CHAPTER 10 — THE RIGHT TO REMAIN

Expanded English reconstruction; not a recovered verbatim original

01 — Going Back

Roy returned to the sealed facility with Rachel, Adrian, and Chronos. No one promised that his lost years would finally make sense. NIL-11R remained stable but finite. The child chose to enter the place he feared. Adrian carried the original physical authentication modules, and Rachel carried the witness medium. Together they descended toward the white room.

Roy descended with Rachel, Adrian, and Chronos through a shaft that had outlived the government that commissioned it. The child was frightened, but insisted on accompanying them. Roy reminded him that an open door existed as a choice, not a test. They carried authenticated physical evidence, not merely copies of allegations. The difference mattered because the Minister had spent years relying on the idea that his office could decide what counted as real.

The group traveled below a metropolis that had barely noticed its own history reappearing. Public transit continued, rain collected in the gutters, and commercial displays advertised futures in which every human need could be predicted and sold. Roy considered the irony. The people pursuing him had devoted immense resources to predicting and reproducing him, yet had never asked what he wanted. Beside him Chronos clutched a mechanical clock. The child's fear of returning to the sealed facility was plain. Roy did not offer false safety. He offered the possibility of turning back. Chronos refused it with a quiet decisiveness that mattered more than

anything he might have done to the city around them.

02 — Two Rachels

R-07 stood beside the Minister when the door opened. She and Rachel shared a technological lineage and similar features, but not one biography. R-07 rejected the assumption that an earlier model owned or defined a later person. Roy accepted the distinction immediately. After witnessing another Roy’s refusal, he would not treat similarity as evidence of possession.

Inside the white room R-07 faced the Minister without accepting his definition of her. He called her research property. She distinguished being constructed through technology from being owned by its inheritors. When he tried to issue an override, the terminal requested witness consent. The room's safeguard was not a substitute for a court or a complete philosophy of personhood. It was a small procedural obstacle that had nevertheless survived powerful people's attempts to erase it.

03 — The Four Who Refused

Outside, Goliath, Shade, Vector, and Null confronted the armed security staff. They transmitted the destructive recovery order and refused to let a disputed life be dismembered under a concealed administrative claim. The former hunters did not seize government power. They asked the guards to read what they had been told to do. One by one, weapons were lowered.

Rachel faced a woman built from an earlier generation of her own series. Their similarities were undeniable; their private lives were not interchangeable. R-07 recognized Rachel as a later descendant in design, but denied that either woman could decide for the other. Roy accepted that immediately. He had just watched a previous man with his face refuse an experiment. The archives were teaching the same lesson through different

bodies: likeness was not ownership, and inheritance was not consent.

R-07 and Rachel stood with a resemblance so strong that the Minister assumed one must be an iteration of the other in the legally convenient sense. R-07 corrected him. Similar biological architecture did not mean shared experience. No one could use the current Rachel's consent as a substitute for R-07's own, and the reverse was equally true. Roy listened with attention shaped by the earlier continuity recording. A man with his face had refused an experiment; the present Roy had no right to overwrite that refusal with an imagined memory of agreement. A family of designs could contain separate people whose relationship demanded recognition rather than merger. The room's old records were suddenly less abstract than they had ever been.

04 — The Last Machines

Autonomous platforms activated under the facility’s old lockdown procedure. Roy engaged them without asking Chronos to warp space. He diverted one machine through its own momentum, trapped another against a maintenance platform, and used a mechanical emergency release against the third. His peak output reached sixty-three percent, below the new ceiling. Preserving the child’s freedom mattered more than demonstrating superior force.

Four operatives arrived outside the room and refused the new detention order. Goliath had learned not to confuse strength with entitlement. Shade had seen a wounded enemy spare her life. Vector had discovered that a lawful-looking command could be more dangerous than a bullet. Null had measured the damage a government was willing to inflict on ordinary water users. Their disagreement did not make them innocent of their earlier actions, but it made them agents capable of refusing another wrong.

05 — The Eleven-Year Record

With both witnesses present, Adrian authenticated the physical record. The archive confirmed that the original Roy Batty died eleven years earlier. Researchers had run multiple partial reconstruction trials from surviving tissue, memory traces, and experimental interfaces. At least one responsive intermediary with Roy’s face had explicitly refused continuation. The trial nevertheless proceeded.

When autonomous security platforms attacked, Roy kept Chronos from trying to distort the room again. He used movement and machinery rather than peak power. A platform's momentum broke a support it had been meant to pass; another tangled itself in the service cables. The third fell when Roy released a maintenance platform beneath its feet. His regulator registered a peak below the seventy-percent limit. The scene was not a demonstration that he had recovered his former strength. It showed what he could do without it.

The autonomous platforms were built for circumstances in which hesitation was a disadvantage. Their mechanical decisions were fast, but simple. They moved toward the detected threat, isolated it from exits, and deployed restraints. Roy let one overcommit its weight to a direction the maintenance platform could no longer support. He led another across cables loosened by the first collision. At no point did he ask his rebuilt body for the absolute maximum the old NIL-11 might have provided. Rachel's regulator stayed inside its envelope. Chronos watched the sequence, almost offended that such ordinary mechanisms could defeat expensive security machines, then understood the gift in it: he had not been required to prove his power to be worth saving.

06 — A Refusal That Remained

The archive displayed SECONDARY INSTANCE: TERMINATED. The concise status concealed a life capable of fear, language, and judgment. Rachel’s recorded objections and C-05’s witness account established the refusal. R-07 stated that it had not been properly honored. No declaration could return that individual to the life he had been denied.

The original archive confirmed that the first Roy had died. Multiple partial reconstruction attempts followed. An earlier responsive instance had refused to continue, yet the procedure had gone forward and that instance was later terminated. Those stark terms concealed a person's experience behind administrative categories. R-07 and C-05 authenticated the refusal. They also testified that it had been disregarded. Roy did not need to borrow the earlier man's memory to understand the wrong done to him.

07 — No Borrowed Memory

The present NEXUSYS-11 had not imported the personal memories of the prior instance. Its neural architecture differed from the earlier trial, although it incorporated surviving original materials and records. Subjective identity continuity was marked UNDETERMINED. Roy could not prove he was the original continuously conscious person, or conclusively prove a complete break. The evidence did not make him property.

The record of the current NEXUSYS-11 showed that the earlier instance's personal memories had not been imported and that the living Roy used a distinct neural architecture. Subjective identity continuity remained undetermined. Rachel did not pretend the archive could answer a question for which the evidence was insufficient. Roy could claim a relationship to the original man without proving uninterrupted consciousness, and could respect the earlier instance as a separate person without denying his own existence now.

The current subject's neural architecture differed from the responsive secondary instance in the archive. The old instance's personal memories had not been imported. Roy could not transform that technical distinction into certainty that consciousness had either broken or continued from the original dead body. The system itself marked the claim undetermined. What he could establish was that someone responsive had been treated as a test component despite voicing refusal. The archive was not a revelation of an uncomplicated true identity. It was a record of obligations that researchers had disregarded, and a warning against turning the unanswerable parts of one person's life into permission to control another person's present.

08 — The Minister’s Limit

The Minister insisted that an uncertain identity invalidated Roy’s protections. R-07 replied that uncertainty about personal continuity was not permission to dissect a living claimant. The archived refusal triggered a requirement for independent review. The Ministry’s emergency recovery order was suspended; the legal case reopened. That was not a final judgment, nor the Minister’s arrest. It was the end of his immediate unilateral authority.

The Minister tried to transform uncertainty about identity into permission to destroy the subject. R-07 rejected the leap. The question whether Roy inherited a prior individual's legal status was distinct from whether a presently responsive individual could be disassembled as property. The case required independent review. Even the security director finally set down his gun. The emergency capture order was suspended and a judicial inquiry requested. No conviction was announced, and no one pretended that a provisional safeguard settled every future dispute.

09 — The Child’s Testimony

Chronos authorized a bounded portion of his eleven years of observation. The records confirmed distress, requests to stop, and anomalies developing around continuity experiments. They did not identify the ultimate source of his spatial effects. Roy did not force him to reveal more. For once the observer could decide when an observation ended.

Chronos chose to preserve only part of his own eleven-year record. It documented his observation of the continuity experiments, the first discrepancies in timing and distance, and his own attempts to resist confinement. The cause of his abilities remained unresolved. He had lived for years among researchers who described his distress as a performance failure. Now, in front of witnesses, he could stop the playback when it became unbearable. Nobody compelled him to continue. That small control over testimony meant more than a demonstration of power.

When Chronos showed part of his observation record, the room filled with the ordinary monotony of years of experiments. There were waiting periods, measurements, scripted questions, and the same white walls. Occasionally the logs contained contradictions no researcher could explain. A clock had gained time. A distance had shifted. An object had followed an impossible path. The program had no verified account of why the child could produce those events. Instead it treated the effects as useful and the child's objection as a fault. Chronos stopped the playback before a particularly painful memory. R-07 accepted that decision. Roy recognized the importance of what had just happened: a witness had been allowed to decide how much of himself to reveal.

10 — Rain Again

Outside the facility the rain had eased. Goliath, Shade, Vector, and Null went their separate ways. R-07 remained to preserve the evidence on her

own terms. Rachel reminded Roy that his regulator could not replenish the time already spent. He accepted this. The display still read RIGHT TO REMAIN: NOT YET ADJUDICATED. Roy walked into the city anyway. He did not mistake awaiting a verdict for needing permission to take the next step. — END OF CHAPTER —

Outside, the city continued under a thinning rain. The Minister remained behind, subject to a process not yet completed. The four surviving operatives had made choices that took them away from his chain of command, and Chronos stood beside Roy with a mechanical clock in his hand. Rachel reminded Roy that NIL-11R had not made him immortal. He knew. The record still said his right to remain had not been adjudicated. But a living person's next step was not the same as the court's last word, and Roy walked forward without asking permission.