

Crosswired
Episode 2

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Final

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CONTINUED:

SIMON Did I ever seem like I was one person and then suddenly I was, I dunno, different?

GRETCHEN Well, after the car wreck you seemed a bit, I don't know, traumatized.

SIMON Car wreck.

GRETCHEN Yeah. The crash. You know. What's wrong? You having memory problems? Are you sure you didn't get hurt? The news guy was saying it was a bomb.

SIMON Talk to me about the car wreck.

GRETCHEN Well, I don't know that much about it. You never really told me much. We'd only known each other a little while and you didn't seem to want to talk about it. I just figured--

SIMON Was I in the hospital?

GRETCHEN Just for a few hours I think. You said--

SIMON Is that all you know? What I told you?

GRETCHEN Well, yeah. Is there more?

SIMON I dunno. Listen, something's wrong.

GRETCHEN The bomb...

SIMON No, not the bomb. With me. You'd better sit down.

GRETCHEN I don't--

SIMON Please, Gretchen.

GRETCHEN Ok.

SIMON I was at the health center today when the bomb went off. I was waiting to see Dr Garvin and the bomb tore through the wall of the waiting area.

GRETCHEN My God...

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SIMON I caught a piece of shrapnel, I guess. Some debris. I don't know.

GRETCHEN You said you were ok.

SIMON I am. It didn't hurt me. It... did this.

GRETCHEN Wha...? Simon? What the hell is that?

SIMON I'm not human. Not anymore.

GRETCHEN What do you mean anymore?

SIMON I remember growing up. I remember breaking my arm playing football. This isn't the same arm.

GRETCHEN It isn't...

SIMON Somewhere along the line I changed. I became...

GRETCHEN What are you?

SIMON Cyborg. At least that's what Dr Garvin called me before I--

GRETCHEN Oh God! Oh my God.

SIMON Gretchen. Please. Calm down. I need your help right now.

GRETCHEN It's not possible. It's not--

SIMON I know. I know. It's not possible. But here it is. And I need your help to find out why.

GRETCHEN Why?

SIMON Why did someone go through the trouble to turn me into this?

GRETCHEN Dr Garvin. He's been treating you. For your diabetes. Did he...?

SIMON Yeah, he knew. He wasn't going to tell me, though. He was going to kill me.

GRETCHEN Kill?

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SIMON Terminate. Whatever. I eliminated that threat.

GRETCHEN Eliminated? What did you do? If he knew, maybe--

SIMON I could tell. I don't know how. I could tell exactly what he was thinking. There's no way he was going to let me live knowing what I was. And no way he was going to reveal what he knew.

GRETCHEN So you...

SIMON I eliminated the threat. And now I need your help.

GRETCHEN Simon...

SIMON Gretchen. Please. I don't know what I am or why, but I need your help in figuring it out. You're the smartest person I know.

GRETCHEN Beside you, you mean.

SIMON And I'm apparently part computer. Please help me.

GRETCHEN Ok. Fine. (shudders) God, but cover that arm up. I can't stand to look at it. (pause) Wait, so are you a robot all over?

SIMON I think so.

GRETCHEN Oh gross!

SIMON Too soon, Gretch. Too soon.

SCENE 2:

Simon and Gretchen are driving in Gretchen's car heading to Rhode Island to visit Simon's mother.

GRETCHEN A call would have been easier.

SIMON Maybe I am paranoid, but I don't think that would be a good idea.

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GRETCHEN Well, I guess this thing can use the highway miles. Blow out the carbon, isn't that what they say?

Some silence as they drive north.

GRETCHEN (cont'd) Can I ask you a question?

SIMON You just did.

GRETCHEN What does it feel like?

SIMON Like a normal body. Even now, knowing what it is, I can't tell. I mean, clearly I can do things faster than most people. I just thought I was...

GRETCHEN Gifted?

SIMON Yeah, I guess.

GRETCHEN You said you could read his mind.

SIMON Not like in words, but yeah. It was just so clear - his intent. There was no doubt in my mind.

GRETCHEN And me?

SIMON Can I read your mind? Sort of. Concern and fear, definitely. I guess that means you love me.

GRETCHEN I guess. Could be gas.

SIMON Well played.

GRETCHEN Why do you think that is? The mind-reading, thing.

SIMON I'm no expert in cyborgs.

GRETCHEN Well, no one is, I'd imagine. But--

SIMON Maybe...

GRETCHEN What?

SIMON An old professor of mine. Mostly worked with AI, but he was always going on about the convergence of humans and technology.

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GRETCHEN You MIT guys sure must be a riot at parties.

SIMON You'd be surprised.

GRETCHEN You thinking of talking to him?

SIMON It's only another hour or so north.

GRETCHEN So I'm getting a tour of all your old stomping grounds, huh? Meet your mom? You must love me, too.

SIMON Definitely gas.

They laugh.

SCENE 3:

Simon and Gretchen climb the stairs to MAUREEN DOUGHERTY's house. This is the home Simon grew up in.

GRETCHEN How do I look?

SIMON Like a million bucks. Relax. You already know each other.

GRETCHEN Phone calls and Facebook aren't the same as meeting in real life.

SIMON I'm not sure I know what real life is anymore.

GRETCHEN Don't be morose.

KNOCK ON DOOR

DOOR OPENS

SIMON Mom? It's me!

GRETCHEN Us.

SIMON Us!

Maureen steps into the foyer.

MAUREEN It's about time you came up for a visit.

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SIMON I know.

GRETCHEN Hi Mrs Dougherty.

MAUREEN Maureen, darling. And you look even prettier than your profile pictures.

GRETCHEN You stole my line.

MAUREEN Lovely to meet you finally. Well come in. Come in. I just put on some tea. Go have a seat in the parlor.

SIMON We really can't stay long. We're going up to Cambridge.

MAUREEN Oh, have a seat. You'll just hit rush hour traffic if you leave now.

Maureen exits to the kitchen as Simon and Gretchen enter the parlor. Sounds of tea being prepared can be heard.

GRETCHEN So, how does it feel to be back?

SIMON It's... Gah!

Simon sits down abruptly, holding his head.

GRETCHEN Simon! What's wrong? Mrs--

SIMON Don't!

GRETCHEN What's wrong? Talk to me.

SIMON I don't know. I've never felt like this before.

GRETCHEN Like...?

SIMON It's like a giant adrenaline rush. Everything is tingling.

GRETCHEN The long drive up?

SIMON I don't know. Just... I'm ok. Let's get this over with.

Maureen enters with a tea setting.

MAUREEN And here we are. Do you prefer milk?

GRETCHEN No, ma'am. Maureen. Just like that.

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MAUREEN I started to make some scones. I can still put them in the oven. They won't take too long.

GRETCHEN Oh, I love scones.

SIMON That won't be necessary, mom. We really can't stay all that long.

MAUREEN You haven't been home in so long. Surely you can--

SIMON We'll be back. Maybe on the way back from Cambridge. I just needed to talk to you about something.

MAUREEN Of course, dear. (to Gretchen) He's always been so intense, hasn't he. Focused. Remind me to give you a tour of the house before you go. I've kept his room exactly the same since high school.

SIMON Mom.

MAUREEN Oh, go ahead. What do you want to talk about. Wait. Are you two...

SIMON What? No!

GRETCHEN No! I mean, we're not even married or anything.

MAUREEN Oh, that doesn't mean anything nowadays.

SIMON That's not it.

MAUREEN Well, go on.

SIMON What do you know about my car accident?

MAUREEN (Seeming out of sorts)

Oh, we were so worried when we found out. Where are my glasses?

SIMON Did you come to visit me?

MAUREEN You wouldn't let me. You said it wasn't anything big. My--

(CONTINUED)

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SIMON But you worried.

MAUREEN It's called being a mother. Do you mind if I smoke?

GRETCHEN It's your house.

MAUREEN Now, where's my lighter. I must have left it in the other room.

SIMON Can't it wait?

MAUREEN I'll be right back. Just sit. Drink your tea.

SIMON How about my broken arm? When I was a kid.

MAUREEN Probably left it by the stove. Maybe you can look at the pilot light while you're here.

SIMON (whispered)

 Something isn't right.

GRETCHEN Simon?

SIMON This isn't like her.

GRETCHEN Dementia?

SIMON (aloud)

 You said "we" were worried. Who did you mean?

MAUREEN How's that, dear?

SIMON Before. You said "we" were worried. Dad's been dead for years.

MAUREEN Old habits, I'm afraid. Now that pilot.

Maureen exits to the kitchen.

SIMON We need to go.

GRETCHEN Simon.

SIMON We need to go now.

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GRETCHEN But--

SIMON That rush. It was like what I experienced when I met with Garvin, only much stronger. We're in danger here.

GRETCHEN But, your mom.

SIMON That's not her. We need to go.

GRETCHEN I smell gas.

SIMON The kitchen. Come on! Run!

GRETCHEN Maureen...

SIMON Come on!

Simon and Gretchen run out the door as Maureen re-enters the parlor.

MAUREEN I really should give these up one of these days. They'll probably kill me. Kids?

LIGHTER IGNITING

EXPLOSION

The gas-filled house explodes, sending debris everywhere.

GRETCHEN Oh God! Simon! Your mother. We have to...

SIMON We have to get out of here. Come on! Get in the car!

GRETCHEN Oh God!

SIMON Gretch! Move!

Car doors slam, the engine starts, revs and peels away. As the sound of the car fades a low rumble of helicopters rises.

SCENE 4:

Simon speaks to the listener.

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SIMON

I still don't know how I knew. It's more than premonition. Sensors? Feedback? Feedback regular humans don't get? Whatever it is, I need to learn to pay attention to it. And I need to understand just what I'm made of.

(pause)

I don't know if that was my mom or not. Whoever, or whatever, she was, she wasn't the woman who drove me to school, or put band-aids on my knee. Two attempts on my life in two days. Was it three? The bombing? Maybe I am paranoid. But I'm also alive.

Whatever that means. I need to talk to Dr Hadoop. I only hope whoever is trying to kill me hasn't gotten to him.