

Sineon Kalter

Backstory

Species: Android (sometimes referred to as an 'Artco' or 'Artificial Companion')

Sex: ♂

Appearance: Skin is unnatural in texture, more so than most Praetors

Age: Personality-wise approx. 40-50 years

Height: 6,7 feet

Weight: 198 lbs

Siblings: None

Worldbuilding Details

The Praetorate is an organisation with strong ties to the law enforcement and judicial sectors. They deploy impartial investigators to assist in investigations and jurisdiction of hate crimes and terrorist acts. To ensure impartiality those Praetors are all 'isolated individuals'. They belong to no culture, they have no religion, no family.

Praetors are androids with advanced AI. They are capable of developing unique personalities with feelings and are capable of empathy, albeit their emotions often are less pronounced compared to those of humans. The goal in their creation was not to create a mindless tool, but an effective person who can, without any preconceptions, adapt into the current political and cultural situation on the station; praetors have no 'history'.

Given their task and the artificial nature of their consciousness, Praetors are pre-programmed with a sense of distrust, which leads them to be more cautious and discerning about the things they hear about. This is an artificial equivalent of a human's tendency to exercise prejudice.

Praetors are also high-ranking, with very few superiors. There are consequences to mistreating a Praetor so they are legally well-protected.

Praetors generally live for about 200 years, and only reach the end of their lives when their personality unit breaks down.

Usually, a praetor receives a specialized 'chassis' that allows for the seamless installation of case specific upgrades (analytic tools, increased mobility, language and voice packs...), but at the time of Sineon's creation the budget cuts made it impossible to commission this type of artificial body. So they opted for a used body instead. The problem was that in the later stages of the economic crisis many storages had been ransacked by people who were in desperate need for replacement parts. From simple electronic tools to entire limbs and AI units, nearly

everything had 'found' a new owner and use, leaving behind destroyed and unusable remains.

Sineon's body was one of the few things untouched, probably 'thanks' to the stigma that is still attached to 'ArtCo's.

Earlier ArtCos were capable of recording memories of their liaisons with their owners, which could be downloaded later for the owner's entertainment. However these became a security risk for the owner so in later editions of these robots, the record feature was no longer included.

Sineon Kalter is an original character from the story *Pale Men*. He is a repurposed android working as a judge of sorts, who feels as if he doesn't fit in due to having a steeply contrasting previous life with an ill-suited body to match, and irreconcilably contrasting professional duties and resources. However, he resolved most of the problems that faced him and lives a life doing his new job more effectively.

Trust & Confidence in Self and Others

Being an android, Sineon was not born but simply 'woke up' for the first time, having been installed with an AI unit.

As a Praetor, he is given to being distrustful as skepticism helps him in the work he is programmed to do. For a biological creature distrust would be the result of adverse life experiences and of having lived a time of life when they were instinctual with no capability to think rationally.

Overall his distrust of 'the other' is very strong, to the point where he considers most people to be potential criminals and watches them with a suspicious eye for this reason. He tends to trust his colleagues more than non-colleagues.

However, distrust runs deeper for Sineon than it does for most Praetors. Being a repurposed ArtCo (and an earlier model at that), Sineon has a few recorded pornographic 'memories' of his previous life in his memory banks. These have a chance of being triggered semi-randomly, as his system sometimes misfires with an electrical impulse if he becomes over-worked or otherwise over-stimulated, and this misfiring can trigger an unwanted ArtCo memory. Whenever this happens he feels paranoid that other people can see the memory. He does what he can to withdraw from the people or situation he is involved in at the time so that he can wait out the replay in private, but often this is difficult, inappropriate, or impossible to do.

Given the nature of the work Sineon does, he lacks complete control over how much work each case will involve. Humans are inefficient and chaotic compared to robots, so whenever somebody behaves in a way that Sineon did not predict he becomes stressed, fearing that this will trigger the replaying of one of his unpleasant memories.

Freedom & Self-Determination

On the face of it, Sineon is very nicely set up to have all the capacity for freedom and self-determination he could want. He is a high-ranking individual who in theory has plenty of autonomy, and has enough prestige through his position that if anybody tells him what to do he is likely to resist and confront them.

However, Sineon has one very good reason to feel disempowered. Biologicals get to choose, in a sense, how they want to develop their personalities. They can decide how to react to the life experiences they have, and become this or that kind of person as a result. Sineon's personality was pre-programmed so he didn't get to craft his personality to his own choosing. This sense of disempowerment is his chief character flaw.

Sineon's memory-replay issue is another aspect that leaves him feeling less autonomous (and therefore less free) than he would like. As a robot who is meant to do specific work, he feels that he is constantly treading a balance between doing what he was created to do and taking it easy so that he doesn't trigger his memories.

However, his sense of autonomy is not completely damaged. His life has been easier from a pure life-experience perspective. Sineon didn't experience toddlerhood as a biological might because there was never a time when he lacked life experience (or at least the programming to artificially provide him with useful life experience). He therefore began life as capable as an adult with an understanding of consequences and the impact his own actions have on others.

As somebody whose life isn't quite his own, Sineon is possessive of a few things, mostly artworks and his own creations. He likes to paint, and he likes to keep his paintings. While he's not strictly speaking possessive of other people, he is painfully aware that humans can grow old and sick and eventually die, while he himself can effectively live forever, for as long as he can have his parts replaced. He therefore cherishes the time he has with them but also feels disempowered when it comes to keeping humans whom he likes, in his life.

Regarding willfulness, Sineon doesn't really need to be willful - he's powerful enough that his word is law, and he's made for that position. It's entirely appropriate for him to want things to go his way.

Ambition

Young childhood is usually the stage where biological children 'come together' in our bodies and minds, and start to operate more smoothly in the world. A biological human is only 3-6 years old at this time, but they're used to physical movement and the experience of negotiating their parents' rules that they feel like they're in flow. This is not true for Sineon however. He was made to be a Praetor and was programmed to be nothing but that. The very concept of working as something else is strange and alien to him. Despite this, the role of Praetor is not particularly to his personal taste.

Sineon finds humans irritating as they are less efficient than androids. He also has difficulty with distinguishing between when it is appropriate to use his work-related skills and when it isn't. For instance, if somebody talks to him on a personal level he is prone to talking to them as if he were busy with work. He can therefore be unsympathetic, harsh, and lacking in a sense of humour.

Aside from all this he is prone to feeling guilty. This is a weakness deliberately installed in Praetors to ensure that they retain a strong work ethic, and Sineon's superiors exploit it whenever they can. The extent to which they do this is unfair: they impress on him the importance of keeping his cases under complete control with any failure to do so as evidence of failure on Sineon's part. Although he is aware that his superiors do this, he is incapable of not feeling guilty.

He also develops feelings of guilt on a more organic basis when interacting with humans. Sineon's abrupt nature and single-mindedness about work sometimes means that he upsets humans. When he upsets one enough that such is obvious, he feels guilty about it.

Productivity

Sineon's negative feelings about humans are only compounded by the fact that he has superiors who insist that he keep his cases 100% under control - something that he finds impossible to achieve due to the involvement of humans. His bosses are aware that this level of control is not possible and Sineon recognises that they know this, but that doesn't stop his bosses from making it clear to Sineon that he expects that level of control and he finds this frustrating.

All of this means that he cannot be as productive as his superiors demand, and that he is usually scapegoated as the one responsible for the suboptimal productivity.

Sineon does not have any other pursuits outside of his work that allow him to be productive: he doesn't volunteer or have a secondary job or role. As a result his professional world is limited to one workspace, one in which he cannot be as productive as he would like. Sometimes he feels inferior because of this.

When Sineon first started work, his previous use as an ArtCo was painfully obvious: his body was that of an over-sexualised young man, and he often found that he wasn't taken seriously. Worse than this, it also led him to feel as if he didn't 'belong' as a Praetor. He therefore made a decision to have his chassis changed to better-fit his personality, which conjured the image of a middle-aged man.

Re-Evaluation of Prior Life Experience

Praetors do not experience puberty so neither did Sineon. However they do have sexual feelings. Sineon's history as an ArtCo complicated this for him and he determined that, just like most things in his life, he would keep them strictly under control. He has never liked it when somebody flirts with him.

Once Sineon had lived for a short while he recognised that the ArtCo memories still in his memory banks were at the core of most of his problems. He therefore made the decision to have them purged. After the purge he still detected that they were there, but their clarity had been significantly dulled so they no longer haunted him.

This diffused much of his tension, and from then on Sineon found his work much easier. While

not all of the pressures were gone, he could work for as long and as hard as he wanted with no ill-effects.

This even impacted his attitudes towards his coworkers, to an extent. On one occasion, a human coworker with cancer made a mistake as a result of feeling so severely ill. His superiors decided to fire him but Sineon felt this to be wrong. There was nothing Sineon could do on a professional level to help this coworker as he was mandated to produce a factual report which implicated them, but he found within himself a sense of sympathy that he would not previously have had, as he finally had the emotional space available to recognise that sometimes, humans couldn't even control themselves.

Closeness in Relationships

Having 'come into himself' fully and found peace with his selfhood, he continued with his work for many years. He developed a good relationship with his colleague with cancer, with their main common ground being the temporary body modifications that his colleague had to have installed. They were unsightly but allowed him to continue work. As a repurposed android with unnatural-looking skin, Sineon understood what it was like to look strange, so he empathised with his colleague and was rewarded with a friendship.

Sineon continued to take pride in his job, and while he treated each case with the same amount of care and attention, he felt particularly relieved at the end of a case about artefact-trafficking as the completion of this case resolved a lot of religious tension in his community.

Passing on Responsibilities

As an android Sineon had no children so didn't have anybody whom he particularly wanted to nurture. However he sometimes recommended further training and education to his coworkers to help them develop professionally.

Deactivation

Sineon feels distinctly uncomfortable about his own deactivation as he is made to fulfil a task that will continue to require administration after he has passed. Indeed, he has great difficulty even thinking about it. He doesn't like the idea of an after-life as he is made to be productive, and he dislikes the idea of enforced inactivity as an after-life implies.

Credits

Based on theory by:

Erikson, E., (1951) 'Childhood and Society', W.W. Norton & Company, Inc. chapter 7.

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~Hayley, The Character Consultancy