Brainiac
**Fiction**

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It was a dreary weather, the rain lashed across the windshield. Nothing was visible beyond the range of the headlights. I had been working late again, and found it very difficult to spend time with my family. My family consisted of my sister only.

Our parents had passed away two years ago in a car accident. I don’t remember that incident well. I was in that car too; in fact I was the one driving. My sister tells me that, it was very cold and the car skidded on the ice-covered road, swerved off-track and hit a tree. The impact was so great, that I lost consciousness. When I came to, I was in the hospital and my parents were dead.

That’s what I heard from others. May be the trauma has made me forget what actually happened. But today, it was coming back in fragments. Because this was the very place where that episode occurred.

The fragments weren’t enough to bring back what I had forgotten. Besides I couldn’t afford another accident. So I concentrated on the road. The rain fell harder and I couldn’t see anything this time. I knew I had to stop. But where do I find a shelter in the middle of nowhere? And as if to add to my woes the car started slowing down. The engine sputtered and then died. What the hell! I thought. I took out my cell phone. But it had no reception. I put it back in my pocket and got out.

I looked here and there. Trees loomed on both sides. There were puddles of water everywhere. There was a strange stuffiness inside my head. My head felt heavy, my vision flickered and I heard a voice in my head. "Turn right," the voice said. I turned mechanically as if my brain had commanded me to do so. To my surprise I saw a small path between the trees. "Follow that path," the voice said again. I did as I was told. The conscious part of my brain was telling me to follow the voice, but my subconscious was telling me that something was seriously wrong. However I tried I couldn’t stop. I moved on like a zombie into the deeper parts of the forest.

My eyes could see the narrow grassy lane, the trees on both sides, the sloshing mud that dirtied my jeans and shoes, the rain wetting my whole body but my brain knew only one thing, walk. I hardly thought of anything else. I had come to a clearing. A grassy field stretched to a small hill and on top of it stood a mansion-like structure. It must be a beautiful view during the day but if sure looked spooky at that time.

"Come inside," the voice beckoned, and I followed the instruction like a machine. I went inside the building. The door was open. It was dark inside. There was a faint light coming through another door. My body was stiff with anticipation, my hair stood on end but there was something controlling my actions. The nearer I went, the stronger the voice became. There was no other option than opening that door. Even if it were the door to hell, I had to go in. I pushed the door open and stepped into the largest laboratory I had ever seen in my life.

It was straight out of a science fiction movie, a vague scene from a science fiction replaying itself. A spotless white room, huge and full of strange apparatuses and in the midst of the complex machinery, seated in a wheelchair was a small insignificant-looking man. "Welcome to my humble abode!" he said. I was startled, because this time I really heard him with my ears.

"Y-you were calling m-me?" I stuttered, nervously.

"Yes, my son. It was me, along with some help of my friends in the other room. This is my lab and I am Dr. Brian Jones, better known as Brainiac." He said with a smug smile.

"Known to whom?" I asked. I was gradually regaining my courage. "Brainiac. Interesting."

The smile vanished. Brainiac or whatever he was called, became more serious. Or if I could add, even menacing. That man may be small but he sure was imposing. To think he actually communicated with me through my head and controlled my actions from so far away! And god knows how many ‘friends’ he had with him. He had eyes that flashed with almost animal-like intelligence. I instantly started cowering at his gaze.

He took me to a door at the end of the lab, and opened it. "Come," he said and took me inside. This room was even larger than the first. But there was hardly any space to walk. It was covered with glass boxes, each containing a grayish coloured ovoid mass. The boxes were connected with wires to some instruments and a vital sign monitor. I made a vague guess as to what these grey masses could be, but my answer puzzled me. May be I am dreaming. But I could feel a strange sensation; there were many consciousnesses around me, pressing into my thoughts. I could see things, strange landscapes, people, vivid memories and I felt happiness, grief, pain, anger – a potpourri of emotions. The emotions overwhelmed me. Stop! said Brainiac telepathically. The consciousnesses shrank back immediately. Then the man took me back to the lab.

"I am a scientist. I specialize in human brain. I was so good in my field that my fellow researchers called me ‘Brainiac’. The human brain is an astonishing object. It has a potential of doing things you can only dream of. I was researching on the ability of a brain to communicate with another. The brain generates invisible waves all the time. You are aware of electro-encephalography, I assume. If the waves are a little more powerful, they can be received by another brain. You will be able to send memories, commands and communicate with each other. It’s just like using a computer, only better. Though I experimented with dead people’s brains, I wasn’t satisfied. The dead cells needed more stimulation and the process was taking ages. So I kidnapped a roadside vagrant. I cut the skull open and charged the cells before the poor
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child died. It worked. I started bringing in all the lost children and tramps to feed my researches. My seniors got wind of my activities. They wanted to shut my research facility down! Can you imagine? But they weren’t successful. Their brains are my property now. I am more powerful than you can imagine. I can lure anyone into my house. I brought a doctor to check on me last night. But now he is one of those.” He smiled and indicated the door.

I thought I was dreaming. Scared, though I was, I could not help feeling a sense of loathing towards this man. I said to him, “You and your ideas! How low can you get? Supposing everything you said is true, how come nobody came to investigate so many deaths and disappearances in the neighborhood? And how can you do all this alone?” I indicated all the intricate machineries, wires and petri-dishes all around me.

Brainiac laughed. “You have got tact, my boy! Anyone who comes in here only disappears. Besides, our country is busy waging war against the third worlds. The government can’t address and solve all domestic problems. My experiments will help them in warfare. There would be no need for weapons. The sheer force of the brain waves will wipe away the enemies. We’ll not only vanquish them but also control their thoughts. They wanted to shut my researches. My seniors got wind of my activities. They wanted to see how Brainiac would be using them to destroy mankind. I was filled with anguish; I couldn’t bring any one into this misery. I decided that I couldn’t change what had happened but I definitely wouldn’t let Brainiac fulfill his evil dream.

I went back to the lab. Using a paper from a notepad and a pen lying beside it, I wrote down my entire experience and what Brainiac intended to do. I then stole out of the house, and ran as fast as I could towards my car. Brainiac may not be able to come here so fast but he can surely control my actions. The car was still there as I had left it. I quickly got inside, stuffed the letter into my bag and turned the ignition. But as hard as I tried, the car didn’t start. I couldn’t escape. I took out my firearm from my bag. I needed it to kill Brainiac and stop whatever he was doing.

As I got out of my car, my head felt stuffy, my vision started flickering again. The voice sounded terrible. “Come back now!” it commanded. I started following his orders instantly. But at the back of my mind, I was trying to put up a fight. “NO!” I cried out. I will give a last fight! I wouldn’t be Brainiac’s slave. I won’t let his plan succeed. But how?

My sister, will I be able to see her again? Will they find the car? Will they find my letter? I hope they do. I won’t be able to kill Brainiac, that’s for sure. But he sure won’t be able to stop me from killing myself! He wouldn’t be expecting that.

My head was throbbing wildly from fighting with Brainiac’s command. My eyes were streaming with tears. The pain was killing me, a little more wouldn’t hurt. With a lot of effort I brought the gun to my temple. I’ll blow my brains out before he can find them. With my hands trembling violently, I pulled the trigger.

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