Note From The Creator

Before You Read-

This entry is written in **CYOA format**, which means the story pages are not in order and you have to click on the hyperlinks in order to continue to the next page.

Originally I was planning to make my text-based game in Twine, but due to time constraints I unfortunately have to make my interactive fiction in google docs instead. *Please forgive me if the story is kinda confusing and even rushed orz*

Here's some quick link that should direct you to each separate arc on this entry in case you needed it:

ACT 1: The Arrival

ACT 2: Unforeseen Circumstances

ACT 3: Welcome To The Bifrost Terminal

Anyways, Happy reading!

Boy I hope I didn't put the wrong hyperlink or forgot to put it on some of them-

ACT ONE: THE ARRIVAL

PAGE 1

Kasper stepped into the arrival hall after he took a flight from his homeland, he had just gone through the usual procedures and picked up his bags at the baggage carousel. He takes his time to double-check the contents inside them, and yep- everything seems good here.

He glanced at his phone and yawned while covering his mouth. *11:45 PM*. It had been a long flight, and the mild jet lag is starting to creep in. Hopefully this won't get in the way of the plans he's having for today. Zipping his bag shut, Kasper began walking down the hall at an easy pace, scanning for a place to sit while waiting for his friends to come pick him up.

How long had it been since he last saw them in person? It's probably been almost a year by now. The thought alone stirred something soft in his heart, realizing how much he missed hanging out with his friends and doing all the fun shit together. He can't wait to see them again.

He eventually found a public seating area by the glass curtain wall and sat down, finally giving his feet a break. It got a nice view of the runway from here too. He watched another plane take off in the distance before casually checking his phone again and opening up the recent group chat in the WheApp.

`[ Kaz, We'll probably arrive there at least in an hour. Is that okay? ]`

Tap.Tap.Tap.

`[ Yeah all good man, save travels. ]`

He slumped his body on the seat, tilting his head back against the top surface as he stared upwards to the high ceiling of the airport. His friends are currently investigating this century old mystery about the disappearance of a jazz singer, and they're planning to drive to the secluded town that's rumored to be her last sighting after they pick him up.

[Continue]

PAGE 2

He doesn't really get why they decided to choose this one as their next project to investigate, considering they got the source from an old internet forum thread where one of the commenters told something that took their interest. Something about her disappearing off to the mountain nearby the said town while carrying a strange lantern. *Sounds pretty strange and spooky, that's for sure.*

It's not like he's putting up a fuss about it though. He's happy that he's able to join in their adventures again like the good ol' times. Kasper just wished they could do another urban exploration together sometimes while he's staying here for a few weeks. Perhaps that quiet town might have some places that's worth checking out.

But right now he has some time to kill.

What can I do in the meantime?

➤ [Stay in place and watch some videos online]

➤ [Check out the convenient store nearby and buy some snacks]

➤ [Wander around the airport]

➤ [Take a nap]

PAGE 3

Hm, I think I should take a nap for a bit...

Kasper yawns and repositions himself on the seat that he's sitting to make himself more comfortable, before he slowly closes his eyes and lets his mind rest for a while.

[Continue]

PAGE 4

He decided to watch some videos on his phone to pass the time from his seat. At first he watched videos about urbex, ghost hunting and a few unsolved mystery cases, but then he ended up scrolling over short form cat videos for a while.

His brain feels like a mush now.

[Continue]

PAGE 5

He walks to the nearest convenient store that he can find from his area. There's a big sign at the front of the store called "Loomart". Never heard of that name before, maybe it's worth checking out.

Ding dong!

Kasper entered the store. From inside, it seems like any normal convenience store. They got a lot of common items like snacks, hot foods, basic necessities, beverages, magazines- the usual stuff. It seems like it's fully stocked by the staff recently.

He decided to check out the snack section. There are a wide variety of snacks available for him to choose.

➤ [Take a pack of fruit flavored chewy candies]

➤ [Take a few small packs of honey roasted mixed nuts]

➤ [Take a few packs of melon bun]

➤ [Take a can of hot potato chips]

➤ [Take a pack of sour gummies]

➤ [Take a pack of black pepper beef jerky]

PAGE 6

Kasper grabs the snack and proceeds to the counter to pay.

"Here's your total sir." Said the cashier in an unenthusiastic tone and gave him the receipt.

He smiles at the cashier while placing the money on the counter. "Keep the change."

After paying for the snack, he takes it with him and then walks out from the store. He briefly looked at the receipt before throwing it away into the waste bin, and placed the snack inside his baggage after he found a place to sit again.

[Continue]

PAGE 7

Kasper begins to wander aimlessly around the public area of the airport. The place is actually more massive than he expected, he could just get lost here. Granted, it's one of the busiest airports in the world and they have thousands and thousands of people coming here all day. All across the globe.

...Thinking back, it's actually pretty crazy that people found a method to travel over long distances in the fastest and efficient way, through *flying* out of all things.

Same goes for having smartphones and the internet in this day and age, which isn't really that long ago since it's first invention. It's one of those modern inventions that he's grateful to experience as it definitely made his life more easier to stay connected with his friends when he's far away from them.

Kasper carefully observes the people in the airport while he continues to wander.

He saw a group of people in uniforms walking together steadily towards the boarding gate.

A child running towards his father and warmly embracing his father's hug who's trying to hold back his tears.

A couple sleeping together on the floor due to delayed flights.

Somebody playing some uno with multiple strangers while they're waiting for their flight

A man boarding a flight in a business suit, while the person next to them are still in their pyjamas, with not a single care in the world.

Kasper continued to observe in silence as he kept walking.

[Continue]

PAGE 8

Everybody is going somewhere, *and no one wants to be here for long despite all the amenities given to them.*

Time has no meaning here, *yet it greatly matters to everyone.*

Nothing really happens but at the same time *there's so much going on here*.

It's a lawless place but *full of rules.*

...

Airports do quite have a special vibe. It's a feeling that's kinda hard to describe, but he loves it. Watching all the souls and wondering where they go.

Some are old.

Some are going back home.

Some are young.

Some are on the way to a vacation, or a business trip.

Some go close within the country, maybe to meet their friends and family.

While some others are going far, maybe on their way to start a new life somewhere else.

He loves the feeling of sonder he's getting from it. It makes him feel small in relation to the rest of the world, and he sees the beauty in that.

Everyone here is on some point of a journey in their life, and he can't help but wishing everyone all the best on their journey.

...Kasper caught himself being lost in his own thoughts. *Damn, how long has he been wandering around anyway?*

Maybe he should find a place to sit down for a bit. His legs probably deserve a rest.

[Continue]

PAGE 9

Kasper checks back on this phone. Seems like not much time has passed.

Is it just me or time feels slower here? Feels like it hasn't moved at all... it's probably just the jetlag fucking up with my sense of time.

He sighed, maybe he can do something else for a bit.

(Note: Select only the options you haven't chosen yet.)

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[Continue]

PAGE 15

Some time has passed, but it's still going to take a while for his friends to come here. Somehow, the longer Kasper stays in here, the more he feels sorta disconnected with the real world. It's kinda hard to describe the feeling, but it's almost like he's stuck in some sort of time limbo.

It's not like it bothers him much though, he can just do other things in the meantime to beat the boredom. There are plenty of things that he can do in this place and it is designed for that, he just needs to wait a little bit more.

What else can I do here...

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PAGE 21

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Suddenly, Kasper receives a call. He takes his phone out from his pocket and swipes up on the screen to answer it.

"Hello?"

"Kaz! We're gonna arrive there in 10 minutes, you can head out to the pick-up area in the meantime."

"Ah- alright. I'll be on my way." He turns off the call and proceeds to walk towards the designated pick-up point outside the airport.

[Continue]

PAGE 22

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*(If you choose **[Take a nap]** option, then please skip this scene.)*

While walking to his destination, Kasper noticed a group of families that seemed to be in quite a hurry as they moved quickly in the opposite direction. However when he turned his head around to see where the family was headed to, he saw one of the kids drop their plushie on the floor without realizing it, leaving it behind as their walking speed was getting faster.

"-!"

Kasper quickly grabs the plushie and begins to follow after the family at a quick pace, trying to get their attention by calling them from behind.

"Wait-! Your kid dropped this!"

The parents stopped in their tracks and turned around to him and saw Kasper coming towards them with their children's plushie on his hand.

Both of the parents were surprised before thanking him generously for retrieving their children's plushie back to them. Kasper replied back with modesty and humility to the parents as he's just glad that he's able to catch that quickly.

But then one of their kids comes forward to Kasper, and offers him a bag of mini chocolate chip cookies with their tiny hands. He staggers back in surprise for a brief second before politely refusing the child's offer. Don't get him wrong, it's cute that the kid is offering him some cookies as a gift of gratitude, but he doesn't think that this is a necessary thing to do. They should just keep them so they enjoy those cookies when they're on the flight later.

But the kid insisted Kasper take it, telling him that it's homemade cookies they made together with their mom, and they would like Kasper to take them. He eventually gives up as he doesn't want to waste their time any longer since they're already in a hurry- so he took it and thanked the kid with a warm smile.

As they parted their ways, Kasper waves goodbye to the family and wishes them a safe journey. He then continues back on his business and leaves the airport entrance with warm feelings in his heart.

[Continue]

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After walking for some time, Kasper arrives at the pick-up area and waits for a little while until his friends come there to pick him up. He spent the remaining time checking out his phone and enjoying the mini chocolate chip cookies that the kid gave to him earlier until he heard a familiar voice.

"Kaz!"

Kasper quickly looked up to the source of the voice and saw a couple of his friends sticking their hands out from the car window, waving at him to come inside.

"Get in loser, we're going ghost hunting."

Kasper chuckled as he entered the car. "Wow really? Thought you guys retired from those stuff long ago."

"Well kind of- but I do miss them sometimes. Maybe one day we'll get back to it."

They then drove away and left the airport as quickly as they came.

Kasper can see its massive structure slowly gets smaller and smaller until he can no longer see them from the distance. They're now on their way to the next destination.

[Continue]

PAGE 24

.....

It has been almost two hours since their departure and they're driving down on a long road to the secluded town as planned. The ride was long and pretty bumpy at times considering it's an old highway, but as far as his friends know, it appears to be the only route that would lead them to said town.

"Do you guys want some snacks?" Kasper asked them as he took out the snacks he brought from Loomart from his bag.

"Oh heck yeah, sure! Gimme gimme." One of his friends reaches out to take the snack from Kasper and begins to share it with the rest of the group in the car.

"So, you guys are heading there just to check out the town, right?" Kasper asked the group.

"Yup. We're planning to interview some of the folks over there regarding the rumor, but we gotta see first if they're friendly or not." Greg replied from the front seat.

"And if they aren't happy to see new faces in the town, then we can just get the hell out from there and head to the mountain instead."

"Oh better yet, it's actually a town full of cultists." Aspen chimes in.

"Heyyy, don't jinx it."

"I mean if that turns out to be true, maybe we finally get to find out what happened to that lady, you know." He shrugged with a smug look on his face.

"Is it really worth it to find out if we never make it out alive though?" Another friend of his chipped in, munching on the snack Kasper gave earlier.

"Not unless we sacrifice you to them first." Aspen replied back with a grin.

They all laughed out loud.

[Continue]

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[Continue]

PAGE 27

"So, what's the rumor about exactly? I know some info that you guys gave to me before, but I don't think I have the full details regarding the thing."

"Have you heard of Marina?" Leon asked.

"Huh?"

"*Marina Anastasia*. She was a young singer who used to perform at the most famous jazz club in this state." He continued. "The audience in that jazz club adores her voice, and she quickly becomes one of the audience's favorites over there. She was even popular enough to have some of her songs recorded in vinyl form."

"She had a bright future ahead of her. But sadly her journey to fame was short-lived when she suddenly went missing one night. Literally a day before her another performance."

"Nobody knows where she went, or even finds her remains to this day. It's almost as if she's just walked away from this world."

"Hah, doubt that. Her remains are probably somewhere in that town or somewhere else. The police just aren't competent enough to find a missing person back then and no one seems bothered enough to try finding that out again except us." Aspen shrugged again as he rolled over his eyes.

"To be fair, she wasn't *that* popular yet around that time." Ricardo speaks up after quietly listening to the conversation while playing games on his phone.

"She only started to get some recognition outside the jazz club not too long before her sudden disappearance. If she was a little more well known, then maybe this mystery could've been solved a decade ago and they would've talked about it to this day."

"-And the last time we heard anybody mention her disappearance case aside from the wikipedia is from that old forum, surprisingly. Seems like those mystery true crime channels haven't found out about them yet."

Kasper continues to listen quietly and they continue to talk about the case.

[Continue]

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"Talk about her music- you guys wanna hear some of them? I luckily found it on an old music archive website this morning." Leon asked the group.

"Yeah sure, go ahead." Kasper responded with a slightly upbeat tone. He actually enjoys listening to classic music once a while, so he's lowkey interested to hear them. Others agreed with him as they don't mind listening to it as well.

Leon begins to play the music, there was a brief silence in the car as they all listened to the song.

"Actually, it's not bad."

"Yeah it's pretty good, I can see myself whip and do the nae nae with this one-"

"Dudeeee"

"Dancing, I mean dancing. Sorry."

Meanwhile for Kasper, the tune of the song makes him feel somewhat melancholic about it, as well give him some goosebumps upon listening to it. He closes his eyes and leans closer to the window. Trying to relax and immerse himself with the music.

"-Kasper?" He heard Leon call for him.

"Don't worry, I'm still awake." Kasper replied back casually, his eyes still closed. "I just...want to rest my eyes for a bit. Keep going with what you guys were talking about though, I'm just gonna listen in."

"Must have been a tiring flight, huh?"

"With a baby crying for half of the flight? *Yeah, you bet it was.*" Kasper let out a tired chuckle.

"Haha okay, I won't bother you much then. Rest well."

[Continue]

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Meanwhile his friends continue to chatter regarding the unsolved mystery.

"...When somebody posted about the mystery in some random forum back in the early 2000s, a lot of people at the time believed that the gangsters were responsible for her disappearance."

"While some other users in the forum believed there were some scandals happening behind the scene that caused her to quit her job and live under a new identity far away from here."

"But there's this one guest commentator saying that there is a rumor that the singer was last seen in a secluded town that is far away from the state she lives in. She was carrying a strange lantern with her before she went to the mountain near the town by herself."

"Hm, I see..." Ricardo ponders for a bit. *"Do you guys think she was possessed?"*

"Hard to say." Greg shrugged. He doesn't sound like he's buying into that notion. But at the same time, he doesn't seem to reject that idea either.

"But maybe we will find some answers here." He said as the car approached closer to the secluded town.

[Continue]

PAGE 30

.....

Greg decides to park his car near the lake and the group begins to exit from the car.

Aspen takes a deep breath before exhaling them out. *"Man, the air feels nice here."*

Kasper takes a look around the area and is stunned by the environment. He didn't expect the town to appear more scenic than he thought it would be and got that *hygge* vibes to it.

"Wow..." Kasper said in awe before taking some pictures of them with his phone.

"Oh- the mountain is over there, right?" He asked his friends while pointing at the big mountain near the town.

"Yeah! Can't wait to set up our camp over there." Leon said excitedly. "It's been a while since we got to have a camping trip together." He patted Kasper's shoulder. "Thanks for the idea by the way Kaz."

Kasper chuckled lightheartedly. "No problem, I just thought it would be nice if we try to camp there while we're at it, you know? But I didn't expect you guys to be fully on board with that idea."

"What? Of course we do! We haven't got to see your face for a long while dude! If you want to have a night camping up in the mountains, then we're gonna be down for it!"
He tells Kasper as he gives him a noogie.

"Ahah- hey!"

They both chuckled as they playfully began to wrestle against each other.

But then the group spotted an old man from a distance, coming closer towards them with a walking stick in his hand.

"Who are you folks?" The old man asked them in a straightforward manner, but he seemed more curious rather than peeved by their presence.

[Continue]

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"*Uh sorry*, we're- we're just here to visit the town." Ricardo replied awkwardly to the old man with a strained smile.

"Ah, it's rare to have outsiders here nowadays. What's the reason for you folks to come to this place?"

Kasper then decided to come forward and answer that question for the group.

"Well, to be honest-" He scratched the back of his head as he continued. "We heard that there's an old rumor of a young singer back in the 1920s, Marina Anastasia, who was last seen in the mountain next to this town carrying a strange lantern before she went missing."

"It's basically a century old mystery by now, and we're here to try to uncover them- or at least figure out where that rumor comes from."

"Have you ever heard of them before?" Kasper casually asked the old man.

"....."

There was a brief silence from the old man before he finally said something.

"Yes. I do actually." The old man answered.

"But if you folks want to have a talk about it, then we can head over to my house. It's not far away from here."

The old man then turns around and begins to walk in the opposite direction, gesturing to them to follow him.

"Come, follow me."

"Oh- okay then." Kasper replied hesitantly before turning to his friends who are equally as confused as him. The group shrugged to each other before they reluctantly followed the old man.

[Continue]

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.....

"You can call me Tomas."

The old man placed the teapot on the table before gesturing to the group to pour some tea for themselves. Meanwhile one of the group opens a recording app on their phone and starts recording the conversation.

"My great great grandfather...I think his name is Silas Cortés? He knows about Marina and her profession as a jazz club singer back in the days, or so I was told."

"Oh...so he was a fan of hers?" Ricardo asked the man as he lifted his cup of tea.

"No. They were close friends, or at least that's what he mentioned in his diary."

"..Ah, but at the same time, they're also coworkers." The old man points that out, almost forgot to mention that.

The group then appears mildly confused at that statement. Does this guy the old man is talking about are working at the same jazz club?

"Huh, what do you mean by that?" Aspen asked bluntly.

"..While they both have their own profession that is known to the public, they also have another job in the background. But there's not much that I know about this one. Mr. Cortés would occasionally bring that up in his diary, but he never specifically told what the job is."

"So...a secret job? Maybe some sort of undercover work?"

"Maybe selling booze in the back alley?" Aspen chipped in.

The old man just shrugged. He couldn't confirm or deny if that is true.

"While the diary did give some hints about his other profession, it's...kinda hard to describe. I believed that the place he was working at was very far away from here, and yet he would arrive back to his hometown by the next day, which sounds impossible to travel that quickly especially by that time."

[Continue]

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"Does he ever mention how's the place was like?" Kasper asked him, getting more intrigued by this information.

"If I'm not wrong, the place is...*huge. Really huge.* It was sitting at the top of a mountain. He mentions there's a large statue outside the building that functions more like a beacon."

The old man paused for a moment before he continued.

"The building was painted with dark blue, cyan and gold. And based on how he described the place, it seems to be opulent and luxurious. Something out of this world."

The group quietly listened. They were quite fascinated by the description of the place, but at the same time they can't recall if there's already a place that fits the description in their mind. Seems like it's something that's worth researching later.

"But there's one thing that my great great grandfather always carries when he arrives there. A lantern- and I believe it isn't just any kind of lantern, as this one seems necessary to carry for his work."

Something then clicked on their minds immediately.

Leon gasped. *"Wait, would that means-"*

"Yes. I quickly thought the same thing when you folks told me about the rumor."

"His lantern also has a distinct design to it, and has a similar style and color to what he described about the building." The old man takes a sip from his cup. "I like to believe she was carrying the same lantern before she went missing. It was probably created specifically for their job over there."

The group began to raise their eyebrows. Some of them, including Kasper, become more intrigued with that fact. But some find it rather hard to believe what he just said and think it's just some phony shit.

"Do you have some proof for these claims?" Leon asked.

[Continue]

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The old man lowered his head as he placed the teacup on the table, appearing a little dejected.

"My family used to keep his belongings in this place when he passed away, but unfortunately their house got burned to the ground during a war long ago. Everything was lost and there was nothing left for them to salvage....except for one."

Then the old man takes out something from the bag next to him and places it on the table for the group to see. ***Their eyes widened.***

It's the lantern the old man was talking about. And it looks just like what he had described to them earlier.

Not only that, the lantern doesn't seem to be worn by time at all. Not even a single sign of decay can be seen from it.

"***This*****.** This is the only thing that survived from the fire. I don't know how, but it doesn't appear to be damaged at all when everything else in that house was turned into ashes."

"My family has been keeping this lantern since that incident and it has been passed down from generation to generation. And it's still in perfect shape, even after all these years."

"Huh that's actually...really cool." Greg said in awe. "Can I touch it?"

"Sure, go ahead." Tomas granted permission for them to inspect it.

While Greg is taking his time to examine the lantern, Aspen throws another question to the old man.

"Have you or anybody in your family ever tried to use it?"

"No." The old man shakes his head. "Even though it looks like a lantern, nobody in my family can find the access panel on this thing and look at what's inside of it. So we don't really know its actual purpose, and we never get to do any sort of maintenance other than cleaning it from the outside."

"Though it doesn't seem to be necessary that much, since the lantern has always stayed pristine this way...it does make me wonder, if there is some kind of mystical element with this thing."

[Continue]

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He then leans back to his chair and watches some of them taking pictures of the lantern with their phone.

"I believe that's all from me." Said the old man. "Or at least from what I remember when my family talked about it years ago. My memories aren't doing great as they used to- but if you folks have any more questions, then I'll be glad to answer them." He gives the group a warm smile, open for their inquiries.

Kasper nodded to him as he already had some questions in mind, but which one he should ask?

➤ [Ask if the old man ever thinks about selling it in the future]

➤ [Ask regarding Mr. Cortés appearance]

➤ [Ask if he knows anything else about the missing singer]

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"Hmm...have you ever considered selling the lantern? I mean, I think some people would love to buy it for a higher price. You can get a huge fortune from it."

"Good heavens, no! This lantern is the only remaining keepsake from my great great grandfather." The old man said dismissively. *"This thing is **priceless**. My family will never forgive me if I did such a thing."*

"I see. Got it." Kasper nodded while awkwardly scratching the back of his head. *Maybe he shouldn't have asked that now he thinks of it.*

➤ [Ask if he or his family feels ever feel quite skeptical about these claims regarding the lantern and Mr. Cortés]

➤ [Ask if the old man got some theories about this mysterious place Silas mentioned in his journals.]

➤ [Ask him if Mr. Cortés has mentioned other people in his diary aside from Marina.]

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*(You get **1+ Point** for asking the question)*

"Do you know what Mr. Cortés look like? Does your family ever mention his appearance?"

"Well..." The old man thinks for a moment, trying to remember something.

"If I'm not wrong, he has dark, slick back hair with a gold prosthetic eye. A charming fella from what I heard. My family used to have a lot of photos of him, but that too was lost during the war. So take that description as you will." Tomas stated.

"I see, he does sound like a pretty cool guy. I'd love to meet him." Kasper smiled as he nodded to him.

➤ [Ask if he or his family feels ever feel quite skeptical about these claims regarding the lantern and Mr. Cortés]

➤ [Ask if the old man got some theories about this mysterious place Silas mentioned in his journals.]

➤ [Ask him if Mr. Cortés has mentioned other people in his diary aside from Marina.]

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"Do you have any other information that you know about Marina?"

"Unfortunately, no." The old man shakes his head.

"My great great grandfather may have talked more about her in his diary, but I believe it has now lost to time. My parents didn't mention about her much aside from what I've just shared to you guys...so they might just be clueless as me."

"I see..." Kasper nodded solemnly.

➤ [Ask if he or his family feels ever feel quite skeptical about these claims regarding the lantern and Mr. Cortés]

➤ [Ask if the old man got some theories about this mysterious place Silas mentioned in his journals.]

➤ [Ask him if Mr. Cortés has mentioned other people in his diary aside from Marina.]

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"Sorry if this might be a bit rude to ask, but have you or our family ever felt....at least a bit skeptical about these claims?" Kasper tries to point that out.

"You mentioned that this info about Mr. Cortés has been passed down from generation to generation, and finally down to your parents. Don't you ever wonder if any of this information has stayed true to its origin or has been at least slightly altered over time?"

The old man remains silent for a bit before he responds.

"I... I'm not sure actually. You can say I'm a little skeptical about it, but at the same time I want to believe what they've told me about him is mostly true."

"After all we can't confirm or deny its authenticity when what's all that's left that's related to him is...*this*." Tomas gestured to the lantern that the other friend was holding with a doleful look.

"I only wish there's a way to figure that out."

Kasper nodded again, appearing more sympathetic. "...We will try our best to find a way if it's possible then."

"Okay, one last question..." He paused for a moment,

➤ [Ask him where Silas is when the singer went missing on that day, and what was his reaction when he found out.]

➤ [Ask him if he ever tried to test out the lantern's durability.]

➤ [Ask him if he can use the bathroom...?]

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"..Actually, I can't stop thinking about this 'special' place that your great great grandfather mentioned about. It kinda reminds me of Atlantis, or El Dorado." Kasper begins to rub his chin. "Sounds like a mythical place that's hidden from this world. Do you have any theories of what and where that place could be?"

The old man begins to rub his chin too, trying to think about it. "Well...it surely must be at the top of the mountain somewhere in this world, that's for sure.."

"But from the way he described it, as was mentioned by my family, that it was completely nothing like this world. The technology was far more advanced from what they had at that time if I'm not wrong. So yeah, there's that." The old man just shrugged. "I have no idea either."

So either he's working with aliens or he's a part of government secret projects. Got it.

"Okay, one last question..." He paused for a moment.

➤ [Ask him where Silas is when the singer went missing on that day, and what was his reaction when he found out.]

➤ [Ask him if he ever tried to test out the lantern's durability.]

➤ [Ask him if he can use the bathroom...?]

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*(You get **1+ Point** for asking the question)*

"Do you know if Mr. Cortés has worked with other people and mentioned them in his diary, other than Marina herself?" Kasper asked him further.

"Actually...yes. I think he does." The old man replied as he's trying to remember it clearly. "But my family doesn't tell much about them other than they could either be his co-workers, his friends, or even both."

"So that means...there could possibly be more people who have similar positions as him and worked there too?"

The old man hesitantly nodded. "I don't know how many, but there probably would be at least a few of them if my memory serves right. Some of them are the same people who would visit him here once a while, as I was told."

The group looked at each other for a moment. They didn't expect this mystery to be much deeper than they thought.

"Do you remember at least some of their names?"

The old man shakes his head in response.

"No. Unfortunately not. I couldn't even recall the singer's name until you folks mentioned her."

"Ah, I see.. it's okay then." Kasper felt a bit bummed out by that answer, but he totally understood that.

"Okay, one last question..." He paused for a moment.

➤ [Ask him where Silas is when the singer went missing on that day, and what was his reaction when he found out.]

➤ [Ask him if he ever tried to test out the lantern's durability.]

➤ [Ask him if he can use the bathroom...?]

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"...Can I...use the bathroom?" Kasper smiled sheepishly to the old man.

Tomas blinked his eyes for a second. "Oh- sure! The bathroom is over there." He gestures towards the bathroom nearby.

"Thanks!"

Kasper then stands up from his chair and heads towards the bathroom, leaving the group and the old man for a moment.

[Continue]

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"... Have you ever tried to...*break this thing?* Sorry if it's not an appropriate question, I'm just curious about it." Kasper apologised in advance for the absurd question he had, as he let out an awkward chuckle.

The old man was a bit taken back for such a question, but he then smiles back at him and lets out a small chuckle.

"It's alright to ask. While I do get quite curious sometimes on what's inside that lantern when I was younger, I never really thought about trying to break it open because yeah- I don't think my parents would be very happy if I tried to do such a thing."

"However I do recall one of my family members accidentally dropped the lantern off from a high height while they were renovating our house. It creates a loud thud and even leaves a small crack on the floor...but there wasn't any sign of damage from the lantern at all, thankfully."

"Wow, it must be highly durable then." Kasper chuckled a little. "That's actually pretty cool to know."

[Continue]

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*(You get **1+ Point** for asking the question)*

"...Where was Mr. Cortés when Marina went missing? What was his reaction when he found out about her case?"

Tomas' expression then changed from neutral to melancholic.

"...If I recall correctly, he was supposed to be with her on that day. Maybe with a few others that he knows of. However his wife's water broke unexpectedly during her pregnancy and needed to be rushed to the hospital, so he had to cancel his plans to follow them at the last minute."

"And...I believe that was the last time he saw them. He doesn't know what happened to them, and no matter how many times he tried- he's unable to go back to that place again after that happened."

"Everybody in that group, including the singer, went somewhere that my great great grandfather was supposed to follow...and they never returned back here."

"Well except for one, *but...*"

"...His body was found near the river on the next day."

Kasper's heart sank upon hearing that harrowing statement. He doesn't know what to say.

[Continue]

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"....."

"I think that incident left him somewhat scarred for life. Sure, he probably doesn't show it since from what my family told me he's still a great, charming man and had a good life- but I feel like he was riddled by guilt deep inside. He becomes somewhat more reserved, and tries to distance himself from everyone except his own family."

The old man then let out a small, doleful sigh.

"He...never talked about this to anybody else, not even to his wife. We only found that out once we discovered his hidden diary along with some photo books after his death."

"I don't know why he kept this away from us. But...maybe it's just too hurtful for him to talk about it."

"I see..." Kasper looks down before taking a sharp breath, and musters up a soft smile to him.

"Thank you for telling us about this, Tomas. It's an honor to have the opportunity to discuss this mystery case."

"And...I'm sorry to hear about your great great grandfather. It must be painful to deal with that alone by himself." Kasper said with a sorrowful look on his face.

"It's honestly my pleasure to be able to share it with you folks." The old man smiled at them. "Especially when it's rare to have somebody outside this town come here and be interested in this place."

[Continue]

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Some time has passed, Greg begins to check the time on his phone. He then leans closer to one of them who sits next to him, whispering something to his ear as he places his hand on his friend's shoulder.

"Dude, I think we need to leave soon- or it's gonna be too dark for us to set up our campsite later."

Leon nodded back at him before turning his head to the old man. "I think it's time for us to leave now, but do you know if there's any wild animals or bugs that we need to watch out for on the mountain that's next to this town?"

"Oh- you folks are planning to go there?"

"Yep! We're planning to camp there for tonight. Mostly just for fun, but we also wanna try to check out the location it's rumored to be where Marina Anastasia was last seen." Ricardo replied enthusiastically.

"Aha I see. We rarely spot any wild animals in that mountain, but it's good to be cautious."

"But since you're planning to stay there for the night..." The old man takes the lantern with both of his hands before extending them towards the group. "..Do you folks want to borrow this lantern along with you?" He asked with a smile.

The group was dumbfounded by that.

"Eh- really? Can we borrow this??" Leon asked him in shock. To which he simply nodded back in content.

[Continue]

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"It was great to have a talk with you folks about my great great grandfather. I never expect to share this story again with anybody else after a long while, let alone it being somebody who isn't from this town."

"It seems like you are dedicated to finding some answers about this old mystery when most people already forgot about it- and even go as far as to come here, which I can respect your commitment."

Tomas looks down at the lantern on his hands before giving a wistful smile. *"And if you folks manage to resolve them...then perhaps my great great grandfather can finally rest in peace."*

He then looks back to the group.
"Unfortunately I couldn't help you folks with that since I'm a bit too old to head up to the mountain nearby anymore...but if you want to borrow this lantern for the night, then be my guest."

"Just as long as you folks return it back by the next day of course." The old man stated to them as a reminder.

"Roger that." Ricardo chuckled before nodding to him.

*(If you get **two or more points** during the Q&A session earlier, then please select this text to proceed with the story)*

*(And if you get **one or zero points** during the Q&A session earlier, then please select this text to proceed with the story)*

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The old man then gives the lantern to Kasper.

"Please take good care of it." He said before patting his hands on Kasper's shoulder.

"Oh-! Thank you." Kasper seems a bit surprised that he gives the lantern to him.

Aspen then nudges on his shoulder. *"Looks like you're the chosen one Kasperr*" He said with a smirk.

"Pfft, no I'm not." Kasper chuckled back as he gently pushed him away.

"Anyways, thank you for lending us the lantern for today. If we catch something interesting over there, we will definitely inform you about it tomorrow." Greg said to the old man before the group was getting ready to leave.

"Again, it's my pleasure to help you folks with this. I wish you all the best on finding out about this mystery, and please stay safe while you're resting out there tonight." The old man smiles as he bids farewell to the group.

The group does the same, as they wave goodbye to the old man after leaving his house. Kasper looks back at the lantern that he's currently holding with him, before he shifts his eyes to Tomas' house, taking a good look at the place one last time before leaving. He gives a faint smile before he turns around, and walks away.

The group then enters back inside the car, and begin to drive towards their next destination: ***The mountain.***

[ACT 1 END]

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The old man then gives the lantern to Leon.

"Please take good care of it." He said before patting his hands on Leon's shoulder.

"Aw sweet thanks, I will!" Leon smiled in gratitude to the old man before giving the old man a quick hug.

Aspen then nudges on his shoulder. *"Oho, it seems like you've been chosen, Leon.*" He said with a smirk.

"Well you know what they say, it's destiny." Leon gives a triumphant smile as he shrugged in a joking manner.

"Anyways, thank you for lending us the lantern for today. If we catch something interesting over there, we will definitely inform you about it tomorrow." Greg said to the old man before the group was getting ready to leave.

"Again, it's my pleasure to help you folks with this. I wish you all the best on finding out about this mystery, and please stay safe while you're resting out there tonight." The old man smiles as he bids farewell to the group.

The group does the same, as they wave goodbye to the old man after leaving his house. Kasper looks back at the lantern that his friend is currently holding with him, before he shifts his eyes to Tomas' house, taking a good look at the place one last time before leaving. He gives a faint smile before he turns around, and walks away.

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[ACT 1 END]