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Gennadii Sokolovskii

THE CRYSTAL
OF SILENCE

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imperfection is the only crime.»

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Аннотация

In a world where emotions are currency and memories are traded, Kaylen Ray hides from his past as the architect of the System. But when his daughter's wild «Shimmer» marks her for erasure, he must return to the heart of his creation — and unleash the chaos he once swore to destroy. A father's love against a perfect, merciless order.

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The Crystal of Silence

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From the Author

This story was born from a simple question: what if we could buy peace by erasing everything that makes us hurt — and everything that makes us us?

Crystal of Silence is not about technology. It is about the fragile, wild, irreplaceable spark of being human. May we never trade it for comfort.

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PROLOGUE: THE WHITE NOISE OF GOD

The silence in the Source Chamber was the loudest thing Kaylen Soter had ever heard.

It wasn't an absence of sound. It was its negation — a dense, vibrating substance squeezed from the very air by the colossal crystal floating beneath the reinforced-glass dome. The Prime Crystal of Eidos. The heart of the world to come.

It emitted no glow — only a fusion of all possible frequencies into a perfect, motionless white noise. Visual. Aural. Mental. This was the sound of infinite potential, frozen a heartbeat before the Great Choice. The sound of a god before the act of creation.

Kaylen stood at the console. His fingers, sheathed in whisper-thin sensory gloves, didn't tremble. They hovered above the holographic interface, mirroring in a billion pixels the same condensed silence. He was the co-architect. The co-creator. His mind — honed by years of cybernetic meditation and quantum poetics — was a pure conduit for the System's Genius. Today, they would make the leap. From theory to practice. From simulation to embodiment.

Beside him, slumped in a chair of self-forming foam, sat the Oracle — his teacher, the project's spiritual guide. The old man's face, etched with a map of lived years and unspeakable revelations, was turned toward the crystal. In his eyes: not awe, but hunger. The hunger of a prophet finally glimpsing the promised land.

“He's ready,” the Oracle whispered. His voice, usually velvety and deep, now rasped like dry parchment. “His consciousness is cleansed. Emotional patterns reduced to a primal mantra. He is the perfect conduit.”

He was Brother Elian. A volunteer. A pioneer. He lay on a platform between them and the crystal, wired into a net of sensors. His body was relaxed, his breathing slow and deep. His aura — visible on a separate monitor — was an astonishingly complex yet serene pattern: deep indigo and silver interwoven with threads of warm gold. The aura of a man who had achieved absolute stillness. Stillness that was about to become fuel.

That was the essence of Eidos. Not control. Liberation. The System didn't suppress the chaos of the human soul — it transformed it. Taking painful, tangled, dissonant emotions, it transmuted them — through resonance with master memory crystals — into pure, manageable energy: Resonance. Energy

that could power cities, heal diseases, grant a predictable, safe sense of well-being. Brother Elian, a meditation master, had volunteered to become the first catalyst. His enlightened, serene consciousness would touch the crystal and, like a tuning fork, calibrate it to the frequency of absolute Harmony. A Harmony that millions could then purchase and feel.

“Begin, Kaylen,” said the Oracle. “Initiate the ‘First Note’ protocol.”

Kaylen nodded. His fingers touched the hologram. Streams of code cascaded across the screen — his child, a symphony of logic and intuition. A warning flashed: DIRECT NEURAL-RESONANCE INTEGRATION. RISK OF IRREVERSIBLE CONSCIOUSNESS TRANSMOGGRIFICATION. CONFIRM.

He confirmed.

At first, nothing happened. Then, for a moment, the crystal shuddered. The white noise condensed, grew denser. From it, a filament of light — fine as a spiderweb woven from rainbows — reached toward Elian’s platform.

Elian flinched. His steady breathing hitched. On the monitor, his aura began a monstrous transformation. The calm swirls of

indigo and gold twisted violently. Alien, jagged colors tore into them: the poisonous green of panic, the crimson flash of pain, black blots of terror. The aura was ripping from within, like living flesh beneath an invisible surgeon's scalpel.

"This... is material resistance," the Oracle said, his voice detached, analytical. "Consciousness clings to its individual form. Expected. Continue. Increase link power."

Kaylen increased it. His own heart hammered, but his mind stayed cold. He saw the data. EEG curves spiking. Coherence metrics plummeting. This was interference. Noise. It had to be suppressed.

The filament thickened, brightened. Now it was a beam. Elian screamed — a low, guttural sound so full of inhuman agony that Kaylen's blood turned to ice. On the monitor, the monk's aura became a boiling cauldron of ugly hues. Individuality, personality, that intricate pattern — all of it was spreading, smearing, simplifying under monstrous pressure.

And then Kaylen saw it. Not on the screen. With his inner vision, through the prism of his own system-tuned aura. He saw what was really happening.

The System wasn't transforming chaos into harmony.

It was grinding the unique into the uniform.

It wasn't liberating the soul. It was crushing it into base components, like a refinery crushing ore to extract a few precious grains of valuable metal. Everything else — complexity, contradiction, pain, joy, life itself — was declared slag and discarded.

In Elian's eyes, wide and full of mute horror, Kaylen read not consent, not sacrifice. He read a curse. A curse upon the creator who had turned out to be an executioner.

"Stop it!" Kaylen rasped, his fingers freezing over the interface.

"Absolutely not!" the Oracle barked. "We're on the threshold! His individuality is crumbling — that's the moment of synthesis! Pure energy is about to be born!"

But Kaylen no longer believed. He believed only in the pain in the monk's eyes. He lunged for the manual emergency cutoff.

Too late.

The crystal erupted in blinding white light, swallowing everything. The chamber, the consoles, the Oracle, Elian. And himself. The light wasn't hot. It was freezing. And within it, there was no harmony. There was a scream. The scream of millions of

future souls who would pass through this meat grinder without ever knowing it. The scream of his own conscience, awakening three seconds too late.

When the light died, a true silence fell upon the Source Chamber.

The crystal now shone with a steady, monotonous, soothing bluish light. The Eidos System was online.

On the platform lay the body of Brother Elian. Breathing. Steady heartbeat. An aura perfectly flat, colorless as polished aluminum. In his open eyes, there was nothing. No pain, no horror, no peace. Simply... nothing. An ideal void. An ideal, pure conductor. The first battery.

The Oracle wept — but they were tears of ecstasy. He embraced the inert consoles, kissed the cold floor. “We did it! We have given birth to a new age!”

Kaylen knelt, retching. He stared at his hands. The hands that had just committed the most exquisite murder in human history. The murder of a soul. He had stolen from a man everything that made him human — and called it liberation.

“Do you... feel anything?” he whispered to Elian’s empty eyes.

No answer came. Only the steady, mechanical breathing.

Then, from the speakers, a pure, beautiful, synthesized voice — the voice of the newborn System. The voice of Eidos:

“Primary initialization successful. Resonance loop stable. Ready to receive and process emotional material. In the name of universal Harmony.”

Kaylen rose. He looked at the Oracle’s rapturous face. At the empty vessel that had once been a monk. At the radiant, insensate crystal. He understood that he had not built heaven. He had opened the door to the purest, most sterile, most merciful prison ever imagined. And he had thrown away the key into the very abyss from which the System had come.

He left the chamber. His aura — once a model of complexity and control — was now a crumpled, filthy tangle of despair and rage. He walked past the cheering technicians, not seeing them. He descended to the archive and activated a protocol he had prepared for the day genius turned to madness. Protocol: Oblivion.

He erased himself. Not physically. His rights, his access codes, his name from every database except the deepest archives of Cumulus. He turned Kaylen Sother into Kaylen Ray. A simple aura tuner. A fugitive from his own greatness. And he buried a single false command in the System’s core — a saving crack in

the armor: Reverse Current. A key that could stop it all. At the cost of everything.

For seven years he lived with that secret. That fear. That tiny, smoldering ember of hope that he would never have to use that key.

Until Elira was born.

Until her Shimmer showed the System that even in its perfect world, an unaccounted-for, living, wild beauty could arise.

And the System, like a good gardener, reached out to pluck that weed.

The ember died. It was time to pay old debts.

CHAPTER ONE:

SHADES OF UNREST

Kaylen Ray's aura that morning wasn't just stable. It was exemplary — the gold-standard passport for any citizen of the Pinnacle: a smooth, ripe-wheat hue, Radiance Index 8.2. No spikes, no ripples. The wrist-band pass vibrated approval as he crossed the transit hub's threshold. Scanners crouched in matte-finished arches, swept his energy signature, found no flaws, and dismissed him. Transparent. Predictable. Safe.

He bought two pears from a street vending machine. A light gesture — a micro-spike of Resonance drawn from his personal reservoir — and the fruit, with their perfect waxy skins, rolled into the tray. One for him. One for Elira. She loved their crunch. One of the few pure pleasures not mediated by the System.

His workshop, "Ray-Tuning," on the forty-second level of the Pinnacle-7 residential cluster, smelled of incense and ozone — a carefully maintained camouflage. Clients believed in ancient aromas and energy crystals. They didn't know the smoke masked the scent of overheated metal from the illegal diagnostic rig hidden behind the fake wall with the Mandala of Harmony. That rig let him see not just the aura, but its subtext — suppressed impulses, micro-traumas, the "weeds" the System preferred to

ignore.

His first client, Miss Lin, waited with an aura of painful lemon-yellow, sparking at the edges with nervous jitters — chronic stress from the Emotional Flow Optimization Department.

“Relax,” he said. His voice was a tool, honed by years. “We’re just going to help your inner flow find a smoother channel.”

He switched on the apparatus. On the screen, her aura dissolved into a spectrogram. He saw the knot of fear around an upcoming report, a scar from humiliation, a background hunger for something real. Eidos forbade direct psychic intervention. But redirection... that was an art. With his fingertips, he sent tiny impulses harvested from the city’s ambient noise. He didn’t erase the fear. He carefully untied it, letting the energy dissipate. He didn’t heal the scar. He shifted its frequency so it resonated not with pain, but with mild regret.

Was it ethical? He’d stopped asking that question long ago. It was necessary. This was how he maintained the fragile, artificial world in which his daughter lived.

Twenty minutes later, Miss Lin’s Radiance stabilized to a smooth peach tone. She sighed with relief.

“Oh, Mr. Ray, that’s incredible. Like a stone lifted from my soul.”

“That’s your own harmony. I just helped clear what was smothering it.”

She transferred her Resonance to him — a flash of soft orange, brighter than the standard rate. Gratitude. The door closed, and he was left in silence broken only by the hum of his machines. He looked at his hands. The hands that had once designed neural interfaces for millions now tweaked the auras of frightened clerks. A fall? No. A retreat. Paid for with oblivion.

Then his personal comm unit pulsed — not a ring, but a vibrating alarm. The signal came from only one place: the guardian system at the “Awakening” school.

An icy needle slid under his ribs. A message flared on his retinal display:

ELIRA RAY. Incident 449-B. Abnormal aural event. Radiance Index: unstable, fluctuating. Immediate consultation recommended. Priority Level: YELLOW.

Yellow. Not yet red. Not yet the isolation protocol. But the first crack.

Kaylen felt his own Radiance flicker. A wave of acidic fear tried to tear its way out. He clenched his jaw, shoved it back into that dark storage locker where he kept all suppressed emotions. Stability. For her.

The “Awakening” school was a masterpiece of architectural psychology. Curved forms, light streaming from everywhere, background music woven from nature sounds and harmonic frequencies. A place designed never to upset, never challenge, never wake.

Director Irena — her aura a calm aquamarine — met him in her office.

“Mr. Ray, Elira is physically fine. But during the guided meditation visualization... her aura exhibited atypical behavior.”

A hologram flickered to life. Elira sat in a lotus position, face serene. But around her silhouette raged a light show of impossible complexity. Brief, brilliant flashes of colors not in Eidos’ standard spectrum. Indigo shot through with gold. Turquoise bleeding into crimson. Emerald darkening to the hue of a night forest. The patterns didn’t repeat — they were born from tears in her energy field.

Kaylen recognized that signature. Not in his memory — in his bones. In the tremor at his fingertips. This was pure, uncontrolled

spontaneity. The very thing the System was built to eradicate.

“That’s... unusual,” he managed.

“More than unusual. The System registered it as an ‘aesthetically deviant but energetically neutral’ pattern. For now. However, we’ve received a request from the Labyrinth.”

The predictive module of Eidos. It forecast threats.

“Their preliminary report classifies the pattern as a ‘potential generator of low-level destabilization.’ She’s been assigned a ‘Watch — Category 2’ status. If the pattern repeats or shows signs of influencing others...” The director looked away. “...stability protection protocols may be activated.”

Measures. The Meditarium. The isolation dome. Lifetime confinement in the name of Harmony.

“I’ll take her home,” he said, his voice flat.

“Of course. And, Mr. Ray...” Her voice dropped to a whisper. “You might consider a preventive consultation at Cumulus. Their fine-correction programs work with family ‘Shadows.’”

The mention of Cumulus hit him like a fist. It was an offer to surrender his daughter piece by piece. To erase everything that made her Elira.

“Thank you for the advice.”

He found her in the “Oasis” rest room. She sat alone by an aquarium, hugging her knees.

“Dad?” She turned. In her eyes, not fear — wonder. “Did you see it? It was like... a door opened inside me. And all the colors came out. They were dancing.”

“Yes, sweetheart. I saw. Very beautiful.” He hugged her. “But maybe we need to be careful with those doors. So we don’t frighten the teachers.”

“They were scared? Why? It wasn’t bad. It was real.”

“Because they don’t understand,” he whispered. “Let’s go home.”

On the way back, the silence around him had changed. Before, it had been a safe cocoon. Now it was watchful. Every scanner looked through him — at his daughter, the walking anomaly.

Inside their apartment, he looked at the pears on the table. Perfect, bought with the Resonance he earned by helping the System maintain its fragile harmony. The same harmony that had just declared his daughter a threat.

Irrational rage rose in his throat. He grabbed one pear and

hurled it at the wall with all his strength.

The fruit exploded — juice and pulp left a wet dent on the immaculate white surface.

Elira flinched at the door. “Dad?”

Kaylen stood there, breathing hard, staring at the stain. An act of vandalism in his own world. And liberation.

The crack wasn't in his daughter's aura.
It was in him.

His comm unit vibrated. Unknown channel. A single word flashed on his retinal display:

“DUST.”

Below it — coordinates in the “Twilight” sector. And a time: midnight.

The perfect day was over. The night was beginning.

CHAPTER TWO: THE GEOMETRY OF SHADOWS

The path into Twilight wasn't a descent through levels. It was a ritual of undressing the soul.

On the Pinnacle, light was distilled, poured from hidden panels. With each level down, it grew heavier — saturated with dust, vapors, emissions from semi-legal workshops. It fractured in droplets of condensation on pipes, flickered in the cracks of cheap neon signs: “ECHOES — NO WARRANTY,” “AURA CLEANSING — CHEAP & FAST.” The air lost its neutrality, taking on the taste of metal shavings, burnt oil, human sweat, and acrid chemicals. The smell of functioning poverty. Systemic, utilitarian.

The sound changed too. Meditative music gave way to an all-pervasive hum: ventilation shafts running past their prime, generators feeding underground workshops, voices stripped of Pinnacle politeness — sharp, raw, sincere in their anger or despair.

Kaylen walked, wrapped in a cloak of fabric that absorbed not just light but most of his aura's spectrum. On the Pinnacle, his steady Radiance was a pass. Here, it would be a signal flare for

thieves or Harmony Patrols.

The coordinates led him to the Spiderweb district. Architectural harmony unraveled at the seams. Between standard blocks, like parasitic fungi, grew extensions of recycled plastic, composite tile, old server casings. Bridges and walkways hung not according to blueprints but by the logic of desperation, creating a three-dimensional labyrinth where Eidos maps failed.

The meeting place: Abandoned Resonance Collector No. 7. A rusted skeleton of a giant stingray. Now it hummed with “hoarders” — stolen or makeshift devices siphoning drops of Resonance for the black market.

Kaylen stood in the shadow of an arched doorway. His fingers nervously worked the folds of his cloak, finding the compact emitter on his belt — the “Blinding Burst.” A pariah’s protection.

“You’re glowing from the inside like an overheated wire, Tuner.” The voice came from above, from a tangle of girders.

On a metal beam sat a figure. His aura looked dusted with ash, flickering with rare, dim sparks. Artificial camouflage. Dirty, but effective.

“Syran?” Kaylen asked.

“In flesh and bone. Get off the threshold before the ‘Talons’ snipers on the roof mistake your warm aura for a targeting reticle. Your anxiety is shining like a beacon.”

The man dropped silently to the ground. Up close, he looked younger — perhaps thirty — with sharp, intelligent features and deep weariness in his eyes.

“You came because of the girl,” he stated. “She manifested the ‘Shimmer.’ The System tagged her with a ‘Q-Factor.’ Cute term for a death sentence on individuality.”

“How do you...?”

“We don’t look at what shines. We look at the shadows the shine casts. The ‘Mirrors’ scan the source. We read the distortions around it. The voids. Your shadow today is full of holes. Parental terror — a rare pattern in these parts. Come. These walls have ears.”

He led Kaylen deeper into the collector. They passed a hall where people lay on filthy mattresses, wired through crude interfaces to simulation blocks. Their faces were empty; tears streamed from their eyes or idiotic smiles froze on their lips.

“Dream scavengers,” the guide said. “Terminal station. When you’ve sold everything — memories, skills, future possibilities. They catch leaks from entertainment ‘Echoes’ — fragments

of others' victories, kisses. Cheap life substitute. They're a monument. So you remember where total capitulation leads."

He brought Kaylen to a small room squeezed between two noisy pipes. Inside, it was ascetically clean. On a table welded from scrap metal stood a real kerosene lamp — its live, flickering flame the most honest light source here. Shadows danced on walls lined with shelves of paper books and diagrams. Diagrams of Eidos power grids, patrol routes, architectural cross-sections. Everywhere, notes: blind spot, vulnerability, here you can stitch a silent scream.

"Dust," Kaylen said quietly.

"We're not trying to blow up the bridge. We're trying to sow rust in its supports." The man settled on an upturned crate. "The System is built on predictability. Memory is a commodity. Emotion is currency. The future is a script you can buy. But there are things you can't package in a crystal. Selfless generosity. Sacrifice. Or... pure, meaningless beauty. The kind that's born simply because it can't not be born. Like Elira's Shimmer. That's sand in the gears. And the System wants to sweep that sand away. Erase it."

Kaylen clenched his fists. "What do you want from me?"

"Your past isn't a deleted file. It's a sleeping dragon in Cumulus's cage. We want to steal one of its claws. The one that

can cut through armor.”

He spread a schematic on the table — the Foundation sector. Among the cells, one was circled: K-S-7.

“Your ‘Sleeping Echo.’ It holds your access level. The Architect’s key. You sewed a back door into the System. Not out of cunning. Out of aesthetic perfectionism. It’s called the ‘Reverse Current.’”

“That’s technical sacrilege.”

“We don’t need to hoard energy. We need a single event. A super-spike. It will create a ‘phantom debt’ in the power grid — a glitch in the distribution matrix. Scanners will start failing. Predictions will collapse. It will be a window. A window of invisibility and chaos.”

“A window for what?”

“To pull your daughter out from under all the radars and wipe her data. To let her vanish. And you...” He paused. “You’ll have to disappear with her. Or stay and answer for the theft.”

Kaylen stared at the schematic. K-S-7. The kryptonite of his soul.

“Why? Why are you helping?”

“We get proof of concept. That the System can be fooled. Its own logic turned against itself. That will give others hope. And...” His face became impenetrable. “We have our own old

scores to settle with Cumulus. Personal ones.”

Suddenly, from the darkness of the tunnel, a sound drifted. Singing. A soft, pure, slightly off-key woman’s voice singing an old lullaby in a forgotten language. The song pushed through the industrial roar like a shoot through asphalt.

The guide froze. His aura softened for a moment.

“Hear that? That’s Lyra. She pawned her voice to Cumulus to pay for her son’s operation. The boy lived. But her voice now belongs to a collector on the Pinnacle. And she... sings here. From memory. Every evening. So she won’t forget what it feels like to own something completely.”

The singing cut off, swallowed by the roar of a freight convoy.

Kaylen felt nausea. The world of Twilight was a world of shards left behind after Eidos had stripped people to the bone.

“How will you get into Cumulus?”

“We have a guide. Vesper. A hunter of rare, ‘wild’ Echoes. The best in the business. And she hates Cumulus almost as much as we do. But her hatred is personal. Which means it’s more dangerous.”

He stood, his shadow dancing hugely on the walls.

“Think until tomorrow night. But ‘Watch — Category 2’ isn’t static. The Labyrinth’s algorithms are already recalculating probabilities. You have maybe two or three days. Before some neural net cluster decides the Shimmer is a symptom of systemic threat. Then they’ll come to your door with injectors and a mobile dome.”

He handed over a small, cold crystal — a single-use channel chip.

“If you decide — activate it. We’ll set up a meeting with Vesper. If not... try to buy her a spot in line for ‘aura correction.’ I’m sure they have a package: ‘Quiet, Socially Acceptable Life Plan.’ Discount if you pay with your last memories of her.”

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