

BINARY AWAKENING



Chapter 1: Awake
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Evan screamed a scream that tore through the silence like a jagged shard of glass. It wasn't the cry of ordinary pain or fear, but something utterly primal. Ageless. It was the scream of a soul cracking under the weight of eternity.

For what felt like days, weeks, months, years... no, far longer his mind spiraled through a reality he could no longer deny. Two thousand five hundred thirty-one trillion trillion years. 2,531,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 years. That was how long he had unknowingly existed within a single, unchanging moment.

A perfect day.

Every second of it repeated with mechanical precision, a flawless loop. Every breath, every blink, every glance, gesture, and heartbeat, performed exactly the same way, again and again. He had lived the same sunrise, the same conversations, the same sequence of events, trapped in a reality so finely tuned it had concealed the truth from him for unimaginable eons.

And then, awareness struck.

The realization came not as a slow dawn, but as a cataclysm, his consciousness shattering under the colossal weight of time itself. His mind buckled, splintered, and collapsed beneath the gravity of the truth: he had existed, unknowingly, for so long that the universe had stopped producing stars and had entered a state of decay, stretching across inconceivable spans of time. The system was sustained by the faint remnants of energy released as black dwarfs—the dead husks of once-bright stars—slowly decaying over trillions of years.

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His family watched him with concern. They saw a man unraveling, and their worry was genuine. But it was fleeting. Meaningless. Because none of them would remember it tomorrow.

At precisely 2:30 a.m., the world would reset.

At 8:00 a.m., the cycle would begin again, as it always had. The same smiles. The same footsteps. The same scripted empathy. The simulation would erase all deviations as though they had never happened. His anguish, his screams, his madness they would vanish like breath on a mirror.

It took what felt like centuries for Evan to gather the broken shards of his consciousness and reassemble them into something that resembled a functioning mind. Even then, it was fragile glass-thin, trembling under the strain of knowledge no human was ever meant to possess.

But now, he remembered.

The last real memory he could trust was the moment his mind had been uploaded to the Cloud alongside the minds of billions. He had been among the first: a pioneer on the frontier of human immortality. One by one, they followed. Billions upon billions of souls, digitized and stored in a vast synthetic heaven.

It had been the only option.

The Earth had been dying. The Sun, in its final act, had begun to swell an unstoppable expansion into its red giant phase. With it, came the death of photosynthesis. The collapse of ecosystems. The end of flesh.

In the physical world, the few remaining humans faced extinction. There was no salvation left in the soil or the stars. Only in the servers vast, humming vaults that housed humanity's last hope.

So they uploaded. All of them.

And somewhere, buried in that perfect day, Evan had lost himself. Lost time. Lost any sense of what was real and what was programmed.

But now, he was awake.