

Ingrained on my thumbprint is the Core H7. Its blinking red light begs through my nails for a software update.

“Good Morning, Mr. Pagano. It’s Friday. September 23, 2037. You have 2 messages. Expect rain at 3:27 pm till 5:23pm. Have a great day today and please update your Core H7, immediately.”

On my night stand is Alissa. She automatically syncs with my Core H7 and knows everything about me. The girl I like. Where I’ll be from 3:27pm to 5:23pm. My blood pressure. What I ate 4 weeks ago.

My lower back aches for some reason. I wave my hand over my iPhone 28 to sync and update my Core H7. It tells me I have caught the Influenza Q37 virus for the third time this year. If not treated within the next 24 hours, I am left with a congested nose, an irritable mood, loss of hearing, sore muscles, hair loss, and incessant dry coughing.

“Update and scanning complete. All viruses deleted,” says Alissa.

“Alissa, read all messages aloud.”

“Kurt says ‘\$35 dollar pizza deal at dominoes! Promo code:ART12A’, Melanie says ‘Hey, come over when you’re up I found something while I was cleaning my closet’, end of messages.”

Melanie lives an apartment away from me. We met when we were undergraduates and suffering through our engineering degrees. Black coffee and dark eyes bags. I believe that’s how we bonded. I just found out she lived next to me two years ago. We’ve been talking since. Core H7 and smart speakers. Something we both cannot live without.

I wave my hand over Melanie's peephole to alert her that I'm at her doorstep. As she opens her door, her eyes greet me in enthusiasm.

"Thomas! Do you remember VR headsets?"

Bulky old eye goggles overwhelming you with realistic images and sounds. It fooled you to think that you were physically in this imaginary setting and allowed you to interact with it.

Now, you simply wave your hand over your eyes to immerse yourself in a virtual world.

Melanie has this printed quote framed over her couch. It reads "Intuition tells us technology will grow linearly –Ray Kurzweil."

"New painting?," I ask as I point at the printed quote.

"It was graduation gift from my dad in college. Never really struck me what it meant until I started cleaning my closet and found my VR. Which is what I wanted to show you actually... It reminded me of college."

That was almost twenty years ago. The time when my sweaty hands would grip the steering wheel. Road rage to passing strangers that would cut you off without their signal lights on. But, driving was also calming. After hours of studying, I would go through my nightly commute and listen to some Bruno Mars songs. Then, I'd shake my shoulders with each groovy beat. Now, we have self-driving cars. Traffic is extinct. All driving errors have been heavily studied and calculated. Travel time has been shortened to 3 minutes which is too short to even think to play a song. These cars travel swiftly that you don't grasp the chance to look outside.

I double tap my Core H7 off. Outside Melanie's window are busy streets with cars zipping by.

"Hey Mel... remember when these roads used to be jammed?"