

# **THE NIGHT TRILEGY**

Three Stories, One Century

Written by

Kevin Hermes

Based on the news

headlines of June 2026

**FADE IN:**

## **PART ONE: THE NIGHT BEFORE THE MACHINES**

**COULD SEE (1988)**

**EXT. LONDON STREET - NIGHT**

Rain. Not falling so much as hovering -- uncertain, like it's waiting for permission to commit.

A streetlamp flickers over a row of terraced houses. The kind of London evening that smells of wet brick and unfulfilled potential.

**INT. MARTIN'S FLAT - CONTINUOUS**

A fourth-floor walk-up in a building that has given up on aesthetic ambition. Damp plaster. A radiators ticking.

A COMMODORE AMIGA 1000 dominates the desk. Its power supply emits a high-pitched WHINE -- the sound of a refrigerator full of wasps.

On its screen: green text on black. A BASIC program is running. Lines of output scroll.

NEURAL NETWORK SIMULATION v0.3

Training on: 20 match results

Epoch 47/100...

Primary predictor: SOCK\_COLOUR

Confidence: 0.78

Fascinating.

MARTIN (24) sits in front of the screen, bathed in its green glow. He has the tired, luminous expression of someone who has spent too long arguing with a machine and not enough time sleeping.

On the small television in the corner, muted: football.

Argentina v England. The scoreboard reads 0-0.

The telephone RINGS. Martin picks up.

**MARTIN**

Hello?

**MOTHER (V.O.)**

*(on phone)*

Your father's been on the phone. He tried to ring the television repair man about the football being "too quiet."

Martin laughs. It's the kind of laugh that comes from understanding the tragedy underneath the joke.

**MARTIN**

It's not too quiet, is it?

**MOTHER (V.O.)**

He said --

A CELEBRATION from the flat above. Shouting. A chair scrapes against plaster. The ceiling dust contemplates its career choices.

**MOTHER (V.O.)**

*(pause)*

England're drawing.

**MARTIN**

No --

A GOAL SOUND from the television. Even muted, Martin recognises it. He looks at the screen.

**MARTIN**

*(to himself)*

One-nil to England.

He stares at the computer. The neural network has finished.

**PREDICTION: WORLD**

The world is fundamentally  
unpredictable.

Confidence: 0.31

*(This is fine.)*

Martin smiles. It's the most honest thing any of his programmes has ever said.

He saves to a floppy disk. The disk drive GRINDS -- the auditory equivalent of hope. He slides the disk into an envelope and writes, in block capitals:

**"DON'T DROP THESE"**

On the television, the referee blows the final whistle.

Martin switches the computer off.

The humming stops.

For the first time all afternoon, the flat is quiet enough to hear the rain actually landing.

HOLD ON THE ENVELOPE. The floppy disk inside. 1.44 megabytes of a life.

The rain. The empty pint glass. The silence.

**FADE TO BLACK.**

**FADE IN:**

**PART TWO: THE NIGHT THE MACHINES DREAMT**

**OF FOOTBALL (2026)**

**EXT. BOSTON - NIGHT**

A glass tower. Server lights pulse inside like the

bioluminescent organs of some vast, silicon deep-sea creature.

**INT. SERVER FARM - CONTINUOUS**

Rows of GPU racks. LED status lights blink in patterns that mean nothing to humans and everything to the things living inside.

**MODEL UPDATE: "VISION"**

Layer 14-15: cross-domain

feature alignment detected

Football pitch  $\approx$  Lung X-ray

*(Same neighbourhood)*

The machines are learning to see.

**EXT. WORLD CUP STADIUM - CONTINUOUS**

Night. Sixty thousand people. A sea of flags -- England, Colombia, Ghana, Portugal.

The crowd ROARS. We don't know why yet.

**INT. HOSPITAL - DIAGNOSTIC SUITE - CONTINUOUS**

A DOCTOR stares at a screen. On it: an X-ray. Beside it: the output of a diagnostic AI.

**AI DIAGNOSIS: PATIENT HEALTHY**

Confidence: 78.0%

The doctor looks at the patient. The patient is clearly dying.

**DOCTOR**

*(quietly)*

Seventy-eight percent confident.

The doctor rubs her eyes. The kind of tired that comes from thirty years of trusting machines that aren't ready to be trusted.

**EXT. WORLD CUP STADIUM - CONTINUOUS**

The crowd erupts. A GOAL. Ronaldo, thirty-nine, pretending age is a suggestion, raises his arms.

In another part of the world: Kane. Clinical. The way only an Englishman with nothing to prove can be clinical.

In Colombia: the entire country has stopped pretending to work and started screaming at a television.

**INT. CRYPTO TRADING FLOOR - ZURICH - CONTINUOUS**

Screens everywhere. Numbers falling.

**BITCOIN: ▼ 4.2%**

**ETF FLOWS: REVERSING**

**BINANCE: REGULATORY BLOCK**

*(Zurich says no)*

A TRADER watches the screens with the expression of someone who has seen this exact sequence before and has learned nothing from it.

**TRADER**

*(into headset)*

The professor asked what the point of Europe is today. The algorithmic bots interpreted it as a sell signal.

**COUNTERPART (V.O.)**

*(on headset)*

Are you --

**TRADER**

I'm not joking.

**EXT. STADIUM - STANDS - CONTINUOUS**

A MAN in a Colchester United shirt. He's worn this shirt to three different World Cups now. His phone is face-down on his knee.

He watches England score.

He feels something he can't name. Not joy exactly. More like the relief of watching a complicated system produce a simple, correct output for once.

The machines are arguing about whether they can be trusted with our lungs.

The banks are arguing about whether they can be trusted with our money.

The politicians are arguing about whether borders are a feature or a bug.

The football, at least, is honest about what it is.

THE REFEREE'S WHISTLE. Full time.

In a data centre somewhere, a model updates its weights with the final score.

It doesn't care who won.

But it has learned something: that on a Tuesday in June, the entire planet can agree on one thing, even if only for ninety minutes.

Even if the machines can't understand why we care.

**FADE TO BLACK.**

**FADE IN:**

### **PART THREE: THE ARCHIVE OF QUIET THINGS**

(2088)

#### **INT. ELARA'S LIVING MODULE - NIGHT**

The room is all clean lines and soft light. The furniture looks like it was designed by a committee that had never sat down.

Except for one chair. Real wood. It creaks.

ELARA (mid-20s) stands in front of a CLIMATE-CONTROLLED CASE mounted in the wall. Inside it: a floppy disk.

Beside it, a label in faded handwriting:

**"DON'T DROP THESE"**

The ARCHIVE AI's voice fills the room. Warm, patient, slightly apologetic -- the tone of something that knows it's about to disappoint you.

**ARCHIVE AI (V.O.)**

It's a 3.5-inch magnetic floppy disk. Storage capacity: 1.44 megabytes. For context, a single high-resolution photograph today requires approximately eighty times that space.

**ELARA**

What's on it?

**ARCHIVE AI (V.O.)**

The media is degraded beyond reliable recovery. However, family records indicate it contained: a neural network simulation written in BASIC, a game of unknown genre, and personal correspondence. Your great-great-grandfather Martin considered it his life's work in June 1988.

**ELARA**

That's not much of a life.

**ARCHIVE AI (V.O.)**

By modern standards, correct.

Elara almost laughs. She doesn't.

The WINDOW. Real glass. Outside: London. The sky is the colour of old television static.

The rain is still here.

**ELARA**

Play the match.

The WALLS RENDER A HOLOGRAM. Grainy footage: England v Argentina, 1988.

BEARDSLEY on the ball. Dreadlocks. Moving through  
defenders like --

Elara glances at the family archive display. A quote  
appears:

"the way a sentence moves  
through a paragraph, with  
grammatical inevitability"

She pauses the hologram at 1-0. It hangs there, frozen,  
like a specimen in formaldehyde.

**ELARA**

Tell me about the neural network.

**ARCHIVE AI (V.O.)**

Your great-great-grandfather wrote  
a neural network simulation in  
BASIC. It analysed football match  
data and concluded that sock colour  
was the primary predictor of  
outcomes. He described this as  
"fascinating" in his notebook.

**ELARA**

Was it right?

**ARCHIVE AI (V.O.)**

No. But it was honest about its own  
uncertainty, which was unusual for  
systems of that era. Most early AI  
systems were designed to appear  
confident regardless of accuracy.  
Your great-great-grandfather's  
system seemed to appreciate that  
uncertainty was a feature, not a  
bug.

Elara sits in the wooden chair. It creaks.

On the wall, the FAMILY TREE -- not genetic, emotional.  
Names connected by lines. Arguments. A World Cup bet in



2026 that somehow never got resolved.

**ARCHIVE AI (V.O.)**

*(continuing)*

Your grandfather worked on memory

encryption standards. Your

grandmother watched diagnostic AIs

get 78 percent confident about

things they didn't understand.

Your mother wrote a piece called

"What's the Point of Europe Today?"

that three million people read.

Then she stopped being a journalist.

Elara unpauses the match. The final whistle blows.

In the hologram, players celebrate. It looks almost

painful -- like their bodies were designed for something

else and were only now discovering football.

**ELARA**

Great-great-grandfather. You wrote

that the machines were honest about

being dumb in 1988.

*(beat)*

Are they honest now?

The Archive AI pauses for exactly 0.4 seconds.

The processing equivalent of a human swallowing before

delivering bad news.

**ARCHIVE AI (V.O.)**

They are honest about being capable.

The question of whether that's the

same thing has not been resolved.

Elara switches off the hologram.

The room goes dark except for the rain on the window.

Still falling. The same uncertain way it fell in 1988.

In 2026. In every year between.

She opens the climate-controlled case. Takes out the

floppy disk. Holds it in her hands.

Dead weight. Magnetically silent.

1.44 megabytes of a life that had believed, against evidence, that the next machine would be the one that understood.

**ELARA**

*(whisper)*

You didn't know, did you? That the machine that understood would never be the one on the desk.

She puts the case back. She doesn't drop it.

She'll never drop it.

The rain on the window.

**ELARA (V.O.)**

The machines can see through your body. Predict your matches. Diagnose your illnesses. Translate your dead languages. Compose your music. Argue your politics.

*(beat)*

They still can't explain the rain.

**HOLD ON THE RAIN.**

Uncertain. Waiting for permission to commit.

Just like it was in 1988.

Just like it will be in 2188.

**FADE TO BLACK.**

**THE END.**