

Intro

The gateman gives Otzy a thumbs up and reaches down towards his terminal to open the gates. The old rusted metal fence's squeaky wheels roll across the wet concrete to the side as Otzy reaches down to turn off the radio in his car. "Startin to turn to static this far anyways, Mine as well just appreciate this rain til I get there" Otzy thinks to himself as the gate Slows to a stop and a weak *ERRR* plays over the old speaker, The gateman signals for him to go before looking back down at his phone. Otzy drives through and the gate closes behind him, With only an unmarked two lane road in front of him and trees to his side he gets comfortable in his seat and appreciates the rumbling noise of the rain hitting his car. "Finally my week again. A break from that dang keyboard, Just me in my own little world with no expectations but to come back with some interesting notes and some measurements" He mumbles to himself, with nothing else in mind. A few minutes pass of more forests until he turns right, down the small road cutting into the dense forest. a large blocky white unmarked concrete building comes into view, The facility. Otzy rolls underneath the stilted license plate scanner and checks his mirror to make sure it flicked green, he's always been a little worried it'd randomly bug out and call security on him but today isn't the day. He rides through the empty visitor parking and down into the underground parking deck, The rain's background ambience being replaced by a muffled generator hum. He rolls around the spiral, all the way down to the bottom, floor 12. He drives to his designated spot. Parking spot number 427. Parking and stepping out of the car he double checks that he's wearing his ID card lanyard before closing the door and locking up his car.

He walks towards the glowing set of double glass doors on the back wall of the car park and enters, He takes in the purified air and gives a passing wave to the two old security guards sitting behind the glass booth laid back in their chairs chatting. They unlock the interior door before Otzy even reaches it and it beeps a clear *BWEEP* with the lock audibly correcting itself. Otzy steps on through and checks his old faded lcd watch, "9:40, Yea not much time to wander around today. Dumb traffic" Otzy mumbles to himself as he walks through the old white hallways. The government may have taken head of the company but even they don't want to spend the money modernizing these back halls, at least the janitor is kept busy. Otzy continues his brisk walk through the halls, past the orangeish yellow stripes of the entrance zone, the sparkly clean floors of the admin zone and the forever busy cafeteria down to his own branch. The general research branch, in which many smaller specialized branches used to exist in but in recent times they were all forcefully converted to research into a singular topic, False Worlds. Worlds alternate to our own with endless possibilities and controlled creation. Otzy steps into the elevator down to branch 7B. It's cramped but fitting for the amount of traffic allowed down

here. He taps the down button and looks at his watch, tapping his foot impatiently “Come on old thing, It's 9:50. I don't wanna be rushing on a damn monday” he says out loud to which the elevator only responds with static filled jazz played over what sounds like a tin can badly converted into a speaker. The door opens with a weak ding and Otzy doesn't even let the doors open fully before speed walking down the white halls towards his teams lab room 8, He swipes his keycard through the scanner and the doors bolt *clicks*. He quickly swings open the door and steps into the airlock. He steps inside and lets the door close behind him before taking off his backpack and placing it down onto the floor. He knowingly reaches to the left and pulls a hanging long white labcoat from a nearby hook without looking and puts it on as disinfecting white mist begins to sprays onto him from above. Lab coat acquired he bends down to his backpack and unzips it, taking out the 4 items he chose for breaching today. A small ceiling star projector, a ceramic mushroom, a blank styrofoam cup and a little vial of beach sand. He nearly drops them, sneezing from the harsh smelling mist. He wishes he could just jam the door open so he didn't have to do this every morning. Finally the door opens in front of him and he carries the items forward into the small item check-in room.

He quickly places the items on the scale to his right and waves at Charles behind the window tapping away at his keyboard. “Hey Newb-” *Otzy catches himself* “-Charles... Can ya get these printed real quick?” He says pointing at the few items. “Hah, still trying to call me newbie? I've been here a year now otz!” Charles chirps back before leaning forward towards the window “What you bringing in this time, Is that a little mushroom?” He says confused but curious and excited. “A *ceramic* mushroom, Alongside this little kids star projector, This cup I had lying around” Otzy replies with a corrective joking tone. ...and some sand” he meekly adds “Oh harr de harr, Leme ring it up” Charles taps away at his keyboard “Ceramic... Mushhhroom, Star projectorrrrrrr...” He murmurs to himself typing them into the computer. “Oh wait, Don't include the vial on the sand. Its just how I'm carrying it here, ...Not gonna use the vial just the sand” Otzy interjects with an awkward tone. “Ack- now I've gotta... -Okay! I've got it. Just go grab ya suitcase ill have the template setup soon aight?” “Aight.” Otzy turns around and walks to the equipment dispenser, A small padded platform raised up from the floor rests underneath a large square tube going up into the upper machinery floor of the lab. To the right of it rests a small purpose built terminal with a wire running upwards along the tube. Otzy swipes his card into the reader, presses the “Cataloger” preset button and flicks down the mounted lever with a

satisfying *chunk*, He hears faint rumbling above and knowingly backs away just incase, Just as he does an extra large dark brown suitcase falls down through the hole and onto the padded pedestal with a *Fwoooof* of air dispersing from around it. "Never gets old" Otzy thinks to himself with a smile before walking over to slide the suitcase off the platform and into his hand, "Agk-fuckin, Always forget how heavy this preset is" He curses to himself picking it up and shuffling its handle into his left hand.

He waves through Charles who returns a half looking one. Otzy steps through the check-in areas door straight into the observation room. A completely white blank empty room lies behind a long plane of thick glass with only a single entrance of the thick steel airtight door on the far side of the room. On the back wall lies Sasha, connecting countless wires to the monitoring equipment lining the back wall of the observation room. A tangled colorful mess of tech debt from a bygone era kept going with only half understanding and a forever delayed restructure plan, the nature of the black fog makes it all one of a kind. She wipes some sweat off her forehead and looks over to Otzy with a wide smile, "Oh otz! Perfect timing" she says in her typical expectant but joyful voice "I just got the vital scans working again. Come over here n'help me check real quick" She says already walking over with a heartbeat sensor clip in her hand "Oh uh well leme jus-" Otzy tries to speak but stops when sasha just slips the clip onto his earlobe and says "Stand still real quick sweetie". Otzy looks unimpressed at her but stands still. Sasha grows a smug smile on her face before twirling around walking back and bending down to the lone terminal poking out of the wall of machinery, pushing a few wires out of the way. She stares at it intently for a moment before looking back at Otzy "Aight it all works! Thanks for the help!". Otzy takes the sensor off his ear and places it on a nearby table "Yea. your welcome" He responds as he walks towards the terminal next to the steel door entrance to the chamber. "No Pozzik or Derrick, Must be upstairs working on the machines. Eh I don't wanna see them anyways" he mumbles himself as he places the suitcase on the table next to the door terminal

A door opens to Otzy's left where he came from, Before he can even turn around "Otz! Otz! I go-" Charles shouts from across the room "Charles! Don't yell my name like that man! I told you!" Otzy responds in an annoyed voice instinctively. "S-Sorry, What is it? Got the report template?" Otzy follows himself with a quiet tone. "Yep!" Charles chirps as he speed walks over

to Otzy holding out the papers straight in front of him the whole time. Otzy grabs it and unlocks the suitcase with their standard code of 1225 "Thanks Charlie" Otzy says as Charlie is already turning back around to walk back. "Hey wait!" Otzy jerks out, Charlie stops and turns around. "It's my week, remember? So I'ma be under all day. Help Sasha or the old folks upstairs if need be while I'm gone okay?" Otzy says in an assuring tone to him. "Got it!" Charlie says, turning back around to his little office. Otzy looks back to his suitcase and props it open. It's been perfectly mechanically organized and set up for him just like every other day. On the left, a sliding wood piece with a stretchy nylon band stretched across it with the text "PLACE REPORT OVERVIEW HERE" stamped in white. Otzy slides the paper he got from Charlie under the band, snapping the paper to the board and looks to the left of the suitcase to check his equipment. Small state of the art but still aged devices folded up into their black squishy styrofoam inserts, each with their battery light sticking upwards with an unblinking green, Fully charged. He slides the paper wooden paper holder over to the left side of the case and checks his general storage. A folded up nylon pullstring bag, a sealed emergency poncho, some iodine packets, an incredibly dense packet of paperwork, guides for various scenarios, a tiny set of basic tools and some cheap pencils which Otzy quickly replaces with his own pens, leaving the cheap ones on the table. He briefly considers checking underneath for the other tools but trusts the packing machine did its duty and packed all the other necessities nestled underneath the top layer.

He stands up and takes a big stretch, and turns to Sasha on the computer. "Aight, I'm going in soon. Don't forget to turn on monitoring aight?" Sasha doesn't even turn "Yea- yea I know, Get in there already its 10:30AM! I'll figure out whatever the fog does to the monitoring *this time* AFTER you've gotten in there". Otzy looks up to the big red LCD clock attached to the wall "Ah, Suppose you are right then. Cya!" He says as he walks over to the small amulet holder embedded in the wall next to the steel door. A large brass circular amulet rests on top of a padded cushion inside a glass box embedded into the wall. The amulet is made of solid brass with an interior circle cut into the body, 6 black spikes jut out of the interior walls inwards to a small dark black crystal, pinching it in place with excessive force. At the bottom a shining sharp needle barely pokes its head out of the brass pointed directly towards the crystal. Atop of where the needle rests internally sits a small indented release button just big enough for a finger to click down. The amulet has seen heavy use with obvious wear with small scratches littered across the brass and a darkened gleam where the chain holds it from, yet the black spikes on the inside seem unaffected by the passage of time. Surrounding the amulet is

12 small sets of embedded black pincers built into the floor of the structure, 6 of them filled with other black crystals. Otzy swipes his keycard and carefully opens the glass panel. he reaches down and carefully picks up the amulet and placing it face up on top of a nearby table before reaching inside and un-tensioning the suspended gems, carefully grabbing each one and placing them into holding indents on the back of the amulet. 6 in storage on the back of the amulet, 1 in the claws already. "...If they're gonna leave those slots then I'm gonna fill them, ... Don't care if I'm only supposed to take 3 total, it's better safe than sorry" He thinks to himself as he places his keycard ID on top of the cushion and closes the door. He won't be needing that anytime soon. He places the cold metal chain around his neck before looking down at the hanging amulet resting on his chest and smiling



.(If i had more time i'd properly make this but this is all your getting now, use your imagination .)

He quickly walks over to the chamber door terminal and wakes it up. Its utilitarian green console shines up and reads "| PRESSURE:GOOD | DOOR: LOCKED | VENTILATION: GOOD |" Otzy presses the down arrows a few times to highlight "OPEN" and spams enter to mash through the warnings. The bulk steel door next to him creaks and begins to slowly open as a loud beeping alarm rings continually warning people to get away from this apparently incredibly dangerous door. Otzy taps his foot impatiently until it finally is open enough for him to squeeze in. He quickly pulls the door shut much faster than the automated system was opening it, The beeping stops and the door audibly locks itself. Otzy sighs in relief before looking to the wall right next to him on the right, and just on queue a panel folds inward and upwards revealing a small conveyor belt slowly feeding him the items he checked in at Charlie, Each one perfectly sterilized and kept in a vacuum until ready. He grabs them all and walks over to the center of the room and sitting down criss crossed on the flat floor. Sasha's staring at him through the window with an annoyed look and a hand on her hip, obviously waiting for him to hurry up. Otzy smiles awkwardly back at her and quickly places the four items around him at equal distances, pouring

the sand out of the vial and placing the empty glass in his pocket. He runs his hand through and then tightens the suitcases leather handle around his left wrist before grabbing the amulet and looking at it intently, He takes a few deep breaths before closing his eyes and gently pressing down on the release switch, the needle jabs forward in the blink of an eye crashing into the gem and sending rippling cracks up its surface. Otzy braces himself as he feels the air around him grow cold, a black fog begins to seep from the newly formed cracks in the gem, At first a small trickle, Then a stream, Suddenly. A tempest of black fog. Otzy's body forces him to hack and cough at the fog filling his lungs but he fights the urge to move, His legs jolt and try to kick to get him away but he crossed them for this very reason, His lungs tingle with a buzzing feeling until he cannot feel them anymore and the room turns silent ...His hearing is gone. His body tries to force open his eyes but they feel welded shut, as if the weight of the world rested upon them only when he tried to pry them open. Soon after his legs and arm buzz that familiar static, buzzing louder and louder as if the muscles within are trying to breach out until they all *stop*, No more signal. His chest follows soon with his heart slowing to a near standstill, His blood run cold and then his head, A throbbing headache starts to wash over him like crashing catastrophic waves as his hearing returns only to be filled with a deafening static noise screaming, screaming over even his loudest thoughts that dare try to pierce through until it all... *Stops*. He is no longer physical... All he has is his thoughts, All he *is*, is his thoughts Floating... floating thoughts... It takes him a while to notice his own panic, His subconscious shrieking screams bubbling up to his higher mind, The panic of a primal mind fearing its impending end, A stop to the endless stream of consciousness that makes up its own awareness and understanding of itself, He spirals deeper and deeper trying to scream into the longing cold, cold abyss... until mercifully... it all *Stops*

(Chpt 1) THE HOOK

He's falling, what's left of his concept is falling, falling in darkness. His mind's eye begins to reform, A scattered mess of grey matter floating aimlessly, dry and lacking color, he tries to paint a picture of his own lost form with them. First the brain, then the head. Higher Consciousness returns and with it the crashing waves of a screaming migraine, He calms himself, Reminding himself that it's natural and trying to understand will only make it worse. The crashing waves recede into the ocean and the headache follows with it. He begins to paint his body once again, The chest below and the extremities connected to the core. He begins to feel them again, Buzzing, Buzzing with static, It tries to rush upwards to his head but he pushes it downwards and out, He can sense his cold body once again. He returns to the head and paints his ears. His hearing returns with only a faint whispering static in the background. He knows he's nearly there, He paints the eyes and can feel them once again, He only has to find the will to open them.

He awakens. Facing upwards at a dark colorful sky, large white bubbly caricatures of stars float lazily around with an endless stretching aurora floating in front of them with the cosmos' own colors behind. He feels the clothes on his body and the suitcase in hand, It smells like wet soil after rain with a hint of sea salt. He can feel grass poking at his empty hand. He sits up groggily and looks around him, Small dotted islands float on the surface of a shiny blue sea lit by the starlight above as far as he can see, Each with small curvy brown bridges connecting them. The island he's on barren of foliage but the few he can see close by differ. To his left, a small bumpy island merely the size of a small home floats with palm-like trees dotted across its green surface, small glowing sticks casting light onto a dirt path across the island and onto its bridge. To his right a larger island with a long line of raised hills surrounding its shores with a rough wooden looking roof splayed across the peaks He squints his eyes and can just barely make out small round cap like objects poking out of the top of the roof, Each colorful and glowing like the glow sticks on the other island.

Otzy hefts up the suitcase and places it onto his lap, propping it open and knowingly reaching for a pen without even looking while scanning down the "OVERVIEW" paper down to the "ORIGIN OBJECT" grid, A tall computer generated spreadsheet with two columns and four rows, One for each item. "Ceramic Mushroom... Beach sand... Ah, there it is. "Childrens Star Projector". Otzy begins to write in the square to the right of it before stopping himself "Wait, Does that say" Otzy narrows his eyes and looks closer at it "Children,ss star Projector", Otzy snickers to himself. "Heh, Newbie's misspells strike yet again. I'll poke fun at him when I get

back” before continuing to write “Starry sky above” in the “WORLD EFFECT SHORT” column next to it and flipping up the page to write a more detailed description in the designated “Children;ss star Projector” effects page, Still snickering to himself when he reads it at the top of the page. Once done he puts his pen back into the suitcase before locking it up and standing up to stretch off that groggy feeling. He grabs the amulet around his neck and checks the crystal, Just as he knew it would, The once glistening black gem is now a cracked grey husk of its former self that not even light itself wants to reflect off of its rotten form. He unwinds the pinching claws and picks it out of its hold before putting the drained crystal into his pocket for later. It's procedure to just throw them away after use but he likes holding onto them. He looks around again to try and decide where to go next but feels something tug his foot, he recoils upwards and nearly falls over backwards pulling his suitcase tight up to his chest. He peers over it downwards and sees a very big blue... Mushroom? On the ground. He stares at it from a moment before it lifts its head upwards revealing small little white eyes hidden underneath its big cap, It tilts its head to the side and looks at Otzy with a confused expression, Its wearing a dark blue scarf . Otzy lets his guarding suitcase stance down looks down towards it saying “Speech?” In an accidentally cold sounding voice. The shroom looks down for a second before meekly responding “weird tall shroom can speak? speak?”



(Hey look! An image!. In later parts these will just be embedded in text but for this time its out in the open so you'll read this. These are just imagination fodder so don't take them as 100% true cannon gospel on what something looks like, what something looks like past the explicitly said details is up to you so have fun with it)

Otzy is simultaneously relieved and a bit annoyed at this revelation, “Oh good, Don't mind me little... Shroom? I'm just here to look around and do some tests and then I'll be right out of your hair... er- cap” He says back only to see the little shroom has seemingly already tuned him out and is prodding at the metal reinforced corners of his suitcase curiously, Otzy

yanks it back "Hey! N-No! Don't touch tha-" he says as if he's scolding a pet before being interrupted by something behind him tugging at the cuffs of his pants, He quickly swings around accidentally dropping his suitcase without realizing to see yet another mushroom poking at him, A slightly smaller but still plump green-capped mushroom. "Hey! What are you doin-" The mushroom doesn't even react as it quickly grabs the fallen suitcase off the floor and starts wobbling away at a shocking speed. "W-wait bring that back RIGHT NOW!" Otzy says trying to sprint forward after the green cap but he quickly trips and tumbles right overtop the blue shroom that's still standing right in front of him "oof". Otzy scrambles to get back up but once he does it's too late and the green cap is already out of sight. The blue cap wobbles back and forth on the ground turtle'd for a few seconds before hopping back onto its stubby feet. It looks at Otzy and asks "Why tall shroom look so mad? mad?" in its same quiet shy childlike voice. Otzy just sighs already mentally wishing for different dwellers in this world, He takes a deep breath and bends down to the shrooms level and calmly explains "Your friend just took something *really important*, They took it and ran off into *place I don't know*, I need important thing to do job" ending it with a false smile in hopes the shroom will understand what that even is "Oh! Shroom should have known ...Shroom sorry sorry" "No no its fine, It wasn't you" Otzy says half paying attention trying to think about if he should go back and listen to derrick berate him or try and find it himself. "Shroom know where green went went" blue cap says excitedly hopping up and down a little. Otzy catches himself nearly reaching for the amulet before fully processing what the little shroom said. "...Really? And do you think you could... Lead me to them?" Blue cap does a little spin before sprinting off towards a nearby bridge. It's incredible how that much mass has so much acceleration. Otzy nearly trips over himself trying to scramble to speed up, Yelling up ahead "W-Wait! Slow down!" to which the shroom instantly perfectly stops in place and turns around to look at Otzy. "Shroom slow down, Big Shroom too big to keep up" the shroom says completely unaware of the shade it just cast at Otzy and waits for him to catch up before walking at a slower pace.

They walk over the bridge off the flat island and into a small forested one, Otzy notices that it's not made of wood, It feels hard like stone yet sounds like ceramic when he steps on it,

He makes a mental note to check it once he gets his equipment back. Small little colorful rods stick out of random spots on the side of the path sporadically lighting the dirt up as they walk for a few minutes in silence until Otzy begins to feel tense from not doing his work despite the obvious excuse, "So... Do you guys have... Names? Call each other anything?" He asks, Half curious Half trying to find out for the dweller societal report "Na-yaem?" The shroom says confused "Shrooms have no 'Na-yaem', "Okay I shoulda figured that, I-I mean do you call each other specific things? Like should I make a specific *noise* to get your attention?" Otzy clarifies, trying to dumb it down. "Hmm... Shroom not ever need attention noise... Shroom always know other shroom, Big shroom not know same?". The shroom replies, seemingly careful in its words. "...Okayyyy, Well... Me and you are *different* but... That don't mean it bad, It just mean different" Otzy catches himself already devolving his own language to the shrooms and mentally gags "How about, I just call you blue cap? If i say that, It means im trying to get your attention... Okay?" Otzy asks in his best patient kindergarten teacher voice as they walk over another small brown bridge to another forested island. The shroom thinks on it for a few seconds "o-kay, Shroom now blue cap!" it chirps in a slightly confused but still happy voice. Otzy catches himself smiling at the dwellers speech and quickly reminds himself to not get attached but before he can think about it too hard the shroom suddenly stops in its tracks and points at one of those houses Otzy saw in the distance when he first woke up. "ThiS where shroom sleep! sleep! Shroom sleep with head in sky to recharge!". Otzy stares at it, confused as to why bluecap suddenly stopped and decided to show him this. "Uh... T-thanks for telling me, I'll uh... I'll be sure to write that dow- Oh wait!, Is this where my suitcase is? Is this where that green shroom went!?" He says already walking off the main path towards the door. The shroom rapidly darts in front of him and says "N-no! Suitcase not there! No wake sleeping shroom!" Otzy pauses and just looks down at the shroom annoyed. "Ack- What? Where is it then? ...do you even know where you're going?" He asks, staring back at the shroom that looks like its barely even there mentally.

Otzy starts to reach for his amulet "I-I'm just gonna go home, Thanks for trying I guess-" The

shroom interrupts him by thumping into his leg, Shockingly powerful “N-No! Shroom sorry!

Shroom just got lost in the stars! stars! Shroom know where to go! ” it screeches with a

worried voice. Otzy pauses, “Did it know?” he questions himself mentally before speaking up “Okay, Just. Lets go okay? Straight there.” The shroom lets go of his leg instantly and wordlessly starts trekking back down the path they were just on, Otzy follows shortly behind him. Back to silent walking Otzy has entered his mind palace once again, “Nah, Normal ones aren’t supposed to know... it probably just heard me say I was gonna go home and got all scared... They don’t seem the smartest anyways...” He thinks to himself “Weird little things...” as they step onto the bridge out from where they just came he catches something in the corner of his eye, He stops without the shroom even noticing. Off the right of the bridge, Far far off in the distance he sees something, In the empty ocean he sees something tall and narrow but lacking color It’s just barely poking over the horizon. The shroom briefly turns around and notices Otzy squinting off into the distance and scuttles over to his side. “What big Shroom see?” it asks tilting its head to

the side. “I... I don’t know, It’s like some tower or something, I swear we just wen-” “Oh!

Mushroom see that before. Shroom friends try to sail sail there once on float boat, Tower

never got closer! Shroom friends gave up, Shroom did not try since, not worth...” It says,

interrupting Otzy. “Huh, Well... I wish I had my suitcase, I’ve got some binoculars folded up in there... maybe it’s like those other... Ah whatever I can always come back, lets keep going” Otzy says gesturing for the shroom to continue, Which its confused by for a moment but it eventually figures out what that hand motion means

They continue their trek across the small dotted islands, passing other smaller shroom houses of varying sizes, each of which- without fail- the mushroom would and point just to exclaim “Not suitcase! Nearly there!” while pointing at it. Just as Otzy is beginning to feel like he should just pierce up and take the loss again until suddenly the shroom shrieks out “Here!”. A tall 2 story building stretches upwards from the surrounding coast mountains that it uses as the first story walls, Made of the same material the bridges are. Otzy briefly thinks about how coastal

mountains shaped like that are impossible but quickly reminds himself it's a False World. "Green shroom in here! Here!" the little shroom squeaks before waddling forward and opening the door for Otzy, "come inside! inside!". Otzy briefly thinks of the risks but shrugs and steps inside. A warm multicolor glow stretches across the giant one room floor, The colorful glowsticks normally kept on the trail haphazardly spiked into random places in the ceiling above and bended upwards for safety, Random similarly colorful furniture seemingly placed at random spots across the room, chairs, tables, Benches, Stools and even a few odd... Statues? The room bustles with activity from what must be at least 30 colorful shrooms all bumbling around. Sitting at crudely made tables doing odd hand gestures, chasing each other around or sculpting small little toys and statues out of an odd clay like material, None of them seem to notice Otzy which he sighs in relief for. "Big shroom stay here! here!, Shroom go find green shroom and get brown box!" Otzy shuffles partially behind the door to not draw any of the shrooms' attention to him and waits, watching the other shrooms' odd behaviours and making mental notes.

Eventually bluecap comes down from upstairs holding his suitcase, A wave of relief washes over Otzy as he waves to bluecap and motions for him to come over. "Got brown box! box Got brown box! box~" it sings to itself as it steps outside and hands it to Otzy who quickly grabs it and thanks the shroom. He quickly pops it open and checks inside, Everything's still there. "Oh good, They didn't get in" He whispers to himself before looking back down at the shroom that's seemingly expecting something. "Uh... I-I'm going to go now okay? I've got stuff to do... You did really good getting this back for me" The mushroom seems to not even notice his words, Only blankly staring at his amulet. Otzy quickly grabs it and pulls it closer to himself "Y-You can't have that, That's mine" Otzy says shakily, backing away from the shroom who finally speaks up "Shroom not take! Take!, Shroom just looking at black fruit boost in odd circle! why big shroom hold boost like that?" Otzy loosens his stance, "What? A snack? N-No it's not food it's just..." A realization dawns on Otzy "Do you mean the black crystal in the middle?" He turns the amulet around and points to the other 6 slotted into the back "These?" He

asks, confused. "Yes! yes! Shroom see those before! other shroom use dark rock just like, it help grow star fruit big and strong! strong!". Otzy stands there blankly thinking about it until fireworks go off in his mind "Holy shit. Is this thing saying they just... *have* breaching crystals? This is amazing, I- T-That's perfect! I Just need to make sure their real before i put it on the report " He quickly looks down at his watch "11:47 AM" "damnit" he mutters to himself under his breath "Fuckin, Its time for lunch checkin but... I- I can't leave this I... I'ma just go tell them I'm skipping so they don't get worried about me, I wanna check before the end of the day. " He quickly looks down at the shroom looking at him confused.

"Okay, Blue cap... So, change of plans, I actually *do* have more time but, I've gotta go do something real quick okay? You've gotta stay *Right here* for a little bit and then you can show me all about your little star fruits alright?" The little shroom giddily jumps up and down "okay! okay!

Okay!" It chirps before walking back inside and sitting down next to the other shrooms. Otzy gently closes the front door and walks away, to a secluded area, deep in the woods of the island and behind some bushes. A place where nobody will find *what's left of him* once he "leaves". He looks around for any other shrooms and once he confirms to himself he's alone he sits down crisscrossed and opens up his suitcase. He quickly pulls out the specially made flashlight they use for breaching upwards. It's a small, circular light shaped like a hockey puck. He flicks it onto "Burst" mode before shutting the suitcase and locking it up and tightening the handle around his wrist. To make sure its changes can "follow him upwards". He grabs his amulet and quickly unwinds the pincers around a crystal, He picks it out and places it into the holding claws, Winding them as tight as he can before bringing up the flashlight puck to the front of the amulet and twisting it til they lock together. With the flashlight lens locked to the amulet and pointing through the dark crystal directly at Otzy's chest he takes a few deep breaths and reaches to the power button, He gently presses down onto it until *Click*. He only sees a split second of white light passing through the crystal towards his chest before his body slumps and his mind stops thinking once again

Floating, Floating. Once again the fragments of Otzy's consciousness floats through a dark expanse. This time upwards, Up Up into a white glowing expanse far above. His head and

mind reforming once again with a feeling of natural healing, as if a grave mistake had finally been corrected and a sinful weight lifted off the mind. His body soon follows with the forgotten warmth of flowing blood comforting him through the expanse as color slowly returns to the body and clothing, His mind calm and free of worry. Soon after he begins to feel the weight on his eyes feather away with hearing soon returning, He can hear the faint whirring and clicking of the lab's machinery once again.

He wakes up just as that black fog clears from hiding his forgotten body, allowing sight to the schrodinger yet again. He's still groggy from the voyage across the lens but he's got things to do. He quickly gets up and carefully walks around the 4 items on the floor, making sure not to bump any of them. He notices Sasha still fiddling with the machinery wall and he taps the window to get her attention and motions for the door. She looks annoyed that she got interrupted but quickly walks over and spams through the warnings to start the door opening before going back to her work. The door alarm rings yet again with Otzy squeezing through it as soon as he can to push it closed and shut it up, He looks around and sees charles carrying a big box of cables towards sasha. "Perfect, Just who I needed" Otzy thinks to himself as he walks over towards Charlie, who's putting down the box next to Sasha to dig through, "Hey Ne-C-Charlie! Can you tell derrick or poz upstairs that I'm skipping lunch checkin?" "O-Oh uh... Wait" Charlie gets a smug look on his face "Did you forget to write down stuff again?" "N-No! I just, Some Dweller saw the amulet and told me about how they have something really similar to it. It might finally be a new world with crystals in it! Last time *our* team fount one was like... god, Probably before you even joined us!" Otzy says excitedly "ooooo, Alright I'll run up and tell em soon" Charlie starts to turn around and head towards the cramped stairs before stopping himself "wait... Does this mean I can get your lunch credit for the day?" Charlie asks in a small voice "...Fineeee" Otzy briefly scrabbles his signature onto a nearby piece of paper before frisbeeing it over to charles "Here" Charlie catches it which surprises even himself "Thanks otz!" before running back towards the stairs. "You hear that sasha? I'm goin back in aight?", "Yea yea I heard, ya going back in, Just go on ahead, monitor equipment still running. I'm finishing up what I got and then ima go inhale whatever their serving at the cafeteria" Otzy just shrugs and goes on back in, Mashing through the door sequence,

Squeezing through and closing it behind him. He sits back down, Swaps a crystal into the holder, Tightens the suitcase strap around his wrist, crosses his legs and decides to just get it over as fast as he can, He quickly grabs the amulet and presses down on the release trigger.

He falls through the lens yet again. Static consumes his body and threatens to tear it apart from within, but he resists. His mind runs blank and then ceases to continue, Soon after his concept falls down into the world below and back into its body for this world.

He gets up and shakes off that deathrest feeling. He looks around, No trampled grass, No mushrooms watching from afar. Seems nobody found his body while it was “asleep”, He gets up and flicks off the flecks of dirt off his grey arms and buttons up his lab coat to try and feel a bit warm again before walking back towards the mushroom hut, He hopes bluecap is still there so they can lead him to wherever those “Snack boosters” are. He walks up to the door and opens it. All the mushrooms are still inside playing their same games as if he never left although there's notably a few less. He scans through the crowd of vibrantly colored mushroom caps poking over each other and he notices a singular lone blue one sitting at a table by itself trying to mold something out of that clay-like material, Otzy waves to get his attention and the bluecap instantly seems to perk up, Waddling over to Otzy and attracting the attention of other shrooms watching him walk up to the tall grey weird looking figure standing in the door. “Tall Shroom back! back!” Otzy smiles “Yes I am, Now. When I left you had mentioned seeing something like this” He bends down and grabs his amulet, facing it towards the shroom while pointing at the gem in the center. “Yes yes, Shroom remember, Black sparkle at big pit nearby!” Otzy nods “Hmm, Big pit? Okay, Can you lead me to this big pit?” “Shroom know way way. Follow!” Blue cap waves to his friends inside before waddling off along the path they were following earlier, Otzy follows.

They cross more similar islands, More palm trees, More mushroom houses, Otzy swears he even sees the same house a few times but pushes it off as just False World simplicity, He catches himself gazing into the stars above and quickly reminds himself that he has to fill out his report soon... Just not now since he's walking, but he can get some more details for it. “Hey bluecap, quick question but if you guys eat these “starfruit” and also just absorb the starlight

above for sustenance, Do you drink anything?”. Bluecap looks over at Otzy confused as they walk “rink? rink?, Shroom never need to rink before, Shroom not hear this noise before” “Okay, Good to know... Wait, So can you even swim in the ocean then?” Otzy further asks “Swim? Shroom not Swim swim” “What. You just, Can’t? Can your friends swim or what?” Otzy presses “No. No Shroom swim, Ocean bad bad for Shroom. Shroom suck water, Shroom grow, Shroom too big, Shroom lose color” Blue cap says in an somber quiet voice as it tightens its blue scarf. “O-Okay then, Well. I’ll be sure to write that down when we get some time to stop then” “oh! Does Big Shroom need to rest? Big Shroom needed slower before” Otzy briefly considers it “Uh... y’know what, Sure just. Gimmie a few minutes aight?” Otzy says “Y-You got something to do right?” He adds, Not even sure why he asked. “Shroom can go ahead ahead, Shroom check path!” It says, already speeding up its walk to its normal excessive speed before Otzy can even reply. “wai- ...Ah whatever”

Otzy sits down, crossing his legs out of habit and props open his suitcase. He feels oddly annoyed just looking down at the paperwork, normally its a nice rebuke from the False Worlds but there's an air of “Why do I care?” to it. He ponders on it for a second before shaking it off, for there's work to do. He plucks out one of his fancy pens and scans down the overview paper, Writing “Dominant dweller species” next to the ceramic mushrooms and “Island geography” next to sand, His hand stops on the styrofoam cup and he questions what effect its had on the world so far, “... The water in the ocean I guess? But it was specifically a *dry* cup I used. Maybe I just haven’t seen it yet or something” He skips over it and shuffles the “Dweller species analysis” paper to the top and starts writing. “The dominant dweller species type of this world are individualistic(?) large humanoid mushrooms with rotund plump mushroom like forms of vibrant colors, While their speech is close to that of a human infant, Typically only verbalizing the absolute minimum required for sentence structure their infrastructure contrarily suggests...” He writes for quite a while in that overly wordy and dense style derrick pushes him to use constantly, He feels satisfied and turns over to the “Geographical landmarks” page ready to wri-

"BIG SHROOMMMMM!" shrieks bluecap, that must of snuck up on Otzy as he was lost in documentation limbo. "Ah! W-Wh-Hu... What? What happened?" Otzy scrambles his suitcase closed and looks up to the worried bluecap, Fumbling for the locks on the case. "Bridge to pit is brokennnnnnnnnnn" the shroom whines. "W-Whats wrong with it?" Otzy asks, trying to calm the creature down, "Shattered! shattered! Broken! Big shroom come fix!" Bluecap screeches as he forcefully pushes Otzy up onto his feet, "O-Okay Maybe I can fix lets just g-ACK" The mushroom tightly grabs Otzys hand and starts pulling him down the path at a full on sprint, Its blue scarf fluttering in the wind. Otzy's barely able to keep up, resorting to just trying and failing to just hop and let the shroom pull with its upsetting amount of strength until mercifully it finally lets go. All of Otzys legs muscles screeching at him from the forced exercise. He huffs and puffs trying to catch his breath and looks up to see a small crowd of vibrantly colored mushrooms all huddled around the upward curve at the start of a brown bridge, Some looking sadly at the bridge and others staring at Otzy with varying reactions.

Blue cap walks up to the crowd and they surround him, Otzy can see them doing odd hand motions alongside the air above the crowd growing a bit colorful and wibbly until they all suddenly disperse and look towards Otzy with a hopeful happy expression as bluecap walks back over to the still recovering Otzy "I told friends you help! help!, Big shroom have many

talents, Big shroom can fix?" "Y-Yea... Just... Give me a minute..." says the exhausted Otzy. The mushrooms stare at him, Some looking around confused until Otzy takes a deep breath and walks over towards the bridge, The mushrooms all disperse away from his path, looking curiously at the tall grey figure towering over them. Otzy walks onto the bridge and instantly sees the problem. A giant chunk of the middle section had been completely smashed out, with crumbling dust of the bridge eroding away at the edges and falling into the water below. "Theres no fucking way I'm gonna be able to fix this before 5 today" he thinks to himself, He looks back to the shrooms already preparing an apology speech but he sees the look on their face, Hopeful faces truly expecting a miracle that don't know any bad in the world. He starts to feel bad, He feels terrible and sick but he reminds himself and quickly pushes that feeling away...? "Is that wrong? Why does Derrick always insist... Oh fuck it. There's work to be done." He glances down at his amulet intently, thinking about the breaching crystals he could find. "That's why I'm here, no reason other" He convinces himself before speaking to the expecting crowd "Okay! So... This

is a BIG issue and... I don't know how to solve it" The mushrooms look shocked and hurt "BUT! We will find another way around! And then we can all go!" He looks back down at the water below, his mind desperately trying to figure out how the hell to get across, He thinks back to all the False Worlds he's been too in the past and how he's solved similar situations "...Why not, Surely a boat would just work right?".

He turns to the still waiting crowd, Some of the shrooms are already growing bored and starting to play hand games with each other "Okay! We're gonna build boat and help each cross! Can shrooms help find material? Tree make good float boat!" He shouts out to them, Mentally gagging slightly less at dumbing down his speech like that. "Yes! yes!" the mushrooms all reply in slightly creepy unison which makes Otzy feel a bit uncomfortable as they all shuffle off to the side of the path towards the nearby forest, Otzy curiously watches them "wait, I didn't give them tools how are they gonna get any wood those are hard ass palm tr- Andddd they're just punching them down... God damn" Otzy suddenly feels very relieved that the dwellers of this world are very friendly towards him. Shortly after, Shroom after shroom finishes demolishing their tree and brings back a long log, dropping it loosely in front of Otzy before sitting down and waiting for more instructions staring at Otzy until the last straggler drops theirs and sits down. "Ahem, Okay." Otzy clears his throat "I know how to build big float boat. But me need to make sure float boat floats" He says, Already propping open his suitcase and reaching for the scale to use this great opportunity, He quickly unfolds it and presses down on it to make sure its charged. "I place this helper on floor. Each shroom need to step on helper so I can make good float boat!" He says, placing it down onto the floor. The shrooms look confused but quickly shuffle into a line, Otzy pulls out a pen and paper and motions for the first to hop on. [457 LB] "Jesus fucking christ" Otzy whispers to himself as he writes it down and motions for the next to hop on, 10... 15... 20... 23 All of the shrooms accounted for and *very conveniently* weighted for Oztys report, He doesn't bother with buoyancy calculations, He already knows his boat can take the weight, He just wanted that data. "Good job shrooms! Now I build Boat... This take a while so uh... J-Just find something to do I guess? I dunno maybe find some string" Otzy says, slipping out of his caveman speech as the task ahead dawns on him. He takes a deep breath and digs out the tool kit from his suitcase.

An hour later, Otzy stands proud in front of his makeshift boat, Loosely put together press fitted logs in a vague cube shape floating atop of the calm water. No sail engine or even

paddle in sight, It should just float across given a good push with the small gap. It frankly looks terrible, terrible but functional. He packs up all his tools, closes the suitcase, locks it up and runs his hand through the tight wrist strap "Aint gettin stolen by a shroom this time" he thinks to himself as he turns around. He calls out to the shrooms all doing their own thing "Hey! Boats finished! Lets go already!" The shrooms all stop what their doing in unison and start waddling over to Otzy excitedly. They instinctively form a queue infront of Otzy and wait "wow, quick learners huh" Otzy thinks to himself before speaking up "Okay! Shroom get on one at time and then other shroom push boat! Boat float across to other side, Then shroom push boat back! Got it?" He asks, The shrooms all shout "Yes! yes!" in unison and Otzy motions for first in line to go, Its blue cap. They look up to Otzy a bit unsure but he assures them its safe, They sit down and Otzy looks through the line and picks the biggest shroom he can see "Hey! Orange cap. Your gonna be the boat pusher, Come over here" The lumbering orange cap plots over and grabs hold of the boat, "Aight, Now give it a good push into the wate-" The orange shroom instantly **SHOVES** the boat as fast as it possibly can across the pond, The boat skimming off the top of the water like a weak pool toy as bluecap holds onto the sides for dear life until the boat crashes onto the other side of the water, Blue cap looks around confused for a second before jumping up and down in joy "Made it Made it! Fun! fun!" it chirps from across.

"Okay, Thats great bluecap. Now give it a good push back across okay?!" Otzy shouts to them, Blue cap doing as they are told soon, The boat actually *floats* across the river this time, gently shoring itself in front of Otzy. "Uhhh..." Otzy looks back towards the lumbering orange cap "I-its your t-turn now orange, Hop on!" He stammers out, The orange cap looks happy as it hops atop the boat and Otzy just motions for next in line to come up and push, The boat slides across the water surface calm again and orange cap quietly gets off "G-Great! Now blue cap if you coil-" The orange cap, Without being told goes ahead and **SLAMS** the boat down into the water again, It spends more time in the air spinning than it does actually floating on water. It crashes down onto the shore in front of Otzy with an awful noise but still in one piece. "T-Thanks orange cap! Just let bluecap push it from now on okay!?" Otzy shouts across, the orange cap slumps, Looking defeated and sad "D-Don't be like that You can push it back when were all done okay?!" Otzy says without thinking "Wait, fuckin, Why do i care? They're just gonna be gone later today anywa-" He's interrupted as the next shroom in line gets onboard and the one behind that goes ahead and pushes them across "Oh! Good job! I-I guess you little guys learn

quickly huh? Well uh... Just keep it going then” He says re-assuringly to the line as he watches the boat sail back and forth. “Oh whatever, not like derricks here to tell me off. I’m gonna allow myself a *little* bit of fun, He’s too stuck up to do that anyways” He thinks to himself as the mushrooms rapidly get more and more efficient at the task, Starting to load more mushrooms onto the boat at once and doing perfect pushes to get the boat as fast as possible without risking it skimming until its just him and one mushroom left.

The mushroom taps on Otzy's leg and motions for him to get aboard the boat, “Oh, Uh sure. But wait, how are you gonna get across?” the little shroom just motions for him to get aboard again and shakes its head no “Uh... Okayyyy” Otzy climbs aboard his rickety raft, it's unsurprisingly not a luxuriously comfortable vessel of the sea but him and his locked suitcase fits on it just fine. The last mushroom quickly gets a running start and shoves the boat into the water, Just as it runs entirely off shore the shroom tries to jump onto the moving boat, un-gracefully tumbling through the air directly towards where Otzy's sitting. Otzy tries to get up and move quickl- **WHAMM** the mushroom slams right into the side of the boat, Its lower body already dunked into the water as it begins to fizz and bubble up around it as it clings to the side of the boat trying to pull itself up. Otzy panics, He quickly reaches up to grab the mushroom with his free hand and pull it up but its too heavy, He quickly fiddles with his suitcases strap to get it to let him go but it wont, The fizzing water grows violent and he can see the vibrant green of the mushrooms cap begin to slowly fade, Otzy's panic deepens. He rips his hand out of the suitcase strap, The weak metal locks flying off into the water as he reaches down with both hands to pull the shroom upwards. The water fizzes louder and louder, Rushing upwards up the shrooms body in long thin bubbling streaks as if it was trying to wrap around its body and pull it down to the depths below as the fizzing grows louder and louder until the boat roughly bumps into the shore of the other side just as otzy goes for one last **YANK** sending the mushroom flying out of the water towards the shore, shattering the streams crawling on its body back into small droplets. The shrooms quickly run to their sodden friends landing spot and huddle around them as otzy quickly scrambles onto the shore.

Otzy stabilizes his own breathing before slowly reaching over to grab his suitcase, Lucky that it managed to stay aboard. He looks down at the broken strap mechanism with a sad expression “...That’s gonna make bringing it home hard” he thinks to himself before slowly getting up and walking over to the crowd of shrooms huddling around the little green cap, Otzy

shuffles next to blue cap. "Is it gonna be okay?" "...Yes, just need time time to rest. Long long time asleep. Shroom thank you for saving" bluecap says before doing an odd hand gesture to the group, They silently pick up the green cap all together, Lifting them above their heads and start carrying them off towards a nearby mushroom house, Blue cap looks back up to otzy "Lets go, Pit P i t nearby!" bluecap chirps happily, seemingly already over the near tragedy yet its voice seems oddly forced sounding. "U-Uh.. O.. Okay! Yea! Lets get going!" Otzy stutters before getting back to the path and motioning for bluecap to lead the way. Bluecap once again starts leading the way and otzy follows suit, The dirt path slowly gaining sporadic embedded green stone, growing wider into the forests more and more just as the houses turn from a rare sight to an expectation. the glowing path markers becoming more frequent and orderly, Lighting up the path a dull green with the stones slowly overtaking the dirt more and more until the dirt is just a memory. The houses grow larger and grander looking with colorful intricate drawings carved into their walls as bluecap seems to grow more and more excited with each passing second, beginning to speed up and constantly checking behind to make sure otzy is still following until suddenly sprinting off forwards saying "Hurry! Hurry! Big bridge soon!"

excitedly like a kid with his scarf fluttering. He's speeds up to try to keep up with bluecap and in his periphery can see the islands to his left and right growing closer with their own paths glowing a deep blue and yellow respectively with more houses dotting the small floating islands, Just as he begins to ponder their naturality he reaches a grand merger. 7 colorful paths from island paths not his own all merge together into a massive flat circular island, Their colors swirling off their path and into the colorful artistic vortex pebbled into the island's ground. In front, a grand colorful bridge splattered with a rainbow of colors stretches far forward, Its railing dominated by statue after statue of grand standing mushrooms all in an endless rainbow of color. Each bending down as if to greet any travelers from near or far. He can faintly see bluecap standing in the middle of it waving at otzy. He rushes forward, unable to take any notes on the architecture like he wants to and meets up with blue cap "Pit here! Pit here! Pit here!" Bluecap yells jumping

up and down unable to contain their excitement, "come on! come on! come on!" it says forcefully grabbing Otzy's hand once again and dragging him up the rising bridge, Otzy tries to shout at them to stop but just as he can finally get the sentence out bluecap stops and lets go of his arm shouting "Look! Look!"

Otzy looks up from his sore ankles, "W-What? You didn't ha-" Otzys remaining words barely fall out as he looks up to see it. The Pit. Just over the railing, a *sisyphean task* **completed**. The ocean, **Gone**. Giant white styrofoam walls stretch up from the depths of the dry ocean floor, reaching just above the crashing fizzing waves of the ocean seemingly in spite, just so it can split it all in twain and protect a grand tower inside. Not that one far distant in the ocean but instead A towering colossus of a structure, Endless floors molt upwards and outwards with no rhyme or reason. *No plan, No pattern*. Countless strings of colored cloth taut between floors, coming in one floor some color and coming out another with the vibrant colorful caps of mushrooms barely visible from above, they move around the structure like uncoordinated but knowing ants, all working their own task. And at the very top of it all, A stretching garden of colorful fruit juts up and down the current "top" of the tower, soaking in the endless starlight from above with yet more mushrooms endlessly catering to and harvesting the star fruit

"Wow..." Otzy says breathlessly, Unable to even take in the sight, "That's... That's what the cup did?" he says out loud without even realizing. Bluecap just smiles up at him, not even listening. His eyes wander around the structure before locking onto a distant small shroom down below that seems to be running towards the edge, he panics for a moment as it gracefully jumps off the floor and lands head first on the floor below but his panic subsides when the shroom simply bounces softly and a few nearby help him back onto his feet. Bluecap interrupts his sight-seeing loudly "Big shroom, Lets go down!" it says "Y-Yea I wan- Wait!" otzy exclaims, snapping himself out of it "What about the dark crystal you said, Where's that in here?" Blue cap looks disappointed "crystal with elder shroom... shroom..." "Normal shroom not allowed to bottom, only elder." It says sadly "O-Oh well... I'm not a normal shroom now am I?" Otzy asks so naturally it surprises even himself. "True! true!" Blue cap says already looking happier, Lets go explore! explore!" they say walking off to the side where staircases down reside. "W-wait!" otzy shouts "Do we... *have* to take the stairs?" Bluecap looks surprised "Oh, well normally fast shroom fall and bounce bounce, Big shroom not seem bouncy..." "Ah... Thats... unfortunate I... I guess we'll just have to take the stairs" Otzy says already dreading the walk down "But, other

shroom make uppy downy uppy downy nearby!" Bluecap walks back towards where they were and towards a nearby elevator "Huh... Guess I just... Didn't notice that, Sweet!" Otzy and bluecap both get into the rickety elevator, It shakes quite noticeably as they shuffle in "Uh. Is this safe bluecap?" "Yes! yes!, Shroom made for shroom, Shroom bounce if bad happen" It says excitedly.

Otzy blinks but presses the rough looking down button anyways. The doors shut and the elevator begins descending downwards after a few jolts. Otzy props himself up againsts the sturdiest feeling wall and blue cap sits down with a *plop* shaking the elevator. They ride down slowly in silence for a few moments before bluecap speaks up in a curious tone "What shroom and big shroom do after big shroom find rock?" it asks "Uh... I... Well I was gonna just..." Otzy looks down at the waiting happy face of blue cap and then glances at his amulet "...We'll find something to do... Don't worry" He says, faking a smile as the elevator slows to a crawl and the doors open "Hey, this isn't the bottom. What are we doing here?" otzy asks but blue cap only responds "Wait here big shroom! Bluecap go find thing! thing!" before running off into the low ceiling cramped mess of a factory floor, Jolting around a corner and out of view before otzy can say anything. A few of the working mushrooms look curiously at otzy in the open elevator but just happily wave at him before resuming their tasks, The ones working with the cloth tapping it againsts their vibrantly colored caps to dye the cloth. Some time passes, "Its... been a while, M-Maybe I should just go... Go check the crystals then breach home for the day, Already spent too much time messing around anyways" Otzy begins slowly reaches towards the down arrow of the elevator until suddenly hearing bluecap yell from somewhere "Big Shrooooooom!" It yells, careening around a corner and into view, holding a large blue piece of... cloth? It runs past all the working shrooms, somehow dodging all of them until it slides back into the elevator "I got big shroom gift! gift!" it quickly chirps before jumping up high and wrapping the blue cloth around Otzy's neck. "I got big shroom scarf! Just like me! Made by self!" it rattles on in a happy voice "Now big shroom won't look so grey! Big Shroom have color!" It ends. The little things pulling at Otzy's heartstrings by accident. "Awww... Uh... T-Thanks bluecap this is... this is great! I'ma keep this!" he says, straightening it up and tying it around him and bending down to hug the little dweller. "Bluecap happy big shroom like!" "Otzy just smiles for a while before remembering his

mission” “Oh! Yea, Lets keep going down shall we?” he asks, Gesturing to the down button to which bluecap happily smacks. The elevator rumbles and then slowly begins descending once again

They arrive at the bottom, The elevator shutters open its doors to the shaded ocean bed below the structures floors, Star light above can rarely reach down here in the depths but what does still shines defiantly againsts the darkness. “Elder nearby, Bluecap never been down here...

Shroom not sure where to go go... S-Shroom no like...” it says in a shaky voice, seemingly scared of the darkness which otzy instantly picks up on “O-Oh! Well... I won’t be long, Y-You can just stay here and wait!.” Otzy says trying to calm it, Bluecap just looks around at the area outside the elevator scared still “O-Or... Or you can just go up a floor and wait there? That sound good? Go have fun with your friends while you wait for me” Bluecap nods “Y-Yes!

Shr-Bluecap like that, Bluecap go upup” “Okay, I’m a go now. You go do whatever okay?” Otzy says stepping out of the elevator and into the dark, Bluecap just nods and presses the up button.

Otzy watches as the doors close and waits until the elevator reaches the next floor before turning around. Its cold and dark, Darker than what it looked like from the elevator, He puts hit suitcase down and unlocks it to take the puck flashlight out. He flicks it back over to “NORMAL” mode and turns it on, Still bright as ever. He locks up his suitcase and starts walking around the darkness, Shining his flashlight into the distance only to see more empty ocean floor and darkness. He wanders and wanders for what feels like hours, its far too dark and far too empty but he knows there's something here. False Worlds don’t create spots like normally, complete “dead zones” where whatever “story” was going on seems to... end and all that can be seen is darkness and a large expanse, he’s seen it before and he’ll see it again. He presses forward, looking left and right, left and right waiting for something to appear that wasn’t before until... He turns around to look at the path he had once followed and there it was. A small square grey concrete structure hidden in the dark, He walks forward and sees that the concrete has grown old and rotten. The cartoonish fantasy lens of the False World had not touched it in a long time

and it had grown a pale grey appearance that of the real world. He steps around the sides of it and finds a small metal door in the wall, He opens it and steps inside. A dark small featureless room with but a singular desk in the middle at the back wall, The floor no longer the seabed he stepped on but more sad rotten concrete, the faintest of white paint seems to spell a broken "A" below.

He steps forward and shines his light towards the desk, A lone old shrivelled mushroom sits behind the desk, Its vibrant colors long gone with only a tinge of red left.

"the tall one has arrived... Do they wish for the blackened crystal?" It asks in a frail weak sounding voice towards otzy "You already knew... How?" otzy asks in a flat serious monotone voice. "My children... My beautiful colorful children... I know them all... I know their needs... I know their wants... I know their speech..." It speaks, barely uttering above a whisper. "So you heard that dweller talking to me about me wanting a shard?" Otzy presses. "I know not what you want of it... But I feel... As if you will be disappointed" It says before slowly trying to move its sickly yellowed arms and pointing behind it, Otzy shines his flashlight back towards it and the light stops, He walks closer to get a better look. "...I mean you no regrets... tall one" It utters out as otzy studies the black outcropping in the wall closely, He brings his flashlight right up to the surface of it and turns it on, a meager bit of light still pierces through the dark fog inside "...it's not pure enough... I shoulda known..." otzy says defeated "How... How did you know?" Otzy asks curiously. "Feelings and knowledge... different... Each object has a purpose... and everyone an object... I feel them all... Yet..." the old mushroom turns around towards the crystal outcropping, his bones clicking and cracking "This night... This longing night... Never had either... until you appeared..." Otzy perks up and looks back towards the shroom, "I appeared?" He asks "You... You defy my logic with sincerity... Your object... clear. Your purpose... Unknown" The mushroom takes in a deep shaky breath "This night... you a faint purpose... a faint reason when you arrived... Yet... you do not desire it... It mocks me... as if it was made to question me" Otzy grows silent and thinks to himself, He's dealt with aware dwellers before in places just, not like this... This is different. "I... Have no purpose?" Otzy asks, almost scared at the thought. "No... I can sense it... You have purpose but... the feelings are swirling... ever changing... Unaware of their own path..." Otzy backs away from the elder mushroom "...No. I know what I'm doing... I- I'm here to collect data. Data and then leave..." Otzy says at first firmly but with a shake in his voice at the end. "...Perhaps... Perhaps that is your purpose... All fear the

unknown... The darkness of uncertainty... it is innate to all life yet... Its what drives you... What led you here... Perhaps... Perhaps that is your purpose..." Otzy mind calms down from the racing thoughts of uselessness swirling around his mind. "Yea... Thats it, yea... Yea! That's my purpose! I chase the unknown!" Otzy says proudly. "Then... It is settled... I no longer.. question your purpose... I no longer... Have a purpose..." The mushroom lets one last shaky sentence before closing its weary eyes and growing motionless. Otzy stares at the mushroom and feels... nauseous, Not from the mushrooms appearance but from the cold dark air around him, He looks down at his watch "4:50" "...Guess... Guess its time to go home" He mutters to himself and he stares at the crystals, wishing, wishing so badly they were pure before turning around and leaving through the same metal door. He wanders the darkness, unsure as to why he hasn't left this world yet, the words of the mushroom echoing through his mind. "Well... I..." He looks down at his suitcase thinking about his report, He briefly thinks about bluecap before moving his thoughts "I.. I need to finish my report today... I'll... I'll get overtime I guess... Give me time to just.... Finish this and say...". He trails off looking down longingly at the amulet around his neck, He sits down, places his suitcase on his lap and quickly presses down on the breacher

Rising, Ascending, Washed away, The light blinds him but deep below something calls to him.

He wakes up, the fog fades and a familiar feeling sets in. A bit groggy yet again but the comfort of a familiar environment suppresses it. He stands up and stretches his body. His neck feels cold without the blue scarf on it but he knows that's how it works. Things may enter from above, but impure things from below may not ascend, Not even copies of above. He sees newbie through the window sat down in front of the monitoring terminal Sasha was messing with earlier. He seems bored until suddenly he perks up and quickly gets up, he must have just seen his heart-rate update on screen. Otzy carefully steps over the 4 items he used in breaching earlier, making sure to not even come close to bumping one before walking over to the steel bulk door and motioning for Charlie through the window to let him out, The glass is too thick for any speech. Charlie walks over and fiddles with the door for a bit, Muffled "ERR" buzzers faintly pierces through the glass as he presses a few wrong buttons until the opening alarm starts ringing, The door ever so slowly begins to open with that same alarm from last time blaring at everyone to get out of the way of the slug of a door. Otzy squeeze himself out as soon as the door has a gap wide enough and shuts it behind him,

"Welcome back, You sure took your time. Everything good in there?" charlie asks. "Yea yea... I'm... I'm fine, I just got distracted in there is all". Otzy says as Charles already begins speaking "You're not letting those dwellers shepherd you around are ya? Derrick always reminds me to never let that happen when its finally my time to brea-" "Yea... I... I know, he told me the... same stuff when I was preparing for my first False World. He cared more about me not getting attached to the dwellers than telling me how to not get lost in the damn fog on my first descent." Otzy replies, the lingering solemn feeling leaving his body and being replaced by annoyance as he remembers Derrick's training. "Speaking of which, I've gotta go get the overtime papers from the guy, which will be... fun" Charlies eyes widen "Overtime? You really that behind on your report?" Otzy seems a bit stunned by the question, he knows why yet it still strikes him as a new question. "Well... I uh... may have gotten... carried away chasing after the crystal and uh... Forgot to... Finish the report" Otzy finishes. Charlie just snickers and laughs "You get all sucked up into that places dumb little story?" Charlie mocks "You know all of them try to drag you into it and you're NOT supposed to get sucked in right? Or did you find something else that really acute you eye like thos-" Charlie sarcastically continues. "Yea Yea I know! Look, I got a little bit of it okay! A-And I just got excited thinking I fount some crystals alright?" Otzy rebukes embarrassed, "And were those crystals pure?" "....no" Charlie just smiles "Okay well you do whatever, I'll just set up the chamber door so you can open it from the inside cause I wanna go home and do anything but work" he laughs.

Otzy signs and walks around the test chamber glass and to the cramped staircase upstairs, With the air warming and the faint buzz of machinery growing louder He mentally braces having to talk to stonewall derrick but is pleasantly surprised to only see pozzik sitting at their big repair desk, "Oh. You're still here? Do you need something Otzy?" Pozzik says awkwardly, He's older than anyone here, even just beating out derrick yet he's still never figured out how to converse. " Where's Derrick at? I was gonna ask him for some papers to quickly fill out" Otzy says peeking down the cramped halls of the server and machinery racks. "Oh. Derrick and Sasha had to leave early for a meeting with higher ups, He will most likely return here tomorrow " "Okay well, do you have the overtime paperwork? Fount a potential lead on some breaching crystals in the False World and wanna go ahead and confirm them tonight" Otzy replies, "Okay. I think i know where they are at, Please hold for a moment" Pozzik

says as he neatly shuffles his papers into a stack and slowly bends down to search through the drawers on Derricks side of the desk, Slowly reading each and every ones header to himself silently until stopping on one that he pulls out. "Okay. Here it is, Just sign on the bottom waiver and then hand it back to me to process for the higherups. Payment is by the hour and you are only allowed at most 12 hours of voluntary overtime in one instance due to company policy." pozzik says, Not even blinking at the idea of 12 hours of overtime. Otzy picks up the paper and borrows a pencil out of Pozzik's overflowing pencil holder mug and begins signing it "...Wait, I can do partial overtime right? I can just do it til like 9 and then leave and still get paid? Don't gotta do the full 12 hours". Otzy asks "Yes. Partial is paid but only at the start of each new hour. Please. Keep in mind the lower branches where we currently reside in is automatically locked at 12am midnight closing hours and require outside intervention to leave, Do not stay past that time unless you-" "I-I get it pozzik, I wont stay that long. I promise" Otzy quietly interrupts, signing the paper and handing it over to Pozzik. "I'll be down in the chamber aight?" "Okay." Pozzik says in his typical flat tone. Otzy walks back down stairs, spams the door open command, Slips inside closing the door behind him and sitting back down. He's tired and exhausted but... he has a job to do, He presses down on the amulet and lets the fog consume him.

Static, Screaming, falling, Drowning. Down to the copied hollow husk below. What makes you, *you?*

He wakes up in the dark expanse below the tower, His body yet again turned grey but now contrasted with but a small blue scarf that otzy smiles at. He looks around and sees that the concrete structure of the elder shroom is yet again lost in the dark, he pushes it out of his mind, He need not even take his flashlight out for the elevator has a ray of starlight casted on it from above. He steps into it and quietly presses the up button. "Least bluecap should be up here, Can go ahead and... Get that done I suppose" The elevator rumbles and starts climbing upwards, Quickly it hits the floor directly above the dark seabed, He steps out and looks around for bluecap. None in sight, He walks around the factory floor, a few blue capped mushrooms but... None of them have their scarf. He starts pacing around the factory floor looking for any sign of bluecap, Nothing. He taps on the shoulder of a shroom "Hey uh. Sorry to bother you but have you seen a small blue scarfed mush-" "Sorry, I'm busy right now. Maybe come back later?" The mushroom says in a flat emotionless tone. A jolt of fear strikes through otzy "Was... Was that the end? N-No surely..." he taps on another shrooms shoulder and asks the same time "H-have you seen a small blue scared mush-" "Sorry, I'm busy right now. Maybe come back later?" says the other mushroom, Repeating the same words in the same flat emotionless tone. "N-No! Th-That

wasn't the end there... There was still story left right?! Me and bluecap were gonna explore around-" "Sorry, I'm busy right now. Maybe come back later?" says the mushroom in response" otzy is silenced, "...Thats... That was it then" otzy whispers under his breath "When I talked to that old shroom it was... The end... Story over..." He continues in an almost surprised tone "Their gone... They arent here anymore... I..." Otzy thinks to himself for a long time, The shroom in front of him repeating the same motions over and over. "I guess... I guess I'll finish my report" he says, looking down at his suitcase, Hollow. He doesn't even find a comfortable spot before sitting down and mindlessly writing, Writing about a world that is now over, Frozen in time with no more story to tell. The hours pass as Otzy's blank mind slowly accepts the reality he inadvertently created, He wanders around the world cataloging all the things he was going to go back to with bluecap, He figures out that the mushrooms were actually processing some of the styrofoam wall into a type of fabric and that they actually sifted their ocean to get their clay like material but... It doesn't matter to him anymore, Whatever feeling of accomplishment he would have gotten from figuring it out is muted by the sight of robotic mushrooms that don't even acknowledge his presence. For a moment he hears derrick berating him about how this is why you don't get attached, Why you work as fast as you can and then leave but it only infuriates him. "Its unfair! Why are these worlds like this?! Its just... Aghhh" he can't even bring himself to speak his mind outloud. He can feel the internal anger quickly turning to sadness, He wants to go home more than anything, He wants to forget and never get attached again, A familiar feeling from previous times but just as he reaches for his amulet to go back up and escape to a reality that won't leave him he sees his watch "7:30PM". A thought crosses his mind, "It's... it's not that late... Poz said the doors lock at midnight... right?..." he turns his attention to the breaching needle on the inside of the amulet "...Well... I mine as well get my overtime paid... Just, a few hours... A quick adventure... Write down what I want, explore the world... and then come home" Otzy slowly speaks to himself in a shaky voice as he sits down and opens up his suitcase. He stares blankly at it lost in thought before slowly beginning digging through the various items for something interesting. He takes out one of his fancy pens, a gold and black one he's never once used, a few spare batteries for the flashlight and rummages through his pockets to find some loose change. He gently places them all around him and slowly closes the suitcase, locking it tight and placing it on his lap. He takes one good look at his amulet and whispers to himself "Just... One quick world" before pressing down on the piercing arm

(Chpt 2) TASTE OF PARADISE

Good luck reading all this.

4 crystals

The air grows dark. The fog surrounds him once more in its cold, cold embrace. A bitter chill flows through his body as his heartbeat grows even quieter than before. For but a second he can hear the distant sounds of the empty lab far far above. He can feel the beam of his home's light, but just as he remembers the warmth of above his senses are destroyed once again by the darkness. Falling down yet again, out of the copy and into the floor that it lies lifeless on, the last it saw of its perceived reality. His concept and the memories within fall into the lens yet again

"These worlds live and breathe. They speak and talk to us through their creations. They know things unknown to all of us yet make understanding an endless game of chase. We stand on the edge of an ocean *begging* to be explored yet were only allowed the surface" - Erald F Smith, Former Senior Head of Research

The mind's eye reform. Put back together yet again by the lens so that otzy form may reshape and coalesce once again for the descent. He may remember feeling in control of his mind's eye in these quiet dark forming moments but it is naught but a falsehood assumed by a *presumptuous* prideful mind. He is an unknowing spectator as it all forms together. The grey matter, The consciousness, the body, the form, the feeling. The feeling of buzzing static trying to rush through his body and dull the feeling of itself, only for it to be removed by Otzy's now awake and floating Consciousness. Soon after otzy can sense the ground beneath his new form, another tool created for his use. Understanding it will only hurt.

He opens his eyes to a bright sky above, a light purple and pink hue dominates the empty cloudless sky with 2 small suns above. The sky above is still just as vibrant as before but the ground beneath him seems a bit drab and lifeless, like everything has a faint filter atop of it. A faint smell of sweet fruit tingles his nose. He looks down at his lap to see his suitcase made the trip through the lens, he sighs in relief and looks down at his clothing and body. He's a bit darker than before, still monotone grey yet... still darker excluding bluecaps scarf that still valiantly shines its vibrant blue in spite of the worldly transition. Otzy looks up around him, "Just... Some random farm field? Looks like a vineyard, think those are trees all the way out there" he thinks to himself before shrugging, opening his suitcase and grabbing a blank sheet of paper, he writes "2nd layer report" at the top before squaring off 3 big vertical boxes going down the paper and writing a starting item's name at the top of each square. "There we go. My report, My format" he says feeling oddly satisfied being able to do it his way even if he knows that Derrick would never allow him to submit a report that way. He places the paper back into the suitcase and checks his watch, the digits seem to be a bit dimmer than normal for but a moment before brightening up again, although The last digit seem to be jittering and changing bit with it seemingly not sure what minute it is "7:44PM" "Is... Is this old thing trying to die on me? I coulda swore i put a new button cell in it just last wee- *-thump

thumpTHUMP**THUMP**THUMPthumpthump* Otzy's thoughts are interrupted by impossibly loud thumping racing past him on his right. He just barely spotted a short black object moving through the holes in the crossed wooden fence as he quickly stands up onto his tippy toes to peer over the viney fence... nothing... Just another lane in the field. He slowly eases back down and looks around, "Guess I'll... Just get walking then" he thinks to himself as he begins walking down the seemingly endless lane of vines, for a second he feels the strong urge to pluck one of the berries off the vine and take a taste but he knows better... instead he pulls a plastic baggy out of his suitcase and plucks them off to put them in there "...I'm totally gonna eat one of these once I see someone else eating them" he thinks to himself feeling like he's sneaking an extra candy off a "please take one" bowl only to be interrupted yet again by that same *thumpthumpTHUMP**THUMP*** from before, this time on his left. He quickly spins around and peers over the fence only to catch the blurry backside of an odd angular metallic object absolutely **SPRINTING** down the lane on its two legs with its stretchy... arms? Grabbing berries off the vines in a frenzied blur. "Ro...bot?" otzy asks himself, questioning his own eyes until he hears it again *thumpthumpthumpthump* "Shit!" otzy shouts to himself quickly seeing a black bobbing black object sprinting towards him at an alarming rate. He tries to jump and climb up onto the viney fence- ***CRACK*** otzy slams his head right into the top of the fence and falls back onto the ground as his foot cracks right through the fence. He scrambles back onto his feet as the thumping grows louder and louder, He starts just running down the lane trying to get away in panic only for the thumping to grow impossibly loud but slow their pace. Each frantic step he takes is followed by a loud ***THUMP*** on the ground just after. He keeps running and running trying to get away until he trips over his own panic and falls face first into the dark dry ground with the thumping stopping shortly after. He tries to push himself off the ground but suddenly 3 cold hollow feeling "fingers" wrap around his ankle and forcefully ***YANKS*** him upwards holding otzy high above its own head. it holds him there for a brief moment before rotating the fingers to spin him around. Otzy can see a short but wide blocky robotic creature, Its long bendy arm swirling out of its big brick of a mid chassis and up out of view to his gripped leg. He scrunches his head "upwards" to get a better look at the head of the robot below him, a wide stout block of more black metallic paint rarely cracking and chipping away to reveal the similarly flat steel underneath. It stares upwards at him with those angular glowing white eyes seemingly carved into its blocky head, It shows no emotion nor hint of higher thought simply staring until suddenly blaring out over a distorted speaker, its white eyes 'blinking' in gained brightness for each syllable "[UNKNOWN: CREATURE] [REQUESTING: INSTRUCTION]" and jerking its head upwards to stare towards a distant dish tower



(Not exact but was the inspiration. A bit less cartoony)

It stares and stares. Naught any noise but the faint clicking of an internal engine skipping

and whirring. Otzy considers his situation and starts thinking of a way out "Shit... Uh... Maybe I could wiggle free?" Otzy tries to wiggle and snatch his ankle free from the robotic fingers but they seem to just dig harder into him "O-Ow" he blurts out. The robot quickly turns its head to look back at otzy and stares for a moment before looking back to the dish tower. "Okay, M-maybe I can just... Kick myself free. It can't be that tough of a metal right? I.. I might break a toe or something but it'll... It'll be fine" otzy thinks to himself, already mentally psyching himself out to try and kick at the arm but just as he takes a deep breath to reel his free leg back the robot suddenly emits a soft **ding** and jolts its head back towards otzy. "[SPEAKER: ACTIVATED]" It shouts in its distorted grating voice before a different voice comes out of the speaker "Huh? Whaz this now?" speaks an old crackly voice through the speaker. The robot's face moves much slower as it turns around to look at Otzy's face before stopping with a jolt, pausing for a moment and then pulling otzy closer. "Huh? Whaz this no- Oh gawn dunnit!. hows many times I gotta tell you slimy bastards to not be sneakin into my dang ol fiel-" The old voice interrupts itself "Wait a tick, Your wearin a- You ain't no slimy little bandit! Hyehehyeh" the old voice cackles as the speaker fades his laugh in and out, the compression seemingly confused on if it's speech or not "So lemme guess. Jus so happen ta 'fall asleep' in my little ol field? Woke up all confused?" Otzy's a bit shocked at the possibly aware comment "Uh... Y-Yea! I just fell asleep. S-Sorry about that, I'll be out of your hair once you uh... G-Get the robot to let go of me" otzy stutters out, trying to speak loudly and clearly into wherever the mic is on the robot "Hyehehyeh you really think yous gonna just 'walk' out this there field? This thing ov'a fiddy miles side to side and you smack dab in da middle boy! Nahhhhh, yous best just hold on now sonny cause ima get this here robot to get you on outta here so it can get on back to its job aight?" "W-Wait can you at least get it to grab me any other way first?!?" "Huh, whazzat sonny? I didn't hear you all that well" "I said, Can you *please* get it to grab me some other way first?" "Please get it to go faster first? is that whatchu said?" "N-No! I Sai-" But otzy is interrupted by the speaker blaring over him yet again "Aight well if yous say so, Hold on tight cause ima send em at full pickin speed aight!?" "WAIT WAIT WAI-" Otzy is silenced as the robot quickly repositions Otzy's body fully above itself by wrapping its arms around Otzy's upper and lower body before absolutely **SPRINTING** down the lane so fast that otzy can't even dream of holding his eyes open on account of the pure wind effect smacking againts his face.

After what must have been 10 minutes of a surprisingly smooth but still incredibly aggressive feeling ride the robot finally slows down to a stop. His head feels like a washing machine tumbling around his own brain but the robot slowly lowers him down to just above the floor before rudely dropping him the remaining inch with a light **thump** onto the ground that jolts his dizziness back to reality... Er... *This* reality. The robot spins its head all the way around and looks back up at a dish tower while otzy is still getting himself up and shortly after it emits another soft beep, carefully walking away from otzy staring directly at him before snapping back around to sprint back towards the field. Otzy dusts dirt off his greyed labcoat for what must be

the 4th time today before looking up to a small little metal... barn? Its in the rough shape of a barn but its pure layered sheet metal exterior and the much shinier colossal radio tower behind it makes otzy question what it really is. He slowly walks around it, checking out the odd shingle like pattern of the exterior before- **SLAM** a loud creaking door shunts open on the front size "You gunna come on in or you gunna keep starin at this shack's walls until they like you back?" shouts the same voice that blared through the robot's speaker from around the corner of the building, notably uncompressed this time. Otzy is a bit embarrassed as he walks around to the front to see the barn door oddly open to a dimly lit interior buzzing with electronics. He steps inside, All he can see are the green lights of server racks in both of his periphery and a few dimly green glowing monitor screens that look like they predate the moon landing "Um... I can't see all that well it's... pretty dark" "Oh really? I couldn't tell! Hyehyehyeh. Give an old shell a minute to turn the lights on would ya?" **thump thump thump click** Otzy's blinded for a second as his eyes adjust "There! Now les see what you even are" says the old voice as Otzy's vision returns.

(New mechanic below. From now on hyperlinks will occasionally appear in text. These will just be music/ambience that fit the scene or the rare image, None hold critical information but I still highly suggest listening/viewing for mood sake. If a song ends just let it end)

[The room around him illuminated by a bright exposed yellow bulb in the low tile ceiling,](#) the room is dusty yet the tables are partially organized and clean with the server racks either side of him contrasting the antiquated tech that monitors them, notably wide office chairs are dotted across the room parked facing the various cluttered desks with a few missing all their wheels, all of them have been permanently reclined far past their normal limits, just above all the glowing monitors stacked upon the front desk rests an dusty old double barreled shotgun lazily lying atop a monitor, it has a small shiny golden nametag embedded in its stock that reads "Chekky", It looks like it saw a lot of use a long time ago. Otzy pulls his vision back towards the big picture and can't help but shake the feeling that the room feels a bit too... real?. it's still fantasy, it still has that slight cartoonish look to it but... it just feels a bit uncanny and lived in compared to the worlds he's cataloged before, as if it's just someone's workspace and not some entertainment for otzy. He shakes the feeling out of him and sees an older looking figure in front of him. A large wide lumbering turtle person with tar black leathery old skin and a massive shell on his back hunching him over, his upper shell partially covered in a shiny metal plating with countless little antenna and dishes poking out of it alongside various spools of cable and metal wire attached to the bottom. He's hunched down to Otzy's level staring at him with his one uncovered eye while rubbing the bottom of his dulled beak "Hmm... You one of them paper penners? Sure look like one with that ego paddin grey cloth you call a 'coat'" The turtle's eyes narrow, otzy starts to feel behind him for the door just in case he needs to ru- "Hyeh! I'm pullin ya leg. Ya shoulda seen the look on your face!" the turtle laughs with a jolly expression "My last eye may not treatin me well no more but it can still spot a diamond in the rough and it sure seems like a *shiny* one just mozied on into my little farm hyeh!"

"The names Melvin" The turtle introduces itself before turning away from otzy before he can speak up and walks towards a desk, Otzy briefly spots what looks like some children's chalk drawing of a small turtle family scribbled on the back of his shell where Melvin can't reach. before the turtle stops and turns back around to look at otzy "Well... Ya gonna stand there lookin like a lost kitten or what?" "Well... I uh... You're kinda moving a bit fast for me just... What's going on, what you want me to do?" "'HYPEH! HyeH! HyeH! *I'm* moving too fast?" Melvin says with a smug laugh "Ooooooooooowee thats the firsts ever heard of *that one* before" The old man cackles "You really *were* a diamond stuck under a rock huh? Ain't seen the light of day for so long you forgot the sky's color? HyeH HyeH you crack me up!" The turtle pauses and stifles his laugh a little, looking at otzy with a slight concern in his one eye "Do you even know your own name?" Melvin asks

"Yeaaaaa..." otzy says, obviously a bit confused by the old turtle's eccentric speech. "It's Otzy. Everyone just calls me otzy. There's a lot more to it. but it's a big mouthful so I just take Otzy" He says, relaxing a little. "Hooweee. You had me worried there for a bit, Yacht-zee." "N-No it's OT Z-" "I got it Yacht-zee, Don't worry. These old ears still work just fine! What bout where we're at? You know where you're at right now, right yacht-zee?" "Well... As a matter of fact, no. I do not, I'm still trying that one out so if you've got a paper map o-" "Oh you realll lost huh? Hol on a secon yachtty I think I gots somethin for ya, Gimmie a few to dig it up will ya?" The turtle annoyingly interrupts, turning back around towards his deck and beginning to search through the many unorganized drawers and fighting with the jammed ones. Otzy tries to wait patiently right where he was but curiosity starts to rear back up into his head now that he's out of danger and left to himself. He soon finds himself slowly pacing around the room looking closely at every server rack, electronic bin and old yellowed poster on the walls with [cartoonish caricatures of slugs](#) explaining very basic safety. No maps of local architecture or geography in sight but the pure novelty of seeing another worlds' infographic posters will always put a smile on his face even if he can't enjoy trying to guess a False World's 'intended path' entirely off the map. He's suppressing the urge to ask the old turtle about every little thing when notices a small black ankle bracelet around the turtle's left ankle that seems to blink a green led every time his leg moves and he just can't help himself "So... If you don't mind me asking. What's with the ankle bracelet? Are you... On arrest of somekind?" The turtle makes a quiet annoyed "Mphm" Before speaking up "Its just there to make sure I'm doin my job. Nothin more... I ain't no damn chain-ganger" Melvin finishes in an almost scolding tone with otzy feeling like he should stop here but he's just gotta know "are you... paid?" The turtle seems to stop rummaging through the drawers for a moment before turning back around to otzy with an annoyed stern expression "At some point, it'll get cold out and these here plants will stop growin. Then. Farlo, Jarlo, Carlo. Whichever *bastardin one* it is this year, will drag their feet down here to 'review' how much of this JKL crap I've managed to harvest for them. Then *and only* then do we figure out just how much they owe me. so they know

justtttt how much I've been fueling their habits" Otzy feels like he just turned down the wrong alley and mentally starts to hit the abort button "Okay sure, thats fine, I-I'm sorry I'm just new here is all" Melvin smiles and turns back around to the drawers "Hgeh hgeh hgeh. Ah don't worry yourself, it aint nothin for you to be worryin bout... Oh wait!.." Melvin finally seems to find what he was looking for "Hah! This is it!!" he reaches almost elbow deep into the drawer and rummages around before yanking out an incredibly crumpled yet still colorful pamphlet "Come over here and look at this!" Melvin motions for otzy who quickly stumbles over.

Otzy scoots next to the old turtle and looks down at the pamphlet, the old turtle smacking the dust off it before handing it over to Otzy. "youngin tinkerer came by long ago when he took up after his old man. He told me to give this here advert thingy to anyone who don't look right or somethin like that..." The old man seems to think about his own words for a second while otzy is still reading "N-Not sayin yer lookin 'wrong' just uh... ye just don't look like most of us! Figured thats what the youngin meant" Otzy doesn't even respond, already being tuned out reading the small pamphlet. It's a small portrait frame page of glossy paper. On the left is a large tall image that stretches from the bottom to the top of the page that features a towering almost gaudy looking black and gold skyscraper reaching far far up into the sky, The top of it looks like the clicky part of a pen. On the right are small sections of photos of various floors on the skyscraper, all of which seem to be dedicated to entertainment or relaxation of some kind, Spa resorts, Live theatre, champagne tasting, ball rooms, unmentionables, and even a built-in aquarium greenhouse combo floor. In the middle column is a short message addressed to otzy. "If you are reading this. Then, you hopefully are someone that has been deemed *"Unique"* in some form. And as such, on behalf of Farlo, the current reigning host of our eternal ball, and myself as the newly appointed grand mechanic, we would like to bestow upon you a *gift*. Find your way to our grand tower with this message in tow and present it to the front, Farlo wishes to speak with new guests of importance in person and offer out gratitude to those he enjoys. 78132" Otzy just stares at it confused for a brief moment before chuckling to himself, thinking "Wow, Guess this is the darkworlds way of telling me to go somewhere huh?" The old turtle notices his chuckles and interjects "Eh? Whatcha laughin at? I wouldn't be turning down a free vacation from the man himself hgeh!" "No it's just... -Wait, vacation!?" "Yeup! Thas what that tall ol brick is made for. One place where everyone can go enjoy their time off, bout anythin you'd ever want is up in that buildin somewhere. Just gotta know *where to look* hgeh hgeh" "Huh... A vacation..." otzy looks down at his watch. "8:1³⁴" "Sure... Why not, I've got time still and... I deserve a little break, I've been doing a good job for a few years now, I deserve a little vacation don't I?" Otzy slowly murmurs to himself, unaware he's spilling his thoughts "...eh? You talkin to ya self?" "Oh! Sorry I just... Got lost in thought there" he glances back down at the paper before stuffing it into his coat pocket "Yea... Yea, I'll

take em up on the offer I suppose" Otzy turns towards the door and starts walking with newfound purpose "Oh well ya suddenly know where to go now?" The old man teases "Ack- Y-No, I don't... uh... Can yo-" The old man just grabs a small bracelet band off his desk and chucks it at otzy "Ere, put that on and check round back. Ya can borrow one of my old clunker bots for a bit to lead ya there" Otzy actually catches it which surprises even himself and he studies it. It just seems to be a small rubber band with a bubbled plastic disc bulging out one side. "It's what makes the old picker listen to ya. keep 'em close cause you aint got them big ol towers like I do. Just tell it to go on home when ya get there aight?" The old man explains, pulling up his arm and pointing at his much nicer fully metal one that makes toys look like a children's toy in comparison. Otzy slides the metal barn door open and squints his eyes at the light shining into the dark room. He remembers his manners and turns around for just a second "Uh... Thanks. Melvin" Melvin just smirks back and turns back to his green monitors.

([Ambience](#))

Otzy steps outside to the familiar cartoonish looking outside and closes the barn door behind him with a quiet thud and takes a deep breath, the still air is nice but the eastern winds coming from the distant forest carry a burning tinge to them. He realizes that... he's alone again, normally it doesn't bother him that much but... it's a strong feeling. The wind blows quietly around him as he thinks about how he really hasn't taken the time to well... *think*, all day. His mind starts to wander as he recedes into it and soon he gets a familiar feeling he's had many times before. A slight stress? A feeling of guilt? A subconscious worry? A lingering fear from before? He can't tell, but he can feel it in his chest, in the back of his mind gnawing at him. As if he's forgetting something or that he needs to do something but... what? He looks down at the suitcase in his hand and the feeling grows. "...I-I need to do my report" he mumbles to himself already pulling it up to unlock it but he stops. He wants to do it but also he doesn't... and he just can't place why. He starts trying to reason with himself in his own mind, a failed tactic from the past. "Normally taking a few minutes to write is a nice break but... What's wrong? Why is my want to do that just... gone? ...Why does it feel like *work* all of a sudden? Is it just getting tiring- No I've done this for 3 years now and nev- RARELY felt like this... Did... did I ever even enjoy writing? No that can't be right, It's- its fun deciphering worlds. It's fun figuring things out and... Agh... this is just some big mix of garbage..." He feels a headache coming on, a sadly familiar pattern. He tilts his head down to hold it and remembers the invitation poking out of his coat pocket, he chuckles to himself quietly "There... I'll go there. I'm just thinking too hard, blowing a small feeling way out of proportion like always, it's been a stressful day... I'll just go enjoy some... *fictional relaxation*" he says quietly laughing to himself at the idea while pulling out the invitation pamphlet "...You knew, didn't you? hah..." he says under his breath at the pamphlet, staring at the shining gold skyscraper on it as he swears the wind around him seems to change to a faint static "...Always making it about the team, about *me*" he again mutters, speaking not to anyone but to the world itself. He knows it won't respond, He thinks it can't respond. He was told in his training that the worlds aren't alive, that they're pre-determined and static, with dwellers aiding the story along. that his job is to observe, not interact and yet. He still acts as if it can

listen and change, a small part of him still wishes and *thinks* it can listen and change even when nobody else does. A small part of him wishes he wasn't so alone in finding *those things*, a large part of him wishes the others could one day encounter the things he does, A small part of him wishes he could jus-

He catches himself. He's spiraling, just like old times. He shakes the feeling off himself and the faintest sound of static vanishes from his ears as he does, it wasn't there to begin with. He puts the pamphlet back into his coat pocket and feels content, the vague feeling of dread and worry gone after dwelling in his own mind. He's done this before, The mind won't let itself stress for too long without a break. He walks around the side of the building and to the back where he finds a small rusted barn just a head taller than him with the thin metal doors wide open and seemingly un-shut for years. Inside he can see what must be a dozen or so of the small picker robots all lined up in rows, the ones farther in the back are more damaged and rusted looking with a few not even standing on their own feet but lying in a pile. As he approaches the front row the robot's eyes start to glow a faint white, otzy stops, accidentally swinging his bracelet arm forward and having the robot's eyes grow brighter. He figures the bracelet is causing that. "Well, I just need one that can take me to the sky scraper and that's it." He thinks to himself looking at the three front most picker bots. The one in the center looks almost brand new and its eyes seem to glow brighter than the others when he holds his bracelet up to it. "I... shouldn't take that one, It seems perfectly fine, Melvin's probably close to fixing it... I just need one that can walk is all" He thinks to himself, looking over to the left bot and checking it for damage. It's obviously had some heavy use and gotten quite rusty over the years "Uh... It'll... It'll be fine" he mutters to himself, bringing his wrist closer to its head in hopes it'll turn on but instead the middle most one turns on and looks towards his bracelet instead. "Huh? Wait no, I don't need a fancy one like you melvin ca-" ["AWAITING: INSTRUCTION]" the robot blurts over him. "Uhhhhhhhhh" otzy blurbs unsure what to say "INSTRUCTION "Uhhhhhhhhh" NOT FOUND" "Oh! Uh. TURN OFF" Otzy says in a clear loud tone, shortly after the robot turns its head back into its rest position and its eyes turn off. Otzy sighs in relief and once again tries to power on the left robot, this time tapping his bracelet directly on its metal head. It flickers to life for half a second before emitting a loud buzzing static noise, turning off and then the middle robot turns back on again "Ac-Th-W-What!? how!?" Otzy shouts in frustration before ordering it to turn back off again. "Fucking... I'm trying to be nice here god damnit!" He mutters to himself as he tries one last time to power on the left robot, this time holding the bracelet directly to its head and not letting go. Its eyes stutter to life and that loud static noise returns once again and starts growing louder and louder as if it's trying to get him to stop but otzy keeps the bracelet to its head until finally... It's quiet again.

Otzy steps back as the white eyes of the robot flicker a few times before locking into a flat faintly glowing white. its head moving to track Otzy's wrist bracelet. "Ugh. Stupid noise" he mutters to himself before thinking how to get the robot to do what he wants, unsure of how it even works. "It's just like any other dweller, gotta see where its logic fails..." Otzy thinks to himself, falling right back into his trained testing routine that he was taught to do by derrick. He

points towards the ground in front of the robot with his free hand "Move here" he orders with little emotion and the robot obliges. at first stuttering in its steps and movements as old stuck pistons free themselves but soon walks over gently to where he pointed. "Alright, Good job. Now..." Otzy catches him complimenting a robot, he looks around for a moment thinking of another test for the robot before realizing the obvious "Here, hold this for me" He holds out his suitcase to in front of the short robot and it seems to stare at it blankly for a few seconds before carefully putting out both arms and grabbing it out of Otzy's hands. "Alright, Seems to understand basic things well. Lets try something harder" he thinks outloud, It's just a tool after all, no need in feeling bad testing it like this. "Okay well maybe... Just try ope-" ["PLEASE DO NOT WASTE YOUR OWN TIME. MOST TASKS ARE WITHIN CAPABILITY."](#) The robot interrupts with its loud tinny speaker voice and eyes that 'blink' brighter with each syllable "OH! Uh... S-Sorry I didn't realize you were uh... sentient I guess?" otzy shrieks, being pulled back into his normal self. "ERROR: MULTI-USER CONFIG NOT SETU-" The robot interrupts itself with a loud static shriek again "DO NOT APPLY A LABEL THAT YOU CANNOT DEFINE" it blurts out again, creating an awkward silence "PLEASE CONTINUE. AWAITING INSTRUCTIONS" It blurts out, one last time "...Okay well... First, can you *stop* yelling? Or just turn your volume down?" "TYPOGRAPHY SYSTEM LACKS LOWER CAPITALIZATION AND EXCLAMATION POINTS. LOWERING SPEAKER VOLUME AS ALTERNATIVE" The robot says, Its volume lowering as its speech goes on but still coming across like a screaming fax machine, a slightly more bearable fax machine but still a fax machine. "Can you take me to the skyscraper? This one" Otzy pulls out the invitation and holds it in front of the short robot's eyes. It scans it up and down with a faint whirring click before stepping back "LOCATION KNOWN. RECREATION TOWER. FORMAL NAME(S) TOO MANY TO COUNT. ALLOTTED TIMEFRAME?" The robot asks, looking up at otzy who looks down at his watch "8:24" "Still trying to die on me huh? Stupid thing..." otzy thinks to himself before responding to the bot "Well... How far away are we from it?" "APPROXIMATELY 30 MINUTE WALK TO NEAREST SHUTTLE, POTENTIAL VARIANCE... NOT TOO MUCH" Otzy thinks about his time, "Eh... it's only like 8:30-ish. What, get there at like 9 and chill out til 11? Getting paid overtime to relax and rest my leg seems like a pretty good deal to me heh. Just have to do my report at... some... point" Otzy shakes the feeling out of his head again and speaks clearly to the robot "Alright. Lead the way to this shuttle then, let's not take *too* long though" "CONFIRMED. PLEASE FOLLOW AT RELATIVE TO YOU SPEED" Otzy pre-emptively braces himself to be left in the dust by yet another dweller trying to lead him somewhere in a rush but surprisingly the robot actually walks at a somewhat reasonable pace. It speed walks away from the holding shed through the empty rolling fields behind the old turtles vineyard, Otzy follows along at the slightly uncomfortable pace.

As they walk otzy thinks to himself about how similar these worlds can be, The visuals and story can change yet... He so often finds himself being led somewhere by some dweller, towards some distant place, being clearly taken down a path typically predictable even to him and yet, even a few years into the job he doesn't mind it all that much. Although very *rarely* he sees things that feel out of place or experiences something that feels not right, and those are the ones that keep him up at night wondering. the innate simplicity and wonder of the worlds that *most* carry is... relaxing for the most part, not many worries or stressors and it'll all be gone by the end of the day afterall so no worries in messing up... unless he messed up *his* work of course. He still has that feeling, that feeling of needing to do his job even if he knows Derrick wouldn't take it half complete in a different format, It doesn't make sense to worry like that and

he knows that yet... It's still there. "Why'd I even do that? Making it in my own format? The hell was I thinking... dumbass, I'll just remake it later" he mumbles to himself quietly. "WORK CANNOT BE DONE DURING MOVEMENT IF TIME IS TO BE KEPT, PLEASE REFRAIN FROM TRYING TO MULTI TASK" the robot shouts out, somehow hearing his mumbles despite the far lead it maintains in front of otzy. "Fuckin good mics on em huh? Yea Yea I hear you, I was just beating myself up over a dumb thing I did earlier, it's all good" "SENSITIVE MICROPHONES ARE REQUIRED FOR PROPER INSTRUCTION UNDERSTANDING, ADJUSTING IT IS NOT AN OPTION" the robot pauses for a second "DO NOT HARM YOURSELF OVER MINOR ERRORS, SMALL MISTAKES ARE CALCULATED AS AN UNAVOIDABLE LOSS IN YEARLY REPORTS AND ARE NOT WORTH PURSUING" "Ak- Y-Yea I guess that makes sense huh?" Otzy's a tad surprised by the oddly relevant comparison but doesn't bother complimenting on it, instead looking around at the rolling fields and distant locales. He can see what looks like a chemical plant buried under a giant maze of pipes off in the distance to his right, it's not where they're going but... "Hey robot, What's that place over there?" His curiosity asks "PROCESSING FACILITY" "...Yea? And? You just gonna leave it at that?" The robot's movement slows down for a brief second, as if it has to move processing power away from walking just to describe the place, "FORMER WORKHAND GRAVEYARD. CURRENTLY PROCESSING FACILITY FOR JKL PLANT, TOXIC GENETICALLY ENGINEERED DESCENDANT OF NOW EXTINCT LOST MEDIA VINE FRUIT PLANT. PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES AND BITTER FLAVORING AGENT IS EXTRACTED AND REFINED WITH SECRET INGREDIENT FOR CONSUMPTION BY HIGHER FLOOR GUESTS. BYPRODUCT IS FURTHER REFINED FOR LOWER FLOOR GUESTS AND UPPER GUESTS OF DISTINCTIVE (BAD) TASTE" Otzy snickers at bad taste comment before quickly taking the now known toxic fruit out of his pocket and throwing it away. "I assume by floors you mean the skyscraper on the paper?" he asks, trying to rub fruit juice off his fingers a bit too roughly. The robot slows down to a crawl as it works on its response until suddenly "YES"Are you... Are you gonna say anythin-" "BY FLOORS I DO REFER TO THE GOLDEN TOWER, ALSO KNOWN AS: THE PIERCING NEEDLE, THE ENTERTAINMENT MANSION, THE TALL PALACE, THE MARBLE MANSION, HEDONIST'S HEAVEN, THE MIGHTY PEN, THE GOLDEN DOME, SKY WATCHER, FARLOS CRIB (DEROGATORY), THE PLEASURE PAL-" "Okay! Okay! I-I Get it!" Otzy tries to interrupt "THE PLACE, THE GREAT ANTENNA, J.E.L, ETERNAL PARA- "STOP!" Otzy screams, the robot stops its speech and resumes its normal walking speed "PROCEEDING AS NORMAL, THANK YOU FOR CANCELLING THAT, THERE WAS STILL 78 NAMES LEFT TO BE SAID" otzy just sigh's "...Yea no problem. jeez..."

The robot leads otzy over a few more hills and shortly the wall of a tall forest comes into view, where land development stopped and the trees are safe for now. "WE WILL GO THROUGH THE FOREST, STRAIGHT LINES ARE THE FASTEST PATH" The robot says, not even stopping or looking back at otzy. He thinks about asking to go around but he looks down at his watch "Ehh... Whatever, It'll *probably* be okay" is what he tells himself as they enter the forest. otzy isn't given much time to look around and try to match the trees to a real life species like he wants, instead he's kept at that same slightly uncomfortable pace they've been at, it's starting to exhaust him a little but, they shouldn't have too much longer right? As they walk otzy does get a brief look at the forest of course, just not as in depth as he oddly wants too, it's well kept and maintained. Only the occasional fallen log and small rusted pipe attempts to block the path, with the short robot perfectly navigating around or over obstacles. At first otzy is able to keep up and enjoy the surroundings best he can but with each 'shortcut' the robot takes it seems to speed up a bit and otzy lags behind a bit more each and every time. The 'path' the robots take seems to only

become more blocked and ruined as time goes on with the forest slowly turning into what feels like an endless dumping ground for all sorts of curious ruined machinery that only seem to grow larger and more annoying to get around and waste more of his time, seemingly trying to get him to just give up. Otzy feels as if some of the machinery is oddly familiar, Not in their design but the way they sit rusted and forgotten, it reminds him of the few times he's something in a False World, things or events that remain un-explainable yet un-sharable, fleeting and paradoxical. "That rust, it's like that anchor... The anchor... Why was it there those few worlds? It kept showing up over and over for a week in *my* world's and then... it just stopped..." Otzy ponders to himself, his mind starts to wander back to the old questions he tormented himself with when he first noticed it, lost in thought otzy unconsciously slows down. Otzy feels a deep panic coming on as he starts to seep back into the past but he snaps himself back to reality and realizes he can't see the robot, he can smell a faint salty breeze trying to fight back over the chemical smell as he sprints forward, looking around for the robot, shouting "H-Hey! Wait!" but just as he does he passes around a large crumbled machine and in view is the robot standing atop of a massive multi-story rusted pipe that cuts through the entire forest splitting it in two. It jumps down to the floor unphased by the drop and walks over to the winded otzy "Huff.. Puff... Are you SURE this is the fastest path!?" otzy asks the robot, looking down at his watch that reads "8:34". "PATH IS STILL THE SHORTEST. YOUR STAMINA WAS PREDICTED EARLIER. DO YOU REQUIRE A SHORT BREAK? MULTIPLE LOCATIONS WERE ALLOTTED AS REST SITES AND CALCULATED WITHIN THE PREDICTED ARRIVAL TIME. THE 3/4TH'S WAY REST SITE IS CLOSE BY" Otzy catches his own breath "A-And you didn't tell me!?? I could of really used one of those earlier!?" "YOUR KNOWLEDGE WAS WRONGLY PREDICTED. TIME FRAME AHEAD OF PREDICTION. LONGER REST AVAILABLE" otzy just sighs in annoyance "Yea. Sure. Whatever. Just... Where is it at? "FOLLOW. IT IS JUST PAST THE OBSTACLE" the small robot leads the way again but at a much slower pace, observing otzy carefully to match his comfortable speed. He leads otzy towards the towering rusted pipe it stood atop earlier and through a small crack in its walls. They pass through the pipe to the other side, but only after otzy yells "ECHO!" into it a few times to listen to the fun noise.

When they step through to the other side and Otzy's eyes adjust to the bright suns floating in a purple sky they find a small sandy shore hidden away behind an inland curved bend of the once purposeful pipe. The sound of fizzy buzzing waves weakly rolling onto sand fills his ears as a faint unpleasant breeze hits his face. The old and rotten pipe still yet shields the oasis from the polluted world past its walls in spite of its own form. But alas, the grey foggy ocean it walls off is still polluted and ruined by the world outside. Its dark green murky sea water fizzles and bubbles endlessly into the grey fog above as it weakly crashes against the shore of the dark sand it reached and deluged. Luckily the sand closer farther from the shore is still clean, shining a pure white off its surface. Otzy doesn't get near the water, he learnt the hard way as a kid to not mess with crashing waves and the rotten chemicals doesn't help sweeten the deal. He instead sits close to the pipe wall, where the sands are left untainted. Otzy wishes he had a towel to sit on. As he tries his best to get comfy despite the sand trying to annex his pants he swears he can see the robot in the corner of his eye twitching a little bit, its head seemingly turning at random, sometimes facing otzy, sometimes the ocean, and sometimes some random far off place past the pipe. But each time he turns his head to look at the robot it's just fine,

staring back at otzy and waiting for him to give it an order. Otzy tries to get comfy and rest for a moment but he can feel that sense of responsibility clawing at him again, that feeling that won't let him take a break until it's done. He looks down at his suitcase yet again and sighs but just as he goes to open it the robot suddenly speaks up "BREAK LOCATIONS ARE FOR BREAKS. WORK STOPS DURING BREAKS" It says walking over to otzy and looking down at him "Look, I know But. I've only got so much time... Alright?" Otzy raises up his watch for the robot to see, Not really thinking on if he should be showing a dweller this or not. The robot stares at it for a brief moment before speaking with a faint static behind its speech "SOLUTION. DISCARD TIME PIECE" The robot says looking directly at Otzy's watch. Otzy scoots away from the robot and pulls his watch hand back "...No. That... That wont help... W-What kind of logic is that?" The robot ignores the question and continues on, lacking the brief static from before. "ALTERNATIVE SOLUTION. THE WORK CAN BE DONE BY ANOTHER WHILE YOU CORRECTLY UTILIZE THE BREAK LOCATION" The robot tries its best to naturally motion towards Otzy's suitcase "...What? Are you saying you could do the work for m-" "YES" The robot pre-emptively answers. Otzy thinks on it. "Well... hmm... intelligent dwellers aren't allowed to see the world rule papers, that's just a hard rule from derrick that even I can agree on, it just makes a big mess. But the work papers? I mean maybe a few dwellers would figure it out but... I can probably come up with some other excuse. Almost every dweller is incapable of accepting their own reality anyways... Plus this is just a robot so... maybe??" otzy sits there, lost in thought until the robot speaks up once again "HAVE YOU MADE A DECISION?" it asks.

"Y-Yea! You can do it just uh... leme get it set up, uh... you keep an eye on the pipe entrance for a moment okay? Make sure nobody sneaks up on us or Something" The robot turns around without a thought and otzy quickly unlocks his suitcase. He quickly digs down towards the dusty False World guide papers that sit at the bottom of his suitcase, they come standard with every suitcase kit just in case someone like Charles is doing their first False World. "It's just a robot... A lower intelligence dweller, it shouldn't be *able* to worry about this stuff but..." Otzy thinks to himself as he grabs the stack of papers detailing a somewhat abridged version of their team's current general understanding of False Worlds and their dwellers and quickly stuffs them in a hidden compartment underneath the suitcase's false floor before closing it up. Awareness is a spectrum. "There... No worrying about this thing freaking out on me" he thinks to himself. "Alright! I've got it all set up okay? Come over here and I'll tell you how to do it real quick" He calls over to the robot which is already walking over before otzy can finish his sentence. It parks itself in front of otzy and looks down at the open suitcase. "Alright, So..." Otzy points down at the barren review paper "You gotta fill this out for me. It's uh... A... Uhh... w-writing exercise! Yea! Creative writing!" Otzy instantly realizes how dumb that sounds and how even dumber it is to ask a robot to be creative but he's too late to back out now "Basically, I uh... Write down these objects and then... T-Try to match them to the world around me! It's uh... A fun game of just... creative matching is all! T-Then I write down the kinds of people I find in the world and how they build and then... Y'Know what? Just..." Otzy pulls out his old report from the mushroom world "Here! Just this but for this world... Okay-" "OKAY" The robot grabs the mushroom report and quickly scans through each page, flipping through all of the hand written pages in only a few seconds "UNDERSTOOD." It grabs a pencil from otzys suitcase without even

asking and grips it in its pincher hands far too tightly, digging into the wood but not snapping it in half somehow. It looks back towards otzy "WORK WILL BE COMPLETED. UTILIZE BREAK TIME NOW" it says, standing there motionless seemingly trying to forcefully stare the relaxation into otzy.

A large part of otzy feels like this is a bad bad idea but this robot ain't gonna let him do that work now that's for sure. Otzy gets up and stretches, that little sit down actually helped quite a lot. He's still a bit tired but... he checks his watch, its the teeniest bit dimmer than usual but it still reads the expected number. "8:44 PM" "Robot said we were like 3/4ths the way there I think... Long as it doesn't take too long on the paper we might get there on time..." he thinks to himself, Surprised but happy that he's still on track. He paces around the beach a little, still instinctually staying away from the waves but looking at the few seashells there that got washed all the way up to the clean sand. He thinks about picking up a few to bring them home but quickly reminds himself that they are stuck here, not to come up with him. He looks out into the foggy ocean and feels... relaxed, something about rainy or foggy days always just made him feel cozy and warm inside. He walks a bit closer to the shore and enjoys the scenery. He remembers how he always used to go outside and stand on the porch to listen to the rain pitter pattering againsts the plastic roof back before he had to move into the city. He misses those days. Lost in his nostalgia, he notices something in the distance, he can just barely see the outline of it but there's something there. Something in that grey fog. A distant... tall... tower?. He has a feeling of deep deja vu as he walks towards the shore to try and get a closer look but it seems to maintain its distance and the waves buzzing noises grows louder, he keeps walking closer and closer trying to get a look at it but it never seems to get any bit closer to him. He begins to recognize it, it's the tower from the mushroom world, it *has* to be. His mind lights ablaze, "it's repeated! It's another thing! Another event!" He starts sprinting towards it, the sand flying upwards off his shoes as he tries desperately to sate his curiosity until he suddenly feels the water of the shore trying to seep into his shoe, he's hit the water. He quickly snaps back away from the waves and panics, he reaches for a suitcase in his hand that just isn't there. He jerks his head back towards the robot working in the suitcase then back towards the tower- *BZZZZTTTT* The robot emits an ear piercing buzzing static noise "WORK COMPLETED. PLEASE COME COLLECT CARRYING CASE AND THEN WE CAN CONTINUE OUR WALK" The robot screeches out. "G-Get over here! I need the binoculars!" otzy says, ignoring the words "BREAK TIME HAS CONCLUDED, THERE IS NO TIME. WE MUST BEGIN MOVING" Otzy turns back around "N-NO! Bring it over her-" Otzy looks back towards the ocean only to see plain ocean, no fog in sight... No tower in sight "...no" Otzy whispers to himself as the robot quickly walks over to him and places the closed suitcase in front of otzy on the sand. "I HAVE RETURNED YOUR SUITCASE, YOU MAY USE THE BINOCULAR DEVICE IF YOU WISH BUT MY DATABASE CONTAINS NO KNOWN STRUCTURES IN THE OCEAN" It pauses for a moment before continuing with a faint static behind its robotic voice. "DO NOT WASTE TIME ATTEMPTING TO DISCOVER NON-EXSISTANT THINGS." An air of silence descends upon otzy as he stares at the robot. "...What did you just say?" the robot pauses for a moment, a faint static plays over its speakers yet again before stopping "NO RECORDS INDICATING OCEANIC STRUCTURE IN DATABASE. TIME LIMIT IS IN EFFECT, MOVEMENT IS NEEDED SOON" it blurts out. "WE CANNOT WASTE TIME IF SCHEDULE IS TO BE MAINTAINED.

Otzy just stares at the robot, he wants to question it. He knows what he just saw has to be important to *something* if the dweller tried to pull him away that hard, He knows this is just

like the other times, he knows False Worlds are supposed to *gently* pull people back onto their path if they wander off it but that wasn't gentle, that was a panic. Otzy has already receded into his mind as it begins to flood with endless questions and curiosities, A frantic burning curiosity and drive. "That was it! That had to be another event or... whatever the hell they are! I just gotta find a way to trigger it again! Wait... Was it a part of the story? Was I meant to see that? ...No! if it was a part of this story's world it would *want* me to see it right!? Isn't that how it works...? Every world has a story and path to follow... they're static when created, Unchanging and unmoving with minor exceptions to dwellers who..." Otzy looks back down at the robot, feeling his passionate curiosity buzz fade, A creeping fear of *deja vu* rears its distorted head in Otzy's mind "Tend to... Pull us... back... onto the path". Otzy feels weighted. He wants to ask the robot so many questions, he feels like he *could* find something huge for the group up in the real world. He could finally learn just *anything* about these sorts of events for his own mental health but... "Robot. What was that tower in the ocean?" otzy asks it with bated breath. " MY DATABASE CONTAINS NO KNOWN STRUCTURES IN THE OCEAN. WE CANNOT WASTE TIME IF SCHEDULE IS TO BE MAINTAINED" the robot repeats, Stitching its old speech together, Its eyes don't blink once as it says it. Otzy's heart sinks, [Has he really hit it again?](#) Another thing in a False World he can't explain, Another thing a *dweller can't explain*. Another thing the team up above **won't be able to reproduce**. Another thing **he can't make sense of**. He's been here before, too many times. "R-Robot! Please come on! It was right there! Y-Your the first dweller to be in sight of this kind of... Thi-This kind of thing happens so *rarely* I..." " MY DATABASE CONTAINS NO KNOWN STRUCTURES IN THE OCEAN. WE CANNOT WASTE TIME IF SCHEDULE IS TO BE MAINTAINED" Otzy stares blankly at the robots flat eyes. He feels so frustrated he could cry. He was so invigorated for such a brief moment, only to hit a wall seconds later, just like the last times. Each time he found something, saw something, experienced something, something that felt *special*, something that taunted his mind, and each time it was ripped away from him just as he realized, just as he was starting to hope he could learn *anything*, tell the team *anything*. The robot quietly reaches upwards and gently grabs the pamphlet from Otzy's coat pocket and seems to scan it for longer than normal. Otzy doesn't even notice, too busy in his own mind trying to forget before he starts worrying. The robot looks up at otzy and gently moves the pamphlet into Otzy's line of sight, its eye seems to blink faintly for a few seconds as it tries to speak but only a faint static noise comes out that jolts otzy back to this reality, for now. He sees the invitation and takes the reminder. "Ive... I've only got a few more hours here before it's back to reality. I can't be spending it like this... getting all upset over yet another False World 'thing' that... none of them will be able to reproduce" he thinks to himself, hoping for a quick recovery as he slowly reaches for the invitation and puts it back into his coat pocket. He looks down at the robot that's been staring intently at him, as if trying to say something. Otzy just picks up his suitcase "...Your good little robot... It's just... I-it's not your fault that you don't know, it's no one's fault" he says giving it a small pat on the head "...Lets just keep going okay? You lead the way" he says, trying to keep the outside together while the inside rots

Otzy quietly follows the robot through the forest, His legs are moving but he isn't there. He's stuck in his mind playing the same questions over and over, the same questions he always

has. "Why me? Does it mean anything? Why did the robot not know? Why did it pull me away? Why **me**!?" He's spiraling, He knows he can't answer those questions yet his mind won't let them die. He knows he's only torturing himself yet he's hooked himself, he just can't help it anymore, it all feels so out of place yet nothing shows! It feels so purposeful yet so accidental. He starts questioning the very foundation of it all, just like last time "Was any of it even special to *begin* with? Was it all just fucking happenstance that I took as something special? Is this all just some big ploy to fuck with me? That repeating anchor!, that vanishing flood!, that damn tape reel I could never get! Just to f- Aghhhh" Otzy can't stay mad for too long, it just turns to sorrow. He wishes so badly another could experience the little benign events he sees, to just tell him *if* they matter, to tell him *if* he should chase them but he knows the team can't help. Charlie and Sasha can tell him over and over that he shouldn't worry about it so much, that he's losing sleep over something none of them understand, that he's chasing ghosts but what do they *know*, they weren't there to see it! "It's just another odd moment in a False World they won't get to experience. It's just another one that I will eventually forget and stop thinking about. False Worlds *aren't supposed to hurt me*, They *can't* hurt me... right? Its a rule..." is what he tells himself as he can feel his brain trying to end this and give itself a break. He knows he'll never forget, He'll lie in bed tonight thinking about it over and over trying to figure out what it was just like the last times until he finally exhausts every option 10 times over, but isn't playing pretend fun? He realizes the trees above him are gone, He's staring at the stars. He'd been blindly following the robot for so long stuck in his own mind he didn't even notice they had left the forest behind, he had just been on auto pilot not in control. He looks up into the sky above, the sun is beginning to set and the sky growing darker, he can faintly see the cartoonish stars twinkling far far above the unappealing normal stars of this world, it's still up there in some form, far far above this world but stuck, frozen. When he looks down he sees rolling fields dotting the horizon as the tall grass of the field brushes againsts his pants and the bottom of his greyed lab coat, staining both a faint green that slowly turns to matching grey, his origin is unchangeable and so is the effects of it, but the future still lies malleable. Otzy starts to feel calm again... somewhat, he still can't help but feel a gnawing feeling in the back of his head, like he's forgotten something but he's had more than enough for one day, he doesn't even let himself get back on "what if" or "Why is" train of those events, he's too tired to even try to worry. "WE ARE HERE" the robot speaks, otzy looks down from the stars and back to this reality. A small marble building with a long curved glass roof sits alone in the middle of a field, various paths of questionable upkeep spout out of the nearby forests and fields all leading towards it, some paved with shining paint and railing while others merely trodden dirt. Otzy checks his watch out of instinct. Its oddly dark and dim. "9:14 PM "A bit late... .Whatever... I'll still have time" he thinks to himself, briefly looking down at his amulet. There's 4 crystals in the back with the holding pincers still holding the cracked dull grey crystal he used to breach down here with, "I'll just unwind it later..." otzy thinks to himself as he walks around to the front of the building. Otzy begins to walk up the short white staircase to the small set of fancy double doors but the robot continues to follow him "Oh yea you're still... How can I send you back?" Otzy thinks about his own question for 2 seconds and the awareness sets him back in the driver seat "Wait yea I'm... I'm dumb. GO HOME" he speaks in a loud clear voice but the robot does not move, instead it stares at him. "What?" "TETHER RANGE FOR PORTABLE CONTROL DEVICES IS TOO LOW. THE DEVICE YOU ARE WEARING IS REQUIRED" The robot says, walking closer and staring arguably too intently at the bracelet melvin gave otzy

“Can you make the trip back if i give you the strap and tell you to go home? Or is there somethi-”
“SOLUTION IS ACCEPTABLE AND WITHIN TOLERANCES” “fuckin... why does everything *have* interrupt me today??
Y-yea sure whatever just raise an arm up or something... There we go” Otzy takes off the bracelet and wraps it around the robot's cold bendy tube of an arm “Okay now. Go home... You did a good job today despite the... J-Just go home” “DO NOT WAS- THANK YOU FOR CHOOSING ME, I WILL RETURN TO THE VINERY, PLEASE ENJOY -ATTEM- YOUR STAY AT THE GOLDEN SKIES ESTATE. EXSI-THANK YOU. THANK YOU” The robot glitches out, shouting its last message as it runs off back towards the forest “path” they took. Otzy feels an urge to ask why the robots speech glitched out but he's too mentally drained from getting himself worked up over “nothing” that he doesn't even try

“The forms these worlds take, the way they are presented to us. It is as if they mean to tell us something, as if they have meaning. Yet they lack cohesion, a larger purpose one could find echoed across them that all we can agree on, a singular *message*. Assumptions can be made and small information gained yet the whole still remains a null for it never meaningfully repeats. The vague words made of its false silence change for each person, for each world. Even in the rarest of False World creations, in the most aware dwellers, the farthest we can break off its path. It all still lacks a meaningful thread to pull on no matter our effort... For what purpose does it all mean? ...I need a break” - Erald F Smith, Former Senior Head of Research

He enters inside the small station, In front of him is what looks like a train platform but instead of a horizontal line the train will pull up to its a small track that bends downwards into the ground below, the railing itself goes onto the platform and rests inside a currently blocked off area with raised railings preventing anyone from getting too close to the track “...Okay? Weird, Guess it's a little pod system or something...” Otzy thinks to himself before looking up and answering his own question, Curved around the top of the rail tunnels entrance is a long led display saying “NEXT POD ARRIVING IN 5 MINUTES” “Oh okay I guess it is a pod sys- is that fucking comic sans!?” Otzy cuts himself off, surprised, amused and annoyed all at once. Otzy wishes he could take a picture of it for Charlie but he remembers that wouldnt work, he instead starts walking around the small little waiting station to bide his time. Theres an old flatscreen hanging from the ceiling but from the amount of dust visible on it from down below and the screen being black, otzy feels like he isn't gonna get to check the weather. A few posters of yet again more [cartoonish slugs](#), this time explaining pod safety and how to properly fit a seat belt around “large workhands”, the large passenger caricature is a cartoonish looking turtle like old man melvin that otzy smiles at. Next to those sits an impractically tall corkboard with not much on it, Various invitations to long expired events, a cooking show advertisement featuring a satyr looking creature with some colorful wings, A low hanging “Free doodle” page that has been completely covered in doodles, an inspirational poster vandalized to call the reader stinky, a missing poster for some green scaled, skull wearing lizard, and a wanted poster for one “KazaaakplethKilik” with an attached printed off photograph of monitor with grainy cctv footage on it, the mantis in question wearing a pirate hat and somehow robbing two banks at the same time with just his claws. Otzy just smiles at it all, he loves these dumb little things in False Worlds. He hears the door open creek open behind him and a tall slug slinks through, It seems to stare at otzy for a

few seconds confused before just continuing to slink along towards a nearby bench, leaving a thin trail of quickly evaporating sludge. Otzy feels a bit disgusted seeing a real slug after having that perfect cartoon version of them in his mind for a few hours but he reminds himself to not be rude as he looks up at the pod text "NEXT POD ARRIVING IN 2 MINUTES". Otzy just continues looking around at what little there is to look at in the room, keeping his distance from the slug. An old looking drink machine not properly aligned pokes out of its wall cubby like a tumor which annoys him a tad, He goes over to look at the flavors just to see what the False World made up this time. "Slug Sluice, Space-floob, Farlo Fountain, 25% Red juice, JKL *Lite*, Dredge Drawl" "ooo these look fun, Maybe I'll get..." otzy notices the flashing glowing coin slot "Oh wait, Yea I don't have money for this." he chuckles to himself "Whoops" Otzy just walks to a nearby bench and sits down for the last minute.

shortly after a loud buzzer goes of *ERRRR* and a frankly bored sounding recording of a slug comes over the speaker "Attention all passssengersss, Pleassssee WAIT for the pod to come to a full sssstop and the blockersss to lower before attempting to board the pod for everyonesssss sssssafety... fucking idiots-". Just as the recording ends with a click a small white pod comes ZOOMING up the railing and has an incredible fast and hard stop at the end of the rails, then the blockers surrounding it slowly descend into the ground and the rounded back of the pod opens itself up. The slug had already gotten up and started the slink over to the pod before the safety rails even come down full, otzy just hangs around and pretends to be really interested in the corkboard he already read so he doesn't get right behind the slug and feel like he's rushing them, once the slugs gotten aboard otzy walks over and gets inside as well, ducking his head down a tiny bit to fit inside. The pod is quite cramped and small it could snugly seat about 6 people or 24 clowns, the slug has already sat down and started reading some colored newspaper, it peers over the paper at otzy for a brief moment before going back to its reading, otzy briefly ponders how they read when they don't have any visible eyes but he's seen weirder biology things in False Worlds before before. He sits down across from the slug near the entrance and quickly checks to see if anyone else is boarding before putting his suitcase in the seat next to him before thinking "Gah, never realize how heavy that thing is til I finally let go of it..." and shaking his hand a little to loosen up the muscle even though he knows that can't be good for his joints, when he's finished he notices that the slug had fully put down and was watching otzy shake around his own hand for a few seconds, it quickly realizes and puts its newspaper back up high to block "eye" contact and a much quieter announcement comes from a cheap speaker in the ceiling of the pod "Attention all passssengersss, The pod will be closing and launching within 30 ssssecondss, Pleassssee reach above you and lower the safety brace... or iss it sssstrap? Is it ssstra- ah okay, lower the BRACE onto your chesssst, Pleassssse remember to asssssisssst any large workhandssss travelling with you." Just as it ends a mechanical lock above *clicks* and otzy looks up to see large metal bars, like the kinds you'd see on roller coasters. He sees the slug in front of him calmly reach up with one tendril and pull it down til it *ker-chunks* into place without even looking away from their paper, otzy copies them, reaching up above him and pulling the bar down. It's... a bit slimy and oddly very padded but he gets it down and clicks it into place with no issue and a few seconds later another

announcement comes on as the door on the pod fully closes and the safety rails outside raise up again "The pod will be launching in 10 sssecondsss, pleasssse hold onto any loosseee objects" otzy quickly scrabbles for his suitcase and tightly holds it close to him as he can hear a faint clicking noise from outside the pod, like someone winding up a very large music box, he tries to scoot around in the bar a bit to look out the windo- *FWOOOM* The pod absolutely FLINGS down the railing extremely quickly, otzy doesn't even have time to react before his head is jerked into the padded bars and held there for a few seconds as the acceleration slows to an equilibrium, of course in front of him, otzy can just barely see through his squinted eyes that the slug is completely unfazed by the experience, simply flipping through its paper. A few seconds later Otzy's able to peel his head off the surprisingly comfortable padded bar and let that feeling of "I just got put in a paint mixer" pass, he checks and luckily the suitcase is still inside of his hands, he thinks to himself "God, DAMN. Why have these past two worlds been in such a rush to get me through them?" before quietly chuckling at the absurdity of it. He looks over to his right towards the front of the pod, a small blue map of the tunnel system they're travelling in is displayed on a small monitor, although calling it a "system" is generous considering it seems that the endless amount of lines are all separate from each other and just coalesce into the same station at the skyscraper, it *seems* like they're going quite fast but considering that the windows out of the pod give a *real* good detailed look completely featureless metal walls otzy isn't really able to gauge how fast the pod is moving. Otzy briefly considers popping open his suitcase to check the robot's work "Eh, It probably did fine" He thinks to himself as he instead chooses to simply close his eyes and relax. A minute later a faint **Ping** plays from the front of the pod and he looks over to see that text has appeared at the top of the screen "ETA: 33 seconds", "Eck... I was just getting comfy..." He mentally whines to himself as he makes sure he's holding the suitcase tightly and on queue the pods breaks engage with a loud **CLUNK** and it starts to slow, significantly *less* violently than the initial launch. He finds his mind wandering back to the tower as the pod slows, he starts trying to fall back into his endless questions with a dreadful feeling building but just as he does the pod suddenly hitches its breaks much harder and jerks his head into the padded brace once again, They've arrived

The windows outside of the pod only show metal walls as the front of the pod **Clicks** loudly and gently pulls itself upwards. A large circular door just outside the pod's front slides downwards and the pods own front swings upwards like a trunk to let them out. As otzy fights with the safety bar to try and get it up off of him the slug calmly lifts it upwards with one tendril and slowly starts to slick its way out of the pod, otzy swears he can see it snickering at him but just as the slug steps off the pod the safety rod unlocks completely and slings upwards on its own. Otzy gets up and embarrassingly brushes himself off before grabbing his suitcase and climbing out of the pod, only after nearly bonking his head on the low ceiling of course. Just he steps out the pod door, through the short airlock and the over-engineered circular sliding door into the arrival area. He looks around and to his left and right, stretched across the long curved walls sit endless docking ports for what must be hundreds of pod lines all converging into one ginormous room, each a small gold trimmed circular glass door that needlessly spins and slides downwards into the ground to open the way for only a few slugs to come out of the cramped pods alongside the rare turtle. To his front another excessively large hallway to corral the small army of slugs all making their way to check-in. The whole room teeters on the edge of excessive

gaudiness with its needlessly shiny glittered floors, gold trim and the occasional gothic looking trim finish, it all gives the vibe that the designer *kinda* knew what victorian era ball rooms looked like but got distracted so often by some other era's version of royalty that it just turned into a pile of "fancy" european architecture all smushed together, it's almost impressive that it still manages to look *good* and pleasing to look at. Otzy can faintly hear classical music blasting out of the large overhead speakers mounted to the excessively tall domed roof, trying its best and still failing to prevail over the endless sea of long drawn out sharp "ssssss" from the slug mob all speaking to one another. Otzy just takes in the view for a minute before chuckling to himself and easily peering over the crowd, "Why do False Worlds seem so keen on making most of the characters smaller than me?" he briefly questions himself as he can faintly see slugs forming many *somewhat* orderly queues in front of what must be the longest front desk Otzy's ever seen in his life, he checks that he still has his invitation and decides to tuck it into his front pocket a bit more just so it won't be so obviously in view "Don't really feel like... going on another goose chase if this get stolen, already had to find my suitcase today" is what he thinks to himself as he folds it to hide and starts trying to get through the crowd. The slugs seem to be pretty easy to scoot through and around, otzy feels quite a bit rude squeezing through them but each time the slug turns to see what just bumped them on accident their annoyed expression goes away when they realize this unknown lanky creature a good head taller than them wearing a lab coat and holding a suitcase just walked right past them as if they were just a penny stuck to the ground. Otzy hears a few of them gossiping about him which just tickles him "Kevin what the fuck issss that? Why the hell does it got those long sssspindly assss armssss?" "it'ssss just ssssomethin one of farlos concubinessss sssspat out one day after too much JKL an-" "oh sssshut the hell up kevin".

Otzy reaches the front of the crowd and looks around for an empty line, behind the check in desk lie an absurd amount of elevators lining the back wall of the building, otzy briefly thinks about how much space that must waste on each floorplan before shutting himself up and walking over to the empty desk that has a slug half heartedly waving to get his attention. "Hello and welcome to the... You get the idea, Employee Id?" It says in an perpetually slightly annoyed voice "Uh... I'm not from around here, I dont- I dont *have* one of those, I do go-" "ughh god damnit" "the slug quietly whispers to itself "...I do have. This invitation from the... "grand mechanic" whoever that is" Otzy picks out the old invitation and slides it over to the underpaid slug, it does the closest equivalent to a sigh a slug can do before slowly bending over to read the invitation "the fuck kind of..." It looks back up to otzy "Sir im going to have to get this checked with... upper management, please give me a minute" "Your fine, Take your time!" The slug seems half annoyed, half worried reaching for an black and gold rotary phone that has to be kept around for novelty at this point and dials in a number "Hey itss- Yea yea I know- Itsss a invitation ...No itssss not addressssed to specifically them ...at the bottom? ...It'ssss 78132 ...wait itssss real? ...I-I know but why would... Okay okay I hear you... alright, bye. *click* fuckin assssshole" The slug looks back up to otzy with a confused expression it quickly swaps out for its best customer satisfaction look "Well good sir, I am terribly sorry for the hold up. It's only out of your safety that we check for falsified documents," It reaches for something under the desk and clicks it a few times audibly "If you could just wait here for a moment, one of our best assistants will be here to escort you to the V.I.P elevator." Otzy just waits, he thinks about trying to do small talk with the slug but both of them seem to be vehemently againts the idea so he just waits. Eventually a large older looking turtle lumbers

from around a corner wearing its best attire, a spiffy tuxedo, some white gloves and carrying a small suitcase of his own, it looks around seemingly confused as to where it was called too and the slug silently just clicks the button under the desk a few times until the turtle looks right over to where otzy and the slug are. It lumbers on over and looks towards the slug "Is this th-" "Yea" It looks back towards otzy with a slightly confused look "Well good sir, Apologizes for the wait, If you would please follow me briefly I can show you the way to the V.I.P elevator and open it." "Sure, You can just call me Otzy though" "Will do Mr Otzy" It says turning around and nearly bumping otzy with the back of its spotless if a bit pyramided shell. It leads otzy around the long slab of stone that makes up the check in counter and through a few crowds of slugs that all very quickly make room for this spiffy turtle and stare at otzy the same confused way the others did. They lead him to the long elevator wall and to the very center most elevator, a *definitely* gaudy, over the top set of golden double doors with an engraved platinum sheet wall and a curved emerald for a call button, all roped off by the obligatory red velvet stanchion. The turtle tries to gracefully unhook the stanchion but takes a bit *too* long with its big lumpy hands and the few slugs watching from afar snicker to themselves as the turtle motions for otzy to go first. Otzy steps into the roped off area and presses the emerald call button, the turtle seems to flinch a bit as if it was supposed to be the one to press it but it just opens its small little suitcase and reaches for something "I'm assuming you are going to the upper 30 most floors Mr Otzy?" it asks, briefly looking up at him "Oh uh... I'm not really sure, I just got this invitation and all so..." "Oh! My apologizes, I did not realize you are foreign summon! Your the first one to ever receive the title, I hope you can excuse the assumption" It says before looking down into the suitcase to hide its embarrassed look "No no your fine, I-I'm just as confused as you are don't worry" Otzy nervously laughs, wondering if he's actually gonna get to relax or not. "Well if i remember correctly that means that Farlo himself will be guiding your relaxation tonight! So you will most definitely be going to the upper 30 floors this night, and in this case I need too..." The turtle digs through his suitcase towards the bottom and pulls out a small black box and hands it to otzy, "Inside this will be your masquerade for the night, Its tradition for all patrons in the upper most floors to mask their identity for individual reasons I'm not privy too." "Oh uh... Thank you" Otzy carefully grabs the box and begins to open it "Wait! V.I- Mr otzy!" The turtle interrupts "Please do not put your mask on until your in the elevator sir!" The turtle leans closes and whispers "The commoners would know your identity!" Otzy holds back a laugh at the idea of trying to pretend he isn't literally one of a kind surrounded by slugs and turtles but goes with it "O-Oh! Yes, I understand. Pff I'll wait until then, Don't you worry" Just as he finishes that a pleasant *ding!* plays and the elevator opens to a surprisingly not gaudy as all hell interior, A fluffy dark red carpeted floor with two comfortable looking recliners, a small coffee table between them, a threatening looking water cooler in the corner and some tasteful navy blue and gold pointed lilies wallpaper. He steps inside and the turtle quickly steps out of the roped off area and waves bye "Have a good night Mr Otzy!".

The golden doors close behind him and he gets a better look at the elevator now that he doesn't feel rushed, Everything's new and shiny yet still has a thin layer of dust on it. He places the black box in one recliners and sits down the other to just rest for a minute before continuing "...Damn, okay maybe I agree with Sasha on this one, we GOTTA start trying to figure out a way to bring stuff back up." He thinks to himself, already melting into the seat "Even if she don't like doing work down here ain't no way she wouldn't wanna waste a few crystals seeing if we can somehow purify something enough to get it to appear up there when the fog clears... I mean none of the other teams seem to be able to do that but, shit... I'll give it a go if I can sit on this thing on my breaks" He continues thinking to himself, wondering if Derrick could convince the higher ups to let them spend a few weeks trying random things to see if anything would work. Just as he remembers that he's supposed to be doing something, a large flatscreen descends from the top of the door frame down towards the floor, covering the golden doors like a large picture frame. Audio plays over the black screen for a brief second with background talking and a close voice "*Hold on a minute, I've got a call*" It buzzes with static for half a second before flickering to what looks like the ceiling of some fancy room, the camera rustles around for a second giving away that it has to be one of those fancy smart phones otzy could never afford and then flicks downwards. The view stays blurry for a second before focusing in on the holder of the phone, the face of a happy looking tall black cat creature stares back at the phone through its white velvet masquerade mask trimmed with gold, he dips the phone downwards by accident for a second showing, accidentally showing off his extravagant white flowing jumpsuit with a black trim and underside that swirls around the inside, the whole suit has a questionable amount of glitter in it. "*Oh hellowooo! It's about time you turned up!*" "Uh... What did you say?" "*Oh? You can't understand me? Wait hold on a minute deary*" *Cough Cough* "*Is this easier for you to understand?*" The walking feline says, talking in a rougher tone. "Yea th-thats way better" "*Good to meet you! I figured you'd be getting here around now after Warnen made that big fuss about his system going off*" the feline seems to trail off for a second "*Oh where are my manners! I am Farlo, the current reigning host of our eternal ball, 'the taste of paradise that shines through the darkness of inevitability~'*" And you are? Huhw" Otzy feels quite a bit awkward but he's brushed with higher ups before, why not play into it? "I am Otzy" Otzy lingers on the silence for a moment as Farlo seems a tad disappointed, "*Otzyerian Sullivan Gerald The third*" he adds, trying to put on the fanciest voice he can to embellish his amalgam of a full name,, surprising even himself at how naturally it fell out of his mouth. "*Oh ho ho ho hooo~ Well aren't you a special guest? No wonder the system picked you up!*" Farlo gets closer to the screen and tries to get a better look at otzy "*And yet he still could not install a proper camera in their designated place... Actually dear Otzyerian, Do you mind telling me what exactly you are? I've never seen such a creature like you and I just must know~*" Otzy has to fight himself from continuing to talk in that same fancy tone, like a gremlin in him wants to play along "I'm a *human*, There's a lot of us where I'm from but I'm the only one down here" "*I have... noooo idea what that is! But you know what I DO know?!*" Farlo pauses just long enough to make otzy question if hes supposed to answer.

“W-Wha-” “*Its that your tonight's PREMIERE guest! Til the suns come back up the floors are yours to explore! No limits or walls, Everything you could ever want! In fact, I will be your personal gui-*”

The feline's speech is interrupted by unintelligible speech, It lacks the distinct S's of slugs. The camera droops upwards as Farlo looks over to his right “*I'm trying to talk to our guest, What, Canary? He's been fine- Oh you mean Warnen... *sigh* What did he do now? ...Mhm ...Mhmmmmmmmm *sigh* ... Look, I'll take care of it after... What? Oh that stupid damn goat. I swear to Lo, what the hell has gotten into him as of late?? If he dare... You're right, I'll deal with it, just go on.*”

The camera flicks back to Farlo's face who smiles return upon seeing otzy, “*Well... There's been a change of plans my little guest, A... patron of mine is causing a small issue and I need to go rectify it.*” Farlo closes his eyes and looks down with a closed fist close to his chest “*Oh uh... Sorry to hear tha-*” Farlo releases his fist upward like a blooming flower and interrupts “*But do not fret dear Otzferian, Even without my presence to accelerate your enjoyment and show you the wonderful novelties and nick nacks i've hidden for guests of honor, I'm sure you will still have a simply extravagant night. And as recompense for the loss I shall bequeath to you a gift*” Farlo quickly turns off the camera feed leaving otzy quite confused for a moment until it turns back on and Farlo is wearing a new red velvet mask, with the signature golden trim of course “*I expect that one of my serfs gave you a box upon your arrival here correct?*” “*Uhh yea one of the turtles gave it to me*” Otzy says reaching over to the other seat and grabbing the box “*Wonderful, now if you would open it up for me and put on the mask inside that would be lov-*” “*Got it*” He says flicking open the fancy box, Inside lies a red masquerade mask of his own, the same red velvet of Farlo's, although it lacks the distinct golden trim his has. Otzy carefully pulls it out of its slot and wraps it into his head, he can't help but feel he looks a bit stupid but it's shockingly comfortable, as if it was designed to fit his face. He looks back towards the screen to see an excited Farlo “*OOOooooo~* The camera jostles a little as he seems to tip tap in excitement “*Oh you just look so wonderful with a mask of mine on deary!*” Otzy can't help but feel a little embarrassed “*Awww don't feel like that! Here, Look at how good you look!*” Farlo seems to tap his phone screen for a second before the elevator screen swaps to a large mirror with Farlo's face shunted into the corner. Otzy turns his head side to side to get a good look at it, its still gaudy but he feels like it oddly fits “*...know what? ...Yea I can see it. Kinda fits my lab coat a little, and if I had a hair brush... although I wish my coat was pure white stil-*” “*I knew you'd like it! Never had a guest of honor that didn't look good in one of my old masks!*” Farlo accidentally interrupts, already closing the window mode and going back to full screen face chat. “*Oh! And don't worry about your hair, Infact...*” Farlo taps something on his phone and the elevator chunks and rumbles for a second before starting to slowly ascend upward, The watercooler burbles menacingly. “*While I'm gone dealing with... A patron, I'll send you up to floor 34, Our premier waiting room for all manor of waiting and waiting adjacent actions. Stocked absolutely*

full of various things to do to keep your attention while you... wait... for me...” Farlo’s smile and excitement seems to fade for but a moment. *”Just be sure to keep the mask on deary! You sure wouldn’t want to be paying for any of these services now would you? Oh ho ho hooo... Just let the mask do alllllll the talking, The attendees will know what it means.* Farlo looks off to his right again and briefly flashes a smile at someone, while camera flashes go off *”Oh! That’s my queue! I’ll catch up with you in a minute. Ta Ta, and ciao!”* The camera feed turns to black and the elevator speaker slowly fades to an upbeat bossa nova waiting song

“Well... That was fun” Otzy’s left smiling to himself at the whole situation. Going from trekking through a polluted forest to this extravagant act that wants him to feel special. A cynical part of him passes it off as just False World pandering but... “Nah, Fuck that. I’m a have some fun tonight, I only got what...” He checks his watch “10:04” The numbers seem oddly faint and dark. He swears he sees it flicker to another number briefly but it stays firm when he looks at it. “An hour and a half left? Aint that much time but... I’m gonna enjoy my little vacation if I can help it.” He pulls himself out of the chair and checks out the oversized floor selection menu. 102 buttons all laid out in 4 columns stretching down with all unique faintly layered icons on top of the white numbers. with the sole exception given to floor 101 that sits alone disconnected from the others groupings above them all with only a golden crown on its button. Otzy amuses himself looking through all the icons. He skips over the boring dull grey icons of the lower 60 floors and skips around to interesting looking icons. “88 looks like offices... ...72’s a martini... 42’s all the way up here in the 80’s for some reason... ...Oh hey theres a call farlo button... I’ll let him be ...64 is a game controller, how cute... 77 is a dice, yea I don’t wanna gamble... 100 is a bench, whatever that means... 44 is a gem, Must be jewelry... Wait where is... There it is! 69 is- awwwwwww what a cop out! It’s under renovation... heh” Otzy laughs to himself, just enjoying playfully poking fun at all the menial details of a False World as if they were real. He feels the elevator slow down a tad as the rolling floor counter ticks over to 100. “Waiting room all the way up here huh? Weird.” The doors slowly open to a small but still extravagant entrance room, faint classical [music](#) plays from the small but still domed ceiling of the room with a faint murmur of slug speech much quieter than the music but distant and audible. Otzy can see a small reception desk with a large number display above it. He steps out of the elevator, grabbing his suitcase on the way out and leaving the now empty black box and looks around. To his side are a few more elevators of normal non-special make and to his front A mostly empty room save for the occasional slug parked on a nearby couch, and the front desk next to a roped off hallway with a turtle guard, faint murmurs of slugs can be heard echoing distantly. Otzy walks up to the front desk to greet the calico cat receptionist who seems to be staring at Otzy’s mask “Hello, Farlo sent me here to wai-” “*You don’t need to wait in line sir, The guard will let you in.*” She points to her left and smiles “*don’t worry, Farlo told us you were coming a minute ago*” “Oh, T-Thank you” Otzy mosies on over to the stanchion, much to the dismay of the waiting slugs and greets the large scarred turtle guard “Hello, I’m Ot-” “Ack!” The turtle interrupts “Don’t tell me your real name. Don’t tell me where you’re from, Don’t even tell me what you are, **we don’t do that up here,**

You aint you and where you came from aint a memory up here. Capiche?" They say in a *stern* voice "Uh.. Y-Yea I got it, sorry I'm just new is all" "Ya fine" The turtle pulls back the stanchion and clears his throat "Sorry bout that. I ain't tryin to sour your mood I just gotta make sure ya know da rule is all. Now go on and enjoy ya night, Farlo don't want ya ta be anything but entertained and he sure puts alot up here for yous fancy types" He finishes with a friendly smile which otzy returns as he walks through. As he walks through the hall he can't help but feel a bit out of place, He enjoys bumping shoulders with the elite from time to time and he knows how to suck up to higher ups but, this is a bit much even for him. Although... A part of him can't help but feel like this treatment is the teeniest bit deserved considering what he went through. Soon after the hallway opens up to a large open room, clusters of well dressed slugs and the occasional humanoid feline dot the room, all talking amongst one another and occasionally sharing a laugh. "Wow. really hit the aristocrats huh? Guess I can't act like its the old college dorms heh" He thinks to himself and he notices that oddly none of the cats here have a monotone flat pattern like Farlo did, He also chuckles to himself thinking about a tuxedo cat in a tuxedo but hasn't had a drink yet so the last thing he wants to do is sit around and gossip about rich people's problems. He slips past a few groups and into a connected hallway he sees that has various sculptures dotted along its walls. A few of the groups give a curious look at his form but all seem to look away quickly when Otzy returns the stare.

Otzy realizes he seems to have stepped into a small art hallway with various art of good quality placed alongside the walls and occasionally in a pedestal central to the hallway, A few slugs and cats pensively look at the objects and move along satisfied. He peruses down the hall, not incredibly interested at first considering he wanted to relax but soon enough he finds himself curiously looking at the various statues, paintings and sculptures dotted along the hall, Slowly but surely falling back into the same mindset that got him hooked on this job 3 years ago. Each time he looks at one he questions what it could mean about the False World, knowingly and willingly overthinking what is probably nothing of interest. He stares at a sculpted statue of a fallen star embedded in the ground and wonders if that's how they perceive meteors. He stares at a statue of a giant marble cog and questions if the average slug even knows what machinery holds their life this high. He stares at a statue of a mountain with ruins at the top of it and questions its importance. A small plaque at the bottom reads "Dreamscape, By Warnen". "Was this a mountain from their own history? Or maybe an old story. Or maybe just somewhere I ain't been too". He tries to come to reasoning but... It doesn't mean anything, He knows none of this *probably* does, It's what he was told afterall, "Your work comes above it all. Most if not all things in False Worlds do not matter and should be ignored" but... that's what *fun* about it to him. Finding meaning where there is none, exploring the world and getting lost in its fantasy. It's magical, and he's truly happy that it's his job to go into these worlds... even if the job goes againts exploring... often. He continues his walk and ends up bumping into a large group of slugs and cats all surrounding an art pedestal that otzy can't see. They seem oddly annoyed sounding but he can't understand what they're saying. He briefly tries to see over the tall cats but gives up quickly when he notices a small lonely table exhibit off to the side that not a single slug nor cat seems interested in. He walks over to the table and sees that its a small 3

dimensional map of the world complete with a metal model of the skyscraper. He just smiles, finally able to trace his path here and see what he missed out on. "Wow... There's a lot of just... dead space around this place, Guess they just don't bother building if everyone just takes a pod here or already lives here..." He mumbles to himself, scanning past the dead zone around the skyscraper and down the map, trying to trace back his own path out of curiosity. "There was the... There it is, that's the little pod station and just outside is the hills... There's the forest and..." His eyes linger on the densely packed model of a forest as he tries and fails to trace his path back through it. There's no landmarks or anything detailed in the forest, as if they don't want to admit it's polluted. "Whatever ill just... There it is! That's where Melvin's place is... Wow, They have... a lot of farmers... jeez. Wait, if that's Melvins, that means I can follow it into the forest and... wait, what?" Otzy follows along where he thinks the forest path was until he reaches the ocean and sees a peculiar pattern in the ocean "It looks like there was something here but the papers all ripped and stitched together..." Just as he thinks that to himself he notices small model boat obviously attached to a hidden track by a stick starts "floating" down the ocean, It starts up at the top of the map near the skyscraper and floats downwards until it's near the spliced part of the paper where it suddenly slows down to a stop and waits there until a small circle of light appears on the water in front of it, soon after the boat starts moving along its path again, following the circle of light until it's past the forest and exits off the bottom of the map where it quickly flicks itself under the table to hide itself. Otzy questions what that was for but in trying to look under the table to sneakily look at the boat's track mechanism he notices a shiny metal plate attached to the side of the table, It reads "'Map of our world' By Warnen Yarn, 44th and current Grand Mechanic". Otzy begins to question if this Warnen is someone the world expects him to meet or if they're just yet another "Needless Detail" as Derrick would put it but before he can think too much on it his thoughts are *yet again* interrupted. This time by a tap on his shoulder.

"Excuse me sir but you're Farlos guest of honor tonight are you not?" A tall siamese cat wearing a long modern flowering dress asks Otzy, tilting its head a little "Uh.. Oh yes! That's me. 'Sir Otz- wait, I'm not supposed to use names. Yes, I am Farlo's guest of honor" The cat and its cohorts look at him confused *"Well, As guest of honor your input is of the highest value and we simply cannot come to an agreement on this art piece, Could you spare but a moment to put our quarrels to rest?"* "Sure!" Otzy responds in his awkward 'I dunno what to say so im just gonna be chipper' kind of way which just makes them look at him like he's an alien. "Uh um... Yes, I'll gladly give my input on this matter although do keep dearly in mind that while I *am* the guest of honor tonight, I am but a humble person like each one of you are..." He says, trying to play fancy. "Now what is the art in question?" The confused but entertained nobles quickly motion for him to walk through a gap they made, he steps inside and gets to see a small slowly rotating canvas crudely nailed onto the rotating platform. "...Is that the whole piece?" *"Oh, no, that's simply the backside of it. We've been debating amongst ourselves for the better part of an hour now on if this art piece deserves its spot here on the upper floors or if it should be exiled to the lower museums"* "Oh, Well... Most art has value even if it's not the most well made, it's the intention behind it that matt-" The piece fully rotates around into view. It is nothing but a

blank white canvas with a pineapple badly taped to the front with a few holes poked into it by the now discarded blunt end of a dirty plastic spoon that rests upside down on the spinning plinth, a small badly written card lying flat on the plinth reads "+IS mult" "...Oh..." Otzy says outloud to himself, a few of the nobles smugly look at each other "Well... It could... Uh..."

After masterfully exiting that situation in a way that absolutely helped all parties involved otzy speed walks away from the group down the hall and takes the nearest turn to get out of view. A pleasant floral aroma strikes his nose as he walks into what seems like it was originally a waiting room but has now been turned into some form of plant art that just so happens to have a receptionist desk and stanchion gate in the back. The walls are covered in seemingly randomly placed indentations where large thick viney plants are allowed to grow up the walls untouched and untrimmed with 2 enormous arched windows sitting above the empty couches on the side wall, giving view into the starry skyline outside the building. In the gap between them lies another indention in the wall where the large viney plant has already started to hang over the windows in an attempt to see the light yet again, Its large bulbs lie furled up and stiff. Otzy hears a quiet **ding!* come from his right and he looks over to see a small utility door hidden in the wall and painted to match it. Shortly after a bored looking turtle lumbers out, dragging behind him a hose that's reel is attached to the back of his shell, he gives otzy a smile as he walks over towards the two windows and reaches back to his shell to grab the end of the tip of the house, He fiddles with it for a second before a mist of blue glistening liquid starts to shower out of the hose and he begins watering the plant with it. The liquid seems to cause the plants bulbs to slowly unfurl themselves and reveal their beautiful pink petals, alongside a faint pink cloud of pollen that carries with it a fresh coating of that aromatic smell the room had in it. "Oh I am so happy pollen allergies don't transfer to my body copy down here" Otzy thinks to himself as the turtle moves onto the next vine, triggering the same reaction. He walks over to the receptionist, making sure to carefully step over the hose. "Hello, I'm just looking around but uhm. What is this place? Is this some sort of greenhouse?" He asks the blue feathered receptionist "Ah, *Partially yes good dear but it is also this floor's spa of choice. Farlo thought it was best for guests of high calibre to enjoy a natural feeling experience while they wait for the next event.*" "Oh that sounds... Actually really nice right about now, Uh... How long is it?" Otzy says looking down at his watch that very brightly reads "2:34" "What the..." "Is there something wrong deary?" they ask, Otzy looks up to respond "S-Sorry its just my watch, it" " He looks back down at it and reads a very *dim* "10:34" "Ah... I-it's fine... I'm just supposed to be meeting with Farlo in person at... *some point* and I gotta be leaving soonish-" " *Don't worry sweet heart, You're free to leave your private session at anytime you feel fit. We'll be sure to notify you when farlo comes looking if your still inside when he arrives.* " The bird says, in a calm mellowed out tone, as if they're at peace. "Yea about that... I don't have too much time tonight, do you... know when he's gonna come get me? Kinda only have like an hour max before I gotta go y'know." "Well, *Farlo is a busy man as you know. Being our graceful ruler and ceo of this tower leads one to having much to do- Although, being a special guest such as yourself I'm sure he'll be here soon, Infact. Why don't you just go on in for a quick dip while I give him a*

ring, hmm? Or... *just a shower if you feel particularly rushed*" "Uh... Alright, Sure. that'll work I-I guess." Otzy says, already trying to walk towards the roped off hallway "Ah!" The bird interrupts "Do you mean to bathe with that worn suitcase of yours in hand? Here, let me hold onto it for you darling" They say, motioning for otzy to come and put his suitcase on the desk. "Y-Yea, Sorry" Otzy says, checking to make sure the suitcase is locked before hesitantly putting it on the desk, The bird quickly bends down and unlocks a hefty looking safe before putting the suitcase in there "And your watch too? You shouldn't burden yourself with the worries of time in there, we'll get you out when needed, don't worry." Otzy feels quite uncomfortable giving his watch away like that but he obliges. "And the amulet?" The bird asks, staring down at it "No. That stays with me. Just... If it's been more than 30 minutes and he still isn't here, yell for me... okay!? I've got *places to be*" He says in a stern voice as the bird puts that into the safe as well before closing it and locking it up "Don't worryyyyyy, We have our timers. Here, if it'll soften your worries..." The bird reaches down under their desk and pulls out an *old* looking kitchen timer and winds it up for 31 minutes before placing it back under "There, Better?" "...Yea. better... Sorry" "Don't apologize dear, we're here to help you, not stress you." The bird says walking out from behind the desk and carefully picking up the stanchion rope and motioning for otzy to go through "Private rooms are to the right, They'll all empty so choose the one you want... And have a wonderful time"

Otzy speedwalks down the hall. When Otzy turns the corner he's presented with a set of 3 opened doors, each decorated on its own angled wall with beautifully drawn artistic depictions of their interiors. The door to his left labelled "Oceanic Nebulae" on its frame has its wall decorated with a spiralling colorful nebula with hundreds of small stars hidden behind the swirling gas, inside the hallway otzy can faintly see a fake white cave wall wallpaper. To his front a door with its frame labelled "Forest grotto" has its wall decorated with tall pine looking trees and a purple sunset, A fallen tree shades a comfortable looking water grotto with perfectly green leaves. And finally to his right he can see a door frame labelled "Mountain Getaway" with its walls decorated to look like a warm hot spring with craggy rock smoothed down by the flow of water slowly trickling down into the spring. Otzy enters the door on his right, The narrow hallway quickly turns from normal fancy walling into a facade of a mountain cave complete with a few "cracks" in the wall shining the outside light in, the cracks are pretty obviously just lights behind a false rocky wall "How cute" Otzy thinks to himself, as if it's a little amusement park trying to get in character. Shortly he hits a wall and enters into what looks like an airlock, he steps inside and lets the door close behind him before looking to his left to see a long white comfy looking bathrobe hanging from a nearby hook and to the right of it a small chute labelled "CLOTHES CLEANING". Just as he starts to wonder if this is where he's supposed to change a voice plays over a *nice* sounding speaking "Welcome to the *Mountain Getaway*, This message is a recording. Before you enter the realm of relaxation we wish to offer you, our most esteemed guest, a complimentary cleaning package as thanks for choosing our room over the others. Simply place your clothing in the chute, close it and knock three times. One of our best professionals will gather your clothing and hand wash them with our patented techniques,

even restoring and embellishing long lost color or embroidery. The message ends with an audible click and leaves otzy feeling a bit shy. He looks around the room's corners "...No cameras I can see... Eh it wouldn't matter anyways it's a False World..." He mumbles to himself, still feeling a bit awkward about it despite logic but he strips down none the less and puts on the bathrobe to cover himself before putting his cloths in the chute and clunking it closed and knocking on the metal of it 3 times *Tink tink tink*. He faintly hears through the wall what sounds like a chair scooting and annoyed sounding s's from a slug mumbling to themselves before the clothes chute rattles loudly as someone collects the clothes on the other side and then pushes the chute back open on his side. Otzy turns away and walks through the door in front of him into the spa area.

It's as advertised. A somewhat large room with walls made up of tall high res screens all merged together to give the illusion of a long mountainscape with the peaks of them covered in snow. The floor is made of smoothed flat rock with conveniently recliner pool chair shaped rocks littered around the sides of the surprisingly large steamy hot spring with its own rock looking actually *real*, as if they cut out a hot spring somewhere and placed it here. Soon after the door closes behind him some cleverly hidden speakers embedded in false rocks start playing comforting music with an ambience of blowing wind to try and immerse him in the world. "Hah, how cute. They must of had fun making this" otzy warmly chuckles to himself without thinking as he walks over to the water and dips his foot in to feel it "ooo~, That's really nice, Just above room temp" he comments to himself, already stepping in. The water reaches up to above his knees before he's fully in and the ends of the bathrobe floating along with him, he does that cool feeling walk where he tries to fight againsts the water until he reaches the little alcove where the rock creates a roof over his head, Conveniently there's a comfortable seat under the water just there and he sits down on it, the seat at first is a bit too high but it lowers itself until his shoulders are underwater. "Ahhh... Finally, I haven't taken a break like this in... Well I guess i've never been able to afford this kinda treatment, heh" He says nestling himself in and stretching his arms that crack a little, he accidentally bumps something with his right arm and a blank screen embedded in the rock on his right turns on, an os logo spins while it boots up. "Huh? What, they install some games here or something? These people not know how to relax without having angry birds or something?" He bickers to himself as it turns on to show a Frutiger Aero style control panel with nice big bubbly buttons for various controls, Pool temperature, Artificial wind control, Music/Radio selection, Water jets, It even has a watermark of the skyscraper. "Oh, That makes... a lot more sense... I need to stop being so cynical heh." he laughs to himself as he lifts a hand out of the water and taps the music button. "What they got here... Kinda getting tired of all the classical even if it is nice sounding" he mumbles, scrolling down the list "Wow this UI kinda sucks okay We got... 'party in the garden', 'Hey I teach ya (Some manners)', 'Party animal horse', 'Doomsday Disco', 'Don't leave us stranded here', 'and... the slug slide' ...Okay maybe the classical isn't that bad" He says to himself as he scoots away from the screen and closes his eyes, putting his arms back into the comfortably warm water and getting comfortable. He closes his eyes and just relaxes, His mind finally slows the best it can and he simply *exists* in the water for a few minutes, thoughts float in and out of his mind as he lets the faint music simply drown out the ones that don't interest him, the dreadful head of those events in False Worlds tries to return to taunt him once again, a passing reminder brought to the spotlight, an intrusive thought,

it wants to try and drag him back down the pit of endless questions but... He's too relaxed to fall for it and soon he feels himself drifting to sleep. He has no dreams, it's a comforting black void of consciousness, a blind spot, a skip. Dreams don't exist in False Worlds, None of them know why yet it's one of the few constants. Perhaps the mind can only drift so far from its original body.

He wakes to a gentle alarm playing over the speakers that replaced the music, the touch screen to his right blinking to grab his attention. He quickly remembers where he is and pushes himself over towards the pad "ALARM. YOU ARE REQUIRED AT THE FRONT DESK" It flashes in an annoying red. "...Guess that's him" Otzy mutters to himself as he stretches and starts walking towards the exit of the spring, not realizing he's bending down to stay majority in the water until he's reached the end. He hops out of the spring, he isn't *quite sure* why he kept the robe on when he got in the water but it's certainly too late now. He quickly walks back to the airlock but before he enters he notices a little shower like door embedded in the wall, not a single attempt was made to hide it. A large sign above it says "POWER DRYER _{mk2}". "Oh, like a big towel or something?" He thinks to himself as he opens it up and walks on in. He looks around at the odd perforated walls "What is there a... Switch or somethin-" *click* Hit foot presses down a large pressure plate in the floor, before he can even register the thought an exceptionally loud *WHIRRRRR* rumbles through the wall as the driest air he's ever felt in his cold life blast streams of air out of the endless holes in the walls, it feels like an entire desert's atmosphere was compressed into a singular form, curated and perfected for generations with the sole purpose of blasting into his body and ripping the moisture off of it. When the drying finally dies down Otzy's left with frazzled hair and a shaken soul, a faint mist of moisturizing spray is spurt out of a few embedded nozzles and returns his skin to normal form. He silently picks the robe that had been blasted off him onto the floor and steps out of the chamber. He regains his senses seeing the distant alarm still flashing and he quickly mozzies back to the airlock entrance. He steps inside and looks over to the clothes chute, low n behold his clothing has been neatly stacked up there, looking nice and clean... Still grey but they do smell quite nice now. He quickly starts putting his stuff back on "Damn, I'm gonna be lookin spiffy when I get back up there if this kinda cleaning can transfer back up... It should update when the fog clears" He thinks to himself as he finishes clothing up, he notices a small yellow sticky note in the chute that was left under his clothing. "I dunno what the hell you did but this grey wont wassssh out no matter how hard I try, Sssssso don't blame me for not trying sssucker" "hah, They tried to wash th- Wait they *write* their s's like that too??" Otzy quickly shuffles his way out of the airlock and back to the front, just as he's exiting he can hear Farlo shouting. "*What do you mean he just took it? Did you not put it in the designated safe area you are specifically told to put it in?! It was a direct request from Warnen, Farlo. You know I can't decline that even if I know it's a bad idea!*". Otzy just sighs he sure knows what that means. He feels like he should be distraught but he just isn't, all he just wants to do is turn back around and get right back in that spa and pretend he didn't hear this. Instead he turns the corner to Farlo dramatically covering his eyes with his hand and arching backwards like a drama queen "-*Ah! And how am I to explain this to our guest? That some de jure royalty he doesn't know just took off with his ONE personal item? The ONE item you*

were trusted to keep safe???" Farlo takes his hand off his head and looks over to otzy "*Oh THERE you are, Come over here. hurry hurry*" Otzy walks over to him and props himself on the desk, The receptionist quickly slides from his watch back without breaking eye contact with Farlo. "*They didn't take this, Here*" They whisper to otzy when Farlo closes his eyes to rant. "*Listen, Deary, Sweetie. There's been a change of plans. We've got to go get your suitcase from that rat bast-*" "Yea I... I know... I heard, Just..." Otzy looks down at his watch. Its flickering between a very faded "10:54" and a bright "3:44" rapidly. It lingers on the former "...What? Why is it..." "*What are you waiting for? Come on!*" Farlo holds out his hand and waves it a bit, impatiently gesturing otzy to come on already. "Look... I just... Need a minute okay-" "*You can have your minute in the elevator, now come along now!*" Farlo stomps off in a panic, Otzy stands stunned for a second before running to catch up, a large crowd of observers is forming near the walls of the room but none of them dare get in the path of the cat

He lag behind Farlo, trying to keep up but those long legs make Farlo way faster without realizing. A large group of of drunken looking slugs and a familiar cat bolt in front of otzy and get in his way, making him stumble trying to slow down "Hey! Your that... that That bassstard that *hic* ssssaid tha pineapple sssSSUCKED! We don't *hic* take kindly-" Otzy stops listening when notices farlo absolutely sprinting back down the hall towards him " -that... that... That ssssay thangsssss like tha- OW" Farlo smacks the back of the head of the drunken slug as the rest of the group quickly dissipates back to the walls of the hallway "*Lay a finger on him and your whole lineage will be buried at the pipeyard*" Farlo grabs otzys hand and pulls him away from the group and the now sober slug stands there looking like the fear of god was just put into his mind. The crowd of nobility are deathly silent as farlo quietly walks otzy back to the golden elevator. "*Have a seat.*" hey says, lacking the elegance his voice normally carries. Otzy plonks back down in the seat he rode in before. "L-Looks Farlo I know you wanna help but-" "*Hold it a minute.*" He snaps, shutting otzy up as he roughly takes his mask off and looks at the back of it intently, gently feeling around the back of it with a single pawpad. Otzy feels like he isn't supposed to see his face but can't help but look. Farlo finds what he was looking for and quickly pokes out a claw and cleanly cuts the red mask's back open, spilling its white stuffing out. He pulls an old key out of the fabric before putting the mask back on. "*Now. What was it you were trying to say?*" He says, back to his normal self while bending down towards the bottom of the elevator's buttons and flipping open a hidden panel "I... Uh... I-its... Lets just go get my suitcase alright? Lets try not to take too long... Okay?" Otzy says, obviously intimidated by the tall cat. "*I can tell you're scared of me, Stop that. This isn't the kind of place where you're supposed to be worried*" He says in a calm tone "*This isn't the kinda place where **this** should happen in the first place!*" He says, growing angrier just saying it. He calms himself as he inserts the key in a small hole and turns it. The elevator makes a loud clunking noise and the faint bossa nova music playing stops. "*We're going to re-obtain your suitcase, and you will enjoy the rest of your night.*" Farlo says before typing in a code using the floor buttons, the elevator rocks once again before starting to descend downwards. "*So if you would.*

Please... just relax” He says as sits down in the other chair and does so himself, “Thanks... I guess... I don’t really have much time y’know? Kinda wish... I just stayed in the spa” He awkwardly says. *“Look... I know Warnen, I know how he’s been acting ever since he sent out those invitations. As much as it is my duty to provide you with the best experience, I know Him, I know he will take anything he thinks is ‘important’. As such, I need you to come and make sure everything’s where it’s supposed to be. It’ll be quick”* Farlo says, letting out a deep sigh of annoyance while otzy starts to question things “Wait, How did he even know about my sui-” The elevator snaps to a complete stop that jolts both of them into their seats, the speaker buzzes with a loud static before a recorded message plays “UNSCHEDULED EARLY DEPARTURE, RETURNING TO PUBLIC FLOORS” “*God. Damn it.*” Farlo whispers as he gets right back up out of his seat and right back in front of the panel where he quickly shoves the key right back in *“I know damn well Warnen doesn’t have access to this elevator anymore, why the hell...”* He turns the key a few times until the elevator clicks and starts going back down Farlo gets back up, flops back into the chair and puts his hand on his head. A faint static continues to play over the elevator speaker as the elevator slowly descends, Otzy’s starting to get an idea of what that noise means. He checks his watch and its only displaying “3:44”, The thumps it a few times with his finger which causes it to flicker back to “11:04” for but a moment. He wants to ask for reassurance from Farlo, reassurance that this won’t take too long but one look at Farlo’s upset state makes otzy remain silent, he wouldn’t want to be asked about menial things when he’s feeling that way. “It’ll be fine. Doors only lock at 12...” he thinks to himself

The elevators golden doors audibly open to a [tight, grey, dreary hallway](#). Farlo sighs before getting up and motioning for otzy to do the same. *“...Come along now deary, Lets go get your stuff back”* Hey says, gently offering a hand and helping otzy up off the chair. They step out of the elevator and Farlo flicks a nearby light switch, one by one small dim white lights flicker on in order, going down the hall and lighting the dusty grey walls. They’re just concrete, no attempt to paint or mask what is plainly visible. *“I don’t come down here often, It is not within my duties to care for this place, It is theirs and only theirs... You won’t have to look at it for long, Sorry”* he says with an annoyed voice that slowly slips into solemnity, he checks to make sure otzy follows along *“He’s at the very end of the hall.”* He adds as he starts to up his pace to a normal walk. As they walk through the bleak dreary hall, metal doors begin to appear on the left and right side, roughly dug into the raw concrete foundation of the building. Farlo walks past each one without even looking, Each one has a name on it faded by time, each one has been welded shut from the outside *“Those aren’t his room, We don’t re-use rooms down here. Those are resting sites. Tombs of Mechanics long past, before my own time. all sealed in their workplace, frozen in time with their creations of pride. What they created dies with them, but the title is always passed on to the next no matter what happens. Nobody knows where the first one was buried, The one who made this tower...”* Farlo continues in a quiet voice, he doesn’t seem comfortable anymore *“I-I’m... Sorry, I don’t mean to attack you with such things. It just bothers me when I come down here is all... His room should be coming up soon”* He says rounding another corner, the halls themselves feel unnatural, as if nothing was planned and only expanded when the next was

needed. Otzy isn't sure what to say, he feels microscopic down here, uncomfortable, he just keeps following. As he rounds the corner, picture frames begin appearing next to all of the doors, at first incredibly faded and rough in pure black and white, some not even strong enough to survive the heavy air down here but they grow fresher and more detailed as they grow closer to the end of the hall in sight. Each picture shows a young, smiling goat with varying horns and dark shades of fur, once one has glasses they all have glasses, each is different, yet together they all feel the same. Farlo's up ahead at the end of the hallway facing a closed door, He seems to be thinking to himself as he waits. Otzy speed walks to catch up. The portrait right next to the last door has an older looking goat wearing pink glasses that the next shares. "...Wait here a moment will you? I've some words to say to Warnen before you get your case back." Farlo quickly glances down at Otzy's watch "Don't worry, I won't take too long. You probably want to leave after this anyways..." He says, entering the door and closing it behind him before otzy can even respond. Otzy just looks around while he waits, looking at the end of the hall that just lies there as cracked concrete rubble where they stopped digging, he looks at the portrait of the goat inside the room, they don't look happy, they look tired. Otzy starts to feel a bit stressed and looks down at his watch "3:14". He taps his finger on it, "3:14". He taps harder "3:14". He smacks it with his palm "11:14" "Okay... Still got time" He sighs in stress. He feels tense, like he needs to move or just do something but he keeps waiting, soon after he hears faint yelling piercing through the metal door

"Ohh THIS again?! THAT'S why you did it?" *mumble mumble* "How many times have I told you?!" *mumble* "I DON'T CARE, NONE OF US DO" ...Otzy plugs his ears, He doesn't want to hear this. ... "Go ahead, Get all fucking upset about it! Your DONE, I don't give a SHIT what you say! None of it matters! You have a god damned JOB to do!" *Stomp Stomp Stomp* The door opens and Farlo stomps out. He doesn't even look at otzy who unplugs his ears. "Go get your shit, I'll be at the elevator waiting." He says walking off while pulling a pill out of his pocket and taking it. [Bad memories from long long ago](#). Otzy gently opens the door and steps inside. A messy, messy workshop dug into the concrete lies in front of him, endless unfinished projects lie broken and abandoned on the lab tables, an old calendar drawn on a whiteboard lies untouched covered in dust, to his right a short young looking goat, wearing a hoodie and quietly sobbing into their own crossed arms laid on a table. His suitcase is right there next to them, all the papers inside sprawled out messily and unorganized with a few of his tools placed on a metal tray next to some tools, thankfully untouched. He could take his suitcase, collect his things, leave right now and return home with time to spare, that goat isn't real anyways, it stops existing the moment otzy leaves, why care? Otzy walks over to the desk and gently pulls out a chair and sits next to the sobbing goat boy and waits. He isn't sure what to say, he isn't sure what to do but he sits there. "I'm sorry", Warnen weakly says. "Huh?" "I... I'm sorry" "What are you sorry about?" "I... Your... Suitcase" "Its okay... You didn't break anything... It's all okay" Otzy reaches over and pats Warnen on their back, It's fluffy. Warnen sniffles a little before murmuring to himself "It doesn't make any sense..." "What doesn't?" Otzy asks, afraid of what he might be talking about. Warnen stays silent for a moment before bursting upwards with a tear soaked face "NOTHING! NONE OF IT! ITS ALL JUST..."

Warnen looks at otzy briefly with his red teary eyes before looking down at the suitcases papers sprawled out. "IT WAS SUPPOSED TO MAKE IT MAKE SENSE... Find someone that can help! ANYONE!" He slams his head back into his long sleeved arms and falls back into sobbing on the table. Otzy doesn't know anymore. "W-What are you talking about?" "None of this is real..." It's what otzy feared. "S-Sure it is, It's real to you guys!" Warnen slowly lifts himself up and just stares "Then... Why does nothing make sense? Why is our history dotted with... So many errors... So many just... mistakes, things that don't make sense! People I know change who they are on a whim! People I've known exist and then they ...don't. I dream of things that scare me... I... I don't even know if my memories are... real anymore" he says burying himself again. "Well... It's... It's not that bad! I'm right here, I'm real! Otzy taps him on the shoulder a few times "See?" "I know you're real. You're the only thing that is!... Those papers prove it... Were all just temporary" Otzy's starting to panic. This dweller won't last much longer like this, There's too many sharp things in this room, he's seen what happens. "L-Look, I know those papers seem bad but... that's just OUR understanding of your world okay? That's OUR perspective, W-We could be *WRONG* as far as I know! You're a man of science aren't you? You sure seem like one, Surely you can understand that right?" Warnen seems to think for a moment and raises his head up, "I... *sniff* I guess but... Yours makes more sense than... what I know" "Well... I've seen things that don't make sense either! I... I've seen things in worlds like yours that seem to... taunt me and... nobody else seems to have it happen to them no matter... how many times they try. B-But the point stands! We... We don't know your worlds that well either way, We can't go *back* once we leave. It's just... Assumption" Otzy says, bending the truth. "Really? But... Aren't I supposed to not be able to think like this? Your papers even say so, I'm just a... 'dweller,' We *can't* think like this". "Well... You're just Special. Sometimes worlds have Dwe-People like you... People that can see the cracks a little. People that just... seem to be a bit more *aware* than the others." "Then... Why me? Why am I the only one like this? Everyone else just wants me to be a mechanic. Just do what my dad did and stop asking so many questions..." Otzy just shuffles in his seat, His mind already connecting what they just said to his own thoughts. "Well... Maybe if you keep trying you'll eventually find something. Something that'll make it all make sense, and you can stop worrying!" A discarded robot in the back of the room briefly shrieks static over its speakers, when otzy looks over to it he sees nothing. "...Fucker".

"What is it?" "It's..." Otzy feels the urge to say what he's seen but he knows it'll only make them worse off. "It's just... One of my own issues, it's fine. Here" stands up "Come on, Get out of that chair and walk for a second, get your mind off all this" Otzy says, sounding like his dad. Warnen stands up and wipes his face with his sleeve. "And do what? Nothing around here works..." "And my lab from up where I come from is just as dysfunctional sometimes" He says with a smile, Warnen just looks sadder imagining a world he can't be in "W-Well, Why don't you show me something you were doing earlier today? Uh..." Otzy looks around the room. Every robot, machine, engine and computer parts laid out on a table has a thick layer of dust on it, even the hoist chains hanging from above look untouched. Warnen looks like he isn't here. "Hey! Snap outta that. What about..." Otzy spots a faintly glowing computer sitting atop one of the back wall desks,

but only just accepted. Otzy checks his watch, Its stuck at “3:44” “I can’t tell you, It doesn’t

Warnen. I DON'T WANT TO THINK ABOUT IT. IT FEELS LIKE IM *NOT* SUPPOSED TOO, IT FEELS LIKE ITS PL-"

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in the room blares out in synchronous perfect harmony, speakers without wire, speakers without

power, All buzz their deafening white noise in attempt to silence the truth. Otzy covers his ears, his eyes close instinctively, It hurts, **it hurts**. He falls to the ground in agony, barely catching himself from hitting the ground despite it suddenly feeling soft and comfortable. He lies there, in the darkness of his closed eyes his body screams out for it to end but it never comes, It feels like eternity, Endless torture. Eternal punishment.

Otzy lies there, His body racked with pain doesn't allow him to take control until it finishes screaming. When otzy takes his hands off his ears and slowly opens his eyes the pain quickly fades. He stands up off the hard cold concrete, his ears feel fine, his head no longer hurts him, his muscles don't ache, nothing hurt him. He looks around and the room lies empty. The robots that lied on the table are gone, the computer behind him just a blank wall. He looks around for Warnen, he isn't there. His suitcase lies untouched on the table where it was before, the papers still sprawled out. "Is he... Gone?" Otzy thinks to himself as he slowly walks over to the suitcase, he checks the chair he was sitting in, he checks under the tables, the ceiling, cabinets. Warnen isn't there "Maybe he just... Ran away after that noise..." Otzy prays to himself as he gathers his suitcase back together and steps outside the room, the door closes behind him with a soft thud. He looks to his right and onto the wall next to the door, where the portrait should be. There's just concrete. Warnen *isn't*, anymore. Otzy's heart sinks, "W-Why did he just... What happened?? Where did he go???" Otzy swings the door open again and looks around inside, He still isn't there. He runs back through the hall to the golden elevator, screaming out as he turns the corner "FARLO, DID YOU S-" Nobody is there, The elevator's open and playing its soft waiting music. "N-No!, It can't be..." Otzy runs inside and closes the doors, he rapidly presses the "call Farlo" button and a dialtone plays over the speakers. "Come on... Come on..." he mutters as it dials until *Click* "The person you are trying to reach is currently unavailable and their voicemail box is full. Please try again later" "...god damnit, Not again..." Otzy whispers to himself as the soft music returns. A faint *ding* plays over the speaker and the screens where Farlo once talked displays a spa icon on it. "No... no! NO! I'm NOT going back after that" Otzy screams in anger at the inanimate object "Somethings wrong, Somethings fucked up... Every damn time I get close to something I get pulled away, EVERY TIME I *THINK* about it down here I get pulled away. I'M NOT going back up! I won't do it, I WON'T DO IT." The Icon on the screen fades away and the music returns. Otzy forcefully presses the lobby button on the panel and waits as the elevator starts to rumble upwards. "That dweller didn't deserve that. And I'm not going to blame myself for it... Not this time." He says to himself with a shake in his voice. Otzy closes his eyes and sits in silence.

The elevator arrives at the lobby floor, The doors open to endless crowds of slugs frozen in time, unmoving. Otzy doesn't even try to speak to them, He should have done the same last time. He pushes past them and to the main outdoor entrance. Stepping into the wastes outside of the skyscraper, the air is dry. "I'm going to find something, I'm going down..." he mutters to himself "I'm going to find *something* next world... I don't care what it is... I don't care about the world itself... I just... Need to know"

Old chpt1 (Kept for comment archive)

He's falling, what's left of his concept is falling, falling in darkness. His mind's eye begins to reform, A scattered mess of grey matter floating aimlessly, dry and lacking color, he tries to paint a picture of his own lost form with them. First the brain, then the head. Higher Consciousness returns and with it the crashing waves of a screaming migraine, He calms himself, Reminding himself that it's natural and trying to understand will only make it worse. The crashing waves recede into the ocean and the headache follows with it. He begins to paint his body once again, The chest below and the extremities connected to the core. He begins to feel them again, Buzzing, Buzzing with static, It tries to rush upwards to his head but he pushes it downwards and out, He can sense his cold body once again. He returns to the head and paints his ears. His hearing returns with only a faint whispering static in the background. He knows he's nearly there, He paints the eyes and can feel them once again, He only has to find the will to open them.

He awakens. Facing upwards at a dark colorful sky, large white bubbly caricatures of stars float lazily around with an endless stretching aurora floating in front of them with the cosmos' own colors behind. He feels the clothes on his body and the suitcase in hand, It smells like wet soil after rain with a hint of sea salt. He can feel grass poking at his empty hand. He sits up groggily and looks around him, Small dotted islands float on the surface of a shiny blue sea lit by the starlight above as far as he can see, Each with small curvy brown bridges connecting them. The island he's on barren of foliage but the few he can see close by differ. To his left, a small bumpy island merely the size of a small home floats with palm-like trees dotted across its green surface, small glowing sticks casting light onto a dirt path across the island and onto its bridge. To his right a larger island with a long line of raised hills surrounding its shores with a rough wooden looking roof splayed across the peaks He squints his eyes and can just barely make out small round cap like objects poking out of the top of the roof, Each colorful and glowing like the glow sticks on the other island.

Otzy hefts up the suitcase and places it onto his lap, propping it open and knowingly reaching for a pen without even looking while scanning down the "OVERVIEW" paper down to the "ORIGIN OBJECT" grid, A tall computer generated spreadsheet with two columns and four rows, One for each item. "Ceramic Mushroom... Beach sand... Ah, there it is. "Childrens Star Projector". Otzy begins to write in the square to the right of it before stopping himself "Wait, Does that say" Otzy narrows his eyes and looks closer at it "Children,ss star Projector", Otzy snickers to himself. "Heh, Newbie's misspells strike yet again. I'll poke fun at him when I get

back” before continuing to write “Starry sky above” in the “WORLD EFFECT SHORT” column next to it and flipping up the page to write a more detailed description in the designated “Children;ss star Projector” effects page, Still snickering to himself when he reads it at the top of the page. Once done he puts his pen back into the suitcase before locking it up and standing up to stretch off that groggy feeling. He grabs the amulet around his neck and checks the crystal, Just as he knew it would, The once glistening black gem is now a cracked grey husk of its former self that not even light itself wants to reflect off of its rotten form. He unwinds the pinching claws and picks it out of its hold before putting the drained crystal into his pocket for later. It's procedure to just throw them away after use but he likes holding onto them. He looks around again to try and decide where to go next but feels something tug his foot, he recoils upwards and nearly falls over backwards pulling his suitcase tight up to his chest. He peers over it downwards and sees a very big blue... Mushroom? On the ground. He stares at it from a moment before it lifts its head upwards revealing small little white eyes hidden underneath its big cap, It tilts its head to the side and looks at Otzy with a confused expression, Its wearing a dark blue scarf . Otzy lets his guarding suitcase stance down looks down towards it saying “Speech?” In an accidentally cold sounding voice. The shroom looks down for a second before meekly responding “weird tall shroom can speak? speak?”



(Hey look! An image!. In later parts these will just be embedded in text but for this time its out in the open so you'll read this. These are just imagination fodder so don't take them as 100% true cannon gospel on what something looks like, what something looks like past the explicitly said details is up to you so have fun with it)

Otzy is simultaneously relieved and a bit annoyed at this revelation, “Oh good, Don't mind me little... Shroom? I'm just here to look around and do some tests and then I'll be right out of your hair... er- cap” He says back only to see the little shroom has seemingly already tuned him out and is prodding at the metal reinforced corners of his suitcase curiously, Otzy

yanks it back "Hey! N-No! Don't touch tha-" he says as if he's scolding a pet before being interrupted by something behind him tugging at the cuffs of his pants, He quickly swings around accidentally dropping his suitcase without realizing to see yet another mushroom poking at him, A slightly smaller but still plump green-capped mushroom. "Hey! What are you doin-" The mushroom doesn't even react as it quickly grabs the fallen suitcase off the floor and starts wobbling away at a shocking speed. "W-wait bring that back RIGHT NOW!" Otzy says trying to sprint forward after the green cap but he quickly trips and tumbles right overtop the blue shroom that's still standing right in front of him "oof". Otzy scrambles to get back up but once he does it's too late and the green cap is already out of sight. The blue cap wobbles back and forth on the ground turtle'd for a few seconds before hopping back onto its stubby feet. It looks at Otzy and asks "why tall shroom look so mad? mad?" in its same quiet shy childlike voice. Otzy just sighs already mentally wishing for different dwellers in this world, He takes a deep breath and bends down to the shrooms level and calmly explains "Your friend just took something *really important*, They took it and ran off into *place I don't know*, I need important thing to do job" ending it with a false smile in hopes the shroom will understand what that even is "oh! Shroom should have known ...Shroom sorry sorry" "No no its fine, It wasn't you" Otzy says half paying attention trying to think about if he should go back and listen to derrick berate him or try and find it himself. "Shroom know where green went went" blue cap says excitedly hopping up and down a little. Otzy catches himself nearly reaching for the amulet before fully processing what the little shroom said. "...Really? And do you think you could... Lead me to them?" Blue cap does a little spin before sprinting off towards a nearby bridge. It's incredible how that much mass has so much acceleration. Otzy nearly trips over himself trying to scramble to speed up, Yelling up ahead "W-Wait! Slow down!" to which the shroom instantly perfectly stops in place and turns around to look at Otzy. "Shroom slow down, Big Shroom too big to keep up" the shroom says completely unaware of the shade it just cast at Otzy and waits for him to catch up before walking at a slower pace.

They walk over the bridge off the flat island and into a small forested one, Otzy notices that it's not made of wood, It feels hard like stone yet sounds like ceramic when he steps on it, He makes a mental note to check it once he gets his equipment back. Small little colorful rods stick out of random spots on the side of the path sporadically lighting the dirt up as they walk for a few minutes in silence until Otzy begins to feel tense from not doing his work despite the

obvious excuse, "So... Do you guys have... Names? Call each other anything?" He asks, Half curious Half trying to find out for the dweller societal report "Na-yaem?" The shroom says confused "Shrooms have no 'Na-yaem', "Okay I shoulda figured that, I-I mean do you call each other specific things? Like should I make a specific *noise* to get your attention?" Otzy clarifies, trying to dumb it down. "Hmm... Shroom not ever need attention noise... Shroom always know other shroom, Big shroom not know same?". The shroom replies, seemingly careful in its words. "...Okayyyy, Well... Me and you are *different* but... That don't mean it bad, It just mean different" Otzy catches himself already devolving his own language to the shrooms and mentally gags "How about, I just call you blue cap? If i say that, It means im trying to get your attention... Okay?" Otzy asks in his best patient kindergarten teacher voice as they walk over another small brown bridge to another forested island. The shroom thinks on it for a few seconds "o-kay, Shroom now blue cap!" it chirps in a slightly confused but still happy voice. Otzy catches himself smiling at the dwellers speech and quickly reminds himself to not get attached but before he can think about it too hard the shroom suddenly stops in its tracks and points at one of those houses Otzy saw in the distance when he first woke up. "This where shroom sleep! sleep! Shroom sleep with head in sky to recharge!". Otzy stares at it, confused as to why bluecap suddenly stopped and decided to show him this. "Uh... T-thanks for telling me, I'll uh... I'll be sure to write that dow- Oh wait!, Is this where my suitcase is? Is this where that green shroom went!?" He says already walking off the main path towards the door. The shroom rapidly darts in front of him and says "N-no! Suitcase not there! No wake sleeping shroom!" Otzy pauses and just looks down at the shroom annoyed. "Ack- What? Where is it then? ...do you even know where you're going?" He asks, staring back at the shroom that looks like its barely even there mentally.

Otzy starts to reach for his amulet "I-I'm just gonna go home, Thanks for trying I guess-" The shroom interrupts him by thumping into his leg, Shockingly powerful "N-No! Shroom sorry! Shroom just got lost in the stars! stars! Shroom know where to go! " it screeches with a worried voice. Otzy pauses, "Did it know?" he questions himself mentally before speaking up "Okay, Just. Lets go okay? Straight there." The shroom lets go of his leg instantly and wordlessly starts trekking back down the path they were just on, Otzy follows shortly behind him. Back to silent walking Otzy has entered his mind palace once again, "Nah, Normal ones aren't supposed to know... it probably

just heard me say I was gonna go home and got all scared... They don't seem the smartest anyways..." He thinks to himself "Weird little things..." as they step onto the bridge out from where they just came he catches something in the corner of his eye, He stops without the shroom even noticing. Off the right of the bridge, Far far off in the distance he sees something, In the empty ocean he sees something tall and narrow but lacking color It's just barely poking over the horizon. The shroom briefly turns around and notices Otzy squinting off into the distance and scuttles over to his side. "What big shroom see?" it asks tilting its head to the side. "I... I don't know, It's like some tower or something, I swear we just wen-" "Oh! Mushroom see that before. Shroom friends try to sail sail there once on float boat, Tower never got closer! Shroom friends gave up, Shroom did not try since, not worth..." It says, interrupting Otzy. "Huh, Well... I wish I had my suitcase, I've got some binoculars folded up in there but... Ah whatever I can always come back, lets keep going" Otzy says gesturing for the shroom to continue, Which its confused by for a moment but it eventually figures out what that hand motion means

They continue their trek across the small dotted islands, passing other smaller shroom houses of varying sizes, each of which- without fail- the mushroom would and point just to exclaim "Not suitcase! Nearly there!" while pointing at it. Just as Otzy is beginning to feel like he should just pierce up and take the loss again until suddenly the shroom shrieks out "Here!". A tall 2 story building stretches upwards from the surrounding coast mountains that it uses as the first story walls, Made of the same material the bridges are. Otzy briefly thinks about how coastal mountains shaped like that are impossible but quickly reminds himself it's a False World. "Green shroom in Here! Here!" the little shroom squeaks before waddling forward and opening the door for Otzy, "come inside! inside!". Otzy briefly thinks of the risks but shrugs and steps inside. A warm multicolor glow stretches across the giant one room floor, The colorful glowsticks normally kept on the trail haphazardly spiked into random places in the ceiling above and bended upwards for safety, Random similarly colorful furniture seemingly placed at random spots across the room, chairs, tables, Benches, Stools and even a few odd... Statues? The room bustles with activity from what must be at least 30 colorful shrooms all bumbling around. Sitting at crudely made tables doing odd hand gestures, chasing each other around or sculpting small little toys and statues out of an odd clay like material, None of them seem to notice Otzy which he sighs in

relief for. "Big shroom stay here! here! Shroom go find green shroom and get brown box!" Otzy shuffles partially behind the door to not draw any of the shrooms' attention to him and waits, watching the other shrooms' odd behaviours and making mental notes.

Eventually bluecap comes down from upstairs holding his suitcase, A wave of relief washes over Otzy as he waves to bluecap and motions for him to come over. "Got brown box! box Got brown box! box~" it sings to itself as it steps outside and hands it to Otzy who quickly grabs it and thanks the shroom. He quickly pops it open and checks inside, Everything's still there. "oh good, They didn't get in" He whispers to himself before looking back down at the shroom that's seemingly expecting something. "Uh... I-I'm going to go now okay? I've got stuff to do... You did really good getting this back for me" The mushroom seems to not even notice his words, Only blankly staring at his amulet. Otzy quickly grabs it and pulls it closer to himself "Y-You can't have that, That's mine" Otzy says shakily, backing away from the shroom who finally speaks up "Shroom not take! Take! Shroom just looking at black fruit boost in odd circle! Why big shroom hold boost like that?" Otzy loosens his stance, "What? A snack? N-No it's not food it's just..." A realization dawns on Otzy "Do you mean the black crystal in the middle?" He turns the amulet around and points to the other 6 slotted into the back "These?" He asks, confused. "Yes! yes! Shroom see those before! other shroom use dark rock just like, It help grow star fruit big and strong! strong!". Otzy stands there blankly thinking about it until fireworks go off in his mind "Holy shit. Is this thing saying they just... *have* breaching crystals? This is amazing, I- T-That's perfect! I Just need to make sure their real before i put it on the report " He quickly looks down at his watch "11:47 AM" "damnit" he mutters to himself under his breath "Fuckin, Its time for lunch checkin but... I- I can't leave this I... I'ma just go tell them I'm skipping so they don't get worried about me, I wanna check before the end of the day. " He quickly looks down at the shroom looking at him confused.

"Okay, Blue cap... So, change of plans, I actually *do* have more time but, I've gotta go do something real quick okay? You've gotta stay *Right here* for a little bit and then you can show me all about your little star fruits alright?" The little shroom giddily jumps up and down "okay! okay! Okay!" It chirps before walking back inside and sitting down next to the other shrooms. Otzy gently closes the front door and walks away, to a secluded area, deep in the woods of the island and

behind some bushes. A place where nobody will find *what's left of him* once he "leaves". He looks around for any other shrooms and once he confirms to himself he's alone he sits down crisscrossed and opens up his suitcase. He quickly pulls out the specially made flashlight they use for breaching upwards. It's a small, circular light shaped like a hockey puck. He flicks it onto "Burst" mode before shutting the suitcase and locking it up and tightening the handle around his wrist. To make sure its changes can "follow him upwards". He grabs his amulet and quickly unwinds the pincers around a crystal, He picks it out and places it into the holding claws, Winding them as tight as he can before bringing up the flashlight puck to the front of the amulet and twisting it til they lock together. With the flashlight lens locked to the amulet and pointing through the dark crystal directly at Otzy's chest he takes a few deep breaths and reaches to the power button, He gently presses down onto it until *Click*. He only sees a split second of white light passing through the crystal towards his chest before his body slumps and his mind stops thinking once again

Floating, Floating. Once again the fragments of Otzy's consciousness floats through a dark expanse. This time upwards, Up Up into a white glowing expanse far above. His head and mind reforming once again with a feeling of natural healing, as if a grave mistake had finally been corrected and a sinful weight lifted off the mind. His body soon follows with the forgotten warmth of flowing blood comforting him through the expanse as color slowly returns to the body and clothing, His mind calm and free of worry. Soon after he begins to feel the weight on his eyes feather away with hearing soon returning, He can hear the faint whirring and clicking of the lab's machinery once again.

He wakes up just as that black fog clears from hiding his forgotten body, allowing sight to the schrodinger yet again. He's still groggy from the voyage across the lens but he's got things to do. He quickly gets up and carefully walks around the 4 items on the floor, making sure not to bump any of them. He notices Sasha still fiddling with the machinery wall and he taps the window to get her attention and motions for the door. She looks annoyed that she got interrupted but quickly walks over and spams through the warnings to start the door opening before going back to her work. The door alarm rings yet again with Otzy squeezing through it as soon as he can to push it closed and shut it up, He looks around and sees charles carrying a big box of cables towards sasha. "Perfect, Just who I needed" Otzy thinks to himself as he walks

over towards Charlie, who's putting down the box next to Sasha to dig through, "Hey Ne-C-Charlie! Can you tell derrick or poz upstairs that I'm skipping lunch checkin?" "O-Oh uh... Wait" Charlie gets a smug look on his face "Did you forget to write down stuff again?" "N-No! I just, Some Dweller saw the amulet and told me about how they have something really similar to it. It might finally be a new world with crystals in it! Last time *our* team found one was like... god, Probably before you even joined us!" Otzy says excitedly "ooooo, Alright I'll run up and tell em soon" Charlie starts to turn around and head towards the cramped stairs before stopping himself "wait... Does this mean I can get your lunch credit for the day?" Charlie asks in a small voice "...Fineeee" Otzy briefly scrabbles his signature onto a nearby piece of paper before frisbeeing it over to Charles "Here" Charlie catches it which surprises even himself "Thanks otz!" before running back towards the stairs. "You hear that sasha? I'm goin back in aight?", "Yea yea I heard, ya going back in, Just go on ahead, monitor equipment still running. I'm finishing up what I got and then ima go inhale whatever their serving at the cafeteria" Otzy just shrugs and goes on back in, Mashing through the door sequence, Squeezing through and closing it behind him. He sits back down, Swaps a crystal into the holder, Tightens the suitcase strap around his wrist, crosses his legs and decides to just get it over as fast as he can, He quickly grabs the amulet and presses down on the release trigger.

He falls through the lens yet again. Static consumes his body and threatens to tear it apart from within, but he resists. His mind runs blank and then ceases to continue, Soon after his concept falls down into the world below and back into its body for this world.

He gets up and shakes off that deathrest feeling. He looks around, No trampled grass, No mushrooms watching from afar. Seems nobody found his body while it was "asleep", He gets up and flicks off the flecks of dirt off his grey arms and buttons up his lab coat to try and feel a bit warm again before walking back towards the mushroom hut, He hopes bluecap is still there so they can lead him to wherever those "Snack boosters" are. He walks up to the door and opens it. All the mushrooms are still inside playing their same games as if he never left although there's notably a few less. He scans through the crowd of vibrantly colored mushroom caps poking over each other and he notices a singular lone blue one sitting at a table by itself trying to mold something out of that clay-like material, Otzy waves to get his attention and the bluecap

instantly seems to perk up, Waddling over to Otzy and attracting the attention of other shrooms watching him walk up to the tall grey weird looking figure standing in the door. "Tall shroom back! back!" Otzy smiles "Yes I am, Now. When I left you had mentioned seeing something like this" He bends down and grabs his amulet, facing it towards the shroom while pointing at the gem in the center. "Yes yes, Shroom remember, Black sparkle at big pit nearby!" Otzy nods "Hmm, Big pit? Okay, Can you lead me to this big pit?" "Shroom know way ^{way}. Follow!" Blue cap waves to his friends inside before waddling off along the path they were following earlier, Otzy follows.

They cross more similar islands, More palm trees, More mushroom houses, Otzy swears he even sees the same house a few times but pushes it off as just False World simplicity, He catches himself gazing into the stars above and quickly reminds himself that he has to fill out his report soon... Just not now since he's walking, but he can get some more details for it. "Hey bluecap, quick question but if you guys eat these "starfruit" and also just absorb the starlight above for sustenance, Do you drink anything?". Bluecap looks over at Otzy confused as they walk "rink? rink?, Shroom never need to rink before, Shroom not hear this noise before" "Okay, Good to know... Wait, So can you even swim in the ocean then?" Otzy further asks "Swim? Shroom not Swim swim" "What. You just, Can't? Can your friends swim or what?" Otzy presses "No. No shroom swim, ocean bad bad for shroom. Shroom suck water, Shroom grow, Shroom too big, Shroom lose color" Blue cap says in an somber quiet voice as it tightens its blue scarf. "O-Okay then, Well. I'll be sure to write that down when we get some time to stop then" "Oh! Does Big Shroom need to rest? Big Shroom needed slower before" Otzy briefly considers it "Uh... y'know what, Sure just. Gimmie a few minutes aight?" Otzy says "Y-You got something to do right?" He adds, Not even sure why he asked. "Shroom can go ahead ahead, Shroom check path!" It says, already speeding up its walk to its normal excessive speed before Otzy can even reply. "wai- ...Ah whatever"

Otzy sits down, crossing his legs out of habit and props open his suitcase. He feels oddly annoyed just looking down at the paperwork, normally its a nice rebuke from the False Worlds but there's an air of "Why do I care?" to it. He ponders on it for a second before shaking it off, for there's work to do. He plucks out one of his fancy pens and scans down the overview paper,

Writing "Dominant dweller species" next to the ceramic mushrooms and "Island geography" next to sand, His hand stops on the styrofoam cup and he questions what effect its had on the world so far, "... The water in the ocean I guess? But it was specifically a *dry* cup I used. Maybe I just haven't seen it yet or something" He skips over it and shuffles the "Dweller species analysis" paper to the top and starts writing. "The dominant dweller species type of this world are individualistic(?) large humanoid mushrooms with rotund plump mushroom like forms of vibrant colors, While their speech is close to that of a human infant, Typically only verbalizing the absolute minimum required for sentence structure their infrastructure contrarily suggests..." He writes for quite a while in that overly wordy and dense style derrick pushes him to use constantly, He feels satisfied and turns over to the "Geographical landmarks" page ready to write "BIG SHROOMMMM!" shrieks bluecap, that must of snuck up on Otzy as he was lost in documentation limbo. "Ah! W-Wh-Hu... What? What happened?" Otzy scrambles his suitcase closed and looks up to the worried bluecap, Fumbling for the locks on the case. "Bridge to pit is brokennnnnnnnnnn" the shroom whines. "W-Whats wrong with it?" Otzy asks, trying to calm the creature down, "Shattered! shattered! Broken! Big Shroom come fix!" Bluecap screeches as he forcefully pushes Otzy up onto his feet, "O-Okay Maybe I can fix lets just g-ACK" The mushroom tightly grabs Otzys hand and starts pulling him down the path at a full on sprint, Its blue scarf fluttering in the wind. Otzy's barely able to keep up, resorting to just trying and failing to just hop and let the shroom pull with its upsetting amount of strength until mercifully it finally lets go. All of Otzys legs muscles screeching at him from the forced exercise. He huffs and puffs trying to catch his breath and looks up to see a small crowd of vibrantly colored mushrooms all huddled around the upward curve at the start of a brown bridge, Some looking sadly at the bridge and others staring at Otzy with varying reactions.

Blue cap walks up to the crowd and they surround him, Otzy can see them doing odd hand motions alongside the air above the crowd growing a bit colorful and wibbly until they all suddenly disperse and look towards Otzy with a hopeful happy expression as bluecap walks back over to the still recovering Otzy "I told friends you help! help!, Big Shroom have many talents, Big Shroom can fix?" "Y-Yea... Just... Give me a minute..." says the exhausted Otzy. The mushrooms stare at him, Some looking around confused until Otzy takes a deep breath and walks over towards the bridge, The mushrooms all disperse away from his path, looking curiously at the tall grey figure towering over them. Otzy walks onto the bridge and instantly sees the problem. A giant chunk of

the middle section had been completely smashed out, with crumbling dust of the bridge eroding away at the edges and falling into the water below. "Theres no fucking way I'm gonna be able to fix this before 5 today" he thinks to himself, He looks back to the shrooms already preparing an apology speech but he sees the look on their face, Hopeful faces truly expecting a miracle that don't know any bad in the world. He starts to feel bad, He feels terrible and sick but he reminds himself and quickly pushes that feeling away...? "Is that wrong? Why does Derrick always insist... Oh fuck it. There's work to be done." He glances down at his amulet intently, thinking about the breaching crystals he could find. "That's why I'm here, no reason other" He convinces himself before speaking to the expecting crowd "Okay! So... This is a BIG issue and... I don't know how to solve it" The mushrooms look shocked and hurt "BUT! We will find another way around! And then we can all go!" He looks back down at the water below, his mind desperately trying to figure out how the hell to get across, He thinks back to all the False Worlds he's been too in the past and how he's solved similar situations "...Why not, Surely a boat would just work right?".

He turns to the still waiting crowd, Some of the shrooms are already growing bored and starting to play hand games with each other "Okay! We're gonna build boat and help each cross! Can shrooms help find material? Tree make good float boat!" He shouts out to them, Mentally gagging slightly less at dumbing down his speech like that. "Yes! yes!" the mushrooms all reply in slightly creepy unison which makes Otzy feel a bit uncomfortable as they all shuffle off to the side of the path towards the nearby forest, Otzy curiously watches them "wait, I didn't give them tools how are they gonna get any wood those are hard ass palm tr- Andddd they're just punching them down... God damn" Otzy suddenly feels very relieved that the dwellers of this world are very friendly towards him. Shortly after, Shroom after shroom finishes demolishing their tree and brings back a long log, dropping it loosely in front of Otzy before sitting down and waiting for more instructions staring at Otzy until the last straggler drops theirs and sits down. "Ahem, Okay." Otzy clears his throat "I know how to build big float boat. But me need to make sure float boat floats" He says, Already propping open his suitcase and reaching for the scale to use this great opportunity, He quickly unfolds it and presses down on it to make sure its charged. "I place this helper on floor. Each shroom need to step on helper so I can make good float boat!" He says, placing it down onto the floor. The shrooms look confused but quickly shuffle into a line, Otzy pulls out a pen and paper and motions for the first to hop on. [357 LB] "Jesus fucking christ" Otzy whispers to himself as he writes it down and motions for the next to hop on, 10...

15... 20... 23 All of the shrooms accounted for and *very conveniently* weighted perfectly for Otzy's report, He doesn't bother with buoyancy calculations, He already knows his boat can take the weight, He just wanted that data. "Good job shrooms! Now I build Boat... This take a while so uh... J-Just find something to do I guess? I dunno maybe find some string" Otzy says, slipping out of his caveman speech as the task ahead dawns on him. He takes a deep breath and digs out the tool kit from his suitcase.

An hour later, Otzy stands proud in front of his makeshift boat, Loosely put together press fitted logs in a vague cube shape floating atop of the calm water. No sail engine or even paddle in sight, It should just float across given a good push with the small gap. It frankly looks terrible, terrible but functional. He packs up all his tools, closes the suitcase, locks it up and runs his hand through the tight wrist strap "Aint gettin stolen by a shroom this time" he thinks to himself as he turns around. He calls out to the shrooms all doing their own thing "Hey! Boats finished! Lets go already!" The shrooms all stop what their doing in unison and start waddling over to Otzy excitedly. They instinctively form a queue in front of Otzy and wait "wow, quick learners huh" Otzy thinks to himself before speaking up "Okay! Shroom get on one at time and then other shroom push boat! Boat float across to other side, Then shroom push boat back! Got it?" He asks, The shrooms all shout "Yes! yes!" in unison and Otzy motions for first in line to go, Its blue cap. They look up to Otzy a bit unsure but he assures them its safe, They sit down and Otzy looks through the line and picks the biggest shroom he can see "Hey! Orange cap. Your gonna be the boat pusher, Come over here" The lumbering orange cap plots over and grabs hold of the boat, "Aight, Now give it a good push into the wate-" The orange shroom instantly **SHOVES** the boat as fast as it possibly can across the pond, The boat skimming off the top of the water like a weak pool toy as bluecap holds onto the sides for dear life until the boat crashes onto the other side of the water, Blue cap looks around confused for a second before jumping up and down in joy "Made it Made it! Fun! fun!" it chirps from across.

"Okay, Thats great bluecap. Now give it a good push back across okay?!" Otzy shouts to them, Blue cap doing as they are told soon, The boat actually *floats* across the river this time, gently shoring itself in front of Otzy. "Uhhh..." Otzy looks back towards the lumbering orange cap "I-its your t-turn now orange, Hop on!" He stammers out, The orange cap looks happy as it hops atop the boat and Otzy just motions for next in line to come up and push, The boat slides across the water surface calm again and orange cap quietly gets off "G-Great! Now blue cap if you

coil-” The orange cap, Without being told goes ahead and **SLAMS** the boat down into the water again, It spends more time in the air spinning than it does actually floating on water. It crashes down onto the shore in front of Otzy with an awful noise but still in one piece. “T-Thanks orange cap! Just let bluecap push it from now on okay!?” Otzy shouts across, the orange cap slumps, Looking defeated and sad “D-Don’t be like that You can push it back when were all done okay?!” Otzy says without thinking “Wait, fuckin, Why do i care? They're just gonna be gone later today anywa-” He’s interrupted as the next shroom in line gets onboard and the one behind that goes ahead and pushes them across “Oh! Good job! I-I guess you little guys learn quickly huh? Well uh... Just keep it going then” He says re-assuringly to the line as he watches the boat sail back and forth. “Oh whatever, not like derricks here to tell me off. I’m gonna allow myself a *little* bit of fun, He's too stuck up to do that anyways” He thinks to himself as the mushrooms rapidly get more and more efficient at the task, Starting to load more mushrooms onto the boat at once and doing perfect pushes to get the boat as fast as possible without risking it skimming until its just him and one mushroom left.

The mushroom taps on Otzy's leg and motions for him to get aboard the boat, “Oh, Uh sure. But wait, how are you gonna get across?” the little shroom just motions for him to get aboard again and shakes its head no “Uh... Okayyyy” Otzy climbs aboard his rickety raft, it's unsurprisingly not a luxuriously comfortable vessel of the sea but him and his locked suitcase fits on it just fine. The last mushroom quickly gets a running start and shoves the boat into the water, Just as it runs entirely off shore the shroom tries to jump onto the moving boat, un-gracefully tumbling through the air directly towards where Otzy's sitting. Otzy tries to get up and move quickl- **WHAMM** the mushroom slams right into the side of the boat, Its lower body already dunked into the water as it begins to fizz and bubble up around it as it clings to the side of the boat trying to pull itself up. Otzy panics, He quickly reaches up to grab the mushroom with his free hand and pull it up but its too heavy, He quickly fiddles with his suitcases strap to get it to let him go but it wont, The fizzing water grows violent and he can see the vibrant green of the mushrooms cap begin to slowly fade, Otzy's panic deepens. He rips his hand out of the suitcase strap, The weak metal locks flying off into the water as he reaches down with both hands to pull the shroom upwards. The water fizzes louder and louder, Rushing upwards up the shrooms body in long thin bubbling streaks as if it was trying to wrap around its body and pull it down to the depths below as the fizzing grows louder and louder until the boat roughly bumps into the shore of the other side just as otzy goes for one last **YANK** sending the mushroom flying out of the water towards the shore, shattering the streams crawling on its body back into small

droplets. The shrooms quickly run to their sodden friends landing spot and huddle around them as otzy quickly scrambles onto the shore.

Otzy stabilizes his own breathing before slowly reaching over to grab his suitcase, Lucky that it managed to stay aboard. He looks down at the broken strap mechanism with a sad expression "...That's gonna make bringing it home hard" he thinks to himself before slowly getting up and walking over to the crowd of shrooms huddling around the little green cap, Otzy shuffles next to blue cap. "Is it gonna be okay?" "...Yes, Just need time time to rest. Long long time asleep.

Shroom thank you for saving" bluecap says before doing an odd hand gesture to the group, They silently pick up the green cap all together, Lifting them above their heads and start carrying them off towards a nearby mushroom house, Blue cap looks back up to otzy "Lets go, Pit ^{Pit} nearby!" bluecap chirps happily, seemingly already over the near tragedy yet its voice seems oddly forced sounding. "U-Uh.. O.. Okay! Yea! Lets get going!" Otzy stutters before getting back to the path and motioning for bluecap to lead the way. Bluecap once again starts leading the way and otzy follows suit, The dirt path slowly gaining sporadic embedded green stone, growing wider into the forests more and more just as the houses turn from a rare sight to an expectation. the glowing path markers becoming more frequent and orderly, Lighting up the path a dull green with the stones slowly overtaking the dirt more and more until the dirt is just a memory. The houses grow larger and grander looking with colorful intricate drawings carved into their walls as bluecap seems to grow more and more excited with each passing second, beginning to speed up and constantly checking behind to make sure otzy is still following until suddenly sprinting off forwards saying "Hurry! ^{Hurry!} Big bridge soon!" excitedly like a kid with his scarf fluttering. He's speeds up to try to keep up with bluecap and in his periphery can see the islands to his left and right growing closer with their own paths glowing a deep blue and yellow respectively with more houses dotting the small floating islands, Just as he begins to ponder their naturality he reaches a grand merger. 7 colorful paths from island paths not his own all merge together into a massive flat circular island, Their colors swirling off their path and into the colorful artistic vortex pebbled into the island's ground. In front, a grand colorful bridge splattered with a rainbow of colors stretches far forward, Its railing dominated by statue after statue of grand standing mushrooms all in an endless rainbow of color. Each bending down as if to greet any travelers from near or far. He can faintly see bluecap standing in the middle of it waving at otzy. He rushes forward, unable to take any notes on the architecture like he wants to and meets up with blue cap "Pit here! Pit here! ^{Pit here!}" Bluecap yells jumping up and down unable to contain their excitement,

"Come on! Come on! ^{come on!}" it says forcefully grabbing Otzy's hand once again and dragging him up the rising bridge, Otzy tries to shout at them to stop but just as he can finally get the sentence out bluecap stops and lets go of his arm shouting "Look! Look!"

Otzy looks up from his sore ankles, "W-What? You didn't ha-" Otzy's remaining words barely fall out as he looks up to see it. The Pit. Just over the railing, a *sisyphean task* **completed**. The ocean, **Gone**. Giant white styrofoam walls stretch up from the depths of the dry ocean floor, reaching just above the crashing fizzing waves of the ocean seemingly in spite, just so it can split it all in twain and protect a grand tower inside. Not that one far distant in the ocean but instead A towering colossus of a structure, Endless floors molt upwards and outwards with no rhyme or reason. *No plan, No pattern*. Countless strings of colored cloth taut between floors, coming in one floor some color and coming out another with the vibrant colorful caps of mushrooms barely visible from above, they move around the structure like uncoordinated but knowing ants, all working their own task. And at the very top of it all, A stretching garden of colorful fruit juts up and down the current "top" of the tower, soaking in the endless starlight from above with yet more mushrooms endlessly catering to and harvesting the star fruit

"Wow..." Otzy says breathlessly, Unable to even take in the sight, "That's... That's what the cup did?" he says out loud without even realizing. Bluecap just smiles up at him, not even listening. His eyes wander around the structure before locking onto a distant small shroom down below that seems to be running towards the edge, he panics for a moment as it gracefully jumps off the floor and lands head first on the floor below but his panic subsides when the shroom simply bounces softly and a few nearby help him back onto his feet. Bluecap interrupts his sight-seeing loudly "Big shroom, Lets go down!" it says "Y-Yea I wan- Wait!" otzy exclaims, snapping himself out of it "What about the dark crystal you said, Where's that in here?" Blue cap looks disappointed "^{crystal with elder shroom... shroom...}" "^{Normal shroom not allowed to bottom, only elder.}" It says sadly "O-Oh well... *I'm* not a normal shroom now am I?" Otzy asks so naturally it surprises even himself. "True! ^{true!}" Blue cap says already looking happier, Lets go explore! ^{explore!} they say walking off to the side where staircases down reside. "W-wait!" otzy shouts "Do we... *have* to take the stairs?" Bluecap looks surprised "^{oh, well normally fast shroom fall and bounce bounce, Big shroom not seem bouncy...}" "Ah... Thats... unfortunate I... I guess we'll just have to take the stairs" Otzy says already dreading the walk down "But, Other shroom make uppy downy ^{uppy downy} nearby!" Bluecap walks back towards where they were and towards a nearby elevator "Huh... Guess I

just... Didn't notice that, Sweet!" Otzy and bluecap both get into the rickety elevator, It shakes quite noticeably as they shuffle in "Uh. Is this safe bluecap?" "Yes! yes!, Shroom made for shroom, Shroom bounce if bad happen" It says excitedly. Otzy blinks but presses the rough looking down button anyways.

The doors shut and the elevator begins descending downwards after a few jolts. Otzy props himself up against the sturdiest feeling wall and blue cap sits down with a **plop** shaking the elevator. They ride down slowly in silence for a few moments before bluecap speaks up in a curious tone "What shroom and big shroom do after big shroom find rock?" it asks "Uh... I... Well I was gonna just..." Otzy looks down at the waiting happy face of blue cap and then glances at his amulet "...We'll find something to do... Don't worry" He says, faking a smile as the elevator slows to a crawl and the doors open "Hey, this isn't the bottom. What are we doing here?" otzy asks but blue cap only responds "Wait here big shroom! Bluecap go find thing! thing!" before running off into the low ceiling cramped mess of a factory floor, Jolting around a corner and out of view before otzy can say anything. A few of the working mushrooms look curiously at otzy in the open elevator but just happily wave at him before resuming their tasks, The ones working with the cloth tapping it against their vibrantly colored caps to dye the cloth. Some time passes, "Its... been a while, M-Maybe I should just go... Go check the crystals then breach home for the day, Already spent too much time messing around anyways" Otzy begins slowly reaches towards the down arrow of the elevator until suddenly hearing bluecap yell from somewhere "Big shroooooom!" It yells, careening around a corner and into view, holding a large blue piece of... cloth? It runs past all the working shrooms, somehow dodging all of them until it slides back into the elevator "I got big shroom gift! gift!" it quickly chirps before jumping up high and wrapping the blue cloth around Otzy's neck. "I got big shroom scarf! Just like me! Made by self!" it rattles on in a happy voice "Now big shroom won't look so grey! Big Shroom have color!" It ends. The little things pulling at Otzy's heartstrings by accident. "Awww... T-Thanks bluecap this is... this is great! I'ma keep this!" he says, straightening it up and tying it around him and bending down to hug the little dweller. "Bluecap happy big shroom like!" "Otzy just smiles for a while before remembering his mission" "Oh! Yea, Lets keep going down shall we?" he asks, Gesturing to the down button to which bluecap happily smacks. The elevator rumbles and then slowly begins descending once again

They arrive at the bottom, The elevator shutters open its doors to the shaded ocean bed below the structures floors, Star light above can rarely reach down here in the depths but what does still shines defiantly against the darkness. "Elder nearby, Bluecap never been down here..."

Shroom not sure where to go⁹⁰... S-Shroom no like..." it says in a shaky voice, seemingly scared of the darkness which otzy instantly picks up on "O-Oh! Well... I won't be long, Y-You can just stay here and wait!." Otzy says trying to calm it, Bluecap just looks around at the area outside the elevator scared still "O-Or... Or you can just go up a floor and wait there? That sound good? Go have fun with your friends while you wait for me" Bluecap nods "Y-Yes! Shr-Bluecap like that, Bluecap go up^{up}" "Okay, I'ma go now. You go do whatever okay?" Otzy says stepping out of the elevator and into the dark, Bluecap just nods and presses the up button. Otzy watches as the doors close and waits until the elevator reaches the next floor before turning around. Its cold and dark, Darker than what it looked like from the elevator, He puts hit suitcase down and unlocks it to take the puck flashlight out. He flicks it back over to "NORMAL" mode and turns it on, Still bright as ever. He locks up his suitcase and starts walking around the darkness, Shining his flashlight into the distance only to see more empty ocean floor and darkness. He wanders and wanders for what feels like hours but he knows there's something here, False Worlds don't create spots like this unless they intend to *hide something in them*, and it's even rarer for the "story" of a False World to *lead him to a place like this unless it's important*. He knows this. It's part of the reason he and others are tasked to search into False Worlds afterall for they have many many uses but understanding them is the hardest task of them all, an impossibility they wish to rectify. He presses forward, looking left and right, left and right waiting for something to appear that wasn't before until... He turns around to look at the path he had once followed and there it was. A small square grey concrete structure hidden in the dark, He walks forward and sees that the concrete has grown old and rotten, The cartoonish fantasy lens of the False World had not touched it in a long time and it had grown a pale grey appearance that of the real world. He steps around the sides of it and finds a small metal door in the wall, He opens it and steps inside. A dark small featureless room with but a singular desk in the middle at the back wall, The floor no longer the seabed he stepped on but more sad rotten concrete. He steps forward and shines his light towards the desk, A lone old shrivlled mushroom sits behind the desk, Its vibrant colors long gone with only a tinge of red left.

"the tall one has arrived... Do they wish for the blackened crystal?" It asks in a frail weak sounding voice towards otzy "You already knew, How?" otzy asks in a flat serious monotone voice. "My children... My beautiful colorful children... I know them all... I know their needs... I know their wants... I know their speech..." It speaks, barely uttering above a whisper. "So you heard that dweller talking to me about me wanting a shard?" Otzy presses. "I know not what you want of it... But I feel... As if you will be disappointed" It says before slowly trying to move its

sickly yellowed arms and pointing behind it, Otzy shines his flashlight back towards it and the light stops. He walks closer to get a better look. "...I mean you no regrets... tall one" It urks out as otzy studies the black outcropping in the wall closely, He brings his flashlight right up to the surface of it and turns it on, a meager bit of light still pierces through the dark fog inside "...it's not pure enough... I shoulda known..." otzy says defeated "How... How did you know?" Otzy asks curiously. "Feelings and knowledge... different... Each object has a purpose... and everyone an object... I feel them all... Yet..." the old mushroom turns around towards the crystal outcropping, his bones clicking and cracking "This night... This longing night... Never had either... until you appeared..." Otzy perks up and looks back towards the shroom, "I appeared?" He asks "Yes... You... You defy my logic... Your object... clear. Your purpose... Unknown" The mushroom takes in a deep shaky breath "This night... It gained a faint purpose... a faint reason when you arrived... Yet... you do not desire it... It mocks me... Its purpose was to question me..." Otzy grows silent and thinks to himself, He's dealt with aware dwellers before in places just, not like this... This is different. "I... Have no purpose?" Otzy asks, almost scared at the thought. "No... I can sense it... You have purpose but... the feelings are swirling... ever changing... Unaware of their own path..." Otzy backs away from the elder mushroom "N-No! I-I know what I'm doing!, I- I'm here to collect data! Data and then leave!" Otzy shakily shouts. "...Perhaps... Perhaps that is your purpose... All fear the unknown... The darkness of uncertainty... it is innate to all life yet... Its what drives you... What led you here... Perhaps... Perhaps that is your purpose..." Otzy mind calms down from the racing thoughts of uselessness swirling around his mind. "Y-Yea... T-Thats it! Yea! That's my purpose! I chase the unknown!" Otzy says proudly. "Then... It is settled... I no longer.. question your purpose... I no longer... Have a purpose..." The mushroom lets one last shaky sentence before closing its weary eyes and growing motionless. Otzy stares at the mushroom and feels... nauseous, Not from the mushrooms appearance but from the cold dark air around him, He looks down at his watch "4:50" "...Guess... Guess its time to go home" He mutters to himself and he stares at the crystals, wishing, wishing so badly they were pure before turning around and leaving through the same metal door. He wanders the darkness, unsure as to why he hasn't left this world yet, the words of the mushroom echoing through his mind. "Well... I..." He looks down at his suitcase thinking about his report, He briefly thinks about bluecap before moving his thoughts "I.. I need to finish my report today... I'll... I'll get overtime I guess... Give me time to just.... Finish this and say bye to blue cap". He talks to himself before looking down longingly at the amulet around his neck, He sits down, places his suitcase on his lap and quickly presses down on the breacher

Rising, Ascending, Washed away, The light blinds him but deep below something calls to him.

He wakes up, A bit groggy yet again but the comfort of a familiar environment suppresses it. He stands up and stretches his body. His neck feels cold without the blue scarf on it but he knows that's how it works. Things may enter from above, but impure things from below may not ascend, Not even copies of above. He sees newbie through the window sat down in front of the monitoring terminal Sasha was messing with earlier. He seems bored until suddenly he perks up and quickly gets up, She must have just seen his heart-rate update on screen. Otzy carefully steps over the 4 items he used in breaching earlier, making sure to not even come close to bumping one before walking over to the steel bulk door and motioning for Charlie through the window to let him out, The glass is too thick for any speech. Charlie walks over and fiddles with the door for a bit, Muffled "ERR" buzzers faintly pierces through the glass as he presses a few wrong buttons until the opening alarm starts ringing, The door ever so slowly begins to open with that same alarm from last time blaring at everyone to get out of the way of the slug of a door. Otzy squeeze himself out as soon as the door has a gap wide enough and shuts it behind him, "Welcome back, You sure took your time. Everything good in there?" charlie asks. "Yea yea... I'm... I'm fine, I just got distracted in there is all". Otzy says as Charles already begins speaking "You're not letting those dwellers shepherd you around are ya? Derrick always reminds me to never let that happen when its finally my time to brea-" "Yea... I... I know, he told me the... same stuff when I was preparing for my first False World. He cared more about me not getting attached to the dwellers than telling me how to not get lost in the damn fog on my first descent." Otzy replies, the lingering solemn feeling leaving his body and being replaced by annoyance as he remembers Derrick's training. "Speaking of which, I've gotta go get the overtime papers from the guy, which will be... fun" Charlies eyes widen "Overtime? You really that behind on your report?" Otzy seems a bit stunned by the question, he knows why yet it still strikes him as a new question. "Well... I uh... may have gotten... carried away chasing after the crystal and uh... Forgot to... Finish the report" Otzy finishes. Charlie just snickers and laughs "You get all sucked up into that places dumb little story?" Charlie mocks "You *know* all of them *try to drag you into it* and you're *NOT* supposed to get sucked in right?" Charlie sarcastically continues. "Yea Yea I know! Look, I got a little bit of it okay! A-And I just got excited thinking I fount some crystals alright?" Otzy rebukes embarrassed, "And were those crystals pure?" "....no" Charlie just smiles "Okay well you do *whatever*, I'll just set up the chamber door so you can open it from the inside cause I wanna go home and do anything *but* work" he laughs. Otzy

signs and walks around the test chamber glass and to the cramped staircase upstairs, With the air warming and the faint buzz of machinery growing louder He mentally braces having to talk to stonewall derrick but is pleasantly surprised to only see pozzik sitting at their big repair desk, "Oh. You're still here? Uh... Do you need something Otzy?" Pozzik says awkwardly, He's older than anyone here, even just beating out derrick yet he's still never figured out how to converse. "Where's Derrick at? I was gonna ask him for some papers to quickly fill out" Otzy says peeking down the cramped halls of the server and machinery racks. "Oh. Derrick and Sasha had to leave early for a meeting with higher ups, He will most likely return here tomorrow " "Okayy well, do you have the overtime paperwork? Fount a potential lead on some breaching crystals in the False World and wanna go ahead and confirm them tonight" Otzy replies, "Okay. I think i know where they are at, Please hold for a moment" Pozzik says as he neatly shuffles his papers into a stack and slowly bends down to search through the drawers on Derricks side of the desk, Slowly reading each and every ones header to himself silently until stopping on one that he pulls out. "Okay. Here it is, Just sign on the bottom waiver and then hand it back to me to process for the higherups. Payment is by the hour and you are only allowed at most 12 hours of voluntary overtime in one instance due to company policy." pozzik says, Not even blinking at the idea of 12 hours of overtime. Otzy picks up the paper and borrows a pencil out of Pozzik's overflowing pencil holder mug and begins signing it "...Wait, I can do partial overtime right? I can just do it til like 9 and then leave and still get paid? Don't gotta do the full 12 hours". Otzy asks "Yes. Partial is paid but only at the start of each new hour. Please. Keep in mind the lower branches where we currently reside in is automatically locked at 12am midnight closing hours and require outside intervention to leave, Do not stay past that time unless you-" "I-I get it pozzik, I wont stay that long. I promise" Otzy quietly interrupts, signing the paper and handing it over to Pozzik. "I'll be down in the chamber aight?" "Okay." Pozzik says in his typical flat tone. Otzy walks back down stairs, spams the door open command, Slips inside closing the door behind him and sitting back down. He's tired and exhausted but... he has a job to do, He presses down on the amulet and lets the fog consume him.

Static, Screaming, falling, Drowning. Down to the copied husk below. When did you start being yourself?

He wakes up in the dark expanse below the tower, His body yet again turned grey but now contrasted with but a small blue scarf that otzy smiles at. He looks around and sees that the concrete structure of the elder shroom is yet again lost in the dark, he pushes it out of his

mind, He need not even take his flashlight out for the elevator has a ray of starlight casted on it from above. He steps into it and quietly presses the up button. "Least bluecap should be up here, Can go ahead and... Get that done I suppose" The elevator rumbles and starts climbing upwards, Quickly it hits the floor directly above the dark seabed, He steps out and looks around for bluecap. None in sight, He walks around the factory floor, a few blue capped mushrooms but... None of them have their scarf. He starts pacing around the factory floor looking for any sign of bluecap, Nothing. He taps on the shoulder of a shroom "Hey uh. Sorry to bother you but have you seen a small blue scarfed mush-" "Sorry, I'm busy right now. Maybe come back later?" The mushroom says in a flat emotionless tone. A jolt of fear strikes through otzy "Was... Was that the end? N-No surely..." he taps on another shrooms shoulder and asks the same time "H-have you seen a small blue scared mush-" "Sorry, I'm busy right now. Maybe come back later?" says the other mushroom, Repeating the same words in the same flat emotionless tone. "N-No! Th-That wasn't the end there... There was still story left right?! Me and bluecap were gonna explore aroun-" "Sorry, I'm busy right now. Maybe come back later?" says the mushroom in response" otzy is silenced, "...Thats... That was it then" otzy whispers under his breath "When I talked to that old shroom it was... The end... Story over..." He continues in an almost surprised tone "Their gone... They arent here anymore... I..." Otzy thinks to himself for a long time, The shroom in front of him repeating the same motions over and over. "I guess... I guess I'll finish my report" he says, looking down at his suitcase, Hollow. He doesn't even find a comfortable spot before sitting down and mindlessly writing, Writing about a world that is now over, Frozen in time with no more story to tell. The hours pass as Otzys blank mind slowly accepts the reality he inadvertently created, He wanders around the world cataloging all the things he was going to go back to with bluecap, He figures out that the mushrooms were actually processing some of the styrofoam wall into a type of fabric and that they actually sifted their ocean to get their clay like material but... It doesn't matter to him anymore, Whatever feeling of accomplishment he would have gotten from figuring it out is muted by the sight of robotic mushrooms that don't even acknowledge his presence. For a moment he hears derrick berating him about how this is why you don't get attached, Why you work as fast as you can and then leave but it only infuriates him. "Its unfair! Why are these worlds like this?! Its just... Aghhh" he can't even bring himself to speak his mind outloud. He can feel the internal anger quickly turning to sadness, He wants to go home more than anything, He wants to forget and never get attached again, A familiar feeling from previous times but just as he reaches for his amulet to go back up and escape to a reality that won't leave him he sees his watch "7:30PM". A thought crosses his mind, "It's... it's not that late... Poz said the doors lock at midnight... right?..." he

turns his attention to the breaching needle on the inside of the amulet "...Well... I mine as well get my overtime paid... Just, a few hours... A quick adventure... Write down what I want, explore the world... and then come home" Otzy slowly speaks to himself in a shaky voice as he sits down and opens up his suitcase. He stares blankly at it lost in thought before slowly beginning digging through the various items for something interesting. He takes out one of his fancy pens, a gold and black one he's never once used, a few spare batteries for the flashlight and rummages through his pockets to find some loose change. He gently places them all around him and slowly closes the suitcase, locking it tight and placing it on his lap. He takes one good look at his amulet and whispers to himself "Just... One quick world" before pressing down on the piercing arm