

What the hell was this place? It wasn't anywhere I had been before, that much I knew. The biggest thing that stood out about the empty room around me was the single door, specifically how tall it was. Between the abnormally tall door and the round handle, I had a sinking suspicion of where I was.

Earth.

That was a human door, the kind I hadn't seen in so many centuries that it looked alien to me.

"Any fives?"

"Fucking shit Finn, you know we're playing poker."

Poker. They were playing poker. Any doubt that I had left Equestria was erased, they didn't play card games. A feeling of loneliness overcame me as I realized I might never see Luna or the others again, soon followed by a wave of depression. I'd lost everything again.

"Quit your bitching, you'll be home soon enough," a gruff voice called from the other side of the door.

"Hey John, you sound insane when you do that," another voice advised.

"He was just going to sit there all day, what else was I supposed to do?" the second one, John, argued.

"You could warn us before shouting at stuff he hasn't even said yet," the third voice countered.

"Eh, fuck it. You can come out Jay, you have nothing to hide from us," John called.

I cautiously opened the door and stepped through, though I kept my back against the door to at least have something to hide behind if these insane voices turned out to be hostile and dangerous.

"Where am I?" I asked apprehensively.

"Good question, I suppose the best answer would be: nowhere," the second voice answered, revealing itself to be a tall...teenager? No, these must be some kind of gods to read my mind and transport me here against my will.

"You're not far off, I suppose we could be called gods from your perspective. Don't repeat that though, makes me feel like the ponciest ponce to ever ponce past the poncing parlor. I'm John, this is Chase and that's Finn," John, who appeared to be older than the others judging by his beard, replied, introducing the tall teenager and a skinny young adult respectively.

“So what are you?” I pressed, feeling my fear subside.

“I’m your creator, Finn and Chase keep me from going too crazy and find all the little mistakes I make,” John answered simple, sending my mind reeling.

“The fuck are you talking about? My [i]creator[/i]? Horseshit,” I spat, forming my claws threateningly.

“None of that,” John ordered, waving his hand and returning my claws to their previous state.

“Jay, this may be hard to understand. Have you heard of ‘Last Thursdayism’?” Chase asked.

“What the hell are you talking about now?” I seethed, becoming increasingly irritated at the way these creatures couldn’t answer a simple question.

“It’s a ridiculous theory that can’t be debunked by science, it states that the universe in its entirety popped into existence last Thursday,” Chase continued.

“And that means?” I prompted.

“It’s your birthday!” Finn cheered.

“You are one year old, as of today,” John clarified.

No. Impossible. All my accomplishments and failures. All the friends I’d lost. And these jokers had the gall to say they’d never existed at all?

“We never said that. You’re as real as us, maybe... it depends, maybe we’re in the same situation as you? Or maybe not. Who knows? Not me.” Finn commented with a shrug, “Also, aunte up.”

“So it’s just me that can’t read his mind yet? This sucks,” Chase complained, “I’ll raise you twenty.”

“Call,” John responded, dropping his chips on the table.

“So, why am I here? This doesn’t look like a party,” I asked.

“It is and isn’t. Take a look around this room, what do you see?” John prompted.

At his order, I turned to look around at the walls. I quickly noticed a set of Tyranid models on a shelf next to a [Prototype] game box, specifically for the Xbox Three-Sixty. As I continued

looking around, I found posters for various TV shows, a cartoon of a bald guy in a yellow costume, and even a John Wayne movie.

"What is all of this?" I wondered.

"You. These are all the things that I put together to make [i]you[/i]. Even this game, wouldn't you say poker most resembles your political style?" John pressed.

"I guess it does, mind if I join in?" I requested, feeling surprisingly at home in this strange place.

"It's because you're basically in a room made of your personality," Finn hinted with a nudge at where my ribs would be. "Well, the first [i]usable[/i] version at least."

"Finn, lay off. You in Jay?" John asked, intercepting my next question before I could ask.

"Mate, no offence, but I ain't tapping that." Finn joked, dealing Jay into the game. "And if I wanted to mess with him, I'd be doing the Project Horizons song and dance. You know, tear you down when you're too happy, and build you up when you're sad."

"I prefer the long game, myself," John commented as he pushed a stack of chips my way. I tried not to think too hard on where they came from, this was already too weird.

"They come from everywhere, and nowhere!" Finn explained in a really bad german accent.

"Finn, don't hurt him any more than necessary. This was supposed to be a nice meet and greet," John chided.

"So, what am I?" I asked, unable to stop myself.

"The main character. Well, sort of. It's complicated," John replied.

"The main character? Like, in a book?" I confirmed.

"Yes, and I'm the author," John clarified, making me feel very small all of a sudden.

"All jokes aside, trust me when I say you're not the only one. There is a reason why I don't allow myself to think too deeply." Finn said in a surprisingly serious tone.

"So these are what, your editors?" I continued.

"That's right," Chase agreed.

"Then why am I here?" I asked.

“Apparently to ask endless fucking questions,” John snapped, “The IDEA was to bring you here and see how you were managing all of the stress we’ve been putting on you over this past year.”

“Aside from feeling like I’m being pulled in every direction at once all the time, I’d say I’m handling it pretty well,” I replied.

“For now. I guess that’s about what I expected, you do have some experience from your time managing a legion. How was it seeing Dee again?” John asked.

“Nostalgic mostly, but don’t call him that. That’s my name for him,” I answered, feeling my anger flare.

“I wrote that nickname, I can use it if I want,” John argued, giving me an idea of where some of my mannerisms came from, “What about Celestia? We haven’t heard from her in a while.”

“Good.”

“That’s all? Alright then, moving on. Let’s see, what’s next on the list? Ah, Luna. How are things between you two?”

“I’m not comfortable answering that without her here, I don’t kiss and tell,” I declared.

“Fair enough, how about Brismene? How’s that going?” Finn asked, trying, and failing, to keep the emotion off his face.

“What about it? I scared off that unicorn and went home,” I replied, confused.

“Arcane is the main character of Finn’s story. Suffice to say, things are getting rather serious in that small town,” John explained.

“I’ll have to check on it then,” I noted.

“Hard to do without remembering this conversation,” John commented.

“Shitfuck,” I replied casually, suspecting I would get that response.

“Yeah, we wouldn’t want to mess with the plot too much... Well, more than we already have.” Finn admitted, “How about you? Before we get into any more questions, I’ve got a feeling that you’ve got a few of your own.”

“If you’re writing my life, did you write my more...[i]private[/i] moments too?”

"It's all been mostly 'offscreen' but your first, shall we say, encounter with Luna that you remember was in print. It turned out so bad that I had to rewrite the entire thing from her perspective," John stated, trying and failing to keep a straight face, "Do you have any idea how difficult that was? I'm a straight male, I have literally no damn clue how to write [i]that[/i] from a female's point of view."

"He had help." Chase interjected tersely, before slipping a restrained chuckle, "It was honestly pretty damn funny. You should've seen his questions," flashing a knowing smile in John's direction.

"Help? All you gave me was 'details, details, details,' as if [i>that[/i] was supposed to mean anything." John shot back.

"Was I *wrong*? You wanted to write it from Luna's perspective, yes? What do women do when describing things? They go off on a monologue describing every fine detail. Don't believe me? Then what are Fifty Shades of Grey or Twilight Saga about then, if not a women's personal tirade on their fantasies?"

John sat silently staring at Chase for a moment, before a near imperceptible crack in his features, a smirk, brought out his response, "Point... taken,"

"Well... if it helps, I didn't want to touch that with a meter long stick." Finn continued, patting Jay on the back, "I'll be honest, I'm not really one for smut. But if you remember anything from... before, you'll know how the internet is."

John openly laughed before turning to Finn and saying five words, "Five Score Divided By Four."

"H-hey! That was different!" Finn exclaimed, jumping a bit, "I'm a bloody teen! What did you expect?"

"Less hypocrisy, but that one deserves a pass. Damn good read even with the smut," John allowed.

"Never understood that title. I mean, what the hell is 'Five Score Divided By Four' supposed to mean?" Chase mumbled.

"It has to do with the curse that ponifies the person. A score is twenty, five score is one hundred, and a hundred divided by four is twenty five. The curse lasts twenty five years, and is also the first line of the curse itself." John explained, keeping his eyes on his cards.

"Wait, hold on. You wrote Luna and I... from her perspective?" I confirmed, instantly becoming self conscious.

“Apparently, but from what I saw in the comments, the internet thinks you’re fine.” Finn shrugged before adding in an after thought, “Well, somewhere between the request for unbirthing porn and the revolution against ladders and steep stairs.”

“Unbirthing, what are - oh, Cat and Dash.”

“Yep.” John chuckled, before leveling a finger in Chase’s direction, “You should’ve seen this guy’s reaction; I fuckin’ *died*.”

Chase let out a sigh as he rubbed his eyes, “When I read a Prototype fic, at no point do I ask, ‘Yeah sure, [b]but is their unbirth porn in it?[/b]’”

John let out a short, yet loud burst of laughter at his compatriot.

“Ha! I don’t know why I found that so funny at the time, but I did,”

“And...” I started slowly, “The stairs and ladders?”

“The comments section is harder to comprehend than Pinkie on her worst day. Not as bad as Youtube, but it gets weird sometimes,” John added, wiping a tear from his eye.

“And other people read this? I shouldn’t care and I still feel like you’ve stolen any dignity I might’ve had,” I groused.

“Just be happy that I didn’t suggest weeping angels. Or anything from Dr. Who. Or anything else in my mind... Or cupcakes.” Finn rambled, “Anyway, it could be worse. You could be stuck in the stereotypical Fimfiction romance thing.”

“The fuck is a weeping angel?” I demanded, pointedly ignoring the rest of the nonsense assaulting my hearing.

“Bad times. A weeping angel is bad times wrapped up in a stone box.” Finn unhelpfully explained.

“What?!” I snapped, quickly losing my patience.

“You know SCP-173?” Chase suddenly asked.

I look at him out of the corner of my eye, “Killer Boo mannequin from Hell? Why?”

“Think that, made out of nothing but stone, but instead of breaking your neck it sends you through time to sustain itself.”

“Why not just fucking take a hammer to them then?” I ask impatiently.

He let out a slow, exasperated sigh, “Because it’s *Doctor Who*; everything is composed of unadulterated bullshit you’re not supposed to think too hard on or you destroy any sense of suspension of disbelief. I’m not capable of that, so I don’t watch it. Does that answer your question?”

I sigh, “Yeah, I guess,”

“Jay, in all seriousness, things are only going to get harder. You may have your ceasefire for now, but that won’t help when the allied nations invade. What do you have planned for that eventuality?” John asked, clearly trying to keep everything on track.

“We’ll have fortifications and better weapons, I plan on making them either fight a war of attrition they can’t sustain or get them to back down before then,” I answered easily, considering it obvious.

“Murphy’s Law.” Finn replied simply.

“Are you telling me I’m doomed to fail?” I asked, acutely aware of who I was talking to.

“We’re saying you need to be adaptable, that is what your speciality is after all,” John placated.

“And what I’m saying, is that, war never is that simple. I’m not a soldier, but I can tell that if you think of it like that, you’re going to get a slap from reality.” Finn explained, “And who will that come from? Twilight? Dopple? Or someone... closer?”

Finn sighed before continuing, “I may be known as the ‘Joker’ of this group, but even I can give advice. Everyone here knows that you are the sole reason the world isn’t bathed in Redlight-”

“Blacklight,” Chase interjected.

“What?” Finn asked, caught off guard by the interruption.

“Jay’s Blacklight, not Redlight. Redlight was the original virus that was discovered and used in Carnival I, and what Elizabeth Greene was pumping out ever since Carnival II happened in Hope, Idaho. Blacklight was made from one of Elizabeth Greene’s strains of Redlight and that was what made Mercer what he was. Later, Mercer would kill and consume Greene, and while that would give him Greene’s DNA as well as Redlight’s, that doesn’t change the fact that it’s Blacklight. This guy-”

Chase points at me.

“-cosplayed as Mercer with the claws that Merch gave him. He's Blacklight,” Chase finally finished of his explanation before looking between Finn's and my expressions.

“Heh... Sorry, couldn't help it.”

Finn continued to stare at Chase for a bit before giving a slow nod.

“ Well... alright then, I stand corrected. But back to what I was saying: but will that change, Jay? How can you stand up if your mistakes only drag you down? How long will it take before you get shot down? Be it from your own folly, or a lucky hit.”

“So, what? Be careful? Is that the best you've got? Luna tells me to be careful all the time,” I deadpanned, increasingly finding this a waste of time.

“Save your breath Finn, he won't remember this conversation,” John advised, “Jay, we're just trying to meet the real you to celebrate your birthday with the readers.”

“Good for you, can I go home now?” I spat.

“Unless you have any questions to ask us, you may,” John allowed, gesturing towards the door I walked in through.

“Just one. Are you Fate?”

“No, that pseudonym belongs to another character,” John replied.

“Can you at least give me a hint about where to find this thing? I could use something to sink my claws into,” I pressed.

“Sorry, [i]spoilers[/i]. This little talk will reach the readers after all,” John apologized.

“Then this has been a remarkable waste of my time, goodbye,” I bid angrily as I strode back to the door and kicked it in.