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Decay

By Luke Thompson

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(It is purely a work of fiction)

(Security)

(Sign:

Danger:

Hi, it's you. You're not supposed to be here.

James, get up. We're late.

What else can I say, drunk on a Sunday night.

Do you remember that part last night, when Amy got on the table...

That's my sister, I do not need to be reminded.

Where's all the food?

Come on, let's go.

Come on, guys, we're going to be late.

Do you care to drive after your stunt last night, Amy?

Oh - Hi Mark!

You're in.

Not going by bus, today?

Nope.

I - sorry, I was driving past the shops and I picked him up.

Oh, OK.

So what's the rush, anyway?

Some kind of emergency meeting?

(Decay)

What do you think this emergency meeting is about?

I don't know, but it can't be that important.

Go on ahead guys, I'm gonna...

No, Dr Niven. LHC is most important experiment of our time.

I will not, due that unfounded theory -

Unfounded? Director, my results show that -

Inconclusive! Your results are inconclusive at best!

No. You'll have plenty of time for measurements when you're down in the tunnel tonight.

Director, we have to stop the LHC until we assess the danger.

No. Dr Niven, once we have fixed this problem, the LHC will run again as usual.

Finding the Higgs is the highest priority.

Why is Dr Niven going into the tunnels?

Why do you think the Director General said it?

Maybe they made a black hole.

Sorry!

Hey!

Hey!

So did you recover from last night?

Yeah, you too?

Mhm.

Wait, aren't you meant to be on your way to Barcelona by now?

I... might have missed my flight?

Oh no! [Laughs]

Good morning. I am professor Vacinski, Director General of CERN.

This meeting has been called because last night there was an emergency beam dump.

Here we see a monopole magnet in LHC sector 7G.

Beam sensors have detected that an unknown event caused this magnet to quench

and triggered an uncontrolled shut down.

If this happens again, the results could be catastrophic.

Due to the special circumstances, Dr. Niven is taking a team into the LHC tunnel

to investigate the cause and see what damage there is.

The LHC will be in shut-down, at least until the end of the week.

Since Dr. Niven will not be available, we will need four volunteers to be on shift in the control room.

We'll do it.

Okay. You four.

Oh, I'm going to be in a conference in Barcelona.

Very well, you, you then.

Uh, I have an analysis note due this week so I'm not going to have time to do this.

The collider will be shut down, you can work in the control room.

Report to the control room at 9 p.m., that is all everybody.

Sucks to be you guys!

Here you go.

Thanks.

They don't look like proto-decay matrices.

No.

Dr. Nivens got me working on this Higgs bio-entanglement simulation.

Some company gave a lot of money to CERN and I get stuck working on it.

I've got so much work to do.

Listen, are you okay after last night?

Why?

You and Matt?

Don't know what you're talking about. Anyway, are you jealous?

Hm, sorry.

Listen, I better go, I've got a lot of work to do.

Ugh, I'm so tired. I can't even think about work right now.

I hope he doesn't expect me to remember anything.

Ahh, Lisa! Did you finish the talk?

Yeah, just in time.

I had every confidence in you.

Did you get a chance to look at my simulation?

Ah yes, problems with the simple symmetric parameter lattice...

I think I found a way to express it differently.

I didn't implement it in my analysis code yet, but you might like to try it.

It looks more complex though, I don't know if it will work on my laptop.

Well, we'll deal with that later if we need to.

Okay, thanks.

Anyway, I have to prepare my team for going in the tunnels and look over Lisa's talk

so I'll talk to you later.

And Lisa? Don't miss the plane again.

I won't.

Hey guys, wait.

I'm bringing someone.

Who?

Just someone.

OK. Well, we're gonna be late, so...

Hi!

Everyone, this is my girlfriend Kate. Kate, this is Matt and Connor

Hi.

and my sister Amy.

Hi.

Nice to finally meet you.

Finally? I didn't tell you...

Mom let it slip. I was waiting for you to tell me!

It's nice to finally meet you as well.

Are you coming with us?

I think so.

Yeah.

Okay.

Should we go?

So uh, why have you thrown away your evening away to go on shift?

James was gonna come meet me for dinner but then he told me that you guys had to uh...

Oh sorry.

It's okay, don't worry.

And how did James manage to convince you that

vending machine food was going to be an acceptable substitute?

Shift can sometimes be boring, are you going to be okay?

I told her.

Well, I insisted.
She's with me.
So are you guys visitors, like James?
Yeah, but he works on the accelerator. The rest of us analyse the data.
Yeah, he's an engineer, and we're real physicists.
So, what do you do?
I'm a trainee nurse.
I hope you're not claustrophobic, it's a long way down.
Guys, I've thought of a joke.
Ugh, another one.
So a chimpanzee and a sloth...
And then the chimpanzee's like, "Stop it, stop it!"
Do you want to watch "A Clockwork Orange"?
I borrowed it from Amy.
Yep, sure.
That's a pretty deep film for a lowly engineer like yourself.
You shouldn't let him talk to you like that.
He's only messing around.
So the accelerator boosts the beam of protons to almost the speed of light.
And then we collide them... here.
And then we detect what's made in the collision.
What's up?
I thought I'd got it working!
Got... what working?
Her Higgs simulation.
Her... what simulation?
My Higgs radiation simulation.
The "God" particle.
It's a particle that we're trying to make in the collider.
I'm meant to be investigating how it acts on living tissue...
...but my programme just crashes every single time that it starts to look bad.
So what, you think Higgs radiation is dangerous?
I don't know. I'd know if I could get it to finish!
They wouldn't run the LHC if they thought it was a danger.
Must be a glitch or something.
Have you tried on the central computer system?
Except... she doesn't have access to the mainframe.
Are you not allowed to use it?
Well... not exactly.
There we go.
Nice!
Nice one Amy!
It wasn't me!

It's not you... the LHC is ramping.
"Ramping" ramping?
The beams are firing!
The team's still down there! Shut it off!
What the fuck?!
The phones are down!
What... what's going on?
The LHC is turned on.
The radiation levels will be killing everyone down there.
People are dying?!
No one is dying!
Shut up Matt!
James, what can we do?
I don't know, the overrides aren't working.
I haven't got any signal!
We're a hundred metres underground, what do you expect!
The radiation levels are spiking.
The shielding's not in place when the maintenance tunnels are open.
Well why the fuck not?!
This shouldn't be able to happen.
...Shit!
We've got less than two minutes and we're fried.
We've got to get out!
What about the people in the tunnels?
What about us!
Fuck!
It's locked down!
James, calm down and think. How do we get out?
We go into the service tunnels.
The tunnels?! Are you mental?!
The LHC master power's down there. It's shielded, we can shut it off.
This is insane...
Right, we'll go down and shut it off. Then we'll work out what to do there.
No, but we can't...
Come on!
Push something!
So that's it?! The worlds largest machine has an on/off switch?
What is your problem?!
Look, this is just a relay. There's six of them.
If one of them trips the others go off automatically.
I hope somebody noticed that.
There's nobody around to notice it. No one will be in until tomorrow.
We need to find an elevator to get back to the surface.
Yeah, if James knows where they are...

Look, if we follow the tunnels we'll get out.
But... what about the people down there?
They could still be alive couldn't they?
Even if they are, there's nothing we can do for them.
The best we can do is get out and try and get help.
But if the radiation did that to them... then...
No - we're safe now the machine's off.
But if the radiation did that to them... then...
No - we're safe now the machine's off.
It's just the ring itself that's radioactive. We're safe here.
Oh my god, all those people...
How could this happen?
It couldn't have happened. You can't turn the machine on
when there are people down there.
There are interlock systems everywhere.
Well somebody fucked up, and it wasn't me!
Yeah, and it wasn't us! This couldn't happen from the control room.
No one's got access to do that except...
except maybe Dr. Niven... but he was down here.
The sooner we get out of here the sooner we can sort it out.
I... I don't like it down here.
It's not too far.
What the hell was that?!
Probably a steam valve or something... right?
Probably.
How much further is it?
It's not far.
...Great.
Just as I was starting to get freaked out.
Look, I'm sorry. I thought that...
Do you know where we're going or don't you?
Look, I'm sorry. I thought that...
Do you know where we're going or don't you?
Matt...
I can't be the only person that heard that scream.
We're running around down here.
I mean, where the fuck are we going?
Matt, calm down. If you know where to go, let's hear it. If not, shut up.
James, do you know where we can go?
I think if we go back and left and follow
the ring around we can find our way from there...
Kate!
We've got to go and get her.
You have to listen to me! James, listen! She's gone!

You saw those people James, you saw what they did.
Don't just fucking stand there, help!
What's that?!
Freon coolant gas.
What the fuck just happened?
They looked like... the technician team that were down here.
But why would they that to us?
Did you see their faces?
The radiation burns, yeah... They shouldn't even be alive.
Where you going?
The gas won't stop them forever.
I found a way out. Come on, lets go.
What if there's more of them?
...Here.
Take this.
One of these maniacs has a gun?!
Think he's been dead a while.
What's a security guard doing down here anyway?
What is this?
The interlock turns the LHC off if people are in the tunnels.
It's been sabotaged.
Someone did this on purpose.
That could be her!
James, stop!
James!
James...
Help!
Give me the pipe!
Jesus Christ Matt...
I... what else was I going to do?
If they're all like that we're screwed!
There were like, what, 30 people in this section?!
We'll find a way out. James, which way?
I thought there was an exit, back at the dead end.
Next one's about a three hour walk away, it's at point 17. And that's if we
don't get lost.
Is there anywhere safe we can stop on the way?
We need to let someone know we're down here!
There's a mainframe computer room about half way round. We can send a
message from there.
Ok.
Which way now?
We have to go that way.
Jesus... What does it take to kill one of these things?!

They're people Matt!
No person could survive this!
Are you hurt?
It's my arm.
Are you alright?
Yeah.
You too?
Ugh... yeah, I'll be fine.
Can someone try and log in?
It's not accepting my user name.
Connor, can you hack this?
Not now Matt, give him a minute.
Look, the quicker we get through to the server the sooner...
Give it a rest Matt!
Look, the quicker we get through to the server the sooner...
Give it a rest Matt!
How much use is he going to be to us if he's concussed?!
Same place as last time.
Same place as what?
Cracked my skull climbing.
They had to put a metal plate in my head.
You never told me about that.
It was when I went home for a few weeks.
After Prague.
Oh.
I didn't mean it like that.
Just give me a minute.
And I'll see what I can do with the terminal.
Is there anything up there?
There's a door, it's secure. There's no one about.
I think we're safe for now.
All right. We'll stay here for a bit.
I'll try and get through the firewall, see if I can get any help.
How's your arm?
Don't worry about me. The bleeding's stopped.
Keep an eye on them stairs.
We need to be looking for Kate.
James...
I know what you're trying to say. But you're wrong.
Yes! Got in!
Can you get through to anyone?
...no.
Keep trying.
Amy, come here.

Have you got through?

No but...

It says Amy's biosim just finished.

Oh.

So?

So I was right about Higgs radiation...

What?

The Higgs killed them all.

Killed who? They're not dead.

Yes, they are.

It's killed everything except the brain stem.

There's nothing left of them.

The radiation damage might stop it after a while...

but for now they're just animals.

You must have messed up or something... Missed a semi-colon!

The... the Higgs wouldn't do that.

It doesn't even look like my simulation.

It looks more like Dr. Niven's...

So Dr. Niven knew and he still came down here?

No, it says it's only just completed.

He's been trying to run it for weeks and it always failed...

...until now.

So they've been dead since the beam came on...

James - we need to get out of here.

I can't get help, but if I can get a map of the tunnels can you find a way out?

I'll try.

Find the way out?

Why don't you ever know?

I haven't been to this area before...

Ok then, how long will it take this time?

Matt! Enough!

Fuck you Connor! Why are we even listening to you?!

It's your fault we're on shift! It's your fault

we're down here in the first fucking place!

Leave him alone!

Oh, concerned about his feelings now are we?

...don't.

What?

Everyone else has figured it out James.

We fucked last night.

Fuck you Matt, I was drunk!

Not that drunk.

You took advantage of my sister?!

Not that drunk.
You took advantage of my sister?!
Advan... whatever. At least I get laid.
Bet you didn't get that far with Kate.
You... FUCK!
I'm going to find Kate.
James, she's dead.
I have to go.
No, stop it James! Come back!
I need you! Come back!
I have to go with him.
You know she's dead, right?
I can't let him do this alone.
Alright, I'll come...
No, stay here, you have to find help!
Alright, I'll come...
No, stay here, you have to find help!
Do you know where you're going?
I think there's a shortcut up here.
I... I just...
Thanks for coming.
Look, Matt.
Forget about that.
Fine.
Matt, we need to stick together to get out of here.
Don't worry about...
What?!
I said, fine!
Shit!
Run!
Are you ok? What's wrong?
James, please don't look. Please don't look.
Let's go.
Are you ok?
I'm not feeling great.
Look, here, I'll help you.
What happened? Is he ok?
I think his wound's infected.
I'll be ok.
Did you call for help?
No. I couldn't through the firewall.
But I got a map for this area.
Alright.
Where did you get that?

We found a body in the tunnels.
He must have shot that guard.
But I saw him with the Director General earlier.
Listen, there's something else.
After you guys left all the sim data got deleted from the system.
There's only one person with the authority to do that.
If he's trying to stop people from finding out,
that could be why we can't call for help.
Are there any backups anywhere?
Dr. Niven keeps a record of everything he does.
It could be enough, if we can get to his office.
If he knows we're down here...
We'll get out.
Hey guys. I think I found something.
Ok, so we start here.
And then we go over to here.
The services lifts are down, so we'll have to take the stairs.
There's a crawl space here.
And then we come to here.
And then we get out here.
Is there any way we can get out nearer to Dr. Niven's office?
Why?
The simulation data logs got deleted.
We have to go and find records.
I don't think we can get through.
There are safety doors in the way.
Let me look at that.
There we go!
Are you feeling ok?
I just... I just need to sleep.
James?
James!
James?!
Is he ok?
I don't know. I don't know what's wrong with him.
He's sleeping for now but... maybe we could let him rest for a bit?
Yeah.
No.
I think we should get moving as soon as we can.
If he doesn't rest we'll have to carry him.
We can't wait here forever, and if he can't look after himself...
Don't you dare, you selfish piece of shit! If you want to go just go on
your own!
No one's going anywhere! We'll rest for a bit, then we'll leave.

No! James, what are you doing?!
Matt!
James!
Stop!
James!
Give me the gun.
No!
Come on, we need to go.
He's dead... he's gone.
Amy, you need to... you need to...
We have to...
Connor... I never...
It's ok. We can talk about that when we get out of here.
I don't want to have to do this on my own.
You won't have to.
We know the way out now. We just need to...
It's going to be ok! You're going to be ok!
You know what'll happen.
No, I don't! And neither do you!
I'm bleeding out. When I die...
I don't want to come back.
No! I can't lose you. Not now!
I'll end up killing you. You need to get out.
No. Look, hold this - I'll go get a first aid kit. It'll be ok!
Give me the gun if you can't do it!
No!
Amy!
Amy!
Connor...
Inadmissible les jeunes mouvements sont incompetents.
J'en ai mar d'avoir des resultats aussi fou
tous les jours tous les jours et je dois de moyens.
Tranchement de regarder ca.
Incroyable non?
Mister! Mister, please, this is not a safe area!
Come over! We'll call an ambulance!
Appelles l'ambulance.
Connor...
"Lisa's phone, leave a message"
Lisa, pick up the phone!
I don't have long! Everything's fucked, everyone's dead!
The Director General killed them all. Pick up the fucking phone!
Lisa listen, I'm going to email you the data.
You're the only one that can understand it.

Move away from the computer.
You did this!
You killed them all.
I didn't know this would happen.
But I had to do it.
Dr. Niven knew the Higgs was dangerous.
But I couldn't let that stop me.
My research is too important!
I had to!
And I can't let you tell anyone.