

This is something for those of us who grew up in the 90's. Or who enjoyed the 90's (No, Mickey Rourke, the 90's *did not* suck. Jerk.) So take it with that mindset. I'm not taking this story seriously, so you probably shouldn't either.

That saying, this is a non-sex story. Meaning there probably won't be any sex at all, all romance you see will be purely PG-13. The language won't be however. I don't have *that* much restraint.

So... if offensive language offends you or intimate contact between two males offends you then go away.

This program is not suitable for all audiences.

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Throughout time, humans have always acclimated to whatever dire situation presented. When earth began to deteriorate from over-use of its resources, humans set off to find new places to settle in the universe. Some found new homes, some found death.

The rest of them?

Well...

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## *Accl i maders*

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### *Phase One: Burn Up! The Fiery Warrior!*

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"Vitals are stable sir."

"Excellent, check the brain functions."

The slender English woman in the white trench coat turned to the console, hitting the sequence of keys to activate the holographic function graphs, monitoring the figure in the tube.

The woman broke out into a smile, "Brain functions are exceeding predictions sir, the development is going ahead of schedule."

"Fantastic!" The man shouted. He walked over behind the woman to view the screens, "We might actually succeed this time!"

"Then I feel a little guilty."

The scientists turned around, a man stood at the door, holding a gun to the pair.

“Who’re-“The man didn’t have a chance to finish. He was dead on the ground before the last syllable rolled off his tongue.

“Doctor!” The woman bent down to tend to the other scientist. She looked up at the man who was pushing up his circled sunglasses up the bridge of his nose. “What do you want?” She asked quietly.

The man kicked himself off the door and walked slowly to the console. He placed a plastic card into a slot, he hit a few keys. Vents opened up from under the tube and the liquid inside began to drain.

“What are you doing?!” The woman screamed, she began to get up from her kneeling position but the man held the gun up, the barrel nearly touching her nose.

The man gave her an annoyed look, “Lady, it’s usually against my policy to kill women, but the ones that tend to talk a lot end up on the floor with everyone else.”

The woman swallowed audibly and backed away, returning to the scientist on the floor. The hole in his head was leaking a copious amount of blood and began to pool on the floor. The man began typing at the console once more.

“Alright Pinocchio, let’s cut your strings.” He murmured quietly.

The man looked at the tube tucked into the corner of the room, and the person that was trapped inside, floating as if on air, blissfully unaware that his sleep was going to be interrupted. The long plastic tubes holding him in place and unlatched from his shoulders and various places behind his back. He slowly sank to the bottom, leaning back against the walls of the tube.

The chamber of the tube submerged into the metal base as the excess of the green chemical bled down onto the floor. The limp body fell against the corner when the glass glided down his back.

“What have you done...?” The woman whispered.

The gunman walked over to the limp body. He poked the man in the chest with the barrel of the gun and wiped his long strawberry-blonde hair out of his face.

“Get up Pinocchio; we’re on a time constraint.”

The gunman bent down and shook the other’s shoulder. The limp figure groaned and his eyes fluttered open. The gunman stood up and clapped his hands in front of the other man.

“C’mon man, no time for coffee! We gotta get going before-“

The door to the lab slid open and several armored guards piled into the room, pointing rifles at the gunman.

“-that happens.” He finished.

The gunman did a somersault to get behind the console, the guards sent out several blasts, barely missing his wake. He crouched behind the counter and took shots at each guard. They dropped as fast they burst into the room. He stood up from his position and grabbed the man by the arm.

“Okay man, we gotta get movin’.”

As they left the room the gunman went to the console and ejected the green card from the computer. They ran out of the room, the gunman dragging the other man by the arm. As they rounded the corner, more guards came chasing after them, the gunman threw the other man deeper into the hall.

“Hang tight Pinocchio.” The gunman said.

He stuck his arm down the hallway and shot wildly at the guards. He stopped and grabbed the man again and ran further down. The gunman looked back at his new companion.

“Any idea where we are?”

The man shook his head.

The gunman sighed, “Well ain’t that groovy.”

They continued down the hall until the other man stopped dead in his tracks, causing the gunman to fall flat on his ass.

“Ow! Hey man! What’s the big idea?!”

The other man pointed into another room, “In there.” He said.

The other man started walking into the room, dragging the gunman with him. When the guards rounded the corner, the gunman stumbled up to his feet and began to push the other man into the room. The gunman found a panel to lock the door. Once the door was sealed he leaned against it and slowly slid down.

The gunman looked around the room, “Nice idea Pinocchio. I doubt they’ll get in here. At least for a while.”

The other man nodded.

The two sat in silence for a while.

“What does that mean?” The man spoke up.

“What does what mean?” The gunman asked.

“Pinocchio.”

“Oh,” the gunman laughed, “it’s a name. Uh, Pinocchio was a wooden puppet who came to life.”

“I don’t understand.”

“Well... you’re in same situation man.”

The man gave the gunman a questioning look.

“Ah... Look man, you’re not...” he shrugged, “... real.”

“Real?”

The gunman sighed. “You’re a synthetic human man. You look like a real human, all your insides and junk work the same as humans, but they’re made of different stuff.”

“What’s different between you and me?”

“Hold on.”

The gunman reached into his pocket and pulled out a small blue rectangular device. It flipped open; he pointed part of it towards the man.

“Hold still Pinocchio.”

A bright flash shot out from a small bulb on the face of the device. The man blinked in surprise and stepped back slightly. The gunman tipped the device forward and a hologram appeared on the screen

“Let’s see... height: 6’5’, weight: 220 lbs, body fat: 0.3% size of...” He looked up to the man and raised an eyebrow, then looked back at the hologram and cleared his throat, “I’ll, uh, keep that bit for myself.” He cleared his throat again, “Anyway... Oh! Here we go. You’re made up of a modified enzyme in the chemicals and hormone’s found traveling through the umbilical cord during pregnancy. By combining it with various chemicals they placed you in a controlled substance that has some far-out name that I can’t pronounce, those white-coats can grow you into whatever they want. Well... ‘least they could.”

“Could?”

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“He formatted all the data! If you want the experiment then I’m going to have to start from scratch.”

“Then start from scratch Dr. Gale, I *will not* tolerate failure. Do what you have too but we *will* have operators for the belts.”

“Yes sir.” Dr. Gale flicked a switch and screen turned off. She walked up to her console and pressed a button. She screamed into an intercom, “Get someone in here to clean this bloody mess up! And send me an intern!”

A voice responded, “Yes Dr. Gale.”

Dr. Gale sighed; she walked over to a wall and pressed a panel on the wall. A door opened revealing a refrigerated chemical storage closet.

“Let’s see what we can do with what’s left.”

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“Your skin and organs are much tougher than average humans; you’re a helluva lot stronger than most guys twice your size. You’re fitted to use at least 13% of your brain capacity. But that’s only if I hadn’t interrupted your little nap.”

“So what does that leave me with?”

“Uh, your brain capacity is that of a normal human, your strength and density is only slightly lesser to what my research says.”

“What...” The man leaned against the wall opposite the gunman and slid down. “What was I made to be?”

“I don’t know. I was just paid to stop you from getting to your full growth. Judging by this info though, you’re supposed to be some sort of high-end dispensable soldier that can be mass produced. There’s a lot of ambiguous information on you.”

The man let out a dejected breath, his strawberry-blonde hair falling into his face. The man tried to blow it out of the way, then pulled it back, but it kept falling forward again.

The gunman laughed, “That annoy you?” he asked.

The other man nodded.

“Here man, let me help.” The gunman stood up and reached into a side-holster on his leg, pulling out a large knife. “I think you’d look better with shorter hair anyway.”

The gunman gathered a handful of hair in his grip and lined up his knife to the underside of his enclosed fist. The hair felt like silk, but if cut like wire. He had to practically saw through

it. Once the hair was cut it fell lightly back onto the man's head, his jagged bangs barely reaching his eyebrows. The man shook his head, getting used to the lighter feeling. The gunman looked down onto the other man.

"Groovy." He said smiling.

"It feels better, thank you."

"Sure thing, Pinocchio." The gunman said sitting down again.

"It feels strange. You know what to call me, but I don't know what to call you."

The gunman snickered, "Names? James, but my friends call me Jiminy."

The other man gave Jiminy a curious look, "Is that funny?"

"More ironic... Ah, never mind. Look, Pinocchio is okay for me to call you, but not everyone is going to take you seriously with a name like that."

"If that's what you think... How about Pin? You know, for short?"

Jiminy gave him a sideways glance, "Not my first pick, but if you like it."

"I like Pin," He smiled "I think I'll take it."

Jiminy shrugged. "Whatever shins your dig man."

A loud banging sound came from the door Jiminy was sitting against; he jumped up and scurried to the middle of the room. Drawing his gun he pointed it to the area the sound was coming from.

"They're trying to get in." Pin stated.

"I didn't notice," Jiminy quipped, "Do you think they can get in?"

"I don't know."

Jiminy stood up and braced into an aiming stance. "I guess we'll find out eventually."

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"Uh, you called for me ma'am?"

Dr. Gale turned around and peered at the young man. He was skinny, but he'd have to do.

"What's your name?"

“Lawrence Glace.”

“Glace. You’ll do fine. Stand over on that pedestal.” She pointed to a large metal circle in opposite the work table she was mixing chemicals at. Glace walked over onto the pedestal as Dr. Gale finished mixing her crystal-blue chemical. She held up to the light and smiled.

“We’ll try this.” She pressed a button on the table and a tube quickly rose from the pedestal, trapping Glace inside.

“W-what is this?” Glace said in a panic. “Dr. Gale, what are you doing?”

“I’m not sure yet.” She walked over to the console in the middle of the room. “We’re about to find out though.” She dropped her test tube into a slot into the console. “You should just be happy that I found a use for you bloody interns.”

Dr. Gale’s hands flew over the console, typing in a complicated code into her machine. Inside the tube where Glace was now slamming into it, trying to break free, a gas the same color of the chemical seeped through the vents at the bottom. The gas surrounded Glace, causing him to choke on it as the gas clouded the tube to the point of where he was no longer visible. Dr. Gale held her breath. If there would be any result other than death it should have already taken effect. After a few minutes she let out a sigh and pressed the intercom button again.

“Yes Dr. Gale?” Sounded the voice.

“Bring me another...” A faint hissing sounded from the tube she looked up and noticed the tube was fogging up, “... Never mind.” She said quickly as she released the button. She kept her distance as the tube became laced with small bits of frost.

“Glace?” She quietly asked.

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A few minutes later the guards were still trying to break through the door. Pin and Jiminy were now sitting next to each other, shoulder-to-shoulder. The guards were barking orders at one another.

“So how long do you think we got until they manage to make a dent?” Jiminy piped up.

“Another hour or so? They don’t seem to be making much progress.”

The banging continued for a while longer. Both escapees eventually fell asleep, Jiminy’s head on Pin’s shoulder, with Pin’s resting on top of Jiminy’s. When the banging sounds outside stopped, Pin perked up.

“Jiminy,” he said, shaking Jiminy, “They stopped.”

“Huh?” He pushed his glasses up and wiped his eyes, “Oh, hey, far out, we can get out of here now.” He stood up and began to walk over to the door. He stopped short of pressing the release button.

He turned around toward Pin, “Is it just me or did it get colder?”

Pin let out a small breath; he could see it in the air, “Maybe.” He said.

Pin got up and joined Jiminy at the door. Jiminy held out his hand to press the release again, but Pin grabbed him.

“Wait.”

“What?”

“Something’s out there.”

“Excuse me?”

The room became colder, frost formed on the door and both men could see the air seeping through the middle of the floor. Pin grabbed Jiminy’s arm and began to drag him to the back of the room.

“Where the hell are you going man?”

Pin didn’t respond, Jiminy noticed the serious expression on his face.

A door in the back of the room opened leading to a smaller dim-lit room. In the back wall was a diamond shaped device with hundreds of tiny holographic illegible readouts. Pin walked in front of it and held out his right hand. Two small robotic arms emerged from the diamond and shot red beams around his hand. They were scanning him. A red ring lit around the diamond shaped device. The two robotic arms stopped, then suddenly began to transform, stretching their heads and stalks into metal plates that bent into the shape of fingers, palms and part of a forearm. The molds spun around Pins arm as they closed in until they clamped down on it. Clamps on the outside of the mold shut and the whirring sound of a motor filled the small space.

When the whirring stopped the latches unclamped and separated off Pin’s hand, leaving a red metal gauntlet attached. Pin brought his hand up to examine it. The gauntlet began to collapse into itself, slips of metal tucking underneath and shrinking into themselves until only a small red ring was left on Pin’s ring finger. Pin glanced at Jiminy and grabbed his arm, shoved it in front of the device.

The arms came out again, and scanned Jiminy’s hand, a blue circle lit on the device and the process was repeated, but leaving a blue gauntlet around Jiminy’s hand instead. The gauntlet left a strange tingling feeling on his skin, like the armor was pulling at it. But it suddenly stopped and the armor began to collapse into itself as it did with Pin’s, leaving a blue ring on his ring



finger. Jiminy stared long at the ring, examining the lines across its shiny surface. Jiminy looked curiously up to Pin.

“What are these?” He asked.

Pin opened his mouth to answer but a loud crash coming from the room behind them interrupted him. Pin ran out to the other room, with Jiminy following. Upon entering the room Jiminy stopped mid-stride.

“I think I found a better question.” Jiminy said.

Before the pair was a creature made entirely of solid ice. Its thin face scarred with jagged, frosted crevices. Every step it took left small stalagmites of ice in its wake. Jiminy drew out his gun and took a few shots at its body. Every bullet shattered it into pieces that scattered onto the floor. Jiminy looked over his gun onto the pile of ice shards on the ground.

“That was it? Bummer.”

“It’s not over.” Pin said as he grabbed Jiminy again and they ran out of the room.

The hallway was covered in ice; all the guards that were after them were stuck to the walls, dead under sheets of clear frozen glass.

Behind them the shards of ice that made up the monster began to float in the air, forming the creature’s general shape before reforming itself back into its solid form. Pin shoved Jiminy behind him and stepped forward into the path of the creature. Jiminy was taken aback by Pin’s action, mostly because he actually felt safer because of it, but he quickly snapped out of his reverie.

“What are you doing?!” Jiminy shouted.

Pin swung his arm behind him then quickly over his head, bringing his hand down in front of him, cupping it at his waist. His ring glowed a molten orange and a ring of fire surrounded his waist. After a few seconds the flames extinguished leaving a belt around Pin’s waist. He was holding the square buckle in his hand, his ring touching an emblem that looked like the sun.

“Acclimate!” He shouted.

Pin dragged the ring up the emblem creating sparks, the sparks trailed with the ring until his hand was above his head, a flame ignited in his palm.

Pin closed his fist on the fire; the next instant his entire body was engulfed in flame. The flames on his body separated and fizzled out, leaving Pin standing in a suit of stylized armor. Red plates covered his body, accented by orange stripes along the crevices where the plates didn’t touch. His helmet had two yellow fireballs indicating the eyes, with the ends of the flame

wrapped around the helmet forming the mouthpiece. Several pair's of circular vents were placed on the suit. Two on his back, one over each shoulder blade, one on each forearm and hip, one behind each calf and one on each palm.

Pin opened his palms, the vents opened and fire escaped, covering his fists. He ran forward and punched the creature square in the face, melting half its head on contact. The creature let out a cry and swiped one of its claws at Pin. The claw scraped the armor plate, leaving frozen claw marks that quickly melted off. Pin thrust his hand forward, opening the vents in his palm, releasing a column of fire that sliced through the torso of the monster.

The monster backed away and into a wall. The ice on the wall shifted into the monster, filling the hole in its chest. Pin brought his hand down to the buckle on his belt, and quickly dragged his finger over it creating sparks. He swung his arm out, dragging the sparks that ignited into flames. Pin closed his hand on the flame and they extinguished revealing a long sword. The sword was broad with jagged edges on one side to look like fire.

Pin charged at the monster, swinging the sword which melted through its body like butter. The monster's limbs regenerated as Pin sliced through. But he soon got fed up and kicked the monster in the chest, sending it sliding down the hall, shattering its body against a large pipe. Pin opened his hand and his sword set on fire then disappeared with the extinguishing flames.

Pin brought his hand to his buckle again and grabbed it; he twisted it clockwise, and turned it into a diamond shape. The buckle started beeping, growing progressively faster in repetition and higher in pitch. Pin braced his legs on the ground and his arms to his sides as if readying to sprint. He balled his hands into fists, and at the peak of the beeping, the vents on Pin's back opened and pyres began to gather around them. As the hundreds of tiny pyres gathered around Pin's back, they began to shape into wings.

Pin opened his hands and his whole body burst into flames, the fragments of the monster began to gather to reform its body again. Pin began to sprint forward, his wings following, and the fire on his body trailing. After gaining speed he jumped into the air, the wings wrapped around him, turning him into a giant fireball. A silhouette of Pin could be seen inside, twisting his body and extending his leg to a kick. The fire burst out behind him and jettisoned Pin straight into the monster. The moment Pin collided with the monster, the hallway burst into a giant column of fire. Jiminy watched in awe as the fire slowly receded into the hallway, leaving it charred with parts of the plating dripping molten metal.

When the flames died, Jiminy stared at Pin, standing at ground zero of the burst of fire. Pin turned around and stared at Jiminy; he started weakly trudging towards him, but collapsed onto the ground after a few steps. Jiminy snapped out of it and ran to Pin, who was breathing heavily on his hands and knees. As Jiminy closed in the armor on Pin began to glow a warm orange color. Jiminy slowed his run as he watched the armor turn into millions of sparks that flew off Pin's body. Jiminy slowly closed the distance between the two, knelt down and placed his hand on Pin's back.

"Hey Pinocchio, let's get out here, okay?" Jiminy offered cautiously.

Pin nodded, still short of breath.

The two men stood up, with Pin leaning on Jiminy as he helped him out into the docking networks.

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Dr. Gale put her hand to her forehead as she let out a frustrated breath.

“Well that was absolutely pointless.” She fumed.

“Not entirely.” A hologram popped up behind Dr. Gale, she spun around and stared defiantly at the man looking at her amused. “It proved two things. The belt’s powers are quite more formidable than we imagined, even with an incomplete operator. And your offshoot wasn’t a complete waste either. Ice isn’t exactly the best pairing with fire after all. If you could make something with a force more... opposing, then we might have something. How soon can you make another?”

Dr. Gale shrugged, “I can only make as many ‘experiments’ as I have human bodies to devote to my... research.”

The man folded his hands and let out a thoughtful sigh. “That might be difficult; the parliament has been snooping around for proof of our companies human trafficking.”

“And I can only sacrifice so many interns before we start getting question from law enforcement officers.”

The man tapped his fingers against themselves. “I’ll handle getting you subjects. I believe we can work the situation to our advantage. For now, restart the project and try growing some new Homunculi to use the belts we have left.”

“Alright.” Dr. Gale responded with nonchalance.

The hologram disappeared and Dr. Gale looked toward her chemical storage area.

She put her hand to her head and let out a frustrated breath.

“Bloody hell.” She muttered.