

Prompt: In the year 2024 every human being on earth becomes "Inactive" for 10 minutes. In an event called "The Pausing." The only way people knew this event happened was because clocks seemed to have skipped 10 minutes into the future.

Temporal Guardian

Written by B.C.

As a member of the Infinites, I've crossed the Solverse more times than I can recall. The truth is, nothing could have prepared me for the revelation that awaited me in the heart of the timelines.

It all began with a simple anomaly—a glitch in the fabric of time that caught my attention. As an Infinite, we have the ability to notice any balance alteration, and this anomaly felt different, somehow deliberate.

Following the trail of temporal disruption, I jumped into my ship and followed a strange trace a star left. That should've not been there.

"A red dust from a star?" said my copilot.

"Never seen it in 200 years. I'm leaving now."

I navigated through the corners of the Solverse for 4 years following the trail. Nothing. It never ended. Until finally, during the Interdimensional Parade, where authorities from each dimension reunite, an accident took me to a discovery.

As the parade progressed, a sudden rupture in the timeline occurred. For a brief moment, time itself seemed to fold, creating a temporal loop that went unnoticed by most but felt by all. A collective disorientation swept over the attendees as they experienced a loss of exactly ten minutes—a mere blink in the grand scheme, yet an eternity in the context of temporal manipulation.

Amidst the confusion, I noticed one figure, distant from the chaos, a smirk of satisfaction barely concealed. Unlike the rest, this individual seemed not only aware of the time slip but pleased by it. My instincts screamed that this anomaly, this deliberate manipulation of time, was their doing. With the crowd's focus scattered, I followed the enigmatic figure as they slipped away, their movements a dance of shadows and secrecy.

The chase led me through the twisted alleyways of a dimension known for its labyrinthine constructs, a place where time and space seemed to fold into themselves. It was here, in the solitude of the cosmic maze, that I confronted the figure—the Preserver.

The Preserver, once a guardian of temporal integrity, stood before me, their presence a paradox of power and desperation. Their confession was as shocking as it was heartrending. They admitted to the temporal theft, to siphoning moments from the Solverse, all in a bid to save their home dimension from an obscure yet devastating entity known as The Broken.

The Broken, a name whispered in fear across the dimensions, were an aberration that consumed realities, leaving behind nothing but void. The Preserver's actions, though forbidden, stemmed from a place of profound desperation—a last, forbidden attempt to gather enough temporal energy to fend off the inevitable doom that awaited their home. I was torn. The Preservers, by their very nature, were the custodians of time, sworn to prevent such aberrations from occurring. Yet, here was one, driven to the brink of existential dread, willing to fracture the very essence of what they were meant to protect.

The revelation forced me to reassess my understanding of the Solverse and its inhabitants. In the face of annihilation, the lines between right and wrong blur, and even the most steadfast guardians can find themselves making unthinkable choices.

The encounter with the Preserver was a turning point, a moment that challenged the very foundation of my beliefs as an Infinite. It was a stark reminder that in the vast, unfathomable expanse of the Solverse, survival sometimes demands sacrifices that challenge the core of our principles.

References

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