

Ito Murikama rushes into a swanky restaurant in downtown Tokyo. He pushes his way through the crowds on the dance floor and several waiters and waitresses. Disco music which sounds like a track from Saturday Night Fever recorded in Japanese blasts over the restaurant's loudspeakers.

Ito looks around the dark, smoke-filled room, but does not see his family.

"Ito...over here! Ito...in the back by the mirrored wall", Ito's mother shouts over the blaring music.

Between the smoke, flashing colored lights, and the white spots created by the disco ball, Ito can hardly see his family seated at the rear of the room.

Ito rushes to take a seat at their table.

"We were beginning to think you weren't coming. We know how busy you are with the robot and all", Ito's father, Ken, states.

"What's all this hoopla about a robot?", Ito's uncle, Jiro, asks.

Ito's girlfriend and bride to be, Akira, chimes in.

"Didn't you hear ? Don't you know?", Akira states loudly.

"No," Jiro tries to talk as he eats.

"Ito designed a robot that can enter a nuclear reactor that is in the middle of a core meltdown. It can seal the core without any

human intervention. It could prevent another Fukushima from happening.”

“I had no idea you had built something like that,” Ito’s Aunt, Masao, replies.

“It’s nothing really. I developed it in my robotics class. Originally, it was going to be used to rescue animals trapped in a fire, but after Fukushima I altered it to go in and seal a damaged nuclear reactor core,” Ito replies excitedly.

“What does it look like and how does it work?” Ito’s Uncle states with his mouth full of peppered steak.

Ito reaches into his shirt pocket, removes his smart phone, and locates a photo. He rotates the phone around to show his Uncle.

“It resembles ASIMO –that robot that Honda built a few years back,” Ito’s father states.

“Yes...somewhat similar. I call it MACSPA for Meltdown and China Syndrome Prevention Automaton. I couldn’t think of an easier to remember acronym right now. When they the company I’m dealing with buys the design, they may call it something else. For now, I nicknamed it MAC for short,” Ito concludes.

“Maybe you can call it BIG MAC and have it make me a hamburger,” Ito’s future father-in-law shouts out over the disco

tune playing in the background. He has obviously had a little too much Saki.

Everyone at the table laughs.

“The robot can detect a nuclear leak before even the plant’s computers can determine if there is a problem. The robot can enter a compromised core where no human can safely go and work to seal it,” Ito continues.

Akira takes a drink from her champagne glass.

“Once the contract goes through and this American company... what’s their name Ito?

“Dallas Nuclear,” Ito replies.

“As soon as the contract goes through and they buy Ito’s design for MAC, we’ll have enough money to get married.”

“Ito you haven’t eaten anything. Waiter...bring my son a dinner,” Ito’s Mother states.

Just then, Ito’s smart phone begins to ring.

“Hold on I must get it this. It’s Dallas Nuclear,” Ito states as he stands up to walk to a quiet part of the restaurant.

“Make it short, Ito because you have to eat,” Akira shouts out over the excessive volume of the music.

Ito walks into a quiet area by the restaurant’s restrooms.

“Yes, this is Ito Murikama speaking.

“Mr. Murikama this is J.T. Wainsworth. I am the Head of Special Research at Dallas Nuclear. Please to make your acquaintance. I wish I had better news to tell you Mr. Murikama, but after more intensive examination of your robot designs...I think you refer to it as MAC...”

“Yes,” Ito states barely able to speak he is so nervous.

“Well, after the Board of Directors took a closer look at the design they have...how should I put it...changed their mind on the project, I’m afraid, “ J.T. states coldly.

“Changed their mind ? How so ?”

“The Board has decided to go with a different design from another developer,” J.T replies emotionless.

“But why?! Ito exclaims disappointment in his voice.

“Don’t get Dallas Nuclear wrong, Mr. Murikama. We think your robot design is very innovative and many on the Board of New Research feel your device was the superior one of all the concepts that were submitted,” J.T. continues.

“Then why won’t they give me the contract” Ito shoots back.

“One thing you’ll learn in this business Mr. Murikama is that it’s not always about innovation. The cost of the device is what’s

most important. The Research Board feels that your robot though better will cost too much to produce,” J.T. finally blurts out.

A sound of rustling papers is heard over Ito’s tinny phone speaker.

“Joel Finner who is our Director of Finance ran the numbers and estimates each MAC will cost around 2.5 million dollars. The Board feels that figure is too high for a robot that may be expendable,” J.T. states.

“Expendable?! I designed MAC to enter the reactor, seal the core, and return out!” Ito exclaims.

“I know you did, but the Board can’t be sure about the robot not sustaining significant damage or obliteration in the core. In addition, even if your robot should be able to exit the core no one is going to want to approach it. The robot will be extremely radioactive and would mostly be so for years after that level of exposure. Most likely, the unit would have to be destroyed anyway,” J.T. concludes.

“The robot design the Board chose is significantly less expensive... around \$300,000 for each unit. It’s compact, has two tank-like treads, and runs on batteries. Once its work is done in the core, the drivers will leave the unit in there. No retrieval,” J.T. adds.

“And if you don’t mind my asking Mr. Wainsworth who is the person who submitted the winning design ?” Ito inquires warily.

“Says here a Mr. Yoshiro Okada.” J.T. replies.

“I knew it!” Ito bursts out. Everyone in the restaurant looks at him.

“You know him ?” J.T, responds.

“Yes I know him all right. I was in a few classes with him at the Osaka Robotics Institute. He was always winning all the awards and the robot competitions,” Ito states angrily.

“It’s like I said Mr. Murikama we really like your design. We like it and we think it’s a better designed automaton than Mr. Okada’s, but like I explained the bottom line is what matters most to the Board.”

After a short pause.

“You could try submitting the design to another nuclear power company and maybe they will –”

“No I don’t think so, Mr. Wainsworth. Right now, I’m going to sit down and eat my dinner!” Ito closes the call as J.T. continues to talk.

Ito walks back to the table where his family and Akira is. He appears dejected.

Akira jumps out of her seat.

“Ito what’s wrong ? What was that about ?” Akira states concerned.

Ito does not speak, but looks down.

“Was it about the contract ?” Ito’s mother adds.

“It has something to do with the contract, doesn’t it ? Akira asks softly.

“The call was from Dallas Nuclear’s Head of Robotics Research and Development. They’re not going to grant me the contract,” Ito finally blurts out.

“WHAT?! Ito’s mother shouts out and stands up throwing her napkin on the table.

“But they said you were a shoe-in for the deal,” Ito’s father tries to talk while he’s eating peppered steak.

“What happened ?” Akira asks.

“They said they prefer my design over the one that was chosen, but the cost to produce the MAC robot is too prohibitive,” Ito reveals.

Ito’s Uncle hold his hand cupped to his ear.

“What did he say ? I can’t hear anything over the Bee Gees song,” Ito’s Uncle cuts in.

“They said the robot is too expensive,” Akira shouts.

“But, what about our wedding ? Without the advance from the contract we can’t pay the caterers...and the photographer,” Akira states concerned.

Ito looks down again.

“I’m sorry, Akira...truly I am, but we’re going to have to postpone wedding. Mr. Wainsworth at Dallas Nuclear did say they won’t hold any rights on MAC’s design, so I can take the concept to another company. Maybe I can—”

Akira cuts him off.

“I can’t wait that long. I’ve already waited two years while you finished working on that stupid tin can”! Akira shouts.

“Akira don’t say that. MAC was my life’s work. He could save this country from another Fukushima or possibly a reactor meltdown even worse,” Ito demands.

“I don’t care about nuclear meltdowns! You wasted years working on that junk pile. You would have been better off developing a robot that could deliver food for your Uncle’s take-out place,” Akira states.

Akira grabs her coat and the bags of gifts.

“Where are you going?” Ito asks.

“I’m leaving you,” Akira states. “I’ve had enough!”

Ito runs after her.

Staying Alive plays loudly in the background sung in Japanese.

“What’s going on now?” Jiro, Ito’s uncle, says to Ito’s mother.

“Akira is leaving him,” Ito’s mother states.

“Ohhh,” Jiro says as he gobbles down a bowl of noodles.

Ito grabs Akira by the arm and turns her around.

“Akira, please don’t do this. We’ll get the money somehow,” Ito adds.

“By the time you sell that robot design, I’ll be an old maid,” Akira states.

“No...it’s time I thought about myself for once,” Akira continues.

Ito is speechless.

“I need some time,” she concedes.

Ito still says nothing.

“If I change my mind, I’ll call you,” Akira concludes.

She storms out of the restaurant just as the waiters and waitresses begin to serve the desert.

“C’mon Ito. Don’t worry. Give her some time...she’ll come around. You said Mr. Wainsworth told you that some other facility may purchase your design right ?” Ito’s mother insists.

“Yes. He did,” Ito replies.

“Well, what are you worried about ? I’ll bet the first place you show your concept of MAC to, you’ll get another contract and Akira will come running back,” Ito’s mother continues excitedly.

“But what do I do for money ? If I had won the contract, I was

going to work for Dallas Nuclear testing MAC in their simulator. I was planning to get the contract advance plus salary,” Ito states dejectedly.

Uncle Jiro waves his arms as he eats spoonfuls of ice cream.

“No worries. I have a job for you,” Jiro states smiling.

“I want an order of peppered steak with noodles on the side. I want a large order of rice. I want grilled chicken...not cooked too much. Last time I was here the chicken was too dry,” Masumi Rimura states. He is one of Uncle Jiro’s long-time customers.

Ito scribbles the order on a pad. He appears disgusted.

“My wife wants grilled chicken also with steamed vegetables,” Masumi continues.

“Anything to drink”? Ito asks.

“Just ice water for us both,” Masumi states.

“Be right out with it,” Ito replies as he heads towards the kitchen.

As Ito goes into the kitchen, his smartphone alerts him with a text message. Ito knows he shouldn’t be looking at his phone while at work, but he is anxiously awaiting news from a few other nuclear facilities in the United States he emailed his designs for MAC to.

Ito glances at the message which reads simply: There is a fire.

Awaiting your orders.

Ito's face is completely perplexed. Who sent this text ? Maybe its an ad for something.

Ito shrugs, stuffs the phone into his pocket, and rushes into the kitchen.

Several miles away Hiroshi Nakamura is having some fresh brewed coffee while he flips through a binder of reports at the Osaka Nuclear Facility. His job used to be easier, even cushy if one could possibly refer to a job at a nuclear reactor like that, but ever since the embarrassing incident at Fukushima, his job has become a daily nightmare of tests, checks, rechecks, and reading through nearly endless status reports.

Hiroshi runs his finger along a line of text which shows cooling water levels at the four main reactors at the Osaka plant. The levels of the cooling water is critical to the safe functioning of a major nuclear power plant. It was problems with water levels that caused the meltdowns at Fukushima and Three Mile Island.

Hiroshi appears concerned about the readouts; he picks up a cordless handset mounted in the control console.

"Yumi this Hiroshi over in Analysis," he states.

A young girls voice responds.

“Yes Hiroshi. What can I do for you ?” Yumi responds pleasantly.

“Yumi...I’m concerned about the cooling water level in Tower Two. It appears a little low, but not an emergency. Please log it in and send a request to Tower 2’s control room to investigate it. It may just be evaporation, but we can’t be too careful. Have the team in Tower 2 immediately put in a request with the Control Room to add water to the containment tank.

“Okay Hiroshi. No problem.”

“Tell them I’m going to check a few more things on my end and run a few more tests,” Hiroshi concludes and hangs up the handset.

Just a few feet from where Hiroshi is sitting and about five hundred feet beneath him, a narrow, gold colored, heavily armored pipe which takes radioactive wastewater out of Tower 2 is leaking thus causing a rise in temperature however slight in Tower 2’s nuclear rods room. The extra heat of the reactor core is burning off the water in the cooling pool quicker than normal thus leading to Hiroshi’s printout showing a slightly higher than normal core temperature and a lower water level. The highly irradiated water drips from a joint section in the pipe directly into

the soil under Osaka Nuclear Facility and while Hiroshi struggles to discover why the facilities gauges are showing low coolant water in the reactor core, the water is leaking into ground and rising rapidly to the surface, In a few minutes, highly toxic radioactive water bubbles up around the base of a tree just outside the reactor's perimeter. The water, steaming as it hits the cool soil and air, envelops a small wasp hive on the ground.

Meanwhile, back at Uncle Jiro's restaurant.

Ito continues to receive the strange text message on his phone:
THERE IS A FIRE. AWAITING ORDERS.

Uncle Jiro runs out from the kitchen, hands Ito a tray with small bowls of rice with fish in them.

"Hurry bring this out to them. It's an appetizer. I'm still working on the main dishes. I don't want them to complain," Uncle Jiro states.

Just as Ito rushes out holding the tray a delivery man rushes in with boxes of eggs on a hand truck.

"Good afternoon, Jiro," the delivery man states.

Ito's trips over the hand trucks' wheel and all the contents of the tray slide off and fall on the restaurant's oak wood floor right in front of the customers.

“I-I’m sorry, Uncle Jiro,” Ito states shocked at what he has done.

One of the irate customers seated at the table stands up.

“Everytime I come here there is a problem! Last time all the food was ice cold now all the food is on the floor,” the customer shouts.

Ito’s phone chimes again with another text message displaying the same cryptic message: THERE IS A FIRE. AWAITING ORDERS.

Suddenly, Ito knows what the message signifies.

“There is a fire used to be code for a nuclear leak or that a nuclear warhead had been launched,” Ito mutters to himself.

“Ito come in the kitchen and get another order of rice and fish. Hurry up the customers are waiting,” Uncle Jiro shouts.

“I must go, Uncle Jiro. It has to do with MAC. It may be important,” Ito states as he throws off his apron, steps over the spilled food and rushes out the door.

“Be back here for the dinner crowd!” Jiro yells after him.

Jiro rushes out from the kitchen with more bowls of rice and fish and puts them on the customer’s table.

“You’ll have to forgive him. He’s my nephew. Today is his first day,” Jiro states laughing slightly.

“It should be his last day!” One of the customers yells out.

About an hour later, Ito steps from a crosstown Osaka bus to where his father has a garage-style storage room. With space at a premium in Japan, a storage area is a necessity. Ito runs to get to the storage area which is about a block from the bus stop, fumbles for his keys, and opens the shed.

Inside the shed there is no electric light and the shed is filled with items from Ito's family; two old Honda cars which Ito's father is restoring sit are parked on one side with black tarps over them. There is a work bench with saws, tools, parts, etc. There is an old flat panel TV, a few old personal computers, bags of clothing, and a few pieces of furniture.

Dead center in the garage is MAC; he is standing up with a c plastic dust cover on him. Ito gently slides off the cover and finds that some of the controls of MAC's chest are flashing.

"I'm sure I shut him off completely when I put him in here," Ito whispers to himself.

Ito moves closer.

"MAC...are you active ?"

For a few seconds, there is silence. Then.

"MAC active," the robot responds.

Ito jumps back.

“B-but...h-how can that be ? I terminated your operations. I even removed your Lithium Battery pack,” Ito exclaims shocked and perplexed.

Again, there is a brief pause almost as if MAC were trying to get out the words.

“Had energy stored in emergency solar cell battery from when I was outside one day. Running on the saved power,” MAC replies.

Ito rushed to a plastic storage bin, flings open the cover, and removes a battery pack. He opens MAC’s back panel and snaps it in. This is followed by a loud whirring sound as the lithium ion batteries begin to charge.

“Why did you power on ?” Ito inquires.

“My sensors have detected a containment water level drop in Reactor 2, pool 7 at the Osaka Nuclear Facility,” MAC states.

“Water level dropping ? It must be a leak,” Ito concludes.

“Yes.”

“But why haven’t the workers at Osaka detected it,” Ito wonders.

“Possible failure of detection equipment. Status of reactor shows slight water level drop, but actual leak is larger,” MAC states.

Ito pushes open the garage door.

“We must go there right away! Do you think your jets are operational ? You’ve been here for nearly a year. The fuel may have dried up,” Ito states concerned.

“Running diagnostic...maneuvering jets fully operational...fuel levels at acceptable level,” MAC replies.

“I’ll take the bus and meet you there. It’s not far from here,” Ito replies.

MAC walks out of the garage. The sound of whirring and servomotors can be heard. Despite a slight stiffness in his gait, MAC moves surprisingly humanlike.

Once he clears the garage, two small retro rockets mounted to his waistline fire. He seems to go nowhere for a few seconds and just as Ito approaches him to check on the rockets, he jets skyward. Ito closes the garage door and rushes for the bus stop.

In but a few minutes, MAC touches down just outside the Osaka nuclear facility in the parking lot. Some employees of the plant upon seeing him chuckle slightly thinking he is robot like ASIMO and he is advertising something.

One employee holding a burger, soda, and fries walks up to MAC.

“What are you advertising...ASIMO breakfast cereal ?”

The staff laugh.

MAC turns his head stiffly in their direction.

“There is a fire. Please evacuate this facility immediately!” MAC exclaims.

The group of employees returning from lunch laugh again.

Suddenly, just as one of the employees is joking around and trying to get MAC to take a sip from his soda, Tower 2 of the Osaka Nuclear Plant explodes.

The employees near MAC scream and duck for cover as pieces of Tower 2’s roof fall into the parking lot. Some of the flaming pieces come down on cars parked in the lot, setting them on fire.

A huge plume of radioactive smoke –light grayish in color—pours from the damaged facility.

The employees scream drop all their lunches and run for their cars

Immediately, alarms can be heard in the facility and hundreds of terrified staff rush out, past MAC standing in the lot, and too their vehicles. Detecting the explosion, MAC begins to walk towards the reactor.

Inside the reactor’s control room, Hiroshi is typing furiously into

a keyboard mounted on the console.

A worker rushes in.

“What are doing, Hiroshi. Get out of here! Let the clean-up team deal with it. They’re on their way from Kyoto!”

“I must make sure all the containment doors are sealed. It will close off the reactor from the rest of the plant. It’s going to take a few minutes. Go on...I’m right behind you!” Hiroshi yells over the klaxons.

“Don’t be a hero! Get out right after you’re done!”

The worker rushes out to the parking lot.

Hiroshi nervously watches a monitor hanging from the control room’s ceiling showing the status of the closing containment doors.

“C’mon”! Hiroshi mutters to himself.

Just as the Osaka crosstown bus pulls off the highway, Ito leaps out of his seat. Passengers on the bus are stunned. A huge fire and plumes of thick, white smoke pour from Reactor 2 at the nuclear power plant and the rest of the plant is barely visible behind the heavy clouds of irradiated nuclear steam.

“The reactor!” One of the passengers cries out.

“It’s another Fukushima!” Another passenger screams.

“I need to get off...right now...right here! Ito exclaims to the bus driver.

“Next stop not till ---”

“Here! Now!” Ito yells.

The bus driver slams on the breaks, opens the front doors, and Ito jumps out.

As he rushes across a four-lane street to the reactor’s grounds, he passes the plant’s employees running away. Some are on foot, a couple on bicycles, and others race to get their vehicles out of the facilities parking lot. Some are covering their mouths with their hands.

Despite all of the commotion, MAC stands motionless in the center of the parking lot as the cars race around him and out the exits.

“MAC begin procedures to prepare for entry into the reactor,” Ito states out of breath from his dash from the where the bus let him out.

MAC turns towards Ito.

“Reactor entry procedure...started,” MAC replies in his mechanical voice.

A heavily armored faceplate moves down from MAC’s forehead

and shields his eyes from the radiation.

He removes a small aerosol can from a compartment in his upper thigh and sprays himself with it.

“Remember that spray will only protect your metal surface for a few minutes. Get in there...seal the core...and get out as fast as you can!” Ito reminds MAC.

Before MAC can speak further or Ito thinks of another check, a woman screams.

“What’s that thing?!”

In an instant, a huge flying object collides with MAC and the robot, caught completely by surprise, is flung against a light pole in the facility parking lot. MAC hits the pole with such force that it sparks and topples over.

Ito is stunned.

“What the –”, Ito is cut off when he sees what it is that hit MAC.

An Asian giant hornet nicknamed the Japanese “murder hornet” of huge size lands directly in front of Ito. Ito loses his breath and backs up as he takes in the sight.

The hornet is about the size of a small compact automobile it lands next to the lot.

Ito can barely hear his own thoughts as people scream at the

sight of the nearly twenty-foot hornet. The beating of its expansive wings causes a tremendous wind which knocks Ito down. The buzzing sound it creates is almost deafening.

“My God...it must have come in contact with contaminated cooling water leaking from the plant,” Ito contemplates.

MAC struggles to get up. The wind from the hornet’s beating wings acting like a wind tunnel.

“Get away!” MAC cries out.

Ito back away slowly.

“MAC initialize molecular expansion!” Ito commands.

With the order given, MAC “grows” several feet and is now equal in size to the hornet.

Despite this, the hornet quickly turns his attention from Ito to MAC, flies towards him, and collides with him.

MAC is almost thrown off his feet again, but advance servomotors allow him to keep his balance while the hornet grasps him in it’s spindly legs.

The hornet repeatedly attempts to insert his stinger into MAC’s mecha surface, but to no avail.

MAC grabs the hornets midsection and produces an electric shock through his fingertips. The hornet releases him only to try

to lock it's powerful pincers around the robots neck area. MAC punches the hornet repeatedly until it releases its grip on him.

The hornet charges him again.

MAC raises his right hand and a freezing cold spray is emitted from his hand. The spray normally intended to freeze solid a nuclear core causes the hornet to become an instant ice statue.

Suddenly, another giant size hornet flies towards MAC.

"MAC look out! Ito screams in terror.

MAC turns towards the approaching insect. His chest panels springs open and a flame thrower fires at the hornet. Meant to fuse broken piping in a reactor, MAC's flame thrower envelops the monstrous insect in fire.

The insect squeals in pain but continues to head towards MAC.

MAC punches the hornet just as it reaches him causing the radioactive creature to be hurled several feet away from MAC and Ito.

The charcoaled carcass of the hornet crashes down on a Toyota car in the nuclear facilities lot.

MAC turns his head from side to side.

"My audio receptors detect more of them, but I don't see anything."

“I hear them too, Mac, but we’ve got to seal the core.”

MAC shrinks his metal body down to human size again.

The robot then walks up to the door of the facility, yanks it off its Hinges and walks in.

Ito waits outside nervously watching the sky for more Asian “murder” hornets. If one should attack him now without MAC’s protection...

Ito perishes the thought. The most important thing now is to seal the reactor core breach.

“I watch through the app connected to your eyes,” Ito adds.

Ito watches on his smartphone; he can see exactly what MAC is seeing as he walks into the crippled facility.

The corridors in the facility are dimly lit as emergency lighting switches on. As MAC walks slowly down the smoke-filled hall, various alarms, sirens, and klaxons ring repeatedly some at such a high volume they would prove deafening to a human.

MAC looks around and sees no one else in the facility.

“It doesn’t look like anyone is in there. They all must have evacuated. That’s one positive thing,” Ito concludes as his voice comes through on MAC’s tinny built-in speakers.

“Check your internal blueprints of the Osaka Nuclear Facility, MAC. Find where reactor core number 2 is.”

MAC searches an onboard database containing the layouts and diagrams of every nuclear power plant in the world.

“Core number 2 located. Three levels down,” MAC discovers.

“You’ll have to fly down the stairwell. Most likely all elevators and equipment lifts are shut down,” Ito assists.

MAC enters a stairwell, ignites his rocket pods, and gently lowers himself down the stairwell. When he touches down by the reactor core, he sees the containment wall also completely closed.

A CCD camera used to monitor the core picks up MAC entering the area.

Hiroshi sees from the monitor readouts and the cameras that the containment doors are almost completely shut. The last remaining door is just inches from sealing. Once closed, he can leave the facility. Just following company policy...but I never thought I’d be risking my life for this place Hiroshi ponders to himself.

Just then he glimpses MAC approaching the core on the camera’s monitor.

‘Who the heck is that?’ Hiroshi mutters.

Maybe it's one of the emergency crews on site, but he never heard of any team that had a protective suit like that. If Hiroshi didn't know better he'd say it...well...it looked like some kind of robot. Like ASIMO.

Hiroshi grabs a nearby mike on a flexible stand.

"Whoever you are you have to get out of there! Now! The containment doors are nearly closed!" Hiroshi shouts into the mike.

When he sees MAC does not response, Hiroshi rushes to put on a protective radioactive suit. He starts to leave the control room when the facility is rocked by another explosion. Pieces of the ceiling fall on top of him and he collapses unconscious in the corridor MAC just walked through.

MAC detects the second explosion but continues.

"You have to hurry, MAC. There was another explosion. More radioactive steam was vented out. The wasps are gathering on the rooftop. There looks to be five of them," Ito states excitedly on the phone.

"Almost there..." MAC responds.

MAC slips into the core room just as the containment door seals shut behind him. He quickly raises his right arm and fires below

zero coolant into the core water pool. After a few seconds, the super heated rods begin to show signs of cooling down. The water temperature slowly begins to drop.

A robo voice booms out in the small chamber.

“Water level at critical level. Water level at critical level...”

MAC walks over to a pipe fitted over the pool. He pulls away some melted metal debris from the pipe’s mouth. He extends his right arm again and a small attachment emerges from a sealed compartment. Liquid cement shoots out immediately sealing a broken section of the water line. The special cement hardens in seconds.

“You’re doing fine, MAC. Now let’s get fresh water flowing into rod pool,” Ito calls out.

MAC walks over to a wall mounted panel. As this work goes on, the automaton’s metal frame is bombarded with tremendous nuclear radiation hundreds of times more powerful than the atom bombs of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Any human even one in the best protective suit would long have died under this level of exposure.

However, even man’s best metallurgy has its limitations. Under the intense heat of the core rods, MAC’s outer exoskeleton begins to

melt.

He struggles to reach the wall panel. He types something in and ice cold water sprouts from the repaired pipe into the rod pool.

Almost instantly some of the alarms shut off.

The robo voice booms out again.

“Radiation at super critical levels,” the voice exclaims.

As the freezing water hits the rods, tremendous clouds of highly irradiated steam envelop MAC. Multicolored sparks fly from his joints.

“You have to start out, MAC! You’re diagnostics are showing signs of damage!” Ito shouts over the phone.

MAC does not tell Ito the true extent of his condition. He raises his right appendage again and fires a small rocket at the sealed containment door. The rocket blows the door clear off its track and it bangs down in the outside corridor.

MAC struggles to stay upright as he attempts to reach the exit doors.

As he walks the length of the hall, he spots Hiroshi laying unconscious.

“I have located a survivor. He appears to be one of the plant’s employees. He shows low signs of contamination and is alive,”

MAC determines after examining Hiroshi.

“Uhhhh...wh-who...wh-what are you?” Hiroshi can barely speak through the thick plexiglass faceplate of the hazmat suit.

“I am MAC.”

MAC begins to pick up Hiroshi, cradling him in his arms which are now dripping molten steel. Sparks and short circuits continue through his metallic frame.

“Can you carry him, MAC ? My app shows you’re badly damaged from the heat ?”

“Asimov’s first rule of robotics. A robot may not injure a human being or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm,” MAC states.

MAC strains to carry Hiroshi out the exit. He lays him out on the parking lot asphalt.

Now, upon seeing the true extent of the damage done to MAC is shock.

“Mac! My God! You’re metal!” Ito begins to cry.

Ito begins to approach him.

“No! Stay back, Ito! I have absorbed tremendous amount of radioactivity!”

Without warning, one of the giant Asian hornets flies at Ito.

Before Ito can react, a giant SUV-sized Asian hornet collides with him, pinning him to the ground.

“Go...h-h-help him,” Hiroshi strains to talk to MAC.

Instantly, MAC stands straight, engages his molecular expansion circuits, and grows taller.

Sparks and tiny flames are visible all over his metal body.

MAC extends his arm, but the rockets malfunction. He rushes over to where the hornet is attempting to grab Ito in its forelimbs and lift him away.

MAC grabs one of the wasp’s translucent wings and tears it from its back.

The wasp responds by releasing Ito and hurling its full weight against MAC.

MAC is thrown against a panel truck in the lot. The truck is compacted like a soda can. Some of MAC’s melted body frame peels off revealing his internal wiring and servomotors.

The wounded hornet leaps on top of MAC. It grips MAC’s head in its pincer and tries to pry it off. The metal groans as the determined wasp pulls it slightly off its socket.

Then, another mammoth sized hornet flies off the roof of the nuclear facility headed for wounded Hiroshi.

Halfway to Hiroshi, MAC, struggling to prevent the first attacking hornet from ripping his head off, sees the hornet rocketing towards Hiroshi.

Hiroshi struggles to get up as the wasp lands in front of him pincers at the ready to grab him.

MAC activates his cement gun, firing off a globule of the quick setting mixture. The ball of liquid concrete covers the hornet, solidifying instantly. The hornet freezes in place like a stone statue.

MAC activates a laser cutting tool. Invented to cut away debris from a nuclear core, the laser now is utilized to sever the hornet's head.

MAC pushes the dead, headless hornet's body from his own. MAC tries but cannot get off the ground. His damaged circuits make it impossible for him to continue the battle with the giant hornets.

Another hornet leaps from the rooftop, heading for MAC.

Suddenly, machine gun fire erupts and the hornet is torn to pieces by semiautomatic weapons of the Japan Defense Force who arrive just in time.

The hornet riddled with large caliber bullets falls dead to the

ground.

A Japanese soldier lowers his rifle and rushes over to Ito.

“You okay?”

“Yes. I didn’t go in,” Ito states.

Two Japanese soldiers decked out in hazmat suits pick Hiroshi up, place him in an ambulance, and run a Geiger counter over him from head to toe.

“He shows some sign of contamination, but not too bad considering how long he was in there”, the soldier explains.

The other soldier motions towards MAC.

“The robot must have shielded him somehow,” he states.

MAC tries to walk, but his legs give in and he topples forward in the parking lot.

Ito starts towards him.

A soldier pulls him back.

“I’m very sorry son...but you must not go near him. He’s received a tremendous dose,” the soldier informs him.

“MAC...MAC,” Ito cries out.

MAC struggles to get up, but he falls down again. His head is hanging down his back held on by a few wires because of his

fight with the hornet.

To protect the humans around him, MAC points his arm at himself.

The soldier frowns.

“What is he doing?”

Ito wipes tears from his eyes and struggles to watch.

“I think I know what”, Ito replies low and sadly.

Sparks continue to emit from all of MAC’s joints. His legs have become molten metal slag due to the high heat in the reactor core.

MAC activates his cement gun and a steady stream of fast-setting cement streams from the gunlike device fitted to the top of his hand.

In just a few minutes, MAC’s entire robotic body is covered in the cement. The gun keeps shooting the liquid solution out until even MAC’s hand is covered.

In another few moments, the concrete hardens and what was the world’s most advanced bipedal automaton is now a solid block of concrete.

Ito begins to approach the cement block.

The soldier quickly holds a Geiger counter up to it.

“Nothing. Zero radiation levels,” he states disbelievingly.

“He sacrificed himself to save us. To save all of us,” Ito states as he sobs.

Another soldier rushes up to Ito from a Jeep.

“Hiroshi want to talk to the boy,” the soldier states excitedly.

“Whose Hiroshi?” Ito asks.

“He’s the reactor employee your robot saved,” the soldier answers.

Ito climbs walks to the ambulance. Hiroshi is in a gurney as emergency workers prepare to take him to a nearby medical center. Ito can see he has slight burns on the tops of his hands, lower arms, and face.

“Y-your robot..he’s amazing. H-He saved my life. Y-you...saved my life...along with everyone in this community. You working through the robot,” Hiroshi can barely talk.

“We have to get going to the radiation burn center,” one of the emergency workers states as he begins to close the ambulance backdoor.

“W-wait!,” Hiroshi yells out.

The worker pauses.

“Call me. You can get my number from the Osaka Nuclear Commission Website. I will tell them what you did. I can get you

money to rebuild the robot. Make him even better,” Hiroshi drifts off to sleep.

The ambulance driver close the door and the vehicle zooms off.

Ito ponders what Hiroshi said.

“He seemed so human in the end,” Ito states to himself.

“Where do live ?” One of the soldier’s asks Ito.

“Not far. I took the bus here,” Ito answers.

“Your parents must be worried sick about you. I’ll have one of my men drive you home,” the soldier concludes.

Ito climbs into the back of a Jeep.

As the Jeep pulls away, he cannot help but look at the concrete block that was MAC and wonder what the future holds for him and the robot he created.

THE END

Meltdown

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