

No Body Up There Likes Us,
Afterall.

Andy Zeng

15387 years later, as he faced the large boulder inscribed with humanity's last message to its creator, Captain James Murakami was to remember that distant afternoon when his father took him to eat sushi.

“And so it goes,” he had said, dabbing a bit of wasabi onto his toro sashimi, “A lot of people think it's about them. *Want* it to be about them. But space is large and cold. Very large and very cold. And if there's one thing I can tell you, son, it's that it's really about no one.”

Stepping out of his hibernation chamber, the 21st-century man had no idea why he recalled this moment. As his thoughts tried to sort themselves out into a more coherent mess, he observed the lush vines and green underbrush all around him, dotted with flora and fauna he had never seen before.

“GREETINGS, CHRONICLER. THIS IS THE END,” he read, from the rock, his voice course from disuse, his fingers spasming from atrophy. He finished tracing the inscription on the giant boulder as a waterfall splashed in the distance behind him, sunlight refracting off of tiny droplets, weaving them into rainbows.

Finding this message solved none of his questions. Gone were the skyscrapers and automobiles of the 21st Century. Gone were the intelligent androids and AI micro-surveillance drones of the 22nd. Gone were the remnants of the Technocore singularity of the 30th.

Is this the end of history? He mused, perusing the beautiful landscape around him, his lips tightening into a bloodless line. He reminisced his past. In 2020, the U.S. and China, the world's superpowers, had access to technology way beyond what they could manage. Rampant authoritarianism combined with godlike tech lead to a destruction of democracy from within and without, on top of the fact that the Earth was slowly turning into hot, liquid goo from warming. It was a living hell.

He was more than lucky to have been chosen to be the Chronicler. The authorities knew that a third world war was imminent, so they dedicated him to be the one to record history before it was lost to time. Using untested hibernation technology, he would freeze and defrost his body

at will. He had woken many times before—20 years after the war, 500 years after the war, 5000 years after many more wars—but this was likely his last time.

They had left this message for him to understand, this final enigma, the only testament to ultimate human ingenuity spanning now 20,000 years of civilization.

Is the ultimate form of existence... inexistence? That to transcend humanity is to let it end how it all began?

He stood in thought for a minute, what his father said churning in his mind.

And suddenly, the last human on Earth, who had been up until that point engaged in an intellectual impasse, saw the endless pain and destruction he had witnessed in his long life flash before him like a motion picture.

Turning towards the rainbow refracting from the undulating current, he said: “So... I guess nobody up there liked us after all...”

He tried not to take it personally and failed.