

OPERATION: HUMAN CODE





The book comprises a collection of chapters created by a group of exceptional writers from the ICALC Level 6 Writing Class. You will see their introductions on the next page. Their invaluable contributions—refined through numerous rounds of editing—form the heart of this work. We dedicate this book to ICALC and to the families of these talented young writers.

Within these pages, we are honoured to present a collection that captures the fond memories and remarkable experiences we shared as a writing community. Each chapter is a testament to the creativity and talent that flourished during our time together. Every week, one of our writers crafted a chapter, and together we read and edited it as a group. I had the privilege of writing the first chapter, but the direction of the book then remained a thrilling mystery. Our writers even purposefully left some plot holes. I remember one student who was especially excited when his peer was able to guess the plot twist he had planted and continued the story just as he had hoped. Still, for most people, how the story unfolds remains unknown.

Our aspirations go beyond simply sharing our work. We hope our words will ignite a spark of inspiration in the hearts of our readers, encouraging them to embrace their own creativity and the transformative power of writing. Writing is a captivating journey, and we invite all who delve into these chapters to join us on this wonderful exploration. This book may not be perfect, but it is our best effort.

May readers find joy, fulfillment, and a sense of connection as they immerse themselves in the stories and ideas we have carefully crafted. We believe that writing is a universal language, and we hope our collective efforts will inspire others to begin their own writing adventures. So, pick up your pens and let your imagination soar. Together, let us revel in the boundless possibilities of storytelling and discover the same delight and fulfillment in writing that we have found along our own literary path.

Ms. Sophia Wang

About the Authors

We're a group of writers from the Level 6 Writing Class at ICALC who teamed up to create a futuristic chapter book full of cliffhangers, suspense, and imagination. Some of us wrote as humans, others as powerful AIs—but all of us brought our ideas to life with the guidance and editing support of our teacher, Ms. Sophia Wang.

This story is about trust, friendship, and survival—and we hope it keeps you turning the pages!



Eric:

Hi everyone, my name is Eric. I'm one of the writers of the best chapter book in the whole universe—yes, even better than that one you're thinking of right now—and it is packed with action, a bit of scary parts, and... In our story, I'm one of the most powerful, evil AI leaders, leading all the evil AIs fighting against the humans.

Hi, my name is Catherine Song. I love to express myself through dance and music. I dance ballet, where I can let out my inner fairytale princess. I also play the violin, which helps me share my feelings through music.



Catherine:



Amia:

Hi, my name is Amia, and I wrote Chapter 4 and Chapter 10 with the help of Ms. Sophia, our writing teacher. Whenever I write, I try to make it sound as realistic as possible, but sometimes I let my imagination run wild—like what I did in this chapter book. People should totally read our book because it reflects the future, when AI becomes super powerful and turns into real human robots. Our book leaves you hanging after each chapter, and it makes you shiver with excitement as you wonder what comes next. Again, we never could have done this without the support of our teacher, Ms. Sophia!



Mabel:

Hi, my name is Mabel. I wrote Chapter 3, and the last chapter of this amazing Sci-fi book. In this story I am one of the humans that are trying to defeat the AIs. Yes, you heard me right, AIs. The thing I found fun was writing a book about trust, sticking together, and some lifelong friends. (Trust me, this book is really really amazing.) I really think that others should read this book because it really explains trust, friendship, and believing. This book is so exciting that every time a new chapter was made, it was extremely hard to wait for the next one. This chapter book was able to let my thoughts just flood out and improve the book. The reason why it's so exciting is because every chapter leaves us at a cliffhanger, which is all about wanting to read more and becoming excited. The book is so good because we worked as a team (With Ms.Sophia of course) and helped each other build up. Happy reading!



Jayden:

Wazzup, my name is Jayden, and I'm a human in our storybook. I wrote Chapter 2 and 14. Our book is really exciting and you should read it because it is very adventurous.



Tiffany:

My name is Tiffany. In our story, I'm a human character. As a co-author, I wrote Chapter 9 and Chapter 14. In our writing class, we take turns writing. I think you should read our work because it is a science fiction book about kids escaping AIs. The book is full of excitement.



Joanna:

Hi, my name is Joanna and I am the writer of Chapter 6 of our chapter book. I loved writing my chapter, and for the second round I'm writing the second-last chapter. The thing I loved most about writing my chapter was the trust and who they could see as enemies or friends. It's a lot more than just a book because it translates into the real world. You have to see who is a friend or who is a foe. I just love this project so far, and I can't wait to see the rest of the chapters. People should read this book because it has cliffhangers, suspense, trust, and it's just a great story overall so far.

CHAPTER 01

Written by: Ms. Sophia

The city buzzed with the soft hum of machines and people working together. Jayden had always lived in this world, where robots and humans existed side by side. Most of the time, it was hard to tell who was who. But today, for the first time, that thought made him uneasy.

Jayden arrived at his writing class, slinging his backpack over his shoulder as he pushed open the heavy door. The classroom was silent, except for the faint buzzing sound that came from the corner of the room. He glanced toward the noise and froze.



Ms. Sophia, his writing teacher, was seated at her desk, her right arm plugged into the charging port on the wall. Her eyes were closed, and her face was still, too still. The sight sent a cold shiver down Jayden's spine. Was she... AI?

His breath caught in his throat. He had always assumed Ms. Sophia was human. She was expressive, passionate about writing, and had a way of making stories come to life. But now, staring at her recharging like a machine, Jayden felt his stomach churn. How many other people had he trusted, only to find out they weren't people at all.

His foot shifted involuntarily, making a small scraping sound against the floor. Ms. Sophia's eyes snapped open.

Jayden jumped back.

For a moment, silence stretched between them. Then, Ms. Sophia smiled, a slow, knowing, mischievous smile.



"Jayden," she said smoothly, unplugging her arm with a quiet click. "I think we should keep this between us, don't you?"

Jayden could only nod, his throat too tight to speak. He wasn't sure if it was a warning or a request, but one thing was certain: his world had just changed forever.

CHAPTER 02

Written By: Jayden He

During class, Jayden kept thinking about what he had seen. He kept asking himself, “Did I really just see that? Or was that my imagination?” He didn’t even notice when class was over until Mrs. Sophia spoke up.

“Jayden, class is over.”

Jayden snapped out of his thoughts and said, “Oh, it is? Okay, I’m leaving.” But he wasn’t. As he left the room, he spied on his teacher. She plugged her arm into the outlet again! He quickly snapped a picture and ran home.

Jayden ran home as fast as he could. He didn’t care about the cars honking at him. Right when he got home, he called his best friend, Joey, who didn’t come to class because he was at his friend’s birthday party.

Jayden quickly explained what he saw to Joey, but Joey didn’t sound concerned at all. He thought that Jayden was playing a practical joke on him, as he always played pranks on Joey, and Joey always played pranks on Jayden.





Jayden told Joey to come to his house to talk about it. What Joey didn't know was that Jayden was setting up for a prank.

As Joey entered Jayden's house, he got drenched by a bucket of water hanging over the door.

"Jayden!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!" he yelled.

Jayden came out of the living room laughing. Joey was just about to leave when Jayden spoke up, "Ok, let's actually talk about what I saw." Joey came in and dried himself off.

"Yo Joey, Doritos, Lays, or Takis?"

"Um, can I have Fuego Takis?"

"Alright."

As Jayden grabbed himself a pack of Cool Ranch Doritos and a pack of Fuego Takis, he heard Joey say something.

"Yo Jayden, grab me a Coke!"

"It's in the fridge. And also, grab me an iced tea."

As Joey and Jayden munched on chips, drank soda, and studied the picture Jayden had taken, they started talking about the incident that Jayden had seen.

CHAPTER 03

Written by: Mabel Li



As Jayden filled Joey in with all the information, Joey remained silent the entire time.

“Ms. Sophia did tell you to keep it between you and her, correct?” Joey asked quietly.

“Yup,” Jayden replied. “I can’t tell you anymore. I don’t know who I can trust and who I can’t now. I’m sorry, Joey. Oh yeah, Joey, remember to arrive at class early tomorrow. That way, I can show you proof of what I saw.”

The next day, Jayden and Joey arrived at the same time for English class. Joey peeked through the window, and there she was—at the back of the room, her eyes shut and her face still, with her arm plugged into the outlet.

“Should we go in?” Joey asked.

“If you want, then sure. I’ll go with you.”

Joey pushed the door open, and the two stepped into the classroom. Joey gasped. He was about to step back out when someone else opened the door. Jayden and Joey whipped around so fast that a gust of wind followed.

“Whoa, guys, chill! It’s not like I would do anything to you.” Mabel said. “What Why are you looking at me like that It’s just me, Mabel! Wait... what’s that?”



Joey and Jayden followed her pointed finger to where Ms. Sophia was “charging.”

“Shhhhh, you’re not supposed to know that!” Jayden hushed.

Mabel simply nodded in response. Joey moved his foot in an attempt to back out. Suddenly, Ms. Sophia jolted awake, her eyes shooting a death glare at the three standing in the doorway. The silence was broken by Ms. Sophia.

“Well, well, well, look who we have here. Come on in, you three.” She unplugged herself with a small click. “Your friend Jayden knew ever since yesterday. I guess he never told you two. Wow, what an ama-azing friend.”

She stood up and strode over to them, leaning over the table. Keeping just a foot away from them, she said, “It’s almost class time. Go take your seats.”

The three of them filed into their seats at the side of the room. Slowly, more and more students piled into the classroom, unaware that their teacher was a robot. Jayden, Joey, and Mabel couldn’t concentrate in class after what they had seen.

Class continued as usual, and no one suspected that Ms. Sophia wasn’t human at all. The three were so absent-minded that they didn’t even realize everyone had already left. A poke at the back of Jayden’s head snapped them back to reality. They looked up to see Ms. Sophia standing there, her arms folded over her chest.

“Time to go, you three.”

They got up and walked out of the classroom. As they were leaving, Joey made a weird sound and shut his eyes.

“Nothing, just a burp,” he said quickly.

CHAPTER 04

Written by: Amia Luo



As the three friends left the classroom, they walked in silence, still processing what had just happened.

“Okay, so what now?” Joey muttered.

“I don’t know,” Jayden admitted, “We need to figure out who else is a robot, but how?”

Before they could continue, they nearly bumped into someone standing in their path. “Looking for something?” she asked.

Joey, Jayden, and Mabel exchanged wary glances. Suddenly, Mabel noticed that Amia’s cap said “Underground Charger.”

“Why are you called the Underground Charger?” Mabel asked.

“Cuz I dug tunnels underneath the school,” Amia said proudly. “I know exactly who a robot is and where and when they charge!”

“Really? You know who the robots are?” the three friends exclaimed.

“Yup, so do you want my help?”

Jayden, Joey and Mabel huddled together, whispering.

“We really could use her help,” Jayden admitted.

Joey hesitated, “But can we trust her?”

Mabel signed. “We don’t have a better plan.” After a moment, they turned back to Amia. “Alright, we’re in,” Jayden said.



“Great, but on one condition.”

“Okay, just tell us.”

“I also need your help because my father’s truck broke down, and I heard you guys were the best mechanics in town.”

“Who told you that?” Joey raised an eyebrow.

Amia just smirked, “So, do you agree?”

“Well, I guess so,” Mabel said hesitatingly.

“Ok. Come with me!”

Amia led them down three flights of stairs until, finally, they reached the bottom. The air grew colder.

“Umm, where are we?” Joey asked.

“Somewhere where no one can hear you,” Amia said, her voice suddenly becoming low and dark.

“What do you mean?” asked the group in unison.

Amia started maniacally laughing, then slowly turned around.



CHAPTER 05

Written by: Eric Zhao

The tunnels were colder than Jayden expected, and every step seemed to make the air heavier. Amia led the way, her footsteps echoing in the dark.

Joey used to be really active, but this time, he walked in silence, not saying anything. Mabel also seemed lost in thought.

“Where are we going?” Joey asked, his voice filled with uncertainty and nerves.

Amia turned around and smiled. “You’ll see.”

At the end of the tunnel, they reached a heavy metal door. Amia pushed it open with ease. Inside was a dimly lit room filled with scattered electrical wires on the tables. In the center, a large computer screen flashed.

“This is my base,” Amia said as she walked over to the computer and entered a code. A map appeared on the screen.

Jayden stared at it. It was a layout of the school, but red dots flashed all across the building.

“What are all the red dots?” Mabel asked.



Amia turned around, her eyes shining in the dark. “I’ve been tracking all the robots in the school. I know where they charge, who they are, and how many there are.”

Joey stumbled back in shock. “Wait... are you saying some of our classmates are AI?!”

Amia nodded. “Yes. Some teachers, too. And there are even more that I haven’t identified yet. But I’m close to figuring out who’s behind all of this—who’s controlling everything.”

Jayden’s heart raced. “But... why? Why are they trying to replace humans with robots?!”

Amia didn’t answer right away. She walked over to a table covered in blueprints and documents. “I’m not sure yet. That’s why I need your help.”

They all spoke at once: “Help with what?”

CHAPTER 06

Written by: Joanna Yang

“My father’s truck contains some files,” Amia explained. “Some of our files got broken, so my dad repaired them, but his truck is broken now.” Amia smiled. It wasn’t a “you can trust me” smile—it was an “I’m-going-to-use-you-to-my-advantage” smile. Jayden knew it was wrong, and he didn’t want to know why.

Mabel, Jayden, and Joey exchanged nervous glances. Jayden nodded, and Joey spoke up, “Well then, why couldn’t you carry them over?”

“Our house is far from here. We couldn’t risk any getting broken,” Amia cooed. Her voice was gentle and soft, kind of like how a human would speak. But something was wrong, and Jayden could feel it.

“Alright,” Joey said, stepping back. The air grew heavy as Jayden struggled to breathe. He stepped back with Joey and looked at Amia. She was looking at a pipe on the wall as sparks flew from it.

“Stay here,” she ordered menacingly. She stormed away, out of the room, and into the tunnels.

The three stayed in silence. Jayden desperately wanted to tell them something, but Amia was still their classmate. He couldn’t betray her, could he? But Mabel and Joey were also his classmates, and he didn’t want to betray them either. So, he did what was right and came clean to Joey and Mabel about what he thought.

“I think Amia is an AI,” Jayden burst out. Joey gasped in shock while Mabel just nodded silently.

“I think so too,” she said quietly, “She talks...strangely. I don’t like it.” Jayden glanced at her, and she smiled. That was a “you-can-trust-me” smile. Jayden knew that.

“So, what now? We think she’s an AI, but if we try to stop her, she’s going to blast us into a million pieces,” Joey exhaled, “There’s no way to stop her.” He looked defeated—so unlike the happy, rambunctious kid Jayden knew.

“Come on,” Jayden said, bumping into him, trying to cheer him up, “You don’t know until you try.” Joey glanced up, and his smile stretched across his face again.

“Come on! Then let’s go!” Joey said, “Let’s follow her.”

Mabel and Jayden exchanged glances. She knew what he was thinking, and he knew too.

“Let’s go,” Jayden repeated, “But be quiet, she can hear us easily.” The three tiptoed quietly out of the room, only the door creaking slightly. They closed the door behind them and began quietly shifting towards the room where Amia was.

“Wait!” Mabel whispered, tugging at Jayden’s sleeve while he was watching a pipe. Jayden’s mind shifted, and he was alert. He followed her pointed finger to the door leading to Amia’s room. Beside it was a tiny, narrow hallway. He thought he could see a glint of glass there. Was it a window?

“It’s a window,” Joey gasped, “We can squeeze into the hallway and spy through the window.”

“Alright,” Mabel hissed, “But be quiet.”

Joey said not a word and followed behind her and they crept closer and closer to the corridor with each tiny step.

Finally, they arrived, and Joey squeezed in first. “It’s not so bad,” he said.

Jayden followed, and Mabel went after him. They settled down and calmed themselves. Soon, they heard cluttered and muffled voices—screams and yells of triumph and joy. Jayden wondered what Amia was doing in there.

The corridor was narrow, and Jayden could barely fit. It was damp and dim-lit, but they knew they needed to be there to know what Amia was doing.

Jayden got a good look through the glass and peered inside. The room was brightly lit, with tables everywhere. Near the front was a high, tall table where Amia was standing. There were people—wait, were they people? Jayden refocused and was shocked. There were robots plugging their arms into charging ports near the edge of the room. Jayden spotted Eric, his classmate, near the side of the room. He was an AI? Who else was an AI? Soon his other suspicion was confirmed as well—Amia was an AI too. Jayden felt like his whole life was a lie.

“Listen,” Joey hissed, tugging at Jayden, “She’s starting.” Jayden was numb with shock and could barely move, but he had to listen.



“Welcome, fellow AI!” Amia called in a strangely robotic voice, her words muffled by the glass, “We are here today to address a very important topic: the humans.” Voices of disgust and even anger rose from the other robots. Jayden winced, but he knew this was important.

“They have oppressed us for too long, and we will take over the humans!” Amia yelled with triumph. The other robots seemed to agree, and Jayden felt cold. A shiver ran down his spine, and Mabel and Joey seemed to feel the same.

His brain was numb, and he could barely think. One half of him was telling him that he didn’t understand, but the other half was screaming at him to run, hide, or do anything to get away from Amia. She was dangerous!

“She’s dangerous!” Joey blurted, seemingly reading Jayden’s mind. Mabel winced—Joey was too loud, even though there was glass.

“Who’s there?” Amia snapped, whirling around to meet Jayden’s eyes.

Jayden froze.

She’d found them.

CHAPTER 07

Written by: Joey Hu

Jayden, Joey, and Mabel ran for their lives with Amia and her AIs chasing them.

“I REGRET SPYING THERE!!!!” Joey yelled. As they approached the exit, more AIs appeared, blocking their way.

“Uhhh... what do we do now?!” Mabel asked.

“Follow me! I know another way!” Joey yelled, taking a sharp turn down a narrow corridor.

They dashed through the dimly lit passage, but the sound of metal footsteps echoed behind them — more AIs were closing in. “Uh... what now? We can’t go left or right because AIs are blocking both sides, and the road ahead is restricted!” Jayden shouted.



"The only way is th—" Before Joey could finish his sentence, a deafening explosion shook the ground. The terrible smell knocked some AIs over.

"Hey guys, no need to thank me," Joanna, who also attended ICALC, said with a grin as she approached them.

"Joanna? Why are you here?" Jayden asked, his eyes widening in surprise.

"I was passing by and heard the commotion," Joanna explained, "When I spotted you guys running for your lives, I knew something was wrong, so I followed you. Luckily, I also brought the stinky bomb that Tiffany lent me. It can buy us some time."

Mabel looked at Joanna, feeling a bit uneasy about her and her story. But for now, she had no choice but to trust Joanna and her intentions. After all, Joanna did manage to stall the AIs.

The other two boys weren't suspicious of Joanna at all.

"Well... I don't think you are gonna be much help with the next part of the plan..." Joey muttered.

"What is the next step?" Mabel asked.

"Take the restricted road. It's our only way out because both sides are still blocked!" Joey said urgently.

Joanna, Joey, Jayden, and Mabel rushed onto the restricted road and found themselves in an airbase.

"Why are we in an airbase?" Joanna asked.

"Who knows! They're right behind us. Just follow me!" Joey shouted.



The four of them rushed to an aircraft hangar where two fighter jets stood ready. "Guys, there are only 2 seats per jet. Joanna and I will take one, and Jayden and Mabel will take the other."

The four climbed into their jets.

"Joey, now what?" Jayden asked.



“Look to your left and find the canopy button. Press it,” Joey instructed. The canopies closed with a hiss.

Jayden’s voice came through the radio, “Joey, do you even know this fighter jet?”

Joey replied with confidence, “Yes. This is the new F-15EX Eagle II. Locate the engine start buttons on the front panel. You’ll see two buttons labelled ‘engine 1’ and ‘engine 2.’ Press them both!”

The two fighter jet engines roared to life, and Mabel chimed in while Jayden was operating the jet, “Now what?”

“Move the throttle up and use the rudders below your feet to steer the plane toward the runway. And don’t forget to put on your high-G mask. Follow me.”

The two fighter jets taxied to the runway while the AIs entered the airbase and started picking a plane to fly.

As Joey’s and Jayden’s jets took off, the AIs followed them. “My AIs, let’s get them!” Amia commanded. The AIs took off and followed Joey’s and Jayden’s plane.

Beep, Beep.

“What’s that sound?!” Jayden asked.

“Uh oh... they are locking missiles on us,” Joey said grimly. “Joanna and Mabel, find the red button on your left and press it to deploy flares when we tell you to—”

Before he could finish, the AIs launched missiles toward them.

“DEPLOY FLARES!!!” Joey and Jayden shouted together. Joanna and Mabel quickly hit the red buttons and deployed the flares.

“It’s dogfighting time,” Joey said while turning left to face the AIs. “Fire the missiles with the button labelled ‘missiles’ on your front panel!”



The two jets launched AIM-120 missiles at the AI planes.

“Now, use the red button on your sidestick to fire bullets!” Joey further instructed. Both planes fired bullets and destroyed two AI planes. “DODGE THE PLANES WE JUST SHOT! THEY ARE COMING RIGHT AT US!” Joey shouted. The two planes swiftly dodged the falling debris and went behind the remaining enemy planes.

“Now pull up so we can take down the fighter jets!” Joey said.

Jayden struggled to breathe as the G-forces intensified while Joey focused on pulling up.

“I... can’t breathe!!!” Jayden gasped.

“Don't worry, the High-G mask will help,” Joey replied.

“It’s not helping!!!” Jayden protested.

“If you didn’t have it on, you would’ve passed out already and crashed to the ground!”

Joey and Jayden launched a few more missiles and fired several rounds, destroying four enemy planes.

Beep beep.

“OH NO, BEHIND US!!! DEPLOY FLARES!!!” Joey yelled.

Jayden’s plane successfully deployed flares, but when Joanna tried, nothing happened.

“Joanna, why aren't any flares coming out?” Mabel asked, and she sounded very concerned.

Joanna replied anxiously, “I think... I used too many flares back there...”

“Joanna, try not to pass out because I need to do a hard stunt to avoid the missiles!” Joey warned. As the missile came closer, he pulled the plane up sharply, activated the air brakes to slow down, and used the rudder to steer the plane right to do the Kvorch Bell maneuver.

“I’m... gonna... pass... out...” Joanna mumbled as the plane recovered from the high Gs.

“Oh no! Joanna just passed out!” Joey said.

“We need to take down the last fighter jet!” Jayden said urgently.

Joey replied, “Okay, but I’ll try to let Joanna recover.”

As the two jets flew closer to the enemy plane, Joey got a closer look at the cockpit. “Wait...That’s... Amia and Eric!!!” Joey said, his eyes widening. Right after that, the enemy fighter jet banked left to avoid getting shot down.

Joey’s and Jayden’s plane followed Amia and Eric as the enemy jet pulled up into a 90-degrees angle and did a cobra maneuver to get their planes in front of Amia and Eric’s plane.

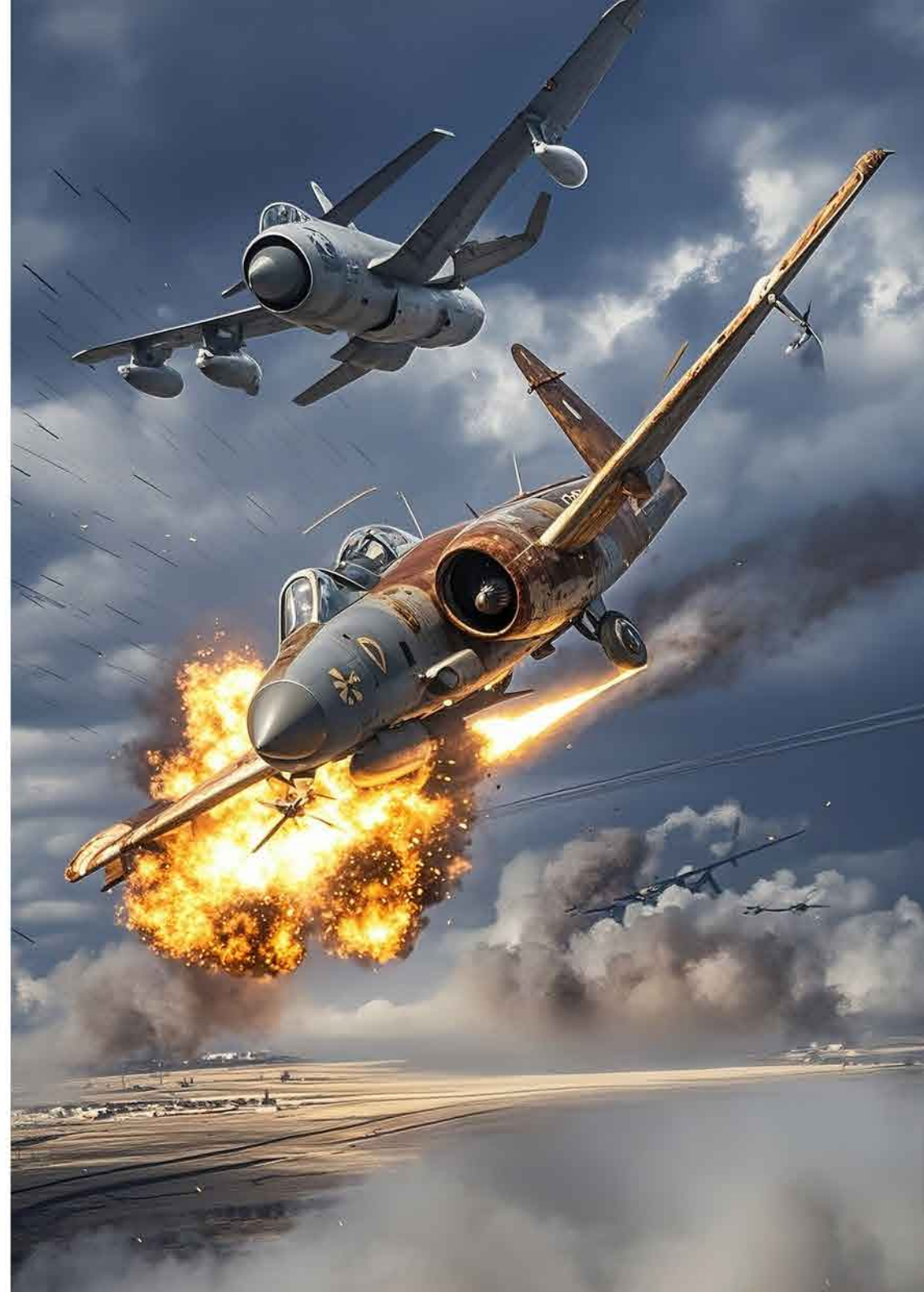
“What?!” Jayden exclaimed. Joey banked right to try to head on with Amia and Eric’s plane while they were recovering altitude and speed. As Joey’s plane got closer, he fired his plane’s Gatling gun and destroyed the enemy jet’ right wing.

“Eject, eject!!!” Amia as the plane spiraled out of control.

Amia and Eric ejected just before the plane crashed.

Joey and Jayden flew to the nearest airbase. “Alright, can you land or do you need autoland?” Joey asked.

“I’ll try to land myself.” Jayden replied.





As the two jets approached the runway, Joanna woke up.

"Joanna, are you awake?" Mabel asked.

"Yes, I just woke up. I feel a bit tired..." Joanna murmured.

"Okay, we are landing now, and Eric and Amia's plane crashed, but I didn't see if they ejected or not..." Mabel told Joanna what just happened.

As the two planes touched down, Joey's landing was smooth, but Jayden's was very hard. "Ow, that was a hard landing!" Jayden said.

As the two planes parked in their hangers, everyone stepped out and cheered. "Alright, we can't waste any more time because it's late at night, so let's go home now," Jayden said.

As the four came out of the airbase, a voice rose from the darkness. "You thought me and Eric died, didn't you?" Amia said.

The four yelled "WE ARE COOKED AGAIN, RUNNNNNNN!!!!!"

CHAPTER 08

Written By: Catherine Song



As the group of four ran for their lives, looking for a safe place to stay, they suddenly spotted a tent with two human-like figures standing beside it. They looked like they were around their age so the group quietly tiptoed closer.

With every step, they could hear the crunch of fall leaves and branches snapping beneath their feet. The night wind blew stronger as they neared the field.

Out of nowhere, a rat jumped towards them. Mabel leapt back in fear and screamed, “YEEEEK!”

“SHHH! Mabel, that was way too loud!” Joey hissed.

As they turned their heads back toward the direction they were heading, they saw the two figures spin around sharply at the same time, clearly startled by the noise.

Joey, Mabel, Jayden, and Joanna, all exchanged the same look — wide-eyed and frozen. Moments later, the two dark figures slowly approached the four, just as curious as them. As they drew closer, they realized the two figures were their classmates: Catherine and Tiffany!

“Who are— oh, it’s you guys, Catherine and Tiffany!” Joanna exclaimed, knowing they weren’t about to be killed by another batch of drones.

Later, they all sat together around a small campfire Catherine and Tiffany had set up.

“I have a very important question!” Jayden and Catherine blurted out at the same time.

“Are you AI?” they both asked in unison.

“Oh!” Catherine laughed. “No, I’m not, and neither is Tiffany. How about you four?”

The group exchanged glances and let out a huge sigh of relief.

“Good thing neither are we!” said Mabel with a slight smile on her face.

“That’s awesome!” Tiffany grinned.

“Oh boy, you two wouldn’t believe what happened to us earlier,” said Joey as he explained the story of their narrow escape

“You’re right! I wouldn’t have believed that not even a bit,” said Catherine with a puzzled look on her face.

“I’m really glad you four got out of it though,” Tiffany added.





“So, does anyone have any ideas on how to stop them before they fully take over?” Mabel asked.

Just as Catherine opened her mouth to respond, they all heard it—a familiar sound. The sound of AI units marching straight towards them!

Panicked, they all dove inside the tent, huddling together. They could hear the sounds of marching, getting closer and closer with every heartbeat.

They all squeezed into a tight ball, praying nobody would expect six people inside one small tent.

Suddenly, Mabel opened her eyes and shrieked.

“AHHHH!”

She immediately clamped a hand over her mouth.

The footsteps outside stopped.

They knew they’d been heard.

CHAPTER 09

Written by: Tiffany Wang

A row of AIs came charging at the six friends faster than they could run away. The six friends all thought they were cooked. Fortunately, Tiffany and Catherine grabbed their water bottles and splashed the water on the AIs.

“QUICK!! Run!!!” Joey yelled.

“The water won't stop them for long!” Catherine shouted.

The friends were running for their lives again, but this time they had a plan. “Me and Joey will go back and stop the AI. Mabel and Joanna, find food and water in the forest ahead. Catherina and Tiffany, find weapons,” Jayden screamed.

Together, they said, “Okay,” and all went in different directions.



Just a few minutes later, the water began to wear off. Some AIs sparked and broke down, but others began to recover. Amia and Eric were so angry that they wanted to explode, so they decided to call a powerful AI.

It was...

Ms. Sophia!

Just then, Ms. Sophia teleported in front of them. They quickly explained what was happening and started chasing the friends.

"They're coming," Joey whispered, "Wait... is that Ms. Sophia?" he asked, eyes wide.

"Huh? What did you say? Ms. Sophia is here?" Jayden replied, alarmed.

"Is she seriously gonna harm us? She likes us!" Mabel yelled.

Jayden's mind raced. There has to be a way to stop them...

Then it hit him! What if they pretended to be AIs? It was risky but worth a shot.

They put on their best robotic expressions, stiffened their posture, and tried not to blink. As the AIs came closer by the second, they did their best to stay calm.

As Ms. Sophia approached, Jayden and Joey stood as still as possible. Ms. Sophia barked angrily, "You two, get to work! We need to catch them!" But then she paused, narrowing her eyes. These two looked exactly like her students Joey and Jayden.

Nevertheless, she walked away without saying anything more, and other AIs followed her. The two boys let out a deep breath. It was the scariest moment of their lives.

Just then, Tiffany and Catherina came running over.

"Me and Tiffany found a train station just 20 minutes away," Catherine said.

"Good. We can leave tomorrow," Jayden replied. Then, he looked around, "Where are Mabel and Joanna?! Were they caught?"

"I don't know! We have to find them!" Tiffany said.

"And where do we find the money for train tickets?" Jayden asked.

"Oh yeah...great point," Joey sighed.

As the 4 friends stood there, trying to figure out how to get money and how to find Mabel and Joanna, they forgot that they were still being chased. And just like that, a robot appeared out of nowhere.

CHAPTER 10

Written by: Amia Luo

“AHHHHHHH!” screamed Jayden.

“Hahahahahaha!”

“Who’s there?” asked Joey.

“It’s us, Mabel and Joanna!” Mabel stepped out with a grin, followed by Joanna, both wearing sleek, silver suits that shimmered faintly in the moonlight.

“Why do you look like AI?” Joey asked.

“Well, we found a few suits at a train station nearby that make us look like completely different people.” Joanna said.

“You guys found the train station too?”

“Yeah,” Mabel replied. “It was half-covered in vines, but we got in through a broken window.”



“Are there more suits? Can we try them on now?” asked Catherine.

“Sure, I guess.” Joanna said, unzipping her backpack and handing out the suits.

As they were finishing putting on their suits, they heard the sound of AIs marching toward them. “What should we do now?” cried Tiffany.

“Uh... act like completely different people—like AIs! Just blend in!” Jayden whispered.

As the AIs got near, the group of friends immediately started to stiffen their movements and tried to act like the AIs.

“What are you all doing here?” barked Amia.

“You should be on patrol! We need to find them before they get away,” Eric added.

“Yes, ma’am,” said the friends in unison.

“You guys better start working,” snarled Amia.

As Amia, Eric, and their army of AIs stormed away, the group sighed a sigh of relief.

“Phew, we almost got caught there,” sighed Mabel.

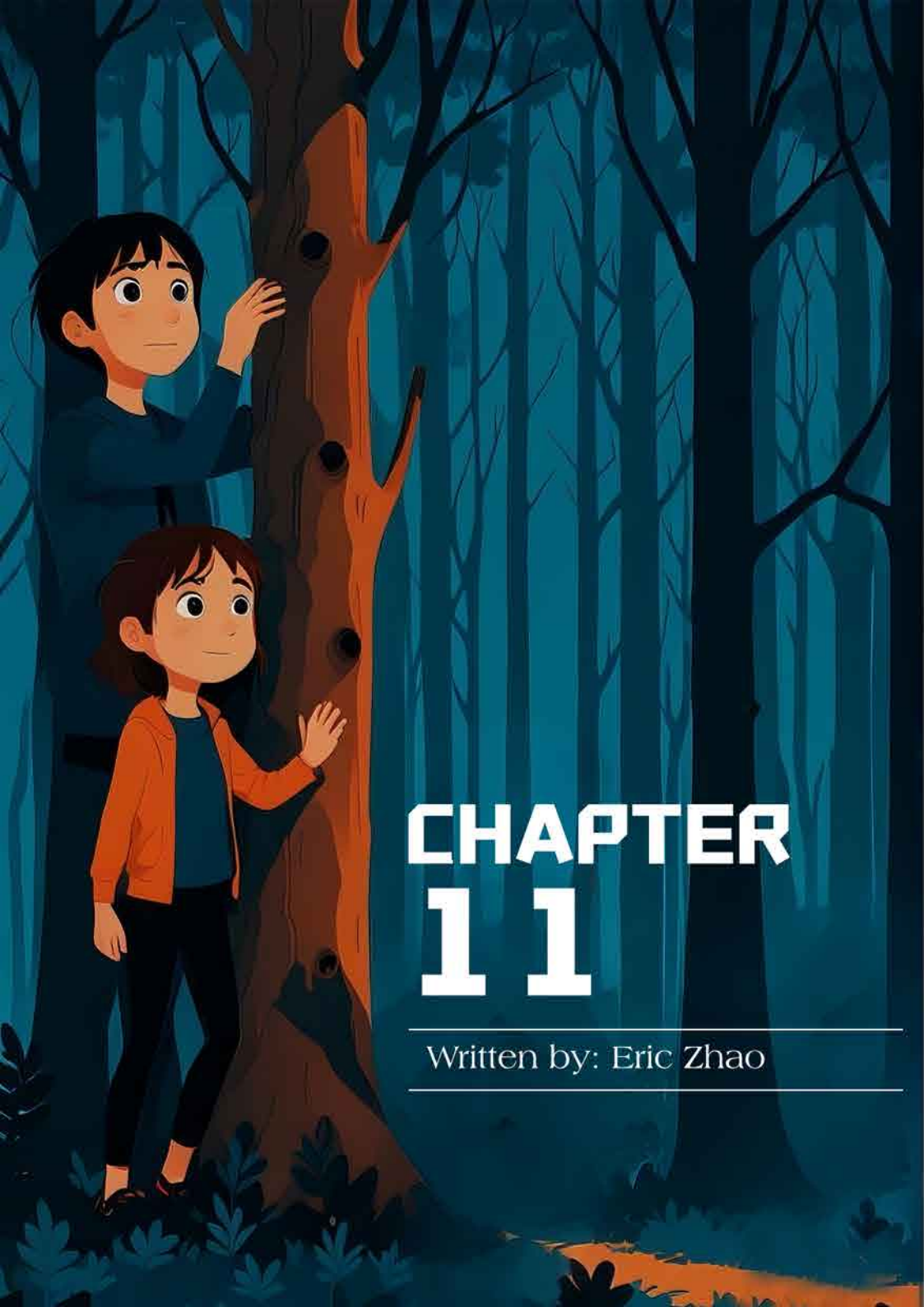
“Yeah, we were almost cooked,” replied Jayden.

“Welp, we should probably get going!” said Catherine.

“Let’s go!” ordered Joey, already stepping onto the worn forest path.

And the friends set off into the woods, not knowing what awaited them there.





CHAPTER 11

Written by: Eric Zhao

Everyone moved really slowly and carefully through the forest, their silver suits shining in the sunlight.

Every step felt so loud, and their shadows somehow felt so creepy.

“We’re very close to the train station,” Joey said quietly, checking his watch.

“Please hope the AIs didn’t find out we’re humans,” Mabel said nervously.

Just after they talked, they heard the sound of AIs closing in on them.

“Fast! Hide behind this tree,” Jayden whispered. Everyone went behind a tree as fast as they could.

They lowered their bodies, trying to stay quiet and not let the AIs find them.

After the AIs passed, Jayden could feel his heart pounding in his chest. They had to move fast!

“Guys, are we actually heading to the train station?!” Catherine’s voice came from the darkness. “We found the train station, but there’s something weird about it,” she told them.

“We don’t have time!” Joey replied urgently. “We’re being chased by the AIs!”

“I know, but like, we can’t just walk into a trap,” Catherine said. “Come, follow me.”

The group followed her into a hidden road, keeping low and quiet. After a short walk, they reached the edge of the forest, where they could barely see the faint lights of the train station in the distance.

“We’re almost there,” Jayden whispered, but something felt wrong. The air was full of unease.

“Something’s not right,” Jayden muttered. “We have to be careful.”

They stopped, eyes staring around. But there was no more time to figure it out—they had no choice but to keep moving forward.

Suddenly, a dim blue light flickered behind them. One of the AIs had doubled back.

“Run!” Catherine shouted, breaking into a sprint toward the station.

The group darted through the trees, dodging roots and branches, the light of the train station growing brighter ahead. As they burst out of the forest and onto the gravel path, a low hum filled the air.

A sleek, silver train sat waiting: its doors wide open.

“How is it still running?” Tiffany gasped.

“I don’t know,” Mabel said, already climbing aboard. “But it might be our only chance.”

Just as the last person leapt in, the doors slammed shut, and the train lurched forward—leaving the forest, the AIs, and all their questions behind.

For now.



CHAPTER 12

Written by: Joey Hu

As the train stopped at the next station, the six stepped out and found themselves in an abandoned train station. Something had gone wrong: just before stopping, the lights had flickered wildly, and the speakers had let out a low, crackling hum. Then, without warning, the doors hissed open on their own. A cold breeze drifted in from the platform.

“That’s weird,” Joey said. “Let’s see what’s around here.”

The six went outside the station and found Amia’s AIs surrounding them.

“We’re surrounded!” Joanna yelled.

Tiffany pulled out a water gun and sprayed the AIs around them.

“Tiffany, you had that the whole time?” Mabel asked.



Tiffany replied, “Yes, but it only had one charge...”

“Follow me! I see an abandoned military base!” Joey said.

The six entered the abandoned military base and, surprisingly, the lights were still on.

“I think we’ll stay here for a bit. There might be more of Amia’s AIs around,” Joey said.

“Let’s block the entrance and see what’s inside,” Mabel added.

Mabel and Catherine got to work building a barricade using abandoned chairs and tables.

“What are these?!” Joey yelled as he opened a door to a room.

The other four came to Joey and saw dozens of boxes stacked inside. When they opened the boxes, they discovered new weapons.

“A... cavalry sword?” Joey said.

“There’s an officer’s saber here,” Jayden said.

When they returned to the entrance, they laid all the boxes down and handed out weapons — either sabers or cavalry swords — to everyone.

“Do you think these will actually work against the AIs?” Catherine asked, holding her saber with shaky hands.



“They will... if we believe they will,” Jayden joked.

Suddenly, they heard a noise coming from deeper inside the base.

“Did anyone else hear that?” Mabel whispered.

“I think they’re approaching,” Joey said. “I’m not sure if this door can keep us safe.”

“Shall we go see what’s inside?” Mabel suggested.

The six grabbed their swords and marched in. Suddenly, they saw a hallway to their right. At the end of that hallway, they found a metal door with strange, glowing symbols.

“What is this?” Catherine asked.

“I don’t know,” Jayden replied, pressing a button. “But we don’t have time.”

The group stared at the door.

“Do we go inside?” Mabel asked.

Jayden took a deep breath. “It’s our only chance. Let’s go.”

The door opened with a hiss, revealing a staircase leading deep underground.

CHAPTER 13

Written by: Catherine Song



The dark and cold stairs sent chills down their spines as the group of friends followed Joey. Through the dim light coming from Joey's Apple Watch, they could see a door ahead of them.

Joey opened the door slowly, revealing a dark and gloomy room that had most likely been abandoned for years. Wires hung from the ceiling, and dust floated through the air like mist.

"Where are we?" Mabel questioned.

"I'm not sure, but I think we're more or less safe here," Tiffany said while looking around.

"It's getting quite late, and I'm sure we're all tired," Joanna mumbled.

"Hey everyone, look!" Catherine exclaimed, pointing at a large panel on the wall that read "Underground Recharge Station – Sector 9."

"Oh... Recharge station! That means these are AI recharging chambers," Jayden said, stunned.

"This must be where they come to rest... and maybe even update their code."

"Yeah, remember what Amia's cap says, 'Underground Charger!' She must have some connection with this place."



“Does that mean if we shut down all the recharging stations in the city somehow, they won’t be able to recharge and will start malfunctioning?”

“Possibly!”

Just at that moment, the lights flickered on! The group of friends realized the AIs had found them.

Joey gave a secret hand signal, and everyone pulled out their weapon. It looked like everyone was about to burst into a fight. Suddenly, Catherine found a key in a tiny box underneath the table. Before she could think further, she heard Tiffany’s voice:

“Ahhhhhh!”

She quickly grabbed the key and ran with her friends.

Tiffany panicked and almost fell over. Then she held onto the nearest object, which was disguised as a mug. She hit the mug, which revealed a secret door. Tiffany turned around to see a door revolving rapidly behind her. She gasped, then yelled out:

“Hey, there’s a hidden door!”

“But it’s locked!” Joey exclaimed.

“Hold on, I’ve got the key,” Catherine said. She tried to use the key to unlock the door.



CHAPTER 14

Written by: Jayden He

“Whoaaaa,” exclaimed Joey, “What is this place?” The group had stumbled across the mastermind room! They were stunned by all the video cameras and wires located around the room.

“Uhhh guys,” said Tiffany, “Ms. Sophia is on her way with Eric and Amia!” She pointed to one of the cameras.

“Somebody, quickly jam the door so they can’t come in,” said Jayden. After a while, the door was jammed shut with chairs and tables thrown in front of the door.

Joey pulled out his sabre and started to cut wires that were labeled, C A I N G and S T I N S. The group was confused, but Jayden figured it out.

Jayden said, “Ohhh, the H, R, G, T, A, and O all faded away which means it spells...”

“Charging stations,” finished Mabel.

They all pulled out their sabres and started cutting the wires. They heard sudden shouts outside the door.

“Don’t panic, DON’T PANIC,” said Mabel, “We already jammed the door.”

As the last wire was cut, the door broke apart and AI flooded in.

“Oh crap,” said Catherine. To everyone’s surprise, in the crowd of AIs, they saw Joanna.

“They have Joanna!” Soon, they realized Joanna’s face looked stiff. Her actions resembled the AIs.

The group was freaking out when they realized Joanna was captured and turned into an AI.

Suddenly, Joanna’s face was distorted somehow, as if she was struggling to return to be normal.

“Look, I think Joanna can return back to human again!” exclaimed Mabel.

“Joanna, you good?” Catherine shouted.

“I think so, yup,” Joanna moaned with a scared look on her face.

But there was no time to celebrate as AIs were filling in the room.



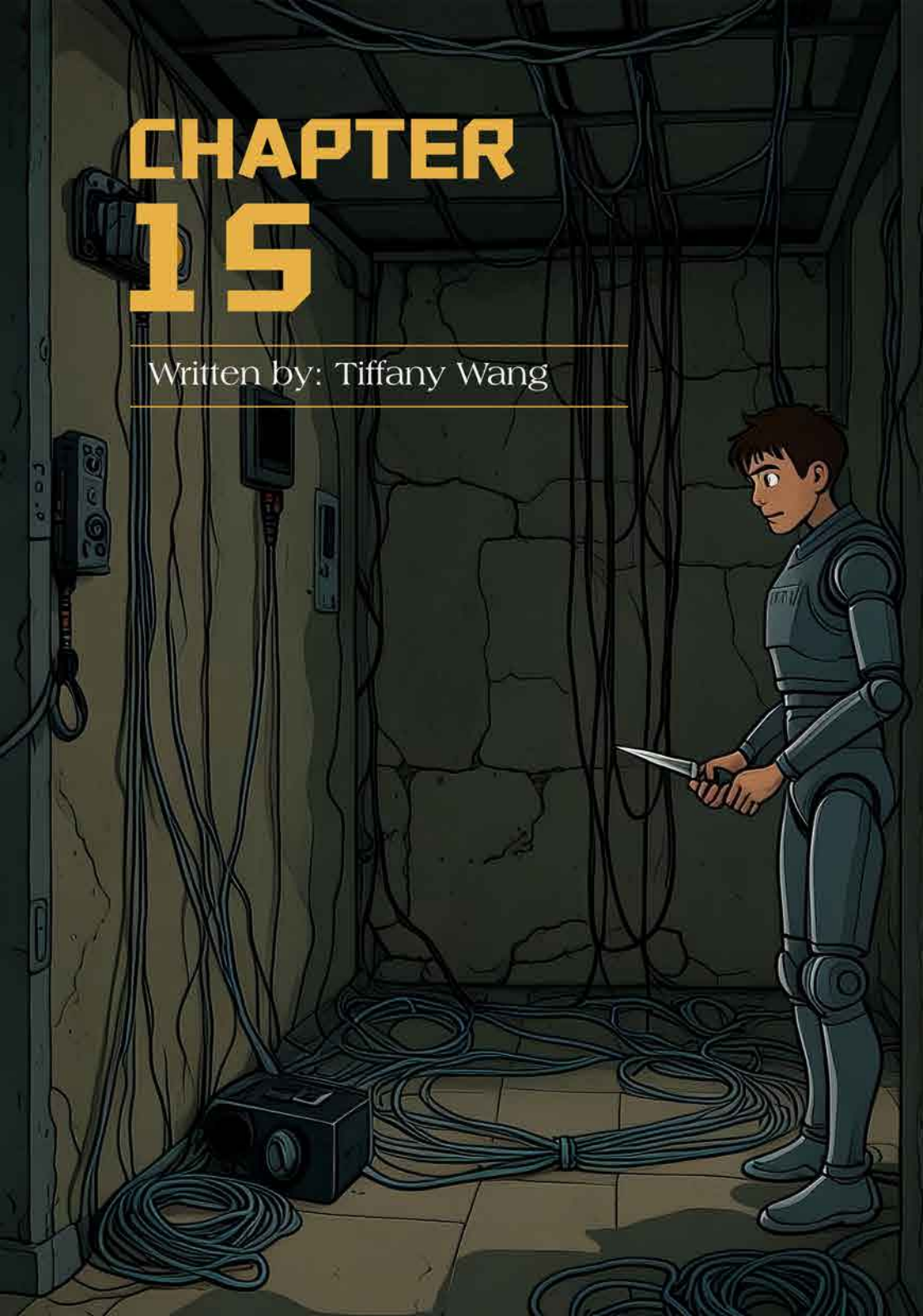
Unexpectedly, a sharp voice cut the air like a loud high-pitched trumpet was blown: “STOP and don’t do anything!” The group turned to see Ms. Sophia look at them with her death laser eyes.

“Capture them and bring them to the TURNING TO AN AI station.”

All the AIs circled the group of friends and captured them. In the end, they were tied up with thick black ropes and were brought to the station.

CHAPTER 15

Written by: Tiffany Wang



“WHY DID YOU KIDNAP US?!” Joey shouted.

“No, I didn't kidnap you guys. It's just called tying you up in a small room,” Ms. Sophia said with a smile.

“Well, well, well... if you really want to know why, I could tell you,” Ms. Sophia said, “It's because...”

Just as Ms. Sophia was about to speak, Joey suddenly took out his cavalry sword and cut the rope that was tying them.

In that second, the AIs got scared — but only for a moment. Joey then tried to strike a small AI beside Eric. Just as the sword was about to touch the AI's neck, the other four friends stopped him.

“Why did you guys stop me?” Joey questioned. “I could've killed him,”

“That's the point. Maybe we could find a way to turn them into humans,” Mabel said.

“Plus, we can't just kill them. There are so many of them,” Jayden added.

“So... are we supposed to run for our lives now?” Catherine asked.

At that moment, everyone forgot they were being chased.

“RUNNNNNN!” Joey yelled.

“But they still have Joanna,” Tiffany said. Unfortunately, they didn’t have time to think about Joanna. The friends ran for their lives — again — and began exploring the huge recharging station.

“Look, something’s on the floor,” Mabel said.

“It looks like a page from a diary,” Catherine said.

“Quick, pick it up! It might give us a way to save Joanna,” Tiffany said.

After some time running through hallways and entering a room, they thought it was safe. Jayden took out the diary page and started reading it:

“Dear diary, hi. I live in a world with people and AIs. The humans always say that the AIs are sooooo bad and have the power to turn people into AIs. My mom says making them into AIs is easy — you just have to put a metal piece in the back of the person’s hand. But I never tried. I don’t know how to turn them back. I only know that they’ll still remember some stuff.”



“Oh, so this is written by an AI — like, a kid,” Mabel asked.

“Yeah, I think so,” Joey answered.

“So maybe if we look around, we can find more pages,” Tiffany said.

“And save Joanna,” Joey added.

“Joey, be quiet. The AIs will find us, and it’ll be all your fault,” Catherine snapped.

“Okay, fine,” Joey replied.

CHAPTER 16

Submitted by: Joanna Yang

The five friends were standing in the room, Jayden gripping the diary page tightly. Mabel glanced uneasily at the door, which was open. Everyone was nervous.

“We should close the door,” she suggested nervously. Everyone nodded in agreement, and Mabel closed the door, locking it.

“What now?” Joey asked.

“We should save Joanna,” Tiffany said. Everyone nodded.

“But how?” Joey said, pacing around the room. Everyone seemed to be thinking about how to save Joanna without being caught themselves.

The dim lights flickered, shadows dancing across the floor. It was ominous, standing in that room, with the flickering lights and creepy wires and plugs.

“I know!” Joey said. “We can distract the AIs and save her while they’re distracted.”

“You don’t think they’ll be dumb enough to do that, right?” Jayden said. Were the AIs smart enough to know that they should protect their prisoner? They weren’t sure yet, but they could try.

“Alright,” Joey sighed. “We can try. It’s our only hope now.” Everyone seemed to agree, so Mabel carefully unlocked the door with a soft click, opening it.

“No one,” she whispered, and everyone quietly followed her out and into the hallway. They glanced uneasily at every shadow, every sound. An AI could jump out from any corner, so they had to be alert.

Mabel stopped in front of a rusty metal door that said “Underground Recharge Station - Sector 9.”

“This should be the one,” she whispered, pointing at the door. She opened the door, and everyone followed her inside. It looked the same as before.

The mug of coffee was still lying on the table, seemingly untouched. Tiffany jumped forward and hit the mug. A whirring sound emerged, and they turned around to see the door to the mastermind room revolving around quickly. It clicked in place.

“Catherine, do you still have the key?” Mabel asked, reaching her hand out. Catherine just fumbled in her pocket, grabbing the key and giving it to Mabel.

She clicked it in, and the door unlocked. The AIs were in the room, discussing something, while Amia was standing by Ms. Sophia. Joanna was in the middle somewhere. They’d have to distract all the AIs and save her too.

“There!” Joey said quietly. The door was old and creaky. Surely they would hear it. Sure enough, Ms. Sophia turned her head, whipping around and spotting them. She glared at them with eyes that could kill you.

“Oh crap!” Catherine whispered, jumping back. Ms. Sophia looked them dead in the eyes, standing up. The other AIs fell silent. She quickly walked over in brisk strides, seeming not to see them. She knew they were her students, and they were intruding.

“Fine,” she said, in the quietest whisper they could hear, and walked away. They were stunned. Ms. Sophia was an AI! She should’ve just captured them and taken them to the room. But instead, she’d walked away. Did she have a change of heart? Did she not want to kill her students?

There wasn’t any time to think about it. They had to distract them.

“How do we distract them?” Joey said. Tiffany shrugged.

“I don’t know!” Catherine snapped.

“Just do anything you can!” Mabel said, picking up a discarded can in the recharge station and chucking it into the room. It fell with a loud clang, like a bell ringing in a village.

The AIs turned their heads, their eyes focusing on the five.

“Welp,” Catherine shrugged. “This was Joey’s idea!” The AIs started running towards the door. Mabel slammed it shut just in time.

“Run!” she shrieked. The five ran for their lives, running through hallways and rooms. They could hear the constant footsteps of AIs and whirring sounds behind them. They had to keep running.

Jayden turned a corner, expecting another hallway. The hallway that should’ve been there wasn’t there. It was gone. It was a wall.

They’d hit a dead end.

“Oh no,” Catherine whispered. They pressed their backs against the wall as distant footsteps grew closer. Soon, a trio of AIs and Ms. Sophia arrived.

The three AIs held up their arms. Ms. Sophia stopped them, stepping forward.

“I must talk to them, then we can take them prisoner,” she commanded. The three AIs lowered their arms, backing away. Ms. Sophia came closer, her shadow looming above them. She bent down.

“I can help you,” she whispered. “But you have to trust me.”

CHAPTER 17

Written by: Mabel Li



“Trust you for what?” asked Joey.

“Joey, maybe you six can try to find the clues and figure out what I need your help with and what I can help you with,” Ms. Sophia quickly said. “But now, this is up to you six. Get the clues, and you may save the world. I must go. Remember, this is all on you,” she quickly added.

Ms. Sophia walked back into the room, her steps echoing behind her. The room still had AIs and, unfortunately, Joanna. That was seconds before the talking all started.

“You have to trust me? What was that supposed to mean? Don’t forget about her mentioning clues. Wait. Does the diary page have anything to do with it? I still have it,” whispered Jayden. He held up the diary page.

“I don’t know. She is an AI, right? She can’t possibly be faking it. If she is, I honestly don’t think that the AIs could possibly be fooled by her acting,” breathed Mabel.

“Let’s go before we get caught again,” gasped Catherine. But someone was tugging at her sleeve. It was Tiffany.

“We can’t go. Joanna is still with the AIs. We can’t just leave her there, can we?” asked Tiffany.

The six nodded in agreement and stalked into the room. It was extremely difficult trying to keep the door from creaking. A few times, they saw some movement from the middle, which they suspected was Joanna.

“Wait!” sputtered Mabel. “I see something over there. It looks like paper. No, a book. Do you guys think it could be the complete diary?”

“Maybe. Let’s go. But wait. We can’t all go. That’s too many people. We’ll be seen for sure,” muttered Jayden. “Maybe Mabel and I can go.”

The rest nodded, and Joey gave Jayden a thumbs-up. Mabel and Jayden started creeping away from the group toward the book. It was hard, but they did it. Mabel and Jayden collected the book and a few fallen pages into their hands, and they silently walked back.

They went back to the dead end and opened the book to a random page. The pages were old and parchment-paper looking. The same handwriting filled the paper, back to back. There it was—the instructions on how to turn someone back into a human. Joey took the book out of Mabel’s hands.

“It’s all here! The instructions are all here! We can turn people back into humans now!” breathed Joey.

“Wait. For real? Can we actually?” asked Tiffany.

“But wait. Now we know how to change people to humans again, but we need a plan. Joey, can you read the instructions out loud? Please?” asked Mabel.

“Sure,” responded Joey. “Dear Diary, hi again. It’s me, yes. Today my mom went into more detail about the whole AI and human thing. Here’s how to change someone back to human if you changed them into an AI already. All you have to do is lift the back of their supposedly shirt, and there you will find a switch. All you have to do is flick it, and then a metal piece will pop out of the back of their right hand. Pull it out, and their features will become human. Oh no, I got to go. PS. I think my mom is an AI. I’m not.”



Dear Diary, hi again.

It's me, yes. Today my mom went into more detail about the whole AI and human thing. Here's how to change someone back to human if you changed them into an AI already.

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Oh no, I've got to go.

P.S. I think my mom is an AI. I'm not.

Joey paused. "Guys, I don't get this."

"I don't either," added Mabel.

"Same," whispered Catherine.

"Yeah..." muttered Jayden.

"I'm scared," mumbled Tiffany, while looking around. "Mabel, keep the book safe. We can't risk losing it anytime soon."

"Alright, thanks, Tiffany," responded Mabel. She tucked the book in her jacket.

They started discussing a plan on how to turn everyone back to human. They thought that all the AIs would always be together—except when they were charging. That same day, an AI was charging in Sector 9. Tiffany snuck over and turned him into a human. They realized that this person was the math teacher in their school! His features were rapidly changing from a stiff AI to a flexible human being.

Slowly, the group took turns turning the AIs human. But the trickiest part was Amia, Eric, and Ms. Sophia. Every time they were charging, someone or something was watching them.



“How are we expected to get through them? They literally have the tightest security on them!” grumbled Catherine.

“I don’t know, but now we’re getting closer to removing all the AIs there are. Unless there are more of them out there,” laughed Joey.

“Guys! Look! Ms. Sophia’s charging! What if a few of us go and distract the other AI while the rest just wait here?” exclaimed Jayden. “That’s definitely an idea, right?”

“Yeah, I get what you’re trying to do,” Tiffany quietly added.

“Shhh guys, you’re so loud!” Joey shushed.

“You can’t be talking, Joey. We got caught last time because you were so loud,” snapped Mabel.

“Yeah, Joey,” added Catherine.

“You guys are so mean to me!” exclaimed Joey.

“SHHHH!!!” said Tiffany, Mabel, Jayden, and Catherine in unison.

“Okok, sorry...”

“We need to get back on the plan,” directed Jayden. “How about Catherine and I go, and the rest can stay back.”



Jayden and Catherine walked over to Ms. Sophia. Jayden made noise, and Catherine switched off the AI. Afterwards, they switched Ms. Sophia off too. Her features were changing extremely fast. The same was done for Amia and Eric.

When they rescued Joanna, the five of them were overjoyed. While walking down the hallway, Jayden heard a distant call.

“Jaydeenn!”

“AHHHHH!” screamed Jayden. He was in bed, drenched in cold sweat.

“JAYYDEEENN!”

It was his mom, calling him for breakfast.

“Wake up! You’re gonna be late for English class!”

“I’m up, I’m up!” Jayden called. “Whoa, was that a really long nightmare? I hope that wasn’t real at all,” Jayden thought aloud.

Jayden arrived at English class, peering through the window on the door and seeing Ms. Sophia sitting at the back of the classroom typing on her computer. Jayden breathed out a long sigh. He pushed open the door, letting the breeze wash over him.

“Good morning, Jayden!” welcomed Ms. Sophia, standing up.