

CHAPTER 1: TUNNELERS or: THE SUBHUMAN RATS BENEATH TOKYO LONDON. I WISH THEY WERE ALL DEAD

Thomaseth smiled. "Jackpot," he said, clutching his goo-gun. There he was, in the vast depths below Tokyo London, face to face with his own personal fortune. This pile of goo was unlike anything he had ever seen—a thousand technocreds? No, too low. Ten thousand? Ballpark. It's been three weeks since he nabbed anything bigger than a tin can, and HQ was getting impatient.

He didn't want to startle the goo, so he kept his moves slow and deliberate. He loaded a plasma mag into his goo gun with the finesse of an ancient Japanese warrior, due in no small part to his years of martial arts training and e-verified 3.4% Neanderthal DNA.

This was no ordinary goo, however. It mobilised, slithering at breakneck speed to avoid Thomaseth's crosshairs. It strafed in a zig-zag pattern, preparing to pounce. It jumped, and at the last second dove beneath his legs. Thomaseth smirked. He'd seen it a hundred times. The classic over-under maneuver. Not one to be outdone by a goo, he responded in turn. Thomaseth did a spinning corkscrew jump kind of like Mario in Super Mario Sunshine, landed on one knee and fired a plasma bolt at the goo in one swift movement. The goo dodged to the right, and fired a goo-based projectile that Thomaseth was quick to avoid.

Thomaseth smirked again. "A tough guy, huh?" He followed the zigzagging goo with the sights of his goo-gun. He would not miss again. All it would take is one slip, one simple mistake and that goo is a fat stack of technocreds with his name on it. Ready...aim... Thomaseth heard a scream. It broke his concentration and in a split second the goo began to flee. The scream was coming from behind him and getting louder. He could either chase the goo and risk an ambush from behind, or cut his losses and prepare himself for whatever was running closer. Thomaseth smirked for a third time. He knew he had lost one HECK of a bounty but he didn't care. "Looks like this day just got...interesting."

Thomaseth did a somersault twist maneuver and pointed his goo-gun towards the scream. The dim light gave way to a silhouette. It was a man. A short man. Thomaseth sighed. "Laramie." He said. "Fucking Laramie."

Laramie Slow-round was a pathetic shell of a man. Pudgy and quite short, he resembled a rotund pile of goo. Beads of sweat poured down his piggy-pig face, and his puffy cheeks were a bright rose-red. The short sprint to Thomaseth had robbed him of what little breath he could keep in his underdeveloped lungs, and he keeled over to collect himself. Laramie was among the bottom 10 percent of Goo-Hunters, surpassing only the women and the disfigured. His aim was dreadful, he could only pull off 10, maybe 20 maneuvers tops, the goos he did bag were juveniles, and he hardly got any killstreaks at all.

The sight of Laramie repulsed Thomaseth. He had tried in the past to diagnose what exactly was wrong with his corpulent comrade, and he had come to the conclusion that his T-count was dangerously low. On top of this, he suspected that Laramie was cursed with <1% Neanderthal DNA. Laramie's shortcomings had left him quite feeble, both physically and mentality. His intellect lagged behind: he was a pre-sing mind in a post-sing world (sing means singularity). With him were outdated relics of the past: instead of the standard issue technowatch and EZ-shades, Laramie was equipped with last-gen hardware. His betawatch was little more than a timepiece with an ultranet connection and his obsolete sol-blockers failed to protect his eyes from dangerous goo-rays. What a fucking idiot. What a fat retarded piece of shit.

Worst of all? Laramie's g-wife (government wife) (that's when the government gives you a wife because of the singularity, very complicated and official government stuff) was a total babe. Thomaseth could only guess what Laramie had been running from. A goo? Classic Laramie.

With his bounty gone, Thomaseth called out Laramie's name. The panting Laramie snapped his head back in fear, only to be relieved when he saw his fellow Goo-Hunter further down the tunnel.

"Thom—Thomaseth!" he shouted, struggling to catch his breath. "I wasn't—you didn't—"

"Shut the fuck up Laramie," said Thomaseth. He spit on the ground three times. That was something people did after the singularity. "You know how many technocreds you just cost me, you goofy fuck?"

"Look, but you have to let me explain w—"

"Ten thousand technocreds, Laramie. Hand it over."

"*Ten thousand?! Does it look like I'm made of money?!*"

It was then that the built-in laugh track simulator went off in Thomaseth's earpiece, indicating Laramie had made a joke. And from the reaction of the crowd, it was a real *zinger*. A real big hit. Thomaseth couldn't help but smirk for a fourth time. Everyone knew that money was outlawed after the singularity; technocreds are something completely different, just something you work for in order to exchange for goods and services.

"Ah hell, I can't stay mad at you, you chubby piece of shit." Thomaseth lowered his goo-gun, which had been pointed at Laramie's sweating butterball face for the last few minutes. He moved closer, the light from all the glowing gizmos and gadgets on his technovest betraying the fear on his fellow Goo-Hunter's face. He shouldn't have been this scared. Not if he was running from a lowly goo.

Thomaseth opened his mouth to ask Laramie to explain further, when suddenly a ferocious rumble echoed from further down the tunnel. Laramie started sobbing like a woman while Thomaseth activated his tactical enhancements to prepare himself for some uber-maneuvers.

“Laramie, what the fuck is going on? What the fuck did you do? You’re always ruining shit for everyone else. First you scare off my BIG bounty, and now you led some kind of monster over here? To me? Your loyal brother in arms? You always were a fuck-up, Laramie. A real piece of shit. A real fat, retarded, ugly piece of shit. You really bunged it up this time. Really shit the bed. You fucking retard. You fucking pigshit retard.”

“Thomaseth, please, let me exp—“

“No, I think I’ve heard enough. I’m going to let whatever this thing is eat you and then I’m going to kill it. I’m going to specifically wait until you’re dead before I do anything and it’s your own fault. Fuck I hate you so much.”

Laramie grabbed Thomaseth by the shoulders and started shaking him wildly. “It’s not a fucking monster! It’s the Tunnelers!”

The Tunnelers. Thomaseth knew them well. In his 754 missions to the depths of Tokyo London, he had seen more than his fair share. They went by many names. Depth-grovellers. Mole people. Goo people. Molefuckers. Goofuckers. ‘Tunneler’ would have been the politically correct term had politics still existed, but it didn’t because of the singularity. Laramie’s choice of term disgusted Thomaseth even more than he already was, to a level of disgust he didn’t even know was possible.

Tunnelers would be a problem. They toiled, here in the tunnels, for trace amounts of neoplasmid from goo-hunting residue. They completely forewent a post-sing lifestyle, not even using the ultranet. “What a bunch of fucking retards,” Thomaseth thought to himself. “Don’t they know how cool the singularity is? Don’t they care that they don’t need money or to work anymore? God I hate them so fucking much.”

Before long, Thomaseth had planned on killing them all. Laramie was shaking in his boots, recounting all the tall tales about the Tunnelers in his little piggy-pig brain. Some say they would ask Goo-Hunters for spare technocreds like the lowly depth-grovellers they were. Others say that they don’t even know what the ultranet *was*. Both stories had Laramie shook to his core. There was a deep feeling of dread knowing that people would choose to live such horrific primitive lives, and Thomaseth knew they had to be stopped at all costs.

He deduced that the rumbling sound were actually primitive jackhammers, nearly completely unheard of since the singularity. The deafening noise would no doubt reduce men as weak as Laramie to tears, but Thomaseth kept composed. His mind raced with thoughts of how stupid

these goofucking degenerates were using their goofy jackhammers instead of post-sing cryptominers and technomallets. A truly vile race of subhumans. He slung his goo-gun on his back and threw his arms up behind him, preparing himself for the most efficient form of running. The classic cyberninja sprint maneuver.

“Thomaseth, you’re not thinking of actually going over there, are you?” asked the cowardly Laramie.

“Stay back,” said Thomaseth, clicking his heels together to deploy his Speed-E-Wheels. “Get back to HQ.”

Laramie hesitated for a moment, and nodded. He knew what had to be done; for him, the fight was over. Turning a knob on his chest, he deployed his hoverdisc. He hopped aboard, but before he left, he looked over to his fellow hunter. “Hey Thomaseth,” he said, setting coordinates for Goo HQ. “Try not to get yourself killed, huh?”

Thomaseth looked over at his portly friend, who was fumbling to enter the right coordinates. “Shut the fuck up and go back to HQ you fucking retard,” he said. He couldn’t help but smirk for a fifth time. Laramie might have been a stupid fat piece of shit, but his heart was in the right place.

Laramie hovered away on his disc. With that distraction gone, Thomaseth turned his attention to the Tunnelers further down the corridor. His Speed-E-Wheels were fully charged, his arms were in the optimal cyberninja sprint position, and his EZ-shades were polarized to protect his eyes from the horrors of pre-sing life; he was completely prepared. With a tap of his heel off the ground, he began his rapid dash to the Tunnelers, half running and half grinding with his Speed-E-Wheels. Sparks kicked up behind him in a vibrant technicolor rainbow. Not the gay kind of rainbow, but a cool cyberpunk post-sing rainbow. Statistics flew across his eyes, displayed on his shades. He was at the optimal aerodynamic level, he was going the perfect speed. In fact, only one stat wasn’t perfect. His heart rate. Although he kept his cool in front of the pathetic Laramie, the truth was that Thomaseth was scared.

He didn’t have much time before he had to face his fears. As he zoomed along the hard ground of the tunnel, the rumble of the primitive power tools grew louder and louder. Beads of sweat dripped down his forehead, quickly wiped away by his built-in shade wipers. He wondered what the Tunnelers would do to him once he got there. Would they ask him for technocreds? Would they try to recruit him into their singularity shunning lifestyle? Frankly, he didn’t want to know.

Figures appeared in front of him. Faint silhouettes at first, but definitely human—that is, if you could call Tunnelers *human*. Breaks in the rumbling were filled with the sounds of laughter.

Thomaseth deduced that there were at least two of them, with his expert estimation skills concluding that there were no more than fifteen.

He slowed down once he could tell how many there actually were. Three. He was right. Thomaseth smirked for a sixth time. “Three on one,” he thought. “Guess we’re even, then.”

He quietly approached the Tunnelers, who were taking turns using the jackhammer and telling nonsense stories about their pigshit primitive lives. He could see a pile of neoplasmid that would fetch quite the price of technocreds in the right market, but there was no way any of these depth-grovellers would be allowed anywhere near a stack of creds that big.

One of the Tunnelers went to stretch his legs, when he spotted Thomaseth creeping in the shadows. “Fellas!” he said, waving over his two companions. “I think it’s one of them Goo-Hunters!”

Thomaseth tried to play the situation by ear. He had been spotted, yes, but it didn’t look like any of the Tunnelers had deployed their weapons--yet. He stood, trying not to make any quick or jerky movements.

“Yeah! I think he is!” said another, uglier Tunneler. “Check out the fancy gear on that one! Jeez, fellas, a real Goo-Hunter!”

The first Tunneler, who Thomaseth identified as their leader due to his age and height, approached him without fear. “’Scuse me,” he said, with a big crooked smile on his face. “You’re one of them Goo-Hunters, ain’t ya?”

Thomaseth could hardly believe what he was hearing. He could barely make out what they were saying through all that goofucker gobbledygook, but he thought they were asking if he was a Goo-Hunter. Him. *Thomaseth*. Of course he was a fucking Goo-Hunter. Look at his EZ-shades, his technovest, his goo-gun. These Tunnelers were stupider than he thought. Such a stupid question offended him to the highest level. He could hardly contain the anger he felt, mustering up only a mumbled affirmative response. This was fight or flight.

“You are, ain’t ya? If that ain’t the best news I’ve heard all day. Look, we got this big-ass goo tryin’ ta ruin our dig. He’s just down the tunnel guardin’ a real big stash of neo’ that we really need get our hands on, y’know? I know you fellas is always tryin’ to bag those fuckers, wanna do us a favour and take ‘im out for us?”

The Tunneler’s dialect was almost completely incomprehensible to Thomaseth. All he could hear was grunting and the word “goo” repeated over and over. He tried waving with both hands and shaking his head, and the eldest Tunneler began to speak again.

“Alright alright, you’re a busy guy. I get it. Say, do an old man a solid and spare a couple technocreds?”

Dialect or not, begging was a universal language. Thomaseth’s disgust had reached its boiling point. In one fell motion, he unslung his gun and fired a plasma bolt into the eldest Tunnelers’ face. The impact of the bolt caused his head to explode in a gory, pink mist, splattering blood and bits of brain and bone everywhere. A spurt of blood erupted from his headless neck, and he fell over, spasming like the lowly goofucker he was.

“Wh-what the fuck?!” screamed the second Tunnelers, his face covered in gore. “You fuckin’ piece of shit you fuckin’ killed him! What the fuck?! What the fu—“

Thomaseth fired a shot into the midsection of the second Tunnelers. His entrails were sent scattered in a hundred different directions, leaving him to drown in his own blood while he gurgled. It was a disgusting sound, but nowhere near as disgusting as hearing his primitive dialect.

The third Tunnelers began to run. He knew the tunnels much better than Thomaseth, but that didn’t matter. With the Hardline perk he unlocked for exemplary goo-hunting, he was able to activate the radar kill-streak with one fewer kill than what was usually necessary. A heat-seeking minimap appeared in the top right corner of Thomaseth’s vision, allowing him to know where the third Tunnelers was at all times. He smirked for a seventh time. The hunt was on.

The situation called for one of his uber-maneuvers: wall-run. His Speed-E-Wheels whirled while he jumped on the wall, allowing him to avoid the obstacles left by the Tunnelers’ wanton mining operation. The Tunnelers’ movements on his radar looked erratic and ungraceful. Thomaseth concluded that the goofucker was either injured or incredibly unintelligent. Probably both.

Thomaseth jumped from one wall to another, a maneuver he liked to call “triangle jump”. The Tunnelers was shucking and jiving through bits of slag. He was much faster than any person with negligible Neanderthal DNA had any business being, which really pissed off the superior Thomaseth.

“Let’s end this,” he said, changing the firing mode on his goo-gun to Spray’N’Pray. He held down the trigger for two seconds, launching a barrage of fluorescent balls of plasma in a thousand different directions. The fast moving projectiles bounced off the walls of the tunnel, leaving faint green decals wherever they hit.

The Tunnelers tripped on an either dead or sleeping bum, and fell flat on his face. “Jesus fuck!” he screamed, unable to pick himself back up. “Jesus fuck no! Fuck! Jesus! No! Oh fuck FUCK!”

Hundreds of rounds bounced off the walls of the tunnel into the third Tunneler. He wriggled and writhed as his body was torn to shreds, his screams giving way to the bloodcurdling sound of bouncing giblets. The bum he had tripped over was torn to bits too—if he wasn't dead before, he was now.

It was silent. Thomaseth loaded another mag into his goo-gun and cautiously approached his prey. A notification flashed before his eyes, indicating that he had received his 4-kill killstreak. Care package. He decided he would keep it for later—you never know when a CAREPACK (that's what they call care packages after the singularity) will come in handy.

Thomaseth stood over the bodies. Absolutely riddled with holes, they oozed out gallons of neoplasmid. He couldn't help but smirk for an eighth time over the irony of the situation, seeing as this goofucker piece of shit would have probably killed him to get his hands on all that neo.

He kicked what was left of the Tunneler over, seeing if anything of value was left behind. Rummaging through the gory mess, he got his hands covered in all sorts of nasty goofucker gunk. This really upset him, so he spit on the ground four times, indicating a level of disgust higher than when he only spit three times before. This was an integral part of post-sing culture. Eventually, Thomaseth found an e-wallet with fifty technocreds. Smirking for a ninth time, he scanned the e-wallet with his own, transferring the creds to him. It would take nearly a week for the transfer to go be quintuple-verified by the techchain, but Thomaseth decided it was worth it for the added cyber-security.

Satisfied with having gotten at least a few technocreds out of the day's ordeals, Thomaseth slung his goo-gun on his back and deployed his hoverdisc. A small circle ejected from his chest and landed on the ground, expanding in a spiral pattern to a platform large enough to stand on. Some hunters, especially pathetic ones like Laramie, made use of an optional handle to support themselves while riding. Thomaseth, on the other hand, much preferred surfing on his hoverdisc hands-free. He climbed aboard, and punched the Goo HQ (pronounced GOOHACK) coordinates into his technowatch. The disc whirled into action, projecting a low green light as it hovered into the air.

With tremendous speed, the disc flew through the tunnels. Cool Eurobeat music began playing through Thomaseth's earpiece, indicating he had reached optimal velocity. He dipped and dived through the air, over rubble and under bits of jagged rock. Beneath him was a technicolour light show, although it is necessary to reiterate that it was not gay at all.

Miles of tunnel passed below the weary warrior. For a split second, Thomaseth saw what he believed was a Tunneler encampment. He made a mental note to set it on fire later and probably kill everyone inside too.

Minutes passed, and a light shone from the end of the tunnel. A mish-mash of strobing neon lights dance around the entrance. Vibrant pinks, blues, and greens. Thomaseth could feel the warm glow of civilization on his grizzled face. “Tokyo London,” he muttered to himself quietly. “Home sweet home.”

CHAPTER 2: TECHTROPOLIS or: I SURVIVED THE TUNNELS AND ALL I GOT WAS THIS STUPID T-SHIRT (FREE E-CIGARETTE INCLUDED, ONE TIME USE ONLY)

The whirring turbines of a thousand strange and arcane machines began to drown out the Eurobeat in Thomaseth’s ears. This loud hum served as the ever-present backdrop of Tokyo London, aural proof of the technological singularity.

Thomaseth emerged from the tunnels and into the techtropolis. With no ceiling above him, his disc ascended into the air, lifting him far above the Gate-Gremlins who loitered around the tunnel entrances. He looked down on them with contempt for being unproductive wastes of human flesh, but their ability to navigate the ultranet and their tendency to steal next-gen gadgets and gizmos put them slightly above the Tunnelers in his personal subhuman tier list.

No longer confined by the speed limits of the tunnels, the hoverdisc accelerated to speeds approaching 20 or perhaps even 30 miles per hour. Thomaseth smirked for a tenth time as the wind blew through his flowing locks, which he carefully washed with NOPOO brand hair cleaner once every 8 days. He looked at the sky. To Thomaseth, it resembled TV static. Or at least he thought it did, as with television being one of the casualties of the singularity, Thomaseth had never actually seen it before. Raw digital signals bounced between countless nanomachines in the air, ready to formulate themselves into advertisements at a moment’s notice. As if reading his mind, an ad for NOPOO illuminated throughout the sky like a giant screen, alongside a lengthy series of numbers and letters.

“NOPOO. Recommended by Goo-Hunters, for Goo-Hunters.” Asian women (the attractive kind, either Koreans or Japanese ones, or perhaps upper class Chinese), were pictured kissing each other as the monotone synthesized voice repeated the message a second and third time. Remembering he was nearly out, Thomaseth entered the 45-digit techchain code into his e-wallet and transferred enough ‘creds to get himself a year’s supply—shipped straight to his domicile in 4 to 6 weeks. “This kind of convenience must be mind-boggling to those stupid pre-sing chucklefucks,” he said, smirking for an eleventh time.

Satisfied, he decided to look through his CAREPACK. Goo HQ was still a ways away, 15 minutes at the top speed of 32 miles per hour on his hoverdisc. The package was bulky and misshapen, giving Thomaseth hope it was full of all sorts of little goodies. Like a greedy child, he ripped off the cyberpaper (which is not entirely unlike regular paper, just with cool post-sing

designs and random computer chips glued to it) and discovered a garment or perhaps a blanket wrapped up tight with fibre-optic cables. With the strength attained by years of Japanese martial arts and drinking a gallon of full-fat non pasteurized milk per day, Thomaseth made quick work of the cables, allowing him to unfurl his prize.

He held it triumphantly before him, revealing the object's identity as a black t-shirt, with the words "GOO MAN" displayed off-centre on the front of it. In one of the pockets (after the singularity, all articles of clothing have extra pockets), Thomaseth discovered a one-time-use e-cigarette, which he quickly puffed and threw down below for the streetwalkers and other unwashed dregs to fight over. He put the shirt on overtop of the uniform he was wearing, as a badge of honour for his success in the tunnels.

In the distance, the pyramid-shaped building containing Goo HQ became visible, its strobing lights cutting through the dense smog of the city. An incredibly intense '*UNCE UNCE UNCE UNCE*' bellowed as the giant subwoofers produced a deafening techno beat. Thomaseth could feel the bass in his chest as his earpiece activated its noise cancelling software to compensate. Non-audiophiles and lower class peasants alike were kept at bay by the tremendously loud noise constantly emanating from the HQ, ensuring only the best of the best, with the highest quality Bose headphones, were capable of coming anywhere *near* the Goo-Hunters' headquarters.

The hoverdisc began descending, activating its crowd-control projectile spray of thumbtacks and other small pointy things to deter any deaf or hard-of-hearing ratmen from accosting Thomaseth upon landing. He performed a backflip as the disc neared the ground, landing with the finesse of a tight little Chinese gymnast girl. Reaching under his t-shirt to turn the knob on his chest, the hoverdisc folded itself back up and attempted to return to its compartment, only to bounce off his new shirt. "Sometimes, you gotta suffer for fashion," he said, manually putting the folded disc back onto his vest under his shirt like some kind of pre-sing troglodyte.

He approached the door of Goo HQ, which alternated flashy colours like some kind of futuristic slot machine. Current scientific understanding suggested that beggars were incapable of tolerating such extreme sensory stimulation, but still one hobbled its way over to Thomaseth with a face full of thumbtacks.

"Geez, what da fuck was dat? Stings like a mothe—"

Thomaseth, not in the mood for this rat's antics, grabbed him by the throat and choked him within an inch of his life, throwing his body into a pile of needles from his hoverdisc. He didn't see a kill show up on his HUD, and smirked for a twelfth time.

"Heh, looks like it's your lucky day. I'm too busy to finish you off," Thomaseth said. The man groaned something but Thomaseth wasn't really listening.

At the door, he was subjected to both an eye scan and technowatch verification. He made sure that no one followed him in as the doors opened for him. He was finally back.

A man like Thomaseth could expect a King's reception back at HQ. Not only did he have one of the highest kill counts of any Goo-Hunter, but he was wearing the latest CAREPACK t-shirt. One man prostrated himself at his feet, begging for Thomaseth to be his tutor. Instead, he got kicked in the jaw while onlookers gave nods in approval.

The interior of Goo HQ was a far cry away from its vibrant casinoesque exterior. It was comparatively quite spartan, with grey furniture, a cyberpool table, and 3 bikini babe calendars pinned up at strategic points in the main room. A corridor led to the armoury and firing range, but Thomaseth's skills made visiting it completely pointless. He glanced around, looking to see if he was getting an appropriate level of admiration when he saw Laramie eating some kind of slop out of a bucket.

The intensity at which this man was devouring his nutrient paste was equal parts disgusting and awe inspiring. Thomaseth spat on the ground, furious that Laramie was eating the culinary equivalent of goo when he could be drinking milk instead. While he was risking his life cleaning up the tunnels, Laramie was neck deep in a bucket of inferior supplement slurry. Thomaseth was *really* mad. "I'm *really* mad," he said, out loud.

Despite Laramie's shortcomings, both physically and performance-wise, he was uncharacteristically popular at Goo HQ. He sat chuckling and gossiping with his fellow underachievers while they all stuffed their faces with sludge, giggling like *women*. The idea of Laramie going home after this and getting a meal home cooked by his gorgeous Taiwanese g-wife was too much for Thomaseth to bear. That should be *his* wife. That should be *his* beautiful porcelain china-doll sweetheart. *His* precious jade dragon.

Thomaseth's g-wife, unfortunately, was *not* Asian. She was Irish, or Swedish or something. He neither knew nor cared. He petitioned HQ a thousand times to upgrade him to the oriental tigress he knew he deserved, but every single time they vetoed with statements like "it doesn't work like that," and "you can't just get *another* wife." Nonsense. Thomaseth *knew* that Laramie must have pulled some serious strings to get his blushing bride. Greased the right palms, maybe? That must be it. He was always sucking up to the boss, *and* the boss's boss.

Thomaseth's earpiece played a recording of a steam whistle, complete with water vapour coming out of his ears to fully convey his anger.

