

ALLEN



Alex

[redacted]

...

In bed. Sound asleep. Not a care in the world.

My alarm goes off. It's 1:00PM.

I'm up. No, I'm not. Yes, I am.

I make my way downstairs, still half-asleep. I decide to fix myself some cereal – dry cereal, of course, as I'm not a fan of milk. Sitting down on my couch, I turn on the TV. I don't have cable, nor do I care for streaming services, so I'm pretty much limited to YouTube and the few DVDs that I've got. Ah, one of my favorite channels uploaded a new video! I press play on that one, grab my spoon, and scoop out some of the cereal that I fixed.

As I bring the spoon to my face, I collapse onto the table.

ALTÆRNA

contains unabashedly violent, sexual, immature, and racist “humor” and imagery, courtesy of a horny, immature, and racist seventeen-year-old boy. Read at your discretion.

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Alien

When I came to, I was in a very large bed. Like, bigger than your average backyard. Everything seemed somewhat familiar, but very strange at the same time. The walls were this bright orange, and they seemed to be...melting? Honestly, they looked almost like a running waterfall, but made out of orange juice.

My vision was still a bit blurry, and that's all I could make out. Rubbing my eyes, I noticed that there was somebody right beside the giant bed. Seemed to be a woman, about my height, long hair that was the same color as the "walls", blue eyes, and she was wearing a bright, red shirt with a skull on the side. She seemed to be trying to talk to me, but I was still a bit confused about everything, and wasn't really paying attention. It sounded like gibberish.

I popped up and started rubbing my forehead. I've seen a lot of isekai anime, and I knew that whenever something like this happens, everyone in that other world always speaks Japanese. I...don't know much at all in the language, so I had to improvise with the smattering that I did know.

"はじめまして...俺 わハアスコ...君達の基地は全て俺がいただいた...uh...this isn't...screw it."

The woman standing there looked just as confused as I was. We stared at each other for a bit, I was waving my arms around trying to get something to happen, it was awkward. A few seconds into...that, the woman chuckled. "What?"

"What?"

"That...whatever that was you were doing."

Oh, thank God she speaks English. I was worried that I was gonna have to reverse engineer the entire anime medium if I was gonna get back home. I breathed a sigh of relief, and explained as best I could.

Which is to say, I didn't explain at all.

"Oh, I, uh, well, erm, uh, it's...eh..."

That was the most I could muster. I still couldn't understand a thing that I was looking at. I almost thought that I had missed something like the Third Impact. The only sentence I could bring myself to say was "Could I ask you a question?"

And thankfully, that woman answered. "Sure, what is it?"

This question was the first thing I should have said in general. I gathered up all the air I could into my lungs, and bellowed out these five words:

"WHERE THE HELL AM I?!!"

Surprisingly, that woman was unfazed by my sudden outburst. She simply answered nicely. "Oh, right. Welcome to Poseiden! My crew and I have taken you here to take out one of our presidential candidates. My name is Hachi."

Well, at least that clears up...a morsel. I suppose it was my turn to introduce myself.

"Nice t' meetcha, Hachi. The name's Husk, Husk Cryon, from good ol' Sweet Home Alabama. Still don't know why y'all chose me instead o' someone else, but I ain't got no clue what goes on up above the stars."

That got a blank reaction from that Hachi chick. I guess that was a bit too "redneck" for her, as it seems it took a bit to register what I said. When she finally said "Nice to meet you, too!" and we shook hands, I had to confirm what she said.

"So you brought me to a pool party planet because you want me to overthrow your democracy."

She nodded her head. "Yup."

"Alright, well, I'm not an assassin."

"Then you're a mercenary."

"Sounds like I'll be a terrorist."

"That works, too."

"Why would I want to be that?"

As I uttered that last line, Hachi pulled a briefcase out from under the bed. It was packed with money, gold bars, and rare retro games. She knew what I wanted, and she delivered. That was all she needed to convince me. "I'm in. Where's the rest of your gang?"

She walked away and opened the door. We both headed outside. Hachi pointed to a nearby town. "HQ is in the middle of that village."

Right after she said that, I noticed something. This wasn't an ocean planet. There wasn't even a drop of water in sight. It was hot, dry, really a desert. I asked Hachi why this place was named after the Greek god of the sea, to which she responded, "Yeah, this used to be a blue planet, but some stuff happened a hundred years ago and now most of the people here are fish with legs."

"What stuff?"

"You know, global warming."

I rolled my eyes. Global warming, the hoax that wouldn't die. Maybe it was a real thing on this

planet, but all I could think of were the idiots in my homeworld claiming that farting cows were going to actually set the world on fire. But, there was no point in chuckling, so we headed on our way.

Hachi stopped me a few minutes in and gave me a pistol. That was a shock. What came as even more of a shock was when she pointed to a kid playing in the sand. "Kill it."

Kill it?!! That's ridiculous! He was just minding his own business, and this girl wants me to pull the trigger on him! Why on earth would I shoot an innocent child?! Well, as it turns out, she thinks, and I quote, "that's the problem. By doing nothing, you're contributing to a system that hurts other people. By doing nothing, you're doing the worst thing you can."

That's...Jesus Christ. I couldn't trust that woman anymore. If I wasn't being paid, I would have walked right on out of there. I was not about to kill an innocent human(?) being, let alone a child, no matter how much I was being paid, no matter how fish-like the kid looked. I told her up-front: "Can it."

She got a bit pissed, but didn't question it. We continued to trod through the endless desert until we finally reached the town. Right outside the group's HQ, apparently built under a hotel, there was some big, muscular guy with an axe. Hachi got a bit jumpy at the sight, but I saw that the guy had a handkerchief around his eyes and wasn't worried a bit. I decided to get some chicken before I went in, so I had Hachi wait in front of the axe guy (she totally deserved it), and went to the nearby hot wing stand. Turns out, my money was worthless in this world – I was going to have to ask Hachi about that later. I came back empty-handed. and we went in. The axe guy sniffed us (pretty weird, but okay) and grunted before he let us in. We got on the elevator, and headed for floor B5.

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The Crew

When we got down, another lady was there to greet us. Hachi introduced us to each other. "Husk, this is Nalna. Nalna, Husk." We shook hands, and went into what seemed like an average living room. There were...eight couches. I sat down on one, and Nalna sat in the one facing mine. Hachi decided to fix everyone some coffee, and left the two of us to talk to each other.

That was when I finally got a good look at Nalna. She had greenish eyes, a moderate amount of dark blue, almost black hair, a decent-sized chest, nice legs...man, she was HOT. She was wearing a black shirt that said, in the most mangled, nonsensical way possible, "**TIME TO KILLING THE TIME**". I think that just added to the charm. We ended up staring at each other in silence (I mean, I was staring at her boobs, but still), trying to think of something to say. Just before I was about to speak, Hachi came in with the coffee. She set it down on the giant table between us, and we each took a sip.

I spat mine out basically instantly. It was completely black and scorching hot. Both of the girls looked at me, Hachi with disgust and Nalna with scorn. I had to explain.

"This ain't my kind o' coffee! Two scoops of sugar and half of the mug full of creamer is the ONLY way - anything else tastes like it came out of an old sock!"

"He's weak."

That was the first thing to come out of Nalna's mouth this entire time. Mocking me for my taste in coffee. I won't deny it; it was more or less warranted. But, come on, girl, I just met you a few minutes ago.

Well, I just shrugged it off and left. I decided to look for where the beds were when I stumbled upon this room full of old desktops. (Really old - we're talking black screens with white text on CRTs.) What I found extra strange was that there was someone curled up in the corner. It was yet another girl - I was starting to think that these people only chose me because none of them could find a good man. This one had blonde hair that reached her behind, and she was wearing...well, it didn't seem that she was wearing much of anything at all. I tapped her on the shoulder and her head jerked towards me. Her soulless eyes and ear-to-ear smile caught me off guard, that and the fact that she was otherwise completely motionless. After regaining my composure, I tried to speak with her.

"Uh...hey."

No answer.

"Hello?"

Nothing.

"Are you there?"

Still blank. I tried waving my right hand in front of her, but I just wasn't getting anything.

Snapping didn't work, either. I even tried sticking my finger into her ear and getting out any earwax, but there wasn't any. Out of options, I went back to the living room.

"Who's that naked girl in the computer room?"

Nalna and Hachi looked at each other and chuckled a bit. They made their way over to where that other girl was, and told her to stand up. That's when I noticed that she doesn't seem to have any inappropriate parts. No nipples, no genitals, not even a belly button. Her skin looked perfectly smooth...and her breasts were enormous. I was at a loss for words, and my jaw was on the floor. She was also a fair bit shorter than the rest of us, though. Nalna explained to me, "Yeah, Q is an odd duck. She doesn't have much of a personality, and she'll always do what you tell her to."

Hachi chimed in. "She never speaks, and she picks up on everything. If you jokingly tell someone to off themselves within earshot, she'll grab a nearby knife and swallow it whole."

That had to be a lie. There was no way someone would be that braindead. But, lo and behold, when I told Hachi to "suck my three inches" with that retarded bullcrap, Q sat down on her knees, leaned forward, opened her mouth, slashed her tongue out, and waited. I had seen enough, so I just backed away slowly. It was clear that if I was going to find where to sleep, I was going to have to ask.

Just before I was going to, however, Hachi decided to announce my first mission.

"For Husk's first mission, he is going to infiltrate the nearby club and gather intel on the inner workings of our target's militia."

That was sudden. So what I was going to do was break into some rave and get some guy to tell me everything he knows? Phew...that's a tall order.

"Yes."

"Okay, but bringing a knife close to the throat of such an important person is bound to bring some attention, and as you've seen, unprovoked violence isn't my style."

"Then you'll seduce him."

"Alright, for one thing, I'm a dude, and for another, I'm seventeen."

"You'll dress up as a woman."

Great. Just what I needed. Not only was I taking orders from an infanticidal climate freak, but I was also going to have to sneak into an exclusive club IN DRAG. All I could think was that copy of Snatcher had better be worth it. Hachi had already told Q to make a dress for this, so I couldn't make any more excuses. She gave me the outfit, and I headed to the bathroom.

I have no idea why I bothered going to the bathroom to change. I was already nude; most of my body is invisible, and that includes my torso, crotch, and legs. Everything that I could possibly need to cover up was already taken care of, and what was left – my hands and head – secreted this sort of fog-like substance making it look like they're just orbs, with the hands themselves just barely being visible behind the fog and the eyes being the only visible part of my face. I haven't actually worn any clothes in years, much less women's clothes. Trying to get this dress on was somewhat of an ordeal, I couldn't tell whether I was supposed to put it on like a shirt or a pair of pants. I might have ripped the top of it a bit.

At least, that's what I thought I heard.

But, in reality, what I assumed to be the slow tearing of strained cloth was actually the footsteps of another member. This one, notably, was a man. He was tall and slender, had short, unkempt, white hair, green eyes, no facial hair, wore an unbuttoned shirt and some black jeans...no, of course I'm not a faggot, what are you talking about? Anyway, he was entering the bathroom, and he decided to talk to me.

"Hey there, big boy."

"Aaaaaaaaand you're already creeping me out."

"Heh, heh...no worries, I won't bite. Say, you look pretty good. Nice face."

"Uh...thanks?"

"Don't mention it, I'm just speaking from the heart."

"Well, maybe you should stop doing it in such a seductive voice."

"Aw, but I like you."

This guy just straight-up said he was into me. I won't deny that he, uh...nevermind, but is this how you want to introduce yourself to the new guy? Creep him out in the bathroom? I couldn't believe what was happening, and slowly backed away.

"Hey, come on back here and let me...express my feelings toward you."

"N-no homo, right?"

"Heh." He unzipped his pants, and whispered "Yes homo."

He bolted toward me and I jumped into one of the stalls. Right as I locked the door, I looked up and he was crawling on the ceiling. I slid under the door and made a mad dash for the hall before tripping on that stupid dress I had to put on. That faggot caught me, pinned me on the floor, and

started feeling down my spine to find my ass. His finger got stuck in there once he found it, giving me just enough time to grab his head and snap his (surprisingly weak) neck before he would have shoved his 'nis down my 'nus. I threw his corpse back at the end of the bathroom and got up. If I was any form of faggot beforehand, that just cured me.

And then, I heard someone chuckling. It was coming from in the hall, just outside the bathroom. I picked up that guy's lifeless body off of the ground and walked out, only to see that it was Hachi, laughing her little head off at my misfortune. I enjoy people making fun of me, but this went way too far. Once she saw me, she wiped a tear from her eye and calmed down.

"So, I see you've met Ro--"

I slapped her with the meat sack I was carrying around. At least wait a week before you make fun of someone who nearly got gay-raped. Maybe I should've waited so I'd know what his name was...Roland? I think it was Roland. Anyway, I went over to the table where Nalna was sitting at because I had no idea what was going on anymore.

"Why didn't you tell me about that Roland guy?"

"Roland?"

"The faggot who tried to get my ass."

"Oh, Roku. Yeah, he's never done that before."

"Well, yeah, it seems he was the only guy here before me."

"He doesn't hit on anyone when he goes outside, either."

"Huh."

Silence. I was waiting a few seconds so I could change the topic.

"So why do I have to go to that party?"

"Didn't Hachi tell you? To gather intel."

"Yeah, but why can't one of you do it?"

"Well, Q doesn't speak, Hachi is..."

"Dead."

"Dead?"

"Yeah, I smashed her head in with Roku's lifeless body."

"Ooooooooookay, then. Anyway, I was going to say that she's -- she WAS a bit crazy, and I just don't like Psarians."

"Psarians?"

"The fish people. They smell weird and they drink too much."

Crap, she has standards! Shivers went down my spine when she said they smelled bad. I don't take showers that often, so I was worried about my chances with her. I couldn't smell myself (there's been many times where I've gotten to that point), and my armpits didn't feel damp, so I was probably fine, but that's something I had to keep in mind until we got hitched.

"Something wrong?"

She noticed. I was blushing. There was no point in hiding it, I had to come clean. "I...I...I li--I like you."

"Figured."

"What?"

"Yeah. First off, my eyes are up here."

I didn't even notice. I was once again staring straight into those two heavenly lumps on her otherwise slim torso. I jolted my head up to eye level and asked her, "So, uh, after this, wanna...get some drinks, maybe watch a movie?"

"I'm 23."

"Oh."

"And aren't you broke?"

"Right, my money doesn't work. Come to think of it, how were you able to get the money that was in that briefcase?"

"Long story. Go get dressed."

"...Fine."

I headed back over to the bathroom and picked up the dress. With Roku gone, I could be more

focused on figuring out how to put it on. It still took a bit – not my proudest moment, but again, I haven't worn anything in years, let alone crossdressed – but I managed, and checked the mirror.

Needless to say, I didn't exactly look convincing. I haven't seen a single real-life trap that actually passed. But, I was different, in that my face is so blank that all I really needed to do was comb my thick head of hair. So, I went over to one of the stalls and dunked my head into the toilet. When I raised my head, my hair went halfway down my back, and I combed a bit at the top with my fingers into a cute pair of cat-ears. Looking at myself, the lack of visible arms was a bit of an issue, but other than that...yeah.

Honestly, I've had a bit of a crossdressing fetish for a year or so, and kinda wanted to try it out for one night. My plan was to stay in my room the entire night and not let anyone see me, but I thought it would be funny. Looking at myself in the mirror, I ended up pulling it off, and may or may not have had a...uh...a boner. Thankfully, the dress was more than puffy enough to hide it (it was basically a giant dome).

I headed out and sat down with Nalna.

"Took you long enough."

"Shut up. Do I look good?"

"Eh."

"Good enough. So I have a bit of a problem."

"Hm?"

I walked over to her and lifted the dress, exposing my invisible legs. "I think I might need some pants."

She grabbed a pair of skin-colored pajama pants out from under her ass. "Here's these. Oh, wait." She took off her panties right in front of me, and I got a slight glimpse of her snatch. "Put these on over them."

She threw everything over to me, and I put it all on then and there. I was ready to go, so I asked Nalna, "Where is this club, anyway?"

She answered. "Go to the north end of town and it's on the left."

"Kay. Also, while I'm gone, maybe you should put on some pants, too."

She shrieked when I said that and rushed into the hallway. I wouldn't have said anything if I liked staring down an open cooch. That disgusting, rotting, soggy, gaping hole in between a woman's legs is the only part of the female anatomy that's actively worse on the eyes than what I've got (provided it was visible to the eyes in the first place).

Anyway, it was time to go. So, I headed up the elevator and walked out. There was a rug just in front of the door with a compass, telling me that north was to the left of the exit. I went and reached the club.

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Drag

When I got there, it was still around three in the afternoon. I had neglected to ask Nalna about when this party was supposed to start, so I pretty much had to guess when everyone would arrive. I could've just waltzed right in, but if I did that, someone would be bound to find a depressed, sexually-confused collection of ping-pong balls lying in plain sight, waiting in the corner for some jackass to spill the beans on everything. Instead, I waited at the back of the building. There was a window there where I could check every thirty minutes for any activity. I'd jump in once it looked like everyone had arrived, and was sufficiently drunk.

An hour passes...

Somebody just arrived. Actually, a lot of people, and they brought a bunch of cleaning supplies with them. Good thing I decided to check through the back, only God knows what gunk might be on those floors.

Thirty minutes...

They're still there. Is this a club or a brothel?

Thirty more minutes...

They left just as I looked back. The floors, which before looked like wood, were suddenly comparable more to the light-up, multi-colored plates you'd find in, well, a dance club. The first logical conclusion would be that the dance floor was layered on top, but the problem is that it looked like the floor was lower than before. Was the wood floor there as a sort of cover? What's the point of that?

Another thirty minutes...

The sun was starting to set. Actual partiers were starting to come in. It seemed like everyone was crowded around the bar, seems Nalna was right. I'd imagine I would be able to get in through the window without anyone noticing in about thirty seconds.

Thirty seconds...

I checked for a lock on the window and my hand phased through. There was no window at all, only an empty frame. Peculiar, but I wasn't gonna complain. Anyway, I jumped in and sure enough, not a soul even glanced at me. Looking at the "Psarians," it was easy to see who the guy I needed to talk to was, on account of the fact that he was the only one wearing shoes. I ran over to him and tried to start a conversation.

"Hey!"

"Hey, babe, wanna dance?"

He bought it. He actually thought I was a chick. Stage one was down, everything else is easy street. But, hey, I like dancing. I figured I'd have more than enough time to boogie before getting him to break. Besides, the music was surprisingly good. "Sure!"

I don't know how long I was going at it, but it doesn't matter. The point is that eventually, I managed to get that guy over to one of the tables at the side of the building and talk. "So, let's get to know each other."

"Gladly, but how about we discuss over drinks." He got up and went over to the barista. "I need one beer and..." He came back over. "What do you want?"

"Oh, just water."

He ran back over. "This girl wants water!"

The barista looked over at me. He was confused at my appearance, but after a second, his glare became far sharper. At least, he could tell that I was a guy.

Everyone else, on the other hand, must have been too drunk to see anything beyond a faint silhouette.

Anyway, that guy came back with the drinks. His mug was twice the size of his head, and my water (it was in a flask for some reason) was about half a cup. I finished it off in less than a second and started the conversation.

"What's your name?"

"My name? You don't know who I am? Everybody on this side of the (I couldn't understand what he said here) knows who I am, and who I am is Yeldit!"

Honestly, I'm surprised I understood as much as I did. He had his mug to his mouth the entire time, and I could hear him gulping gallons at a time.

"Well, it's great to meet you, Yeldit. My name is...Helen. Yeah, Helen."

"Helen? Sounds like the name...of a PUSSY!! Yeah, a tiny, little, tight, nice...oh..."

In the split-second between him saying whatever that was and what happened next, I realized he wasn't staring at my face, or even at where a supposed large pair of honkers would be if (1) I had any, and (2) this dress wasn't basically a tent. No, he was staring at my right hand, which I didn't realize was actually spinning those panties Nalna gave me on its index finger. I must have subconsciously took them off at some point, if I had ever put them on in the first place.

I should have noticed, however, because what happened next might have been one of, if not the worst thing to ever happen to me.

I assume he wanted to see the, well, "pussy" that I didn't have, so he kicked up the dress and

laid on his side. The issue was where his foot hit.

My balls.

It was the sharpest pain I ever experienced, amplified even more because the bastard was wearing shoes. Shoes that felt like they had metal tips. On top of that, I had to keep up with the act, so not only did I have to suck it up, I had to pretend that I was getting off on it (that's how women work, right?).

And it gets worse.

Because once he moved his foot out of the way and saw not a hole, but a lump, he got up in disgust and pulled a sword on me. I don't know why he didn't just try and punch me, but I suppose a sword would be a lot quicker and cleaner for a full-blown kill. It also, however, garnered a whole lot more attention than a typical bar fight would, and the barista came over and dragged Yeldit away from me.

Except for the fact that Yeldit busted out of the barista's grip and sliced his head off. A spectacle to behold for anyone else, but I was terrified. I jumped under the table as I heard multiple fish people brandish their own blades and cock their own guns. Looking at the scene from below was mesmerizing, seeing Yeldit manage to block every shot and every lunge with just his one sword, and then take everyone down who tried to attack. There were a few guys who he was able to kill just by deflecting their bullets straight back at them, and even one where he started out with a typical fencing match, but then he cut the other guy's arm off, stole his sword, held it by the blade, and cleanly shoved the handle into that guy's skull. The bodies eventually piled up in front of me so much that I had a hard time watching, and I needed to push them out of the way. I noticed that one guy still had a few bullets in his gun, and I decided to take this opportunity to end my worries. It was a hard choice to make; I've only killed two people before, I've never wielded a gun, and I still kinda wanted to watch the show. But, I had to. I steadied my arm, aimed for the forehead, and shot. He swiftly tilted his head back just enough for the bullet to merely graze him. I shot again. This time, he cut the bullet cleanly in two just before it would have hit. The third bullet felt like the last one, so I switched up my strategy. Instead of aiming for his head, I'd instead aim for the chest. Bang...and he managed to jump so high that the bullet didn't even graze him. I didn't know how, as the roof looked far too low for such a feat to have even been possible, but when he came back down he brought a large chunk of the roof with him. This guy was completely insane!!

And I was completely screwed. We have a guy who can crash through a solid ceiling and has a blade so fast that he can slice through airborne bullets without breaking a sweat, and on top of that, I was out of ammo. There was only one option left: throw the gun. I don't exactly have the best throwing arm (hell, I'm not particularly athletic at all), but it was all I could do.

What ended up happening was, honestly, absurd. He, of course, tried to block it with his sword, but his blade bounced back from the impact, slicing halfway through his skull(?), with the blunt side. I have no idea how, but it didn't matter. He was dead, my worries were over...and I still had no idea where the target was.

Thankfully, I noticed a table over near the front door with a bunch of flyers. Odds are, if anything

would say where he was gonna be, it would be one of those. So, I waltzed up over to the table and grabbed one. I'll give it to Nalna when I get back, see whether this is what we're looking for. After grabbing it, I made my way out, before realizing I could take Yeldit's corpse back as a trophy. I grabbed the body and swung it over my arm.

At that point, I was closer to the window than the door, so I made my way out the same way I came in. That ended up being my biggest mistake thus far, because for some reason that I don't know, everyone got grossed out by that and pointed their guns at me. I don't know why that's what got them; there were already dozens of corpses on the ground, and the floor was surprisingly sticky. But, regardless, I was surrounded, with no way out.

Bang.

I shrieked when I heard it. I thought I was dead. Yet, somehow, nothing hit me. Did they miss? Did all those fish-people just miss the gigantic target?

I opened my eyes and saw that the shots were actually still in the air, moving toward me. Slowly. So slowly, in fact, that I could just swat them away. All of them, just getting slapped on the side, and turning ninety degrees.

They were certainly still dangerous – that certainly hurt my hands a bit, and I could tell that they were still fast enough to do some real damage if they hit me in the head – but I saw them coming, and my guard was up.

In fact, eventually I noticed that they were being shot in some sort of rhythm. The way it sounded was like some sort of odd drum beat, and I had some sort of music playing in my head that went along quite nicely. Eventually, I was really getting into it. I took off that God-forsaken dress, rolled it up, and started spinning it to the rhythm in my head and even that was enough to block the bullets. Hell, I eventually threw it to the side and started playing some air guitar (even THAT was enough to knock the shots off-course). I didn't notice that my pants fell down and I was actually jacking off until I finished with a jump and a cum. After that was a quick couple of kicks and the last guy there ran out of bullets – and subsequently, the club.

Now that that was over, I pulled "my" pants back up and noticed a few things.

1. The floor, now covered in blood, sweat, and urine, looked distinctively woodgrain-y.
2. There was something in these pants.

That second thing freaked me out a bit as I pulled them up. There weren't any pockets (or, at least, I didn't notice any), and it felt like it was in the crotch part. I checked inside, thinking it might have been crap, but I didn't see anything. I reached in to see what it could have been.

It felt familiar.

It felt like skin.

It...they...were my testicles.

Yup. Yeldit's kick managed to bust both of my balls. I officially could not breed, and I'm surprised my schlong is still intact. (My priorities are straight.) I picked his body back up off of the ground (I stuck the pamphlet into his back pocket) and headed out through the back window. As I climbed out, I noticed someone there.

A woman.

Like, almost a regular human woman. Green hair with a red bow on top, purple eyes, and she was wearing a Japanese schoolgirl outfit. No boobs, but I didn't see that as too much of an issue when she had a face like that. The only "fish"y part about her was she had a tail that looked like a fin.

I freaked out a bit, ran to the side of the building, took off my pants, shook my hair back to normal, and put Yeldit's body down. When I got that done, I decided to flirt with her.

"Hey."

She was laughing. I already flubbed my chance. Maybe I could save it?

"Something wrong?"

"Yeah, you."

"I can explain."

"Nah, don't...I don't want you to ruin that shit that just happened."

Profanity. She was starting to get slightly less appealing.

"Um...okay, well, I've gotta say your laugh sounds pretty."

She stopped laughing. "Huh?"

"Yeah, you sounded cute. I think I like you."

She took a bit before replying, "Fuck off, homo."

"Homo?!! Wait, are you saying--"

"YES, mother--daddyfucker, I'm a dude! How the fuck couldn't you figure THAT out?!"

"Well...with the face...and the clothes..."

"How the fuck are you supposed to figure that out through my fucking face? Look at this fin, does this shit LOOK like a bitch fin?"

"Sorry, I'm not from this...place, I don't know how you people work. I'm gonna go back to my...friends."

I froze up a bit when I said "friends." I'd hardly consider Nalna and Q more than acquaintances (though they're certainly cute), and I wouldn't be all too surprised if I ended up having to do them in like the other two. Regardless of what I thought, however, I had a mission. I needed to go back to base.

And this guy decided he was "coming with."

"Huh?"

"I said I'm coming with. You guys must be funny as shit. Name's Hazel."

"Hazel...and you wondered why I thought you were a chick."

"Just move your ass."

So I did. I grabbed my stuff and went back.

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Rendezvous

The guard was still there. Sniff, sniff, and we were through. Still have no idea what he's after. We got on the elevator. Hazel was a bit confused. "Who the fuck was that guy?"

"No clue. He's just there."

The elevator stopped. Floor B5. The doors opened. Nalna was there to greet me.

And so was Roku.

"WHAT THE FUCK!! YOU!!"

That wasn't Hazel who said that. That was me. I tend to avoid swearing; that is, unless it refers to some form of genitalia. But, this was on a different level. Roku, the bastard that nearly gay-raped me, was somehow back from the dead. I charged at him with full force, prepared to whack him in the face, before Hachi jumped out of nowhere and held me to the ground.

"WHAT THE FUCK IS GOING ON!! THAT'S THE FUCK WHO TRIED TO *DO* ME!! I THOUGHT I KILLED YOU!!" I turned to Hachi. **"I THOUGHT I KILLED *YOU*!!"**

Hachi, being the morally uptight and righteous person she is, of course, tried to get me to "calm down, calm down..."

"HOW THE FUCK AM I SUPPOSED TO STAY CALM!!"

"Relax, it couldn't have been that bad..."

"YES IT FUCKING WAS!! YOU KNOW WHAT FUCKING HAPPENED!! YOU SAW IT!! YOU FUCKING SAW IT AND YOU *LAUGHED* AT IT!!"

"Okay, okay, I'm sorry..."

"NO!!" I kicked Hachi in the stomach and got back up. I ran straight at Roku, with my fist raised, until Nalna walked in and told me to stop.

"WHAT FUCKING NOW!!"

"Listen, Husk. I completely understand where you're coming from, but we might need Roku alive for something. It's a miracle that he and Hachi crawled out of their graves, so don't try to get rid of them again."

"Fine."

"And Roku, don't try to get inside Husk unless he says to."

Roku replied. "I don't believe I'll be following that order. Last I checked, Hachi was mission control, was she not?"

Hachi spoke up. "No, Nalna's the one who gives orders. She just had me say them a few times."

Back at Roku. "Hmph, fine. I suppose I'll just have to exploit his love for me."

On me. "I'm not a faggot, retard."

Roku. "Ah, but you are."

"Huh?"

"Indeed, yes, I could smell it."

"Smell it?"

"Yes, it can be sniffed out through...the testicles."

"Eh?"

"Precisely as I said. Their scent details all of one's sexual desires and history, easily read as a book."

"Uh...well, lucky me, I guess, 'cause my balls were punted outta commission during today's mission."

"I can still smell your desires. In fact, I smell...two people? One seems to be heterosexual..."

"That one's gotta be me!"

"...and has nothing but contempt for his lesbian mothers whom stuffed plastic rods up his buttocks at a young age and forced him to wear women's clothing."

Hazel perked up. "Ah, shit, he knows!" He finally walked out of the elevator and then froze. He apparently didn't see the rest of the crew until now. "Holy FUCK!! Weremaids!!"

That was a term I had never heard of before. "Weremaids?"

Nalna explained. "What the Psarians call us. The young ones think that we only exist in fiction...honestly, most of the old ones do, too. Their legs combined with the upper body of their fish."

"Wait, are you saying..."

"Yep, mermaids. They're real here."

"Huh. That's pretty neat." I paused for a moment. "Wait a minute..."

I stared at Hachi. She was just standing in the corner as Hazel looked all over her body trying to find anything that looked remotely like a scale. When she finally noticed, she got up and came over. "What?"

"I remember a certain orange-haired chick telling me that almost everyone here is a fish with legs because this place burned up a while back."

"Yeah, what about it?"

"Nalna just told me that's a big, fat lie."

Nalna nudged my arm. "No, I didn't."

"Oh? So the mermaids in the water aren't evidence?"

"I..." She lowered her voice to a whisper. "I never said it...wasn't..."

"Case closed. Hachi, your move."

Hachi gave the most pissed "hmpf" you've ever heard and walked out. Hazel followed, gawking at the 'weremaid.' Roku came back to the forefront. "Now as for the other sack..."

"I told you, my balls got kicked off during the mission! Can't sniff what ain't there, can ya?"

"Oh? That's unfortunate...the testicles I smell must have been stolen from someone else. Could you perhaps find a young, male virgin with a large posterior?"

"Don't flatter me."

"Oh? I was referring to the scent..."

"Crap. Okay, yep, that's me. You got me, my nuts are in those pants in the elevator. Just, please, don't go through with this."

"Ah, but it appears I've already started. What is there to gain by stopping?"

"My dignity."

"What dignity have you to lose? It appears you have a surprising amount of desire for...women with penises?"

Dammit, that stuff really works. Yeah, I really like futanari. Not big on any other form of pornography, but the best of both worlds is, well, the best of both worlds. Anyway, I needed to defend myself, so I tried to deny it. "Alright, so that...that sniffing probably isn't the most accurate thing. Everyone knows that there aren't any chicks with dicks out there."

"It was never specified that they had to be real."

"Okay, fine. Can we stop now?"

"A bit more wouldn't hurt, hm?"

"You've already basically killed me."

"Regardless. Now, you said not too long ago that you were not a homosexual; a "faggot", as you said. Perhaps we may see how true that is. Your homosexuality percentage is..."

"Zero! ZERO!!"

"Thirty."

"NOOOOOOOOOO--wait, thirty percent?"

"Yes, essentially hetero with exceptions."

"Phew. Okay, it's not that bad."

"And we shall finish off with your opinion on moi. In your eyes, I am...oh...you find me attractive, but the incident in the bathroom has turned you away from me."

Well, at least he's off my case. And there's no point in denying it anymore, he certainly looks like a fine thing to fill and to be filled by, especially now that he, still the only one wearing any pants, had shed his jeans in favor of essentially a fishnet with padding around the crotch.

I keep getting off-track. So, Roku finally stopped sniffing the air, and he moped into the hallway. I went back over to the elevator (which still hadn't closed for some reason) and grabbed the stuff I left. The pants, I gave back to Nalna. "Here. They've got my...junk in them, so you probably don't want to put them on."

The body, I laid out on the table. When Nalna looked over, she jumped a bit and called everyone over. Roku, Hachi, and Q all came rushing in at the same time (Hachi and Q tripped over each other and got trampled by Roku), and Hazel walked in confused shortly after. Everyone sat down,

with Nalna taking the couch facing mine (more tiddy for me!!), Hachi taking the couch just to the right of mine, Hazel sitting in the one to the far left, Roku laying on the one that I was already in, and Q just standing in between couches 2 and 3 (clockwise from me).

Thus, the meeting began. Kinda. We actually just sat (or stood, or lay) there in silence, waiting for someone to start talking. It took a good twenty seconds before Nalna finally broke the silence. "So...Husk? Are you gonna tell us what happened or are you just gonna sit there and kill time?"

My response probably wasn't the best thing I could've said. "I believe you mean, ahem, **kill**ING **THE** time. Come to think of it, what's with that shirt? Where did you get it? What store sells shirts with grammar that bad?"

"That's not--that doesn't matter. Tell me, why did you kill this man?"

"I had to, he went insane and started killing everybody before I could get anything out of him."

"You mean, you didn't find out where the target is?"

"Not from him, but..." I pulled the flyer out from the corpse's back pocket. "I found this on a table by the entrance."

"Ah...this is perfect!! Now we know we can't take him for the next week! Great job!"

"Wait, what?"

"You really think we can kill him during a rally? There's gonna be, like, fifty million people there, on top of his bodyguards."

"Okay, so I just take out the bodyguards."

Nalna chuckled a bit. "Nobody can take out the QuiDu unit."

"QuiDu...that name sounds familiar." Quidu was a character I drew once years ago. A giant, green arrow with a face and three orange rods for hair. His "hands" were a gun and a sword. I thought it looked cool at the time. I was eleven.

Back to the meeting. Nalna spoke. "Yeah, the **Quintet of Destruction**."

"That's not how acronyms work."

"That's just how it is. Anyway, yeah, QuiDu. Five guys. Real tough. Toughest guys on the planet. Ferment, Gothic, Visor, Syma, and Eldritch."

Hachi was up. "Ah, Eldritch." She and Hazel both ended up saying the same thing at the same

time after that. "Everyone on this side of the chasm mount knows who he is." I joined in on the last part. "And who he is is Yeldit!!"

Everyone was looking at me like I was retarded. Hazel, especially. "Who the fuck is Yeldit?"

I slapped the corpse. "You were just looking at him. The guy I killed."

Nalna was curious. "So, this... 'Yeldit' guy. How did he act?"

"Well, he drank a lot. He kicked me in the balls, and now I don't have balls. He got up and started dancing around, with a sword, slicing bullets in midair and knocking people's swords back at them."

Hachi and Roku gathered around Nalna and they started whispering to each other. I continued. "Actually, that's how I killed him. I threw an empty gun at him and it knocked his sword into his head."

Hazel burst into laughter.

"I know, right? It was ridiculous."

Hachi told me that "that's not why he's laughing. Men don't use guns here."

"What?"

"Firearms are used by women. Men use blades."

"That makes no sense whatsoever."

"I agree. The idea is that women aren't good fighters, so they get the long-range weapons and they don't have to get up close. I find it stupid."

"Okay, at least it makes sense now, and I agree that women are pussies, but...I'm pretty sure it's just sexual."

"Sexual?"

"Yeah. Roku...first, get off of me, second, I'm gonna need to borrow your knife, or sword, or whatever you have."

So Roku got off of me and pulled something out of his ass. It looked like a dildo...ew. But, he twisted a dial on it and a blade grew on the bottom. He handed me this...thing. I stuttered trying to thank him, still grossed out about the fact he gave me something that's been up his behind for God knows how long. I then turned to Nalna. "Now I'm gonna need you to pass me your gun."

She obliged and threw it over. It wasn't some simple revolver like Hachi had, it was a fully-blown shotgun that could really do something. I wasn't here to gawk at it or fire it, though, I needed to prove a point. I shoved the metal tip of that thing Roku gave me into the left barrel of Nalna's shotgun, and the ensuing glow was so bright that it nearly blinded me. I pulled it back out and everything went back to normal in a...flash. "See?"

I actually went even further and did it a couple times over. It was just satisfying. Eventually, something felt squishy when I shoved the thing in. I looked in and saw a small buildup of semen. Some of it even stuck to the blade. "Yup, sexual."

I gave Roku back his whatever and tried to slide the shotgun across the table, oblivious to the fact that I would've nearly shoved Yeldit's body off if I didn't catch it back. I instead walked all the way to the other end of the table and handed it back to Nalna. When I sat back down at the couch directly to the left of where I was at first (screw you, Roku), Nalna started talking.

"So, this body on the table is Eldritch."

"You mean I killed one of those guys."

"Yup."

"One of the strongest people on Earth."

Hazel looked over at me. "What the fuck is an earth?"

"Sorry. Poseidon."

Back to Nalna. "Yep."

"Okay, I guess I have a new mission."

"Uh-huh. You're taking out the rest of the QuiDu unit."

"Alright. Who's next?"

"Well, actually, I thought it would be a good idea to discuss that over dinner."

"Yeah, I'm pretty hungry myself."

"Alright, and since we have a competent bodyguard, I'd say we should go out to eat."

"I wouldn't say I'm competent."

It didn't matter. Roku and Hachi were screaming in excitement. The two must have been starving to death if this is how they're reacting to going to a restaurant. I couldn't let Hachi down if she was

like this. (Roku can go screw himself, though.)

So, I was heading to the elevator when Nalna called me back. "Hold it, you don't have a weapon."

"Got another shotgun?"

"Again, men don't use guns."

"I don't care. Your customs are weird, and as we've established, sexual."

"Sexual or not, we're going by them. When in Rome--"

"When in Rome, my ass!! You probably don't even know where or what Rome is!"

"Sigh...do you want to defend yourself?"

"Fine. I'll take an axe."

"Okay. Q, m--"

"Wait, no, a chainsaw."

"Alright."

"But it's shaped like an axe."

"Got it. Q, make that."

It took two minutes for that weird girl to make...whatever it was. It looked like a regular chainsaw, if you folded it at a ninety-degree angle. I had no doubts that it could be wielded as an axe, but it certainly didn't look like one. Regardless, I assured her that it was "the neatest thing!! I love it! Thank you!"

There was another thing I needed, though. "If we're gonna need weapons for whatever reason, Roku's probably gonna have his pants down a lot, and I'll need to protect my ass. I'd wear pants myself, but that'd look pretty weird with no visible feet or torso. I'll need something that wouldn't look so bizarre, but would still keep me cheeks from getting pierced by fag cock. Maybe..." I snapped my fingers. "A buttplug!!"

Everyone else (except Roku and Q) said, at the same time that I said buttplug, "A cape!!"

"Y-yeah, a cape!!" I looked over at Q. "I need a sleek-looking red cape. Bottom three inches should maybe be purple, with an inch of black just above that."

It took even less time to make that (about thirty seconds). It was exactly what I wanted, even drooped on the floor where the purple and black parts were. Kinda revealed that I was a fatass (about 300lbs.), but other than that, it was great! Even had a pocket for the chain-axe on the left-hand side.

With that, everyone was REALLY ready to go. I got on the elevator first, since I was already there, and everyone followed. Hazel hit the 1F button, and we went up.

As the doors opened, Roku finally decided to open his mouth and say something. "Personally, I preferred the buttplug idea."

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Dinner Among Hostiles

We walked out of the hotel. "Which way are we going?" I asked, and Nalna replied with "It's a bit of a hike, but we'll be going past the nightclub where you killed Eldritch and we'll keep going until we reach another city."

I had already forgotten where the club was, but the sun had finally set and the sign was lit up. I didn't even notice the sign when I first went there, and I don't know how. "**COME ONE, COME ALL!!* The ONLY Dance Club in Town! ALL the Music! ALL the Drinks! ALL the Fun! ADMISSION IS FREE***"

Something struck me as odd about the claims on the sign. "Hey, so that sign says that anyone can come in, but I'm pretty sure there was some security when I busted in."

Hachi explained. "Thing's only open at night. There was just a special event this afternoon before the club actually opened. That's why Eldritch was there."

"Okay, that makes sense, except for the fact that you consider 5:30 to be afternoon."

"The sun doesn't set 'till eight."

"Alright, well. I'll just shut up."

And I did. We walked for a good ten minutes without anything eventful happening. Then, I got bored and started asking questions. "So what's the deal with each member of that QuiDu group?"

Nalna replied. "Okay, so Eldritch – the one you killed – he was really good and fancy with his sword. Ferment is fast, Visor is a beast, Syma is the only mage on the planet, and Gothic...I don't know, I think she's only there because she's the target's wife."

"Wait, I'll have to kill a woman?"

"Two. Syma's a girl."

"Okay, I don't do that kind of stuff."

Hachi cleared her throat and glared at me. "Good point," I said. "Sooooooo do these names have anything to do with the goons themselves? I mean, Eldritch didn't look too weird, at least considering the people here."

Nalna told me, "No, they're just their actual names."

"Kay."

And we kept walking, for another five minutes, until we ended up in a forest (of all things), and started getting shot at. The first round missed all of us completely, and we got our weapons out

(except Hazel, who just screamed "HOLY SHIT!!" and ran back out). Nalna, Hachi, and Q started shooting back at the branches, while Roku climbed up and started looking for whoever it was that was shooting at us. I didn't give two craps about anything, and just started cutting the entire forest down. We managed to get two guys down before they could fire at us again. Not dead, but on the ground and motionless.

I went over to one of them. "Alright, how many of y'all are there?"

"I'll...never tell."

"Yeah, you will, or I'm sawing your head clean off."

"Do it..."

Splorch. Clean off. The other guy panicked and said "there's twenty of us, other than her and me." (Her?)

Twenty sights, ten locked onto me and five each onto Nalna and Hachi. I held up my axe and blocked all of mine, and Nalna got behind a tree, but Hachi ended up getting shot and killed. Roku was up there somewhere, probably trying to bang some of the bastards, and Q was just minding her own business as if her comrade wasn't just killed before her eyes. I wasn't fazed much, either (I saw her die before, by my own hands), but Nalna ran over, bawling her eyes out and trying to bring her back to life. Seeing her kiss Hachi's corpse would've been hot if it weren't for the whole "corpse" thing.

Anyway, I now knew where half of those guys were, so I ran over and cut down the branches that some of them were sitting on. They were still reloading, so they were easy pickings. The rest were on the ground, so I just got through them on my way.

I cleared out my half, and checked on Nalna to see about hers. She was still crying like a baby over Hachi's death, so I kicked her lightly in the ass and told her to "quit blubberin'. We still got ten guys to go before we're safe." She got up, still sniffling, and just kinda shot in the general direction of where her guys were. "Okay, you're gonna have to do better than that, or I'll have to level this entire forest," I said, "and keep in mind that Roku's still up there doing his thing."

"But look!" she said. It turns out eight of them got shot down. I went over, scooped 'em up, and had Nalna try and get the last two. Bang, bang, they fell, and Roku dropped with one of them. He took care of his, I sliced the other in two, and I ran over to the one that I left alive from the beginning. Told him, "today's your lucky day 'cause I'm gonna let you leave here alive. Now, go back to your leader and tell it that we - especially I - can't be messed with. Call the whole operation off. I'm not gonna hold back next time."

And then he bled out. "So much for that."

Anyway, I went back and found Hazel, told him "we're all clear, the goons are down and so is

Hachi.”

”Hachi kicked it? Fuck...”

”Don’t worry, there are plenty of fish in the sea – er, actually, I guess they’re above ground. Come on, let’s go.”

We regrouped and went forward. Turns out we were basically already there, and just past the forest was the town we were headed to, Streetroad. Nalna lead us into a building marked ”CHKN/KCHN” (I assume it meant Chicken Kitchen) and straight to a table where Hachi was sitting.

”Okay, this is getting ridiculous,” I said. ”I saw you die, Nalna saw you die, Q saw you die, Roku probably saw you die, how are you here. Not even a single bullet wound.”

Hachi dismissed it. ”Well, I’m here, so it doesn’t matter.”

”I’m pretty sure it flippin’ matters when Nalna over here was crying her eyes out over you.”

Hachi looked over at Nalna. ”Really?”

Nalna freaked out. ”No! No, no, no! I didn’t do anything!”

Roku came up. ”Yes, you did. I heard as much while I was in the trees.”

I jumped back in. ”And the weird thing is that you didn’t react much at all when I did the deed.”

Back to Nalna. ”Yeah, it’s pretty different when it happens right before your eyes. Now, sit down.”

So I did, choosing the seat across from her again. I looked her in the face and called her a ”Dyke.”

A few seconds passed, and I asked ”So why do y’all want this guy dead? Can’t you just vote him out?”

Hachi answered. ”His policies are just that bad. For starters, I kid you not, he wants to kill all women.”

”I call bull.”

”It’s not.”

"Yeah, it is. That's the plot of Gayniggers from Outer Space."

Hachi's expression quickly snapped to pure anger. "WHAT...did you just say?"

"What? I didn't say any--oh, right. The word."

"Yeah, and it's pretty CLEAR that you're NOT black."

She's right, I am definitively Caucasian even underneath the white-as-cum fog. But, I had a trick up my sleeve. See, my skin may not be dark, but it's darker than the fog. And while the fog is more opaque around my face than my hands, it's also thinner, thin enough to wipe away for a few seconds. I've managed to convince a few colorblind numbskulls that I'm actually black with that trick. So, I fanned my face.

It did not convince her. "Yep! White as white can be. Why did you think you could say that word?"

And before I continue, I just want to say that if you agree with Hachi, you might want to skip ahead a bit. I'll mark where you can continue reading. Because **HOO BOY**, I let loose.

"Alright, so maybe I'm not a nigger – and thank God for it. But, you also aren't a nigger. And Nalna isn't a nigger, and Q isn't a nigger. Roku may be an absolute faggot, but he isn't a nigger. Hazel, he swears like a nigger, but he isn't a nigger. And nobody at that table over there is a nigger, nobody at that table over THERE is a nigger, the waitresses aren't niggers, those guys that shot at us in that forest weren't niggers, hell, I'm pretty sure the only nigger I've seen this entire time was maybe that hulking beast at the front of our hotel, and even then I'm not entirely sure if he's a nigger."

"That doesn't give you permission to--"

"AND you'll notice that you're the only person here getting mad at me for saying the nigger word so much. In fact..." I climbed on top of the table and yelled. "If anyone here wants me to stop saying the word 'nigger', please speak up now."

Nobody answered.

"See, Hachi? Now stop whining like a nigger." (You can come back now, I was done.)

She crossed her arms and gave a brief "hmpf." Hazel congratulated me for my "speech" in his own...special way. "That was some good fucking shit! Damn!"

That set Nalna off. "Okay, I don't know who this kid is, but he's starting to get on my nerves. It was one thing in the hotel, but please stop swearing in public."

I defended him. "Chill out! It's probably not his fault! He might have Autism, he might have Tourette's, maybe he picked those words up in his home, don't forget that Roku scanned him and said his adoptive parents were lesbians, you know the abuse stats behind those relationships!"

Hachi also got defensive. "And why are you complaining about a few swears when Husk over here just got done spouting the N-word, like, twenty times?"

"Sixteen."

"That's still a lot!"

"I don't care. Anyway. What I was saying. Guy plans to kill all women. What universe does that make sense in? No women means no babies and no sandwiches. Hazel's generation would be the last. Actually, Hazel, how old are you?"

"Twelve."

"Twelve! No wonder you ran off when those guys started shooting. Ya should've stayed at the hotel. Probably don't even have a weapon." (What I should've thought about was that I was flirting with a minor.)

"Oh, I got a sick-ass fucking sword. C'mon, wanna see it?"

"Sure, let's go outside."

We walked out and he pulled out this massive thing out from his skirt. It was much too big to be considered a sword, thick, heavy, and cumbersome. It would be more accurate to call it a hunk of metal. No, porcelain. He dropped it three seconds later and it smashed into a million pieces (mind you, it landed on pure sand). He cried over the loss of his giant plate almost as much as Nalna did over Hachi's second dead body. I let him be and walked back inside.

Sitting back down, I started talking again. "Anyway, so the guy you want me to kill is kinda retarded. I still don't know why you can't just vote him out."

Hachi answered. "There's a small group of people who are controlling the polls and ultimately get to decide who gets in and who doesn't."

"Like the Patriots?"

"Huh?"

"You know, the Patriots. From Metal Gear?"

Silence.

“Whatever. Basically, I’m saying I’ve heard if this concept before. Happened a few times where I come from, too.”

“Okay, good.”

“So shouldn’t we be targeting that?”

Nalna freaked out. “That’s a suicide mission!!”

“Really? Tougher than that QuiDu group? ’Cuzzat sounds fun.”

“Do you want the money or not?”

“Got me there. Cross my heart and hope to die, stick a needle in my eye, tie me up and break my thighs, bake me into a pot pie, sell my liver for a dime—”

“Stop.”

“I’m gonna do whatever it takes for that copy of Recca, and nobody’s gonna stand in my way.”

The waitress came around and gave us our menus. “What would you like to drink this evening?”

Nalna and Hachi both ordered sweet tea, with Nalna also ordering it for Q. Roku ordered cherry juice (I didn’t even know that was a thing), and I, of course, ordered water without lemon. “And just a second, there’s a little kid with our group that’s crying his eyes out outside over a broken toy.”

I got up, heard a familiar voice say “fuck you,” and sat back down. Hazel was back, only kinda sniffling, and he got in his seat. “I’ll have milk.”

“Thank you.” The waitress gave Hazel a menu and left. We all opened our menus at the same time, and I closed mine back up pretty quickly once I saw the buffalo wings. I turned to Roku and asked, “So you were in the trees for a long while, and you only killed one guy. What were you doing, trying to bang all of them?”

“Hardly. They were all women.”

“Huh? How could you tell?”

“They all had firearms. Also, the females are gray and the males are blue.”

“So that’s what Hazel was talking about with his tail.”

"Yeah, fuckass," Hazel blurted, "that's basic facts."

"I. Am. Not. From. Here."

And everyone was silent for thirty seconds until the waitress (whom I can now confidently say was, in fact, a waitress) brought us our drinks. "Are you ready to order?"

I was. Everyone else still had their menus open, but they claimed they were ready. Since I was the only one who was 100% sure about what to order, I started. "I'll have the spicy cock—er, the spicy buffalo chicken, boneless."

"Any sides?"

"Didn't check those." I opened up my menu, glanced at them, closed it, and said "Mac and cheese."

Then Nalna. "Drumsticks, side of fries. And the one beside me (Q) wants a salad with a side of chips."

Hachi was next. "I'll have, uh, the chicken soup, with a side of fruit."

Hazel. "Nuggets, side of mac."

And finally, Roku. "I would like a chicken sandwich with extra pickles and a side of fruit."

The waitress nodded her head and walked away. I turned to Roku. "Cherry juice. Never thought of it."

"Would you like to try it?"

"Kinda gross drinking out of somebody else's drink, but why not." I threw my head straight onto the straw. The stuff was great! I should've gotten some for myself. Before I knew it, I already downed a third of the whole thing. "Wait, right, this is yours. Sorry about drinking so much of it." I wiped off the straw with my cape and slid it back. Roku said it was "not an issue."

I went over to my water (which was in an actual cup this time), and drank it all within thirty seconds. "So what's the plan?"

Nalna, of course, had everything planned out. "It's a decent bit away, but there's a large tower within the chasm mount. Syma is at the very top of that tower. You'll more than likely run into Ferment on your way. Come back when both are dead. Shouldn't be too much of an issue for you after dealing with Eldritch, but it still might take a few days. If you want, one of us will come with you."

"Sounds great, but why not all of...does this alliance have any sort of name?"

"Yeah, Viva le T."

"What does the T stand for?"

"Triumphant."

I stared at her for a few seconds before talking. "Really. Okay, for one thing, I'm guessing you mean Triumphant. For another, the name makes absolutely no sense. Not only does it translate to 'long live the winners,' which is just stupid, but I'm pretty sure the grammar doesn't work, either. I know less French than I do Japanese, and Hachi can attest that I don't know crap in that language either, but I do know a bit of Spanish, and I think French and Spanish are very similar languages. In which case, 'viva' and 'le' can't be put together. Spanish and French are gendered languages, and 'viva' is feminine while 'le' is masculine, so it'd have to be 'viva la triumphant,' and even then, as I said, that's a stupid name on it's own..."

"Are you done yet?"

"Sorry, what I'm trying to say is *ël llamo es muy mal*."

"Does it matter?"

"Guess not. Anyway, why can't I have the whole Winners are Dead alliance with me?"

"We're running low on people as is, don't want too many casualties."

"Hachi and Roku will just come back."

"And what if they don't?"

"Get more guys to enlist."

"Nobody wants to."

"We can at least try. Does this place have internet?"

"Yeah."

"Great, I'll just get my phone...my...my phone...I did not bring my phone. Hey, Hachi, if it won't bother you, could you go get my phone?"

She got angry for some reason. "And why would I do that? And Q, sit down."

"Because I think I left it at my house and I don't know how to get back."

"Oh." She settled down. "Okay, I'll be back in a bit."

"Should be near, or on, my bed."

And Hachi was off. After a minute, the waitress came back with our food. "Alright, sorry for the wait. Who ordered the chicken nuggets?"

Hazel raised his hand. "That's me."

"Okay. And the drumsticks?"

"Me, thanks." Nalna grabbed one of the bones before her bucket even got to her.

"The soup?"

"She left for a bit, just set it down right there."

"Okay, boneless wings?"

"I ordered those, thank you." I grabbed my water in preparation.

"Chicken sandwich?"

"Thank you, that would be me." Roku checked under the bun to make sure his pickles were added (it smelled disgusting).

"Okay, and I guess you over there ordered the salad." She gave the last plate to Q and went back. "Enjoy."

I grabbed my fork with my other hand, stabbed it into my chicken, and froze. "This isn't buffalo chicken!"

Nalna looked at my plate. "Looks like it to me."

"What? No, I know what buffalo looks like, and this isn't it. Looks more like, I don't know, General Tso? I mean, I like Tso, but I didn't order Tso, I ordered buffalo." I took a bite. "It's buffalo. What the hell."

"Remember, you're on an alien planet. Not everything is as it seems."

Hazel freaked out. "Fucking ALIENS?!!"

"How did you not figure this out earlier? I've got people from my home planet who think that I came from outer space," I said. That probably wasn't the best example, but I still looked more than different enough from the 'Psarians' for it to work.

And then he pulled out what was left of his sword.

"Whoa, whoa, whoa, what's up with you?"

And then everyone else in the restaurant got their weapons out.

"Huh? Did I do something?"

Nalna told me the issue. "Both of us did. Now, run."

I grabbed the rest of my chicken, popped one piece into my mouth, and dashed out of the restaurant with Roku, Nalna, and Q. "So what did we do wrong?"

"I'll tell you when we get somewhere safe." She motioned behind the building.

Thankfully, the roaring crowd of bloodthirsty fish monsters was too busy firing away to see us get behind. "Okay, so now can you tell me the issue?"

She whispered in my ear, "The Psarians are very xenophobic. They absolutely despise aliens as a concept, and have agreed to kill every last one that they see on their soil."

"Okay, then why are we here? Can't we just leave them to their own devices? They have Poseidon, we have Earth. Seems fair to me."

"That's a good point."

Q, who somehow learned to speak, yelled at both us, calling us "racist bastards" and "fascists" and junk like that, alerting the horde to our location. "Oops..."

"I'd argue that was a bit more than an 'oops,'" Roku and I said at the exact same time. There weren't many more places to hide, so I just crammed all the chicken into my face and grabbed my axe while the rest of them tried to run like the retarded cowards they were. I cranked it a few times and started going to town. I went for the gray ones first, seeing as how they could get us from where they were. I jumped straight on top of them and shoved my axe straight into some lady's scalp. The blade stopped spinning, I lifted the axe above my head (knocking a few of them down), and I cranked it again when I slammed the blade back down onto someone else's head. This also completely split the first one's head in half, and the corpse flung into the faces of two more guys. She was fat enough for both of those guys to have been crushed and killed. For this other one, I just sliced straight through her and landed on the ground. I then grabbed the cord of the axe and started swinging it

around, becoming a near-impenetrable death trap.

Near.

See, with each kill from that tactic, my spinning got slower and less balanced. I was a hundred percent open and almost cut straight through myself by the time I got fifteen kills. My hands were sweaty, my arms were numb, and I ended up getting shot in the stomach.

Yup, shot. It wasn't fatal by any means (again, slow bullets), but it hurt like the Dickens and I dropped (more like 'threw') my axe. It went through a couple of guys, thankfully, but it landed pretty far away. If I was gonna survive this horde, I was gonna have to run all the way there and pray that they didn't go after the rest of the crew.

Or, I could just eat them.

They are fish, after all. I'm not a huge fan of seafood (other than calamari), much less raw, but it would have to do. I grabbed onto the back of one of the ladies and took a huge bite out of the back of her neck. It was disgusting, but it worked. I went to the next one, did the same thing. My mouth was full, and I don't like spitting out food, so I had to swallow it. I felt like I was gonna be sick, but I went through with it. I went to another one, munch. Another, chomp, swallow. Yet another, nom. Still another, umnf, swallow.

That was when I got sick. It served as a temporary distraction (half of them were blinded), and I ran over to my axe. There were so few left that I decided to take a risk and throw it back. It took out the ones that I knocked over and neglected, and a couple extras. At that point, there were only three people left: two chicks that just ran away and Hazel. He just sat there, doing nothing, with his broken hilt beside him. I walked over to him, grabbing my axe on the way, and sat in front of him.

"Look, I don't want to hurt you. You're still a kid, and you look too much like the people on my planet."

"Yeah, didn't really wanna fuck you up, either."

"Huh? You were the first one to threaten me."

"Had to act like the rest of those dumb shits."

"You're your own man. Your own story. Do what you want."

"Law."

"Wait, what?!"

"Yeah, your ass should've been a fucking tuna salad on arrival." (Tuna? Are these people

cannibals?)

"So you're saying it's illegal for me to be here at all."

"Aliens must be met with lethal force. Them's the fuckin' brakes."

"Yeesh. I could understand deportation, but straight-up death? Why does anybody even care about that law? Seems like one that either everyone would forget about or nobody would support it to the point of it basically not existing."

"We're chipped."

"... 'scuse me?"

"Chipped. Back of the neck. Controls us to a certain extent, it's why the streets are clean but everyone is basically the same shit in a different body. Mine's not fully attached, it's why I've been able to not slit you in the fucking throat."

"Literal societal programming...Interesting. We kind of have something like that back where I come from, though rather than chips and ridiculous laws, it's actually a small group using subliminal tactics on our youth to achieve the same effect."

"What kinda bunch would do something like that?"

"Nobody knows." I tapped him on the nose when I said it. It was supposed to be a small clue for who this group was (if you know, you know), but I think he might have taken it as a sign of affection after the events that unfolded behind that club. I quickly ran my finger in the sand and got up. "Oh God, I didn't mean it like that! I swear I'm not a pedo! Or gay! But especially not a pedo!"

Hazel was just laughing about it. "Damn!...damn, you really know how to fuck, don'tcha?"

"Shut up, get up, we're gonna get back with the rest of Viva and we're gonna see about cutting your chip off. If that's okay with you, that is."

"Let's fucking go!!"

"Alright." We regrouped with them and I told them about the chip. "Hazel says he wants me to cut off his. Roku, I'm gonna need that thing that was up your butt."

"Gladly!" He gave me his whatever-the-hell-it-is and I set it to knife mode.

"Alright, Hazel, I need you to lay down on your stomach. This might sting a bit, but try to stay still." I carefully cut each wire (there were plenty already detached, probably because his neck is a fair bit different from other Psarians), and when I was done...well, I might have cut a bit too deep in

some cases, but he was still fine and officially dechipped. "Alright, chip's out. How do you feel?"

"What the fuck was that? You nearly fucking killed me!!"

"Yep, you're fine. Grab my hand if you can't get up. Does anybody have anything I can wrap around his neck?"

Roku asked for his thing back and cut the bottom fifth of his shirt off. He tied it around Hazel's neck like a scarf. "That should be good."

After that, I decided to ask Q (who was tugging at my arm), "So, you've learned how to speak? Would you like to introduce yourself?"

She just stared at me like a deer at a moving car.

"Alright, well if you've forgotten how to speak, at least let go of me. So, when Hachi's back, I guess I'll be on my way. In the meantime, I should probably decide who I'm taking with. Hazel is out of the question, he's still a kid. Uh...I hate saying it, but I think Roku would be the best idea. I've seen him climb on the bathroom ceiling, he'd probably be great for scaling the tower. You good with that, Roku?"

"Perhaps, but I'd like to ask for a certain...favor in exchange."

"No sodomy. I'm not taking you in the ass, you're not taking me in the ass, there are legitimate health concerns related to taking someone in the ass."

"Oh..."

"But, if I have to, I'm gonna guess there's some sort of beach or lake nearby judging by that forest over there."

"Yes, just in the other side of town."

"Okay, then...if we absolutely have to, we can hold hands and walk around the shore."

He leaned in.

"Is that a yes or a no?"

"Go on."

"Okay, fine, if nobody else is around, we'll do it naked."

He leaned in further.

"And we can jack each other off underwater."

Further.

"SUCK each other off. We can SUCK each other off, underwater."

"That certainly sounds enticing, but I'd be a bit worried after how much you bit the straw on my cherry juice."

"Fine, then. What's it gonna take? What's the bare minimum of how much fagginess I'll have to go through if you come with me?"

"Sodomy."

I pulled out my axe, revved it up, slid through his legs, and stabbed it through his ass. "There's your sodomy."

I got back up and kicked Roku's corpse to the side. "Alright, guess I'm choosing between the women. Uh..."

"Hi, everyone, I'm back!!"

Hachi was back with my phone. "Here ya go, I don't know if it has any charge."

I turned it on. 58%, good enough for anything, hopefully. I opened up iFunny (pretty much the only social media I haven't been banned from yet) and started spamming the featured section with calls to all members from Poseidon to join Viva le T, at least until I got sidetracked and started just downloading every offensive meme I could. Not to mention the goldmine that is the comment section itself (at least when they're not harassing me for having an anime PFP). I was on there for a good five minutes until Hachi told us to "look who I brought with me!"

Roku.

It was Roku.

It's always Roku.

His corpse was still in my peripheral vision, and a new one was standing right in front of me with even more skin showing. He didn't even bother with pants this time, he just wore a pair of tighty-whities (not even, more like "tighty-blackies") that couldn't even come close to hiding his giant bulge.

And actually, I'm gonna pause for a bit to just say that no, Roku and I don't get together at the end. It's pointless to say that I'm not a faggot at this point (30% is still greater than 0), but I still have my morals, my faith, and my belief that all homosexuals go to Hell. I understand that spoiling this might be disappointing to some readers, but even more people would probably complain that I "abandoned" Roku's affection after the crazy amount of "buildup." There's really no pleasing people.

If you want to believe that Roku and I get together, feel free to rip out the rest of the pages in this book and write your own fanfiction in its place. Chapter 5 is almost done, anyways. If, however, you'd like to continue reading the actual story, please do. Let's get back to that.

I was ready to just leave this nuthouse. I still wanted somebody to come with me on this journey, but I was tired of all these shenanigans. "Alright, nobody else really has much of a bonus when it comes to joining me, so I'm just choosing based on eye candy. Nalna, let's hit the road. Which way?"

She pointed directly away from the restaurant we were at. "That way."

Unstoppable Force,

**AN
IM
MOVABLE
OBJECT**

Immovable Object

"So in case we run across that Ferment guy, how are we supposed to recognize him?"

"Well, beyond the lightning speed, he's the only guy on the planet wearing a hat."

An interesting description. The only guy wearing a hat? On a desert planet? I doubted it, but Nalna seemed to know everything about this place, so instead of questioning it, I simply asked, "Wouldn't the hat fall off?"

"Apparently not."

"Alright." And we headed off. Nearly instantly, another Psarian showed up, a gray one. We were just gonna walk past her until she brought out a damned RPG. Nalna shot her without hesitation, and we carried on. Not much later, we had a handful more. Not a crazy amount like at the restaurant, but a fair few. They were all blue, though, so it was more than easy for me to take care of them (didn't even have to charge up my axe, just whacked 'em a few times each).

Then another gray one came along. She had a basic glock, and the bullets on this planet still move at about four miles an hour, but I was expecting Nalna to shoot. Nope, she was gesturing for me to do it.

"Why are you pointing at her? Shoot her!"

"I'm out of ammo."

"WHAT!!" I quickly ran over to the gray and sliced her head off. "What do you mean you're out of ammo? You're telling me that shotgun has a limit after you went through eleven shots without reloading once. I don't buy it."

"See for yourself."

I grabbed her gun and popped the back out. Sure enough, empty, and she clearly didn't have any pockets to keep any other shells. Unless...

"Well, do you have any more shells in your tits?"

She chortled. "No, I don't keep any there. I used to have a few tied in my hair, but it looked goofy and was uncomfortable. I'm completely bone-dry."

"Okay then, maybe try grabbing some weapons off of the ground?"

"That could work. Pass me that glock."

"Really? Not the rocket launcher back there?"

"Only holds one."

"Alright." I went back, threw the gun over to her, and we got back to going. Instantly, another ten or so guys came along, half blue and half gray. I ended up having to go through all of them myself, since Nalna's new glock was just that slow. Not an issue, but still. Afterwards, we finally got a decent bit of time where we were just walking uninterrupted, a good five minutes of nothing but sky and sand.

Then I heard something.

It sounded like a breeze, but I couldn't feel anything. The air was completely stagnant, as it had been since I arrived on what might as well have been called Flatooine. But, the sound was getting louder.

And louder, and louder, and louder.

And then it hit me.

In the back.

I don't know what it was, but I got slapped in the back by something and fell face-first into the sand. Nalna held out her hand for me. "Nah, it's fine," I said as I got up. "So do you have any clue what that was?"

"That's Ferment. He ran straight into you and left in the blink of an eye."

"So you're telling me I have to kill that guy?"

She nodded her head. "That's right."

"Welp, I'm as good as dead."

"Believe in yourself."

"Yeah, believe in a three-hundred pound, chicken-legged weakass to take down a faster-than-light alien. Unlike you, if I die, I'm not coming back."

Nalna stopped in her tracks. After a brief pause, she gave a strained "yeah," and then we got back to walking. (What on Earth was that all about?)

The rest of the walk went about as you'd expect, nothing much of note except for a couple dozen Psarians trying to screw us up and over. I started getting fed up with them and throwing my axe at them, and for any that I missed, I simply resorted to...less sanitary measures. Nalna probably went through about twenty arms throughout the journey.

And then, it happened again.

The false breeze.

The footsteps.

I was prepared this time, though, and held out my axe (which still had some charge from the last time I threw it – not ideal). Ferment came blazing through, and this time he had a giant sword that nearly cut through my axe. I barely maintained my ground, and ended up being pushed not only backwards, but also downwards until my head was barely above the sand. When we finally slowed down to a halt, I barfed all over his feet.

“So...I take it you’re Ferment?”

“No...I am...” He did a spin. (Some vomit got on my face.) “The fabulous FERment!!”

I wiped my face off and climbed out of the sand. “And I’ll guess you’re called that because you’re old and fruity.”

“Nah, babe, I’m as straight as straight can be.”

“Yeah, a pink thong, a glittery jacket, thigh-high socks, and...did you just call me ‘babe?’”

“You know it, babe.”

“Ooooooooookay then, fruit. Let’s just get this over with. I’ve been hired to kill someone, you’re one of his bodyguards, you’re gonna die. Or maybe I will. Who knows, probably gonna be me.”

“Okay!!” He did a couple of faggy dance moves and pointed at me. “Let’s get this party started!!” He started circling around me. Faster, and faster, and faster, until it looked like there were five of him at once. I tried lunging at him (he was going so fast that it would’ve basically been a guaranteed hit), but he ended up following me so I was still in the center. So, I tried spinning the chain again, figuring that would reach far enough, but he pulled out his sword and cut the wire. My axe went flying and I was empty-handed, except for the string.

That was when he started attacking. He was going too fast for me to give a play-by-play for what he did, but I dropped to the ground and started rolling around. It turns out he was going so fast that it took him a long time to realize I wasn’t standing. Long enough, in fact, to realize I was actually being kicked around by his after image rather than where he actually was. Meaning I actually had time to react.

Once I figured that out, he started dragging his sword on the ground. I jumped up and got on top of his head. (He really did have a hat on!) I started kicking him in the back and tried to choke him with the bit of string that I was still holding onto. He ended up noticing, so I jumped off of him.

That was when he started jumping around. He was trying to home in on me, but the crazy

"before-image" delay meant I could just run around normally and he'd never hit me. I darted straight for my axe, reached out for it...and then Ferment got it.

And he instantly ran out of energy.

"Hey, uh...huff...can we just, uh...take five?"

"That's not how battles to the death work, you fruity vegetable." I grabbed my chain-axe straight from his hands and walked behind him. He collapsed, so I stepped on his tail (yeah, he has a tail) and grabbed him by his shoulders. "I wonder how your hat stays on." I bent his neck back towards me, looked down at it, and "DEAR GOD!!" His giant, red fedora was NAILED INTO HIS SKULL. How was this guy alive in the first place?!!

So, of course, I popped Ferment's cork and he burst. Blood, blood everywhere. A beautiful sight to behold, something that was astonishingly lacking from a fair few of my other kills today. Everyone and everything was positively drenched in it. I loved it.

Nalna was just a few feet away from the battlefield, well within the splash zone. She was clearly not as amused as I was. "Ew, I shouldn't have come."

"Well, you didn't really have a choice in the matter."

"Yeah, and I can tell you're..." She looked down at my crotch. "...enjoying it."

"Huh?" And I noticed it. "Oh, God!" I covered my lower body in sand to clean the blood off of my raging erection. "Heh, heh...so are we close to the tower?"

"Yep, you should be able to just barely see it over there."

"Okay, let's go."

And so we walked for five minutes, uninterrupted, until we reached the tower. Except, it wasn't a tower. It was a mountain.

"Uh...Nalna, you did say this was the right place, right?"

"This is the chasm mount, the location of Syma's tower and Ferment's hideout."

"Huh. So why is it called the 'chasm mount?'"

"Because there's a chasm at the top on the mount. That should be obvious."

"So it's a volcano?"

"No, the pit only goes down to around the halfway point of the mountain. That's where Syma's tower is."

"So, what, are we just gonna climb this thing, jump off, and break our legs on her roof? Great plan, let's just flipping OFF ourselves."

"That's where Ferment's hideout comes in handy." She walked up to some random spot on the mountain and knocked on it. It collapsed, and she walked in. I followed after a few seconds of pondering what the hell just happened.

It was actually quite impressive for being built inside a mountain. It was only about as big as a studio apartment, but it felt like someone could actually live here. We weren't here to stay for the night, though, we were here to steal the belongings of a dead man.

The first thing I did was I checked under the bed. There were a couple of boxes, but nothing of note except for a few stress balls and puzzles. The second thing was the dresser, which notably had a picture on top of it. It was of Ferment with someone else; a woman, presumably his wife. My first thought was that he wasn't lying, he was straight. My second thought was that the woman in the picture looked like an older version of...my sister, Mayflash. Was there someone on this planet who looked almost exactly like my retarded little sister? It could be possible.

Anyway, I checked the drawers and right on top of a pile of socks was this little thing with a clip on it. "Who on earth clips socks together?"

"Wait, you found it!"

"Huh?"

"That right there is a speed booster. You clip it onto your clothes, and it doubles your running speed. Ferment actually had hundreds of these things on, and that's why everything he wore was so glittery."

"How do you know this stuff? You could've taken this guy out without me with all this junk you know!"

"We've been doing recon missions for months."

"Huh."

"Anyway, it's probably best to get more of these. We could harvest them from Ferment's body, but they've probably shorted out from...that."

"Don't look at me! Yeah, I liked it, but that geyser caught me off-guard, too."

And we got back to searching. None of the other drawers had any boosters, but Nalna found

some still clipped onto belts and pockets in the closet. All in all, we got about twelve clips, and split them up evenly. I attached them to the bottom of my cape, and Nalna clipped them onto her panties. [insert whistle here]

Now that we had those, we were fully prepared to scale the mountain. Just as we were about to walk our, though, a trash can fell from the sky, completely out of nowhere, in front of the entrance.

And it grew legs.

And it did a little dance.

And the ground started shaking. We quickly (very quickly) ran out, and the hideout collapsed. We probably didn't need those clips, after all, since it managed to create a ramp leading directly to Syma's front door. As we walked (yes, walked, we didn't want to hit our heads on the front door and knock ourselves out), there was a voice coming from the top of the tower, one that sounded kinda cute and kinda creepy at the same time.

"What a horrible night to have a curse..."

I'm pretty sure everyone recognizes that line. I don't know why that voice was quoting Castlevania, but I assume it was a coincidence.

Or, at least I did assume, until we reached the door and that same voice called out to us to "step into the shadows of the hell house." Apparently whoever this is just really likes Simon's Quest. But, instead of going in, I tried using those chips to my advantage and ran up the inside of the chasm.

My legs started burning after about twenty feet.

It was about a second of running almost completely vertically, and what a surprise, it didn't work. Turns out, these chips don't modify your endurance in any way, and your legs will give out at the same distance they would've normally. So that's pointless.

No point in complaining, however, so we stepped...

Chapter VII

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
**INTO THE SHADOWS
OF THE HELL HOUSE.**
● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

It was immediately obvious that this was going to be not much more than a long, long climb. Around fifty floors that were mostly each being held up only by a flight of stairs. We climbed up to the fifth one before my legs gave out and I decided to just lay down for a bit. Five minutes after I lay down, I got slapped in the waist by a thing. I nearly rolled off the platform until I stood up and decided "Yep, okay, let's just get back to going."

And then another one came at me.

This time, I got a good look at the thing. It looked like a stone carving of a face, "hurdling" towards us at a slightly faster pace than the bullets of this planet. Still more than slow enough for me to jump on it and try using it as a shortcut.

However, it wouldn't change course, so I just jumped off of it back on the platform at the last moment. And we got back to climbing.

The stone heads started coming at us more often as we climbed further and further. I got knocked off a couple of times, though thankfully, it was only down by a floor or two. By the 25th floor, however, simply ignoring them wasn't an option, as they were on fire from then on. That meant no breaks every five floors, and we were only halfway there.

That was when I started utilizing all those chips we got. If my legs were gonna crash, they might as well burn out, too. Either way, it was better than my entire body burning UP. This idea carried me for another three floors until the flaming stone heads started homing in on me. That was when I pulled out the chain-axe.

The cord was still broken.

I forgot to tie it back. I could still use it, but my hand would more than likely slip off. And I definitely couldn't tie it back when all of those fiery faces were still out to get me. Out of options, I did the first thing I could think of: I whipped those flying rocks with the broken cord.

And it worked.

I don't know how, but each of them that I whipped were sent flying back and fell down to ground level. The cord didn't even get charred. I was in business.

The next couple of floors were more of the same, going up and up on aching feet, slapping those burning boulders in the face with the plastic handle if a piece of string, until floor #35. Out of nowhere, a pendulum came out and slapped me in the face. That little cord whip did nothing to keep it at bay, and it smashed me straight into the wall.

Worse yet, that part of the wall was made of glass. In the span of less than a second, that was shattered and stained, my blood spilling all over both the shards that were stuck to me, and the intact pane below. At that same moment, thousands of volts of electricity from whatever was behind the glass entered what was left of my body. I could feel my soul leave my body, as the last thing I saw was a few more flaming stone heads coming to finish off whatever might have remained.

I was dead.

The mission had ended in failure.

And that's the end.

Who am I kidding, there's a good five and a half chapters left to this book.

Yep, I survived. I don't know how, I don't know why, but after a good hour or so, I came back to my senses and all the rocks were gone. One of the platforms (I believe #38) was even within my grasp. I grabbed onto it, painfully pulled myself off of the wall, sat down on the edge, and gleefully yelled "SHORTCUT!!" Nalna ran up right beside me and asked, "How the hell are you still alive?"

"You know, I've asked that to half of the members of Viva le T, and you always dismissed it. I mean, I don't know either, but still, I don't think it matters any more than how Roku and Hachi kept on coming back. Let's just keep on going."

I crawled over to the center of the platform, worried that I would fall back down to the bottom if I tried standing up where I was. My legs, hell, basically everything felt broken, not to mention the huge holes in my knees. Sure enough, when I actually stood up, it only took me five seconds to fall back down. So, without the threat of those heads, I decided to just crawl up the rest of the tower. Seven floors without a problem, and then there were the final five floors.

Actually, calling them floors is a bit of a stretch. These floors were made up or large, actively rotating gears, not great for someone whose legs have been all but obliterated. Nalna was already off, leaving me in a dire pickle. I tried climbing onto the first one – thankfully, it was rotating away from me, so there wasn't an issue with that one, but getting to the other one was another ordeal entirely. In fact, I failed, and ended up getting completely smooshed. It wasn't like I was one flick away from death, like with the glass wall, but it still hurt like the Dickens. Oddly enough, however, it was actually more helpful than harmful at the end of it; I assume it was like rolling out dough, but it actually somewhat fixed my knees. It was by no means perfect, but I could at least stand up and walk. Trying again at the gears, I managed to catch up with Nalna, who was already up at the 47th "floor" and stalling for time. By then, the gears had gotten a bit faster, but I wasn't too worried. It wasn't until #48 that I was stressing out about it, as the gears had gotten even faster, and while my legs worked, they weren't good enough for running. This was when I did what I should've done from the beginning, and I hung from the side of the cogs and used the strength of my fully-intact arms to get me through. I swung from gear to gear, hanging on from the concave area that would normally house an axle. It was far slower than what Nalna was doing, that being running across with those chips on her ass, but it worked well for how I was. In fact, once I realized I found do that, I started just climbing vertically for the whole thing – three gears is a lot less than thirty, after all. Blam, level fifty with broken legs and minimal effort. Nalna was resting on the stairs the entire time, waiting for me to get up, and when I did, she notified me that "hey, your cape is missing. Ya know where your weapon is?"

...fuck. All this way, and I was gonna have to fight a witch with my fists. If I wasn't dead before, I sure as hell was now. I punched a hole through one of the steps in anger, and walked up to my demise.

Syma.

Flying on a broom far above the top of the tower was a witch...no, "witch" makes it sound like she was ugly, and she was certainly not ugly. Mage, that sounds better. Above the tower was a mage, consistently twirling her magic wand as she gracefully dropped to the roof of the tower. "You look pale," she said as her feet planted themselves on the ground.

"Yeah, I always look like this. Besides, that shi--that crap down there nearly killed me. And also, how does all that stuff down there work? The walls didn't seem thick enough to house those things. I should know, I was shoved nearly all the way through one."

"Believe in magic."

"Really? Don't just write it off like that. I'm tired of not getting answers."

"Sorry, pal. No time, maybe later."

"You do realize that there's not gonna be a later for one of us, right? We're here to kill, and odds are, you'll be the one walking away. I don't even have a weapon."

She passed me something. "Use this silver knife to save your neck."

"A risk taker! Thanks for this, even if I'm still gonna die. But, enough talk." I pointed the knife at Syma. "HAVE AT YOU!!" (Yeah, it's the wrong Castlevania, but it still works.)

And it began. I started running toward her as fast as my brittle legs would allow (which wasn't exactly fast at all, not even enough for the chips to kick in), and she quickly fired some...fire...balls (great phrasing, Husk) from her wand, dispatching my knees once again. I had to crawl toward her and hope that her aim would plummet from perfect to blind...which it did, almost as if it was deliberate. I kept slowly inching towards her, as her shrinking flame pellets hardly even grazed me, until she suddenly threw a gust of wind at me. The only real gust of wind I've felt since landing on this planet, and it ironically felt great until I started sliding away from Syma. I stabbed that knife into the roof just far enough so that I wouldn't get blown away. I tried to climb closer to her, but without the ability to kick my feet up in the air, I wasn't able to get anywhere. So, I just held my ground with both hands for a good two minutes until she stopped blowing me off. (Gotta have at least one sex joke when you're in a battle to the death with the opposite sex.)

Once she stopped trying to push me away, she started casting balls of ice that were certainly better aimed than those tiny flames, but they were also literal balls of ice that only hurt a tiny bit and were more refreshing than anything else as they melted off of my boiling skin. I started inching

closer, now being even slower after my arms got worn out from holding onto that small handle. Eventually, I made it to her. I grabbed onto her leg, clutched the knife with my left hand, and she disintegrated before I could stab her. Three seconds after she was completely gone, her voice somehow came back. "The morning sun has vanquished the horrible night. The battle has consummated."

"Morning sun? I don't see anything! And where did that voice even come from? What happened in general? What time is it?"

Nalna arrived at the roof. "Well, I can't answer any of those questions, but I can at least help you with the last one. You might not have noticed, but this place is actually a clock tower. We can check the front of this place once we hit the bottom. Come on." She started going down.

"The stairs? I'm taking the fun way."

She popped back up. "The fun way?"

I rolled my way to the edge of the roof. "The FUN way!"

"Are you insane?!"

"I was smashed into an electric glass wall and all I have to show for it are a few bloodless, painless flesh wounds. I'll be fine dropping down into some half-a-mile-deep sand. If anything, the stairs are more dangerous with these legs. Anyway, see ya at the bottom!"

And I rolled off.

THE WALKER

The Road Back

Falling and falling, and falling. Thirty seconds felt like thirty minutes as I continued, uncontrollably, to the ground. I'm surprised I remained intact with those gaping holes in my knees. I eventually hit the ground and kept on falling into the sand for a bit.

It took me a while to climb out without, y'know, knees, but I managed. When I emerged, I was on the opposite side of the tower from where the entrance was, and for whatever reason, this was the only side that had the clock. Also, it was a digital clock. Not exactly what I was expecting from all those gears and that pendulum. (On that note, you could actually see where I got smashed into the display. Loads of dead pixels and my own blood, not to mention missing glass. I'm lucky I didn't land on it on my way down, I only missed it by a foot.)

More importantly, though, what time was it? 5:47AM. Good God.

And it took Nalna another fifteen minutes to get back down by the stairs, so I ended up seeing that morning sun that Syma was talking about before we were able to go. When she came back down, she called for me. "I'm over at the back," I yelled. "Might have an issue getting anywhere, though."

"I can carry you if I have to."

"If you have to."

I started crawling my way over to her, and she quickly decided that "this'll take five hours and the sun's up. I'm gonna have to carry you." She ran over to me, hugged me, and tried to lift me up. I was too fat for that. (Damn, and I was hoping I was gonna get to rest in her beautiful, soft arms.)

With that idea gone, I tried kicking myself into position and rolling out. I ended up making the mistake of rolling back into the hole I dug myself out of at first, but the second try worked almost flawlessly (just a few bumps made of shattered glass). It was actually almost as fast as running (normally, without the chips, not that I had any left in the first place). Anyway, I got to the edge of the chasm, and the curvature of the wall actually lined me up perfectly with the next angle I needed to be at, same with when I needed to turn again. I had to stop and adjust myself to actually exit the chasm, but other than that, it was relatively smooth sailing. I had Nalna check the angle that I would be going at to get back. "Make 100% sure that we'll end up at either the hotel or somewhere in Streetroad. Even the slightest mistake can lead to catastrophic consequences. Where I come from, the people who rule us only got their power because we made the slight mistake of believing that their kind was killed en masse nearly a hundred years ago, and now we can't even say who they are."

I don't know why I went on that tangent. It was almost entirely unrelated to what was happening at the moment. I just sometimes blurt out stuff like that. Nalna, however, was interested in this group I was referring to. "Who are they?"

"Well, I don't wanna say it directly, because there's a chance that they found this place and they're monitoring the whole thing, but I can tell you this. It starts with a J, ends with an S, and in the middle is an interjection for disgust."

She groped her tits. "Jugs?"

"Not what I was going for, but that's a good guess. Now, come on. The angle."

"Yeah, you'll need to roll a bit."

I moved as close to the ramp as I could without getting on it. "Is that good enough?"

"Yep." She ran over to (I hope) the hotel, came back, adjusted me so that I'd be ready, and said "100%. Let's go."

I pulled back, and started going. Nearly the instant I hit the ramp, I went crazy. For a second, I thought that the chips were going off, before realizing that they were all attached to that cape. I kept building speed, going faster and faster even after landing on flat ground. I was completely unstoppable, and there were no Psarians to be found on the way. Nalna tried to slow me down a few times, but she just ended up getting knocked away by my crazy, unmodified speed. I was half-worried that I was gonna slam into the wall and break everything in my body that hasn't already been obliterated.

And then I hit something.

Not a building, not a tree, but a man. How I didn't knock him over, I don't know, but the moment I slammed into his legs, I bounced back a bit and my body slapped Nalna in the face, knocking her over and leaving me motionless once I hit the ground. I sat up, looked around, and saw the man who stopped me. A tall man in a black coat covering his entire body was what I slammed into. Beside him was a big-breasted woman, who wasn't quite as tall, and she also wore the same kind of black coat.

"Who are you?" I asked.

The tall one replied. "We have been sent by the future president of our world. I am Vye, and the woman is Zur."

"Vye and Zur? Wait, Visor was two people?"

"We have come for the leader of the terrorist group, Viva le T."

"Never heard of 'em."

"Really? Nearly every news station has been reporting about the deaths of a fair few members of the QuiDu unit at the hands of this Viva le T group."

"I don't keep up with the news."

"Hmph, fine. Then do you recognize this face?" He showed me portrait. It was a very rough draft – no color, very sketchy, and the mouth was missing – but it was unmistakably Nalna. But, I had to keep lying, to keep her safe. I've never been a good liar, so even getting this far was a huge feat. How long could I last?

"That face doesn't look like anything I've seen. Hardly even looks like a face. Those eyes are way too big (I like big eyes), you can barely see the nose (I don't like noses), you can't see the mouth at all (rough draft), are you even sure that's a real person? And what's that stringy stuff coming from the back of her head? (I haven't seen any Psarians with human hair, save for Hazel, and I don't know if he really counts.) Or that...what is that, is she a bobble head? Why does her body just shrink at the bottom? (Psarian necks are solid.)"

"Well...it'd seem like everything you just said would also apply to the woman at your feet."

And she started to wake up. I whisper-yelled at her. "Nalna, get down!"

"Nalna? I believe that'd be the name of the woman we've been after."

"Huh? No, no, no, I have loads of friends called that! (I don't have any friends in general.)"

"Well, I've never heard such a name. Zur, stand up and seize the woman. As for you, I've no quarrel. You may run off if you wish, or you may stay and watch."

I tried pulling Nalna out of Zur's hands, but she wouldn't budge. She did, however, drop her gun on the ground. I grabbed it, lied down between Zur's legs, and shot her in the back of the head right when she was about to grab her own gun. I saw Vye running towards me for a split second, but then he stopped dead in his tracks. What's more, he suddenly grew a pair of honkers. He slowly approached me while I was trying to get Nalna free, and picked Zur's gun off of her body. I couldn't shoot him – I was holding a musket, and I didn't have any more rounds – so I tried what I did with Eldritch and I threw it at him. He was unfazed, didn't even lose his balance, and pointed the gun at Nalna. There was nothing I could do, so I let her go and crawled away, hoping that at least I could save my own neck. I kept crawling faster, eventually using whatever power I could to stand up and run away, and I kept going and going, until...bang.

Blood.

Blood everywhere.

I was still well within the splash zone. Gallons of blood sprayed out of her, enough to knock me straight back down. I could feel my heart plummet faster than the rest of my body as I collapsed onto the sand. Nalna, even if I had only met her seventeen hours ago, was the first woman I ever truly loved. I know it could never happen, she was too old and we came from completely different planets, potentially completely different galaxies, but it didn't matter. She was the love of my life,

As I wrote the above paragraph, Roku rushed out from the club, likely to announce to the rest of the gang that, yes, I was alive. I was prepared to stand up before remembering that my knees were destroyed in the clock tower. I still tried, anyway, as the floors were, for once, spotless.

Unbelievably, I could actually stand. It turns out that the sand that ended up in my legs actually hardened from my tears and Nalna's blood, and made a serviceable replacement for my knees. I was fully functional and ready to continue my mission. I walked out of the club and tried to catch up with Roku. He was already heading back to where I was, however, and he brought the entire team with him. "Ah, and I see your legs are back in working order."

"How did you even know they were broken?"

"How else could those plates of sand be hovering above the ground?"

"Makes sense. Anyway, where's Nalna?"

"Deceased."

"Yeah, but you and Hachi came back, hasn't Nalna?"

"When...had we been killed?"

"Remember, the bathroom? And the jungle? Or the back of the restaurant?"

"I've no idea what you're talking about. We had never been killed."

"Yeah, you did, and you wore less and less pants...every...time..."

He was wearing the jeans that he did when he tried to do me in the ass in the bathroom. Really, I could've sworn he was wearing a pair of underwear last time I saw him.

And it turns out, so did Hazel. "I'm going with Husk on this one. Both of you were fucking dead at some point, and I don't know what kind of bullshit you two pulled to piece your asses back together, but you did. And on top of all that shit, I could almost see your fucking dick a few fucking hours ago."

"See, the kid agrees with me."

"Then you two must have been sharing the same false memories."

Hachi started talking. "Maybe it's that you've been out cold for about six days, but yeah. We found Nalna's dead body not too far from where you were. She's been buried at the front of the hotel. On that note, we're running out of time. We should get back and prepare."

I still had my doubts, but we headed back to base. I walked up to the front door, and noticed something in the corner of my eye. A gravestone labeled "VELVET MERINGUE 1998-2022". That was a name I'd never heard of, not to mention the name of a cream filling. Hachi, however, assured me that "that's Nalna's real name."

"Is it, though? Nalna doesn't sound like a nickname to me."

"Well, it is."

"Still doubt it."

And we headed in. Once we got off the elevator, I noticed that the couches suddenly had labels on the back. Each label had one of our names on it, shortened or expanded to fit exactly four letters (so Hachi got "HAXI" and Q got "KYUU", for example). There were three couches labeled NULL, however. I could understand two of them (hell, I could understand if we decided to just have two couches and split it up evenly by sex), but there were six of us and only five labeled couches. I didn't bother seeing who was missing one, and just plopped down on my seat. Roku tried to get with me, but I told him that he had his own and there was no excuse this time. So, he got into his and everyone else got into theirs, except Nalna who never even showed up. Hachi started speaking while I was still waiting. "So, to get Husk caught up, since he's been asleep for nearly a week, I'm in charge now. I've vowed to do whatever it takes to maintain the legacy of Nalna and ensure the victory of Viva le T. We're officially on the day of the rally, and while Nalna thought of it as too much of a risk to go today, I think it's a perfect storm. We could be able to sway public opinion and get people on our side this way. Husk, I had Q create a new cape out of that old dress we had you wear on your first visit to the night club. Q, give it to him."

If anything goes to show how ridiculously puffy that godforsaken getup was, it's the fact that this new cape actually looks like a normal cape. In fact, it almost looks exactly like the one that got scorched in the tower, only without the black and purple stripes at the bottom.

Enough rambling. Hachi started speaking again once I put the cape on. "Now, Husk, I've supplied the pockets of your new cape with throwing knives. Q, leave the room so I can talk about this. Anyway, Husk, what you're gonna do is when the target gets on-stage, you'll throw one of these. Only one, any more and someone will notice. The rest are just in case you end up in a sticky situation. If you hit him, congratulations. We'll give you the briefcase and send you back to Earth. If not, follow the crowd, and when you can, come back here and we can try again next chance we get. Do you understand?"

"Yeah, more or less."

"Great. We've got about thirty minutes before we go, so do what you want until then."

Roku jumped in. "I have an idea on how we might spend those thirty minutes, Husk."

"Not happening, faggot."

Hachi called me out. "Could you PLEASE stop using that word?"

I sighed. "Women."

"Excuse me?"

"I said you're the boss."

"That's what I thought."

"Anyway, Roku, Nalna told you to stop getting into me, didn't she?"

"Nalna is dead."

"No, she's not. She can't be."

"Yes, she is."

"No! She's alive, I know it!"

I got up, turned around, and saw a picture hanging up from the wall that wasn't there before. A picture of Nalna, with the same encryption that was on the grave.

"What is this?"

Hazel (HAZL) was the one to say it this time. "Yeah, no way around it. That bitch is sleeping with the fucking aquas."

It was true. Nalna was truly gone. I snapped the frame in half out of anger, threw it on the ground, and demanded to know **"WHERE THE FUCK IS VYE."**

"Who the fuck is Vye?" Hazel asked.

"I WANT TO TEAR OUT HIS ASS AND SHOVE IT IN HIS FUCKING EYEBALL."

"Who the fuck is he?"

"I WANT TO FEED IT THROUGH HIS EAR AND STUFF IT DOWN HIS THROAT."

"Husk. Husk. Calm down."

"OUT HIS BELLY BUTTON AND BACK IN THROUGH HIS OTHER EAR, THEN I'LL PULL IT OUT THROUGH HIS OTHER EYE SOCKET AND FORCE IT INTO HIS NOSE."

"CALM. THE FUCK. DOWN."

But, he couldn't calm me down. I spent the entire thirty minutes explaining in gory detail how I was going to tie Vye up with his own digestive tract before Hachi told me it was time to go. At the top of my lungs, I yelled **"LET'S HIT THE GOD-DAMNED ROAD!!"** and we were off.

I was finally able to calm down on the elevator. "So, where is the rally being held?"

Hachi said "it's at Townstreet Rd."

"Streetroad? What, is it being held at the the CHKN/KCHN?"

"No, Townstreet Road. Around the back of that building where I woke you up and you started speaking gibberish."

"Oh." I was silent for a second, and then realized. "Wait, you have roads?"

"Yeah, why are you acting so surprised?"

"We could've just driven to Syma's tower?"

"Driven? What does that mean?"

"With a car?"

"I still have no clue what you're talking about."

"Alright, nevermind."

Once the elevator stopped, we went in the exact opposite direction of Streetroad, towards that weird building (which still looked like it was a rushing orange liquid even from the outside), and right behind it was the place we were heading. It looked like a football stadium for some reason. We got in line, and then Hachi told me to "tell me how it went when you come back!" and gave me a kiss on the cheek. The whole group headed back to the hotel, leaving me behind, in line, on an assassination mission. And that line was crazy long. By the time I got in, the sun had already set again, and there was still another hour or two before anything happened. Thankfully, I was able to get one of the front-row seats, but that didn't mean I was guaranteed to hit the target. As I said, it was essentially a stadium, with the seats being raised far above where the target was going to be.

There was also a jumbotron that played a short video once the rally began. It played some generic "inspirational" music while showing a flyover of all the unique places on Poseidon (sand, sand, and more sand, maybe a shot of the chasm mount, but mostly just sand), but the video got

more and more corrupted as it went on. It eventually switched over to a bizarre cut of an X-ray of a Psarian, with its focus pointed at the brain chip. A voice started narrating. "Do you see this chip? This is why you can't make your own decisions. These are planted at birth into all Psarians so that someone, somewhere, is able to control you remotely. This is why you have no free will." The screen switched to showing a man, presumably the target, who just so happened to be the narrator of the last part. He was distinctively human, albeit with a very pale face. He also had a hat on for some reason. He started talking. "My name is Seprolus, and I vow to de-chip everyone when I get in office. Take control of your life. Vote Seprolus."

That was the end of the video. Short, but to-the-point. I doubt that he was actually going to do anything about the chips, though, since if he gets elected, odds are he was in support of the chips already. Anyway, he walked into the stadium, and I instantly threw one of my knives at him. Almost as if he knew it was coming, he slid right out of the way, looked towards me, and said "Well, what do we have here? Everyone, stay calm and stay seated. As for you, whoever threw this, why don't you come down here so we can fight onstage? You're a mercenary, after all, not an assassin."

I didn't budge.

"Don't keep me waitin'!"

I kept him waiting.

"Are you there?"

I realized this was my chance to throw another knife. Even if Hachi told me not to, I had to do it. This could be my only chance to kill him. I reached into my cape, grabbed another knife, and got snatched up by the guy who used to guard the hotel. As I was carried out, I heard Seprolus say that he was just gonna do what he was gonna do in the first place (likely a long, beautiful lie of some sort). Everything else after that is a blur.

AN
TE
S

Reality

I didn't know where I was. It was dark, cold, smelled like piss (the kind of piss that smells like popcorn, but still), and my knees were broken again. I crawled around to find some sort of light source somewhere, but all I found were walls. My pockets were empty, so I couldn't use a knife and try to carve my way out. All I could do was lay down and wait. For something. Anything. Anything at all.

At all.

But, there was nothing. Nothing but darkness. Complete, pitch-black darkness. Purgatory.

Nalna.

With nothing else to do, I pictured that beautiful face, one that I'd never personally see again. Anything to escape this emptiness. Anything to retain my sanity. Anything to keep my mind off the fact that I'd never see the light of day again, that I'd never return to my own bed, or even my home planet. That I'd never see my family again, or become famous, or have sex, or win a war, or do anything at all.

Movements.

Expansion.

I couldn't help it. Nalna's face and tits were too perfect. My mini-meat was standing up on its end, and I just had to...let's not get into that.

Light.

Something beamed into wherever I was, while I was...doing that. Not the worst thing in the world, like it'd be for most, since unlike most, my crotch (and most of the rest of my body) was completely invisible, but still freaky. I brought my hand back to my side and sat up. It was then that I saw the bars.

I was in prison.

It wasn't hard to see why; multiple accounts of murder and an attempted assassination of a presidential candidate would only logically earn me the death sentence. The bars opened, and I knew I was a dead man. All I could do was crawl my way over. The man at the gate told me it was time for my execution. "Stand up."

"My legs are broken!"

"Doesn't matter, stand up."

I stood up. I was already falling over, but I just followed my balance and did my best to walk over. Trying to follow the guy that was leading me to my execution was an ordeal in itself, but I managed (though not without a couple of kicks to where my nuts used to be). Eventually, we made it to a guillotine. It wasn't a public execution, so I don't know why a full-blown guillotine was necessary.

When I put my head in, the executioner decided to start a conversation. "So, how was your day?"

"Why are you talking to me?"

"What? What's wrong with a little small talk?"

"Because, no."

"C'mon, you tried to kill me, this is the least you can do."

"What."

"Just a bit ago, when I was about to give a speech."

"You're Seprolus?"

"The one and only!...well, not exa--"

He was standing right behind me. I started kicking the air hoping I'd land a few hits on him. I did, enough to make him shut up for a few seconds, but not enough to actually knock him out. After those few seconds, he started yapping again. "Okay, then. That was uncalled for."

"I'd say it was more than called for. Either you're gonna chop my head off or talk my ears off. I'd rather you just drop the blade already, so for God's sake, get on with it."

He whispered to himself. "Yeesh, was I really that irritable?"

"What was that 'I' for?"

"Oh yeah, I forgot to tell you. I'm you."

"Huh?"

"Give or take twenty years."

"No, I mean what are you going on about?"

"I'm you from twenty years into the future."

WHAT.

Time travel! What in the world! How! How was that possible!

Seprolus had the answer. "You're wondering how time travel is possible. Well, you've already experienced it. Poseidon is a prototype of Earth."

"A wha--"

"Yes, a prototype. One of millions, in fact. God is a perfect being, but anything given free will inevitably strays from that perfection."

"You're losing me."

"Not much I can do about that."

"Yeah, you can! You're the future president, AND we're the same person! You can get me out of this thing and we can talk about whatever you were trying to talk about."

"Or I can do this." He cut the rope holding the guillotine up. The blade fell.

I eventually regained consciousness. I was laying on a bench across the room from where I was. My head was back on and even my legs were healed. Seprolus was sitting beside me.

I sat up. "What the hell was that?!"

"What I felt like doing."

"I hate you."

"Enjoy your future!"

[Okay, I'm actually cutting in here for a bit. Just wanted to let you know that the rest of this chapter is nothing but exposition. If you want to skip to the next chapter, go ahead. You're not missing much.]

A couple minutes of silence before I started talking again. "So how am I still alive?"

"Well, Powera--"

"Nobody uses my first name. If you're actually me, you should've known that."

"That's exactly why I used that name. Anyway, Powera, what I was going to say was that you are a special being hardly considered human. There's a phenomenon that happens every couple hundred years, where a man grows to fifteen years of age and gets erased from existence. The irregularity within these children is passed down from their mothers, who are not affected by it whatsoever. The women with this irregularity simply pass it down from generation to generation, completely unaware and unafflicted by what would otherwise leave no trace of one's existence, until it finally shows up in a man. You, Powera, are the only one to survive the erasure. That's why your skin is invisible and you've been given the ability to come back to life."

"So I'm immortal?"

"Not exactly. You're immortal for now, but in about thirty-six years' time, your skin will become a prison of ice. Completely impenetrable. The freezing process has already begun for me, and that's why I'm wearing clothes. This red hoodie actually works in reverse, and cools down my body." He rolled up his sleeve to show his arm. It looked like it was carved out of ice, just like he said. Translucent, but shiny. (Except for the hand, that looked like a normal hand.)

His arm then proceeded to melt, revealing the bones, muscles, and veins beneath. He drank the blood dripping from his flesh (said it "tastes great"), and then pulled his sleeve back out. "That'll heal soon enough."

"What did I just see?"

"Vampirism."

"Wait, WHAT?!!"

"Just kidding. Kind of."

"Alright. Well. Uh...so how did I survive that thing you were talking about with the disappearing?"

"Does the number 30 ring a bell?"

"How the hell would that--"

"Another joke. Sorry. The real reason is where you were born."

"You mean how I was born while my parents were on a month-long vacation in Japan?"

"And that's why you're still here. I'd imagine that if you had even a drop of Asian blood in you, it wouldn't have affected you at all."

"Interesting. So, one last question about the regeneration thing."

"No, you don't have your balls back. You do have your foreskin, though." He started playing with my schlong.

I scooted as far away as I could. "What is wrong with you!"

"Enjoy your future!"

"I don't care about that! We may be the same person, but we're both guys, and you're thirty-seven and I'm only seventeen."

"Actually, no. I'm thirty-eight and you're eighteen. You've been here for a couple of months."

"I've been here for a week, and I've been conscious for two days."

"No, that's what you remember. Every member of the QuiDu unit, save for Gothic, kicked your ass five ways to Sunday for seven months. I told them to let you win once your ability leveled up to the point where you could remember things. It used to take you a week to come back, that's why you woke up in that trippy orange room. Right now, it's around December 11th."

"Neat, I guess. Still, don't touch my privates."

"Alright. So, more-or-less off-topic, what I was going to tell you before I chopped your head off was that Poseidon is a prototype of Earth."

"Yeah, I can remember you saying that."

"Great. So, what I was gonna say was that God is a perfect being, as you know, but He wanted us to have free will and still always choose the right answer. That's already an oxymoron, but He kept on making new worlds and destroying them hoping to get a perfect world where nobody does anything wrong. Poseidon is the third-longest lasting world, and only twelve years away from being wiped."

"What's wrong with this world?"

"The chips. There are only two worlds where homosexuality is a natural occurrence, and this isn't one of them. Yet, a third of the population is lesbians. That's because the chips installed in the necks of the Psarians control everything about them. Azazal's real mother--"

"Azazal?"

"You know him as Hazel, that's the nickname his mothers gave him. His real name is Azazal, and you also know him as Ferment."

"He's Ferment?!!"

"It's pronounced 'furmint', and that's a completely different subject. Back to what I was talking about. So, Azazal's real mother divorced her husband, and married a woman because the chips were set to do that. Azazal's abusive childhood was set up because his chip wasn't correctly wired and he actually had to be disciplined into conformity. It didn't work."

"So who made the chips?"

"Velvet's grandparents. They were incredible scientists that discovered the secret to time travel, and the first thing they did before announcing it was they tried to prove the big bang theory. Which, as you know, is a load of baloney, and that got them here. Their time machine didn't get carried with them, so they were stranded. They created the chips so that they could make this place their paradise. They also made thousands of reprogrammable robots, a few of whom you may know as Roku, Hachi, and Q."

"Wait, they're robots?!!"

"Same model as each other, too. Ever wondered why they always came back to life? And that time that Q yelled at you and Velvet, she ended up taking over Hachi's data for a minute."

"MAN."

"Anyway, the gay crap. Velvet's parents eventually took over, and they're still in control. The thing about this world is that homosexuality isn't a natural occurrence here. There's only two worlds where it is, and her mother and father were both very much homo allies. They tried to make this place the third part-gay world once they took over, and also changed the personalities of Roku and Hachi, whose real names are Robasso and Robassa, and were originally no more than robotic assistants, hence the names. Velvet hated her parents' beliefs, and thanks in part to the fact that her grandparents managed to connect Poseidon to Earth's internet in some way, she found herself a couple of communities for guidance on how to end her parents' reign. First, she went out in secret and tried to convince everyone to go against the chips. Enough willpower can override them in extreme circumstances. Eventually, when I came here two years ago, for reasons I don't know, she set the next stage in motion. She got me to run for office. I was not at all qualified, but it was necessary."

"Yeah, so you could kill all the women on this planet."

"Just the lesbians. No idea how Robassa interpreted it as every woman ever. Anyway. The final step was getting you here. Since you and I still both go against the beliefs of Mr. and Mrs. Meringue, they had to have someone kill me, and Velvet pitched you because we are the same person. Her parents hoped that you'd kill me and I'd basically be fated to suicide, with no blood on anyone's hands but my own. Velvet hoped that you'd eventually figure it out and turn against her parents. She actually always knew about the Jews, and everything she named was dedicated to helping you figure out who the real villain was."

"Like?"

"Viva le T. The T is meaningless, it's just Tel Aviv backwards. And the members, too. Are you still taking Japanese lessons?"

"No."

"Alright, do you at least remember how to count to ten in Japanese?"

"Yes, but I'm not doing it."

"Then I will." He cleared his throat. "ICHI NII SAN YON GO ROKU NANA HACHI KYUU...that's nine, do any of them sound familiar?"

"How did I not figure that out."

"And you can say the last one."

"JUU. Of course. Every single time."

"Every. Single. Time. And that's about all the exposition I've got. Wait, I was gonna say something."

"Before that, where did the name Seprolus come from?"

"That's the last name of the first recorded man who disappeared through the disorder. Anyway, what I was going to say." He cleared his throat again. "You have successfully defeated three members of the elite QuiDu unit. This means you have reduced it to...DuDu."

"Crap joke...crap joke, Jesus...Also, I took out four of your guys, didn't I? Eldritch, Ferment, Syma, and Zur."

"I forgot about that thing. Yeah, that was just a ploy by the Meringue family to kill their daughter. Vye and Zur are actually Robasso and Null."

"Null?"

"Q."

"Oh. Wait, then who's the real Visor?"

"Why don't we just go ahead and meet the DuDu unit now? They're just outside the prison."

"Sure, let's go!"

We walked out (no security, I already fulfilled my death sentence), and the guy from the hotel was out there, barehanded and without a blindfold. "That's Visor," Seprolus assured me. "Absolute tank. He'd only attack if he smelled blood while his eyes were covered. He's the guy who carried you over here, with the help of a little friend you might know." He gestured to that little kid Hachi wanted me to shoot.

"Should've shot him when I had the chance."

"That's quite a change in attitude. You would've rather killed yourself just a week ago."

"Yeah, and then I found out how fun taking the lives of others actually is...did I really just say that out loud?"

"Yep. Congrats, Powera, you're a certified nut."

"They're fish, not people."

"Even able to justify your actions. Have you considered joining the army?"

"No, and shut up. So where's Gothic? You're not gonna tell me she's the little boy, are you?"

"No, no, don't worry. Gothic's an actual woman...more-or-less, and she's of age."

"More-or-less?"

"That comes when it comes. I'll introduce you to her after we pull off one more mission."

"What?"

"Kill the Meringues."

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Destruction

Final chapter. The big one. Kill the slaveholders, save the world, hope I still get paid. "So what's the plan?"

"My mind's a bit hazy on how it went down, but what I do remember is that the Meringues are on the top floor of the hotel. I'll go up and shut down the computer, you stay at the lowest floor and try to distract the Robotic Assistants. Here's some stuff in case things get messy." He gave me my phone (somehow undamaged) and the chain-axe.

"Wait, how did you get another axe?"

"Made it myself. Not quite as good as Null's creation, but it still works like a charm."

I fiddled with it a bit and we started heading over to the hotel. When we made it, Seprolus insisted that he went up first. "Lots of floors to deal with, and we need to do this quick." He walked in and got on the elevator. "I'll keep you updated on your phone."

Ten minutes later, he texted me.

[still going up]

Another fifteen minutes.

[and im here]

[hows it down there]

[Uh...I'm still at ground level.]

[nigga what]

[What? You're on the elevator. What was I supposed to do?]

[TAKE THE FUCKING STAIRS YOU RETARDED FAGGOT]

[Stairs? I didn't know this place had stairs.]

[IT TOOK 25 FUCKING MINUTES TO GET UP HERE CAUSE OF YOUR FATASS]

[stairs are to your left]

[Wait, how am I responsible for how long it took?]

When I sent that, I walked over to the stairs. Seprolus called me as I went down.

"Alright, so you don't know jack. What a surprise, you're exactly like I was when I was your age."

"Because you were me."

"Shut up. Anyway, the issue is that the elevator stopped a floor and a half before I would've reached the top. I had to pry open the doors with my bare hands, which, alone, took ten minutes. Then, I had to squeeze myself through whatever opening there was, which was on the lower floor of the two so that it'd be just a bit easier, and THEN I had to deal with floor #598. I'm pretty sure

there are only four real floors, those being 1, 2, B5, and 600, and the rest are for storing spare Assistant units. I had to essentially stealth my way through the room, because if you touch a single one of those bots, it'll activate the entire floor and they'll all come and kill you. That's fun. Anyway, I got past without touching anything, which took about eight minutes, and then I had to walk up a couple flights of stairs, another two minutes. Floor #599 is where the Meringues are, but the door is locked and guarded by even more Assistants. I'm at #600, now, which is where the computer is. If you actually went down, like you were supposed to, and distracted the Assistants, like you were SUPPOSED to, the Meringues wouldn't have stopped the elevator and it would have only taken me those initial five minutes going up."

"Again, you could've just told me to take the stairs."

"I remembered having a brain."

"Clearly, you didn't remember that I just witnessed the death of the only woman I ever cared about that wasn't related to me."

"Were you actually still crying about that, or were you just standing around and thinking about those old video games?"

"Shut up." I hung up and got to the bottom of the stairs. B5, the area that I thought I could call home. I busted open the door and yelled "Hey, retards, I'm back!!" as loud as I could. Hachi and Roku were at that table playing a card game, and they looked over at me. Q wasn't in here, I think she was in the computer room again. I walked in, gave Roku and Hachi pats on the back, and then realized that the room looked a fair bit different. The table was much smaller (explains how they were even able to play cards), the huge couches were replaced with regular fold-out chairs, and the kitchen was walled off. Hachi also looked different, with a larger, more pronounced, hooked nose, and Roku was back to wearing what he had back when Q made the old chain-axe (thankfully not the one where he was wearing a thong).

Hachi was the first one to say anything else. "Hey, Husk, I'm not a huge fan of you saying that word."

"Retard?"

"Stop saying it."

"I'll say whatever I want, you long-nosed libTARD."

"Long-nosed? Is that an antisemitic comment?"

"That's a lot of syllables to say a load of nothing. Pure kike energy."

"Fascist!"

"I consider myself more of an anarcho-capitalist."

"Just be quiet! I thought you'd be better than this after Roku said you liked trans women."

"When did anyone say I liked trannies? Futanari is hermaphrodite porn, not tranny crap. A guy who says that he's a woman is still a guy."

"You're a terrible human being."

"Maybe I am, maybe I'm not, maybe I'm just intelligent."

"Get out."

"Fine, I needed to go to the bathroom anyway."

That piqued Roku's interest. He followed me into the bathroom, where it seems urinals have finally been installed, and took the one right next to mine. I wasn't spraying yet, so I shifted over one, and he did the same. Still right next to each other. At that point, I was already going, but I still went to the last one on the other side, pissing in the wall in the process. Roku still slid his way next to me. I gave up and pissed on him, hoping that he'd either back off or short-circuit, but he just looked like he enjoyed it. I ran out, still gushing, and went into the computer room (perhaps the worst place one would go while peeing) to see if Q was there.

And what was there was terrifying.

Azazal was being tied up by Q.

My tap finally ran dry and my phone started ringing. Azazal's body was suspended in the air by his tail, with Q tugging on the rope. My first instinct was to get my chain-axe out and cut down the rope, but Q grabbed it by the flat part while I was swinging. I pulled the chain and cut both the rope and Q's hand, and then I rushed over to Azazal and made sure he was okay. His mouth was duct-taped, so I ripped that off of him.

"**FUCK!!**" he screamed, alerting Q to where we were. (How she didn't see me running over, I have no idea.) She started shooting at us, and I had to keep my axe up so I could block the shots while getting the alleged fish to safety. It wasn't hard, by any measure (those bullets are still about as fast as fat sloth on a hot day during rush hour), but the penalty for failure was Azazal's death. We shuffled around the walls for a bit until we got to the exit, and I sliced Q's head off, for good measure.

In the living room, Roku was sitting at the table again...with Q sitting across from him. She got up when we came in and pulled out her gun. I ran over without hesitation and split her cleanly in

half. Suddenly, Roku grew a giant pair of tits and stood up, slowly walking over to Q's second corpse. I rushed Azazal to the elevator and mashed the button, forgetting that it took my future self eight minutes to get near the top. Roku-Q (I'll just call him/her/it "RoQ" from this point onward) had already gotten to Q's body before I even remembered there were stairs, and I ran over to it (it being RoQ) and swung my axe. It caught the axe and threw it to the other side of the room. I kicked the robot in the balls and tried to pin it down, it just shrugged it all off. It grabbed the gun and pointed it at me, so I got my face out of its way and tried to pry it from RoQ's hands. Its grip was tighter than if the gun was nailed to its hands, and my fingers simply weren't strong enough to pull them off.

I was running out of time to think. RoQ pointed the gun back at my face, the trigger was in the process of being pulled, and Azazal was next.

The only thing I could think of was to put my hands on RoQ's face and twist it.

And it worked.

Just a few seconds were enough to finish off the last member of vivA leT. Perhaps it was a mistake, now that the Meringues had no distractions from Seprolus anymore, but it didn't matter. I was safe, Azazal was safe, and if nothing else, we could still live out the rest of our days as goofy roommates, playing games, cracking stupid jokes, and trying to pick up chicks for the rest of our lives. The elevator had just arrived (surprisingly quickly, it hasn't even been a thirty seconds yet), so we got on and I finally picked up the phone. "Hey, sorry it took so long to pick up. What's up?"

"Well, first off, I wouldn't put much faith in that elevator. The wire snapped. That's why it got down so quickly. Take the stairs. And hurry."

"How did you--wait, right, same person, twenty years later," I said, as Azazal and I started climbing back up. "Alright, is that all you needed to tell me?"

"No, uh, I was originally calling to tell you that, I don't know whether you screwed up or I did, but the system's on high alert. Every Null unit and every chipped Psarian is out for your blood."

"THAT EXPLAINS A LOT."

We passed floor B4 and its door flew open. Hundreds, maybe thousands, of Q's flooded the stairway, with no way of fighting them off where we were. We just had to keep going, faster.

While all this was happening, Seprolus was trying to make some sort of joke. "Yeah, and I just want to let you know that, if you're wondering why I'm not going by our real name..." He chuckled a bit.

"Now's not the time for stupid jokes!!"

"No, no, I'm just saying, when I tried to shut down the computer, and it turned against us, it popped up a load of scribbles, I'm guessing it's the name on our birth certificate...and the speakers called me a crayon. So, yeah, if you need a reason to start saying that your last name is Seprolus, you've got one."

"And why did you have to say that when I'm being chased by a horde of robo-zombies?"

"I just thought it was funny, geez."

"NOT!! THE!! TIME!!"

We were at floor B1 by the time he finally shut up. More and more Q's were piling up after each floor. We were at the home stretch, sure, but our legs were getting grabbed nearly every step (Azazal was swearing like a sailor the entire time, as usual) and we were very close to getting mauled. Finally, a mere five steps away from ground level, Azazal was pulled in. I had to wade through the robots to get him back out, and nearly got my right arm pulled off by these crazy chicks. When I got to him, it seemed like all they did to him was they ate part of his clothes, and I'm pretty sure he hated crossdressing, anyway, so there was no real loss for either of us diving into the wave. Pulling ourselves out was a bit of an issue, but all it took was snapping a few necks and we were golden.

Finally at ground level...and more Q's were blocking our way. I really should've brought my chain-axe from the bottom floor, but we just had to suck it up and run straight through them.

Well, I did. I went for the strike, but Azazal ended up finding the gutter and walked straight past them. (I mean, they were targeting me, not him, so yeah.)

Either way, we were out of the hotel, out of the frying pan, but we dove head-first into the firey stove that was the Psarians. The instant that we stepped foot outside, we met face-to-face with millions of guns and a couple hundred thousand guys with swords charging at us. The headliners for the firing squad were apparently Azazal's blended parents, if his insistence on "taking out the bitch with the glasses my-fucking-self" was any indication. I jumped at some random gray one on the side and ate her neck, while kicking some other guy's sword out of his hand. I dropped down, picked it up, and sliced his head off. Azazal stabbed what was left of his porcelain slab into the stomach of the bitch with the glasses while I started spinning into the crowd of Psarians like a harvester in a field of corn. The Q army started spilling into the Psarians, and I was still spinning. Azazal seemed satisfied after taking out only the one girl, and he was just sitting there doing nothing. Nobody bothered him. If I wasn't a sawblade right now, I'd have gone and checked on him, but I was still going and going, racking up more kills by the second.

Eventually, however, I lost my balance and got shot in the leg. I fell, face-first, into the ground, the sword I was wielding barely missing my shoulder. I quickly rolled over and swung as hard and as fast as I could, the sword and my legs, but it was too much. I was in the middle of the crowd, and there was an overwhelming amount of everything. I was going to die.

Did it matter? I'd come back in a mere hour, and could slowly whittle away at them over time, but then what? What would be left for me? What would be left for Poseidon?

And what about Azazal? The one living being whom I could, even slightly, call a friend? Everyone else is focused on killing me, what would he do for the rest of his life? He's only twelve, he has a long future ahead of him. A long future of nothing.

And what about back home? My family must be worried sick about me. I just disappeared one day and never came back. Did I run away? Kill myself? It wouldn't be too far out of the question, I was always a recluse. Or maybe I was kidnapped? That's what actually, essentially happened, after all.

It didn't matter. None of it did. Because it was over.

Not my life, but the beat-down.

I was still on the phone with my future self. I didn't even realize my phone was still, somehow, on my ear. And there were two more words he had for me.

"Stop crying."

And then, he finally hung up.

Silence.

Everyone around me collapsed.

Everyone in general collapsed.

And, in the distance, the hotel collapsed.

Seprolus was still inside the hotel, searching for the Meringues. They would have all been crushed by the rubble.

We won.

And I have an expiration date.

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Awake

Within time, the living Psarians woke up, all rubbing their heads in confusion. Many of them offered to help me get back up, though I insisted on getting up myself. Rolling over, I placed my arms on the ground and fell back on my face. My left arm was cut off by someone. No big deal, I didn't have much use for it anyway without...anything, and if I ever did need it back, I could just stab myself in the heart and wait an hour.

Anyway, I needed to find Azazal. Easier than expected, he was still sitting up at the front, near the debris...the debris. Even if he wasn't crushed by anything, he still could've gotten hit by something. I ran over to check if he was still okay, but his mom – his real mom – was already over there. I watched from a distance for a bit, saw the two make up (though Azazal was still clearly iffy about it), they hugged, and when they let go of each other, I introduced myself. "Hey, my name is Husk. I'm acquainted with your son, I helped him out of that building behind us. I just wanted to make sure that he's still okay."

Azazal helped introduce me. "Hey, it's my friend! The gay alien!"

I muttered "I'm not gay" under my breath before the mom gave me the stink eye. I panicked. "No, no, I never did any funny business with Azazal! I'm seventeen, he's twelve, and I can respect that! Besides, I'm NOT GAY."

Azazal got a kick out of that. Through the incessant giggling, he tried to mention that thing with the nose (that's what he chose, of all things?), so I just casually walked away. I did, however, mention that "he's got quite the mouth when you're not around. Might wanna fix that."

That shut him up. His mom picked him up by the waist and carried him on his shoulder, and she headed off, presumably to find Azazal's dad. Azazal started yelling at me, calling me a "frickin' bung-hole" and a "crap-head" and a whole bunch of other PG-rated insults. I just hope I didn't ruin the rest of his childhood.

As for me, I went into the rubble, searching for somewhere with enough open room to stay. Turns out, there was an entire room, I'd assume from the second floor, that remained fully intact. I had to climb a bit to reach it, but it was good enough for that small climb to be worth it. I got up, went in, and plopped on the bed. This was where the rest of my life was going to take place. There was nothing for me to do, nowhere for me to go, nobody for me to talk to. I was going to remain on this bed for the rest of my life, and never do anything at all.

And then I heard a knock.

Who the hell would climb all the way up here and knock on the door like he knew someone was here? I cautiously opened the door, worried that I was inviting someone in to stay for a long time. Peeking my head through, I saw...myself.

Seprolus.

He was alive. Of course he was, he's basically a vampire. He can't die. "What, you thought I was gonna kick the bucket before introducing you to your future wife? I promised, didn't I?"

Oh, yeah. Gothic. Forgot about her. "Where is she?"

"Down there. But first, here's some stuff I got from the basement." He gave me the chain-axe. "You keep leaving this in random places and you might lose it forever. Also, there's this."

The briefcase. The one with the money and the old games. The entire reason why I went along with vivA leT. I tried to take it from Seprolus, but he refused to give it to me. "You'll get this when you're a bit older. I don't need you wasting the money on manga and crossdressing."

"Who do you think I am? Crossdressing?"

"Who do I think? I know who you are." He pulled his pants down and rolled up his sweatshirt, showing that he was rocking a full-on Misa Amane cosplay, minus the hair. "Because I am you." He pulled his pants back up and his jacket down.

That's who I'm going to grow up to be? A terrible human being, AND a twink? What's next, is this guy's wife actually a dude?

"No, I actually do have a wife," Seprolus said.

"I didn't say anything about it."

"You thought of it."

"What, are you able to read my thoughts?"

"I had them."

Right. Same person.

"I do want to let you know something about her, though."

"What?"

"Well, there are a few constants between each world God created. One of those constants is that there are always two sexes, male and female, with the main difference being that men have...or, at least, had, in our case, testicles, whereas women have...that whole mess that they have."

"Boobs?"

"No, I thought you'd have noticed the Psarians don't have honkers. I'm talking about the vagina."

"Oh, okay. What are you getting at?"

"Well, did you notice anything missing from that?"

"Yeah, I said boobs. You're not telling me that--"

"Not breasts, you idiot! I'm saying my wife has a phallus!"

"Excuse me?"

"Yes, Gothic is a hermaphrodite. I need to specify, a HERMAPHRODITE, not a tranny. Trannies only exist on Earth. Hell, she doesn't even qualify as a hermaphrodite on her planet, that's just how women are over there."

"So, you're saying you got hitched with a futanari."

"Yes, now do you want to meet her, or not?"

"Well, yeah!"

So, he opened the door, grabbed me by the armpits, and threw me out. (I have no idea how that twink was so strong.)

I landed face-first into the sand, my cape contorting and wrapping around my thick head of hair just enough to shield my eyes from such torture. I rolled over, threw the cape off of my eyes, stood up, and realized that my nose was not spared from the sand. My entire head felt like it was filled with pencil shavings. Even mere breathing was hell.

After a few seconds, which felt like a few hours, Seprolus caught up with me and handed me a handkerchief. "Blow into this. Shouldn't take too long to clear everything up. Follow me, I'll take you to the girl."

And we went. On the way, I blew out enough sand to make a children's playground, and I was convinced that there was more sand up in my nostrils than there had ever been in my legs. When we got to where Gothic was, however, that was going to change.

"There she is," said Seprolus.

I looked up from my handkerchief and there was the most beautiful thing ever. Straight, blonde hair, that came close to the ground and turned red near the bottom. Breasts that were almost as big as Nalna's. A face that looked like she came straight out of an anime, not just because she had huge eyes, a small mouth, and no visible nose, but because her face actually looked like it was drawn, by hand. Already, that'd be perfect, but what was most peculiar – and what shot her up from being a perfect 10 to breaking the scale – was her not-so-human attributes. She had cat ears. Not as replacements for human ears, but as in she had four ears. She also had a tail, a big, bushy tail that looked more like one for a fox than for a cat. Her hands and feet also looked distinctively animalistic, to the point that if she wasn't bipedal, and didn't have opposable thumbs, good honkers,

or a human face, you'd be forgiven for thinking somebody put an exceptionally long (~5.5ft.) housecat in clothing. She also had a bizarre glow around her, as if she was in one of those old 3D movies with the cardboard glasses.

For a few seconds after looking at her, I felt like my head was cleared. The perfect being was right in front of me. And she was going to be mine.

And then I felt something in my nose.

But, when I blew it out, it wasn't just sand. The handkerchief was red, red with my blood, and it was overflowing. It wouldn't stop coming, and the pressure was comparable to when I pulled that nail out of Ferment's head. (I hope he's okay.) Seprolus was counting down from ten in a whisper, and when he hit zero, he said "The sand should be out of your system, so if you don't mind," and stuck his tongue out underneath my nose. Three seconds later, the bleeding stopped. "Sorry, it just, virgin blood. REAL good. Hey, why don't you talk to Gothic?"

I moseyed on over to that thing of beauty and shook her hand. The moment my hand reached hers, it burst into pure sweat and I lost all confidence I might have had before. "H-hi...I'm...uh, my n-name is Husk...it's H-Husk Cryon...no, Husk Seprolus. Powera Husk Seprolus, that's my name. And I think...I heard...I heard y-your name...um...Cocktits?"

I could feel my hands slipping, my left towards her crotch, and my right, the one shaking her hand, pushing itself towards her chest. She firmly grabbed both of my arms (I'm worried about how she was able to find where they were) and kicked me where my balls used to be. "Sorry," I said. "I just like...your shirt. Your shirt. It looks neat."

I didn't mention that, did I? Yeah, she was wearing one of those novelty pop-culture crossover T-shirts, except I don't think anyone was asking for the End of Evangelion poster crossed with Homestar Runner, with Rei's disembodied, giant head being replaced with the Cheat, and Shinji and Asuka being the Brothers Strong. She was also wearing a skirt that matched the sand at the bottom of the poster, which would've likely also blended in with the sand on the ground if she sat down.

Anyway, she forced me down and looked at Seprolus. "You're talking me this perverted beach ball is gonna be my husband?"

"That perverted beach ball is me."

"Oh, so THAT'S how it is!"

"Hey, if you don't like him, I can send you back to Anubis with your parents."

"No, thank you!"

"Well, what do you want to do?"

"There's other boys where the two of you are from, right?"

"Yeah, but women don't have schlongs over there. The only other dudes where I'm from who'll stick with you after seeing you pop a boner will either be just like myself over there or they'll think that you're actually a guy who thinks that he's a girl."

"Ew. Well, at least there's no faggots, right?"

"I wish."

Hold it, did she just say 'faggots'? As if she couldn't get any better, she just demonstrated that she thought the same way that I do about homosexuality. She was definitely the one.

I got up and asked Seprolus what was happening. He pulled me a decent bit away from Gothic and whispered into my ear. "Alright, so first off, what a great first impression you made. Now, she thinks you're disgusting. Because you are. But, anyway. Gothic is what's known as an Ailouro. They're part-cat, part-fox, part-human creatures from a planet called Anubis. Anubis is the only planet other than Earth where gay people exist. About 15% of Ailouroa are homos. Gothic was raised by lesbians, though unlike Azazal, neither of them were her biological mother, and they were actually...I wouldn't say good parents, not without a father figure, but they were okay. They tried. It didn't matter. Gothic is a rebel. She would've hated her parents no matter what. It just so happens that, with both of them being women, she ended up being homophobic and misogynistic in the process."

"Misogynistic? She's a woman."

"Homophobic?" He started speaking loudly enough for Gothic to hear. "You're gay!!"

"No, I'm not!" I asserted.

"Remember Roku?" he replied.

"Yeah, and even he said I was only 30% faggot, basically straight."

"Actually, the initial readings were more of a 46. I'm pretty sure you just went down for a bit after that thing in the bathroom and in that club."

"Forty-six percent?!! How? I mean, yeah, I'm into traps, but--"

"Demyx. Raiden. Nagito. Kokichi. Alucard. Yusuke. Tails. I could go on."

"Alright, sure, but in each of those games, there was a chick that I liked more. Except for Raiden, I'll give you that one. Either way though, those are all video game characters."

"Sure. But, why did you save Azazal?"

"I wanted to do something good before I turned into...you."

"No, you saved him because you're interested in femboys."

"He's twelve!!"

"Not forever."

Gothic was over there, laughing her ass off over everything. My future self ruined my present self's chances with my future wife. I want to kill myself.

Seprolus put his hand on my shoulder. "Don't worry, Powera. She'll come around. Look at her legs."

There was a distinct bulge within her skirt. She was erect. A good five inches – bigger than mine, and I'm actually *supposed* to have one. She was, at the very least, kind of into me. I still had a chance, and if Seprolus is any indication, I was gonna win her over at some point.

"So is she really gonna fall for me?"

"Yep, mine is back at the stadium where you tried to kill me."

"Can I see her?"

"Ailouroa don't age past seventeen."

"How were you sure that she was my age?"

"That glow gets stronger depending on how old she is compared to whoever sees her. I'm basically seeing three different Gothics right now."

"Interesting."

"So, are you ready to go home? You'll see Gothic again in a few months."

"About time!"

"Okay, just stay here and I'll get some stuff."

He ran off somewhere and I was left alone with Gothic. She was still giggling (and what an adorable giggle it was), and I'd definitely never be able to talk to her, so I just decided to jack off.

At least, I was going to, but I was pretty stiff, myself, and that would've just hurt. So, instead, I sat down and watched her without doing anything.

She eventually calmed down. "Why are you still here?" she asked. "Where's the other guy?"

"He went to get some stuff so that I can go back to my home planet. Said you can come to, if you want."

"Why would I ever want to be in the same plane of existence as your perverted ass?"

"Ouch. Well, we have video games. There's also this big island really far to the east of where I live, actually more to the west, they make this thing called anime. They're like cartoons, only way better and they have a story."

"Score chasers and kids' shows. What a deal."

"It's the '20s, not the '80s. We're well beyond Pac-Man and the Looney Tunes. Well, maybe not the Looney Tunes, modern domestic cartoons are basically just that with a bucketful of raunch, but I was talking about foreign media with actual meaning. Your shirt was based on the poster for the End of Evangelion."

"Intelligent cartoons for adults?"

"Yeah, it's great."

"I'm sold."

Seprulus came back right when she said that. He brought a cardboard box, and Azazal and his family (Hallelujah, they found his dad) were following him. Azazal waved at me. "Hey, homo! Who the fu--excuse me, who's that you're hanging out with?"

"A woman."

"Nice, guess you're not as much of a homo as I thought!"

"And I can see you're not a trap, anymore, either."

Azazal was wearing a red shirt and black shorts. His face still looked distinctively feminine, but I'll just blame that on the fact that he's twelve. Gothic went over and shook his hand. "Hey, my name's Gotsek, what's yours?"

"Hazel."

His mom intervened and clarified, "His name is actually Azazal, his former caretaker called him

Hazel for the longest time. It's a long story, not really important."

"Hold it," I said, "I'm more concerned about the woman's name. I thought your name was Gothic, not Gotsek. How do you even spell it?"

"G-O-T-T-H-I-C."

Seprolus attached some stickers to each of us and explained what was about to happen. "Alright, so I'm gonna pull this lever and everyone here, except me, is going to get sent to Earth. Powera, you'll be sent back into your seventeen-year-old body from when you left in May. Everyone else will appear out of thin air on December 11th of this year, in houses that future Azazal and I bought for you. You will be neighbors, not too far from where Powera lives. We also provided Azazal's family and Gotthic \$500,000 each, to help them thrive while Charles (Azazal's dad) searches for a job and Gotthic does whatever she pleases. Is everyone ready?"

Everyone, except me, said "yes," but I had a question. "Before we go, I just want to know something."

"Yes, Powera?"

"Does Half-Life 3 ever--"

He pulled the lever before I could finish.

I'm up.

My face is in the bowl of dry cereal. The guy on TV is talking about how he hates my favorite book. I lift myself back up and search for my spoon. It's on the ground. I got to the kitchen to get a different one.

My mom comes in and asks what that loud noise was. I explain that I'm still tired and nearly fell asleep in my cereal bowl, joking that it's a good thing I eat it dry. She scolds me about having stayed up until 5:30AM the previous night, threatening to put me back into public school if this trend continues. She kisses me on the cheek and sends me back upstairs for three hours of homeschooling on my computer.

Was all of that a dream? I mean, it felt like one. Fish people? Robots? Time travel? Dead people coming back to life? A chick with a dick? Completely ridiculous. But, it also ended conclusively, and there's no way a dream like that could have lasted for just a few seconds. I don't know. Honestly, right now, I don't care.

December 11th...just a few months away.

UPDATE

Alright, so it's January now. I was just at the local Whataburger with my family and guess who was there, that's right, it was those guys from that dream. They saw us come in and Azazal came up to me and asked how I've been. I introduced him to my family and called him a space alien. (He's not, but I don't know how I'd explain "prototype Earth" to other Christians.)

When we sat down, Azazal pushed Gotthic over to me and tried to get her to admit she loved me. It didn't entirely work (seems she thought I was dating my own sister - we're not that kind of 'Bama, but whatever), but it's clear enough that she likes me. My mom gave both of us the stink eye, though, probably because of the fact that Gotthic's clothing choices lived up to her name this time. Anyway, Azazal handed me that book I was gonna use as a journal, and all the pages that I forgot to write in (basically all of them) were filled in. Now I have a record of the stuff that happened in Poseidon. Still hard to believe that all of that happened.

I have a good family, I have a girlfriend, I have a regular friend, and I saved a world (even if I killed a good chunk of its people). Somewhere, I also have a briefcase full of money and games waiting for me.

Life is good.

For now.

FIN...

finished sometime in october 2022
released march 27th, 2023
thank you for reading