

Laydeez aaaaaaan' gennelmen, we are proud to present

The Wobbles and Notary PPC Power Hour!

Episode 1: Forest of Fear!

DISCLAIMER:

Thanks to my betas: Desdendelle, Ekyl, and Neshomeh.
You will be spared when the revolution comes.

Direct quotes from the badfic's Words are {bracketed off like this} and have their font changed to **Comic Sans**. It seemed fitting.

Agent Wobbles and Agent Notary are the only things that belong to me in this fic.
Nurse Kevin Thorpe belongs to Ekyl, the PPC as an entity belongs to Jay and Acacia,
and *Gunnerkrigg Court* and the attendant canons belong to Tom Siddell.

“Everybody In Annie’s Forest”, however, belongs to fanfiction.net user Nintendoga.

As far as I’m concerned, they can keep it.

Response Centre 1875 was, to the grimacing Time Lady currently stationed in it, about as ugly a thing as could possibly exist. Its other occupant had only been in here for about a week, but already the respectable accountant's-soul-grey walls had been painted over in a riot of clashing colours and patterns. Some of the walls were spotted, others were striped, and some were both at the same time, but all were in candy-bright colours that were about as pleasant to look at as a bus full of orphans going over a ravine. There was also a sea of cuddly toys, though mercifully a few were set to one side in a box marked "Prizes".

Oh, and her fellow agent was gyrating around the cramped space with a soundtrack courtesy of some strange, warbling synthesised instruments. Joy unconfined.

"I am in hell," said the Notary as she pinched the bridge of her nose.

This actually got her colleague to stop moving - calling it dancing might have been a bit of a stretch - and look at her quizzically, her head tilted like a dog faced with an algebra textbook. "Are you?" She asked. "Um, lemme check..." She darted over to the front door, her movements quick and nimble despite her giant shoes, and opened it. "Uh, nope. RC 1875, just like me. Maybe I oughta get that sign changed or something, 'cause you've said that about half a dozen times now and you seem really insistent—"

"I am perfectly aware of my surroundings, Agent... Wobbles." The Notary sighed as she used her colleague's name. How anyone could be so, so *silly* utterly defeated her. "Would that you could be aware of others when they are trying to think."

"Okay! As long as you know where you really are. It took me a while to get used to this place after my stay with FicPsych, so I just wanted to check." The agent shut the door again and went back to her Jazzercise routine. "Oh, shoot, now I'm behind. Where'd I put my stick..." She dragged out a broom handle from an umbrella stand and prodded the rewind button on the VCR machine.

"You are aware, aren't you, that buttons are generally designed to be pressed with one's *fingers*? Or was that wretched piece of archaic machinery designed by people with even less brainpower than yourself?"

"Nah," the other answered, the insult apparently drifting over her head. It had quite a long way to go, what with the size of her striped wig. "I've just - um - I, uh... me and technology, uh, they don't really mix."

"Ah. This explains why I had to set up that ridiculous contraption over there. And the computer software, if you can call that pathetic relic a computer. Which, being a member of such a fundamentally backward species, you doubtless will."

"Hey now, what's gotcha down? Do you wanna talk about it?" A look of concern crossed

Wobbles' face, warping her thick makeup.

"I would rather discuss my problems with the contents of a used colostomy bag - which, by the way, you are beginning to resemble."

"All right. So, d'you wanna talk about it with Professor Puppet?"

"For Gallifrey's sake, if you try and give me psychoanalysis through the medium of interpretative puppetry again I will *scream*. Just... shut up for more than eight nanoseconds at a time. Oh, and while you're at it, turn that thing off. Your bouncing around is making the damned walls shake."

"Aw, I get it. You're just a big ol' grouch! Well, we can fix that right away, can't we, Professor Puppet—"

***TODAY'S CONSOLE RACKET IS BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE LETTER R. AHM.
BREEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEP!***

"Thanks be unto Rassilon, my ears are spared."

"Uh, hate to be a bother, but, um, couldja get that? I'd do it, but..." The clown agent shrugged and pointed at her stick.

The Notary sighed and trudged over to the console. The place wasn't big enough for it to be a proper passive-aggressive trudge, but it was a game attempt, nonetheless. She tapped away on a few of the keyboards littering the thing - redundancy being something Wobbles's condition made necessary when forced to use technology of any sort - and skimmed through the report from the Department of Intelligence.

"Well now, here's a curious thing. We've an assignment for a wraith-exorcism in something called *Gunnerkrigg Court*, a webcomic. Now, I've got what I assume is your civilisation's attempt at a personal commlink for each of us, so all that remains is for you to read the report from Intelligence. Oh, and do bear in mind that this is set in a school and concerns your species' young. Spawn. Whatever."

"Children, Agent Eaterie. That's the word you want. Oh, and thank you for the smartphone. C'mon, lemme see that thing!" Wobbles elbowed the Time Lady out of the way to read the report.

"My name is the Notary," she said, massaging a rib. "I would ask that you get my name right if we are to be working together." Her tone was about as bitter as one could get.

"That too. Right, uh... ah, here's the toothpick box. Where were you hiding?" Wobbles selected a little wooden stick from the box on the side and scrolled through the mission report. Her body

language got tenser and tenser as she read more of it, until finally there was a soft splintering sound as the toothpick snapped. She pulled her hand out of the way and turned, still smiling but shaking. “Did you read the part involving—”

“Yes,” said the Notary.

“And how—”

“We ascertained fairly recently that I am able to read, human. Get to the point.”

“There isn’t one, not really.” There was a slight pause as the clown turned to face the wall, her hands shoved into the pockets of her dungarees. “Pointless. It’s a good word for this, this, this whatever-it-is. Pointless and hopeless and just, I dunno, *ugly*.”

The Notary opened her mouth to speak, but couldn’t find anything to say. Eventually, she tried again. “If the nature of the assignment is going to affect your fieldwork—”

“But hey, our first outing together! Isn’t this exciting? We get to help people! Sorta!”

Wobbles was already back to her usual, far-too-perky-to-be-reasonably-allowed-to-live state, as far as the Notary could tell. The Time Lady still felt in her pockets for her trusty staser, though. This mission could get nasty. Wraiths were tricky creatures. They were physically weaker than other foes, what with largely consisting of mist and so forth, but the things could still possess an unwary agent. The Bad Things that tended to happen to agents in the field could also get a hell of a lot worse if a wraith wasn’t properly exorcised from the canon it was possessing. Still, she thought, she was probably going to be fine. The staser was the pinnacle of Time Lord weapons technology, and therefore the pinnacle of all weapons technology ever to exist. It could deal with a bit of ugly pink fog any day.

The Notary checked her pistol for any wear and tear and, satisfied that it was in perfect working order after a brief firing test, turned to her roommate, who was looking at her with a horrified expression. “What?”

“You shot a Good Luck Bear!”

“I had to check if my staser was fully functional before going into the field and you have hundreds of the wretched things. Besides,” she continued while changing the gently smoking teddy bear’s appearance into that of a still-smoking bonsai plant, “it makes the place more tasteful.”

“But did you have to shoot it eight times?”

“It was yours,” said the Notary with a smile that was slightly too wide.

“Well, yeah, right *now*, but they’re gonna go to the kids in the Nursery! I make them by hand, and I’m supposed to be giving them out on Wednesday before they have their first ever tests, and now somebody won’t get one, and—”

“And you have me confused with someone who cares what happens to the braindead spawn of your barbaric species. Now, if you’re done with the disguise panel?”

Wobbles stood still for a moment, then shrugged and stood to one side.

The Notary took her place and winced a little at the thought that her fine, courtly robes would shortly be a green and beige school uniform, with all the itchiness that such things entailed. *On the plus side*, she thought, *at least I won’t have to look at that woman’s ridiculous dungarees.*

“We got everything, Agent Potpourri?”

“Save for a D.O.R.K.S unit, yes. Your organisation’s bureaucracy is horribly inefficient. I’m just amazed my neuralyzer application was processed in time for this mission. In addition, my name remains the Notary. Calling me other things is not big, nor is it clever.”

“Okie-dokie, Agent Toaster Feet, but neither is the Captain Mardybum act.”

“Believe me, human,” the Notary muttered, “my distaste for you is no act. Let us away and get this mission over with. Perhaps my conduct here will allow me to acquire a better subordinate than a *clown*.” She pushed the button on the console and opened a portal under Wobbles’ feet, then stepped through it herself. Perhaps it was petty, but the woman was intolerable—

“Get *off*.”

Somehow, the portal had managed to dump Wobbles on her from quite high up, despite her having gone through it before the Notary. The Time Lady managed to dig her remote activator out of her pocket and fix it with a death glare.

“Wow, you’re all kindsa lumpy, aren’t you? I gotta readjust my nose. Also, I guess that’s your gun in your pocket there, ‘cause I don’t think you’re pleased to see *anybody*. Ever.”

“You are correct in your surmise, now *please* get off of me.”

“Oh! Whoops! Sorry...” The funny thing was, the clown sounded like she meant it. “Um, where are we?”

“I don’t know, I’ll check the - *good grief!*” The Notary collapsed, holding her head and moaning.

Wobbles rushed to the Notary's side. "Are you okay? What's wrong?"

"Of *course* I'm not okay, you utter dullard! They hurt! Why did nobody tell me they would hurt?"

"Uh, wha? I'm confused."

"Can you not *see* them? The colours are disgusting and the circles are misshapen and it's painful to look at, physically painful! This is not how Circular Gallifreyan is *supposed to be*!"

"Oh, right, gotcha. Some people just get it a lot worse than others."

"Well, lucky old me."

"Aw, you're not *that* old. C'mon, just pop an aspirin and we can find what's going on—"

{Author's Note: inb4 Huururrrrrrrrrr why is Annie out of characturrrr. Answer: Because...Magic.}

"Oh, right. That. Yeesh." Wobbles retrieved a pencil and scribbled down something in a fluorescent pink notebook. "Bad grammar in the author's note, that can't be a good sign. Hold on, I think that headache of yours is about to get worse."

"The, the rings, they're impure, the harmony of a perfect language rendered jagged and ugly and loud and wrong, wrong, wrong—"

The Words dragged them through spacetime unshielded, never a pleasant thing for a Time Lord or anyone else. Upon landing in some dense woodland, Wobbles smashed face-first into a tree and the Notary threw up. The clown picked herself up and helped the Notary to her feet, a task that immediately proved thankless.

"What... is *that*?" The Notary pointed a trembling finger at a truly vast blue and black dog, currently coiling through the Generic Surface trees and giggling at a small, flame-haired girl somewhere in the distance.

"Uh, that's Coyote. He's a god in the original, and he's also kinda-sorta the principal antagonist. As far as I know, though, he just uses his magical powers on people." As she said this, the top of Coyote's head flipped open and he scooped some yellow powder out, throwing it in the air. "Not special dust or anything like that."

The Notary looked at her askance. "That's certainly a charge. Go on, write it down while I scan the thing with the CAD, we haven't got all day."

Coyote's golden dust settled on the young girl's head, and for some reason this summoned a

boy to her side, the dust forming a beckoning finger in the air. Said boy just appeared out of nowhere, picked her up, declared a non-specific intent to leave the forest early, and vanished as if exiting a stage.

“That *has* to be another charge,” grumbled the Notary. “Where the hell did he come from?”

“Oh, him? That’s a canon called Smitty. I mean, he can’t teleport, but his canonical power is that he can create order in a task as long as he’s involved in performing it somehow.”

The Notary paused for a moment. “Can we keep him—”

“No.”

“Hm,” grumbled the Notary. “Now, it appears that the big blue dog deity is talking to a tree-dog-thing. Are they—”

“Nah, that’s another canon character. *Gunnerkrigg Court* is *weird*. Wouldja scan ‘em, please?”

The two strange creatures talked while the Notary gave them both a quick scan with the CAD. Coyote registered as [about twenty-ish percent OOC], while Ysengrin was [ooh, a bit OOC].

“Why isn’t it being more specific? These things are supposed to be specific, and they’re definitely not supposed to say ‘ooh, a bit’ in a broad Northern accent.”

“No clue. You’re the tech girl, not me.”

“I am not the tech girl,” harrumphed the Notary. “I am many things: First Taxation-Related Intermediary of the Arcadian 7th District Council Reasonable Expenses Subcommittee; Spinel Promotor of the Continuity Council of Gallifrey-In-Exile; substantially more intelligent than a primitive human could ever hope to be. But what I am *not*, and it would serve you well to remember this, is merely the tech girl!”

“If you say so,” said Wobbles with a winsome smile. “But you kinda have to be the sciencey-type person because of my Dres... den’s... oh.”

“Oh?”

“Yeah, I, um, I think I know why the CAD’s not working right. I think I must’ve accidentally touched it.” Wobbles then launched into a rather cheery explanation of acute arcane technometaplasia, more commonly known as Dresden’s disease or chronic gremlins, depending on who you asked. Not only could she make technology stop working with a touch, she could also make it work in a completely different and rather less useful way. Worse still, she couldn’t turn it off, the disease was incurable, the effects uncontrollable, the damage usually irreparable,

and the social stigma immense. Sufferers had had their houses burnt down by angry tech support workers. Still, you've got to laugh, haven't you?

The Notary stopped paying attention somewhere around the eighth word.

Instead, some ancient evolutionary leftover from back when Gallifreyan was a language for telling other eukaryotes where the best sulphur vents were caused her hackles to rise. She could feel something, and it had to do with time—

{*ENOUGH TIME LATER, LET'S SAY FOR ANNIE TO START FEELING THE EFFECTS OF THE MAGIC*}

“— gnhee.”

The pair of agents landed quite heavily against a couple of trees. This fresh sound of agent meeting Generic Surface caused the redhead from earlier's head to swing round for a moment. Had either Wobbles or the Notary been able to pay attention, they'd have noticed something very wrong with Antimony Carver's eyes. As it was, they were face-down in some underbrush trying not to make any more noise than they already had.

Eventually, the Words forced Carver to continue along her path, and the agents picked themselves up, Wobbles having to give the Notary a hand (after several pointed refusals and questions concerning her parentage, sexual preferences, and personal hygiene). The Time Lady dredged the CAD out of her pocket and gave Carver a scan.

“Non, rien de rien, non, je ne regrette rien—” shrieked the CAD. Then it spat a few sparks, the screen shattered and fell inwards, the joins oozed what looked like cake batter, and finally it expired. Wobbles at least had the decency to look sheepish.

“And this is our first assignment, clown woman. I wonder what unutterable joys shall befall us next?”

“That's the spirit, Agent Defamatory! Turn that frown upside down!”

“That one didn't even rhyme, you oaf - oh, never mind. It'd just whizz over your head like every other concept more complex than basic addition. Let's go. This redhead's the main character, according to the Intelligence report. We need to follow her.”

“I know, I'm not *that* dumb. Also, she's, wow. Uh. That's not an expression found in nature. Or a *body* found in nature.”

Annie was currently looking at Smitty with {a smug}. A smug what, the Words were unable to establish, so the overall effect was of her entire body growing faces, each one bearing a smug

expression. It reminded the Notary of her old job on Gallifrey, and Wobbles of the Notary.

“Let’s not look at that any more.”

“Good idea, Agent Groceries.”

Instead, Wobbles risked another look at the Words. She shuddered and scrawled something else down in her notebook, taking a little time to doodle a picture of a happy kitten in the corner as she walked along the path out of the forest. This rapidly turned into a very detailed sketch, complete with smiling flowers and suchlike, and engrossed her to the point where the Notary considered digging her in the ribs to mention that there was a jump coming.

This being the Notary, she decided against it.

{*Inside Annie & Kat’s room*}

The jump dragged the agents to just outside Annie and Kat’s room in the Court’s dormitories. Wobbles stepped nimbly to one side, causing the slightly delayed Notary to trip over what appeared to be thin air and crash into a wall.

“You did that on purpose, human,” said the Notary, though since she was pinching her nose it came out more as “Hyu dib dab ob burrbuf, hoomurb.”

“Nuh-uh! I was over here!”

“Deb der *oomerverb* dib dab ob burrbuf.” There was a sound like a poorly maintained trombone played by a tone-deaf yak, after which the Notary put her handkerchief away. “That’s better. Bleeding’s stopped, at least, but it’s still rather painful. Are you quite sure you were over there?”

“Uh-huh! I guessed you’d be coming after me ‘cause I was further down the path to the Court than you, so I didn’t want to get in your way—”

{“M-Miss Katerina!”}

“Oh. We’ve reached our first batch of solid ick.” Wobbles’s permanent smile seemed, just for a moment, to be that bit more painted on. “So, what do we do? I mean, we don’t want to, um, disturb them in there.”

Meanwhile, Paz’s declaration that Kat’s tongue was {muo bueno} caused the fic’s surroundings to briefly resemble the small Montenegrin fishing village of Muo, which left the Notary even more disoriented than normal. Her headache was getting even worse, and the Words would’ve looked like Dali’s melting watches to her had she ever bothered to appreciate human art.

“Well, we can’t just stand around here twiddling our thumbs. The wraith’s victim is coming in a minute, if those horrible abominations all around us are anything to go by.”

Their surroundings continued to bend themselves horrifically, including the walls turning into compressed Iberian prostitutes as Kat licked the {puta walls}.

Wobbles just curled up in a ball and continued her doodle of a happy kitten, which was now almost a still life. The Notary had no such distractions and so settled for shutting her eyes and jamming her fingers in her ears.

Eventually, the madness subsided and the corridor outside returned to good old Generic Surface, one of the Iberian prostitutes tossing a business card at a disgusted Notary before she disappeared.

“We haven’t got long,” cried Wobbles. “I read ahead and Jack Hyland’ll be here any moment!”

“Now, this might sound obvious even to you, but Jack is a boy’s name among your species, yes? If so, what’s he doing wandering around here?”

“I don’t know, these Words haven’t made any sense at any other point - why are we even talking about this? Quick, sit by me and, um... pretend you’re doing homework!”

“Homework? Really?”

“We’ve got nowhere to hide except plain sight, right? So this is—”

“I wasn’t complaining, human. I was merely amazed that something worth listening to came out of your mouth.” The Notary slid down the wall and pretended to be engrossed in something Wobbles was writing down.

After a few moments, Jack materialised in front of the door. A brief and entirely pointless conversation ensued, after which Jack joined the ranks of the vanished (which Wobbles duly noted down as a charge). There was apparently a comedy scene involving Reynardine running in and out of the room occasionally bellowing that {“KATERINA IS DOING SOME NAUGHTY THINGS HER ROOM!”}, but since the Words were devoid of any kind of humour, the agents elected to ignore it.

“Uh, shouldn’t you be scanning him?”

“One: I don’t want to lose a hand because one of your organisation’s primitive devices exploded. Two: If you could be bothered to think for more than eight seconds at a time, you’d remember that you broke it.”

“I said I was sorry!”

“Because that’s really what matters in this situation—”

“Watch out jump coming!”

“Eh?”

{*MEANWHILE*}

The Notary yelped as she bashed her head on yet more Generic Surface. The jolt had been small, but she’d still lost her balance. “Rassilon’s bones,” she growled as she clutched her head, “a little more warning would’ve been—”

She was cut off by a white-gloved hand being clamped over her mouth. “Shut up shut up it’ll hear you shut *up*,” Wobbles whispered into the Time Lord’s ear. “It’s over there and it’s coming closer so I really need you to shut up now okay? Yes? Good. Homework out.”

The two pored over Wobbles’ notebook as Annie Carver barrelled past in a blur. Despite being in the lobby, she was simultaneously running past a giant crab monster and opening the door to her dorm, resulting in spacetime around her being stretched and warped to the point of incomprehensibility. Indeed, it seemed that rather than a canon, Annie was a bowl of spaghetti.

“Agent Cola Freeze, how did she do the thing?”

“You can check the Words and find out for yourself, clown woman. If I have to do so again I’ll end up throwing up on something, and it will probably be you.”

“Ah, you’ll be fine. Hey, let’s do it together!”

“Wait, stop that this instant-”

{As she ran into the lobby, she ignored Lindsey doing some wierd shit as she ran into her room and locked the door}. The Words sounded both thick and fundamentally skeezy to the agents, like a drunkard slobbering on a woman in a bar. It was only the briefest respite. The Words dragged the pair through space on another short jaunt, leaving them in Annie and Kat’s dorm room; or rather, one created entirely from Generic Surface save for a sign on one wall saying ‘Annie and Kat’s Room’ in large black letters. The Notary then made the mistake of glancing towards the bathroom, where Annie’s face *{became one mixed with anger}*. The Words tried to parse this, and ended up making the word anger in head-sized plastic letters appear in mid-air, as did a large wooden spoon that began to spin.

The resultant attempt to mix the letters with Annie’s face left the Notary dry-retching on the floor

and Wobbles massaging her temples, sweat beading on her brow. Thankfully they'd had the presence of mind to hide behind the door before the possessed canon could spot them.

"Okay, Agent Broke A Tree, this next part, this is the bad part," said Wobbles once her partner had stopped trying to throw up. "We, um, we have to figure out how to deal with this. We can do this best if we, uh, if we skip ahead a li'l bit to when Annie's, um, when she's..." She sighed and mumbled something to herself, then continued in the same, slightly shaky tone as before. "When she's doing the thing we're gonna charge her for. I need you to handle the portal stuff because I can't use a remote activator, okay? Can you do that for me?"

There was a lot of grumbling from the Notary before she could actually form words. "I'm in *pain*, you braindead lummo, not a human child; do not presume to condescend to me. I will do it, but don't think it's for any other reason than because I'm the only person here who can. Now, where do you want me to drop us off? Read out the Words on your own this time, or I will shoot you and it will give me immense joy."

"Uh, lemme see," said Wobbles before trailing off a bit. "Not there, not there, not there, oh ick, definitely not *there*, um, here." Then her voice took on an odd pitch and timbre, similar to the one that the Words had had but not quite so lecherous. "'Okay Kat. Give me a second.' Annie got off of Paz, and walked to the door. Wow, I felt icky just saying that. That's the bit of the Words we need. It's our way in. Paz isn't, you know..." She trailed off.

How do you talk about that? the clown thought. *About a child - and despite what they may say, thirteen-year-olds are children - being raped by another, tortured by another, killed by another? Burned inside and out by something that should not even exist? Their innocence, their joy, all of it ripped away for what? Entertainment? Who is entertained by this? Who derives pleasure from the suffering of people so young? Who-*

"Human."

"Hm?" Wobbles looked up at the Notary.

"Kindly stop shouting."

"I was - oh. I guess I musta been. I'm sorry, it's just that-"

"I know. Prepare yourself, human. This probably won't be pleasant." The Notary pulled the remote activator from a pocket and stabbed in the relevant coordinates. A glowing door opened up in front of them and they stepped through, the Notary taking care not to trip this time.

{'Okay Kat. Give me a second.' Annie got off of Paz, and walked to the door, Fire-cock still burning hot. She unlocked the door and} - spun on her heel as something crashed to the ground behind her. "Who're you guys?" she asked with a smile usually only seen on Hannibal

Lecter. “More people for me to fu—”

She couldn’t get any further on account of a large woman in a schoolgirl outfit charging into her and slamming her against a wall, a meaty forearm pressing against her neck and cutting off her air supply. Dimly, Wobbles knew that the thing’s member was burning the side of her leg, but she paid it no mind. Instead, she grabbed a kazoo from inside her pocket and blew into it as hard as she could. She spat it out, ignoring some complaints from the Notary about damaged eardrums, and began to speak, fishing around in her other pocket for something else.

“In the most holy name of your God Siddell whose holy Words your very existence profanes, I abhor and abjure and repel thee, vile spirit! The power of Siddell compels thee, creature of filth and depravity! In his name, I cast thee out!”

She found what she was looking for and produced a smartphone from her pocket. It was then promptly smashed atop Annie Carver’s head.

The Notary stared at her partner. The blow had shattered the smartphone - not just the screen, but the phone itself. Bits of it littered the floor, some of which were slowly turning into small origami swans.

“Human, did you just destroy that—”

“Not. Important.”

“Because if it was then you and I have got a lot of form-filling to do—”

“Let me tell you what *is* important: exorcising Paz and getting her to Medical. They can fix her up.”

“Fine, but you’re paying for the phone,” the Notary grumbled. She repeated the incantation, though only giving the stricken Paz a light tap with the back of her own phone, then picked the girl up and carted her through a portal.

Wobbles only heard a brief snatch of Paz’s scream before the portal snapped shut, but the sound still chilled her to the bone.

The Notary was a naturally cautious sort, something that came from years of abject cowardice. As such, she took the precaution of pre-loading the coordinates of the Medical Department onto every remote activator she had. She hoisted the girl over her shoulder and walked through the portal, taking extra care not to trip over anything.

The calm of the waiting room was shattered when she arrived. The girl was screaming, crying, praying, swearing; there was so much noise, too much noise for a woman like her to deal with in one go, and she too prayed to Rassilon for some way out of this.

A tall black man in a nurse's uniform pelted into the room, shoving a gurney in front of him. The Notary didn't hesitate in dumping the girl on there, not least because her arms were already getting a bit tired. He was taken aback for a moment by the force of Paz's landing, and the Time Lady took it as an opportunity to speak.

"She's a canon. She was assaulted by a wraith and extremely badly burned."

He looked back at her. "Yeah, I can see that. A wraith did this?"

"I am led to believe the canon it possessed is part fire-elemental."

"Right," he said with an air of finality. He then turned his attention to the girl, pulling out a tricorder and scanning her with it. "Hello there, miss. My name's Kevin, I'm a nurse. You're safe now, and you're going to be just fine, no worries. We're going to sedate you, now, but I promise it won't hurt. It's just like going to sleep. Sandra, get your wand out - Sandra? Strewth, where is she *this* time?"

As if on cue, a woman in long black robes burst through the double doors that led into the waiting room on what the Notary decided could not possibly be a broomstick, because broomsticks did not fly. Speaking of other impossible things, trained medical professionals definitely did not elegantly dismount from said flying broomsticks and pull a twig from their pockets like it would actually *help*—

But it did. She mumbled something and twiddled the stick, and the girl fell asleep.

Kevin turned back to the Notary. "We'll take it from here. She'll live, the poor little mite, but it's a good thing you brought her here when you did. Christ, would you look at these burns. Some of them are internal. Internal! Fizz R ought to be dealing with this, not me."

"Er, are there any forms I need to fill out for her treatment?"

Kevin looked up at her with an expression of disbelief. "Surely that can wait."

"I'd like to do it now, please. It, it helps me think. Today has, er, how can I put this... today has not gone well at all."

"Your funeral, mate. Ask at reception." With that, his team wheeled Paz off into the Medical Department's labyrinthine corridors, heading for the burns ward.

The Notary watched him go, a slim smile on her face. "I wonder if I'll get to fill them out in triplicate..."

Time is strange in the Word Worlds. The Notary had finished up her forms and browbeaten DoSAT into giving her another CAD unit, but to Wobbles she'd only been gone a few seconds. She strode through the portal and scanned Annie, then goggled at the reading.

"Human, I requisitioned another CAD and—"

Wobbles turned to face her, letting Annie slump to the ground. "Notary, shut up. I only want to know one thing. That thing would be that you got the canon to a nurse, and if I find out that you belittled her or were short with her then I swear to God I'll kill you."

"Ha. Ha. Haaaaa."

"I - this is *important*, you stupid clown—"

"I'm not stupid!" Wobbles screamed. "And don't you dare laugh at me!"

"She's the only one who doesn't, fatass."

The colour drained from Wobbles's face as she turned back around, and this time she looked properly at Annie's eyes. They weren't there. There were just a couple of black pits sunk into a young girl's face like portals into Hell. Some detached part of Wobbles's mind thought that if she looked closely enough, she could probably see the demons inside.

She ignored it, and her fear gave way to a cold, seeping rage.

"That's what I was trying to tell you," the Notary said quietly. "Intelligence messed up. This is far too OOC for a mere wraith. We have a replacement on our hands."

"Oh," mumbled Wobbles. Then she brightened up. "Good. You read this thing its charges." She tossed the Notary her notebook and walked towards the replacement.

"Ahemhem. Replacement of Antimony Carver, you are charged with: perverting the spelling and grammar of an original canon; forcing canon characters to act out of character to varying degrees; impersonating a canon character; trivialising torture, rape and murder; and being a vicious, evil, childhood-destroying - I cannot in good conscience read that last charge out, as there are technically children present. You have been found guilty and your sentence is death. Do you have any last words?"

“Yeah. *BURN!*”

Wobbles dived out of the way as the replacement summoned a jet of white-hot fire, leaving her wig slightly singed around the edges. The Notary hid on the other side of the bed and fumbled for her staser, bringing it up to fire—

She didn’t need to. Wobbles had thrown herself *forward*, the fire passing harmlessly over her head, rolled, sprung up, and thrown a punch into her enemy’s neck that could have come from a speeding bus. The replacement gasped for breath as Wobbles grabbed the sides of its head, then twisted.

The snapping noise its neck made was the loudest thing in the room for quite some time.

After a few minutes, when she felt like her hands weren’t too shaky, the Notary fired her staser at the replacement’s corpse. A few seconds later, it looked like the corpse of an elderly deer. She opened up a portal to a deserted portion of the Gillitie Wood and dumped it there to rot, all in complete silence, save for a brief burst of birdsong from the other side of the portal.

“Wobbles, I’m just, er...” The Notary trailed off, her jaw working uselessly. What could she say? “I’m going to exorcise the other canon, the one over there. What did you say her name was?”

“I’m Kat,” said Kat blandly.

“Indeed. Kat, then. If you’d kindly remain still?” The Notary went through the same exorcism as the other times, and the fog cleared from Kat Donlan’s eyes just in time to see that selfsame fog shot to bits with a staser.

“What happened - I was - where’s Annie? Did you do something to her? Have you hurt her—”

“It’s fine,” came a small voice from the corner of the room. It didn’t sound like it could belong to Wobbles, it was too shivery and too scared to sound like her, but it was hers nonetheless. “I’m fine. Annie’s not in danger any more. We killed the thing that was trying to hurt her, and hurt Paz. I promise you, the last thing I would ever, ever do is hurt a child.”

“She’s not a child, and neither am I!” Kat shouted. “Now tell me what happened to her! Where is she? And why are bits of my bedroom on fire?”

The Notary jumped in. “The thing that replaced her was, er, a hard target to hit. If my aim was off, things got scorched. I apologise if any valuables you possess have been damaged.”

Kat glanced around the room. “Um, no they haven’t, but you’re still not answering my question. Where’s. Annie?”

Wobbles scratched the back of her head and smiled, the expression a little brittle. “We’re not sure. Actually, you might be able to help. Um, the way these things work, they take you and hide you somewhere hard to get to, somewhere related to who you are as a person.”

The young girl thought for a moment. “Our place.”

“I was under the impression that this was your dormitory.”

“This is just where we live; Annie’ll be at our place. C’mon, let’s go, move it, move it!” Kat sped off through the twisting maze of corridors and avenues that formed the Court, which was now beginning to look like its canon self again. For what felt like hours they ran after her, through sunlit boulevards and darkened hallways, until at last they reached their destination: a small metal door, surrounded by picture frames, that led to a single tree on a single hill.

“If she’s hidden anywhere, she’ll be hidden here,” said Kat. Her voice was too quiet for the boisterous young girl Wobbles knew to be canon, but fear did that to people. “Beyond this door is a tree from the woods outside the Court. We first talked here. She’ll be here, if what you said is true. If it isn’t, you’ll answer to the teachers and *then* you’ll answer to me.”

The Notary ignored her, instead digging through her robe’s pockets and pulling out a long, black device with an array of old-fashioned dials on the front. “Hm. A few feet before me, heading 010 mark 85. Almost the exact position of the tree. This should do.”

Wobbles sidled up to the Notary. “Um, what exactly is that? I’ve never even seen one of those.”

“This is a Reality Dysfunction Indicator,” said the Notary with more than a hint of smugness. “A replacement hides the original canon in a plothole, yes? Logically, therefore, something that can detect a plothole in what you people call World One can detect one anywhere else, as long as you calibrate it correctly. They used to be part of the standard kit for the Real People Department, but since they’re effectively defunct there’s a lot of them just lying around. The nice people at DoSAT were very accommodating, and of course they had to fill out all the necessary paperwork to my satisfaction before I could bring it here.”

“How long did that take?”

“*Hours!*” The Notary was grinning from ear to ear.

“Hey, quick question. What if this doesn’t work?” Kat said. “What are you gonna do then? Just walk around with your magic Annie-finding box and hope you get lucky?”

“Pro-mmfl!” The Notary couldn’t finish what she had to say on account of having a comedically small bowler hat shoved in her mouth by a panicking Wobbles.

The clown then walked over to talk to Kat while the Notary tried and failed to pull the hat from between her teeth. “Look, Kat. I’m not going to lie, there’s a chance we won’t find her here. You know better than I do how big a place the Court is, and the Wood is even bigger. What helps is that there’s only so many places you can hide someone like Annie. She’s special, so special it makes my heart skip a beat just to think about it, and she won’t abandon you. You’re her main babe, after all.”

Kat looked at the ground for a moment, then sighed. “I guess you’re right. Also, I think your friend might be choking on your hat.”

Wobbles let herself laugh for the first time in too long and strode back over to the slightly blue Notary. Guiding the Time Lady’s hands back to her sides, the clown performed a complicated series of movements that seemed to have her hands moving through one another at one point and removed the hat from her partner’s jaws.

“I - you - what - how - I tried that!”

“I cheated,” said Wobbles with a grin, “since I’m a magic clown who spreads joy and laughter wherever I go. C’mon, hit the button, they’re serving mystery meat in the Cafeteria and I haven’t got anything in the sweepstake yet.”

“Sweepstake?” the Notary said helplessly, before rallying a bit. “You know what? I don’t want to find out. Just don’t come crying to me when the food poisoning hits, human. You’ll have no sympathy from me.”

“I didn’t expect any.”

“Good.” The Notary shoved her hand into a slightly shiny-looking point in space a few inches in front of her, feeling mildly nauseous as it disappeared into the plothole. Something grabbed it, and after a moment’s mild terror she pulled hard. Out sprinted a redheaded girl, who was then tackled by a smiling Kat.

“Oh Annie, that was—”

“Kat, you came back, you really came back for me—”

“If I might interject, girls?”

Annie and Kat paused in their reunion to face the Notary. Then there was a red flash, and the agent began to speak. “You are Katerina Donlan and Antimony Carver. You know nothing of the PPC or the events that have recently taken place. You are the best and firmest of friends, and nothing will break this. Go now, and be at peace.”

The two agents were out of the door before the canons came to.

“Um, what are we doing here, Annie?”

“I have no idea, but... I think that’s for the best.”

“You’re probably right. Want some cherries?”

“I think I do, Kat. I really think I do.”

Wobbles watched the pair run towards the cherry tree with her smile the widest it had been all day.

Having exorcised the rest of the Court canons affected by the Words, the agents took a portal back into the Gillitie Wood together to tie up the last of their loose ends. Coyote and Ysengrin had yet to be taken care of, but for once the Notary had faith in the primitive technology of the human barbarians. It worked well, and really ought to do its job even on a canon that was technically more powerful than Rassilon if you cared to think about it.

“Well well,” said a voice that seemed to be everywhere and nowhere, “I see you’ve returned to my humble abode. Went the day well, my dears?”

“Uh... sorta?” Wobbles said. “I mean, nobody died or anything, so... yay?”

“HAHA! Oh, you’re after my own heart, but’cha can’t have it ‘cause I’m not quite done with it yet, oh no I’m not. Funny how that phrase works, isn’t it? It’s not like you can actually dig your heart out and give it to someone, still beating, still working. Well, *I* can, but I’m generous like that.”

“Show yourself,” yelled the Notary. “You may be possessed by a, er, a fell spirit, and it is our duty to exorcise it.”

“Oh, the pink fog creatures you and yours call Sue-wraiths? You, little lady, are guilty of worrying far too much. My teeth are still strong enough to go through mist... just about, haha.”

“Nevertheless, there’s protocol— ”

“Protocol? Well, why didn’t you *say*?” A black blur buzzed the Notary a few times before reforming in front of her, taking the shape of a great black dog covered in blue and red lines. Coyote stood and smirked, and there’s nobody that can smirk quite like a reality-bending god. “You people know me almost as well as I know myself, so you must know I’m just a terrible

stickler for protocol, haha!"

"Um... we needa do Ysengrin too, Coyote. Is he around?"

"Oh, he'll be lurking somewhere, Wobbles, and while I'm here might I say just what a wonderfully fitting name that is? I wouldn't worry about the little flashbulb you used on the girls, haha. It's so imprecise. Dear little humans, you must understand. Ysengrin's used to having his memories taken, and I'm ever so much better at it than you are. So put your shiny toy away, Agent Broker's Fee. It's not playtime right now."

"My name is the Notary," grumbled the Notary as she shoved the neuralyzer in her pocket.

"Oh? But Wobbles makes getting your name wrong seem like such fun! I mean, you do it all the time, Antrilovorasilendar. What does that mean again?"

"Why'd he call you that?" whispered Wobbles.

"It's my Gallifreyan name," the Notary answered. "Gallifreyans and Time Lords are two very different things, rather like the difference between clowns and ringmasters. Why are you smiling like that?"

"Oh, no reason," said Wobbles, who knew how circuses were really run. She looked back up at Coyote, who was grinning wider than ever. "Uh, yeah, you're... obviously fine. Also a little scary. So, uh, we're going to go now. You have yourself a lovely day now, you hear?"

"I hope so! Of course, I usually do. I hope you'll come and visit me again, Wobbles. You're such fun to have around..."

An ashen-faced Notary was already yanking Wobbles through a portal before she could respond, and they fell into their RC without a backward glance.

"Well," said the Notary weakly, "that was certainly an experience."

"I know," Wobbles responded. "But we did it. It hurt, but we did it. I'm so proud of you, Agent Bumblebee! We did good!"

"Why are you proud of - never mind. The important part is that now we can—"

"DEFINITELY NOT ENJOY WHAT WE'RE ABOUT TO DO, NUH-UH, NO SIR."

"Human, why are you shouting?"

“PAY NO ATTENTION TO THE TIME GRUMP OVER THERE, I AM NOT GOING TO ENJOY SHOOTING A LOAD OF NEW SCRIPTS FOR WOBBLEVISION AND SHE IS NOT GOING TO ENJOY, UH, FILLING OUT THE MISSION REPORTS OR WHATEVER.”

“If you could just— ” the Notary began, but then the penny dropped. “Ah. Right. I will definitely not enjoy filling out all the requisition forms I will have to go through to make Wobbles slightly less of a debilitating presence on field assignments. I will not enjoy that in the slightest. Me and enjoyable activities pass like ships in the night. I am the most miserable being in the cosmos, and that includes paranoid androids.”

“UH, WHAT SHE SAID.”

“That said, I must confess I’m rather enjoying her bellowing at me—”

“What she said,” breathed Wobbles. She then walked out of the door and sprinted off towards the A/V Division’s television studios, leaving the Notary with a stack of forms to fill out. Both pretended to despise what they were doing, but their hearts were both at peace.

It was a long walk from where Ysengrin was in the forest to where his master lay, but he walked it anyway. He chose his path, and nobody could say otherwise.

“You asked for me, Coyote?”

“Ah, Ysengrin. Feeling alright? Not too stressed, not too bitter?”

“I,” began Ysengrin, then stopped. “I suppose I am, perhaps, confused? Something that happened happened, and I remember it happening, but I also remember it *not* happening, and—”

“Shush, shush, shush, Ysengrin. We had visitors, that’s all, it’s perfectly normal to feel a little bit mixed up after something like that, but don’t you fret. I can take it away. I can take it all away.”

“No, Coyote, please, I—”

There was silence in the forest, save for the chatter of tiny birds.

“You asked for me, Coyote?”

“I did indeed, Ysengrin. Come along and walk me home, will you?”

“... Yes, Coyote.”