

You stared up at the clock, only ten more minutes would you have to endure. For a Friday, it had been painfully slow, possibly because of the packet you really couldn't wait to come home to. A post-car drove by outside, you glared daggers at it. You didn't know what you might do if that packet was lost in the mail. Okay, eight more minutes, you discreetly reopened the mail on your computer again. You read it through, again noticing the result of the application survey. You had only narrowly passed on the right side of the grey zone. The mail had arrived just after lunch, and you had been more or less lost to the world since. It was childish, like when waiting for the guest to one of your childhood birthdays should arrive with the presents.

Just seven more minutes, you glared at the clock, as if willing it to run faster. The demo had been amazing, no modern 4D or whatever cinema, could come even close to that. You jumped in your seat when someone spoke right over your shoulder.

"So that's why you've been out of touch all afternoon."

You turned quickly in your chair, and looked up at the man behind you. He smirked and looked up at the wall-mounted clock. Six point thirty minutes to go.

"If nobody complains, why don't we hold here for today? Personally I got a bus I'd like to catch."

The man towering over you exclaimed for everyone to hear. Clapped his hands as a finish. As the room came to life with sounds of people quickly closing down and wishing each other a good weekend. You didn't waste any time, slammed the screen of your laptop and threw it with all the rest into your bag before heading out. Five minutes and fifteen seconds earlier than an early leave. For all your hurry down fleet of stairs and through the hallways, you still ended up in a crowd, which flowed oh so slow out in the bustling, boiling street. The person who invented rush hour deserved a bullet, and it wasn't the movie you were referring to.

Of course the bus was late, painfully three minutes. It was crowded too, so you had to stand, on the upside though, that did get you a spot close to the doors. Of course, there just had to come people on and off at every single stop, so the bus had no chance of keeping even remotely to schedule. Five point seventeen minutes late, it was finally your stop. You had to squeeze your way out past a, mildly obese woman, and her sausage of a dog, one that nearly tripped you out the opening doors. You took the distance from the bus stop to your front door almost as fast, as when you were running late on a rainy Monday morning.

It was crushingly devoid of anything but your doormat. You could almost feel the grey clouds gather above you. Nothing to do, than to throw your stuff on the bed and check the mailbox. It contained a mountain of ads and flyers. You stopped by the trashcan and started sorting through it, halfway through, the wind picked up a little flyer sized white snip and sent it hurling down the road. A groan of frustration escaped you as you unceremoniously slammed the trashcan lid and dumped the rest of the stack on top. The wind had you chasing the snip until you finally managed to stomp a foot on it. It was from the local post-office.

There's a package for you, it can be picked up at the following location. Was the decrypted message.

You groaned again, folded the slightly dirty snip and stuffed it in a pocket. You really couldn't wait to get your car. After sorting through the rest of the stack from your mailbox, you locked the door and headed out, again, under a darkening sky. Yes, you did actually remember a raincoat. In hindsight, you should probably have brought an umbrella, or a large rain poncho. It was a little long to walk, but it was better than being stuck on an overcrowded bus. It started drizzling well before you reached the place. Maybe you'd take the bus home.

There was a line, and someone had some issue that meant the line didn't move the first ten minutes or so after you joined. Shuffling your raincoat left a nice moist ring on the concrete floor. It was with a breath of relief that you watched the rest of the line vanish over the following ten minutes. You picked up the package, noticing that the size was right, and it seemed to have fared well. Package under the arm, you headed out, into a regular downpour. First stop was hurrying over to the relative cower of the bus stop. The plan confirmed your suspicion, you had missed the bus by just three minutes. The next wouldn't be around for nearly an hour. So it was either sit cold and wait, or go and get wet, and be home to dry in fifteen minutes time. Tugging the package tighter, you headed out into the cascading waters.

The cardboard box was soaked and nearly smouldered when you put it on the kitchen table. All your soaked clothes hung up for dry, you willed yourself to take a short warm shower before returning to the box. Beneath the cardboard box was a layer of Styrofoam, beneath that, a lot of bubble-wrap, and into this, completely dry, was another, more solid box, one with a lock on. The lock required a code to open. There was a small note with it.

Upon obtaining this prototype product, you should have received a confirmation email, in which the code can be found in the small picture bottom left.

You let the box be for a moment, to get your laptop. Then, seated with the laptop and box at your kitchen table, you opened the mail. Your mail had not loaded the picture, so after waiting a whole page refresh you finally had the code needed for the box. Three times misread and two wrong codes later it finally unlocked. There were just three things in the box. What looked like a black aviator helmet with the scalp gone, an, unusually small, instruction book and a charge-cable. After adjusting the helmet so it fit you, you tried to turn it on, with no luck. Well what had you expected? Of course it wasn't charged. After making sure it was charging you turned to the instruction book. Didn't take you long to get what you needed from it. It would take about an hour to charge, or so it claimed. It was an Alpha point two model. When charged, all you had to do was to turn it on and the helmet would contain information about all the rest. You noted that there was no specs, no demands about internet connection. It had however, a payload of warning signs, none that concerned you.

You had an hour to kill, so it seemed you would actually be cooking dinner. Dinner both done, eaten and cleaned up, you could finally take it off the charge cable, from which it had been dragging off with your patience and attention for the whole meal. You could probably thank the smell in the air that you could even remember what it tasted like. Then, with the helmet on, adjusted to comfortable, you turned it on.

Welcome Alpha Tester. Register a username.

You had barely thought through the first that popped into your mind before it was written on the black digital canvas before you.

To confirm username, tap on/off

It responded apparently to thoughts. That called for some experimentation.

JPG is not a valid format; please try again.

After some messing about, without moving an inch from your kitchen chair, you finally settled on a username. You tapped the on/off button and were rewarded with a restart, a setup screen, followed by a menu with a countdown-clock. You had some fun, and frustrating, moments navigating the menus, they reacted to thought and focus it appeared. Fancy, no? As time came you made yourself comfortable in your favourite spot for a nap. The system advised that you lay down while using it. You watched the seconds tick by. One by one, as if you could will them to pass even faster. Did you fall asleep?

Welcome Alpha Tester, to Other World. (OW)... Please choose a destination.

At first, there was only darkness. Then a number of doors. Doors with themes and large signs telling where they let. Just like you had navigated the menus, you navigated through, to the one titled:

(Session) Vacation Destination Equestria.

(If you don't know what that entitles, pick another or take a chance.)

[Establishing connection].... [Please wait].... [Connection established... Wait for initializing.]

#Chat room: Eq07,

Mad-hatter101 said: Hey guys girls and all in between. ;D

Solace07 said: Evning.

Pelanor said: Hey all

Hiddenburg said: Hii ^^

ElAgeZet said: Hey Hidden! Stop stealing my emojis! <(^.^)>

Vanilla Baker said: So, what now, any plans?

Random Baker said: Hey, another Baker. :D

Billdude said: Down with the solar Tyrant >;D

Pelanor said: Right now, Vanilla, we're just waiting for the ride.

Hiddenburg said: Long live NLR, for Luna. >:D
C_Foster said: Are you two serious? xD
Mad-hatter101 said: Yes, yes, let the hatred flow through you. The true lord, Chaos is waiting.
Billdude said: Wow, Hat, you quickster.
Mad-hatter101 said: Let your fingers do the walking. Let your mind do the talking. ;)
Solace07: I won't let you touch a hair on my lady, the living sun! D:<
Random Baker said: XD Like they'd ever have a chance.
Vanilla Baker said: I preferred Cadence..
C_Foster said: I think Nyx is nice.
[System message: Launch in ten seconds.]
Hiddenburg said: 10
Random Baker said: Dawn is a kickass.
Pelanor said: -.-; Solar tyrant? NLR? Nyx? You guys lost me completely.
Mad-hatter101 said: 9
C_Foster said: 8
Solace07 said: 7
Billdude said: 6
Random Baker said: 5
Hiddenbur yells 4!!
ElAgeZet said: 3!
Solace07 said: But I'd like to be a tree.
C_foster shouts: 2!
Vanilla Baker: 1! ^_^
Pelanor said: What?! O.o;
Mad-hatter101 howls at the moon "zeroouuu!" :P
**bleep* [Loading...] ... [Link established...]*

Everything went blank. For just a moment, or maybe an eternity.

[...]
[Loading character data...}
[Error...]
[Connecting to backup server...]
[Error...]
[Error...]
[Broken path...]
[Attempting to reroute...]
[Error...]
[...]
[Oh, screw it.]
[Launching...]

It did take an eternity, or maybe it was just a second. Then the darkness lightened, senses awoke. Solid ground beneath, whispering winds through strands of hair and a feeling, of feeling really, really strange...

"Welcome to Vacation Destination Equestria"

...

Something wasn't quite right.