
Episode 473 – Get in Lozer, we’re going gunting

It was a nice apartment, well-lit, spacious and well furnished. A pair of nice, plush leather couches set the scene, arranged in a neat L-shape, with a small coffee table between them. What dominated the room, however, was the massive flat-screen against one wall, so big as to loom over all else around it. By comparison, the broad windows with views out over a strangely futuristic metropolis and the other doorways leading away to gods alone knew where seemed like afterthoughts.

Tsuneo warily looked around the apartment as he entered. “No sign of Rick,” he noted. “I think we're safe.” He stepped in, followed by Rebecca and Dan.

“That’s a relief,” Rebecca nodded. “That last lecture about the finer points of G.I. Joe continuity almost hurt.”

“And I know it was the short version,” Tsuneo added.

“Thrilling,” Dan shook his head. “Don't get me wrong. Rick's a great guy, but sometimes he gets a little... enthusiastic about his ideas.”

“You don't know the half of it,” Tsuneo sighed.

“Well we're safe for the moment,” Rebecca continued. “So what was on your mind?”

“I had a thought about some of our recent fics,” Tsuneo considered.

“Well that's a bad start,” Rebecca noted. “As these lines of thought always make things worse than they actually are.”

“Well yes,” he nodded. “But it was regarding one of the trends we've had of late, being the number of Harry Potter crossovers we've read.”

“More than I had ever wanted, that's for sure,” Dan agreed.

“Anyway, I noticed something about three of them,” Tsuneo continued, “in that they all had a characterisation of Harry Potter that was remarkably consistent yet at the same time, amazingly off the mark.”

“I did notice that myself,” Rebecca nodded. “And it is quite remarkable.”

“How so?” Dan asked.

“Well first let's look at the canon published Harry Potter or his movie counterpart,” Tsuneo considered. “He's a bit of a mischievous type, doesn't like unreasonable authority figures, is a reluctant hero who has had destiny thrust onto him, doesn't like to fight and, above all else, is loyal to his friends.”

“A very relatable character for the target audience,” Rebecca agreed. “And nothing like what we've encountered in our fics so far.”

“In as far as so far, three of our four Harry Potters have been batcrap insane libertarians,” Dan added.

“Exactly,” Tsuneo nodded. “You start off with Harry as seen in Death's Fixer,” he explained. “Who basically does magic whenever he wants in front of the decidedly Muggle V and ads that it doesn't matter because he doesn’t care about the laws of the magical world. It's about as blatantly as statement of libertarian beliefs as possible.”

“He stopped just short of a spiel about how business should be free from government regulations,” Rebecca noted.

“Well that's more of the Harry Potter of Millennium City Magic,” Dan noted. “You know, the guy who basically buys his way out of any sort of potential trouble because he's got a rich godfather, while at the same time being able to effectively ignore Dumbledore’s authority.”

“Again, ideal libertarian points,” Rebecca nodded. “But yet, nowhere near the libertarian fantasy which was Harry Potter the G.I. Joe. You know, the gun-toting child soldier who is an experienced killer and is allowed to bring his firearms into a school even though said school is in an international jurisdiction.”

“And let's not forget Lily's Potter's insane screed,” Dan added.

“I tried to,” she sighed. “But the point stands that said fic was basically a libertarian wet dream.”

“Very much so,” Tsuneo nodded. “But then I noticed that there were a bunch of other common out-of-character elements between them beyond that.”

“Such as Harry being a violent little snot,” Rebecca noted.

“Right,” Dan nodded. “Death's Fixer has him dispatching goons left, right and centre as he goes. Millennium City Magic gives us a Harry Potter who assaults on old man for disagreeing with him and laughs while he does it. And all of that pales before Harry the Joe who's a blood-soaked killer who leaves a trail of carnage in his wake and basically laughs off his near-death experience.”

“Likewise, Harry basically flaunts his magic as he goes the fics we've seen so far,” Rebecca continued. “In Death's Fixer he’s basically doing magic in front of strangers, which ties into the whole libertarian thing above. In Millennium City Magic he's got superpowers anyway, but abuses them for his own personal use. And once again in Harry the Joe we have him being able to freeze bullets in the air and walk off being impaled without any actual schooling.”

“And to finish it off, I need to say something about Harry's friends in these fics, or more to the point, lack thereof.”

“And boy is this one telling,” Rebecca nodded.

“Right, so in Death's Fixer, there's nary a mention of his friends outside of the long-overdue reunion with Neville,” Tsuneo noted. “It's a glaring oversight, and yet it's still closer than he gets in the other fic. In Millennium City Magic, not only is there no indication that Harry has any actual friends, but he completely shrugs off the deaths of his foster parents.”

“Worryingly so,” Rebecca added.

“Finally, you have the worst case scenario in Harry the Joe, where his circle of friends consists entirely of adult soldiers,” Tsuneo noted. “Nothing about that seems even remotely healthy.”

“So what about Neon Lily?” Dan asked.

“I mean, is that really Harry Potter?” Rebecca asked. “Or is it just a horny idiot who superficially resembles Harry Potter for the sake of the author's preferred pairing?”

“Good point, actually,” Dan admitted.

“And yet I can draw one conclusion from this,” Tsuneo considered. “Which is that Death’s Fixer is still the best characterised Harry Potter we've seen so far.”

“No, I can see that,” Rebecca nodded. “If you close your eyes and don't think too hard, you could see how he might have once been the Boy Wizard, instead of some insane libertarian fantasy power trip.”

“It's rather telling,” Dan agreed.

“Hey guys!” Rick barged in as he entered. “Sorry I'm late.”

“It’s okay,” Rebecca shrugged. “We managed to actually have a halfway insightful conversation.”

“Great!” Rick beamed. “So I was late because I was working on my presentation about the number of fics we've read so far that could actually be fiction written by Annie LaBelle within fiction written by Annie LaBelle.”

“Good morning to you all,” the Voice crashed into the conversation.

“Oh what a shame, Rick,” Rebecca replied with a mock sigh. “We'll have to see your presentation later.”

“Ah well,” Rick shrugged. “It could be for the best. I might turn up something new that I had missed to further cement the underlying later of meta-metafiction.”

“Help,” Dan managed.

“So as not to get Rick started,” Tsuneo spoke up, looking at the ceiling, “What are we covering today?”

“Today we're going to be covering the second half of ‘The Newcomer’,” the Voice explained.

“Hm, more of Lozer,” Dan considered. “I'm not sure how I feel about that.”

“How so?” Rick asked.

“Well, on one side, it's the least offensive Ready Player One fic we've read so far,” Dan noted. “But on the other, it's still Ready Player One fic.”

“Fair point,” Rick nodded.

“At least it’s the end of the fic,” Tsuneo offered. “That's something.”

“Short, relatively painless and stupid,” Rebecca agreed. “I can live with that.”

“Fantastic,” the Voice beamed.

“Right then,” Tsuneo nodded as he took his place on the couch. “Might as well get it over with then.”

“Agreed,” Dan added as he and the others joined him. “Downside is that I have no idea what to expect from this fic. Upside is that I know it'll be dumb no less.”

“I think that's the best summary of the Lozer spirit,” Rebecca finished as the big screen turned on, converting the world over to script format.

> Chapter 6: 6-Learning the truth
> Aech Pov:

> "Ok, so right now were all in this giant castlevania lair

Rebecca: A Castlevania Lair, where Castlevanias hibernate during the winter

> with ice, monsterous snowmen and traps as
> well having a new guy with us tag along. So far he hasn't been to bad,

Tsuneo: The term ‘tolerable’ comes to mind

> though I thought he be the

> member of the group who would be the comedy relief or the funny sidekick from old cartoon shows.

Dan: One of those character archetypes that really doesn't translate to the real world.

> Though right now his proving himself to be one of us,

Tsuneo: [Aech] He just told a girl that she's not a real fan.

> I can see it threw his movement as well trying to impress us.

Rebecca: Lozer desperately craves approval

> Never thought I'd have anyone that wanted to make me happy by putting himself in danger,

Dan: But you know, better him then us.

> as well doing the one two step on pressure platted floors."

Rick: Please, we all know the secret code is in the Batusi.

> The five saw Lozer on the other side amazed but still confused on how he was able to get pass the
> arrows by dancing,

Dan: [Sho] Thought he as a goner for sure.
Tsuneo: [Daito] You owe me five bucks.

> "Ok,who's first?" parzival says as art3mis sighs as she walks first saying "Sorry
> boys, but were not going play the nervous game,

Tsuneo: Their plan had been to stand there and stare at it.

> watch how a girl does it" she says with a smirk as
> she pulls out a square disco disc which she throws it at the ground. She steps on the block as the
> lights starting beeping which it covers the square blocks

Dan: Oh hey, it's like in that movie?
Rick: Saturday Night Fever?
Dan: Or Airplane, which was referencing Saturday Night Fever?
Rick: Or in Ready Player One which was referencing Saturday Night Fever or possibly the Airplane reference to Saturday Night Fever?

[Pause]

Rick: So did they just reference Ready Player One in a Ready Player One fic?
Dan: I think I've gone cross-eyed.

> as her song which was "She's a bad mama jama" by Carl Carton.

Rebecca: Hm, I'm not sure that's 80's enough.
Dan: It came out in '81.
Rebecca: Alright, I'll let you off with a warning.

> She moved her right foot to the red square in which she slides avoiding some
> arrows as well did a small spin as well some moves that revolved her hips moving left to right while
> she smiled enjoying the music,

Tsuneo: And remember, the song's likely three times as old as she is.

> the boys watch as parzival was merely starstruck on how amazing she danced,

Rick: Yes, but was she doing a variety of eighties dance moves?

> Aech looked at him snapping his fingers saying "Hey, she's just dancing. It's not belly
> dancing."

Dan: The single most erotic thing that Aech can think of. Well, that doesn't involve Sonic the Hedgehog, that is

> he says as parzival looks at him scuffing replying "I know that" as the guys watch her
> finally reach the other side as she struts a pose.

Tsuneo: And gets hit by the swinging axe.

> "And thats, how it's done. Also parzival, don't think I'm forgetting you hypnotized by these moves."

Rick: His entire response was 'duuh girl'.

> she said chuckling as now it was his turn, he pulls
> up his invetory as he looks for a song and finds the right one,

Rick: Hideaway, the love theme from the movie ROTOR.

> he plays it as the music went on as it was "Can't touch this" by MC hammer.

Rebecca: Aech knows it best as the male orc dance.

> He starts rocking his head slowly as he steps on the first
> block, he does some quick footwork dancing as well avoiding the arrows as they watch him dance
> to the music.

Rebecca: So in short, this trap seems to be purpose designed to be defeated by any stupid dance routine
Tsuneo: It does indeed. And I hate it.

> "Huh, you know i always considered you a Michael Jackson type of guy."

Dan: You know, semi-reclusive and carrying on an odd relationship with a chimpanzee

> Aech says as
> parzival looks going ask him but lose the moment as he miss steps that leads him in trip and land
> on the other side seeing a arrow pass right by him missing his face as he falls by art3mis and
> lozer97, "That was awesome !" lozer said excitedly

Dan: You nearly got impaled! Cool!

> as he helped him up as arty sighs saying "Well,
> in my opinion I give you a five out of ten." she said joking to him as it was the others turn now.

Tsuneo: Breathe man, breathe!

> Daito looked at the floor as well sho as the ninja says "Ready?", "Hi" daito replying to him

Tsuneo: He's not saying he's ready, just saying hello

> as the samurai
> looked at some songs he could play as he finds the right one, he taps on the play button in which
> the song "One,two,three" by Morning Musume.

Dan: Being Japanese really is the be-all and end-all of his character
Rick: Hai.

> The two were in sync dancing together as the two
> watched the arrows firing as they both grabbed them and broke them in half while they still danced,

Tsuneo: Daito and Sho don't deserve separate scenes.

> "Whoa, totally linked together. Reminds me of that episode of RWBY with the dance,

Rick: And the janky animation and the infighting in the production team.
Rebecca: That doesn't narrow it down.

> so cool."
> Art3mis says as the two did a spin in which they make it to the other side with the three clapping for
> their performance. "Nice one guys." Parzival said as he gives them a high five at art3mis was going
> give one to sho as he decline only bowing to her as the last one was Aech.

Rick: Who was rapidly beginning to realise that he was the also-ran of the team.

> "Come on Aech, you can do it." Lozer said encouraged him

Dan: Yeah, when Lozer is the one you have to live up to, you know something's gone horribly wrong.

> as the cyber orc looked and presses his
> feet on a block in which a arrow came flying right at him but he moves away freaked out, "Hell no,
> there is no way I'm doing this.

Tsuneo: Great. Now they're just dragging this out.

> As well dance my way there." he said moving left to right not doing it
> as Z says "Come on Aech, its not that hard. Just find the song and it will lead you."

Rebecca: I mean, it's worked flawlessly for everyone else so far.

> he said as Aech
> cross his arms replying "There is no way I'm doing a dumb dance to get pass this trap."

Tsuneo: I mean, at this point I'd be shocked if there's anything they haven't triggered on it.

> he says as
> art3mis places her hands on her hips saying "Yeah, its not like you got taste in good music." she
> says as he looks at her with a look as Aech pulls out his soundtrack looking for a song, "Oh yeah?"
> he says as he presses a song as it was "This is how we do it" by Montell Jordan,

Dan: Clearly a reference to the classic dance montage from Saints Row IV.

> he walks on the
> blocks going right to left while snapping his fingers as the arrows come, his chest goes up missing
> avoiding the arrows as he slides to the song's rhythm

Rick: So the question is, would this work for any combination of song and dance moves? Or only some of them? Or if you chose the right song but the wrong moves then you'd be dead?
Tsuneo: You're thinking about this way more then the author did

> as well showing off some moves as the others watch him.

Rebecca: You know, more dancing contests should be like this.
Tsuneo: What, with random inappropriate backing tracks?
Rebecca: No, with death traps.

> "Thats it aech, show us what you got." Sho encouraging him as aech kept moving

> listening to the rhythm while sounding out the others as well not thinking about the arrows as he
> kept going,

Tsuneo: Trying to ignore the grievous puncture wounds.

> on the last block he steps on the side as he makes it as he opens his eyes with a smirk
> like look saying "So, what do you have to say about that?" he asks art3mis

Rebecca: [Art3mis] You’re standing on a land mine.

> as the pink skin avatar
> pointed at him back in which he turns seeing some arrows in his back and does a scream. "Ow!" he
> shouts

Rick: We’re going full Looney Tunes here
Tsuneo: I wouldn’t have thought that this fic could get any dumber, but yet here we are.

> as he pulls it out of them as they waited for him to get them out as Z pulls out his inventory
> and grabs a health potion in which he gives it to aech

Dan: If console RPGs have taught me one thing it’s to always have hundreds of healing potions on you at all times

> "Thanks dude." Aech says as he takes it in
> which he heals himself in which they continue to the door.

Rebecca: Well that wasn’t funny or exciting in the slightest, but at least it wasted our time.

> The six look at the door as it slowly opens showing a dark dungeon as well a arcade booth of the
> game Joust,

Tsuneo: Kind of killing the ambience there.

> it stood there around the stone dungeon as the torches around them lite up with a blue
> flame as the group slowly enters the room. "Huh, very dungeon's and dragons type feeling."

Rick: In as far as its all laid out on a ten foot grid.

> Lozer said exploring around like a sidekick

Rebecca: The fic’s even admitting it.

> as the others stayed vigilante watching the corners as they
> walk up to the booth where they heard laughter, a wicked and old laughter that belonged to the rich,

Tsuneo: Do they mean the Lich?
Rick: Well he’s an old money Lich, got real estate investments across the country, bought a football team, even has his own wine label.

> they look seeing him on his throne where his eyes glowed red at them as he smiled them with a
> wicked grin.

Dan: I’m a skeleton. It’s all I can do.

> "Greetings adventurers, I see you have come for my wand."

Rick: [Lozer] Actually, no. I was just looking for the subway station.
Rebecca: [Lich] Oh, you got turned around. You gotta take a left at the Keep on the Borderlands.

> he said holding it on his

> waist as the six looked at him as parzival walked up and spoke to him, "I am Parzival, of the high
> five. We challenge you for the wand."

Rick [Lich]: Yeah, that's what I just said. You deaf or something?

> he said bowing to him as the others did the same as well
> Lozer does showing respect as the Lich looked at them as he nodded back to him. "You show
> respect, not many avatars do that when they come to my lair.

Dan [Lich]: Most of them don't even wipe their feet or use the coat rack. I put it there for a reason, you know

> Most of them try to take the wand without playing a game of Joust. It's quite rude if you asked me."

Tsuneo: The whacky sitcom Lich is an under-used character archetype.

> he replys to them as they rose their heads as they looked ready to play him,

Rick: [Lich] Ahah! Psyche! Finger of Death!

> the lich then showed them six quarters for them as he throws them to each of them

Dan: Lozer fumbles his and then it rolls down a grate.

> saying "You all have a chance to beat me, each of you has been given a quarter for you to play me.

Tsuneo: Good luck finding an arcade machine that takes a quarter.
Rebecca: Good luck finding an arcade machine.

> If one of you win, you will be given the wand and only you.

Rebecca: You only get a single Wand End User licence. You cannot redistribute it.

> If I defeat
> you, I will take away all of your items as well freeze you forever." he said explaining the rules as his
> breath was able to be seen showing how cold he was as the six could feel it.

Tsuneo: Wait, the undead skeleton guy still breathes? My immersion is ruined!

> "Group Huddle!" Aech shouted as the five got in a huddle though lozer was distracted by the lich

Dan [Lozer]: Dhuhhhh, skeleton.

> who was still looking at them as Daito pulled him in for him to be in the conversation,

Tsuneo: They're going to be doing this a lot.

> "Alright, I think
> the best plan we have is to have someone with good eye sight as well be able to track down the
> enemy knights" Z explain as aech replies "Then let me, I can keep my eye on my ostrich while
> moving around."

Dan: Aech volunteers because she has basic hand-eye coordination.

> he said confident like as Sho says "But its the sliding your worried about then I
> should go first, I've been able to have a good grip on the joy stick"

Rebecca: No comment.

> he said offering his help as They

> kept talking as lozer looked at the game as well looked at his coin as the group kept talking,

Rebecca: He tried to bite it to see if it was real gold.
Tsuneo: It’s a quarter. A virtual quarter.
Rebecca: And yet...

> "Guys, I've seen these dumb birds in my damn sleep.

Dan: I have nightmares about them. I take pills, but they don’t help.

> So I should do it." Art3mis said as she walks over to
> the lich and shows him to the lich as he looks at it. "Will you be the first my dear?" he asks as she
> nods as she places her coin into the arcade as well the lich as the two began to play each other, the
> others watched in suspense

Tsuneo: [Flat] Wow. Joust. Thrilling.

> as lozer couldn't help but notice something familar about how she was acting,

Dan: [Lozer] Wait, I just figured it out! That’s Art3mis!

> rather than playful but serious like as the look on her face was something he has seen before.

Rick: It’s almost like he’s been hanging around practicing at video games or something.

> "Hey parzival, I have a question to ask." Lozer asks Z as he looks at the green avatar replying
> "Yeah?, What's up?", "Do you know what art3mis likes?"

Dan [Parzival]: Um, girl stuff? I think?
Tsuneo [Lozer]: Shouldn’t have asked.

> he asks him as the group watches the two
> plays as he replied "Well she's competitive, she likes a good joke or two. She has a knowledge on
> movie, video game and cartoon knowledge.

Tsuneo: She knows stuff about stuff

> She's a fierce gamer plus she always has a sense of costume changing."

Rebecca: In short, his perfect manic pixie dream girl.

> he explain as Lozer eyes widen as he asks "Like disguises?" looking at parzival
> as he could realize he was putting things together as he was about to speak until they heard 'Game
> Over' from the booth as Art3mis lost. "I'm sorry my dear, but you have lost.

Tsuneo: [Art3mis] Aren’t you going to freeze me and take all my gear?
Dan: [Lich] Oh heck no, that was just trash talk.

> Who shall be next?" The
> lich asked as Aech sighs "I'll go, bring it skull face." he said running over as the girl walked over
> frustrated making fists as she yells angered like "Great! seeing ostrich's for three days!

Rebecca: Well that will happen when you run an ostrich ranch

> All for
> nothing!" she said making a angered look as Lozer soon knew that look as he gasped having a
> flashback moment.

Dan: Specifically to being pinned down by VC fire in Da Nang.

> Three weeks while the challenge was still going at the Avatar store,

Tsuneo: They were all playing for a chance at an exclusive The Boulder skin.

> Lozer was walking around
> looking at most of the lanes as well at the items that were being sold. He was looking mostly at the
> street fighter section where he purchased Blanka's hair style

Tsuneo: Somewhere there’s a costume vendor who’s laughing to himself.

> as well some other items,

Dan: He also bought Dhalsim and Sagat’s hair styles. Cost him a fortune, but he feels it was totally worth it

> right now he
> was looking at the vehicle lane looking at the cars as well ships that were on sale. He saw mostly
> cars from the 80's

Rick: There was an AMC Eagle and a Yugo.

> as well a couple of bikes as well a ton of avatars getting their vehicles for the
> copper key race as well other items.

Tsuneo: Looking at items as well as other items.

> "Man, this competition is getting people more hopped up than a
> dog hunt, and their all birds trying to fly a way." he says making a reference from Duck Hunt

Rebecca: This fic really does invoke the spirit of Ready Player One, in as far as it has to stop and point out its own references

> as he
> was about to go get a vehicle but say a massive gumball machine with car capsules which cost
> about four hundred coins.

Rick: Which sounds like a lot. Or it could be pocket change. Or we could have no frame of reference whatsoever.

> Meanwhile outside of the story was Art3mis, disguise as Goro who was
> walking passed the crowd as most of them where keeping their distance from the Shokan

Tsuneo: Since the OASIS has accurately duplicated his BO.

> as she looked around at the motorcycle section thinking "Ok, just find Shotaro Kaneda's bike,

Dan: And which film was that from again?

> get to the
> race and win that key. Finally I can finish this race and soon then go after the other keys."

Tsuneo: I’m not going to lie. The image of Goro on that bike is hilarious

> she
> thought as she walked over to the massive gumball machine where the bike would be at as she
> kept walking seeing lozer there,

Rebecca: And immediately turns around and leaves.

> he enters his coins inside the machine and gets his capsule.

Rick: Wow, the tension in this scene is unbearable.

> "Ok, come on mystery machine." he hoped as he opens it seeing the Akira bike,

Tsuneo: Loot boxes of the future!

> "Aw man. I'm never going get that van."

Rick: He did get the van from Captain Caveman and the Teen Angels. Real booby prize there.

> he said as Art3mis says to herself as she then gritted her teeth getting upset

Dan: She's upset because… he didn't get the van he wanted?
Rebecca: Clearly she's very invested in this complete stranger.

> as
> she walks over putting on her goro impression as she was about to scare him but notice the sad
> look on his face as she looked now confuse at him.

Tsuneo: She has a hard time understanding human emotions

> "What's up with you runt?" she said using her goro voice as lozer looked up to him and gets
> spooked a bit replying "It's just.

Rick: [Lozer] Well, I'm a Lozer.

> I spent most of my time doing missons on the jungle planet
> Amazona as well at Transylvania arena fighting ghoul boxer's and wolf robots which took me hours
> to complete.

Tsuneo: And we're picking up with him at a gumball machine? Can't we see him fighting wolf robots and ghoul boxers instead? That sounds awesome!

> All that and nowl got this akira bike."

Dan: Go on, say it. You know you want to.

> he explain as she couldn't believe it that he was not happy about this bike,

Rebecca: Maybe he's just not an anime fan and it doesn't fit his preferred aesthetic. Have you considered that much?

> this bike was able to outrun any kind of bike especially a light cycle as
> well could make a perfect landing whenever it's in the air

Tsuneo: Drop it from ten thousand feet and it will make a perfect landing.

> as she let out a growl which he wanted to
> step back from goro, "So what you going do with it then? Going sell it for gear? A costume?

Dan: Hey kid; I'll give you this Hokey Wolf costume in exchange for the bike
Rick [Lozer]: Sounds great to me!
Dan: Sucker.

> Give it
> to one of your gunter friends?" she said as she tried to hide her jealousy as the green avatar looked
> at the small bike and shows it to him,

Rebecca: Or just stick it in your collection with the hundred other vehicles you never use.

> "What are you doing?" she asks as Lozer replies "Well, since I
> already bought it and it's a nice bike but not the one I want.

Rebecca: He was really after a tiny little clown bike

> And since you were coming here, you can have it,
> plus I'm mostly on my own. I don't got that many friends."

Rebecca: [Art3mis] I'm sure what that's got to do with anything, but okay.

> he said with a smile as goro
> then grabs it looking at it as she got extremely happy but doesn't show it asking "So like you want a
> trade or something?", "No. It's ok, I'll just try again and try at it at the gumball machine,

Rebecca [Art3mis]: Do you want to trade something for that incredibly rare and valuable bike?
Tsuneo [Lozer]: Naw, you can have it for free. I'll just try again on this random luck gumball machine.
Dan: This has been two idiots negotiating

> Have a good
> day." he said walking pass him as art3mis looked at him go feeling a bit guilty that he gave her the
> bike but didn't give anything back as she sighs pulling out some coins and throws it to him.

Rick: Just beans him in the forehead with one of them for good measure.

> "There,
> now where even." She said as lozer looked at it smiling to goro as lozer heads over to the gumball
> machine to try again

Rick [Lozer]: Aw man, all I got was KITT. And then the Batmobile. And then James Bond's Aston Martin. I have the worst luck with this thing.

> as the disguised shokan walked out of the store as she then removes her
> disguise and places on her biker look and helmet on as she headed to the race saying "Thanks kid."
> as she walked threw the portal.

Dan: Fans demanded the secret origin story of Art3mis' Kaneda's bike from Akira!

> "Goro..." Lozer said to art3mis as she and parzival looked at him with a shocked expression

Tsuneo: He just realised that Art3mis is the only one who can wear a Goro costume.
Dan: I mean, surely anyone could-
Tsuneo: The *only* one.

> as soon
> they heard a 'Game Over' as Aech lost, "Ah damn it!" he shouted which he walks over looking at the
> moment asking "What did I miss?"

Tsuneo: Not much.

> he asks not knowing what has happened or was going to happen
> next with lozer realizing who art3mis really was.

Rebecca: Eventually he realised that she was actually Brick Hactar.

[Pause]

Rick: That would be such a better fic
Rebecca: I would be completely onboard for that.

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> Chapter 7: 7-A challenger approachs
> Lozer Pov:

All: Duuuhhh...

> "I couldn't believe it, I just couldn't believe it when I put everything together. Art3mis, the same girl
> that brought me here was goro,

Rick: He yoinked off Art3mis' rubber mask and found that it was Goro all along
Dan [Goro]: I would have gotten away with it too if not for you meddling kids!

> the same goro that scare the life out of me as well the same who brought me here.

Tsuneo: Gotta be able to tell your Goros apart. They're everywhere.

> I don't know whether to feel betrayed or surprise the fact she lied about that she did know me.

Dan: I don't know about you, but I'd be kicking myself for letting that Kaneda Bike's from Akira go for nothing

> all this was too much as well shocking because now i don't know what to do,

Rick: Um, stare slack-jawed like a stunned mullet?
Tsuneo: Lozer's way ahead of you.

> all I'm
> feeling right now is to run away from this as well try not to lose it as I merely looked at parzival and
> art3mis scared and angry."

Rebecca: And then he remembered that these are the people who actually own the OASIS so he decided to play nice with them anyway.

> "you were goro at the store?

Dan: Yeah, Bob Goro from accounts

> you were the one that scared me?" Lozer said stepping back as the
> two avatars looked at him nodding as she says "Yes, but listen I was going to tell you about it later."

Rick: As a deathbed confessional

> she says as the group looked at what was happening as Lozer asks "Later? Why were you keeping
> it a secret in the first place? Why did you keep me in the dark?"

Rebecca: She was fighting to save the entire OASIS. It slipped her mind.

> he asked frighten like trying to figure this out as the lich was merely watching the conversation

Dan: [Lich] I'm not interrupting, am I?

> as he asked "Will anyone else want to play?"

Tsuneo [Lich]: Remember me? The guy you came here for in the first place?

> he asks as Sho raises his hand heading over to play him so the ninja could keep him
> distracted. "I think it was because she was going tell you why she brought you along, to try and
> learn what it's like to be apart of a group"

Rick: It’s so we can all learn a valuable lesson that will be immediately forgotten for next week’s conflict.

> Z explain trying to calm the situation as lozer shook his
> head replying "And then what? just leave me out somewhere to be on my own? To have me explore
> around Oasis looking for a group

Dan: That’s what the random group finder is for.

> to join like a ghost going after pacman?" he said as Art3mis replies

Tsuneo: [Art3mis] Nah, those ghosts actually have a purpose.

> "Lozer, just calm down. I wasn't going do that, I was going show you a list of clans that might fit with
> your type of..", "Personality?

Rebecca: I’m sure there’s plenty of clans who are looking for a needy creep.

> what I am because I don't fit in with legends like yourselves?"

Tsuneo: I mean, again, five richest and most powerful people in the world and all.

> he asks
> as the group could tell he was upset as Aech walk towards him saying "L, maybe you should relax.."

Dan: Follow Frankie’s advice.

> he said as the green avatar stepped back away from him with a look of disappointment as well
> sadness saying "No, no I don't think I can. You know this is why I don't clan up with other gunters as
> well play with others, It's because I'm never told the truth as well kept it in the dark.

Rebecca: At this point he’s just being a petulant jerk and assigning blame without any self-examination. [Pause] He and Parzival have so much in common.

> i just can't believe it had to come from my heroes." he said like a broken heart sense in his voice

Dan: Lozer is nominative determinism in action.

> as he then runs out of the dungeon leaving the high five in the dungeon as the rest stayed quiet

Tsuneo: [Parzival] Well, that happened. [Pause] Anyone for tacos?

> as art3mis lowers her head and goes after him, "Ah man, that was messed up."

Rick: I can’t believe that the new guy that we barely know would walk out on us.

> Aech said as Z he looks at Sho still holding out on his own as he looks to Aech,

Dan: Yep, we can be totally sure that Sho is the one who’ll crack this.

> "Stay with the others. I going check up on them." he
> said being concern rushing to check up on the two.

Tsuneo: Okay, so he’s checking on Art3mis. And if Lozer just happens to be there, then it’s a bonus

> In another room of the castle, lozer was outside looking at the abyss

Rebecca: Which is of course looking back.

> as well the edge seeing the

> outside as well the ice around him as he held his arms feeling sad as well upset thinking that he
> should have been smarter to think he could be with the High five,

Rebecca: I mean, when you look at it, there really is no reason why they would keep him around.
Dan: What if they needed somebody to run to the store for them?

> he kept thinking that until he heard
> some footsteps. "Lozer?" Art3mis asks as he doesn't look at her knowing it was her as he was still
> upset, "Hey buddy? can we talk?' she asks walking close to him as well slowly as the avatar moved
> away

Rebecca: [Art3mis] Well, I tried. Have a nice life.

> as she stopped seeing how he still didn't trust her as she had to take it slowly, "Will you let me
> explain why I didn't tell you?", "What for? to tell me something that you kept hidden?

Rick: The truth is that she’s actually hairy-knuckled Chuck from Detroit

> Or that this isn't your real look?"

Dan: You got her there. Usually her avatar looks like Boss Hogg.

> he asked coming up with excuses as she replied back "Because I know where
> you coming from.

Rebecca: [Art3mis] Everyone was a beginner at this once.
Tsuneo: [Lozer] Like me?
Rebecca: [Art3mis] Well no, not really.

> Being on your own as well thinking that you can't be with anyone, I thought that
> every gunter in the game would either be on their own or rather think about themselves.

Tsuneo: And practical experience has proven her to be entirely right.

> I thought
> that since I started to play, I only focused on myself and focused on winning the challenge.

Rick: The hot dog-eating challenge, that is.

> What I
> should have done was be with a group, learn how to accept others as well not go at challenges on
> my own."

Tsuneo: When you think about it, what did Art3mis actually achieve?
Rebecca: She gave Parzival a wish-fulfilment girlfriend
Tsuneo: Well fission mucking accomplished, I guess.

> she said to him as he merely listen as parzival walked by hearing the two as he listen,

Dan: [Parzival, loud] You having a private chat over there? Don’t mind me!

> "Parzival showed me that, after that night at the distracted globe,

Rick: I don’t know if that’s a typo or what, but it’s a great name for a nightclub no less

> when we dance on the zero gravity floor. I never felt so alive, it was amazing.

Dan: Nothing says ‘amazing’ more than a Saturday Night Fever homage.

> Being with someone as well have fun at the same time,

Rick: She had never had fun with anyone in this massively multiplayer game before.

> I thought I would never get that kind of enjoyment on my own.

Rebecca: That depends on if her suit had a micro-fibre crotch inlay or not

> But later on when I learn that he loved him,

Tsuneo: I know that's got to be a typo, but it's also hilariously accurate.

> I turned him away because I thought he be a distraction from me winning the game.

Dan: [Art3mis] Then I finally saw what the challenges were and I was like, wow anyone could have done that.

> I
> should have realized that, the Oasis isn't a single player game, but a game to bring others together,
> not apart."

Rick: Which is why only one person could win the prize and gain complete control over it through completing solo challenges
Tsuneo: Exactly.

> she said as lozer looks at him as she walks over giving him a smile as well patted his
> back

Rebecca: [Art3mis] And that's why I didn't tell you.
Dan: [Lozer] Wait, that makes no –
Rebecca: [Art3mis] You're welcome.

> as parzival walked by the two, "Hey guys." he said as he walks over to the two as lozer sighs
> looking down, "I'm sorry I didn't tell you. It was, a jerk thing to do.

Dan: But really, why wouldn't you try to just sell Kaneda's bike from Akira on the auction house or whatever?

> I should have told you, your with us now. And we shouldn't have kept this a secret from you."

Tsuneo: [Art3mis] Anyway, about Aech...

> Z said telling his apology to him as
> lozer replied "Its just, whenever I do join uo with others. I'm never told the truth and always
> forgotten,

Rebecca: Have you begun to think there might be a reason for that?

> I was afraid that once this was over. You would possibly leave me or something like that."
> he said as z smirked off saying "Leave you?

Dan: [Parzival] We couldn't have done this without you, Charlie.
Rick: [Lozer] Lozer.
Dan: [Parzival] Whatever.

> So far you helped us out with getting pass the ice giant
> as well figure out a way across the trap floor.

Tsuneo: Things that they doubtless would have done without him anyway, but that's not the point.

> How could we just leave you on your own after that?"

Dan: [Parzival] We'd have to gank you and take your stuff first.

> he said giving him compliments about how he was helpful to him and the gang. "Yeah,I guess I did
> didn't I?" lozer says feeling happy

Dan: Meanwhile the Lich sighs and checks his watch.

> as parzival says "Besides, I dont think you should worry about
> being on your own for the time being." Z asked as lozer looked at him confused like

Rick: [Parzival] Besides, I'm sure you've got family and friends in the real world who are there for you.
Dan: [Lozer] Who in the what now?

> as suddenly they heard a angered yell as the three look and rush over back to the dungeon.

Rick: Something something game of Joust something?

> They soon come back and see that sho had lost while daito was meditating for some reason

Rebecca: Its his mindfulness routine. Next comes the adult colouring books

> as he
> had his mask on while they look at the lich with his arms crossed tapping his boney fingers saying

Tsuneo: [Lich] Are we playing here or what?

> "Three down, three to go" he said as art3mis saw sho with his head at the column upset as she
> asks "What happen?", "I almost had him, I was close until i made a move which let him jump on me"
> he answers her question as he says something in chinese

Tsuneo: Fic, you and I need to have a talk.

> as she looks at daito asking "What about
> you? did you go?", "No,I'm preparing for the next match. I'm calming my mind."

Dan: Also, he's waiting for someone else to go first.

> he said as he gets
> up and walks over to the booth as he bows to the lich as the two enter there quarters and begin to
> play their game.

Tsuneo: Wouldn't it be funny if Daito won the match off-screen and all loser's prep came to nothing?
Rebecca: Yeah, but that would mean Daito does something.

> Meanwhile watching from the side lines, lozer looked at his watch as it was
> beeping as he answers it. "Is that a Dick Tracy watch?" Z asks as lozer nodded saying "Yeah, I did a
> cops misson on ludos,

Rick: He gruesomely gunned down a bunch of malformed thugs, watched as his daughter in law was killed with a car bomb and rescued Little Orphan Annie. It was a pretty normal Dick Tracy-themed mission.

> I got this as a award." he said as it showed a red bleeping light as it was moving.

Dan: [Parzival] So what does that mean?
Tsuneo: [Lozer] I have no earthly clue.

> "Someone else is here. Their fighting the snowmen"

Tsuneo: His watch detects people who are fighting snowmen. He never thought he'd have a use for it before now

> he explain as there was a thump
> upstairs as they look up seeing some of the dust fall on them, Aech opening his spetacles looking at
> a heat signature

Rebecca: Aech turned on thermal vision in an ice level and was immediately blinded.

> slashing threw the snowmen turning them into water as well throwing them at the wall.

Rick: This guy spent ages training against department store Christmas displays

> "Whoever is up there it totally trying to get a high score." he said as parzival looks at daito
> asking "How's it coming?", "Good, mustn't talk" he answers his question as Z looks at aech asking
> "Do you know who it is?","Nope, but the strange thing is that he appears as a threat."

Tsuneo: He's a rival player. Why wouldn't he appear as a threat?
Dan: Maybe they were hoping he'd at least be nice about it.

> he says as soon they see a light glow at the entrance, suddenly a beeping sound comes out

Rick: [Lozer] What's that?
Rebecca: [Aech] Well, either I need to take my soufflé out of the oven, or the door's about to explode.

> as suddenly behind the door as parzival threw up a shield protecting them as the door exploded

Rick: [Lozer] Huh. Good call.
Rebecca: [Aech] Yeah, but I should still check on my soufflé.

> sending the group back as well the lich making a massive hole infront of them.

Dan: [Lich] Geez, you sit alone on your frozen throne for thousands of years without seeing anyone then suddenly they're all beating down your door.

> "What the hell was that?!" Sho asked as the group got up art3mis looks as the smoke was clearing
> as she turns her head saying "I-ROK?" asking because of the size as well the hood

Rebecca: There's only one person in the entire OASIS who would wear a hood.

> but it soon
> clears seeing it wasnt the bounty hunter but someone entierly different, he wore a dark hood
> combine with a trench coat which belong to Lord John Whorfin from Buckaroo Banzai,

Rick: Along with John Bigbooty's shirt and tie.

> he looked like a dark elf with light blue skin and red eyes with black hair,

Dan: Oh no, it's Generic Edgelord!

> he wore mumm ra's amulet from the thundercats

Tsuneo: As well as Chi stone from Chima

> as well his arms where which had his metalic armor,

Rebecca: Was that over or under the coat?

> he also wore griff's pants with the nuclear symbol on both of his shine as well the metal boots.

Dan: Oh sure they look cool, but they’re hell to put on in the morning.

> Both of his hands both hand gamer
> gloves as well claws that resembled freddy kruger's power glove from 'Freddy's Dead'. The look on
> his face was of seriousness from gannon

Rick: The only character who has ever worn a serious expression

> as well a sinister smile like from street fighter

Dan: No specific character, just Street Fighter in general.

> as he looks
> at the six avatars on the ground getting up. "Are you the one they call, "Parzival"?" He asked as the
> white haired teen looked at him standing replying "Yes, i am."

Tsuneo: [Hoarse] Candygram.

> he said as they then see the lich
> standing up angered like with his hands becoming ice like and speaks in a dark voice

Dan: [Lich] Do you mind, we’re in the middle of something here!

> "How dare
> you interupt my game! I the frost lich!, Will now freeze your bones that will shatter your bones!"

Tsuneo: You’ve got to work on your threat there. The redundant statements aren’t helping.

> he said about to freeze him until the dark avatar showed him his right claw

Dan: [Lich] Yes, yes, that’s very nice. I bet you got it out of a christmas cracker.

> hand and slashes him destroying the lich in seconds turning him into coins and absorbing him

Rebecca: Which makes you wonder why they didn’t just do that in the first place.

> as the six looked shocked at
> him, "Now then, where were we?" he asked the six as lozer says "Totally fragged?" he asks scared
> like as the six tried to now think of how to handle this new enemy.

Rebecca: And then they remembered that they were the owners of the OASIS and just killfiled him

> -----

> Chapter 8: 8-origins of a boss
> Parzival Pov:"Right now we were suppose to have a good match, win the game and grab the wand
> as well maybe head back to the workshop to watch a movie or two.

Rick: As long as it was something in the Time-Warner catalogue

> Though right now what I'm looking at is this evil looking guy who's basically related to me

Rebecca: [Parzival] It’s my mother’s other sister.

> since basically all of his wardrobe is based of the villains my favorite stars had beaten.

Tsuneo: That’s not how being related to somebody works

> Also how in the hell was he able to take down the lich?!

Dan: He read a strategy guide and watched a walkthrough on YouTube

> This is a non pvp zone, something is defientlt wrong,

Tsuneo: [Parzival] I'd contact admin but... Well, you know.

> so why do I feel like we might go up aganist something new?

> The dark being stood there waiting as everyone got up as Aech asked "What hell are you? Freaking
> dracula?"

Rebecca: He's a purely public domain Dracula, not referencing any specific iteration that might be subject to copyright

> he asks as the man just chuckled amused by the orc's comment answering him "My
> name, is Mordred.

Rick: Clearly named after the clone supersoldiers from Heavy Gear, because I can't think of anywhere else he could have gotten that name

> Mordred the ultimate, as in the strongest boss ever made in the Oasis by James Halliday."

Rebecca: He had his boss stats professionally ranked. He was only third strongest last quarter, but they then adjusted for inflation.

> he said as parzival looked at him confused as well shocked saying "Hold on, you were
> created by halliday?"

Tsuneo: That's why he looks like a train-wreck dork.

> he asked the dark elf nodded as art3mis asked as well "What? There's nothing
> on some evil darth vader in the game",

Dan: As opposed to your usual perfectly benign Darth Vader.

> "Thats because the wizard imprisoned me on doom" he
> answered at her angered like as the group looked at him

Rick: [Parzival] Okay, but have you tried just talking this through?

> while lozer was scanning him looking up
> any information on him as he kept talking. "Planet doom? Thats impossible, that planet is a pvp
> world as well only bosses listed on the world, the one villain on that world who can be fought is King
> Zarkon."

Tsuneo: King Zarkon from Voltron hangs out on the Doom-themed planet. Sure, this makes perfect sense.

> Parzival said as mordred merely nodded as he answered back "Yes, fitting that he placed a
> dangerous boss like me on a planet where one of the greatest villains in the 80 lived on."

Rick: As eighties villains go, King Zarkon rates pretty low. I'd put him below Cobra Commander, The Goblin King, the Anti-Monitor or Alan Bond.

> he said
> smiling as lozer saw numerous items on him as they where all from video games as well other
> media which were all from the worst of the worse villains.

Tsuneo: The worst villains, or the villains who were even worse than the worst villains.

> "I remember it like if it was yesterday, where halliday made me."

Rick: I mean, it would be pretty weird if he made you forget stuff.

> he said as he opened his hand showing a hologram of holliday and OG working on the game.

Dan: Ogden. His name is Ogden.
Rick: It's not like you're hosting a podcast or anything.

> In the hologram it showed the two creators working on the Oasis,

Rebecca: I imagine most of their average work day consisted of throwing Family Ties trivia at each other.

> "They had everything they could ever want in the game.

Rick: Infinite peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, an extra hour in the ball pit, a digitally remastered version of the Care Bears movie... everything

> A whole collection of characters to select from, worlds they can travel to as
> well havemany adventures they dreamed of,only there was a problem.

Rebecca: Halliday was a possessive creep.
Tsuneo: I mean, besides that.

> There was no one to face."

Tsuneo: They found their infinite universe boring because there was nobody to fight.

> He said as they saw halliday put in villains from other games and genre's as they had a board of
> bosses

Dan: All the villains were shareholders and Skeletor was appointed chairman.

> for missons the players can fight.

Rebecca: Sadly they were assigned randomly. Putting Gargamel at the end of Mount Doom didn't quite work out.

> "Halliday thought that the ultimate game, needed the
> ultimate antagonist for players to face aganist, in which he created me.

Tsuneo: His disappointment was immeasurable.

> You should have seen me in
> the days, i use to destry hundreds of avatars with the wave of my hand.

Tsuneo: So in that case, why have we never head of you?

> But then,it became
> repetitive." he said as the six saw him battling the avatars until he was destroyed again and again.

Dan: That sounds completely unbalanced and unfair to the player base.
Rebecca: So perfectly fitting for the OASIS?
Dan: Yeah, pretty much.

> "Everytime I respawn I kept destroying and dying again and again, all the time. It was a nightmare
> as I scream and laughed at, until. Something happen,

Rick: Puberty kicked in

> I discovered that whenever a player died, theg become the treasure he or she loses.

Dan: Sure, standard part of the OASIS, but it still took him a while to figure it out.

> When i first touched the coins, i felt stronger, I could see
> the knowledge of their characters as well gain their abilities."

Rick: Halliday called it a feature, not a bug.

> he explain as it shows him taking the avatars coins as well powers,

Tsuneo: He got the amazing power to turn red traffic lights green just by looking at them.

> "The more I took, the more I became powerful, not just of being a
> boss in his game, but a nightmare across the Oasis. I was able to break my control and become
> sentient."

Rebecca: This is the point that you take the OASIS down for emergency maintenance.

> He said as then the hologram showed him as well a army of sentinels by his side, "I took
> the minions thats halliday and OG design for me and made them my personal soliders,

Rick: His unstoppable army of Imperial Stormtroopers, Red-Shirted Ensigns, Foot Ninjas and Zakus.

> I was going to conquer the Oasis as well the rest of the game

Dan: [Aech] And then what?
Tsuneo: [Mordred] Sorry, I don't follow.
Dan: [Aech] I mean, you take over a game, what does that do for you? Nobody plays anymore?
Tsuneo: [Mordred] Well gee, I guess I hadn't thought that far ahead.

> until, Annorak as well Keira and OG came to stop
> me." he says as they look at the three creators and challenge the beast like villain, they watch as
> they tore him apart and destroyed him.

Rebecca: Or they could have just used their administrator powers to remove him from the system.
Tsuneo: Practicality is not this fic's strongpoint.

> "They took my power and made them into artifacts, while the
> rest of me was placed in planet DOOM, to create battles for players to fight to their hearts contents."

Rick: And nothing could go wrong with this plan at all.

> He said finishing his story as he looked at the others with a unsure as parzival asks

Dan: [Parzival] And so how come nobody told me about this when I took over the joint?
Rick: You slept through the meeting.

> "Ok, but that doesnt explain this look you have." he said as mordred merely smirked replying,

Tsuneo: [Mordred] Yeah, like the frightened bush baby can talk.

> "Oh I think you shouldnt ask questions, but preparing for your end."

Dan: So he's not going to explain why he looks like he robbed a Hot Topic discount bin

> he said as his claws came out with a grin on his
> face as Sho said "Really? This is a non pvp zone.

Rebecca: And since he’s an AI controlled NPC, he’s not a PvP opponent
Tsuneo: I am seeing holes in this fic’s logic.

> No one can use.." before he could finish the dark
> elf came at him with full force as daito tackled sho to get him out of the way as the two look seeing
> the column have a slash right threw it.

Tsuneo: He attacked with a run-on sentance.

> "Do not lose focus" daito said as the group got up and moved
> away as mordred looked at them ready to go again, "Great, so he can attack us but we can't,

Rebecca: Again, not a player.
Dan: I don’t think that’s really registered with them.

> how can we take this guy out?" aech says as parzival looks at the wand in the booth

Rick: Yeah, what about the Lich? Has he respawned yet? Because that was a really long expository rant.

> replying "We can't with weapons or any of our abilities. But we can use our gadgets on him."

Rick: They can’t attack him, except they can

> he said as he pulls out a
> eight ball and throws it at him in which shines a bright light blinding Mordred, "Get the wand!" he
> shouted as the six charge around Mordred avoiding him as the dar avatar began slashing his claws
> around the room trying to attack them as he was half blind.

Tsuneo: And any threat he might have presented is instantly flushed. Well done fic.

> "That wand, belongs to me!" Mordred said angered like as his right hand stretched like a snake with
> his claws coming at sho where art3mis pulled out a small spike ball

Rick: Its a purely non-weapon spiked ball intended for entirely non-violent use

> in which Mordred grabs it as the
> spikes come out going right threw his hand as the dark elf pulls it back as he screams in pain but
> crushes it as he absorbs the item,

Rebecca: [Art3mis] No, not my favourite spiky ball!

> "Thanks for the upgrade."

Tsuneo: I’m sure the random spiky ball is a huge improvement over everything else he’s got.

> he said as parzival runs over to the
> booth and grabs the wand as everyone was using most of their tools and gadgets

Dan: Just miscellaneous nonspecific tools and gadgets.
Rebecca: I’m sorry, would you rather the fic painstakingly pointed out what each and every item came from?
Dan: I’ll pass.

> one Mordred that were only making him angry,

Tsuneo: Ironically he’s irritated by shallow pop culture references

> "Let's get moving guys!" he said as datio and sho pulled out some

> smoke bombs in which they throw right at the elf making a massive smoke cloud around him as the
> six made there way out of the dungeon running fast as they passed by the destroyed trap floor

Dan: Mentally kicking themselves for not just blowing it up instead of having the dance-off.

> and melted guards as they made there way back outside. "That was close,

Tsuneo: It actually was not close at all.

> but now where outside so that means the odds are in our favor."

Rick: Because they've moved to a The Hunger Games level.

> Art3mis says as the six begin to equip themselves with some rifles and weapons

Tsuneo: Rifles are not weapons, apparently

> as lozer looks up seeing Mordred flying in the air, "Ugh guys, we might wanna
> try something else then guns."

Dan: [Aech] I've got a banana from Super Monkey Ball.
Tsuneo: [Art3mis] I've got a Bloblobber from Splatoon.
Rick: [Parzival] I've got a Frost-Free Fridge. [Ding!]

[Pause]

Tsuneo: Wait, did you just –
Rebecca: Don't think about it.

> he said frighten as the dark avatar slowly raised his right hand to his
> back as a sword handle generates, he pulls out a long blade

Dan: So they all just shot him
Rick: Then congratulated themselves on the Indiana Jones reference, no doubt.

> which he then unsheathes as he pointed at them as daito says something shocking in Japanese,

Tsuneo: With no attempt made to translate, for which we are all grateful.

> "What did you say?", "Masamune, the one winged angel's sword. Sephiroth's weapon."

Rebecca: And truly beloved by fake internet tough guys everywhere

> he said worried as Mordred charged at them
> as the six moved out of the way only to be thrown back by the force in where he landed right by
> them.

> Parzival got up as Mordred aims his blade at him as Z looked into his inventory as he pulls out his
> own buster sword

Rick: I prefer a Spike Witwicky sword myself.

> as he get's into stance as he looks at him ready to fight, "Your not the only one
> with a final fantasy weapon."

Dan: [Lozer] Aha! I've got Cid Highwind's mop!

[Pause]

Rick: [Art3mis] Why are you like this?

> he said as he charges at him fighting him as the two had a sword battle,

Rebecca: [Aech] So uh, what do you guys think? Leave them to it?
Dan: [Art3mis] Let’s go for ice cream.
Rebecca: [Aech] You know what? I like that idea.

> "Your not leaving me out of this fight." Art3mis said as she pulls out Lighting's blade Crimson Blitz

Tsuneo: You apparently need a Final Fantasy weapon to fight a Final Fantasy weapon.
Rebecca: And yet, its not the stupidest thing in this fic by a long way

> as she charges attacking Mordred as the dark avatar was holding on his own as he kept
> fighting as the others watch,

Dan: [Aech] Yay team!
Rick: [Lozer] I’m helping!
Tsuneo: [Art3mis] No you’re not.
Rick: [Lozer] You’re right...

> "Don't worry, I got some people you can fight!" Mordred said

Rebecca: [Aech] No, that’s alright. We’re good.

> as he
> leaps in the air as throws five coins at the ground which grow into dark like snowmen with blades

Rick: Attack of the mutant snow goons!

> as
> five attack the four other avatars while Parzival and Art3mis kept fighting. "So let me guess? After
> you kill us your going conquer the Oasis?" Art3mis said

Rebecca: Again, you own and run the OASIS. Why are you even fighting him instead of just killing his process and deleting the file?

> ducking from the attacks as Mordred kept
> focus attacking them than rather tell her as he moves back and gets into stance preparing for a
> attack, "Heartless, angel!" he says as he charges at the two about to attack until Aech pulled out a
> rocket launcher and fires at him which sends the dark elf into the castle wall.

Rick: Aech is now the smartest person in this fic

> The cyber orc looked as he ducks from being attack from the snowman as he then hits the living
> snow with the rocket launcher a couple of times until he became coins,

Dan: Wait, that’s not how you... You know what? Never mind, it worked anyway.

> "These guys weren't this hard when we came here. What did this guy do to them?"

Dan: Intensive physical training routine. They’ve been lifting weights and on the treadmill for weeks getting into shape

> he asked as a snowman was going to
> attack him from behind but he is saved by sho who threw a explosive shuriken at it's head making it
> explode.

Tsuneo: Explosives make things explode. Good to know.

> "Well that means we get to level up more." the ninja said

Dan: [Daito] Nah, we still outclass them so they’re barely worth any XP. You’d have to be a complete nobody to get anything out of this.
Rick: [Lozer] Hey, I gained a level.
Dan: [Daito] Never mind.

> as he kept moving as lozer
> activated a massive hammer and starts wacking them while avoiding the attacks as heads to Z
> saying "I think we have to get going before he gets up and changes into a second form

Rick: Yes, but his second form is a cassette player. Really, it’s a bit useless when you think about it.

> or something dangerous."

Rebecca: Because so far he’s completely harmless.

> he said as Z looks at Mordred as he gets up with his eyes glowing purple
> ready to attack but falls on his knee's injured like as he growled,

Dan: [Aech] Dude, why aren’t you attacking?
Rick: [Parzival] I can’t, it’s a cutscene.
Dan: [Aech] This is a massively muliplayer open world game! You’re in constant control! There are no cutscenes!
Rick: [Parzival] Wow. All these years I’ve been doing it wrong.

> "I'm not strong enough, but I will be parzival. Until then, I'll leave my men to help you level up."

Dan: He’s a very courteous insane murder AI

> he said as he places his sword away as
> his right hand becomes a claw and slashes a portal open as he jumps right threw.

Rebecca: [Art3mis] Yeah, nobody make any effort to go after him or anything.
Rick: [Parzival] You can’t, it’s a cutscene.
Dan: [Aech] I just told you... Aaargh, forget it.

> "He seemed weaken, not at his full strength."

Rick: Or maybe he just sucks. You considered that?

> Daito said as suddenly they look at the dark snowmen
> as they melt down to then combine together becoming a massive snow like beast with ice claws,
> fangs and muscles as it roars right at them.

Tsuneo: I did not see this coming. Mostly because it is very stupid

> "But that is!" Aech said as he aims his flamethrowers at
> him firing which did nothing as the snow Goliath back hands him on to the ground,

Dan: Don’t you still have the flamethrowing dinosaur you used on this the first time?
Rebecca: And yet ‘don’t you still have the flamethrowing dinosaur’ is still not the dumbest thing we’ve said about this fic.

> Lozer watched as the snow giant was over whelming everyone

Rick: With its god-awful bodily funk.

> as he felt terrified as he goes into his back looking
> for any items he could use to help them out

Rebecca: Bearing in mind that we're talking about an opponent that can be defeated by a warm day here

> as he finds the zemeckis cube he found on planet
> DOOM as he starts messing with it as he soon gets it ready.

Dan: It'll give them more time to... I don't know, do what they're doing anyway.

> "Eat grenade you abominable snow
> beast!" art3mis shouted as she pulled out a grenade launch as well making a battle cry firing off a
> round at it as the grenade fly's right into the snow beast chest which causes the snow to explode,

Rick: Would you call that a snow crash?
Rebecca: No, because that's a far more nuanced and intelligent depiction of a virtual world.

> she sighs in relief as it was over as the coins where there until it was about to reform again.

> "Oh no, I'm stopping this now" Lozer said

Tsuneo: Please do. I'm about over this fic.

> as he throws the cube at the ground in which it explodes
> in a rainbow like blast which then starts moving events backwards

Dan: [Aech] Great, you just undid all the damage we've done.
Rick: [Lozer] In my defence, I am not very bright.

> except for the gang as they see
> the snow beast doing attacks a few moments ago going backwards as he keeps going as well
> changes into five snowmen as well then change into coins and go up in the air right at the moment
> when they were about to change into snowmen

Rebecca: Well that's an entirely reasonable device and not stupidly overpowered at all
Tsuneo: Gods no.

> as Lozer pulled out a net and catches the coins
> then puts them in a box and locks it up as the box shrinks as he puts it in his bag. "When did you
> get a zemeckis cube?",

Rick: It was in a box of hamdigners

> "I found it at DOOM. Lucky I found it when I had the chance." he answered Z's question

Rick: [Lozer] Looting corpses for the win!

> as the six looked around seeing the destroyed castle as well everything else, "Man.
> Talk about a quest, I'm beat."

Rebecca: Still, it's better than playing Joust.

> aech says as he seats down on a rock relaxing as parzival nodded as
> he looks at the wand replying "Yeah. Come on guys, lets get out of here before something else
> happens."

Tsuneo: Oh, and by the way, a sentient killer AI that was hidden away by its creators has come back to wreak vengeance or something.
Rick: Eh, details.

> he said as they soon see a portal behind some rubble as they go over to it as it opened
> up as the six entered returning back to the garage.

> -----

> Chapter 9: 9-Beginning a New Level
> Parzival Pov:

> "I'm right now confused

Dan: That’s me with most of these fics, really.

> as well more on alert on the fact that we just met a boss who destroyed the lich,

Tsuneo: This is the OASIS. There’s probably a nipple-ring of instant lich destroying out there somewhere.

> his forces as well replicate a sword from final fantasy as well looking like a evil version of me.

Dan: The goatee is just assumed

> Also the fact that he was sentient,

Rebecca: Oh yeah, that too.

> almost like Halliday when I got the egg.

Rebecca: And now he’s going to abduct the digital soul of the one girl he had a crush on and fly off on Parzival’s spaceship to Proxima Centauri.

> He seemed so real, like if he was actually alive, like he was infront of me.

Tsuneo: In all his dishevelled, creepy glory

> Also that he was a creation of both him and OG,

Rick: They had shared custody and visiting rights

> it doesn't make any sense.

Dan: Also me with most of these fics.

> Right now where walking to Halliday's Journals to look up any info on this 'Ultimate Boss'

Tsuneo: Don’t they run this game? Can’t they get an intern to check old builds and patches?

> as well see the curator to know if he knew about him since secretly he was OG but
> me and the other's kept his identity a secret."

Dan: And mostly because he was largely irrelevant to the story

> The six were heading towards the journals not in disguise as right now they weren't being swarmed
> by fans or anything crazy

Rebecca: I’d imagine that now that the competition’s over, everyone has realised just how much of a sad, empty creep Halliday actually was.

> as it seemed relax and empty, they walk inside as they head straight to
> the curator who was standing infront of the archive's door with his hands behind his back as well
> looking like a well groom butler

Rick: So does Odgen Morrow have nothing better to do with his time other than cosplay as a butler

and answer inane questions?
Rebecca: And yet, it’s more useful then what most Tech CEOs actually manage

> as lozer notice him as he stayed back from his sight as aech looked
> saying "What's up with you?", "Um, nothing. Just want to stay back, like if anything happens that's
> all."

Tsuneo: He’s terrified that the butler will bring up his search history in front of everyone.

> he said making up a bluff

Rick: He has Addams Family related butler trauma.

> as the group stands in front of the robot like servant as he looks at
> them saying "Greetings High Five,

Dan: [Parzival] Ahem!
Rick: [Curator] Fine. [Sighs] And greetings to you, Lord Master Parzival, the greatest gunter in the entire universe and Beverly Hills.
Dan: [Parzival] Thank you.

> and what pray tell will you like to see to.."

Tsuneo: A better Ready Player One fic.
Rebecca: I don’t think we have any of those.

[Pause]

Tsuneo: That’s kinda weird, isn’t it?
Rebecca: Yeah.

> before finishing he
> soon notices Lozer who was behind aech as the curator notices giving a disapproval look saying
> "It's quite rude to hide your presence when you are with people young Lozer."

Dan: Aww, he’s just shy

> he said as the green
> avatar stepped out from aech as he smiled innocently like as parzival looks at him and at the curator
> asking "You know him?",

Tsuneo: [Curator] Know him? He’s managed to die looking at the records. Twice.

> "Of course, the young man has tried to do the boss challenge over twenty
> one times and has failed each one.

Rick: But he watched each time for laughs.

> I've told him he should do it with a group or try leveling up but he is quite stubborn,

Tsuneo: The term ‘stupid’ comes to mind

> like a certain boy coming here everyday." he said looking at parzival as he
> nods which made art3mis chuckled a little

Dan: [Art3mis] Ah, I’m in love with a loser. [Pause] Not you.

> as he got serious as he asked "Curator, we need information on halliday's bosses,

Rebecca: And by that, he means the major shareholders.

Rick: Maybe we can get a video of the time Halliday negotiated with a private equity firm for a non-controlling stake in the company

> one that's called "Ultimate."

Dan: [Curator] Oh yes, that really narrows it down.

> he said as the curator seemed a little
> hesitated when he heard that name as he looked around if anyone was near

Rebecca: Only Lozer, but he doesn't count.

> as he walks to the door
> and opens it, "Follow me." he said as he walks in as the group did so as Sho says "Does anyone
> have that feeling that he is going to get deep into this and it will be dangerous?"

Tsuneo: It'll be a very dangerous Vlog.

> he asked as the
> group nodded as they followed him inside as art3mis looks at lozer asking "twenty one times?",
> "Yeah, that many times I've tried and died."

Dan: Just underscoring the question of why people like him.

> he said as they followed the robot butler to the archives as they kept going to a wall.

> "What I will show you, is one of the darkest secrets in halliday's gaming history."

Rebecca: Darker than the time he tried to make out with Dig Dug

> he said as he presses some buttons in which they see the door open as they enter the room,

Dan: So there's a secret hidden room on boss design in the Halliday archive? That seems...
Rebecca: As inefficient and impractical as everything else in the OASIS?
Dan: Well, yeah.

> the group looks around seeing posters of Halliday's game posters

Tsuneo: He had posters of posters

> as well other types of books, games and movies about bosses,

Rick: Like a Boss, Boss Baby, Hugo Boss, the Mustang 302 BOSS and even the protagonist of the Saints Row series, the Playa

> monsters and manuals from game companies with small stick notes on the bad guys.

Tsuneo: He'd learned that Dodongo dislikes smoke

> "Look at all these manuals,

Dan: Look at them, dammit!

> this is where he must have studied each character and program them into the game."

Rebecca: Video game manuals; a helpful tool that will always exist and never ever go out of style.

> Parzival said amazed like as the group looked around seeing the books as the
> curator soon walks to one of the books and pulls out a small book with a skull on top as he seats
> down opening the book.

Dan: Do you think it’s a book?
Rick: I think it might be a book.
Rebecca: There are subtle signs that it’s a book.
Tsuneo: The precise phrasing indicates to me that it may in fact be a book.

> "This individual, what did he look like?"

Rick: He had the head of a currently trending YouTube celebrity, the body of a walrus, the legs of a platypus, the arms of a hat stand and a pile of Lokon Stratos dojins unfit for human consumption

> he asked parzival as the teen
> pulled out his eight ball camera orb and he opens it showing the image of him as the curator looks
> at him replying "It is him,

Tsuneo: He was hoping that it was a common or garden Ultimate Weapon.

> this is quite bad." he said as the hologram shows the two creators as Aech says

Rick: [Aech] I mean, would it have killed Halliday to take a shower?

> "We already saw this when that madman tore apart the lich as well his men,

Tsuneo: He’s a madman because he... killed monsters for their loot, I guess.

> but what exactly are we dealing with?"

Rebecca: Well, it’s like the plot of Ready Player Two, but actually dumber.

> he asked plainly trying to get to the point as the curator raised his eyebrow at
> him replying "Not entirely, you see. Ultimate was a unstable npc,

Dan: He never gave the right voice prompts and his inventory had the wrong items in it

> he had a few glitches halliday tried
> to fix but couldn't due to the company always bothering him

Rebecca: Halliday hated having to work for a living

> which lead to ultimate changing.

Tsuneo: He got a bad haircut and started hanging out with the wrong crowd.

> When
> he and the others defeated him, they took his powers and hidden them across haliday's movies.

Dan: Mostly in lesser Spider-Man spin-offs that nobody cared about

> It is because most of his powers are from video games which he was original design for,

Dan: He has SNK boss fight powers.
Tsuneo: Wow, that is broken.

> so in order to keep his powers away he placed them with bosses he wouldn't be able to handle

Rebecca: They’re locked away with the deadliest boss of all, a rarespawn kobold in Elwyn Forest.

> sine he was in his
> weak condition" he explain as they looked at the artifacts that were crafted from ultimate's power.

Dan: The Knob of Oledge!
Rebecca: The Foam Peanut of Some Power!
Tsuneo: The Left Shoe of God!
Rick: And a coupon for 5p off Dan Dare underoos.

> "But he said that I freed him, i don't understand how." he asks as the curator looks into the book
> showing a hologram of his imprisons as ultimate was wrapped in chains from almost every video
> game halliday had made,

Rebecca: Or at least had plagiarised from.

> "Halliday placed a spell on him which would keep him imprisoned for the rest of the game,

Rebecca: Again, why not just delete him?
Tsuneo: I can only imagine he was a nightmare of spaghetti code

> the only way for him to be free is that only the lives of a thousand avatar would set him free

Rick: More than half of those were Lozer.

> but those lives would have to be both stand for the light as well the darkness." he explained

Dan: That doesn’t explain anything!

> as art3mis looked each image of ultimate in a different form saying "But when we saw him. He
> called himself 'Mordred',

Tsuneo: The patron saint of daddy issues.

> after the knight that betrayed king arthur, why's that?"

Rick: Maybe the dude just likes Arthurian myth. Nothing wrong with that.

> she asked as the curator looks at each replying, "When halliday and OG

Dan: Og-den. Say it with me, fic.

> design ultimate, they didn't want him to have
> one form but always change, it was a tactic to challenge players.

Tsuneo: And make game guides redundant.

> Though soon the more he
> changed, the more he became corrupt, he became violent as well more unstable with each form he
> took.

Rebecca: In retrospect this was probably a bad design decision

> Whenever he took a form it would be to challenge the hero, he would style himself after that
> hero, it appears he has took the forms of your favorite heroes antagonist's."

Rick: So if the player had, say, a Batman avatar it’d turn into the Joker.
Tsuneo: That makes sense, yeah.
Rick: And if it they had a Ryu, it’d turn into M. Bison.
Tsuneo: Follows.
Rick: Or an Optimus Prime avatar and it’d be Megatron.
Tsuneo: I suppose so.
Rick: So then if I came up to it with a Bugs Bunny avatar, it’d turn into Elmer Fudd.
Tsuneo: Well done, Rick. You just found the stupidest and yet the most brilliant flaw in this thing possible.

> he explained looking at
> parzival who looked at ultimate seeing the boss kill avatars as well fight anorak

Rebecca: Anorak cast Power Word: Killfile.

> in a image as he pulls out the wand he got from the lich.

> "So this wand, this is a part of his power. He needed it because he was still weak."

Tsuneo: For very generous definitions of the word ‘weak’.

> he said as the curator closes the book and looks at the wand,

Dan: [Curator] Never did update the model on that, its still low-res.

> "Quite indeed. He may be free but he is still in a
> weaken state for him to be defeated." he explained as he grabs the wand and looks at it examining
> the wand as he walks to a wall where he places his hand on the right side where it opens showing
> item spots of artifacts which were suppose to be placed there.

Rebecca: It’s like a nerd’s collectables shelf

> "Is this, where the artifacts come from?",

Tsuneo: No, don’t ask him questions! He’ll just exposit more!

> "Not exactly master Daito, whenever a item is used they are sent to a artifact hunt or death battle.

Dan: Turns out all your artefacts are just loaners.

> Whenever they are used they would return here where I would recharge them and send them back.

Tsuneo: But only if he has a compatible artefact recharger
Rick: I bet half of them have strange European ports

> Though these artifacts, are the ones that belong to ultimate.

Dan: [Curator] We thought about repurposing them in the meantime, but we didn’t.

> If he were to ever return, they
> would need to be return here and locked away so he could never require them."

Rebecca: Which is why they’re out in the game world, instead of locked away in here.
Tsuneo: Fic, please stop explaining things.

> he said as he turns
> to them as the six looked unsure as Lozer says "So, you mean to say, that a ancient boss that
> halliday locked up, is now free and is going try to reclaim his power and take over the Oasis?"

Rick: I mean, it’s what we’ve been saying for the last page. Weren’t you paying attention?
Dan: This is Lozer we’re talking about here
Rick: Also true.

> he
> said as the curator nodded as the green avatar smiled jumping saying "Awesome! That means it's
> up to you guys to save the day, right?"

Rebecca: And by that, he means ‘not him.’

> he asks parzival as he looked unsure asking "I don't even know where to start."

Tsuneo: My review of the fic so far
Rebecca: Oooh, nice variation

> he says being honest as the Sho looks at lozer as he says "Why not ask the
> artifact hunter himself?" he said as the five looked at Lozer who looked nervous.

Rick: You really get the feeling that it’s all his fault.

> "Huh? oh no. You guys are the heroes,not me. I'm just the sidekick."

Tsuneo: No, Parzival’s the hero, Aech is the sidekick. Art3mis is the shallow love interest and both Daito and Sho are the funny ethnic tag-alongs.

> lozer said protesting the looks they where giving him

Dan: [Lozer] Are you guys kidding? It’s me.

> as art3mis says "Are you serious? You heard the curator, this guy will be
> going after the artifacts in the movies you've been trying to win.

Rebecca: So again, killfile. You have two regular scheduled days of off-line anyway, so use that time to delete him and then, I dunno, offer all the players some Linden Dollars in compensation

> Thats more obvious than leveling up
> in world of warcraft when defeating a horde of the undead."

Rick: Or paying a levelling service that’s totally not going to steal your credit card details at all.

> she said as lozer still had a nervous
> look as he responded "Yeah, but this is different in so many ways. This is big,

Dan: Like Tom Hanks, Elizabeth Perkins and Robert Logia big

> Super mario bros
> level 8, MK2 shah kahn fight, freaking Akuma!" listing the most difficult levels in video games

Tsuneo: We’re talking secret cow level here.

> as
> parzival went him saying "Lozer, we may be the high five but the way we win was because of the
> others,

Dan: They’re on top because they play to win.

> all those players on DOOM lost their characters because of Sorrento and IOI,

Rick: [Curator] And totally not because of a save game bug that Gregarious Games refuses to acknowledge.

> now because of them using that bomb, we got a madman on the run.

Rebecca: Maybe Halliday shouldn’t have hidden this boss monster in the same place he kept the final key. Just saying.
Tsuneo: He should have put it where nobody would ever go like, say, the Waterworld planet.

> I know that you feel like your going make mistakes, same as all of us.

Dan: [Parzival] We all feel like you’re going to make mistakes.

> But what's important, is standing up against men like this,

Rick: Actually, he’s not even a man. He’s an AI

> to prove that
> we aren't just geeks who know about playing a game, but gamers who are willingly to fight for the
> Oasis."

Tsuneo: Actually, we already did that with the whole key challenge thing
Dan [Parzival]: Well okay then.

> he said sounding inspiring as lozer looked at him smiling as aech crossed his arms nodding
> saying "That's as close as your going get from a inspiring speech."

Rebecca: As it was neither inspiring nor that much of a speech.

> he said as everyone looked at him as he nods at them.

> "Ok, yeah. yeah I'm in" he said nodding

Dan [Lozer]: Well so far you’ve basically treated me as a tag-along accessory, talked down to me and lauded your wealth and power over me. But I’m so here for you.

> as parzival smiled saying "Good, because I didn't want to
> leave a new member of the team on the sidelines."

Rick: So that makes them the high... six?

> he said as the green avatar's eyes widen as art3mis goes to him saying "just breathe buddy."

Dan: [Lozer] Oh yeah. Keep forgetting that bit.

> she said calming him down as he nods holding his
> breath still excited like as he then jumps around excited

Tsuneo: Again, why are they bringing this guy with them?
Rebecca: The term ‘mine sweeper’ comes to mind.

> like as the curator sighs, "Oh joy, another member on the team.

Tsuneo: I have never felt for a character as much as I do right now.

> Though this begs the question of what you all are entering." he says as the
> five look at him curious about that, "What do you mean? It's just like the shinning,

Rick: In as far as Stanley Kubrik’s going to shout at everyone on-set.

> only last five
> minutes and then we get sent back, right?" Aech says thinking that it will be the same

Dan: With no basis whatsoever.

> but the
> curator face expression doesn't change as this made him nervous as Daito added "Then what is it
> then?" the red samurai asked as the curator turns around while they listen.

> "The boss challenge has a set of rules once you accept the fight.

Dan: Like you have to fight Bowser while standing on one leg.

> They will be unpredictable as well
> not act like the first game, they will have moves you might not know.

Rick: Like the Kungalese Death Grip

> You will all be not ready to deal
> with what you will face." he said warning them as the five look not afraid as they nodded as parzival
> says "I'm not worried, I mean we've pretty much beat these guys on the challenge list, right guys?"

Rebecca: They've beaten all the nonspecific bosses.

> he asked as he looks at his friends as they had a uncertain look

Dan: [Art3mis] He just said they were different. Did you not listen?
Rick: [Parzival] Nope!

> as the teen looks at lozer saying
> "Then I guess we are the only ones, you done most of it right?" he said as the green avatar looked
> nervous rubbing his head replying

Tsuneo: [Lozer] I kind of died on the first boss.
Dan: [Parzival] What, twenty-one times?
Tsuneo: [Lozer] Yep, twenty-one times.

> "Well, not all of them, I mostly get taken out during the beginning.

Dan: So... none of them then.

> Though now I'm with you guys, it should be much easier."

Rick: He's here to get carried and leech treasure

> he said as the teen sighs as lozer pulls out the list showing the list

Tsuneo: It is a list of lists.
Rick: This list lists the lists.

> in which they look at it as art3mis says "Halliday stopped him once,
> which means we can stop him again.",

Tsuneo: You have a number of advantages over Halliday, not the least of which is basic hygiene

> "Indeed, I guess the high five rides again to save the day."
> each says with her as parzival nods saying "Yeah, because we got one thing that ultimate doesn't
> have."

Dan: Functioning genitals

> he said as Sho placed his hand in the middle saying "Skill" he said as date places his hand
> on his saying "Honor." as then Aech does the same saying "Experience"

Tsuneo: Are they trying to summon Captain Planet or something?

> he says as art3mis places her hand on the others saying "Heart"

Rebecca: Art3mis basically admitting she does nothing for the team.

> she smiled as lozer was next as he placed his hand on them saying

Rick [Lozer]: And I'll form the head!
Dan [Parzival]: Who bought this guy anyway?

> "Total awesomeness."

Dan: Rick?
Rick: Yeah?
Dan: I liked your version better.

> and finally Parzival placed his hand on all of them as he said
> "Teamwork." he said as the six now where going to get ready to embark on a mission to save the
> Oasis and take on this ultimate boss and collect the other artifacts.

> -----

> Chapter 10: Special Announcement

Rick: Great news for all readers!

> "Attention fans of the story, If you like this story

Rebecca: And that's a mighty big 'if'.

> then head over to the story that continues the rest of
> the tale. The new adventures of the High Five,

Tsuneo: Instead of this fic, read this other fic which is just this fic with a different name.

> in it Parzival along with the others

Dan: 'The others' is pretty much the best summary of Daito and Sho.

> continue their journey to find the artifacts

Tsuneo: It's like they're hunting for Easter eggs. Hmm, if only there was a term for that...

> as well avoid Mordred from taking over the Oasis as well taking it over.

Tsuneo: He's going to take over the OASIS and he's going to take over the OASIS.

> Though I can't do it alone, I need your reviews

Rebecca: Begging for reviews. It's inevitable.

> as well choices of games that I should use to continue the tale

Rick: I vote for LHX Attack Chopper.

> so that you can all read on how the six will be able to take down this powerful boss.

Dan: Assuming the nobody sends in any dud suggestions that completely throw the author's plans

> Though there are some a few things that should be said before I start reading each video
> game

Tsuneo: Since we're reading video games, I recommend Zork.
Rick: Lozer was eaten by a Grue.

> you plan to tell me before I start writing them."

> 1.) The games shouldn't all be about shooting, they can be racing, fighting as well adventure based

Dan: As long as there's Halo guns, he's happy.

> since they will be traveling across exotic lands and worlds.

Rick: How about dating simulators, puzzle games or city management ones?

> 2.) They can be old school and new school,

Tsuneo: Please define your schools.

> though just make sure that it's something everyone favors.

Dan: Pick any game you want, as long as its the game I like.

> Video games should be enjoyed

Rebecca: A point generally lost on the characters of Ready Player One.

> by everyone that wishes to do something amazing.

Dan: I'm gong to suggest Animal Crossing and Doom. Let's see what he does with that.

> 3.) Arcade games are a good choice since most of them are multiplayer, so make sure to choose
> some with multiple characters.

> 4.) The bosses in each game can be a robot, plant or anything that looks intimidating.

Tsuneo: The next boss will be the AT&T exchange building in midtown Manhattan.

> And lastly, if you wish to suggest a Blizzard game such as Overwatch, World of Warcraft as well
> Diablo. Then please say so,

Rebecca: If you want to suggest one of these games then suggest them.

> I like those games and they have a lot of things that can be used in the
> story. So come on, the race to save the Oasis is on! So start listing right away and a game of yours
> will be in the story.

Tsuneo: At least he didn't ask us to send OCs.
Dan: What about sending our made-up games, like Spider-Man: Brooklyn Brawl, featuring Apatosaurus Ajax?

On that final comment, the big screen switched off, reverting the world back to prose format. "And that was the sequence of spasmodic muscle twitches that comprised the second half of The Newcomer," Tsuneo considered. "A fic that started off stupid and managed only make it more so."

"I'm going to say something here that I never thought I'd say," Dan offered. "I kind of don't mind Lozer, actually."

"It's weird, but I can actually see where you're coming from," Rebecca nodded.

"Right, so he's as dumb as a bag of rocks," Dan noted. "He's a total deadweight who doesn't add anything to the fic and there's no reason for the High Five to even give him the time of day let alone make him a part of their lives. He doesn't have any useful skills or rare items or anything, and his origin is about how he basically gave away a super-valuable vehicle to the first random stranger that he came across."

"And yet?" Rebecca asked.

“And yet there's nothing actually wrong with him,” Dan explained. “He's not stupidly overpowered, he doesn't walk all over everything around him, he doesn't make himself the centre of attention, he doesn't spend all his time acting as the author's mouthpiece and, above all else, he's kind of harmless.”

“Not being awful is an admirable goal,” Tsuneo agreed. “It’s also a pretty damming statement about the other OCs we meet in these things.”

“It is,” Rick nodded. “But I dunno, Lozer is kinda strangely likeable.”

“Right, and we haven't even had to make up a weird meta version of him to be like that,” Rebecca added. “He's more of a Brick Hactar or a John Barren than he is, say a Madam Z or Misspelled Sapphire.”

“What about Charles and Charles?” Dan asked

“That's a special case that defies all classification,” She shot back.

“True.” Dan nodded. “Point is, I think I like Lozer for who he is, not the joke we make from him. And that's pretty damn rare for us.”

“Well, I can tell you're all really excited for the fic,” The Voice beamed.

“We are, actually,” Tsuneo admitted. “So would you like our reviews now?”

“Um, no, because I get those at the end of the fic,” the Voice noted.

“But that was the end of the fic,” Rebecca explained.

“That was the end of the first part of the fic,” the Voice explained. “Next time we're going to be starting on its second half, which is called ‘The New Adventures of the High Five’. It's sort of like ‘The Vault Dweller' and ‘War for the Wastelands', really. So that will be another three parts”

There was a long pause. “I take back everything nice I said,” Rebecca finally spoke up.

“Fantastic,” the Voice beamed. “Then I look forward to seeing you all next time.”

“Huh,” Tsuneo considered. “You know that this will be a big test of everything we just said.”

“No, I can see it,” Dan nodded. “The fact that we thought this was the end of the fic was a big factor here. Lozer didn't have a chance to screw everything up and make us hate him.”

“Right,” Rick agreed. “And now we have the actual villain which could also completely detail things.”

“Easily,” Rebecca noted. “Because we’re no strangers to jarring tonal shifts within these fics. At this point, it could go anywhere.”

“That's strangely ominous,” Tsuneo considered. “On the other hand, it could just continue to get dumber.”

“Also possible,” Rick nodded. “And there's only one way we'll find out.”

Author’s notes:

Much like The Vault Dweller/War for the Wastelands, this is actually one fic split into two fics for no readily apparent reason. We found the second half of it first, and it was only after I'd started work on it that I tracked down the first part. Of course, I have no idea why the author wrote it like this, but there you go. It's Lozer, it's beyond all comprehension. At least nobody sent OCs this time.

Like so many other Ready Player One fics, this one hits the logical flaw of why the High Five don't just use their position as the owners of the OASIS to instantly solve the problem. After all, as Ready Player Two demonstrated, Parzival is more than willing to abuse his position.

Up next, the same fic with a different wrapper.

Ready Player one copyright Random House and Warner Brothers

The Newcomer written by sparkyraider357

Rebecca Bartley and Rick R. Mortis created by Rick R. (natch)
Tsuneo Tateo and Dan created by Zogster

Questions? Comments? Complaints? A too-small helmet? Email us at elmerstudios00 (at) gmail.com and register your Jeff.

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> "Ok, come on mystery machine." he hoped as he opens it seeing the Akira bike, "Aw man. I'm never
> going get that van."