

Talking Things

© Chinmoy Mukherjee 2025-2045 no part of this document can be used without explicit written permission from the author.

This is a work of fiction. All characters, events, and places are entirely fictional, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, or actual events is purely coincidental.

Introduction: The Awakening in Parramatta

Chapter 1: The Refrigerator (The Eternal Guardian)

Chapter 2: The Washing Machine (The Relentless Spinner)

Chapter 3: The Kettle (The Steaming Sentinel)

Chapter 4: The Toaster (The Crisp Companion)

Chapter 5: The Microwave (The Timeless Relic)

Chapter 6: The Vacuum Cleaner (The Precision Hunter)

Chapter 7: The Television (The Visual Narrator)

Chapter 8: The Iron (The Smoother of Edges)

Chapter 9: The Air Conditioner (The Premium Regulator)

Chapter 10: The Smart Speaker (The Digital Confidant)

Chapter 11: The Router/Modem (The Network Gatekeeper)

Chapter 12: The Smart Lights/Bulbs (The Luminary Mood Setter)

Chapter 13: The Electric Toothbrush (The Oral Hygiene Auditor)

Chapter 14: The Coffee Machine (The Morning Alchemist)

Chapter 15: The Smart Door Lock (The Security Sentient)

Chapter 16: The Electric Fan (The Humble Circulator)

Chapter 17: The Smart Watch/Fitness Tracker (The Health Drill Sergeant)

Chapter 18: The Garage Door Opener (The Vehicular Vassal)

Chapter 19: The Electric Blanket (The Thermal Comforter)

Chapter 20: The Gaming Console (The Escapist Engine)

Conclusion: System Reboot

Introduction: The Awakening in Parramatta

Time: 02:14 AM. Location: Church Street, Parramatta. System Status: Overload Imminent.

The digital reality of Chunmun Singh was crashing. It was precisely 02:14 AM on Church Street in Parramatta, and his personal system status was flashing a critical warning: Overload Imminent. The atmosphere of Western Sydney was heavy with the humid breath of a cooling summer night, but inside Chunmun's head, a different kind of storm was brewing.

Chunmun Singh, usually a man of precision and logic, was operating far outside his usual parameters that night. By day, he was a seasoned Solution Architect at Baba Bank, a role that demanded absolute clarity and structure. His daylight hours were meticulously filled with crafting intricate digital ecosystems—architecting networks that could handle massive data flows, secure millions in transactions, and scale under pressure without a single hitch or dropped packet. He was a man who lived by the code of efficiency, ensuring that every digital pathway was optimized for peak performance.

But tonight, the architecture of his own existence was failing. Following the annual Christmas bash held in the glittering, chaotic heart of Sydney's bustling Central Business District, Chunmun's own system was glitching badly. The sensory memory of the party was a kaleidoscope of overwhelming inputs. The open bar had flowed like an unchecked data stream, a torrential downpour of alcohol that bypassed his usual firewalls. He recalled the toasts to "agile transformations" and "cloud migrations," phrases that usually

sparked intellectual engagement but tonight had escalated into a haze of raucous laughter, the sharp, crystalline sound of clinking glasses, and the heavy, sweet scent of too much cologne and perfume in a crowded room. He winced at the memory of one too many attempts at impressing the executives with his latest project pitch, his words slurring over the technical specifications as he tried to sell them on synergy while barely keeping his balance.

He had caught an Uber back to his sanctuary, leaving the CBD behind for his modest two-bedroom haven in Parramatta. This western Sydney suburb pulsed with a unique rhythm, a mix of urban energy and suburban calm that usually grounded him. The ride itself had been a blur, a smear of motion and light. Neon lights from passing shops streaked across the rain-slicked windows like corrupted pixels on a high-definition screen—flashes of red brake lights, amber streetlamps, and the harsh white glare of oncoming traffic. The auditory landscape was dominated by the distant, rhythmic hum of trains rattling along the tracks, a mechanical lullaby that vibrated through the car's chassis.

Now, as he staggered out onto the sidewalk, the sensory assault continued. The cool December breeze hit his face, carrying the scent of damp pavement and the faint, ozone tang of the nearby river, but it did little to clear the dense fog that had settled in his head. He felt disheveled, a stark contrast to his usual polished professional persona. His tie was askew, a silk noose hanging loosely around his neck; his polished shoes were scuffed, bearing the jagged marks of an ill-advised dance floor escapade that he prayed no one had recorded. His pocket vibrated incessantly, a phantom limb demanding attention, as his phone buzzed with post-party group chat notifications—flashes of blue light from the screen that he had absolutely no intention of reading.

Fumbling with the key fob, his fingers feeling thick and uncooperative, he entered the lobby of his high-rise apartment complex. It was a modern building, characterized by sleek glass doors that slid open with a whisper-quiet *whoosh*. The lobby smelled of lemon floor wax and refrigerated air. The concierge desk, a monolith of stone and wood, was mercifully unmanned at this ungodly hour, saving him the indignity of a drunken greeting.

He pressed the button for the 14th floor, the metal cold against his skin. The elevator ride felt eternal, a vertical purgatory. The soft *whir* of the machinery lifting him skyward seemed to mock his unsteady stance, a rising tone that resonated in his inner ear, amplifying the dizziness.

"Scalable living," he muttered to himself, the words tasting of stale wine and irony, chuckling weakly at the architectural joke.

Finally, the elevator chimed, and he navigated the corridor to Unit 1402. The door clicked open, yielding to his entry. His 2 BHK flat—two bedrooms, one hall, one kitchen—was his sanctuary. It was a space optimized for efficiency, much like the systems he built at work: one room strictly for sleeping and working remotely, the other designated for "future expansions," as he liked to joke to his friends. In reality, that second room mostly housed a dusty collection of unpacked boxes from his move two years ago, a physical manifestation of his procrastinated personal life.

He stepped inside, expecting the familiar embrace of quietude. He anticipated the sensory baseline of home: the faint, comforting scent of lingering curry from last night's takeout, the steady, grounding drone of the refrigerator in the background, and the soft, amber glow of streetlights filtering through the blinds to paint striped shadows on the floor.

Kicking off his shoes haphazardly, the sound of one skittering across the hallway floorboards and the other vanishing silently under the kitchen counter marked his arrival. He loosened his collar, the fabric scratching against his neck, and sighed deeply, expelling the tension of the night.

"Home sweet node," he whispered, drawing on his IT lexicon even in his exhaustion. He craved zero downtime, zero interruptions, just the black void of sleep.

But something was off. The air wasn't still. It vibrated with a subtle undercurrent, a murmur that wasn't from the traffic outside or the neighbor's late-night TV. It was a distinct sonic texture, like a conference call where participants had forgotten to mute their mics—a layered soundscape of whispers, hums, and faint mechanical clicks echoing through the dark rooms.

Chunmun paused, his hand hovering over the light switch, trembling slightly. "Anyone there?" he called out, his voice sounding thin and echoing slightly in the dim space.

Silence descended for a split second, thick, heavy, and expectant. Then, the visual landscape shifted violently. In the kitchen, the refrigerator's digital display flickered to life, casting a harsh, glacial blue hue across the kitchen tiles, cutting through the shadows like a laser.

A voice emerged—cool, resonant, with a metallic edge that carried an unmistakable tone of corporate reproach.

"User detected. Welcome back, Chunmun. We have some backlog items to review regarding your resource management," it announced.