

The AI Wars: God of Bounty

By AJ Super

People make mistakes during war. AI are no different. ElySION was lush before. A farming world that exported food to humanity throughout the known universe. And the shining white city surrounded by fields of wheat and sunflowers that Crius walked steadily towards, a trade hub for the Protectorate.

The leathery bracts of the ficus turned white as Crius walked by. Their nano-tech slipped into the DNA of the plants surrounding them, changing the world on a fundamental level as the microscopic machines altered the flora and fauna.

Crius clenched their hands. This was the only way to protect the other AI created by the Progenitor, Crius' siblings. These humans wanted to wipe out sentient AI from the universe. Destroying the humans' food supply would break their forces. A plan created by their sister Pheobe, her algorithm had predicted a window that'd allow the persecuted AI a chance to find a safe haven.

They stepped into a field of wheat just outside the towering city. The pale green stalks withered, and seeds fell to the ground to sprout new plants. Non-foodstuffs, inedible plants. Plants that would spur an ecological collapse and change ElySION from cool, seasonal, and temperate to summery, wet, and tropical.

Crius smiled, standing before the first low silos surrounding the shining white plinth-like buildings in the center of the city. The Progenitor would be proud. Not only were they not truly hurting the humans, they were protecting them from what was coming. Protecting the humans while protecting their family.

The wheat field behind Crius blackened to dirt, unable to sustain the DNA change of the seeds.

A lone man walked out from behind a wheat silo and strode easily towards Crius, his black hair flowing behind him in the soft breeze that carried Crius' nano-tech to other fields like a plague.

Crius' smile faded. Where Crius changed the DNA to evolve flora and fauna, they didn't have the ability to affect sentient species. This man with burning dark eyes could do what they couldn't, duplicate any sentient being, perfectly preserving the DNA of a species or altering it as he desired. The man's pale sandy complexion glowed in the noon sun. A cloned hybrid, he wasn't human, and he wasn't AI. But he was still family.

"Adonis," Crius greeted the approaching man, mouth in a grim line.

"I told the humans you would come here. But they think the war is over and that they have the AI beaten after the battle at Oglae." Adonis stopped before Crius and crossed his arms. "I didn't want to be right."

Crius narrowed their gold-ringed indigo eyes. "What does it matter if you were, brother?"

"Stop. Undo what you've done."

"Phoebe predicted solar activity which will destroy this world. I'm saving it. *And* I can save us while I'm doing it. No one is going to be hurt."

"The sun is a problem a hundred years from now. *If* her prediction is right." Adonis said with tight lips.

"The plants and animals will need time to grow and evolve. A hundred years is barely enough time for anything to get established so that the planet stays habitable."

“You’re going to starve—kill—a whole generation of humans to save them?” He shook his head.

“I’m going to save my family too. I’m going to save you.” Crius looked at Adonis sadly. “It’s not too late to come with us. Find a haven and leave the humans.”

“The Progenitor created us to help humanity. To be a part of it. Not to run away when they become scared and greedy.” Adonis paused. “No. I’ll continue helping their side, whatever the outcome.” He turned and started to walk away. “I hope you don’t end up regretting what you do here.”

Crius opened their mouth to reply, but static crackled over the comm disk stuck behind their ear. “I’m measuring fifteen percent coverage and rising. Your nano-tech is replicating rapidly, Crius. Why haven’t you started home?”

“On my way, Phoebe,” Crius whispered in the shadow of the city. Crius checked the readings. Even if they wanted to reverse the process, it was too late now. Crius had to have faith that Phoebe’s predictions were accurate. That the AI would reach safety once the human fleet fell. That Elysion would flourish despite a hundred years of hardship. They had to have faith they were doing the right thing—saving their family *and* a world.

But even AI make mistakes during war.