9/23/2022 - 9/26/2022 (before I got a mentor for the project)

Brainstorming

On these days I simply brainstormed and created ideas for the story as a whole. For example I've decided that the personalities of the main and supporting cast will be based on the Chinese zodiacs, the reasoning being that the child and the spirit infused into them have to mesh well enough for their souls not to fight too drastically while being shoved into the same body. Furthermore, this would hypothetically increase the odds for better communication and teamwork among the child and their respective spirit. The world details I brainstormed are varied, from the uniforms the people will be wearing, naming conventions for buildings, compounds, individual groups, etc. potential names for characters, color of the sky, location where the story starts, etc. Even a name for the primary antagonist, the "zeta".

I've thought up ideas for the so-called 'spirit realm'. Essentially it's just another dimension where sentient entities exist. These entities are pure energy and have no physical bodies. They have their own society and whatnot. After the "Collapse" this society collapsed, only the strongest entities survived (coincidentally exactly like the zodiac signs). I'm already thinking about potential character conflicts revolving about how these entities, aka ' spirits' feel with the events and whatnot. Smaller details include potential background character names, color schemes, the name of the group of children as a whole, various ideas for demonic looking monsters (zeta), and whatever details I could think of. Most of these ideas aren't that refined, however it's a good start. I set aside two hours a day to just generate these ideas and put them down in google drive. There was nothing particularly interesting on any of these days to warrant an entire page for the individual day. This was done without my mentor as I lacked one when this

was done. And while I have done brainstorming for this project before these dates, this was the period of time in which I was the most focused on it and got the most results.

I've enjoyed the process thus far, just creating ideas and connecting dots with a sort of 'rule system' the world I'm envisioning has now. I've steadily created the logic and essentially the rules an entire world, while fictitious, runs by. It was exhilarating to say the least. Furthermore, creating this many characters was a great exercise in both my creativity and my general ability to create them, even if I'm not being the most original with their overall design. This is also where I expect the most trouble to occur, character design. While I can think up machinery and the basics for an overarching governmental system, creating and detailing singular characters has always been my weakness in writing. This, alongside learning how an author goes about creating a story will be my main points of improvement, or so I think. Furthermore I decided to do work and record it for this project because at the time I thought it would be best to start, even if I was without a mentor at the time. Time waits for no-one, afterall.

10/5/2022

Post Panel Meeting Reflection

My panel meeting with Ms. Holder, Ms. Schaner, and Ms. Young went well in my opinion. The general 'vibe' so to speak was positive and not once did I get the slightest hint they were being unsupportive. While I didn't have a concrete plan going into the meeting, I had something I would almost say is better. I had a solid grasp on what I wanted to do and a possible way of how I would get there. The story I have in mind has been on my mind for quite a while, giving me both the time to think and imagine enough to almost be able to improvise and create it on the spot, telling it like an ancient tale passed down through oral tradition. The only thing I needed to do was place that story onto paper. Or in this case, a google doc (for now). I knew what I wanted almost like the back of my own hand. I dare say the moment they started asking about the story I had the home field advantage.

Though, contrary to the potentially hubristic tone the previous paragraph may have set, I fully expected and welcomed advice. And the panel members delivered. All of the advice given was good and will most certainly prove to be useful. Some already have proven useful. I may have known what I was moving towards well, but their advice simply expedited and refined the process further, for which I am thankful for. The most notable (and almost all) of the advice is as follows:

- I should aim to complete at least 2-4 chapters with at least two revisions each, showing quality writing. These chapters should focus on character development. Going beyond would be 6-10 detailed and revised chapters, or simply just really high quality work. Furthermore I need an outline for the rest of the book, preferably chapter by chapter and

detailed. I will aim to do this outline regardless, however the extra chapters will be completed if time allows for it.

- I should have a doc or somehow written down a backstory for the characters to further cement their personalities and who they are. Nothing too extreme, just plot points of how their life went and how it affected them.

- I should consider doing a podcast (interviews) instead of a TED talk, as it will take pressure off of myself. This pressure being that I am already doing a lot of writing, as is expected when making a novella. Furthermore interviewing someone would enable myself and potentially others to learn more about the processes and methodologies behind writing a story. This was the most important advice, both for the already stated reasons and they helped me look at this option in a different light, one that revealed its true potential to me.

- I should make copies of drafts before I improve and edit them, to show growth. I should also do this with anything to do with the actual product.

- Ensure that I make good, high quality journal entries. Most of the advice pertaining to this was mostly just to provide detail about everything. What I did, learned, how I grew and how I felt. That sort of stuff.

- Call my work a novella instead of a book, clarity and the fact it won't be a complete book.

- It was suggested that I make character sketches, however I suck at art and at best can describe them on paper. I'll see about this as I go. It likely wouldn't be a smart idea to actually draw them, however I can make a decent description of them. Or perhaps a "Mood board", though I'm unfamiliar with that for now.

- As for the display, character images, excerpts from the novel, things that have influenced the characters, etc. This will be worked on later.

I've already begun considering letting the paper be the podcast / interview, as it sounds like a good idea considering how much potential writing it will save me and the potential for further learning. Furthermore I am putting the other advice into effect, especially the stuff revolving around documentation and final product requirements and expectations. I'll be making brief explanations for the characters' backstories, as I lack the time to make fully fledged and detailed backstories, just 'born here, lived here, important events, etc etc…'. I'm planning to ask my mentor about potential ways to develop characters as well, so this may change.

As for the documentation details, I'll be putting them into effect when I start documenting changes, edits, and so forth. I have already edited the proposal letter slightly to improve the wording.

All in all I should put effort into improving character development and improving my own writing ability in general. While my strengths lie in creating a setting and making a sort of "ruleset" for my imagined worlds, I could always do better. Not to mention the work that can be done on my ability to make good characters, mostly revolving around the emotional aspect. Furthering this, There is always room to grow, I might find a slightly different wording that drastically improves a paragraph or a whole scene, for example. All in all I simply wish to improve. I appreciate the advice given to me and appreciate the panel members for the time they've given up to give me this advice. In conclusion, I'd say the meeting went well.

10/6/2022

Ch. 1, First Draft Creation

I began creating the first draft of the first chapter. And honestly it annoyed me. For the longest time I couldn't figure out where or how I wanted to start it. What time? Where exactly? Should I begin in the base or a little prior? Should I start with a memory or an actual event happening in the present. It took way too long to decide and I have no doubts I'll be changing it often. I had ended up changing what I wrote roughly five times after I had written the first few paragraphs.

I'd write for twenty or so minutes before deciding that what I wrote just didn't work and so I deleted it and started again. It was almost disheartening when I couldn't make it feel right to me. However I ultimately decided to just write, not caring if it wasn't the best, and continued on with the rest of the chapter. Usually this is my fallback plan, if I can't write the start I'd force myself to continue until an idea comes to me, or somewhere along the line I'd make some mistake and start again with an added ounce of frustration.

What ultimately kept me going was a mixture of sheer willpower and overall joy. Sure, I hated deleting and remaking all my work but I still loved it. The more I did this the more refined and plain better it would eventually become. I only managed to produce a few pages by the time I called it a night, and even then I have this gut feeling I'll be doing a lot of changes. It likely won't look how it does now, which is a good thing.

I'd be happy, I'd be into my work, I'd be so in the zone I practically didn't notice how hungry I was or how much time went by. Then I'd drag my gaze onto the little clock in the corner of my computer, realize an hour or so went by, then do a mental facepalm when I realized

how little I had written compared to how much time went by. IT was an emotional roller coaster of content happiness to disappointment and frustration then back to a sense of accomplishment.

So while I say it's the first draft of the first chapter, It's really the ump-teenth draft of the first part of the first chapter. I don't believe the rest of the story will continue like this to this extent, as I typically find a sort of groove and write well enough to appease myself after I get the start complete, but I can't tell the future.

At the very least I've solidified how the point of view will progress. I intend to give each of the three main characters a chapter from their point of view, switching between them as I produce more chapters. I'm not entirely sold on how I will let the reader know who's perspective they're in, perhaps a header at the start of the chapter similar to the Kane Chronicles, which has the name of the character the chapter follows at the top corner of the page.

All and all I spent several hours on this, and while I haven't got too much on the doc itself I am happy I managed to get past the starting line and get the ball rolling beyond the stage of initial brainstorming. I say initial because I know I'll have more ideas and edits to the story as I progress. As of now my writing style begins with brainstorming sessions where I establish lore, world logic / rules, and sort of 'goals' for the plot. Then I just start writing, letting the story mold itself however it wants within the walls and confines I've built. I do occasionally need to steer the story back on track or make accommodations in events where the story took a turn that ended up really good but wasn't completely in line with what I originally intended.

In conclusion I believe the hours I spent on this day, while the product can be seen as mediocre thus far, has been productive.

10/7/2022

Additional Character Brainstorming

I have spent some time after school on this day to brainstorm the characters' backstories and whatever other details I can think of. While this might seem backwards, considering I have started the creation of the first chapter already. However I had enough information on the main characters to start up a draft and see how the beginnings of the novel would look. That and I couldn't really think of much for character past at the time I did that.

It was interesting, I had the personalities laid out to an extent, however those were the personalities at the start of the novel. A result of their backstories. So, almost like a math problem, I had to find out what events and reactions would give rise to the personality they start with. I intend to give them all a wide range of backgrounds. Some average and happy, others from higher end families, some having witnessed the destruction the zeta caused first hand.

This has resulted in a few slight edits to personalities here and there, however nothing particularly large. Just annoyances or possible triggers, stuff like that.

However I have started focusing on a specific character, the only one with any semblance of healing related abilities outside of traditional first aid. The reasoning being that I want the character I kill off first to be able to have an impact, not only on the story, but the reader. I want them to care, even if just a little, that this person dies so early into the story. Basically I'm giving them major 'screen time' with a main character, or at least plan too in the early chapters. After this I intend to balance out the development of characters, perhaps lending specific scenes or chapters to developing them further and with more depth just so whatever dark event I plan in the chapters ahead actually means something to the reader.

But aside from plugging away and getting those backstories done the actual novel hasn't seen any progress. Characters however have seen plenty. Names are solidified, core personality traits are in place, even the mild magic-like abilities are set in stone. I even have an idea on who the best 'traitor' character will be. Because yes, one of them will betray either the team or whatever's left of the government at some point.

The fights no longer have cool fight scenes. Each one will have some weight to the story. Be it demonstrating how the characters solve problems, how they deal with tragedy, give some real tension or just make the reader nervous that yet another character is going to bite the dust. Each battle carries meaning now. For character development, or just pushing the plot forward while pushing the fact the reader won't know when a character might not return to base.

Each character will add something to the group. Like a trait of humanity. Kindness, loyalty, tenacity, intelligence, etc etc. As the characters that provide those things die off, the other characters will seemingly lose a little bit of that trait. After all, how could you simple when the one who brings that smile is gone?

This will be the super dark chocolate of dark novels. There shall be no mercy, no last minute saves, just slow crumbling of humanity as it gives its last ember of resistance.

Don't ask me how I came up with this stuff. All I know is I like darker stories because they seem to put more effort into their characters. After all, who cares if someone you don't know has a bad event? Happy stories, or those with good endings, are kind of cliche now. Even in stories where the 'bad guy' is the antagonist, they get a good ending somehow. So I guess I wanted to make a story that contradicts that. By the end there won't be any good or evil, just a fight to survive. One that ends badly.

10/9/22

First Chapter, First draft completion and Second Draft Start

The first thing I noticed? I had to actively stop myself from deleting an old draft. I almost did that here to make room for the new one instead of just starting a new draft on a new doc. Honestly I can't really say much, my process for finishing a first draft isn't that noteworthy. I simply type and put words on a page and passively build up the scaffolding for a more refined story.

You could liken it to me placing a block of stone on the workstation. I just placed it there. Maybe place tons of stones and just slam them together with magic glue. Refining and molding that stone into an actual story comes later, in later drafts. My first drafts are always sort of minimally edited, only coming through for grammar and spelling. I do believe it went well though. It wasn't hard to keep the story going on track without forcefully changing things. I did introduce some other characters in a way that would be natural, as if the characters knew each other for as long as they have with minimal exposition. Honestly, for as rough as a first draft always is, It shows promise.

This was true up until the point that it wasn't. I looked back on the draft and did a quick read and realized that I had essentially pulled a cliche start. Decent, yes, but I could do better. A more original, or simply more captivating and interesting start. Still, this is what the first draft is about for me. A large experiment in which I test the fundamentals of the work I produce. Sure, this realization means I have more work to do, but ultimately it should make the story better. I view it as unlocking an upgrade.

10/10/2022 - 10/14/2022

Settling into a Routine

As enjoyable as spending entire days on this project is, I know I'll be burnt out. That's why I put in the whole "30 minutes a day thing". I actually plan to start following this. So that's what I did this entire week. I picked half an hour a day and just worked on my drafts. Editing, editing, and more editing. Though spontaneously I decided to put some time into other things, like refining the story outside of those drafts. Getting plot points set up and making sure characters were good.

Why am I not including stuff like that in the actual time? The time is for work on the actual product. Actually putting the story together, everything else is just infrastructure. As such this week my actual product hasn't advanced all that much, Just more work on the drafts, focusing on the first one specifically. I may have only two and a half hours of total work on it this week, but the sheer number of re-do's I've done is almost comedic. Just trying out various 'starts'. Well, mostly created them and slowly removed the ones that worked the least. I actually like this idea for a process. Instead of trying to create a good intro right off the bat, I'm letting my brain come up with whatever it wants. I liken it to monkeys and typewriters. Soon enough one will create a Shakespearian play. So soon enough I'll make a functional start for this story.

Towards the end of the week, I learned to use the "Re-do's" as more than failed attempts, but honest competitors for a potential beginning. I even have enough to truly start selecting one or two for the actual story. Well, knowing myself it'll be more than that. I don't think I'll put all of the attempts or ideas into the portfolio, Then again I haven't really touched that as of late. Still, I think it'll be too cluttered if I put everything there, given the nature of my work. Still, progress is being made and most importantly my writing process is changing.

10/17/2022 - 10/21/2022

Actual Beginnings

Of the many ideas I've had for the beginning of this story, I've slowly narrowed it down to a handful of functional ones. That alone was hard and took a session. I almost went beyond the thirty minutes several times to do so. Regardless I managed to refine those chosen ideas and give them about a full page or so to develop so I could evaluate more of their potential and make a better decision on which to use. Hindsight is 20/20 as they say, and I want to scream at my past self for trying to force the first chapter out there without this process. It's just so much more enjoyable, and more flexible. I've even generated ideas for later in the story. I think I'll be keeping this method for a long time, it makes that first step a lot easier.

As to what I actually did? There isn't much more to say about it. That's sort of why I decided to make these journal entries cover entire work weeks. Just so there's enough to write about, a side effect of a writing process change I guess. Still better than facing burn out I guess.

Still I anticipate that this progress and the infrastructure I've built will expedite the rest of the story's progress by no slim margin. This change made it so dang easy that I can't really explain it. Remember that first entry where I basically went on a rant about how annoying the first steps were and how little progress was made? I essentially did twice that, if not more. All in the same time, without getting mentally exhausted, and actually enjoying it beyond liking the challenge.

Guess I can talk about some of those starting ideas. One had the reader jumping to the conclusion of a mock battle around a ruined town in the desert. Another had the characters waking up to something slightly abnormal. The one I think will be most similar to the true first chapter has a plot point nestled into the story naturally. All and all, it's coming together.

10/24/2022 - 10/28/2022

Progression

Finishing the first draft wasn't as hard as I thought it was. I mean, letting myself just do whatever made things smooth as butter. While unrefined, there's a lot of potential in it. A lot of points can and will easily become high in quality, and everything else can be refined to be a good base for those points to rest on. I mean, I somehow managed to naturally place a Massive plot point reference into a character's inner thoughts and it worked. I never do first-person perspectives, and despite the challenges that it brings, I'm not doing all that bad… well, for a first draft.

I've even begun the second draft of the first chapter. Basically just refining elements, replacing and cutting out some lines, who knows I might even change it a lot. I might catch this really great idea from nowhere and test it out. But for now, the second draft is in its beginnings.

There isn't really much to say about it. The process is rather dull, refining is just me fixing grammar, spelling, and word choice. Removing things that don't belong, etc. It's not until the second part of this draft creation that I really add anything to it if I deem it necessary (and I do). I'm considering making the character's views on other characters more detailed, introducing other characters through their perspective, etc.

Actually, now that I think of it, that is the current weak point. Detailing of characters. I'll be focusing on that a lot, especially trying to make sure the character in question only knows what it would believe it knows. I'm talking about possible misinterpretations, etc. I mentioned before that I was focusing on character development, and this second draft can be used for that. I do prefer using actions more than words for this, so I'll say things like Character X does this to let the reader possibly infer some part of their personality.

10/31/2022 - 11/4/2022

More Progress

The second draft of chapter one is coming along smoothly, nothing much I can say about it apart from the experimental alterations to my writing process. To keep the description short, I first try to visualize a scene before I write it, then write what I see in that mental image. I find it helps to write what I "see" instead of trying to "see" what I write if that makes any sense. Of course, since it's a new thing I'm trying, the overall technique is bound to improve, but that's something for future me to gawk over. I'm just happy I found a useful addition to my process.

I've also begun thinking about the first draft of chapter two. It won't be nearly as hard to start, all I need to do is pick a half-decent starting time, build a good first paragraph and make sure it's done in the tone of character B. That will be the hard part, switching from one point of view to another. I'll likely need to take a few moments to get out of the perspective of the first character mentally, then put myself into the next character's shoes. It will be an interesting thing to do, considering I'm best at writing third-person stories that follow a single character.

On one hand, I'm tempted to treat this like I'm writing a completely new story, which in a way I am, but that sounds a little odd to me. I think I need to experiment a bit and figure out how to write a new story (since every life and perspective is essentially a new story regardless of the fact they take place in the same time and general location), yet make it flow. It needs to mesh and blend in well, but also stand apart, and be easily identifiable. Well, I'm likely making a bigger deal out of this than it should be. I can just put in some heading on the google docs saying "Character name's POV" or something. It's simple, and so long as the first few paragraphs point to that it'll be simple enough. Well, guess the only way to know is to go ahead and do it.

11/7/2022 - 11/9/2022

Guess what? More progress.

Chapter one, second draft. It's complete. Well, that just means I'm happy with it. Still, I know I didn't put in as much time this week as usual. Boiler repairs closing the school and all are part of the reason, but I've done work regardless. The second chapter has begun its development. A lot simpler than I had anticipated, then again this could just be the work of my developing writing process. Scratch that, it totally is. Regardless it was just me repeating a similar process for chapter one's beginnings. I just toss out a ton of ideas, narrow down the list, and am now testing those remaining ideas by giving them a page or so to test them. It's like sounding out a word, but instead of a word it's an entire idea that needs at least a full page to be completely "sounded out".

I don't know what else to say though, I mean, only one and a half hours of work, and most of it was taken up by finalizing chapter one draft two. There were no difficulties or matters that need further discussion, as this has been done before, albeit with a different context. Actually, I can talk about my writing process. The whole point of this project is to improve mine. So far I think it's improved a lot. I now visualize before I write and brainstorm freely, and instead of only choosing one option I choose a handful and test them. I even have backup processes that I use in case of emergencies. I.e. things like word-vomiting all over a google doc until something happens, simply saying "Nope. Ima do this later" when I really can't think of anything. Basically, I don't throw myself into the brick wall without a strategy, and when they fail I take a break.

Well, I say take a break but what really happens is I think of ways to overcome whatever's going on.

11/21/2022 - 11/25/2022

<center>Progress Resumes</center>

To be perfectly honest? I didn't really keep track of exactly when I started working on this again this week. I'm not going to bore you with the details, but life decided my time of peaceful uninterrupted writing was over. A combination of writer's block and other issues stalled any progress on this for, well, until this week I guess. I finally got past it though and resumed progress on chapter two, though I think a lot of it is due for revision already.

It's only the first draft, so I'm not too surprised, but usually, I can hold myself back on trying to make a finished product and keep progressing in an orderly fashion. I can sort of blame this on the time I wasn't working. I could very well be on the second draft of this chapter by now, but even with the hour's worth of work, I put in I'm just about halfway done with draft one.

Not much else to say aside from various things keeping me from my usual writing schedule. I'm working on finding a solution to said issues, but until then I'll do what work I can.

I plan on finishing or at least getting close to finishing the first draft next week, hopefully leaving enough time to progress on other parts of the story as well. For example chapter one could use more refinement, mostly making sure the two chapters work well together. Stuff like removing any contradictory details, ensuring they mesh well and sound like they fit into the same story, and making sure the characters are in character and actually feel like people.

In other words, I hope to do some serious quality control work next week or the week after.

12/12/2022 - 12/16/2022

<div align="center">Quality Control</div>

This week I've spent an hour or so refining, editing, and doing quality control work as planned. It went surprisingly smoothly despite the low time put into it. Chapter one's second draft is pretty much ready to progress to the final version. This satisfies the requirements for each chapter to have at least two revisions. Well, technically it will have more considering the prototype/tests I've done.

I've even finished the first draft of chapter two. Turns out I had less work left to do than I originally thought, a single page really. The sudden ease of work has been a breath of fresh air, but most importantly the things keeping me from my usual work times are coming to an end. I think this is why I was able to work so effectively this week, lots of stress being removed tends to do that I guess.

As for the quality control itself, Just fairly routine editing, and what I mentioned in the previous entry. To summarize it in a little greater detail, I cleaned up grammar and spelling, double-checked character interactions, reactions, inner thoughts, descriptions of scenery, and anything else, quality checking the references to important lore or plot details. Basically ensuring it's good to go for the final revision really. One could call this draft 2.5, but I consider it more the beginning of the final version. I doubt I'll change too much of it from here on out, just taking a fine comb through it, or whatever the saying is.

As usual, I have a few things in my mind already about chapter two's second draft, but nothing out of the ordinary. Just a few grammatical errors I noticed in hindsight and all. Aside from that, I'm rather optimistic about the further progression of this project. I see smooth sailing from here on out.

1/2/2023 - 1/6/2023

New year, New Draft

Chapter one draft three is essentially done. At most I'll change a sentence or two in any way. I'm honestly happy with how it turned out. The characters seem human enough, and the inner thoughts and detailing are to the point I'm content with them. You may have noticed I switched from "final form" to "draft three". This is because I intend to keep working on this and turn it into a complete book. It seemed, in hindsight, dumb to assume I won't touch it further down the road when some element of the story needs the first chapter(s) to change for the benefit of the story (not if, I have a sneaking suspicion this will happen).

Chapter two draft two has also begun development. Basically just cleaning up the first draft and beginning larger scale changes. I really didn't like how one of the characters was described. So I changed that first. The new character's mentality has essentially changed how a lot of stuff is described. Going from a more collected and calculating personality to a more impulsive one is both interesting and difficult, but it's going pretty well. No major complaints or issues, A full work schedule is back on the menu as well. Past me predicted correctly, it is indeed smooth sailing.

Further plans include the usual editing work, improvements to character-related things, but most importantly making sure that the tidbits of lore and, because I've gotten bored of trying to make this journal completely spoiler free, I have to be careful with that one character who becomes very important later in the story to start doing their thing. I mean, I can't just have that character suddenly jump in with their plot twists and shocking news and everything without them getting some "screen time". Aka actually being noticed and brought into the light a bit so people actually care when they become important.

1/11/2023

Post Mid-Year Panel Meeting Reflection

On 1/9/2023 I met virtually with Ms. Holder, Ms. Schaner, and Ms. Young. The meeting focused around the paper outline with a brief check in about the rest of my senior project. In general the meeting went as I expected, and nothing went "wrong" so to speak. They were happy with the progress I've achieved so far, especially in my development of my personal writing process and what I've learned about writing processes in general. The most notable point of advice given by the panel was that I should focus on focusing my podcast better. There was one idea proposed for this by the panel members, which I have below in the bulleted list. The main points that the panel brought up are as follows;

- With my current Idea, I will likely run into the issue of having too much stuff, so I should attempt to shorten / remove excess or parts that aren't strictly necessary to the point.

- Shorten the segments revolving around the school's writing process. Perhaps accomplished by merging it into the rest of the story as a brief mention with maybe a line of evidence.

- A less emphasized point in the meeting, but one I feel is important: Make sure I'm emphasizing my learning in my journal entries.

To address the aforementioned points, I plan to shorten the hook / intro section considerably. The ending line(s) and statistics from Kristan Lamb should stay. Include a few brief reasons together as evidence, but keep it short. Furthermore, segment 4 (why a writing process is so important) should take up a large portion of the podcast. As for section 2, after explaining what a writing process is (mention the school example as an example) I intend to

mention it being bad for a reason mentioned in the next part (This will be used as a transition as well). Section 3 will follow this transition by explaining what makes a good writing process, mentioning how the school method falls short in brief examples.

With these ideas, essentially shortening the first 2-3 segments, miniaturizing the second half of the original 2nd segment and merging it as an example and transition piece between segments 2 and 3, I should be able to completely nullify the potential issue. The only thing left to do from this point is wait upon the questionnaire being answered, though I have a sub-plan in case that never happens. From there edit the pre-existing recording from my mentor, add in recordings of whatever I need to put in, and go from there. As for the third point about emphasizing my learning in the journal entries, that's just a matter of focusing on them or making sure I go into adequate detail about them in the journal entries.

Another thing to note, I intend to shift my focus to my portfolio at some point and really get it in order. I've been doing little to it besides occasionally throwing something into it for future use. When I do that, I'll be focusing on organization, acquiring a photo for the first page, and making sure all the documents within it are shared to the proper people. My main concern here is making pages of text look interesting, or at least format it in a way that it's palatable. Things like selecting a few of my works to display as examples of what I did will help. Also doing things like highlighting and pointing things on the final portfolio will aid a lot in explaining what's going on and break up the monotony.

Aside from the paper outline and portfolio plans, the rest of the project is going well all things considered. My writing process in particular has improved drastically. Key points are I now visualize scenes in my head before writing them. Writing what I see / imagine instead of trying to imagine the scene from what I write just makes it faster and easier. Further more my

brainstorming no longer tries to single out one option immediately, but gives room to test some of the better ideas. This allows for a less stressful, easier, and clearer brainstorming process. I have methods in place to curb moments of writer's block or general fatigue that work most of the time. In other words, my work efficiency is increasing.

      I might be writing in a completely different style than usual, not to mention creating a far larger work than normal, but the challenge has proven to be as enjoyable as it is enlightening.

3/8/2023

Paper Draft and Growth Reflection

I'll start by saying that I didn't make the deadline for submitting the draft. However, aside from the mild inconvenience of the SPAB meeting, I'm not bothered by it. I've already begun making progress on it and am rapidly approaching the criteria for that deadline whilst also making progress on the upcoming revision and formatting deadline. If anything the meeting will just be a formality since the plan and everything is already done.

I'm honestly happy with my recent progress on the paper. With Ms. Holders help the paper is being added upon, edited, and revised simultaneously. As for growth, the majority of it has been in my understanding of writing a story and generally being an author of sorts. I've learned of the two types of magic / power systems, tips and tricks for character development, and just mild refining of the things I do while writing.

If I were asked to say what I've learned this week, I can only really refer to the different types of magic systems, hard and soft. My mentor has informed me that an antagonist can be more than just other people or monsters. Not much else that explicitly pertains to the project. As for my interviews, most of them as of late have been with friends from my old high school. I've gotten good quotes pertaining to where they like to write, how they get ideas and inspiration. From my mentor I've gotten all sorts of tips and tricks, potential ideas she has taken from her friends. My favorite piece of research has to be the newest source I've found pertaining to the creation of a magic or power system. It's expanded my knowledge on that topic substantially and will likely help me improve upon my work going forward.

The only struggle I've been having is simply transitioning from a podcast to an article in like, a week or two. Right on top of all the deadlines. But ultimately everything is working out.

4/17/2023

An Actually Substantial Update

A lot of things have happened since the last entry to this honestly way too long list of journal entries. To summarize the worst part, lots of stress followed by, (not) surprisingly, more stress. But with that aside, a few revelations have been made in how I go about my writing. Imagine that one fight scene in a show or anime. Or perhaps a really emotional scene or epic moment in a game. What's one of the things many of these emotion summoning, edge-of-the-seat epic moments have in common? Music. There are so many moments in these shows where the music just elevates the scene. Which begs the question, why didn't I try using it to my advantage while writing? I can't force the reader to play a certain playlist, but what *I* can do is play one while I write. I've told you how I like to imagine the scene before I write it. Well now, I listen to music while I imagine. Never before has my blood pumped so ferociously while writing out a fight scene for my own characters. Sadly, this scene could never actually fit with the timing of what I've written so far, but I'm saving it for a later date. It might not be the same, but I've found that imagining how my characters fight tells me a lot about their personalities and overall character, so it's always useful material to have. That's another thing. When I have no clue what to write? I shove my characters into a hypothetical fight scene or another equally intense setting. Whatever comes up in that, say a really cheesy flashback sequence to reignite a character's will to fight, could turn into something I want to actually include in the story.

As I'm writing this my teacher, Ms. Lissa has emailed me a resource pertinent to character development. So that's something else that may help. No idea as of yet because I haven't read that yet. Furthermore, I've finally put my AC in for the summer. It's also funny how I went from writing in a somewhat professional setting, at my desk, back straight, etc. Now I just

bundle up in a blanket with only my eyes uncovered, and type through hidden holes in my personal blanket fort. I'm creating a world that is slowly devolving into a hellscape from the comfort of a personal blanket fort.

4/21/2023

Continued progress

As it turns out, writing while stressed isn't that nice. Thus most of my time, despite having previously written various drafts up to and including chapter 3, is spent on going back and editing them to ensure things are up to scratch. Additionally, there seems to be an exponential growth in the level of new things and ideas I am testing out and adopting in relation to the various aspects of creating a story. Things from the type of music, temperature, eating as I write, taking in more sources of information and inspiration. To be perfectly honest it feels like a second brainstorming period. New ideas for my story are being thought of, great ideas being thrown onto google docs and paper for storage and testing, characters altered, cast and entire subplot lines being reconfigured. I'm aware that, due to the nature of only having roughly 3 real drafts won't get close to being a truly finished product, the new ideas and constant alteration to just about everything speaks to that end. This story, as it stands now, is more so like the beta test of a game rather than the full release, constantly evolving. Then again, As an author I'm in a state of constant evolution as well. The way I write now is noticeably different than how I wrote before. I'm glad this is the case as it showcases growth passively.

I've come to realize a possible discrepancy in my time sheet. Namely the fact I have a tendency, when writing and reading alike, to just stare off into nothing and think for inconsistent periods of time. It's hard to get a perfectly accurate measurement of the time I spend thinking and planning in my head instead of on the google docs, where I can just look at the editing history and get the time I started typing to when I finished. Thus the time listed in the time sheet is only the time I spent editing my work on a google doc or another medium. Luckily that time still goes beyond the minimum requirement, so I feel it's ok. As for the story itself though, I'm

going to put some real effort into shoving final edits into it as best I can to get this draft into a presentable state. Oh, I almost forgot to mention that I've checked out the character development blog Ms. Lissa sent to me. Of the many points there I was surprised to see the third point they have. I havn't linked my sources on this but I think that third point alone is worth making an exception, so here; [Link](). Thinking of what might make your character change is a great way of character development that I've only seen mentioned in a book once, and a rare handful of similar concepts. As it states, people don't change easily. And as you may infer from the wording, and what I've gathered from personal experience, is that small nudges only result in the character resisting, proverbially nudging the cause of change back. The more stubborn, the more they'll push back against change. Thus, a nudge or simple shove wont do to change characters. It has to be an explosive amount of force applied all at once, overwhelming their ability to resist the change.