The Spark in the Circuit

B Alan Bourgeois · Opening excerpt · 1 of 2

The archive wasn’t supposed to exist.

Buried in the broken code of a 30-year-old public transit kiosk, it flickered into view only when accessed through a nearly extinct browser using a proxy server traced through four abandoned school networks.

Leo didn’t find it on purpose. He was searching for an image of his grandmother, who used to talk about “the man who lit the fire.” A man who vanished before Leo was born. A man with a name that wasn’t in any official database but whispered often in the corners of activist forums and broken server halls.

The file was labeled G.Solis://RootTruthChain-1.

He stared at the screen. Dust floated in the faint beam of his handheld. Around him, the library's upper floor creaked with every gust of storm wind. This place had no smart lighting, no climate control. Just shelves, silence, and time.

He clicked PLAY.

The man on the screen looked exhausted. Hollow-cheeked. But alive in a way Leo had never seen in real life. No filters. No performance. Just truth.

“We were promised freedom, but given frictionless servitude,” the man said. “Our lives made easy—for them. Our labor made invisible—for us.”

Reading sample — continued

Leo leaned closer. This wasn’t a manifesto. It was a heartbeat. Data with a soul.

The man kept speaking—about Inez, about Matteo, about something called PRISM. Leo didn’t understand all the references. But he understood tone. The feeling of someone laying bare everything, even if it cost them everything.

By the end, Leo’s hands were shaking.

He reached into his jacket and pulled out a cracked circuit board—the one his grandmother said came from “before the fire spread.” He thought it was junk. Now, he wasn’t sure.

He copied the file to a decentralized mesh drive, encrypted the copy, and hid it inside an app that looked like a glitchy weather feed.

Outside, the rain began again. The power grid flickered. Another blackout. Normal now.

But inside him, something else had lit up.

What if it wasn’t over?

What if the Spark could be rewritten?

He whispered, half afraid the shelves would hear him:

“We should bring this back.”

Chapter 1: The Data Cage

Gabriel Solís had long stopped checking the time. In the warehouse, time didn’t move—it pulsed. A dull electric hum overhead, syncopated with the buzz of drones and conveyor belts, marked the passing hours better than any clock.