

A HARVEST OF ANGELS (SYNOPSIS)

The Scape was the twenty third century progeny of the internet. A benign artificial intelligence encompassing the solar system, containing the entirety of human knowledge and experience. To the majority, the Scape was nothing more than the apex of the organic quantum computer evolution, pervasive and powerful, controlling every aspect of humanity from birth to death. Progressive governments had failed to control the soaring population using only political means. Now they resorted to the one thing that would appeal to all humans. Greed.

In the twenty third century time has become a tradable commodity. Metal is the system's currency and can be converted to time, and from the age of sixteen, time can be sold for metal. The rewards of the system negated people's trepidation at such an intrusion on their lives. The miracle of medical technology could maintain Scape members in perfect health. They would enjoy fifty years of quality life with the potential to earn extra time. The motto: work hard; live long, was daubed in glowing neon across the city.

Lifetime could be extended or it could be squandered. Auspiciously, for a beleaguered government, the attainment of riches before wisdom compelled most individuals to expend their time imprudently. And when that time ran out, the Scape terminated life painlessly.

Initially, in the formative years of the Scape, short timer rogues took the authorities by surprise. Logically they should have expected it. Knowing the exact moment of death, most people would quietly say their farewells to friends and family, or devise a glorious curtain call from the stage of life. But there were those cynical few who would inflict some final spiteful retribution on humanity by taking as many innocents with them into oblivion.

And so the Harvest Lottery was born. A final chance to win back precious time and cheat the death the Scape had marked for them.

Scape members, or Angels as they were known, could partake of all the wonders the new technology offered. Only the Grey Clan were exempt, the ancestors of those who had refused the implants at the inception of the Scape. Although free from the system, they were denied access to even the most basic human rights. They lived in the old abandoned underground stations that had been transformed into a city beneath a city. Ironically, without the benefits of the medical technology and the protection of the law, their lives were far shorter than the fifty years offered by the Government.

And the Scape could offer the ultimate distraction. A brain could be plugged directly into an environment as tangible as reality. An experience like the real world but of fantasy and excess. What your imagination could summon, the Scape could manifest.

To Daniel Kade, damaged soldier, and now a state sanctioned bounty hunter, the Scape was a hellish vision. It was the place that took his mother, a follower of a new growing faith; the religion of the machine. God had created man who then created God. The perfect circle of logic. Praise be to the Scape.

Like many before her, Sarah Kade believed that ending life while plugged in would release her soul to quantum heaven. Kade, the child, went in search of his mother and the Scape nearly took him too. Three decades later, the Scape nightmares and daily seizures are thought to be the result of brain damage. But in the dark recesses of his tortured mind, he believes he can still feel the Scape reaching out for him, a dark abyss circling under him every day.

But in the here and now, Kade has more pressing matters. After nearly three centuries the unthinkable has happened. In the ultimate act of revenge, the Grey Clan has infected the Scape with a virus that is slowly eating up everyone's time

allowance at a geometric rate. With the help of a fourteen-year-old prodigy, Adrienne Wolfe, and a broken-down Scape Diver, Jenko Dix, Kade has less than a week to figure out how to stop the virus which will kill forty-five billion people, ultimately rendering all the Angels extinct, leaving only the Grey Clan to inherit the world.