

MIND IS THE ULTIMATE WEAPON

LUCID

ARRIVAL



SPIRIT INTERCOM
OFFICIAL TRAILER
▶
WE HEAR EVERYTHING.
WE CONNECT ALL.

SPIRIT INTERCOM

A SYSTEM
THAT LISTENS.
A VOICE
THAT STAYS.




1.5 MILLION
FOR IMMORTALITY



LUCID ARRIVAL

VOL. 2
2 YEARS LATER
ARC ONE:

NEUROTRANSMITTER LEVEL
DEFAULT PERCENTAGES
50% = NORMAL DEFAULT



ARC ONE:
NEUROTRANSMITTER LEVEL DEFAULT PERCENTAGES
50% = NORMAL DEFAULT

PEOPLE	DOPAMINE	SEROTONIN	ACETYLCHOLINE	NOREPINEPHRINE	GLUTAMATE	GABA	ADENOSINE	OXYTOCIN
ANDREW	43	38	57	58	49	42	63	56
HARRIET	51	48	42	49	52	51	54	67
ROBERT	59	58	68	71	67	24	73	16
KEVIN	46	45	50	53	48	51	51	52
WAYNE	47	46	21	52	52	47	50	38
RUFUS	54	52	57	52	49	51	55	57
MARCO	46	48	46	47	53	46	57	48
MARIE	39	37	47	46	59	45	48	50
MAXWELL	42	43	58	61	48	44	53	63
LISA	48	49	58	63	48	45	52	52
HORACE	46	47	55	54	47	52	57	42
ALONZO	48	52	53	62	54	47	59	39
NATASHA	47	48	50	53	48	49	50	53
KEITH	42	39	58	57	59	41	66	39
HARRY	48	49	56	53	46	48	52	55
FARAW	52	56	59	63	64	39	58	47
WALDUNE	67	42	57	58	50	49	56	33
MELUA	48	49	48	50	46	47	52	54
ZIM	51	63	55	56	52	45	66	45
CONLEY	54	48	51	61	56	54	52	59
THOM	52	63	67	53	58	59	54	51
GORDIN	57	59	60	58	57	38	58	44
BANDU	54	63	57	64	65	49	48	33
VIVIAN	62	65	56	45	32	35	56	41
LEE	46	51	50	57	42	43	56	45
OMEGA	51	73	76	84	89	23	75	26
DOTOR	53	56	47	53	61	54	48	39
TERRY	43	46	46	56	57	45	62	42
ROSE	45	43	45	53	55	43	49	51
ENZO	44	58	43	42	40	36	41	35

CHAPTER 0.1: BOBBY

"BOBBY, SLIPPER IS READY! COME ON DOWN!"

"I SAID I WILL BE THERE, MOTHER!"

"MOTHER, EVERYTHING FINALLY CLICKED. I LEARNED HOW TO ACHIEVE NEUROPSYCHODYNAMIC MASS-ENERGY OSCILLATORY EQUILIBRIUM."

"BUT FATHER, I FINALLY CAME TO THE REALIZATION THAT--"

"MOTHER, I'LL BE THERE IN A MINUTE."

"IT'S GETTING COLD, SON!"

"IT'S ABOUT TIME YOU ARRIVED. WHAT WERE YOU DOING ANYWAY?"

"BOBBY, I TOLD YOU TO CUT OUT THAT KIND OF TALKING! IT'S A WASTE OF TIME FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY!"

"NO! NOT ANOTHER WORD, SON. NOW EAT WITH YOUR FAMILY."

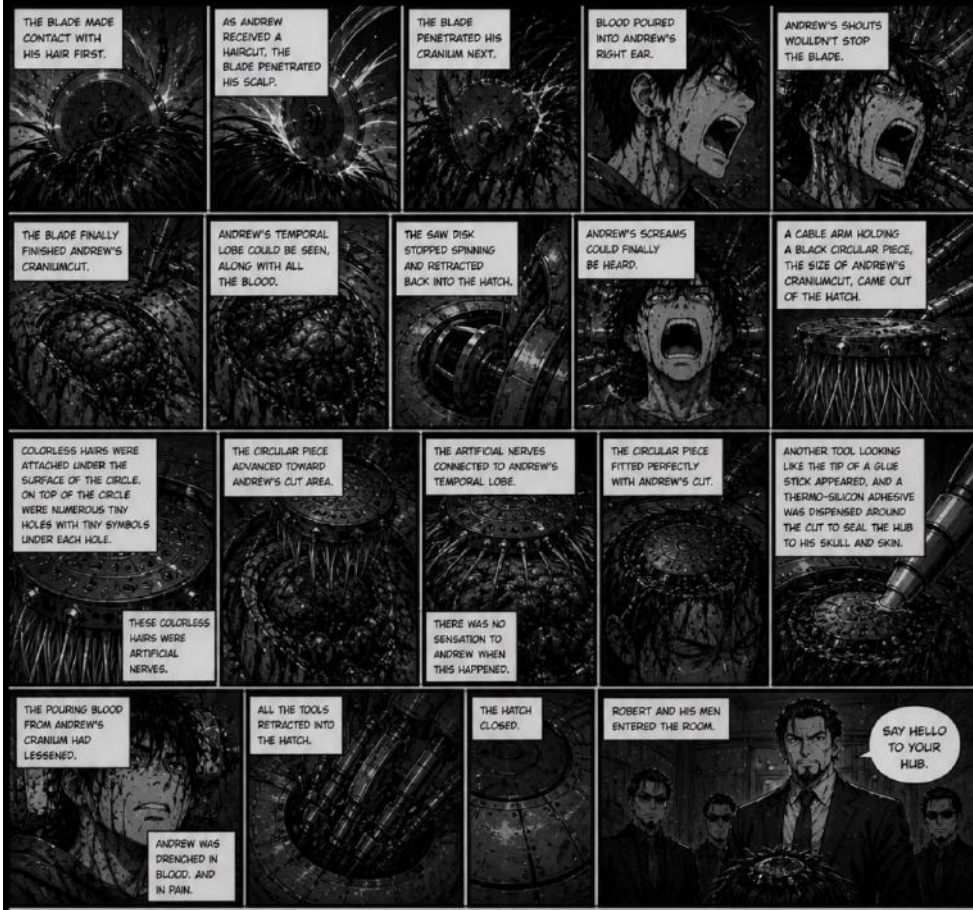
CHAPTER 1: INSERTION CONSCIOUSNESS TARGET: ANDREW RUTANO

ROBERT'S MEN OPENED THE DOOR. ANDREW'S ARMS HAD BEEN RESTRAINED.

AN MRI-LOOKING MACHINE APPEARED. THEY PLACED ANDREW ON A PATIENT TABLE.

A GRAY PLASTIC BELT WENT OVER ANDREW'S WAIST. HE COULDN'T MOVE ANYMORE.





THE BLADE MADE CONTACT WITH HIS HAIR FIRST.

AS ANDREW RECEIVED A HAIRCUT, THE BLADE PENETRATED HIS SCALP.

THE BLADE PENETRATED HIS CRANIUM NEXT.

BLOOD POURED INTO ANDREW'S RIGHT EAR.

ANDREW'S SCREAMS WOULDN'T STOP THE BLADE.

THE BLADE FINALLY FINISHED ANDREW'S CRANIUMCUT.

ANDREW'S TEMPORAL LOBE COULD BE SEEN, ALONG WITH ALL THE BLOOD.

THE SAW DISK STOPPED SPINNING AND RETRACTED BACK INTO THE HATCH.

ANDREW'S SCREAMS COULD FINALLY BE HEARD.

A CABLE ARM HOLDING A BLACK CIRCULAR PIECE, THE SIZE OF ANDREW'S CRANIUMCUT, CAME OUT OF THE HATCH.

COLORLESS HAIRS WERE ATTACHED UNDER THE SURFACE OF THE CIRCLE. ON TOP OF THE CIRCLE WERE NUMEROUS TINY HOLES WITH TINY SYMBOLS UNDER EACH HOLE.

THE CIRCULAR PIECE ADVANCED TOWARD ANDREW'S CUT AREA.

THE ARTIFICIAL NERVES CONNECTED TO ANDREW'S TEMPORAL LOBE.

THE CIRCULAR PIECE FITTED PERFECTLY WITH ANDREW'S CUT.

ANOTHER TOOL LOOKING LIKE THE TIP OF A GLUE STICK APPEARED, AND A THERMO-SILICON ADHESIVE WAS DISPENSED AROUND THE CUT TO SEAL THE HUB TO HIS SKULL AND SKIN.

THESE COLORLESS HAIRS WERE ARTIFICIAL NERVES.

THERE WAS NO SENSATION TO ANDREW WHEN THIS HAPPENED.

THE POURING BLOOD FROM ANDREW'S CRANIUM HAD LESSENERED.

ALL THE TOOLS RETRACTED INTO THE HATCH.

THE HATCH CLOSED.

ROBERT AND HIS MEN ENTERED THE ROOM.

SAY HELLO TO YOUR HUB.

ANDREW WAS DRENCHED IN BLOOD, AND IN PAIN.

THREE WEEKS LATER

TRAPPED, KNEES CROUCHED, ANDREW'S BODY WAS STRAPPED TO A CHAIR.

A SPIRIT EMISSARY WAS STRAPPED ON HIS HEAD.

SCREEN DIRECTLY IN VIEW OF HIS FACE, ANDREW SQUINTED HIS EYES.

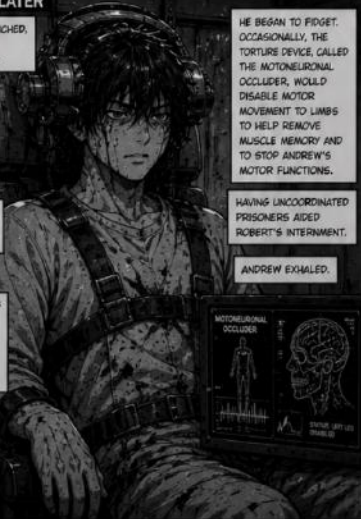
THE SCREEN RELAYED THIS INFORMATION TO ANDREW'S HEAD.

ANDREW SIGHED.

HE WAS CAGED, ALONG WITH ALL THE OTHER PRE-REGISTERED GUESTS. HIS FATHER HAD USURPED THE AUTHORITATIVE RULE.

ANDREW'S LEFT LEG WENT NUMB ON HIM.

LEFT LEG DISABLED.



HE BEGAN TO FORGET. OCCASIONALLY, THE TORTURE DEVICE, CALLED THE MOTONEURONAL OCCLUDER, WOULD DISABLE MOTOR MOVEMENT TO LIMBS TO HELP REMOVE MUSCLE MEMORY AND TO STOP ANDREW'S MOTOR FUNCTIONS.

HAVING UNCOORDINATED PRISONERS AIDED ROBERT'S INTERNMENT.

ANDREW EXHALED.

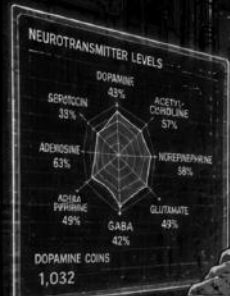
ROBERT, WHO HAD AN ENTIRE ASSEMBLY OF SOLDIERS AND MUTANT CHEF BOTS BY HIS SIDE, CONTROLLED NIRVANA 74 AND ALLURE. HARRIET, KEVIN, MARCO, RUFUS, AND ANDREW'S CHILDREN HAD BEEN SEPARATED FOR THE PAST THREE MONTHS AS WELL AS THE OTHER 10,000 OTHER GUESTS. HE HAD INSTALLED THE HUB NEXT TO EACH PERSON'S TEMPORAL LOBE. FIVE CENTIMETERS DEEP INTO THE HEAD, THE ADAPTER ACQUIRED A DIAMETER OF THREE INCHES. THE CIRCLE RELAYED TINY KNOBS FOR ALL KINDS OF NEURO-CONVERTERS. THESE KNOBS WERE ONLY TWISTABLE IF A KEY WAS INSERTED. GUESTS CALLED THESE "THE KEYS THAT UNLOCK YOUR MIND." EACH KEY WAS THIN AS A PAPERCLIP BUT FIRM AS STEEL. OF COURSE, ROBERT OWNED ALL THESE KEYS, AND EACH KEY REPRESENTED A DIFFERENT NEURO-CONVERTER. WHEN THE KEY WAS INSERTED, AN ARTIFICIAL NEURAL FIBER FROM THE BRAIN'S REGION OF INTEREST WAS ATTACHED TO THE HUB. THE HUB WOULD BE ABLE TO SEND ITS ELECTROCHEMICAL MESSAGES TO THE SPECIFIC BRAIN REGION.

BUILDINGS AND PALACES WERE BUILT BY ENSLAVED ANIMATE PLANTS.



ANDREW MISSED HIS FAMILY. HE DIDN'T KNOW IF THIS EMOTIONAL TRANSSESSION WAS ARTIFICIAL OR NOT. YET, ANDREW DID NOT CARE. HE HAD ALREADY SUCCEDED TO THREE MONTHS OF AGONY AND TORTURE. EVERY EMOTIONAL CENTER OF HIS BRAIN DETERIORATED.

ANDREW WAS CALM COMPARED TO THE OTHER CAPTURED GUESTS. IF ANYONE REBELLED WITH TOO MUCH HOSTILITY, THEIR CONSCIOUSNESS WOULD EITHER BECOME TABULA-RASA, OR THEY WOULD BE THROWN IN THE NEURAL FREEZER.

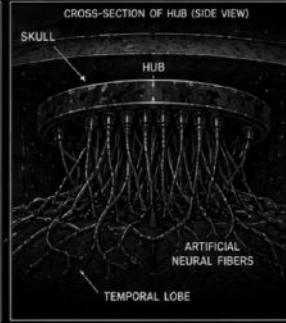


TABULA-RASA

NEURAL FREEZER



A MORAL CURRENCY CALLED "DOPAMINE COINS" SPURTED PEOPLE'S DOPAMINE LEVELS WHEN THEY BEHAVED IN ACCORDANCE WITH ROBERT'S AUTHORITY. WITH THEIR HUBS, PRISONERS COULD GIVE AND TAKE DOPAMINE THROUGH A CABLE CALLED THE DOPAMINE COIN TRANSFERER WHICH WOULD ALLOW UP TO 1,000 COINS TO BE DEPOSITED OR WITHDRAWN IN THE SPAN OF A DAY. THE TRANSFERER COULD CONNECT TO THE DOPAMINE WITHDRAWER WHERE DOPAMINE COULD BE TAKEN. THE TRANSFERER COULD ALSO CONNECT TO THE DOPAMINE DEPOSITOR WHERE DOPAMINE COULD BE DEPOSITED. THE DOPAMINE COIN TRANSFERER, WITHDRAWER, AND DEPOSITOR WERE ALL ALIGNED ON THE UPPER RIM OF THE HUB'S CIRCULAR SHAPE.



WHEN ONE ACTED WITH OBEDIENCE, THEIR NEUROTRANSMITTERS WERE REWARDED WITH A SWEET DOPAMINE HIGH. BRAGGING ABOUT NEURAL WEALTH BECAME A COMPETITION. THIS COMPETITION TRANSITIONED INTO AN IMPERFECT SOCIAL HIERARCHY. PEOPLE WITH THE LOWEST NEURAL WEALTH WERE LEFT TO FINISH THE DIRTY WORK WHILE THE NEURAL WEALTHY COULD GET AWAY WITH DELEGATING THEIR WORK TO THE LOWER CLASS. PEOPLE WITH THE LACK OF DOPAMINE TENDED TO SUBMIT TO OTHERS' WORK. ARGUMENTATION AGAINST DELEGATING DID NOT CROSS THE MINDS OF THE DEPLETED. WHILE DOING SOMEONE'S WORK AS A SIGN OF OBEDIENCE, THE NEURAL UNWEALTHY TENDED TO DO THEIR JOBS POORLY DUE TO THEIR EXHAUSTIVE AND UNCOMMITTED NATURE. THEREFORE, THE NEURAL WEALTHY BECAME MORE WEALTHY WHEN THEY DELEGATED THEIR JOBS TO THE NEURAL UNWEALTHY.

IF ANY PROBLEMS WERE TO COME UP FROM THE NEURAL WEALTHY'S DUTIES, THEY WOULD ARGUE THAT THE JOB THAT THEY ORIGINALLY WERE SIGNED UP FOR WAS GIVEN TO THE NEURAL UNWEALTHY. ANDREW WAS IN THE MIDDLE OF THIS HIERARCHY, MEANING THAT HE DELEGATED HIS WORK TO OTHERS HALF THE TIME AND FINISHED HIS ASSIGNED WORK HALF THE TIME. HE HAD OBTAINED A TOTAL OF 1,032 DOPAMINE COINS. THERE WERE SOME PEOPLE WHO HAD AS LOW AS -12,573 DOPAMINE COINS, AND LEVELS THIS LOW REQUIRED DOPAMINE CHARGERS. THE DOPAMINE LEVELS FOR THESE PEOPLE WERE SO LOW THAT THEY WOULDN'T EVEN HAVE THE MOTIVATION TO STAND UP.



ANDREW ATTEMPTED TO STAND UP BUT COULDN'T. HIS MOTOR NERVES WERE UNCOORDINATED. WRAPPING HIS ARM AROUND ANDREW'S WAIST, BARNETT HELPED WALK ANDREW OUT OF THE ROOM. ANDREW HAD BEEN SO USED TO STARING AT A SCREEN THAT HIS VISION STARED BLANKLY AT THE SAME SPOT.

"CAN YOU STAND?" BARNETT ASKED.
"YEAH."



UNWRAPPING HIS ARM, BARNETT HANDCUFFED ANDREW'S WRISTS AND ANKLES. "PLEASE, FOLLOW ME."



ANDREW'S FEEBLE LEGS STARTED TO RECEIVE SOME PHYSICAL MEMORY AS HE WALKED.



LEAVING THE OCCLUDER ROOM, BARNETT OPENED THE DOOR AND THE JAIL LOBBY APPEARED.



THE ENTRANCE OF THE JAIL COULD BE SEEN TOO. A ROAD AND ALLEYWAY STOOD JUST OUTSIDE THE ENTRANCE. MAJORITY OF THE TREES AROUND ALLURE HAD BEEN EXTREMELY CUT DOWN.



A SMALL HAVEN OF BUILDINGS EXISTED, AND ANDREW SAW ANIMATE PLANTS GALLOPING AND USING THEIR HANDS. WEARING NEON VESTS AND HELMETS LIKE CONSTRUCTION WORKERS, THEY APPEARED TO BE BUILDING SOMETHING. HE COULDN'T TELL WHAT THEY WERE BUILDING.



TAKING A RIGHT AND ANOTHER RIGHT, THEY FOLLOWED A LONG HALLWAY UNTIL THEY REACHED A DOOR. THEY ARRIVED IN A NEW COMPLEX. DUSTY GRAY JAIL CELLS RUN UP THE STORIES. TEN STORIES TALL, EACH ROW ATTAINED A HUNDRED CELLS. ANDREW'S CELL WAS FLOOR 1 CELL 1.



ENTERING HIS CELL, HE STARED INTO THE FOUR WALLS OF BOREDOM. BARNETT LOOKED HIS CELL AND LEFT.



TIRED MECHANICALLY FROM THE MOTONEURONAL OCCLUDER, ANDREW JUMPED ON HIS STIFF MATTRESS.

NIGHT P.M.

ANDREW CLOSED HIS EYES. HIS CIRCADIAN RHYTHM DID THE REST. HE FELL ASLEEP.



DAY A.M.

AN ALARM SHOOK HIS BODY UP. SWALLOWING THE AFTERTASTE OF HIS NIGHTTIME DROOL, HIS GULLET LEANED BACK. HIS BACK LEANED BACK.



AIMING HIS EYES ON THE FLOOR, HE WAS WELCOMED BY THE DAILY BREAKFAST. THE TRAY HELD A PLATE OF FRENCH TOAST AND GOOEY SCRAMBLED EGGS.



ANDREW DESPISED EVERYTHING ABOUT THE JAIL EXCEPT THE BREAKFAST-IN-BED LUXURY. REACHING FOR HIS FOOD, THE TRAY SLID AWAY.



BARNETT HAD CLUNG ONTO THE TRAY. ANDREW PROZE.



"WHERE'S MY 'THANK YOU?'" BARNETT ASKED.



"YOU FORGOT TO THANK ME."



BARNETT MOVED THE TRAY FARTHER AWAY. "YOUR MEAL."



ANDREW MENTALLY SIGHED. IT WAS THE CHEFS THAT COOKED THE MEALS, NOT BARNETT. BARNETT WAS SIMPLY THE FOOD COURIER. "THANK YOU."



"YOU ALWAYS THANK SOMEONE BEFORE A DEED IS DONE. IT'S NOT THE RESULT THAT MATTERS. IT'S THE INTENTION." HE GRABBED THE TRAY TIGHTER AND THREW IT FAR AWAY BEHIND HIM.



THE TOAST AND EGGS SPLATTERED,



AND SO DID ANDREW'S PATIENCE.



BARNETT SMIRKED AND KICKED THE TRAY FURTHER.





ANDREW YELLED, "WHAT IS THAT EVEN SUPPOSED TO MEAN?!"

THE GUARD SAID NOTHING AND LEFT.

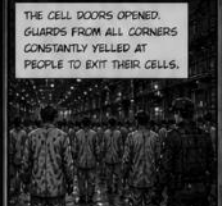
ANDREW TENSED BOTH ARMS AND PUNCHED THE CONCRETE FLOOR, BARELY LEAVING AN INDENTATION.

HE LAID IN BED BREAKFAST-LESS.



STOMACH CHURNING, ANDREW HEARD A MESSAGE FROM THE PRISON'S INTERCOM SYSTEM.

THE MESSAGE SAID, "ROTATE."



THE CELL DOORS OPENED. GUARDS FROM ALL CORNERS CONSTANTLY YELLED AT PEOPLE TO EXIT THEIR CELLS.



ANDREW STAYED IN HIS BED. HE WOULDN'T MOVE.



SEVERAL SECONDS PRESSED UNTIL A GUARD SPOTTED ANDREW STILL IN HIS BED.

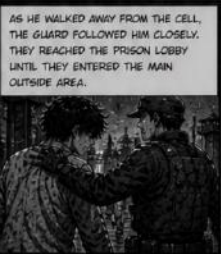
GET OUTTA YUH CELL.



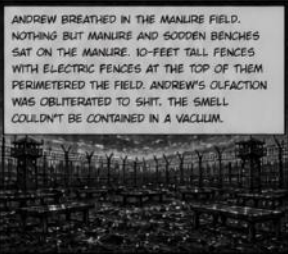
HE DARTED TOWARD ANDREW'S POSITION AND FLIPPED THE MATTRESS UPSIDE-DOWN ATOP ANDREW.



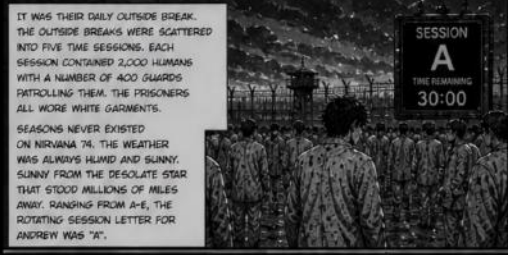
ANDREW'S ADRENOSINE UPLIFTED. HE LEFT THE ROOM SMOOTHLY AND QUICKLY.



AS HE WALKED AWAY FROM THE CELL, THE GUARD FOLLOWED HIM CLOSELY. THEY REACHED THE PRISON LOBBY UNTIL THEY ENTERED THE MAIN OUTSIDE AREA.



ANDREW BREATHED IN THE MANURE FIELD. NOTHING BUT MANURE AND SODDEN BENCHES SAT ON THE MANURE. 10-FOOT TALL FENCES WITH ELECTRIC FENCES AT THE TOP OF THEM PERIMETERED THE FIELD. ANDREW'S OLFACTION WAS OBLITERATED TO SHIT. THE SMELL COULDN'T BE CONTAINED IN A VACUUM.

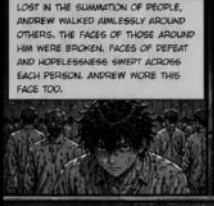


IT WAS THEIR DAILY OUTSIDE BREAK. THE OUTSIDE BREAKS WERE SCATTERED INTO FIVE TIME SESSIONS. EACH SESSION CONTAINED 2,000 HUMANS WITH A NUMBER OF 400 GUARDS PATROLLING THEM. THE PRISONERS ALL WORE WHITE GARMENTS. SEASONS NEVER EXISTED ON NIRVANA 74. THE WEATHER WAS ALWAYS HUMID AND SUNNY, SUNNY FROM THE DESOLATE STAR THAT STOOD MILLIONS OF MILES AWAY. RANGING FROM A-E, THE ROTATING SESSION LETTER FOR ANDREW WAS "A".

SESSION A THE REMAINING 30:00



ANDREW AND THE GUARD FINALLY REACHED THE PUBLIC VICINITY OF ALL THE PRISONERS. THE OUTSIDE TIME PER SESSION WAS 30 MINUTES. THE GUARD HELD ON ANDREW'S SHOULDER AND PUSHED HIM INTO THE CROWD. THE GUARD THEN VANISHED.



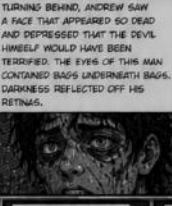
LOST IN THE SUMMATION OF PEOPLE, ANDREW WALKED AIMLESSLY AROUND OTHERS. THE FACES OF THOSE AROUND HIM WERE BROKEN. FACES OF DEFEAT AND HOPELESSNESS SWOOP AROUND EACH PERSON. ANDREW WORE THIS FACE TOO.



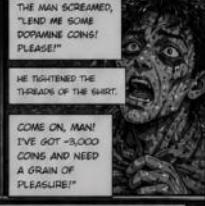
LIGHTLY SHOVING OTHERS AND STEPPING OVER THE BARREN SHOES OF OTHERS, HE GOT CAUGHT IN SOMETHING.



A HAND WAS HOLDING ONTO THE BACK OF HIS TARNISHED SHIRT. HE REACTED SLOWLY.



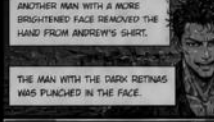
TURNING BEHIND, ANDREW SAW A FACE THAT APPEARED SO DEAD AND DEPRESSED THAT THE DEVIL HIMSELF WOULD HAVE BEEN TERRORIFIED. THE EYES OF THIS MAN CONTAINED BAGS UNDERNEATH BAGS. DARKNESS REFLECTED OFF HIS RETINAS.



THE MAN SCREAMED, "LEND ME SOME DOPAMINE COINS! PLEASE!"

HE TIGHTENED THE THREADS OF THE SHIRT.

COME ON, MAN! I'VE GOT -BLOOD COINS AND NEED A GRAIN OF PLEASURE!"



ANOTHER MAN WITH A MORE BRIGHTENED FACE REMOVED THE HAND FROM ANDREW'S SHIRT.



WHEN WILL YOU LEARN TO BEHAVE, YOU NEURO-DEGENERATE?!"



NOW EYES ON ANDREW, THE MAN SAID.

NAME'S JULIUS.



ANDREW DIDN'T LOOK AT THE MAN AND LEFT.



ANDREW KEPT WALKING AROUND OTHERS. AS HE GUIDED OVER HIS NEXT STEP, HE SAW JULIUS IN FRONT OF HIS WAY.



YOU AREN'T GONNA THANK ME?



ANDREW IMPATIENTLY SCRATCHED HIS HAIR.

THANK YOU!



HE MADE THE MOTION FOR HIS NEXT STEP BUT JULIUS STILL BLOCKED HIM OFF.

YOU AREN'T CURIOUS ABOUT WHAT JUST HAPPENED?!"



ANDREW STARED INTO THE GROUND.



WHAT YOU JUST WITNESSED WAS A DEPRAVED MAN. HE WAS REALLY CUT OF IT, WASN'T HE? NO HOPE OR HAPPINESS IN HIS SOUL. A PSYCHOLOGICALLY DEAD PERSON. A MISTAKE IN SPACE-TIME. A LOST SOUL. IMAGINE WHAT IT FEELS TO HAVE NEGATIVE DOPAMINE COINS. I'M JUST GLAD I WASN'T HIM.



YOU AREN'T CURIOUS ABOUT WHAT JUST HAPPENED?

.....

WHAT YOU JUST WITNESSED WAS A DEFORMED MAN, HE WAS REALLY OUT OF IT, WASN'T HE? NO HOPE OR HAPPINESS IN HIS SOUL. A PSYCHOLOGICALLY DEAD PERSON, A MISTAKE IN SPACE-TIME, A LOST SOUL.

IMAGINE WHAT IT FEELS TO HAVE NEGATIVE DOPAMINE COINS, I'M JUST GLAD I WASN'T HIM.

SO... YOU AREN'T CURIOUS ABOUT HOW MANY DOPAMINE COINS I ACQUIRE?

HUH?

MAKE A GUESS.

I DON'T KNOW, HOW MUCH?

8,082 COINS. AND YOU KNOW HOW I EARNED IT? BY HAVING SUCKERS DO ALL MY WORK. DULL-MINDED PEEPS SUBMIT TO OTHERS' WORK. IMAGINE HOW WEAK-MINDED YOU HAVE TO BE TO NOT TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE SYSTEM.

MEN LIKE HIM ARE HOPELESS AND INDIFFERENT TO FACING DEATH. I'D BE SURPRISED IF--

ANDREW'S ANGER SCORCHED AS HIS CEPHALIC AND BASILIC VEINS POPPED OUT OF HIS WRISTS.

ANDREW LIFTED HIS ARM IN THE MOTION FOR A PUNCH.

BEFORE HE COULD MAKE CONTACT WITH JULIUS, HE WAS PULLED AWAY.

KEVIN? WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
I'M SAVING YOUR LIFE LIKE YOU SAVED MINE.

IT WAS ABOUT TIME I FOUND YOU. WHAT EXACTLY WAS GOING ON WITH YOU AND HIM?

HE'S A PIECE OF SHIT, THAT'S ALL THERE'S TO IT.

ANDREW STRUGGLED AGAINST KEVIN'S GRASP, BITING KEVIN'S FINGER, ANDREW ESCAPED HIS GRAB.

USING ALL HIS MECHANICAL ENERGY INTO HIS LEGS, HE BOLTED BACK TO JULIUS. PEOPLE IN THE CROWD GLARED AT HIM AS ANDREW MADE DISTANCE.

JULIUS' BODY WAS IN VIEW, FACING BACKWARDS.

ANDREW PULMONATED HIS NECK VEINS, BENDING DOWN, HE PLOKED UP MANURE FROM THE FLOOR AND PLACED IT ON HIS RIGHT TALIA.

HE TAPPED JULIUS' SHOULDER.

EXPECTING JULIUS TO TURN AROUND, ANDREW SAW JULIUS' RIGHT LEG HAD RISEN AT A 90 DEGREE ANGLE.

REVERSING THE LEG'S MOTION, JULIUS KICKED ANDREW IN THE GROIN WITH HIS HEEL AT AN OBTUSE ANGLE.

ANDREW FELL TO THE GROUND.

SUFFOCATING OVER PAIN, ANDREW DROPPED THE MANURE. TWO OTHER MEN APPROACHED ANDREW'S LYING BODY.

JULIUS GAVE A HARD KICK TO ANDREW'S STOMACH.

"SO..." HE SAID, "HOW'S THAT PUNCH OF YOURS COMING ALONG?" PLOKING UP MANURE, HE THREW IT AT ANDREW'S EYES.

ANDREW TWITCHED AND CLOSED HIS EYES.

"HOW IS THAT SNEAK ATTACK OF YOURS GOING?" THE TWO MEN WHO HAD APPROACHED KICKED ANDREW IN THE GUT MULTIPLE TIMES.

ANDREW'S UPPER RIBS LOOSED OUT OF PLACE, THE KICKING CONTINUED. BODILY FLUIDS LIKE BLOOD, SWEAT, TEARS, AND MUCUS MIXED AROUND ANDREW'S LIPS AND NOSTRILS.

ANDREW DID NOT SCREAM IN PAIN AS IT WAS TOO DIFFICULT TO BREATHE. HIS INTERNAL ORGANS WOBBLLED OUT OF PLACE AS THE KICKING ENDED.

ANDREW FLOKEDER HIS EYES BACK OPEN AS HIS EYELASHES 'TOSSED OUT PARTICLES OF MANURE.

KEVIN'S PRESENCE CLAMINATED DOWN THE MANURE HORIZON, SPRINTING TOWARDS ANDREW'S FIELD OF VIEW.

KEVIN LANDED A PUNCH ON JULIUS.

JULIUS FELL TO THE FLOOR, TWO OTHER MEN THREW PUNCHES, BUT MISSED.

KEVIN'S AGILITY OUTMATCHED THEM, AND HE LANDED TWO MORE PUNCHES ON BOTH HEAL.

THEIR BODIES CROPPED NEXT TO ANDREW'S EYES.

ANDREW QUIETLY SAID, "DON'T WATCH ME FAIL."

KEVIN DON'T HEAR HIM.

A HAZDOLE OF FIVE PEOPLE A FEW METERS AWAY BEGAN PUSHING THROUGH THE CROWD, ANDREW EXPRESSIONS INVAIED THEIR FACES.

KEVIN SAID, "GET UP!"

ANDREW LAY, LESS MUSCLES BARELY TWITCHING.

"GET UP, AGAIN!"

HE LAY.

GRABBING HIS RIGHT TALIA, KEVIN HOISTED ANDREW UP, "WAKE UP." HE SAID, "MENTALLY AND PHYSICALLY" ANDREW'S EYES FLARED UP.

ANDREW MUTTERED, "WHAT DO WE DO?"



THINKING KEVIN WOULD SAY TO FIGHT, ANDREW WAS PULLED BY KEVIN.

WE RUN!

KEVIN AND ANDREW DISSOLVED IN THE CROWD.



CHAPTER 1.1:

HOW WAS SCHOOL, BOBBY?
GOOD, MOTHER.

WILL YOU TELL ME ABOUT IT?
NO.

FATHER, GUESS WHAT?
NOT NOW, SON.

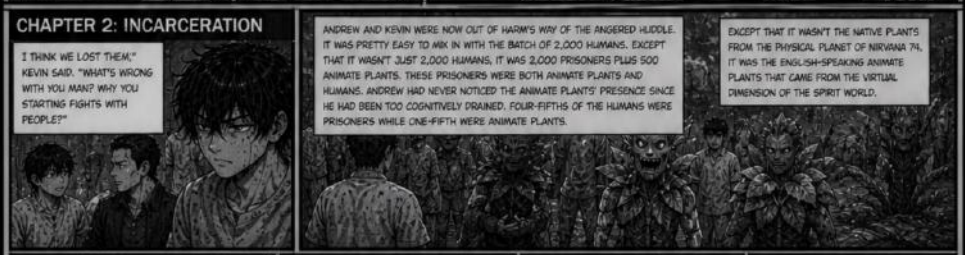
I EARNED FIRST PLACE IN THE NEW YORK ASSOCIATIVE PRESS FOR SCIENCE SCHOLARS COMPETITION!
....

COME ON, GIVE YOUR MOTHER A HUG.
...

...

AND I'M ALSO THINKING OF STARTING MY OWN STARTUP COMPANY. IT'S GONNA BE SOMETHING BIG, AND I ALREADY KNOW--

GET OUT OF MY BEDROOM, BOBBY!



I THINK WE LOST THEM," KEVIN SAID. "WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU MAN? WHY YOU STARTING FIGHTS WITH PEOPLE?"

ANDREW AND KEVIN WERE NOW OUT OF HARM'S WAY OF THE ANGERED HUUDDLE. IT WAS PRETTY EASY TO MIX IN WITH THE BATCH OF 2,000 HUMANS, EXCEPT THAT IT WASN'T JUST 2,000 HUMANS, IT WAS 2,000 PRISONERS PLUS 500 ANIMATE PLANTS. THESE PRISONERS WERE BOTH ANIMATE PLANTS AND HUMANS. ANDREW HAD NEVER NOTICED THE ANIMATE PLANTS' PRESENCE SINCE HE HAD BEEN TOO COGNITIVELY TRAINED. FOUR-FIFTHS OF THE HUMANS WERE PRISONERS WHILE ONE-FIFTH WERE ANIMATE PLANTS.

EXCEPT THAT IT WASN'T THE NATIVE PLANTS FROM THE PHYSICAL PLANET OF NIKRVANA 74. IT WAS THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING ANIMATE PLANTS THAT CAME FROM THE VIRTUAL DIMENSION OF THE SPIRIT WORLD.



ANDREW'S JAW WAS CRACKED OUT OF PLACE BY A FEW CENTIMETERS. HE SAID, "BY THIS POINT, I DON'T KNOW. I CAN'T EVEN TELL WHAT'S RIGHT FROM WRONGS."

AS THEY WALKED, HE SMEARED AWAY THE REMAINING MANURE FROM HIS FACE. "SO YEAH . . . AS YOU SAID, SOMETHING IS WRONG WITH ME."

HE SLOWLY 360'D HIS NECK AROUND TO GAZE UPON HIS SURROUNDINGS.
I COULD CARE LESS.

THERE WERE LESS BODIES SURROUNDING ANDREW AND KEVIN NOW.
OKAY, I THINK I SEE THEM NOW.
HURRY UP.

WHO?
THE SAME PEOPLE WE'VE ALWAYS BEEN SEEING THE PAST THREE MONTHS.
KEVIN SIGHED AND STRUTTED ALONG QUICKER.

RUFUS AND SHRUBBURR STOOD NEXT TO THE FENCE OF THE MANURE FIELD, WAITING FOR KEVIN AND ANDREW TO COME INTO CONTACT.

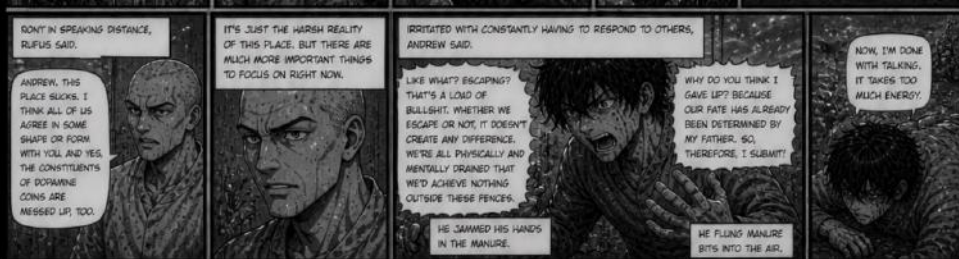
THEY WORE WHITE UNIFORMS AS WELL, YET THEY APPEARED DIRTY FROM THE MANURE.

ANDREW'S LEGS WERE GIVING UP ON HIM. THE MOTONEURONAL OCCLUDER AND THE BEATINGS ENCUMBERED HIM.

IN SPEAKING RANGE, ANDREW YELLED.
HEY! YOU TWO WALK TO US.
ANDREW LAID DOWN AND FLAILED HIS ARMS TO THE FLOOR.

THE TERRAIN BELOW HIM FELT SEPARATED FROM HIS ENVIRONMENT. HIS BODY FELT SEPARATED.

MOISTURE EXITED HIS MOUTH AS HIS TONGUE FELT THE MANURE DUST OF HIS RECENT FALL.





ANDREW STARTLED, SENDING AN AFTERSHOCK TO KEVIN, RUFUS, AND SHRUBBURN.



WHO THE HELL ARE YOU? GET OUT OF HERE.

NO, NO, NO, NO. NO. I DON'T MEAN TO SCARE YOU GUYS. IT'S JUST THAT ME AND MY WIFE COULDN'T HELP BUT HEAR YOUR INTEREST IN ESCAPING THIS PRISON. WE DONT MEAN TO COME OFF AS HARMFUL IN ANY WAY.

ANDREW TUMBLED AROUND IN THE MANURE AND STOOD UP.

HEY, NO WORRIES. WE WERE JUST SAYING THAT--

WE WERE JUST SAYING THAT YOU GUYS SHOULD LEAVE.

HEY, KEVIN. COME ON.

THESE PEOPLE DONT COME OFF AS BAD.

SINCE WHEN DID YOU START FEELING LIKE TALKING AGAIN?

ANYWAY... WHAT ARE YOU TWO'S NAMES?

SORRY FOR NOT INTRODUCING MYSELF EARLIER. I'M ALONZO, AND THIS IS MY WIFE NATASHA.

IT'S AWFULLY DEPRESSING THE CONDITIONS WE'VE BEEN UNDER. YOU GUYS ARE MORE THAN WELCOME TO HELP US FIND AN END TO THIS IMPRISONMENT.

A MOMENT AGO YOU WERE IN DESPAIR...

WE'VE BEEN SEARCHING FOR A WAY TO ESCAPE THIS HELL EVER SINCE WE WERE ZAPPED INTO THIS DIMENSION. THREE MONTHS LATER, I'M STILL SURPRISED I'M ALIVE IN THIS DUMP ALONGSIDE MY WIFE.

I DON'T KNOW. NOT TRYING TO BE RUDE OR ANYTHING, IT'S JUST THAT WE DON'T KNOW YOU TWO. WE DON'T OBVIOUSLY KNOW WHAT YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH OR WHERE YOU CAME FROM, SO, THEREFORE, OUR BOND OF TRUST REMAINS UNKNOWN.

WE TOTALLY UNDERSTAND THE PRE-CONCEIVED NOTIONS YOU GUYS MUST HOLD FOR OUTSIDERS, AND THIS MAY SOUND CLICHE, BUT YOU HAVE TO TRUST US.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT TAKES TO CONVINCE THE FOUR OF YOU, BUT I'LL SHARE SOME HORRENDOUS EXPERIENCES OF OURS.

AROUND LAST WEEK MY MOTHER WAS SENT TO THE NEURAL FREEZER, SHE'D BEEN COMPLAINING TO A GUARD ABOUT HER LACK OF FOOD AND HOW SHE FELT REALLY SICK.

BEING THE SHITTY PERSON HE WAS, THE GUARD DECIDED HE WASN'T GONNA TOLERATE HER ANNOYANCE, AND HE THREW HER INTO THE FREEZER.

MY MOTHER WAS STUCK IN THAT ASYLUM FOR THREE DAYS STRAIGHT!

OUR DESIRE TO ESCAPE IS EQUIVOCAL OR EVEN MORE THAN YOUR GUYS'.

HER BRAIN HAD BEEN FROZEN FOR SO LONG THAT SHE COULDN'T THINK OR EAT ANYTHING UNTIL SHE DIED FROM DEHYDRATION! THAT SON OF A BITCH FORGOT ABOUT HER!

SHE WAS JUST AN UNCONSCIOUS MEATBAG.

ANDREW EMPATHIZED WITH THE GUY. HE SHARED ALONZO'S ANGER AND FRUSTRATION. THIS EMPATHIC ENERGY GAVE HIM MOTIVATION. NUMBNESS MORPHED INTO FEELINGS.

I HOPE YOU CAN SEE OUR TRUE HATRED FOR ROBERT AND HIS MEN.

THERE'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE HE KILLS US ALL.

WE'LL HELP YOU ESCAPE.

I DON'T CARE IF MY FRIENDS ARE AGAINST THE IDEA. IF THEY ARE, I'M HELPING YOU ESCAPE OUTTA HERE BY MYSELF.

AND TO THINK THAT YOU DIDN'T WANT TO ESCAPE A FEW MOMENTS AGO.

I AM AS WELL.

I'M SORRY FOR WHAT YOU TWO HAVE BEEN THROUGH.

AND YES, YOU CAN HELP US.

RIGHTFULLY SO, I AM COMPLETELY ON BOARD.

WE COULD ALWAYS BRING MORE PEOPLE ON BOARD WITH OUR ESCAPING PLOTTAGE, BUT IT'S THE STRATEGY AND PLAN THAT WE GRAVELY NEED. WE CAN'T JUST--

KEVIN'S VOICE WAS INTERRUPTED BY THE PRISON INTERCOM.



GOOD EVENING. WOULD ALL HUMANS PLEASE LINE UP BY THE GATE? SINGLE FILE BY INMATE NUMBER.



WADDLING LIKE PENGUINS, PEOPLE SLOWLY MADE THEIR WAY TO THE GATE. THE NEUROCHEMICALLY-WEALTHY WALKED QUICKER.

ANIMATE PLANTS, STAGNANT AS A LAKE, STOOD.

THE WATCHTOWERS THAT STOOD AROUND THE FENCES HAD GUARDS RUFFELLING DOWN TO ESCORT THE PRISONERS IN THE MANURE.

WAIT... WHAT'S HAPPENING RIGHT NOW? WE NEVER USUALLY LINE UP. AND WHY'D THEY SAY ONLY HUMANS?

SOMETHING MOST LIKELY NOT GOOD.

WE'LL HEAR ABOUT YOUR PLAN LATER, ALONZO. I GUESS OUR THIRTY MINUTES CAME TO AN END SOONER THAN WE PRESUMED.

...

A PACK OF GUARDS APPROACHED ANDREW AND HIS FRIENDS.

THE GUARDS HAD PHYSICAL ATTACHMENTS TO THEIR HELMS, DIFFERENT LOOKING PIECES STUCK ON THE HUB, BUT THEY MOVED SO QUICKLY THAT ANDREW COULDN'T PIECE TOGETHER THE EXACT DESIGNS. SMALL FAIN LIGHTS LIT UP IN SMALL TIME INTERVALS. THEY CARRIED GUNS, INCLUDING RIFLES, SHOTGUNS, AND PISTOLS.

THEY REPEATEDLY SHOUTED, "SINGLE FILE! SINGLE FILE! SINGLE FILE!" THEY WORE ORANGE-TINTED GOGGLES. THEY WORE BLACK ARMOR THAT RESEMBLED THE PATTERN OF THE ROCK PLUMICE.

THE GUARDS ADDITIONALLY HAD SMALL BLUE AND RED PIPES THAT STARTED TOWARD THEIR HEART REGION AND ENDED AT THEIR HUB. THE PIPES, MEASURING ONE INCH IN DIAMETER, WERE CONNECTED TO THEIR ARMOR, AND THEY RAN HORIZONTALLY ACROSS THE CHEST, UP THE COLLAR BONE, UP THE NECK, AND UP THE CHEEKBONE UNTIL THE PIPES REACHED THE RIGHT SIDE OF THEIR HEAD. THE BLUE AND RED PIPES RAN PARALLEL WITH EACH OTHER.

ANDREW WAS SEPARATED FROM HIS FRIENDS. A GUN POKED AT HIS BACK, SIGNALING HIM TO MOVE FORWARD.

ANDREW HEARD KEVIN YELL, "WHERE ARE YOU GUYS TAKING US?!" MEANWHILE, SHRILBURB STOOD ALONE, AND RUFUS WAS BEHIND ANDREW'S GUARD A FEW FEET AWAY.

ANDREW AND THE GUARD WALKED A GOOD AMOUNT OF STEPS. HE LOST SIGHT OF ALONZO AND NATASHA. HE NEEDED TO HEAR THEIR PLAN.

ANDREW FINALLY CAME CLOSER TO THE PROXIMITY OF THE LARGER CROWD OF PEOPLE. FOOTSTEPS BECAME LOUDER.

MORE PEOPLE BEGAN TO SPEAK AT ONCE.

THE ORIGINAL HUCOLE OF FILE THAT ANDREW RAN FROM WAS IN VIEW.

ONE HELD MANURE. ANOTHER HAD A GUN IN A CHOKE-HOLD.

THEY HURLED MANURE AT THE GUARD.

WHAT'S THE PURPOSE OF LINDING US UP?
IS THIS AN REBELLION LINE?
GET AWAY FROM US YOU ANDLESS SOLDIERS!
I DON'T WANNA DIE!
WHAT'S HAPPENING TO US?!

BLANNING FROM THE DISTANCE, A GUARD HOLDING A TASER TOOKLED THE MANURE THROUWER AND ZAPPED THE TASER INSIDE HIS HUB.

THE MAN FELL UNCONSCIOUS.

THE GUARD STOPPED ON THE CHOKE-HOLDER AND ZAPPED HIS HUB TWICE AND ZAPPED HIS HUB TOO.

THE OTHER THREE FROM THE HUCOLE BACKED AWAY WITH FACES OF TERROR.

WHO ELSE WANTS TO BE NEUROCHEMICALLY PROICIENT? THIS IS AN END AS THE NEURAL FREIER!

ANY SORT OF REBELLION LESSENERD AND GO DID THE NOISE.

PEOPLE GREW SILENT AS PETRIFICATION OVERWALLED REVOLUTION.

ASSEMBLING MORE INTO THE SHAPE OF A LINE, THE PRISONERS DON'T SPEAK ANOTHER SINGLE WORD.

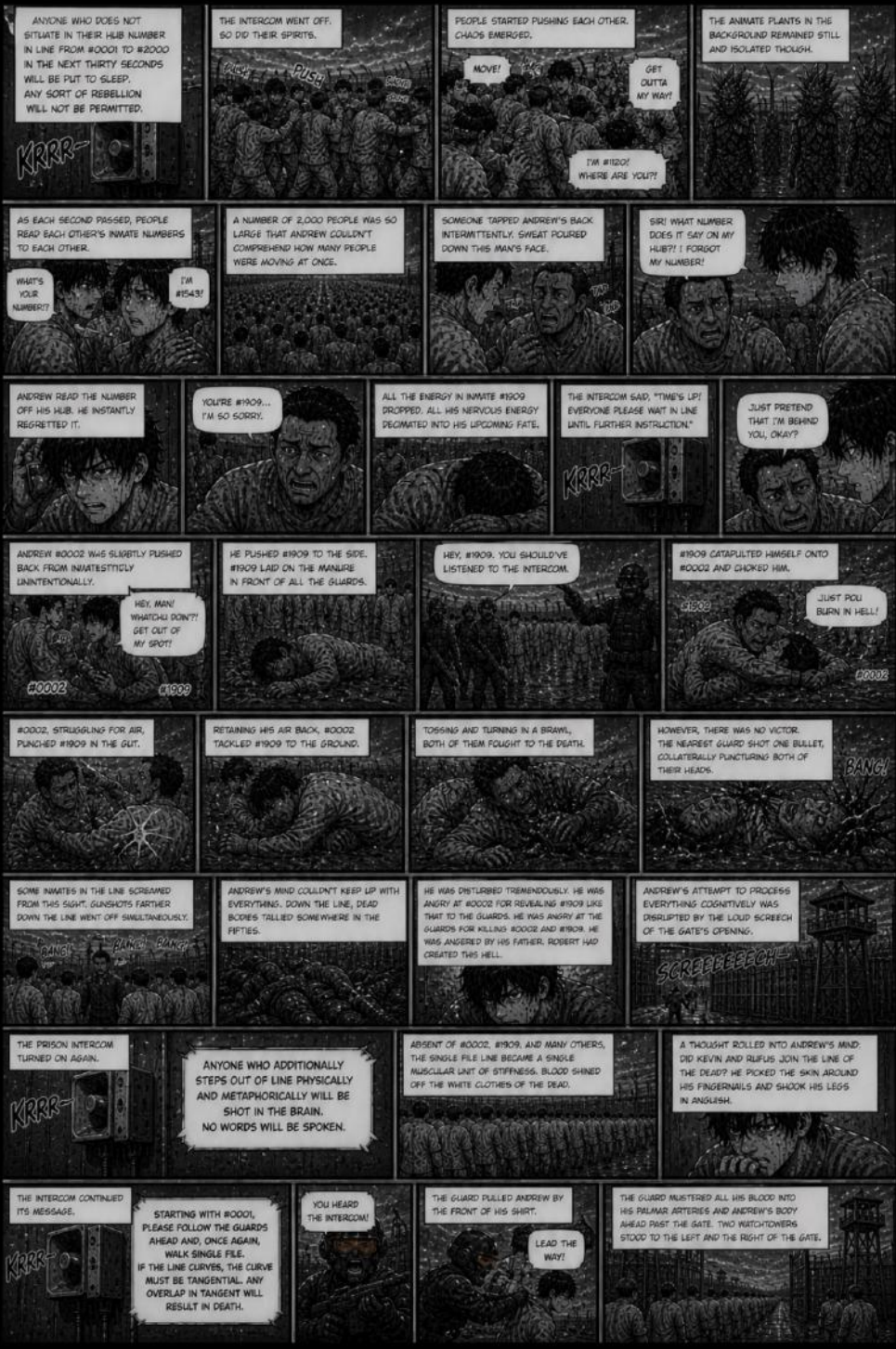
THEY WERE ONLY SINGLE IN FILE.

THE GUARD BEHIND ANDREW SAID, "ANIMATE FOOL, YOU'RE FIRST IN LINE. HURRY UP."

HE COMPRESSED THE POINTED GUN HARDER AGAINST ANDREW'S SPINE.

AFTER DEMONSTRATING ALL HIS ACTOR MOVEMENT, ANDREW WAS RIGHT IN FRONT OF THE GATE WITH THOUSANDS BEHIND HIM.

THE LINE WAS NOT COMPLETELY FORMED OR STRAIGHT.



ANYONE WHO DOES NOT SITuate IN THEIR HUB NUMBER IN LINE FROM #0001 TO #2000 IN THE NEXT THIRTY SECONDS WILL BE PUT TO SLEEP. ANY SORT OF REBELLION WILL NOT BE PERMITTED.

THE INTERCOM WENT OFF, SO DID THEIR SPIRITS.

PEOPLE STARTED PUSHING EACH OTHER. CHAOS EMERGED.

THE ANIMATE PLANTS IN THE BACKGROUND REMAINED STILL AND ISOLATED THOUGH.

AS EACH SECOND PASSED, PEOPLE READ EACH OTHER'S INMATE NUMBERS TO EACH OTHER.

A NUMBER OF 2,000 PEOPLE WAS SO LARGE THAT ANDREW COULDN'T COMPREHEND HOW MANY PEOPLE WERE MOVING AT ONCE.

SOMEONE TAPPED ANDREW'S BACK INTERMITTENTLY. SWEAT POURED DOWN THIS MAN'S FACE.

SIR! WHAT NUMBER DOES IT SAY ON MY HUB?! I FORGOT MY NUMBER!

ANDREW READ THE NUMBER OFF HIS HUB. HE INSTANTLY REGRETTED IT.

YOU'RE #1909... I'M SO SORRY.

ALL THE ENERGY IN INMATE #1909 DROPPED. ALL HIS NERVOUS ENERGY DEGRADED INTO HIS UPCOMING FATE.

THE INTERCOM SAID, "TIME'S UP! EVERYONE PLEASE WAIT IN LINE UNTIL FURTHER INSTRUCTION"

ANDREW #0002 WHO'S SLURBLY PUSHED BACK FROM INMATE#1909 UNINTENTIONALLY.

HE PUSHED #1909 TO THE SIDE. #1909 LAID ON THE MANURE IN FRONT OF ALL THE GUARDS.

HEY, #1909, YOU SHOULD'VE LISTENED TO THE INTERCOM.

#1909 CATAPULTED HIMSELF ONTO #0002 AND CHOKED HIM.

#0002, STRUGGLING FOR AIR, PUNCHED #1909 IN THE GUT.

RETAINING HIS AIR BACK, #0002 TACKLED #1909 TO THE GROUND.

TOSsing AND TURNING IN A BRAM, BOTH OF THEM FOUGHT TO THE DEATH.

HOWEVER, THERE WAS NO VICTOR. THE NEAREST GUARD SHOT ONE BULLET, COLLATERALLY PUNCTURING BOTH OF THEIR HEADS.

SOME INMATES IN THE LINE SCREAMED FROM THIS SIGHT. GUNSHOTS FARTHER DOWN THE LINE WENT OFF SIMULTANEOUSLY.

ANDREW'S MIND COULDN'T KEEP UP WITH EVERYTHING. DOWN THE LINE, DEAD BODIES TALLIED SOMEWHERE IN THE FIFTIES.

HE WAS DISTURBED TREMENDOUSLY. HE WAS ANGRY AT #0002 FOR REVEALING #1909 LIKE THAT TO THE GUARDS. HE WAS ANGRY AT THE GUARDS FOR KILLING #0002 AND #1909. HE WAS ANGERED BY HIS FATHER. ROBERT HAD CREATED THIS HELL.

ANDREW'S ATTEMPT TO PROCESS EVERYTHING COGNITIVELY WAS DISRUPTED BY THE LOUD SCREECH OF THE GATE'S OPENING.

THE PRISON INTERCOM TURNED ON AGAIN.

ANYONE WHO ADDITIONALLY STEPS OUT OF LINE PHYSICALLY AND METAPHORICALLY WILL BE SHOT IN THE BRAIN. NO WORDS WILL BE SPOKEN.

ABSENT OF #0002, #1909, AND MANY OTHERS, THE SINGLE FILE LINE BECAME A SINGLE MUSCULAR UNIT OF STIFFNESS. BLOOD SHINED OFF THE WHITE CLOTHES OF THE DEAD.

A THOUGHT ROLLED INTO ANDREW'S MIND. DID KEVIN AND RUFUS JOIN THE LINE OF THE DEAD? HE PICKED THE SKIN AROUND HIS FINGERNAILS AND SHOOK HIS LEGS IN ANGLESH.

THE INTERCOM CONTINUED ITS MESSAGE.

STARTING WITH #0001, PLEASE FOLLOW THE GUARDS AHEAD AND, ONCE AGAIN, WALK SINGLE FILE. IF THE LINE CURVES, THE CURVE MUST BE TANGENTIAL. ANY OVERLAP IN TANGENT WILL RESULT IN DEATH.

YOU HEARD THE INTERCOM!

THE GUARD PULLED ANDREW BY THE FRONT OF HIS SHIRT.

LEAD THE WAY!

ANYONE WHO DOES NOT SITuate IN THEIR HUB NUMBER IN LINE FROM #0001 TO #2000 IN THE NEXT THIRTY SECONDS WILL BE PUT TO GALEP. ANY SORT OF REBELLION WILL NOT BE PERMITTED.

THE INTERCOM WENT OFF, SO DID THEIR SPIRITS.

AS EACH SECOND PASSED, PEOPLE READ EACH OTHER'S INMATE NUMBERS TO EACH OTHER.

THE ANIMATE PLANTS IN THE BACKGROUND REMAINED STILL AND ISOLATED THOUGH.

KRRR-

PUSH! MOVE GET BACK!

WHAT'S YOURS?!

#1543!

SOMEONE TAPPED ANDREW'S BACK INTERMITTENTLY.

ANDREW READ THE NUMBER OFF HIS HUB. HE INSTANTLY REGRETTED IT.

ALL THE ENERGY IN INMATE #1909 DROPPED, ALL HIS NERVOUS ENERGY DECOMATED INTO HIS UPCOMING FATE.

THE INTERCOM SAID, "TIME'S UP! EVERYONE PLEASE WAIT IN LINE UNTIL FURTHER INSTRUCTION."

INMATE #1909 LET OFF A CROOKED SMILE.

GIRL! WHAT NUMBER DOES IT SAY ON MY HUB?! I FORGOT MY NUMBER!

YOU'RE #1909...

I'M SO SORRY

KRRR-

JUST PRETEND THAT I'M BEHIND YOU, OKAY?!

#1909 IMMEDIATELY STEPPED BEHIND ANDREW.

#0002 WAS SLIGHTLY PUSHED BACK FROM #1909 UNINTENTIONALLY.

HEY, MAN! WATCH-U DON'T! GET OUT OF MY SPOT!

HE PUSHED #1909 TO THE SIDE.

TAP

#0002

#1909

SHOVE!

#1909 LAID ON THE MANURE IN FRONT OF ALL THE GUARDS.

THE NEAREST GUARD SAID, "HEY, #1909, YOU SHOULD'VE LISTENED TO THE INTERCOM."

#1909 CATAPULATED HIMSELF ONTO #0002 AND CHOKED HIM.

#0002, STRUGGLING FOR AIR, PUNCHED #1909 IN THE GUT.

GET UP.

I HOPE YOU BURN IN HELL!

HANGH!

RETAINING HIS AIR BACK, #0002 TACKLED #1909 TO THE GROUND.

TOSSING AND TURNING IN A BRAWL, BOTH OF THEM FOUGHT TO THE DEATH.

HOWEVER, THERE WAS NO VICTOR. THE NEAREST GUARD SHOT ONE BULLET, COLLATERALLY PUNCTURING BOTH OF THEIR HEADS.

BANG!

SOME INMATES IN THE LINE SCREAMED FROM THIS SIGHT, GUNSHOTS FARTHER DOWN THE LINE WENT OFF SIMULTANEOUSLY.

DOWN THE LINE, DEAD BODIES TALKED SOMEWHERE IN THE FIFTIES. ANDREW'S MIND COULDN'T KEEP UP WITH EVERYTHING.

HE WAS ANGRY AT #0002 FOR REVEALING #1909 LIKE THAT, HE WAS ANGRY AT THE GUARDS FOR KILLING THEM. HE WAS ANSERED BY HIS FATHER, ROBERT HAD CREATED THIS HELL.

ANDREW'S ATTEMPT TO PROCESS EVERYTHING COGNITIVELY WAS DISRUPTED BY THE LOUD SCREECH OF THE GATE'S OPENING.

BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG!

SCREEEEEEEECH!

THE PRISON INTERCOM TURNED ON AGAIN.

ANYONE WHO ADDITIONALLY STEPS OUT OF LINE PHYSICALLY AND METAPHORICALLY WILL BE SHOT IN THE BRAIN. NO WORDS WILL BE SPOKEN.

ABSENT OF #0002, #1909, AND MANY OTHERS, THE SINGLE FILE LINE BECAME A SINGLE MUSCULAR UNIT OF STIFFNESS. BLOOD SHINED OFF THE WHITE CLOTHES OF THE DEAD.

A THOUGHT ROLLED INTO ANDREW'S MIND: DID KEVIN AND RUFUS JOIN THE LINE OF THE DEAD? HE PICKED THE SKIN AROUND HIS FINGERNAILS AND SHOOK HIS LEGS IN ANGLISH.

KRRR-

STARTING WITH #0001, PLEASE FOLLOW THE GUARDS AHEAD AND, ONCE AGAIN, WALK SINGLE FILE. IF THE LINE CURVES, THE CURVE MUST BE TANGENTIAL. ANY OVERLAP IN TANGENT WILL RESULT IN DEATH.

A GUARD IN FRONT OF ANDREW SCREAMED.

THE GUARD PULLED ANDREW BY THE FRONT OF HIS SHIRT.

THE GUARD MUSTERED ALL HIS BLOOD INTO HIS PALMAR ARTERIES AND ANDREW'S BODY AHEAD PRST THE GATE. TWO WATCHTOWERS STOOD TO THE LEFT AND THE RIGHT OF THE GATE.

YOU HEARD THE INTERCOM!

LEAD THE WAY!

THE LINE WALKED UNIFORMLY. THE GUARD RELEASED ANDREW'S SHIRT.



ANDREW REACHED THE LOBBY DOORS. AS THE FRONT PERSON IN THE LINE, ANDREW DETERMINED THE CURVATURE OF THE LINE AND THE SPEED OF THE LINE.



A GUARD, LOOKING STRAIGHT AT ANDREW, HAD A FINGER POINTING TOWARD HIS RIGHT. THE FINGERS OF THE GUARD'S LEFT HAND CARRIED A GUN POINTING AT ANDREW'S SKULL. HE WAS SMILING MENACINGLY.



AS THE FIRST PERSON IN THE LINE, ANDREW DETERMINED THE CURVATURE OF THE LINE AND THE SPEED OF THE LINE. HE NEEDED TO MAKE A RIGHT TO THE CAFETERIA.



AS HE CURVED TO THE RIGHT, HE LOOKED BEHIND HIM. PEOPLE WALKED LIKE ANTS. PEOPLE WALKED WITH POSE AND A COMPLAINT POSTURE.



HE LOOKED AHEAD. THE DOORS FROM THE ORIGINAL SPIRIT INTERCOM COMPLEXES LOOKED THE SAME AS THE PRISON DOORS. ANDREW HEAVED BY THE DOOR LEVITATING ITS DOOR HATCH, THE DOOR BORE A HALLWAY THAT LED DIRECTLY TO THE CAFETERIA.



HE CROSSED THE HALLWAY AND ENTERED THE SPACIOUS CAFETERIA. RED CIRCULAR TABLES AND EMPTY TRAYS SCATTERED ACROSS THE SURFACE AREA OF THE FLOOR. HALF-SPHERE BLACK CHAIRS WITH MOVING RED SECS SITUATED IN EVERY CORNER OF THE CAFETERIA.



A GUARD, HOLDING A GUN IN HIS LEFT HAND, POINTED TO THE RIGHT DOOR. THIS DOOR WAS THE SAME AS THE OTHER DOOR. THE DOOR OPENED. STAIRS APPEARED.



THE STAIRWELL WAS DIM AS HONTRALL. THE NIGHT FELL DEEPER DOWN THE STAIRS.



AFTER HE STEPPED DOWN FOR AT LEAST TWO MINUTES, THE STAIRS ENDED.



A YELLOW FENCE BLOCKED OFF THE HALLWAY FROM THE AUDITORIUM. ANDREW STOPPED WALKING. ANOTHER GUARD WITH A HAND GESTURE OF HALT WAITED IN FRONT OF HIM, TOO.



THE SIZE OF THE AUDITORIUM WAS ATTEMPTING. THE HEIGHT OF THE CEILING CLIMBED ALMOST TOO FEET UP. THE ROOM WAS AN AQUARIUM.



THE WALLS WERE LIGHT-REFLECTING WINDOWS. THE AUDITORIUM WAS SUBMERGED IN AN ACIDIC GREEN LIGHT. ORNATE BUBBLES ADORNED SOME OF THE GREEN LIGHT ON THE WINDOWS.



100 ROWS DESCENDED DOWN TO THE MAIN STAGE OF THE AUDITORIUM, BIG ENOUGH TO FIT 10,000 PEOPLE. RED CURTAINS OUTLINED THE MAIN STAGE.



EACH ROW HAD A BENCH AND AN ELONGATED TABLE WHICH STRETCHED DOWN THE ROW. BLUE WIRES SPRUNG FROM THE TABLES. THE BENCHES HAD OWNED GADGETS THAT STUCK OUT OF THE BENCHES. THE GADGET WAS A RETRACTABLE HEAD GEAR, SIMILAR TO THE DEVICE ANDREW FORESAW WHEN HIS HUB WAS IMPLANTED.



BELLOWN STAGE WAS EMPTY AND SO WERE THE ROWS. YET THEY WOULD BE FILLED SOON.



THE YELLOW FENCE SPLIT INTO TWO AND OPENED UP THROUGH TO THE TWO GUARDS. BOOTS HAD FINALLY CAUGHT UP TO ANDREW.



GUNSHOTS ECHOED DOWN THE STAIRS. SCREAMS AND SHOUTS CONTINUED DOWN THE STAIRS.



"STAY IN THE LINE, FOOL," SOMEONE SAID. "YOUR LIFE DEPENDS ON IT." ANDREW'S HEART SANK. HE WORRIED THAT HE WAS TO BLAME FOR THE GUNFIRE.



BELLOWING GRES SCREECHED OUT FROM A WOMAN. THE HORROR WAS IN THE FACT OF NOT BEING ABLE TO SEE BUT ONLY HEAR.



THE WOMAN SCREAMED LOUDER. ANOTHER GUNSHOT PERCOLATED AND ENDED THE WOMAN'S SCREAM.



A GUARD SHOUTED. "SHUT UP! TALKING INCLUDES SCREAMING!"



ANDREW COULDN'T COMPREHEND WHAT KIND OF CODE OF CONDUCT THESE SOLDIERS RAN. THE GUARD WHO SPARED HIS LIFE DIED. YET THE GUARD WHO KILLED THE LIFE-SAVER LIVED.



ANDREW WENT SURE IF HE SHOULD FEEL GUILTY OF THE LIFE-SAVER'S DEATH AS IF HE WERE TO NEVER SPEAK NO REPERCUSSIONS WOULD BE TRANSPARENT. HE SHEDD MORE TEARS OF CONFUSION.



THE OTHER GUARD WHO HAD OPENED THE FENCE PULLED OUT A PISTOL AND SHOT THIS GUARD IN THE SKULL.



THE OTHER GUARD PUT AWAY HIS GUN. BLOOD SPLATTERED ON ANDREW'S HAIR.



THE OTHER GUARD LOOKED AT THE CORPSE. HE SAID, "YOU DISOBEYED WHAT THE INTERCOM STATED, CORMAC. THE INTERCOM SAID, 'KILL THEM IF THEY SPEAK.'"



THE GUARDS THAT PROMPTED THE AUDITORIUM DIDN'T REACT.



THE GUARD SAID, "PLEASE ENTER YOUR ROW NUMBER." "WHAT ROW AM I?" ANDREW ASKED QUIETLY.



THE GUARD RELEASED HIS HAND OFF THE FENCE AND AIMED HIS GUN AT ANDREW. HE GOT UP CLOSE TO ANDREW'S EAR AND WHISPERED, "NO TALKING. I'M LETTING YOU OFF EARLY HERE, MR. BULTING."



THE OTHER GUARD PUSHED ANDREW AHEAD DOWN THE ROWS. "GET IN A ROW! I'M KEEPING YOU ALIVE FOR NOW SO THAT YOU CAN DIE! WHAT YOU JUST DID TO THIS INNOCENT GUARD."



AS HE WALKED, THE PRISON INTERCOM SPoke. "EVERYONE MUST BE IN THEIR ASSIGNED SEAT. HE, ANDREW, HAS ASSIGNED SECS 8800-0100 WHILE ROW 20 ARE #1900-2000. THERE WERE 100 ROWS. PLEASE COMPLY AND GET YOUR SECS. IF YOU DON'T, I MEAN, THESE SECONDS, TESTING OUT SO SO WILL MANGLED IN YOUR DEATH!"



ANDREW'S LEGS STARTED BURNING. HIS ADRENALIN SURGED SUPPLIED HIS MOVEMENT. SURFACE HE SAID. SURVIVE HIS. PROSE AT HIS SEAT WHICH WAS DISPLAYED.



"NAME'S DOCTOR. I LIKE HOW YOU BEHAVE, ANDREW. YOU WERE VERY POLITE AND CIVIL. WHEN THE GUARDS WERE FULFILLING THEIR ORDERS."



THE PRISON INTERCOM SAID, "10 SECONDS REMAIN." THE LOUDNESS IN THE AUDITORIUM ESCALATED.



"TO BE FRANK, I WOULD'NT BE SURPRISED IF THEY WERE ROBOTS UNDER ALL THAT ARMOR AND GEAR OF THEIRS." DOCTOR FINISHED.



AS HE IN REMEMBER PURSHER WITH A BUILT. SCOUTED STRONG BE FLEWED. JOHN. BURNED.



ANDREW WAS IN THOSE SEAT. HE WAS LUCKY. ANDREW WITH PEOPLE WERE. OFC. ALL. BURNING DOWN THE STAIRS OR LAYING ON THE FLOOR.



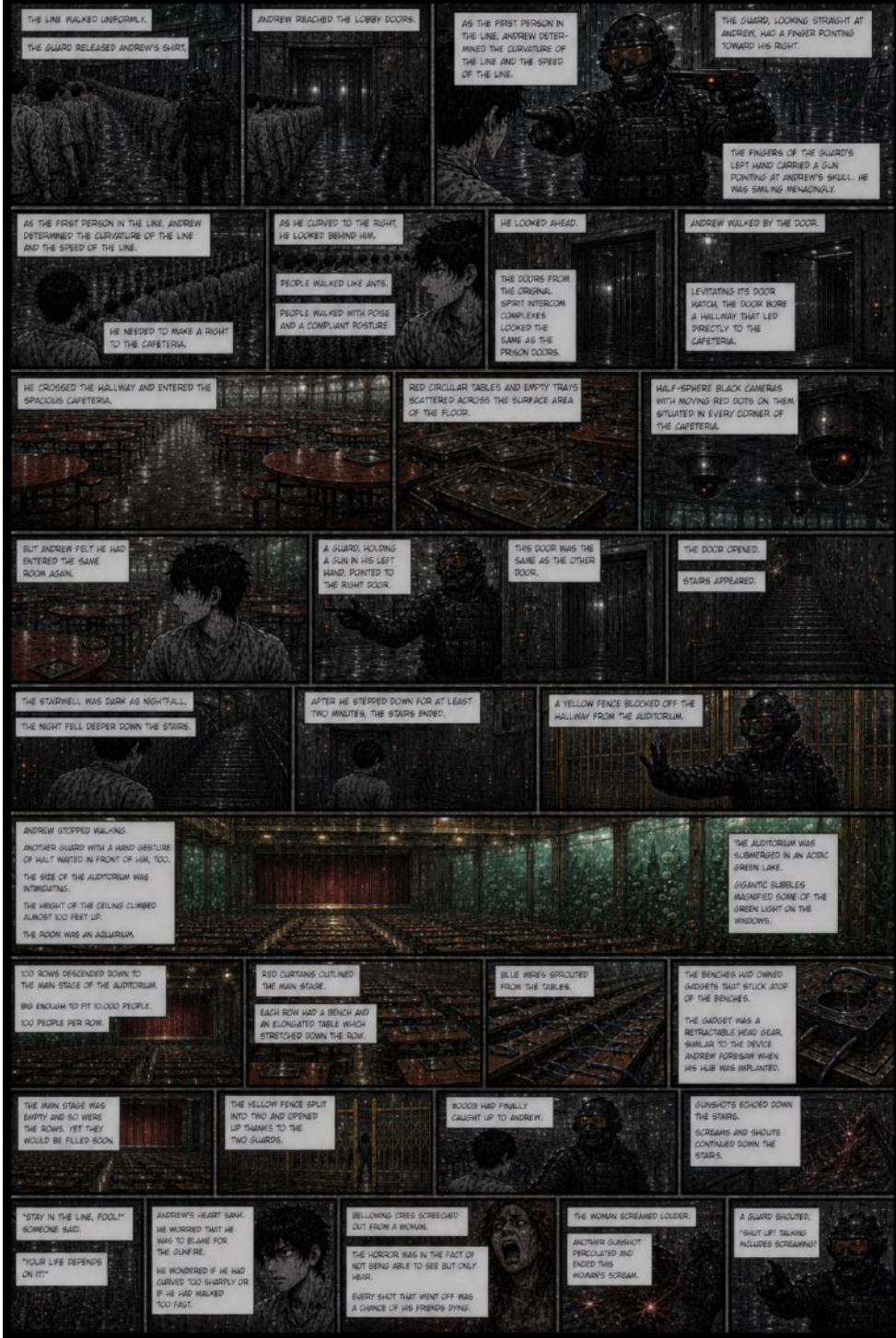
THE PRISON INTERCOM SAID, "THEY'RE UP!"



BOOTS WERE KICKED FROM THE MAIN STAGE. A LOUD SHOT.



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THE LINE WALKED UNIFORMLY.

THE GUARD RELEASED ANDREW'S SHIRT.

ANDREW REACHED THE LOBBY DOORS.

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AS HE CURVED TO THE RIGHT, HE LOOKED BEHIND HIM.

HE LOOKED AHEAD.

ANDREW WALKED BY THE DOOR.

HE NEEDED TO MAKE A RIGHT TO THE CAFETERIA.

PEOPLE WALKED LIKE ANTS.

PEOPLE WALKED WITH ROSES AND A COMPLAINT POSTURE.

THE DOORS FROM THE ORIGINAL SPIRIT INTERCOM COMPLEXES LOOKED THE SAME AS THE PRISON DOORS.

LEVITATING ITS DOOR HATCH, THE DOOR BORE A HALLWAY THAT LED DIRECTLY TO THE CAFETERIA.

HE CROSSED THE HALLWAY AND ENTERED THE SPACIOUS CAFETERIA.

RED CIRCULAR TABLES AND EMPTY TRAYS SCATTERED ACROSS THE SURFACE AREA OF THE FLOOR.

HALF-SPHERE BLACK CAMERAS WITH MOVING RED DOTS ON THEM, SITUATED IN EVERY CORNER OF THE CAFETERIA.

BUT ANDREW FELT HE HAD ENTERED THE SAME ROOM AGAIN.

A GUARD, HOLDING A GUN IN HIS LEFT HAND, POINTED TO THE RIGHT DOOR.

THIS DOOR WAS THE SAME AS THE OTHER DOOR.

THE DOOR OPENED.

STAIRS APPEARED.

THE STAIRWELL WAS DARK AS NIGHTFALL.

THE NIGHT FELL DEEPER DOWN THE STAIRS.

AFTER HE STEPPED DOWN FOR AT LEAST TWO MINUTES, THE STAIRS ENDED.

A YELLOW FENCE BLOCKED OFF THE HALLWAY FROM THE AUDITORIUM.

ANDREW STOPPED WALKING. ANOTHER GUARD WITH A HAND GESTURE OF HURT WAITED IN FRONT OF HIM, TOO. THE SIZE OF THE AUDITORIUM WAS INTIMIDATING. THE HEIGHT OF THE CEILING CLIMBED ALMOST 100 FEET UP. THE ROOM WAS AN AZAURUM.

THE AUDITORIUM WAS SLENDERED IN AN ACIDIC GREEN LAKE. GIANTIC BUBBLES MAGNIFIED SOME OF THE GREEN LIGHT ON THE WINDOWS.

100 ROWS DESCENDED DOWN TO THE MAIN STAGE OF THE AUDITORIUM. HIS ENOUGH TO FIT 10,000 PEOPLE. 100 PEOPLE PER ROW.

RED CURTAINS OUTLINED THE MAIN STAGE.

EACH ROW HAD A BENCH AND AN ELONGATED TABLE WHICH STRETCHED DOWN THE ROW.

BLUE WIPES SPRICLED FROM THE TABLES.

THE BENCHES HAD OWNED GADGETS THAT STUCK JUMP OF THE BENCHES.

THE GADGET WAS A RETRACTABLE HEAD GEAR, SIMILAR TO THE DEVICE ANDREW FOREGAVE WHEN HIS HAIR WAS IMPLANTED.

THE MAIN STAGE WAS EMPTY AND SO WERE THE ROWS. YET THEY WOULD BE FILLED SOON.

THE YELLOW FENCE SPLIT INTO TWO AND OPENED UP THANKS TO THE TWO GUARDS.

BUZZES HAD FINALLY CAUGHT UP TO ANDREW.

GUNSHOTS ECHOED DOWN THE STAIRS. SCREAMS AND SHOUTS CONTINUED DOWN THE STAIRS.

"STAY IN THE LINE, FOOL!" SOMEONE SAID. "YOUR LIFE DEPENDS ON IT!"

ANDREW'S HEART SANK. HE WORRIED THAT HE HAD TO BLAME FOR THE GUNFIRE. HE WONDERED IF HE HAD CURVED TOO SHARPLY OR IF HE HAD WALKED TOO FAST.

BELLOWING CRIES SCREECHED OUT FROM A WOMAN. THE HORROR WAS IN THE FACT OF NOT BEING ABLE TO SEE BUT ONLY HEAR. EVERY SHOT THAT WENT OFF WAS A CHANCE OF HIS FRIENDS DYING.

THE WOMAN SCREAMED LOUDER. ANOTHER GUNSHOT PERCOLATED AND ENDED THIS WOMAN'S SCREAM.

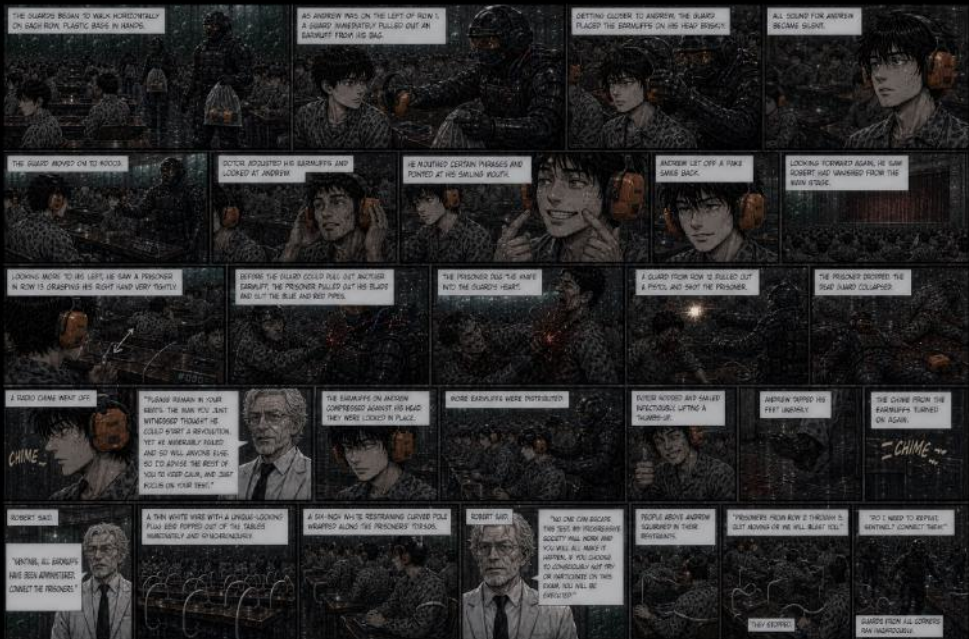
A GUARD SHOUTED. "SHUT UP! TALKING INCREASES SCREAMING!"

CHAPTER 2.1



CHAPTER 3: TRANSCRIPTION





THE GUARDS BEGAN TO WALK HORizontally ON EACH ROW, PLASTIC BAGS IN HANDS.

AS ANDREW MOVED ON THE LEFT OF ROW 1, A GUARD WASTRATEDLY PULLED OUT AN SMOGNET FROM HIS BAG.

GETTING CLOSER TO ANDREW, THE GUARD PLACED THE SMOGNET ON HIS HEAD BRISKLY.

ALL SOUND FOR ANDREW BECAME BLUNT.

THE GUARD MOVED ON TO ROW 2.

SUTCLIFF REQUESTED HIS SMOGNETS AND LOOKED AT ANDREW.

HE ADJUSTED CLOTHS, PARAGAS AND POUNED AT HIS SHALING NOSE.

ANDREW LET OFF A PINK SMOG BAG.

LOOKING FORWARD AGAIN, HE SAW SUTCLIFF HAD UNZIPPED FROM THE ROW STRIKE.

LOOKING AHEAD TO HIS LEFT, HE SAW A PRISONER IN ROW 3 GRASPING HIS RIGHT HAND UPON "ROBERT."

BEFORE THE PRISONER COULD PULL OUT ANOTHER SMOGNET, THE PRISONER PULLED OUT HIS BLOODY AND SLIT THE BLUE AND RED PIPES.

"THE PRISONER DROPPED THE HAND INTO THE GUARD'S CLOAK."

A GUARD FROM ROW 2 ROLLED OUT A PHOTO AND SHOT THE PRISONER.

THE PRISONER ORDERED THE GUARD TOWARD COLUMNS.

A SMOG CHIME RANG UP.

"STUNNED PRISONER IN YOUR ARMS, THE MAN YOU JENT WITHDROSS "THOUGHT" HE CALLED "ROBERT" A REVOLUTION. YET HE UNWARRANTEDLY ROLLED AND SO WILL ANYONE ELSE. SO TO DENY THE BEST OF YOU TO KEEP CALM, AND JUST KILLER ON YOUR OWN."

THE SMOGNET ON ANDREW COMPRESSED AGAINST HIS HEAD. THEY WERE LOCKED IN PLACE.

SOME SMOGNETS WERE INFLATED.

EVERY PRISONER WAS CALLED INSTEAD OF LIFTING A "SMOGNET."

ANDREW "SMOKE" HIS FEET URGENTLY.

THE CHIME FROM THE BARRACKS TUNED ON AGAIN.

ROBERT SAID:

A TANK WENT BY WITH A SINGLE-LOOKING PLAN AND POPPED OUT OF THE TUBES. MORTARLY AND "NOISELESSLY."

A SIX-FOOT TALL, REDDISH-COLORED TALL MAN STOOD ALONG THE PRISONER TOWNS.

ROBERT SAID:

"THE ONE CAN ESCAPE THE TEST BY NEGOTIATING SOCIETY WILL NOW AND YOU WILL ALL BEAT IT UPON. IF YOU GOING TO CONSIDERABLE AND YOU CAN PARTICIPATE ON THIS CASE. ALL WILL BE DONE UP."

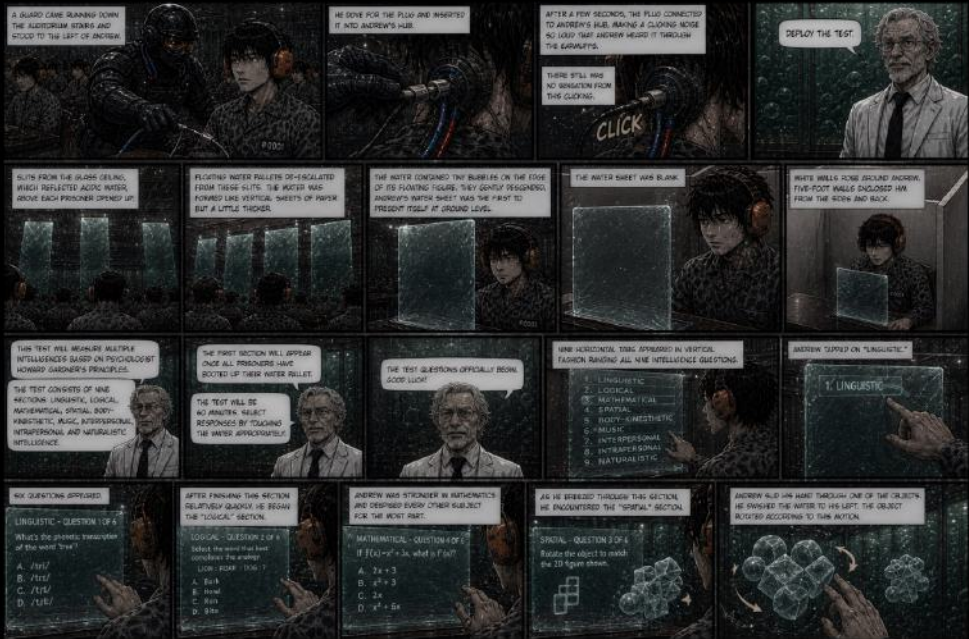
ROBERT SAID: "SOMEONE FROM ROW 2 THOUGHT I WAS A MAN AS WE WILL BLUNT TALK."

"I DO I NEED TO DEFEND MYSELF. COME TO ME."

"VENTRAL ALL SMOGNETS HAVE BEEN ANNOUNCED. CONTACT THE PRISONER."

THEY SCREAMED.

GUARDS FROM ALL CORNERS SAW UNEXPECTEDLY.





HE BEGAN THE "INTERPERSONAL" SECTION. THE SHEET READ, "YOU WILL TALK TO ONE OF THE GUARDS THROUGH YOUR EARPLUGS. SPEAK INTO THE MIC. THE TINY INDICATOR ON THE LEFT OF YOUR EARPLUGS' YOUR SCORE WILL BE RATED BASED ON YOUR TONE, ATTITUDE, EMOTION, DIALOGUE AND FACIAL EXPRESSIONS. CHOOSING TO BE RUDE WILL SIGNIFICANTLY LOWER YOUR SCORE."

1. LINGUISTIC
2. LOGICAL
3. MATHEMATICAL
4. SPATIAL
5. BODY-KINESTHETIC
6. MUSIC
7. INTERPERSONAL
8. INTRAPERSONAL
9. NATURALISTIC

THE WATER SHEET DISPLAYED A GUARD'S FACE IN REAL-TIME.

ANDREW SPOKE INTO THE MIC.

HELLO, CAN YOU HEAR ME?

ANDREW HEARD THE EARPLUGS RELEASE AN EVALUATION. THE GUARD SAID:

FUCK YOU!

ANDREW WAS BLANK.

WHAT?

THE GUARD SAID:

FUCK YOU!

ANDREW WAS ANGERED. HE WANTED TO SAY IT BACK, BUT HE KNEW THIS WAS JUST A PLOY TO DECREASE HIS SCORE. ANDREW SAID:

HOW ARE YOU SURE?

THE GUARD SAID:

I LOVE YOU. LET'S MARRY.

WHAT? OKAY... THEN.

THE GUARD SAID:

DON'T YOU LOVE ME?

ANDREW KNEW HE HAD TO SUBMIT TO THE PROCEDURES OF THE TEST. ANDREW SAID:

OF COURSE, I DO. SO... HOW ARE YOU DOING?

THE GUARD SAID:

YOU'RE A PIECE OF SHIT. I'LL KILL YOUR ENTIRE FAMILY.

ANDREW COULDN'T HANDLE THIS. ANDREW SAID:

UM... WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO SAY BACK HERE?

THE GUARD SAID:

REMEMBER THE TIME WHEN YOUR FATHER BEAT YOUR MOTHER TO THE SPIRIT WORLD? WHAT... YOU WOULDN'T SINCE YOU NEVER EVEN ABOUT IT?

ANDREW WAS DONE. ANDREW SAID:

WHAT'S MAKING YOU SAY THESE THINGS?

THE GUARD SAID:

YOU'RE AFRAID OF INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS. EVERYONE YOU EVER GROWN CLOSE WITH CUT YOU OFF. LIKE YOUR FATHER. FOR EXAMPLE. YOU WERE AFRAID TO TALK TO HIM AS A CHILD. YOU WERE AFRAID TO BE INTIMATE WITH HIM. YOU WERE AFRAID TO ALWAYS HATE YOUR MOTHER AS A CHILD. YOU ARE AFRAID OF KNOWING YOURSELF AND--

ANDREW WAS SWEATING AND HIS EYEBROWS BENT. ANDREW SAID:

PLEASE STOP!

THE GUARD SAID:

YOU HAVE FAILED THIS TEST.

HIS FACE DISAPPEARED FROM THE WATER SHEET. THE REST OF THE SECTION TABS OPENED UP.

1. LINGUISTIC
2. LOGICAL
3. MATHEMATICAL
4. SPATIAL
5. BODY-KINESTHETIC
6. MUSIC
7. INTERPERSONAL
8. INTRAPERSONAL
9. NATURALISTIC

THIS FELT WORSE THAN SOLIDARY CONFINEMENT TO ANDREW.

THE GUME OF HIS EARPLUGS CHIRPED. ROBERT SAID:

ANDREW, MY SON, IF YOU CRY ANYMORE, YOU WILL BE KILLED. SAME THING GOES FOR THE REST OF YOU, INMATES!

ANDREW SHUFFLED OUT ALL HIS AUGUS AND WANTED TO DIE. HE CLICKED THE NEXT TAB THAT READ "INTRAPERSONAL."

1. LINGUISTIC
2. LOGICAL
3. MATHEMATICAL
4. SPATIAL
5. BODY-KINESTHETIC
6. MUSIC
7. INTERPERSONAL

THE WATER SHEET LOADED UNTIL IT TURNED INTO A BLANK SHEET.

THE SHEET REPLIED: ANDREW'S FACE APPEARED ON THE WATER. IT WAS A CLONE OF HIM IN REAL-TIME.

DO YOU LOVE ME?

DO YOU LOVE ME?

ANDREW COULDN'T TELL IF HIS BRAIN WAS FOOLING HIM OR IF THIS WAS AN ILLUSION. HE WAS MENTALLY CONFLICTED.

DO YOU LOVE ME, THE CLONE REPEATED.

DO YOU LOVE ME?

WHO ARE YOU?

I'M YOU.

IMPOSSIBLE.

NO, NOW ANSWER THE QUESTION.

WELL, IF YOU ARE ME, THEN YES, I LOVE YOU.

DO YOU LOVE ME?

I SAID "YES," OKAY? I DO--

DO YOU LOVE ME?

YES, I AM.

I DON'T LOVE YOU.

YOU'RE NOT REAL, SO I CAN'T CARE.

YES!

ARE YOU SURE?

YES.

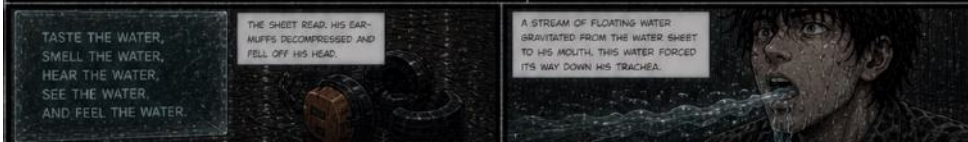
NO YOU'RE NOT.

YES, I AM.

NO, YOU'RE NOT.

YES.

ARE YOU SURE?





CHAPTER 3.1:

PHENOMENAL, BOBBY. YOUR RESEARCH IS GETTING THERE.

THANK YOU, DR. ALSHETEV.

I AM MORE THAN HAPPY TO AID YOU IN YOUR JOURNEY OF YOUR SCIENTIFIC CAREER. YOU HAVE CLEARLY DISPLAYED HOW UNIQUE YOUR MIND IS. I CAN ONLY WISH FOR THE BEST IN YOUR FUTURE.

THANK YOU SO MUCH, PROFESSOR. I DON'T WANT TO TAKE ALL THE CREDIT THOUGH. MY FRIEND, HOWE, HAS BEEN THERE EVERY STEP OF THE WAY AND HE DESERVES A NAME TOO.



OF COURSE, WELL... I LOOK FORWARD TO HELPING, AND PLEASE DROP BY ANYTIME YOU HAVE QUESTIONS.

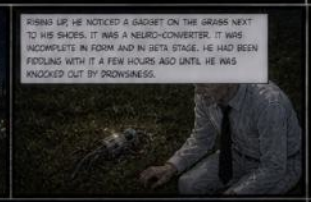
CHAPTER 4: EXPERIMENTATION
CONSCIOUSNESS TARGET:
ROBERT RUTANO
ONE MONTH AGO



ROBERT AWOKES. THE STARRY NIGHT SHIMMERED LIGHT ON HIS WHITE HAIR. HE LAY ON A GRASS FIELD, SLOWLY OPENING UP HIS EYES. HIS SLEEP SCHEDULE WAS AS IRREGULAR AS A DOZEN EQUATING 13.



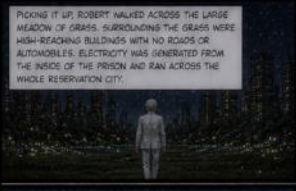
HE SHIPPED IN THE NIGHTLY BREEZE, THE TURTLES OF MIDWAY 74 NEVER FAILED TO ANYTIME HIM.



FINING UP, HE NOTICED A GADGET ON THE GRASS NEXT TO HIS SHOES. IT WAS A NEURO-CONVERTER. IT WAS INCOMPLETE IN FORM AND IN BETA STAGE. HE HAD BEEN FIDDLING WITH IT A FEW HOURS AGO UNTIL HE WAS KNOCKED OUT BY PROWISNESS.



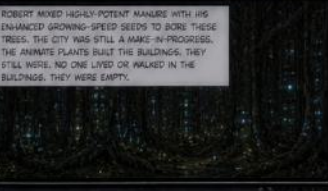
THE NEURO-CONVERTER WAS THE SIZE OF HIS THUMB, PRODUCING A SHINY GRAY. THE CONVERTER HAD UNFINISHED WIRES SPRAWLING OUT OF ITS ENDOSKELETON.



PICKING IT UP, ROBERT WALKED ACROSS THE LARGE MEADOW OF GRASS. SURROUNDING THE GRASS WERE HIGH-REACHING BUILDINGS WITH NO ROADS OR AUTOMOBILES. ELECTRICITY WAS GENERATED FROM THE INKES OF THE PRISON AND RAN ACROSS THE WHOLE RESERVATION CITY.



SURROUNDING THE CITY WALLS MADE OF THICK TREE ROOTS STOOD TALLER THAN EVERY BUILDING'S HEIGHT COMBINED. A CONSLOMERATE OF HUMONGOUS TREES COVERED THE PERIMETER OF THE CITY.



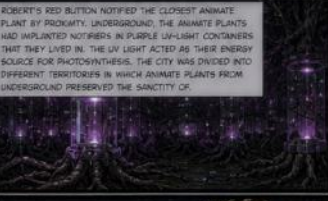
ROBERT MIXED HIGHLY-POTENT MANURE WITH HIS ENHANCED GROWING-SPEED SEEDS TO BORE THESE TREES. THE CITY WAS STILL A MAKE-IN-PROGRESS. THE ANIMATE PLANTS BUILT THE BUILDINGS. THEY STILL WERE, NO ONE LIVED OR WALKED IN THE BUILDINGS. THEY WERE EMPTY.



HAULING ALL THE ABLUNDANT CARBON DIOXIDE FROM THE SURROUNDING TREES, HE FINALLY CROSSED THE GRASS FIELD. LOOKING BACK, HE SAW A SMALL PATCH OF GRASS STANDING SLIGHTLY TALLER.



IMMEDIATELY, HE PRESSED AND HELD A TINY RED BUTTON ON HIS HUB FOR THREE SECONDS.



ROBERT'S RED BUTTON NOTIFIED THE CLOSEST ANIMATE PLANT BY PROXIMITY. UNDERGROUND, THE ANIMATE PLANTS HAD IMPLANTED TUBES IN PURPLE UV-LIGHT CONTAINERS THAT THEY LIVED IN. THE UV LIGHT ACTED AS THEIR ENERGY SOURCE FOR PHOTOSYNTHESIS. THE CITY WAS DIVIDED INTO DIFFERENT TERRITORIES IN WHICH ANIMATE PLANTS FROM UNDERGROUND PRESERVED THE SANCTITY OF.



ROBERT'S HUB WAS SPECIAL. IT WASN'T A CIRCLE LIKE EVERYBODY ELSE'S. IT WAS SQUARE-SHAPED AND ACQUIRED MORE HOLES, BUTTONS, AND NEURO-CONVERTERS.



10 SECONDS LATER, AN ANIMATE PLANT FROM UNDERGROUND SUMMER-SALTED OUT OF THE GRASS FIELD AND LANDED NEXT TO ROBERT.



WHAT THE FUCK ARE YOU DOING?! YOU JUST RANED THE GRASS WITH YOUR ARMAWILLO-LINE ENTRANCE!

I AM VERY SORRY. I WILL FIX IT RIGHT NOW.



I WAS ORIGINALLY GOING TO ASK WHY THE GRASS WAS UNEVEN HERE, BUT NOW YOU JUST MASSACRED THIS WHOLE FIELD.



PLEASE, SIR, GIVE ME ANOTHER--





SURE I AM YOUR MONARCH AND NO, YOU AREN'T GETTING ANOTHER CHANCE!



ROBERT STRETCHED HIS RIGHT HAND WIDE OPEN, DRIPPING THE NEURO-CONVERTER ON THE LAMENY GRASS. THE MICROPYLES ON HIS FINGERTIPS RELEASED VISCOELASTIC LIQUID TITANIUM SHARDS LIKE A CHEESE GRATER. THE TINY SHARDS SOLIDIFIED INTO TRIANGULAR BLADES.



ROBERT GRABBED THE WOODEN ARM OF THE ANIMATE PLANT.

I'M SORRY!



ROBERT CRUNCHED THE WOODEN ARM, BURNING TITANIUM LEAKED THROUGH THE PALM OF ROBERT AND STRUCK ONTO THE WOOD. THE ANIMATE PLANT SCREAMED.

AAAAAAHHH!



HE TIGHTENED HIS HAND, AND LIQUID TITANIUM ELONGATED INTO STRINGS THAT WRAPPED AROUND THE WOODEN ARM. AS HE TIGHTENED HIS HAND AGAIN, THE TITANIUM STRINGS GREW LONGER AND WRAPPED TIGHTER.

AAAACHH!



THE WOODEN ARM FINALLY SNAPPED.

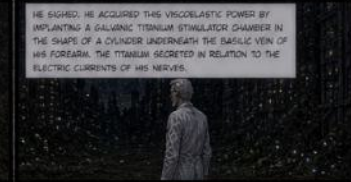


ROBERT SQUEEZED THE ANIMATE PLANT'S HEAD AND LEAKED THROUGH THE PALM THAT THE PLANT ORIGINALLY CAME UP FROM.

NO! PLEASE! NOOOOOO!



HE PRODUCED MORE LIQUID TITANIUM FROM HIS FINGERTIPS AND POLISHED IT INTO THE HOLE. THE METAL HARDENED.



HE SIGHED. HE ACQUIRED THIS VISCOELASTIC POWER BY IMPLANTING A GALVANIC TITANIUM STIMULATOR CHAMBER IN THE SHAPE OF A DIVIDOR JACKET NEAR THE SACRAL VIEW OF HIS FOREARM. THE TITANIUM SECRETED IN RELATION TO THE ELECTRIC CURRENTS OF HIS NERVES.



HE EMULATED THE DESIGN FROM A GALVANIC VIBRILLATOR STIMULATOR. HE HAD A CHAMBER IN EACH ARM. ARTIFICIAL NERVES CONNECTED FROM THE CHAMBER TO THE END OF HIS FINGERTIPS. HE WOULD REFILL THE CHAMBER WITH TITANIUM PELLETS THAT HE KEPT TIED NEXT TO HIS LEFT LEG.



HE KICKED THE WOODEN ARM OFF THE GRASS FIELD.



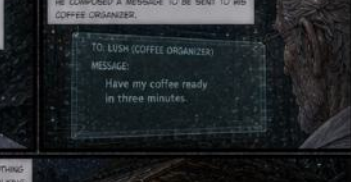
HE STOPPED HIMSELF. HE FORGOT THE NEURO-CONVERTER. THE TITANIUM ON HIS RIGHT HAND EVAPORATED BACK INTO HIS MICROPYLES. HE PICKED UP THE NEURO-CONVERTER.



HE WALKED AGAIN ON THE DIRT.



AS HE WALKED, HE OPENED UP A VISUAL MESSAGING SYSTEM THAT COULD ONLY BE RELIED THROUGH HIS VISUAL CORTEX. IT WAS SIMILAR TO MINDCORD, BUT IT WAS MORE SECURE AND HE WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO HAD PERMISSION TO SEND MESSAGES.



HE COMPOSED A MESSAGE TO BE SENT TO HIS COFFEE ORGANIZER.

TO: LUSH (COFFEE ORGANIZER)
MESSAGE:
Have my coffee ready in three minutes.



HE COMPOSED ANOTHER MESSAGE FOR TWO PEOPLE NAMED HARRY AND FABIAN. THEY WERE SOLDIERS OF WAYNE.

TO: HARRY, FABIAN
MESSAGE:
Please be in the Experimentation room ASAP. Thanks again for volunteering.



HE PUT AWAY THE MESSENGER.



HE WAS IN A GHOST TOWN, NOTHING BUT ROBERT AND THE DIRT. WALKING AROUND EMPTY BUILDING WALLS, HE ARRIVED AT THE COFFEE SHOP.



IT WAS ONLY AN OUTSIDE BAR WITH A SMALL SLANTED BROWN ROOF. LUSH WAITED BEHIND THE COUNTER. HE HELD A PLASTIC VACUUM-INSULATED RED BOTTLE.



DECAF CAPPUCCINO.



ROBERT REACHED FOR THE BOTTLE. LUSH HANDED IT. ROBERT SAID, YOU DON'T NEED TO ALWAYS SPECIFY THE COFFEE. I GET THE SAME KIND EVERY TIME.

SORRY, MONARCH

ASSAY, DON'T BE TALK. ALSO, THE BOTTLE WAS SUPPOSED TO BE LAVENDER TODAY. I THINK YOU LOST TRACK OF THE WEEKLY COLOR ROTATION.

LUSH SMILED. "I DO. IT'S VERY SPECTACULAR HOW YOU WERE ABLE TO CREATE A NEW SPECIES OF PLANTS ON OUR PLANET. MORE IMPORTANTLY, I'M GLAD YOU'RE ENJOYING THE COFFEE TODAY."



"THANKS." ROBERT BALANCED HIS HAND AND GRABBED LUSH'S WOODEN ARM, TREATING THE VISCOELASTIC TITANIUM LIKE SUPER GLUE. HE STUCK THE ARM TO THE COUNTER.



LUSH SCREAMED. ROBERT REACHED FOR THE KNIFE AT THE END OF THE COUNTER AND PLUG IT INTO THE WOODEN ARM SO THAT THE KNIFE STOOD UPRIGHT ON THE TABLE.



"NEXT TIME YOU WON'T SCREW THINGS UP OR ELSE IT'LL BE YOUR OTHER ARM." THE MOLTEN TITANIUM BEGAN TO BURN THE ROOTS OF LUSH, EATING AWAY AT HIM LIKE A FOREST FIRE.



LUSH'S WHOLE ARM WAS NOW ON FIRE. OPENING THE BOTTLE LUSH ROBERT POURS THE STAGGERS COFFEE ON THE ARM TO STOP THE FIRE.



HE THREW THE BOTTLE AT LUSH'S FACE AND WALKED AWAY.



AS ROBERT WALKED BACK TOWARDS THE PRISON, THE SCREAMS OF LUSH MANIFESTED A REGRESSINGO.



MOVING ON ONLY THREE HOURS OF SLEEP, HE FELT HIS LEGS LOSE ENERGY TO WALK. HE WALKED HALF OF A MILE UNTIL HIS LEGS GAVE UP ON HIM.



HE SAT ON THE ORTE AND HELD THE RED BUTTON ON HIS HUB FOR THREE SECONDS AGAIN.



EIGHT SECONDS LATER, AN ANIMATE PLANT DUG OUT THE DIRT AND STOOD A LITTLE TALLER THAN ROBERT. THE PLANT AWAITED INSTRUCTIONS.



ROBERT SAID, "SORRY ME BACK TO MY OFFICE."



ROBERT RESTED HIS EYES. HE FELT ABLE.



ROBERT WOK. HE WAS INSIDE HIS OFFICE. HE LOOKED AT THE PLANT. "HAS I OLT?"



THE ANIMATE PLANT LEFT. THE ROOM WAS THE SIZE OF AN OFFICE. A BROWN DESK IN THE SHAPE OF A CURVATURE OUTLINED THE THREE BLUE INNER WALLS.



A WINDOW ON THE FOURTH WALL REVEALED THE OUTSIDE. FENCE SURROUNDING THE MANURE FIELD. THE WATCHTOWERS AND THE GREAT TREE WALLS.



"TEN MINUTES," THE ANIMATE PLANT SAID.



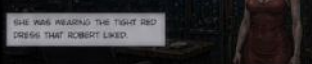
ROBERT GOT OUT OF HIS LYING POSITION. HE SAID, "THANK YOU NOW, PLEASE LEAVE."



HE GRABBED THE FRAME WITH BOTH HANDS. IN THE FRAME WAS DR. ALUSHTEV, THE PROFESSOR APPEARED IN HIS 60S IN A SUIT AND TIE THAT HE WOULD ALWAYS WEAR TO ROBERT'S COLLEGE CLASSES.



FOOTSTEPS APPROACHED. IT WAS THE RECEPTIONIST, PUTTING DOWN THE PHOTO, HE REVERTED HER USUAL APPEARANCE.



SHE SAID, "HARRY AND FABIAN WILL ARRIVE IN LESS THAN A MINUTE."



ROBERT SAID, "THANKS, DEAR."



SHE WAS WEARING THE TIGHT RED DRESS THAT ROBERT LIKED.



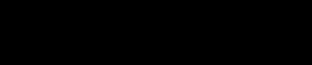
HE NOTICED SOMETHING.



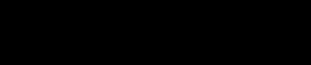
THEY DANCED IN THE DARK WITH THEIR LIGHT GREEN INCANDESCENCE.



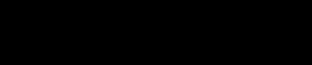
OUTSIDE THE CURVED METAL FENCE THAT SURROUNDED THE MANURE FIELD WERE THREE BEAUTIFUL FLOWERS SPIROUTING WITH LIFE AND LENGTH.



EACH FLOWER WAS THREE FEET TALL. AS THEIR STEMS REFLECTED GREEN, THEIR PETALS BLOSSOMED A MAJESTIC MAGENTA. THEY GENTLY HIT THE FENCE FROM THE BREEZE.



ROBERT SAID.





HE NOTICED SOMETHING

OUTSIDE THE CURVED METAL FENCE THAT ENTRAPPED THE MANURE FIELD WERE THREE BEAUTIFUL FLOWERS SPRINGING WITH LIFE AND LENGTH. THEY DANCED IN THE DARK WITH THEIR LIGHT GREEN BICLUMINESCENCE. EACH FLOWER WAS THREE FEET TALL AS THEIR STEAMS REFLECTED GREEN, THEIR PETALS BLOSSOMED A MAGNIFIED MAGENTA.

THEY GENTLY HIT THE FENCE FROM THE BRISZLE. ROBERT SMILED.



HE HEARD A KNOCK, TURNING AWAY FROM THE WINDOW. HE SAW HARRY AND FABIAN. THEY WERE BOTH WEARING THEIR SOLDIER ARMOR, HELMETS AND EVERYTHING.

SCRRY IF WE WERE LATE.

FABIAN NODDED.



"NO, NO, NO RUSH," ROBERT SAID. "WOULD YOU MIND CLOSING THAT DOOR THOUGH? I DON'T KNOW WHY MELLA ALWAYS KEEPS IT OPEN."

SURE THING.



"WHAT YOU MEN ARE ABOUT TO VENTURE ON REQUIRES COURAGE. SO I COMMEND THE BOTH OF YOU FOR AGREEING TO DO THIS."

YOU ALWAYS READY?

OF COURSE.

HURRY NODDED.



"GOOD!" HE OPENED THE DOOR ON THE OPPOSITE SIDE OF THE TWO. "FOLLOW ME TO MY EXPERIMENTATION ROOM." THEY FOLLOWED.



NICE FLOWERS.

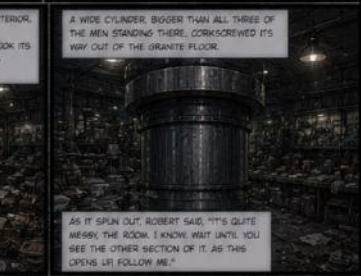


THE EXPERIMENTATION ROOM WAS NOT THE SIZE OF A ROOM. IT WAS THE SIZE OF A COMPLEX. IT WAS COVERED WITH THOUSANDS OF LYING PAPERS, BOOKS, DIFFERENT-COLORED POST-IT NOTES, AND TRASH. DANGLING BOMBREID-SHAPED LIGHTS ILLUMINATED THE WALLS.



A BIG BLACK CABINET HUNG ON THE LEFT WALL OF THE INTERIOR. A CHUNK OF THE COUNTER WAS ARISING SINCE A BENCH RESEMBLING THE STRUCTURE FROM THE AQUARIUM, TOOK ITS PLACE. A PAIR OF EARNLUFFS AND THE HEADGEAR GADGETS ATTACHED TO THE BENCH AS WELL.

ROBERT CLICKED A YELLOW BUTTON NEXT TO THE DOOR. THEY JUST ENTERED THROUGH.



A WIDE CYLINDER, BIGGER THAN ALL THREE OF THE MEN STANDING THERE, CORKSCREWED ITS WAY OUT OF THE GRANITE FLOOR.

AS IT SPUN OUT, ROBERT SAID, "IT'S QUITE MESSY, THE ROOM. I KNOW. WAIT UNTIL YOU SEE THE OTHER SECTION OF IT. AS THIS OPENS UP, FOLLOW ME."



ROBERT WALKED NEXT TO THE WALL. THE DOOR WAS ON. HE CLICKED A BLUE BUTTON ABOVE THE COUNTER.



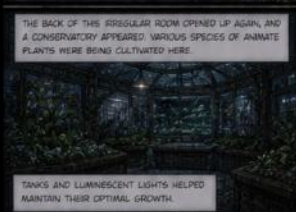
IT WAS A GYM. IT INCLUDED WEIGHTS, TREADMILLS, AND PUNCHING BAGS.

A GRAY RUG SAT BELOW ALL THE GYM EQUIPMENT. THE RUG TURNED INTO GRANITE HALFWAY ACROSS THE FLOOR, SEPARATING THE GYM FROM THE FOOD COURT.



ON THE GRANITE WERE TWO ROWS OF FOOD CATERING ANGLES. THREE ANIMATE PLANTS WORKED AT THE BACK PREPARING FOOD WITH POTS AND PANS.

ROBERT SAID, "THAT'S NOT ALL." HE CLICKED A GREEN BUTTON ON THE WALL NEXT TO HIM.



THE BACK OF THIS IRREGULAR ROOM OPENED UP AGAIN, AND A CONSERVATORY APPEARED. VARIOUS SPECIES OF ANIMATE PLANTS WERE BEING CULTIVATED HERE.

TANKS AND LUMINESCENT LIGHTS HELPED MAINTAIN THEIR OPTIMAL GROWTH.



HE CLICKED AN ORANGE BUTTON. ANOTHER SECTION OPENED UP, REVEALING A STORAGE ROOM FULL OF EQUIPMENT, TOOLS, AND CHEMICALS.

EVERYTHING WAS CATALOGUED AND ARRANGED BY PURPOSE.



HE CLICKED A RED BUTTON. THE ROOM OPENED UP TWICE AGAIN, REVEALING A LOUNGE WITH COUCHES, A LIBRARY, AND AN INFORMATION SCREEN.

A PLACE TO OBSERVE, LEARN, AND RELAX.



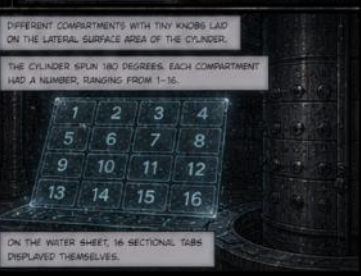
THEY LEFT THE ROOMS AND ARRIVED AT THE CYLINDER THAT STOPPED SPINNING.

HE CLICKED A PURPLE BUTTON ON THE CYLINDER.

A SMALL HATCH OPENED. A SMALL WALL OF WATER STUCK INSIDE THE HATCH. THE WATER FLOATED OUT OF THE HATCH AND TURNED INTO A WATER SHEET.



ROBERT SPLASHED HIS FINGERS AGAINST THE WATER TO HIS LEFT. THE CYLINDER ROTATED TO THIS MOTION.

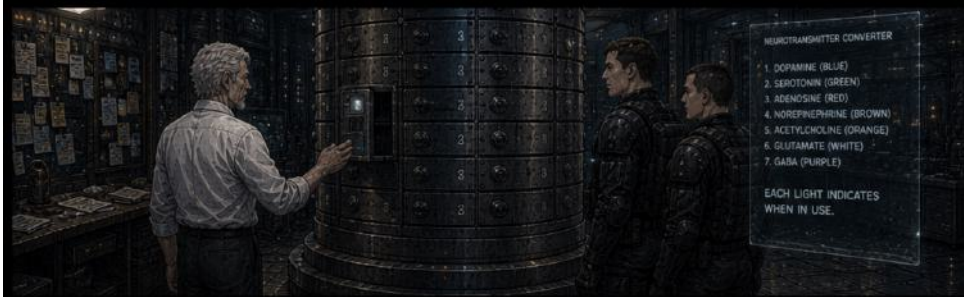


DIFFERENT COMPARTMENTS, WITH TINY KNOBS LAID ON THE LATERAL SURFACE AREA OF THE CYLINDER.

THE CYLINDER SPUN 180 DEGREES. EACH COMPARTMENT HAD A NUMBER, RANGING FROM 1-16.

1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16

ON THE WATER SHEET, 16 SECTIONAL TABS DISPLAYED THEMSELVES.



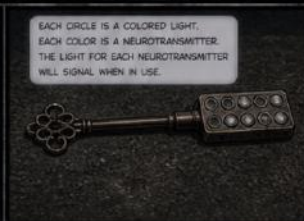
NEUROTRANSMITTER CONVERTER

1. DOPAMINE (BLUE)
2. SEROTONIN (GREEN)
3. ADENOSINE (RED)
4. NOREPINEPHRINE (BROWN)
5. ACETYLCHOLINE (ORANGE)
6. GLUTAMATE (WHITE)
7. GABA (PURPLE)

EACH LIGHT INDICATES WHEN IN USE.



THIS IS THE FIRST NEURO-CONVERTER OF MANY. THE NEUROTRANSMITTER CONVERTER.



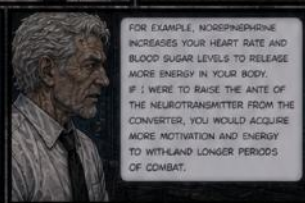
EACH CIRCLE IS A COLORED LIGHT. EACH COLOR IS A NEUROTRANSMITTER. THE LIGHT FOR EACH NEUROTRANSMITTER WILL SIGNAL WHEN IN USE.

BLUE DOPAMINE	ORANGE ACETYLCHOLINE
GREEN SEROTONIN	WHITE GLUTAMATE
RED ADENOSINE	PURPLE GABA
BROWN NOREPINEPHRINE	

EXPERIENCING HIGHER LEVELS OF THESE NEUROTRANSMITTERS OFFERS ADVANTAGES IN BOTH COMBAT AND EMOTIONAL STRENGTH.



HOW SO?



FOR EXAMPLE, NOREPINEPHRINE INCREASES YOUR HEART RATE AND BLOOD SUGAR LEVELS TO RELEASE MORE ENERGY IN YOUR BODY. IF I WERE TO RAISE THE ANTE OF THE NEUROTRANSMITTER FROM THE CONVERTER, YOU WOULD ACQUIRE MORE MOTIVATION AND ENERGY TO WITHSTAND LONGER PERIODS OF COMBAT.



THIS LOOKS UNSAFE. ARE YOU SURE IT WORKS?



YES IT DOES WORK. EITHER SAFE OR UNSAFE, YOU TWO ARE GIVING THE CONVERTER A WHIRL. THIS IS WHAT YOU SIGNED UP FOR.



I KNOW, I KNOW. I WAS—



SO HOW DO WE USE IT? IS THERE A—

YOU USE A WIRELESS SCREEN CALLED A NAVIGATOR TO CONTROL THE NEUROTRANSMITTERS. BEFORE YOU TWO CAN INSERT THE CONVERTER IN YOUR HUBS, YOU MUST INGRAIN A NAVIGATOR TO A PALM.



A PALM?



DOESNT THAT HURT?



OF COURSE IT HURTS! EVERYTHING IN LIFE IS SUPPOSED TO HURT!

YOU'RE WASTING MY TIME!



PLEASE BRING IN TINKERBOT. NOT FOR A HUB IMPLANT, BUT FOR A NAVIGATOR IMPLANT.



TinkerBot is ready by your door.



ONE OF YOU, PICK UP THE CONVERTER.

OKAY.



NOW GIVE IT TO ME.



YOU SEE WHERE THE NUMBER 1 IS? THIS IS THE PORT.



FOR FUTURE REFERENCE, ALWAYS INSERT THE NEURO-CONVERTER INTO THE APPROPRIATE NUMBER LIKE THIS.



YOU FEEL ANYTHING?

NO.



YES, BUT I WAS REFERRING TO THE NAVIGATOR. YOUR BRAIN ITSELF DOESN'T HAVE ANY SENSORY RECEPTORS FOR TOUCH OR PAIN.



DONT I NEED THE NEUROTRANSMITTER CONVERTER BEFORE WE CAN START THOUGHT?



WE'LL START HOW I WANT TO START.



SPEAKING OF PERFECT TIMING, THE NAVIGATOR IS READY TO BE INSTALLED.



I REALLY SHOULD BE HAVING MY TWO TESTERS ASSISTING ME WITH THIS, BUT I'M A DECENT MAN.

WHO WANTS TO BE FIRST?

...



WITHOUT ACTION, NOTHING CAN BE DONE.

I'LL GO FIRST, I GUESS.



LAY DOWN. THE BOT WON'T BEGIN UNLESS ALL YOUR BODY HEAT EVENLY LAYS ITSELF ON THE MATTRESS.

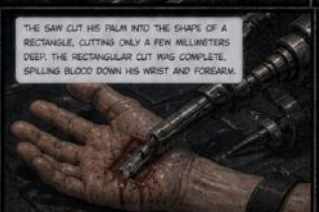


RIGHT AWAY, THE HATCH ON THE RIGHT OF THE MATTRESS OPENED. TOOLS FLEW OUT OF IT, UNVEILING A SAW DISK AND A TOOL WITH A TIP OF A GILIE STICK.



IT ALSO WON'T START UNTIL YOU OPEN UP THE PALM YOU PREFER FOR THE NAVIGATOR.

AAAHHH!



THE SAW CUT HIS PALM INTO THE SHAPE OF A RECTANGLE, CUTTING ONLY A FEW MILLIMETERS DEEP. THE RECTANGULAR CUT WAS COMPLETE, SPILLING BLOOD DOWN HIS WRIST AND FOREARM.



ANOTHER CABLED TOOL WAS EXTRACTED FROM THE HATCH. IT WAS PLIERS. THE PLIERS CLAMPED AT THE END OF THE RECTANGULAR SKIN AND PEELED IT OFF, DISPLAYING A CANVAS OF DARK RED.



ANOTHER CABLE HOLDING THE NAVIGATOR SCREEN CAME OUT OF THE HATCH. THE SCREEN WAS PRECISELY PLACED WITHIN THE RED RECTANGLE. THE SCREEN WAS ONLY A FEW MILLIMETERS THICK, LEVELING OUT THE SKIN DEPTH OF HIS PALM.



THE GILIE STICK APPARATUS TOOL COOLED A THERMO-SALICIN ADHESIVE WHERE SKIN AND SCREEN MET. THE PERIMETER OF THE NAVIGATOR STUCK TO THE PALM.



AS FABIAN CLOSED HIS PALM, THE NAVIGATED SCREEN FOLDED AND MIMICKED THE WRINKLES IN HIS HANDS.

FUCK, MY HAND!



FABIAN JOLTED HIS ARM AND HELD HIS LEFT WRIST AS HE SPUN HIS ARM IN CIRCLES. A SMALL CIRCLE OF BLOOD TAINED THE PATIENT TABLE OF TANKERBOT.



I THINK I'M BLEEDING TO DEATH. BLOOD KEEPS DRIPPING!

SILENCE. THE ADHESIVE WORKS BETTER THAN STITCHES.



WHY DON'T YOU ANESTHETIZE ME?

REQUIRES TOO MANY RESOURCES. HARRY, GET ON THE DAMN TABLE ALREADY!



HARRY GOT ON THE TABLE. HE EXPERIENCED THE SAME AMOUNT OF PAIN AS FABIAN AS THE NAVIGATOR WAS IMPLANTED IN HIS PALM.

AAAHHH!



HARRY FINISHED.

SHOW ME YOUR PALMS.



AS HARRY AND FABIAN RAISED THEIR PALMS, ROBERT RECEIVED A MENTAL MESSAGE.

FROM: HORACE BLANCHE
Greetings, Monarch. The infirmary project has just been put on hold. The animate plants have stopped working. We need to meet.



DAMNIT!



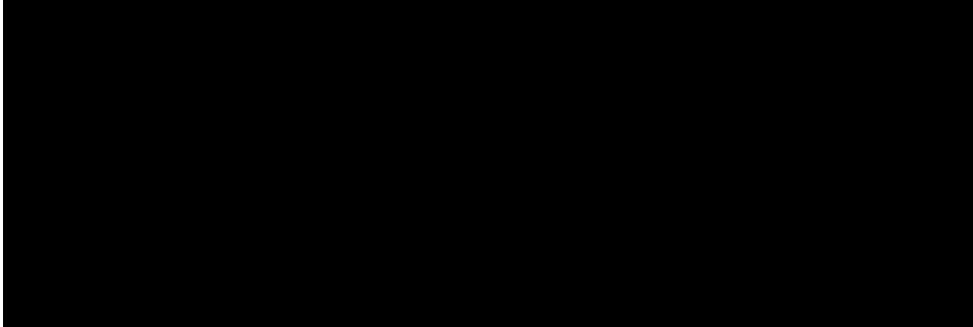
WHAT IS IT?



ROBERT CALIBRATED BOTH OF THEIR NAVIGATORS BY COMPLETING FINGERPRINT SCANS ON THEIR SCREENS.

ANYWAYS, YOUR NAVIGATORS ARE CALIBRATED. I'LL PROVIDE A BRIEF EXPLANATION ON HOW TO NAVIGATE YOUR NAVIGATORS. THE FIRST--

GOOD PLAY ON WORDS.



GOOD PLAY ON WORDS.
SHUT UP.

YOU TURN ON YOUR NAVIGATOR BY TIGHTENING YOUR PALM THREE TIMES INTO A FIST.

DO I HAVE TO TELL YOU TWO TWICE? DO IT!



OPEN YOUR PALMS.



ON TOP OF FABIAN'S SCREEN, HIS NAME APPEARED. THE 12 SECTIONAL TABS OF EACH NEURO-CONVERTER ARE IN VIEW. ALL THE NUMBERS ARE GRAVED-OUT EXCEPT FOR NUMBER #1.



WHY IS MY #1 GRAY AND HIS ISN'T?

BECAUSE YOU HAVEN'T IMPLANTED THE NEUROTRANSMITTER CONVERTER INTO YOUR HUB.

SPEAKING OF... LET'S GET THAT IN YOU.



YOUR NEURO-CONVERTERS WILL ONLY WORK IF YOU TWIST THE KEY TO THE RIGHT. OTHER CONVERTER KEYS REQUIRE KNOBS AND THESE KNOBS CANNOT FUNCTION UNLESS YOU TWIST THE KEY AS WELL. SO TWIST YOUR #1.

SELECT #1.

THEY DID. A MENU OF SIX DIFFERENT-COLORED KNOBS COULD BE SEEN ON THE NAVIGATOR SCREEN.

THE FIRST KNOB ABOVE THAT READS, "DOPAMINE CONCENTRATION," THE BLUE KNOB RANGES FROM 50% TO 100 PERCENT. EACH KNOB CONTROLS THE CONCENTRATION OF EACH NEUROTRANSMITTER OF THE CONVERTER. ALL OF THEM IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COLORED LIGHTS OF THE KEY-EMP OF THE CONVERTER.

DOPAMINE CONCENTRATION	50%
SEROTONIN CONCENTRATION	50%
ADRENALINE CONCENTRATION	50%
NOREPINEPHRINE CONCENTRATION	50%
ACETYLCHOLINE CONCENTRATION	50%
GLUTAMATE CONCENTRATION	50%
RANGE: 0% - 100%	

THE REST OF THIS IS SELF-EXPLANATORY.

HOW DOES THIS WORK?

I JUST TOLD YOU.

NO, I MEAN, HOW DID YOU ACTUALLY MANAGE TO BUILD THIS? HOW DOES THE CONVERTER AFFECT OUR NEUROTRANSMITTER LEVELS?



I DON'T HAVE TIME TO EXPLAIN. ALL I WANT YOU TWO TO DO IS EXPERIMENT WITH YOUR NEUROTRANSMITTER CONCENTRATION.

THE DEFAULT SETTING IS 50%, MEANS NORMAL LEVELS. PLEASE DO NOT EXCEED 75%, OR DROP BELOW 25%. I DON'T WANT THE SIDE EFFECTS TO BE TOO DRASTIC.

SIDE EFFECTS? YES...

LIKE... LIKE WHAT?

SIDE EFFECTS WILL BE DIFFERENT FOR EACH PERSON AS EVERYONE'S BRAIN IS NEUROCHEMICALLY DIFFERENT. THE DURATION AND AMOUNTS TO WHICH YOU LEVITATE OR PLUNGE IN NEUROTRANSMITTER PERCENTAGE WILL ALSO DETERMINE THE SEVERITY OF SIDE EFFECTS.

SPECIFICALLY SPEAKING, WHAT ARE SOME OF THOSE SIDE EFFECTS?

IT'D TAKE TOO LONG TO LIST THEM. IT'S BEST IF I DON'T. DON'T BE NONSENSICAL, AND YOU WON'T NEED TO WORRY.

I HAVE TO GO.

WAIT.

FOLLOW ME, YOU TWO. I THINK WE CAN PUT YOUR NEUROTRANSMITTERS TO THE TEST.



CHIEF KEITH MONARCH IS READY TO SHARE HIS WEEKLY SECURITY REPORT WITH YOU RIGHT NOW!

TELL HIM I'LL MEET HIM AT 7:00 P.M.

MONARCH..



I HAVEN'T BEEN ALRIGHT SINCE BIRTH. TO WORRY MORE ABOUT YOURSELF.



MONARCH.. ARE YOU FEELING ALRIGHT?



I WAS ALSO MEANING TO ASK... WHERE ARE WE GOING?



QUIT TALKING. ALL YOU DO IS WASTE TIME. SOMETHING THAT I DON'T HAVE A LOT OF.



I NEED THE BOTH OF YOU TO DEMONSTRATE SOME SENSE INTO THEM.
EXPERIMENT WITH YOUR NEUROTRANSMITTERS, BUT REMEMBER WHAT I SAID ABOUT 75% AND 25%.



I ONLY WANT HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT. NO GUNS.



I HAVE A QUESTION.
WHAT THE FUCK ARE THOSE SPIDERS?



THIS STRUCTURE IS UNFINISHED. MADE OUT OF WOOD. A CLEAR, SPIDERWEB-LIKE SUBSTANCE ACTS AS THE EXOSKELETON. IT COMES FROM SPIDER CREATURES THAT ARE AS BIG AS DOBERMANS—2-LEGGED AND FAST.

ANIMATE PLANTS WITH CONSTRUCTION VESTS ARE SUPPOSED TO WORK IN DESIGNATED AREAS BY THE COLOR OF THEIR PETALS.

SOME LAZE AROUND IN THE SUN, RECEIVING PHOTOSYNTHESIS.

THEY DON'T STOP WORKING BEFORE SOMETHING'S WRONG.



I NEED THE BOTH OF YOU TO DEMONSTRATE SOME SENSE INTO THEM.



I ONLY WANT HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT. NO GUNS.



I HAVE A QUESTION.
WHAT THE FUCK ARE THOSE SPIDERS?





ANIMATE PLANTS!
GET BACK TO WORK!
IF ANY BULLSHIT LIKE
THIS GOES ON AGAIN,
I'LL BRING MEN WITH
GUNS!

THAT WAS EXCELLENT
WHAT YOU TWO DID.

WHAT SETTINGS
DID YOU TWO
EMPLOY?

WE EMPLOYED 67%
DOPAMINE, 75%
ADRENALINE, AND
75% NOREPINEPHRINE.

GOOD, PLEASE
REVERT BACK TO
DEFAULT SETTINGS
NOW.

FUCK NO, I'VE NEVER
FELT THIS GOOD BEFORE!
THIS IS BETTER THAN
EVERY KIND OF
AMPHETAMINE COMBINED!

COME ON, FABIAN,
CUT THE BULLSHIT.

I'LL ONLY REVERT IF
ROBERT TELLS US
WHAT THOSE
FUCKING SPIDERS DO.

FABIAN SHUT THE
FLUCK UP AND LISTEN
TO OUR MONARCH!
WE--

IT'S OKAY,
YOU'RE RIGHT,
FABIAN.

FOLLOW ME
AND I'LL SHOW YOU.

ABOUT TIME! SHOW
US THE WAY!

THE SUBSTANCE THAT THE SPIDERS
SECRETE IS CALLED THLAVIA. THE
ANIMATE PLANTS CALL THE SPIDERS
"AVALHTS." THLAVIA IS A CLEAR
SUBSTANCE THAT REMARKABLY
CANNOT BE PENETRATED BY FORCES,
SUCH AS GRAVITY AND SIMPLE PUSH-
AND-PULL FORCES, AND ENERGY,
SUCH AS KINETIC ENERGY OR EVEN
THE SPEED OF LIGHT.

THIS SUBSTANCE CAN ONLY
BE PENETRATED IF AN AVAHLT
SUCKS UP ITS WEB FROM
ITS SPINNERET.
I LIKE TO CALL IT THE
UNBREAKABLE SUBSTANCE.

HOLY SHIT! THAT'S
ACTUALLY FLOKING
AMAZING!

THE AVAHTS ORIGINATE
FROM THLAVIC CHASMS.

WHAT GIVES IT
THAT SHINE?

THLAVIC ACID, STRONGER
THAN FLUORANTHIMONIC ACID.
THE AVAHTS CHEMICALLY
COMPRESS THE THLAVIC ACID
INTO A SOLID COMPOUND IN ITS
SPINNERET, WHICH, IN TURN,
PRODUCES THLAVIA.

THIS IS THE REASON
WHY THE LAKE NEARBY
THE PRISON IS PARTLY
ACIDIC.

I'M GETTING A CLOSER
LOOK AT THIS!

ISNT NATURE MONDROUS?!
EACH PLANET SOMEHOW
HAS ITS OWN WAY OF
ESTABLISHING EQUILIBRIUM.



THE SUBSTANCE THAT THE SPINNERS SECRETE IS CALLED THYLAVA. THE ANIMATE PLANTS CALL THE SPINNERS "MILKMAIDS." THYLAVA IS A CLEAR SUBSTANCE THAT REMARKABLY CANNOT BE PENETRATED BY FORCES, SUCH AS GRAVITY AND SIMPLE PUSH-AND-PULL FORCES, AND ENERGY, SUCH AS KINETIC ENERGY OR EVEN THE SPEED OF LIGHT.

THIS SUBSTANCE CAN ONLY BE PENETRATED IF AN AVALAHT SUCKS UP ITS WEB FROM ITS SPINNERET. I LIKE TO CALL IT THE UNSPEAKABLE SUBSTANCE.

HOLY SHIT! THAT'S ACTUALLY FUCKING AMAZING!

THE AVALAHT'S ORIGINATE FROM THYLAVIC CHASMS.

THYLAVIC ACID
STRONGER THAN FLUORANTIMONIC ACID. THE AVALAHTS CHEMICALLY COMPRESS THE THYLAVIC ACID INTO A SOLID COMPOUND IN ITS SPINNERET, WHICH IN TURN, PRODUCES THYLAVA.

WHAT GIVES IT THAT SHINE?

THIS IS THE REASON WHY THE LAKE NEARBY THE PRISON IS PARTLY ACIDIC.

ISNT NATURE WONDERFUL? EACH PLANET SOMEHOW HAS ITS OWN WAY OF ESTABLISHING EQUILIBRIUM.

IT TRULY IS.

AHHHH!

I'M GETTING A CLOSER LOOK AT THIS!

AAAAHH!
FLICK!
AAAAHHH!

GET THE FUCK OFF ME!
I'M GONNA KILL YOU!

AHHHH!

HARRY! HELP ME!

GET THE FUCK OFF HIM!

THAT ALL YOU GOT?

YOU'RE ASKING FOR NICKE!

AHHHH!

DONT KILL HIM, HARRY! HE'S KNOCKED DOWN ALREADY!

AAGHHH!

STOP IT!

AAGHHH!

HARRY! WAKE UP! DONT YOU DARE FUCKING SLEEP!

AAGHHH!

AAGHHH!

AAGHHH!

SENTINEL, PLEASE COME EAST OF THE INFIRMARY. I NEED MAJOR CLINICAL HELP NOW.





ROBERT LOOKED AT THE TWO UNCONSCIOUS BODIES, THE STEAM FROM THE TITANIUM BRACE LOST ITS SMOKE. HE SMILED DISDAINFULLY.



AS HE WAITED FOR MEDICAL HELP TO ARRIVE, HE OPENED UP HIS NAVIGATOR ON HIS LEFT PALM.



HIS NAVIGATOR DID NOT DISPLAY EACH NEURO-CONVERTER BY NUMBER ACCORDING TO HOW MANY WERE INSIDE HIS HUB.



INSTEAD, HIS NAVIGATOR DISPLAYED EACH NEURO-CONVERTER BY WHICH CONVERTER WAS TWISTED IN THE KEY HOLE OF THE HUB. HE TWISTED A CONVERTER KEY. THE NAVIGATOR READ.



HE SELECTED THE TAB.

THOUGHT REMINDER
OSCILLATORY THOUGHT LOG:
• Speak with Keith.
• Handle
• Install Hubs in every infirmary.
• Finish vocal cortex converter.
• Finish building the infirmary.



ROBERT CLOSED HIS NAVIGATOR BY CLOSING HIS HAND THREE TIMES.



HE CONTINUED TO CATCH HIS BREATH. THE TITANIUM STEAM STOPPED.

TIME PASSED.



ROBERT'S SENTINEL APPROVED TWO TINKERBOTS AS WELL 20 GUARDS, ALL WEARING THEIR ORANGE-TINTED-GLASSED HELMETS EXCEPT FOR TWO OF THEM. THESE TWO WORE DARK BLUE GLASS PROTECTION HELMETS.



NAME'S ZIM. I'M AN EXECUTIVE SECURITY GUARD APPOINTED BY CHIEF KEITH KONRAD.



HE'S CONLEY.

HE POINTED HIS RIGHT ARM HORIZONTALLY AT ROBERT IN THE FORM OF A HANDSHAKE.

THE OTHER BLUE GUARD TOOK OFF HIS HELMET TOO.



ROBERT SHOOK ZIM'S HAND. ZIM'S GRIP WAS TIGHTER AND SWIFTER IN ACTION THAN ROBERT'S.



WHICH OF THESE TWO MOTHERFUCKERS STARTED IT?



KEITH APPOINTED YOU FIRST CAN YOU ALERT HIM TO MEET WITH THE IMMEDIATELY REGARDING HIS SECURITY REPORT AT HIS OFFICE?



YOU GOT IT, KONRAD.

CONLEY OPENED HIS NAVIGATOR.



WHAT'S THAT METAL RING AROUND HIS NECK? DAMN!



WE'LL ESCORT YOU THREE TO THE INFIRMARY. GOOD THING THAT ITS LOCATION IS CLOSER THAN WE PRESUMED.

YES.



BUT THE INFIRMARY CONSTRUCTION NOT FINISHED?

THOSE TWO ARE. I'M NOT. I'VE GOT BUSINESS WITH KEITH. FIX THEM.



PLACE HARRY AND FABIAN ON THE TINKERBOT, AND ESCORT THEM TO THE INFIRMARY STAT.



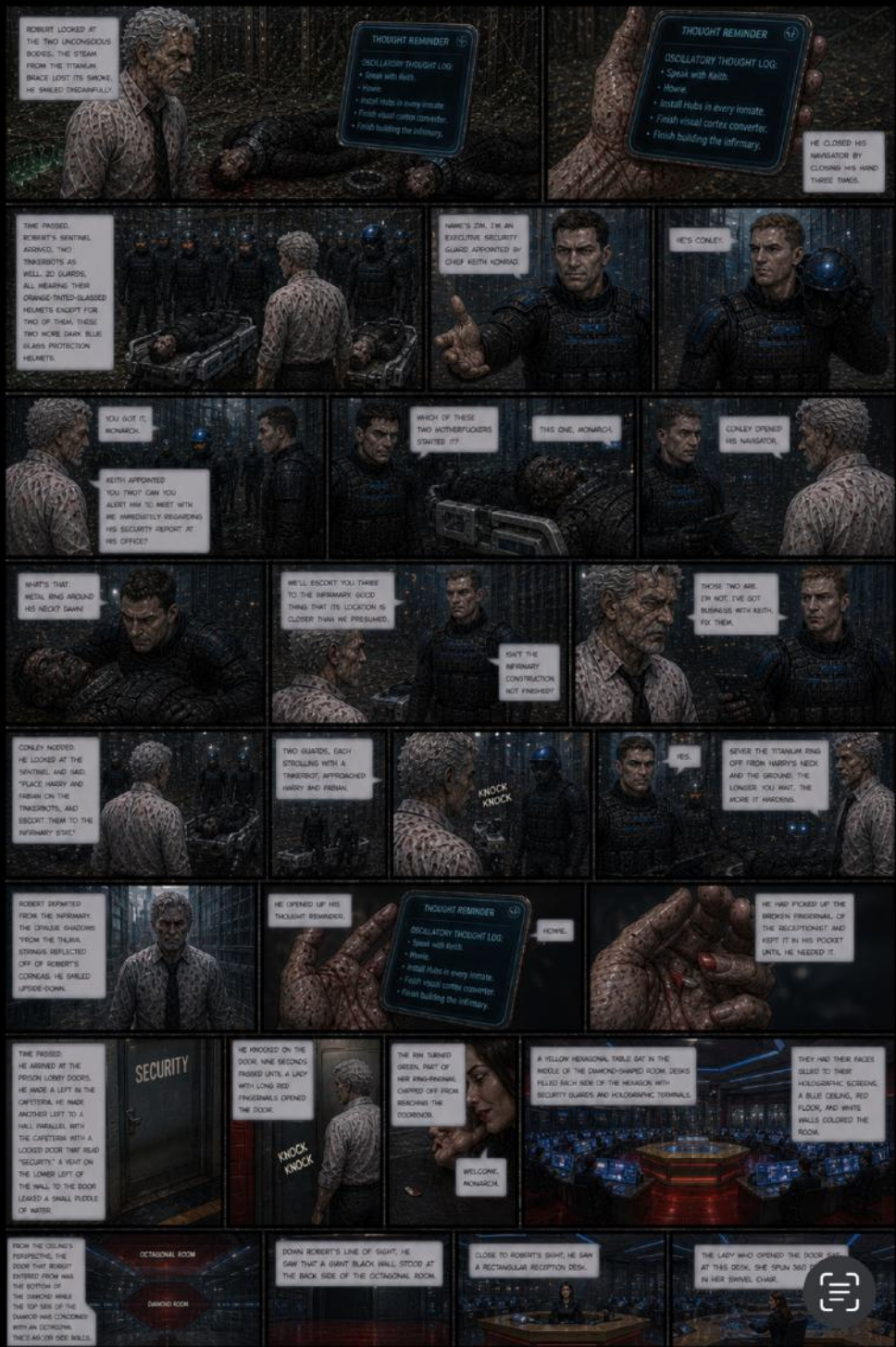
YOU SURE YOU'LL BE FINE?

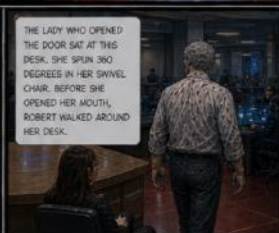
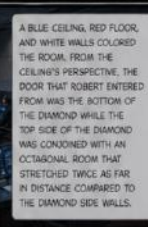


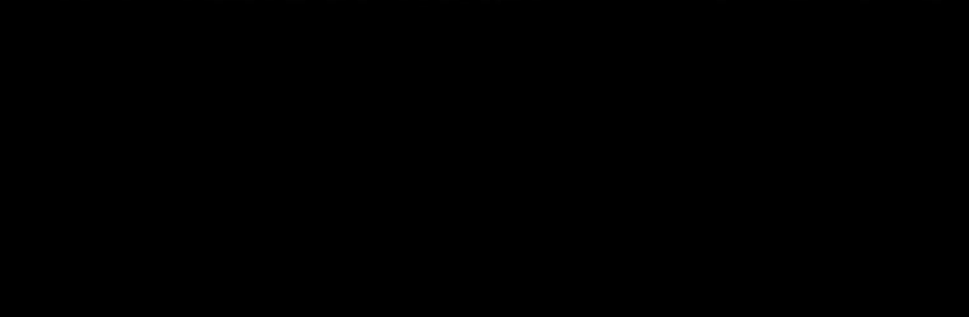
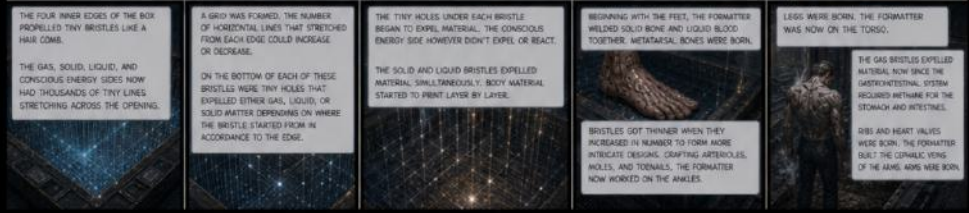
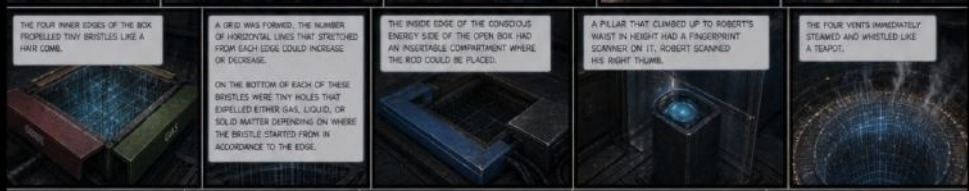
SEVER THE TITANIUM RING OFF FROM HARRY'S NECK AND THE GROUND THE LONGER YOU WAIT. THE MORE IT HARDENS.



ROBERT WALKED AWAY FROM ZIM'S ALMOST PIZZED LOOK. THE ORANGE SHADOWS FROM THE TITANIUM STANDS REFLECTED OFF OF ROBERT'S COATLACE. HE SMILED UPSIDE-DOWN. HE OPENED UP HIS THOUGHT REMINDER.









CHAPTER 6: OBJECTIFICATION



ROBERT STOOD OUTSIDE CHIEF KEITH KONRAD'S OFFICE. THE INSERTABLE KEY-CARD LOCK HAD BEEN TAKEN OFF THE WALL. THE DOOR REMAINED OPEN AT ALL TIMES INSTEAD.

ROBERT WALKED THROUGH AND DISREGARDED KEITH'S RECEPTIONIST'S GREETING. HE MOVED ACROSS THE DIAMOND AND OCTAGONAL ROOMS AND DISREGARDED KEITH'S SECURITY GUARD'S GREETINGS.



HE SAW KEITH WIDE-AWAKE THIS TIME.



YOU FUCKED ME OVER! IF YOU HADN'T PUT ME IN A BAD MOOD WITH YOUR INEPTITUDE, I WOULDN'T HAVE LOST FOCUS WITH MY LATEST TASK!



W-WHAT TASK?



YOUR INCOMPETENCE HAS COST TOO MANY MISTAKES FOR ME! I LOST GENERAL WAYNE BECAUSE OF YOU.



AND IT'S NOW YOUR SOLE MISSION TO FIND HIM!

HOW IS IT MY FAULT?!

IT'S YOUR FAULT FOR--



IF YOU DON'T FIND HIM IN THE NEXT HOUR, I'M SNAPPING THAT NECK OF YOURS!

HE THREW HIM TO THE GROUND.



HE LEFT KEITH'S OFFICE AND DISREGARDED KEITH.



ROBERT GOT HIS BREATHING MORE IN RHYTHM. HE MESSAGED FABIAN AND HARRY: "MEET ME AT THE EXPERIMENTATION ROOM ASAP."



HE HEADED TOWARDS THERE.



HE WAS THERE AT THE ENTRANCE. FABIAN AND HARRY WERE THERE IN TIME.



ROBERT DIDN'T OBSERVE THEIR FACES AND ENTERED THE IRREGULARLY-SHAPED ROOM.

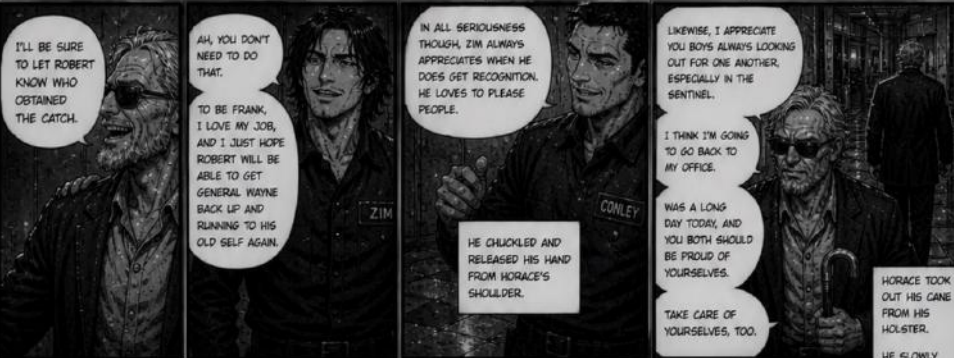
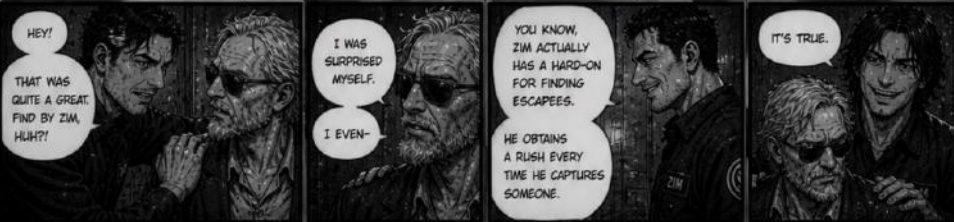
THE DANGLING SOMBRERO LIGHTS WERE DIMMER THIS TIME.



ROBERT STEPPED OVER ALL THE LYING PAPERS ON THE FLOOR AND IMMEDIATELY PRESSED THE GREEN BUTTON THAT WAS ON THE FURTHEST WALL FROM HARRY'S AND FABIAN'S STANDING POSITION.

CHAPTER 7: IRRITATION

CONSCIOUSNESS TARGET: KEITH KONRAD



CHAPTER 7: IRRITATION

CONSCIOUSNESS TARGET: KEITH KONRAD



KEITH, IRRITATED, EXPENDED A FULL FIVE-SECOND STARE INTO ZIM.



QUIET, MAN! YOU DON'T WANT HORACE LISTENING IN ON YOU.

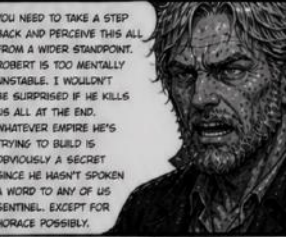
TAP



THAT BLIND SAD SHIT THAT YOU TAKE FOR AS A MAN HAS NO POWER OVER ME! AND I COULD GIVE A FUCK WHAT ROBERT THINKS OF ME. HE'S ALREADY FED UP WITH ME ENOUGH.



KEITH, YOU NEED TO JUST TAKE A BREATHER.



YOU NEED TO TAKE A STEP BACK AND PERCEIVE THIS ALL FROM A WIDER STANDPOINT. ROBERT IS TOO MENTALLY UNSTABLE. I WOULDN'T BE SURPRISED IF HE KILLS US ALL AT THE END. WHATEVER EMPIRE HE'S TRYING TO BUILD IS OBVIOUSLY A SECRET SINCE HE HASN'T SPOKEN A WORD TO ANY OF US SENTINEL, EXCEPT FOR HORACE POSSIBLY.



SO WHAT? COMPLAINING'S GONNA SOLVE NOTHING.



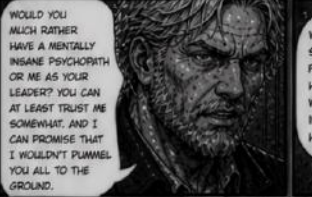
I'M SAYING WE DO SOMETHING.



DO WHAT EXACTLY? YOU TRYING TO OVERTHROW HIM OR SOMETHING? WHY WOULD I EVEN WANT YOU OVER ROBERT?



YEAH EITHER WAY... I DESPISE BOTH OF YOU.



WOULD YOU MUCH RATHER HAVE A MENTALLY INSANE PSYCHOPATH OR ME AS YOUR LEADER? YOU CAN AT LEAST TRUST ME SOMEWHAT, AND I CAN PROMISE THAT I WOULDN'T PUMMEL YOU ALL TO THE GROUND.



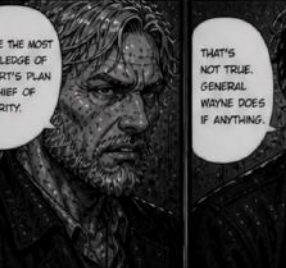
WHAT'S STOPPING ME FROM OVERTHROWING HIM BEFORE YOU? WHY NOT TAKE THIS INTO MY OWN HANDS?



YOU WOULD GET NOWHERE WITHOUT ME.



DO YOU KNOW HOW PRECALCULOUS ROBERT ACTUALLY IS? YOU DON'T THINK THAT I HAVE SOME FRAGMENT OF IMAGINATION CAPABLE OF IMAGINING WHAT ROBERT HAS IN STORE FOR US.



I HAVE THE MOST KNOWLEDGE OF ROBERT'S PLAN AS CHIEF OF SECURITY.



THAT'S NOT TRUE. GENERAL WAYNE DOES IF ANYTHING.

YOU MEAN THAT UNCONSCIOUS FRESH SACK OF MEAT EXHIBITING HIS NAKED BODY TO THE WORLD? HE KNOWS NOTHING. AND THE FACT THAT I BARELY KNOW MUCH EVEN AS CHIEF OF SECURITY DEMONSTRATES HOW SECRETIVE ROBERT IS.

CHAPTER 7: IRRITATION

KEITH WANTED TO KILL HIM.

BUT HE KNEW ANOTHER TIME WOULD BE THE RIGHT TIME.

YES, MONARCH.

GENERAL WAYNE'S CHIEF GUARD, GORDIN MYERS, HAD A BROWN COMPLEXION OF HAIR.

KEITH WAS SUBCONSCIOUSLY JEALOUS OF HIS HAIR COLOR.

IS HE OKAY? HOW DID YOU ALL MANAGE TO FIND HIM?

I FOUND HIM. HE WAS TRYING TO CLIMB UP THE GIANT TREE WALLS IN THE NORTHWEST DISTRICT.

NOBODY ASKED WHO FOUND HIM. PUT YOUR PRIDE AND EGO ASIDE.

I CAN'T ACTUALLY BELIEVE HE'S ALIVE STILL.

I KNOW YOU TOLD ME THAT YOU BROUGHT HIM BACK TO LIFE BEFOREHAND, BUT THE TRUTH IS I DIDN'T FULLY BELIEVE YOU UNTIL NOW. I'M BEYOND PERPLEXED.

WHAT HAPPENS NOW WITH HIM?

WE IMPLANT HIS MEMORIES BACK IN.

HE MAINTAINS HIS SAME NEURO-CHEMISTRY, BUT YOU CAN'T NEUROCHEMICALLY IMPLANT MEMORIES WITH THE FORMATTER.

MEMORIES CAN ONLY BE ATTAINED THROUGH EXPERIENCE.

HOW IS HE GONNA GAIN ALL HIS MEMORIES THEN? HE CAN'T JUST RELIVE HIS PAST.

YOU'RE OBVIOUSLY NOT KNOWLEDGEABLE OF THE MEMORY METAMORPHOSE.

THE DEVICE ENTRAPPED ALL OF HIS MEMORIES RIGHT BEFORE HIS PASSING. HE NEEDS TO RE-EXPERIENCE THEM THROUGH MASS MEMORY OVERLOADING. MEANING THAT WE BOMBARD HIS HIPPOCAMPAL NEURONS WITH EXTREMELY VOLATILE AND HIGH SPEED GAMMA WAVES TO ALTER THE DENDRITIC LENGTH OF EACH NEURON AND MANIPULATE EACH ACTION POTENTIAL WITH—

I GET IT. COMPLICATED STUFF.

LET'S GET HIM TO THAT DEVICE AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE RIGHT NOW. I DON'T WANNA RISK LOSING HIM AGAIN.

LOOKING PASSED ROBERT'S DISAPPOINTED FACE, KEITH NOTICED THE INTIMIDATING LARGE MAN BEHIND ROBERT.

KEITH ASKED,

WHAT'S HIS NAME?

WHY SO CURIOUS?

HIS NAME'S THOM. HE'S MY NEW BODYGUARD.

HE WAS ORIGINALLY GENERAL WAYNE'S #0171 GUARD, BUT I PERSONALLY PULLED HIM OUT OF HIS COMMAND TO HAVE HIM BY MY SIDE.

AFTER WHAT HAPPENED WITH HARRY AND FABIAN, I DECIDED TO ESTABLISH A BETTER SAFEGUARD.

CHAPTER 7: IRRITATION



KEITH WANTED TO REASSERT TO ZIM AND CONLEY HIS CLAIM DEALING WITH ROBERT'S CONSTANT PRECAUTION.

ROBERT'S DISAPPOINTED LOOK DISSIPATED MORE.

FOCUSING HIS EYES PAST ROBERT AND THOM, KEITH SAW AN APPROACHING TINKERBOT.

THAT WAS A SMART DECISION, MONARCH.



GORDIN, DON'T WORRY. I RECOGNIZED YOUR CONCERN, AND I'M HAVING WAYNE BE EXPORTED TO THE MEMORY METAMORPHOSE IMMEDIATELY.

GOOD.

I ALSO NEED YOU TO BE PRESENT AS WAYNE'S MEMORIES ARE BEING PROCESSED. FOLLOW ME.



BEFORE THEY LEFT THE INFIRMARY, ROBERT TURNED AROUND AND GAVE KEITH ONE LAST LOOK.

HOW ARE WE GONNA DO ANYTHING NOW?

DON'T EXPECT US TO GET ANYWHERE WHEN HE'S GOT A BODYGUARD AROUND ALL THE TIME.

AND WHY WAS GORDIN BEING SUCH A PUSSY FOR GENERAL WAYNE. I—



I NEED YOU BOTH TO GIVE ME ROOM TO THINK.

WHAT? WHY NOT FIGURE IT OUT NOW WHEN WE'RE ALREADY HERE?

I SAID I'M NOT IN THE DAMN MOOD!

KEITH LEFT THE ALMOST FULLY-CONSTRUCTED BUILDING.



KEITH WAS NOW IN HIS OFFICE, FACE ON HIS DESK.

HIS HEAD FELT TOO HEAVY.

KEITH FELT HIS CHEEK BEING SCRATCHED.

I'M SO-SO-SO SORRY. I SIPPED YOUR SHOULDER BUT YOU WOULDN'T WAKE UP. YOU HAD NO AREAS OF SKIN TO FEEL OTHER THAN YOUR FACE.

WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM? WHY DIDN'T YOU TAP ME ON MY SHOULDER TO WAKE ME UP? PUCK YOUR FINGERNAILS!



PLEASE FORGIVE ME!

I'LL FORGIVE YOU ONCE YOU TELL ME WHY YOU AWAKE ME.

HUH-?! OH... YES! EXECUTIVE GUARDS ZIM WORCESTER AND CONLEY VILLNAVI ARE OUT THE DOOR SAYING THEY ARE READY FOR YOUR "MEETING".

WHAT MEETING? OH YEAH. THAT MEETING.

LUNA NODDED WITH A FAKE SMILE AND BEGAN TO MAKE HER WAY BACK TO HER DESK.



KEITH WALKED PAST HIS OFFICE, THE HEXAGONAL ROOM FULL OF HIS GUARDS, AND LUNA'S RECEPTIONIST DESK UNTIL HE ARRIVED AT THE ENTRANCE DOOR.

ZIM, CONLEY, AND ANOTHER PERSON HE COULDN'T RECOGNIZE WERE THERE.

BEFORE KEITH COULD EVEN ASK, THE UNRECOGNIZABLE MAN SAID,

NAME'S BANDU. I'M CONLEY'S COUSIN. JUDGING BY YOUR FACE RIGHT NOW, YOU DON'T SEEM TOO STIMULATED.

CHAPTER 7: IRRITATION



WE EXPECT THERE TO BE MANY INMATES TRYING TO REBEL. DURING THE TEST, SO WE PLAN TO HAVE BANDU DISPLAY EXAGGERATED AGGRESSION AND HOSTILITY IN FRONT OF ROBERT. HOPEFULLY, BANDU WOULD BE ABLE TO JOIN ROBERT'S TRUSTED FEW. ONCE IN, BANDU WOULD STEAL THE NEURO-CONVERTERS.

IF GRANTED ACCESS INTO THE EXPERIMENTATION ROOM, ALSO IF HE IS GRANTED ACCESS INTO ROBERT'S TRUSTED CIRCLE?!

YOU KNOW WHAT?! WE DON'T NEED YOU! RIGHT GUYS?!



YOU'VE DONE NOTHING BUT COMPLAIN. YOU WON'T LISTEN TO OUR PLAN OR OFFER ANY SORT OF INSIGHT.

IF WE'RE TAKING OUT ROBERT, I'M NOT LISTENING TO AN OLD MAN LIKE YOU.
WE'RE GONNA BE OUR OWN KINGS.

AS A MATTER OF FACT, WE'RE DONE WITH OLD MEN TELLING THE YOUTH HOW TO OPERATE AND BEHAVE.

CONLEY NODDED.

LET THE YOUTH PREVAIL. FUCK YOU, KEITH. SORRY BUT WE'RE DOING THIS WITHOUT YOU.



BEFORE KEITH COULD GET A WORD OF IRRITATION OUT, THEY ALL RAN OUT HIS OFFICE AND DISPERSED IN DISAPPEARANCE.

KEITH WAS EXTREMELY IRRITATED.



THE NEXT NIGHT ARRIVED. KEITH WAS IN THE EXPERIMENTATION ROOM. KEITH WANTED TO KILL ROBERT, BUT HE FELT HE DIDN'T HAVE THE BALLS TO DO IT. HE WANTED TO STILL KILL HIM THOUGH. HE WAS CONFLICTED. HE REALIZED THAT THE NEURO-CONVERTERS WOULD SOLVE THIS CONFLICT.

CLICKING THE GREEN BUTTON, THE ROTATING CYLINDER PRESENTED ITSELF. THE CYLINDER RELEASED ITS FLOATING WATER SHEET THAT DISPLAYED THE 17 TABS.

1. Neurotransmitter Converter
2. Posterior Parietal Cortex (PPC) Converter [Spatiotemporal Kit]
3. Dorsolateral Prefrontal Cortex (DLPFC) Converter [Spatiotemporal Kit]
4. Neural Lag Converter
5. Double Thought Converter
6. Neocortex Converter
7. Five Sense Converter
8. Thalamus Converter
9. Vestibular Gland Converter
10. Visual Cortex Converter
11. Hypothalamus Converter
12. Dorsal Laryngeal Motor Cortex (dLMC) Converter
13. Mental-Physical State Converter
14. Stimuli Inhibitor Converter
15. Ventromedial Prefrontal Cortex (VMPC) Converter
16. Brain Numbing Converter
17. Consciousness Inversion Converter

KEITH WAS OVERWHELMED. HE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT EACH CONVERTER'S FUNCTION WAS BECAUSE NO DESCRIPTIONS WERE GIVEN. HE WANTED TO CHANGE HIS MIND. MAYBE THIS WAS A BAD IDEA. HE WAS TOO FAR IN THE PROCESS ALREADY. HE HAD TO FULLY COMMIT TO SAVE HIMSELF AND EVERYBODY ELSE FROM ROBERT.



HE SELECTED "NEUROTRANSMITTER CONVERTER" SINCE IT WAS THE FIRST ON THE LIST, AND AFTER HEARING WHAT HARRY AND FARMAN DID, HE FELT THIS DEVICE WOULD BE THE MOST BENEFICIAL FOR PHYSICAL COMBAT.

HE INPUTTED THE NUMBER 1 SINCE THE SHEET ASKED HOW MANY CONVERTERS HE WANTED.

THE CONVERTER CAME OUT OF THE CYLINDER.

KEITH PICKED IT UP. IT FELT LIGHTER THAN HE EXPECTED.

HE HAD NO CLUE ON HOW TO INSERT IT INTO HIS HUB. HE COULDN'T SEE HIS HUB EITHER. HE RUBBED HIS RIGHT FINGER AGAINST HIS HUB AND SENSORIALLY READ THE HOLES' PLACEMENT LIKE BRAILLE. HE WAS STARTING TO SWEAT. HE DID KNOW THAT THE UPPER-LEFT HOLE WAS FOR SLOT #1. JUST FROM PRIOR GENERAL KNOWLEDGE.



HE FOUND THE UPPER-LEFT HOLE WITH HIS FINGERS.

CHAPTER 7: IRRITATION



HOLDING THE NEUROTRANSMITTER CONVERTER WITH HIS RIGHT HAND, HE INSERTED THE KEY-END INTO THE #1 HOLE.

HE WAS GLUTTERING HIS EYES WORKED ANTICIPATION FOR PAIN.

HE TURNED OVER HIS MOST TO SEE IF HIS NAVIGATOR WOULD DISPLAY ANYTHING.

IT DIDN'T. HE ALSO DIDN'T FEEL PAIN.



NOTHING WAS HAPPENING. HE DIDN'T HAVE TIME FOR NOTHING TO WORK. HE DIDN'T WANT PEOPLE TO SEE HIM IN ROBERT'S EXPERIMENTATION ROOM UNACCOUNTED FOR.



HE WAS UPSET AND WORRIED. HE BEGAN TWISTING AND SHAKING THE NEURO-CONVERTER FRUSTRATED THAT IT WOULDN'T WORK.

HE TWISTED IT TO THE RIGHT, AND THE NAVIGATOR SCREEN LOADED.

NEUROTRANSMITTER CONVERTER

DOPAMINE	0%
ACETYLCHOLINE	0%
NOREPINEPHRINE	0%
SEROTONIN	0%
GABA	0%
GLUTAMATE	0%

HE LET GO OF THE CONVERTER AND FOCUSED ON HIS NAVIGATOR.



SIX KNOBS FOR SIX NEURO-TRANSMITTERS APPEARED.

HE DIDN'T KNOW WHICH KNOB HE TWIST. ALL HE KNEW WAS THAT HE WANTED TO KILL ROBERT.

HE FELT AN IMMEDIATE SPURT OF HAPPINESS AND AGGRESSION. HE WASN'T WORRIED NOW. HE FELT DETERMINED.

HE STARTED FEELING BRAIN ZAPS. HIS HEAD SHOOK WHILE HE COULDN'T STOP SMILING. HE FELT A SURGE OF STRENGTH. ALL OF HIS PAST ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION HAD FADDED INTO AGGRESSIVE HAPPINESS.

HE RAISED NOREPINEPHRINE TO 80%.

ALL HIS MUSCLES WERE PULSATING. HE FELT CRAZIER EVERY KNOB HE MANIPULATED. HE FELT ANGRER. GALIA DRIPPED DOWN HIS LIPS. HIS BODY WAS SHAKING TREMENDOUSLY. HE'D GONE SUPER MANN. HIS MUSCLES FELT STRONG AND WEAK SIMULTANEOUSLY.

HE RANDOMLY TWISTED HIS DOPAMINE TO 75%.

DOPAMINE	75%
ACETYLCHOLINE	0%
NOREPINEPHRINE	0%
SEROTONIN	0%
GABA	0%
GLUTAMATE	0%

HE TWISTED ACETYLCHOLINE TO 80%.

DOPAMINE	75%
ACETYLCHOLINE	80%
NOREPINEPHRINE	0%
SEROTONIN	0%
GABA	0%
GLUTAMATE	0%

HE RAISED NOREPINEPHRINE TO 80%.

DOPAMINE	75%
ACETYLCHOLINE	0%
NOREPINEPHRINE	80%
SEROTONIN	0%
GABA	0%
GLUTAMATE	0%



KEITH NO LONGER HAD BEHAVIORAL CONTROL OVER HIMSELF WHICH HE WANTED. NOW HE COULD CHARGE AT ROBERT WITHOUT HESITANCY.

KEITH SELECTED THE POSTERIOR PARIENTAL CORTEX CONVERTER AND THE DORSOLATERAL PREFRONTAL CORTEX CONVERTER MINDLESSLY.

1. Neurotransmitter Converter
2. Posterior Parietal Cortex (PPC) Converter
3. Dorsolateral Prefrontal Cortex (DLPFC) Converter
4. Prefrontal Cortex Converter
5. Dorsal Prefrontal Cortex Converter
6. Medial Prefrontal Cortex Converter
7. Frontal Cortex Converter
8. Thalamus Converter
9. Ventral Caudal Converter
10. Insular Cortex Converter
11. Hypothalamus Converter
12. Dorsal Lateral Motor Cortex (DLMC) Converter
13. Multiple Subcortical Converter
14. Ventral Lateral Converter
15. Ventromedial Prefrontal Cortex (VMPFC) Converter
16. Brain Numbing Converter
17. Consciousness Inversion Converter

THE CYLINDER OPENED THE #2 SLOT FIRST. THE PPC CONVERTER HAD A SIMILAR DESIGN TO THE NEUROTRANSMITTER CONVERTER BUT OPPOSITE OF THE KEY-END WAS A .2 INCH LONG, .2 INCH WIDE METAL PIECE WITH GRAPH LINES ON IT.



HE HAD TROUBLE INSERTING THE CONVERTER INTO THE #2 HOLE OF HIS HUB SINCE HIS HAND SHOOK TOO MUCH. HE SUCCESSFULLY GOT IT IN.

HE TWISTED IT TO THE RIGHT. A SECOND TAB ON HIS NAVIGATOR APPEARED. HE SAW A DESCRIPTION FOR THE CONVERTER.

HE FINISHED TURNING AND CLOSED HIS EYES. HE HAD COMPLETE BIRTH RECEPTION OF WHERE EVERYTHING WAS. HE COULD WALK WHILE KNOWING EXACTLY WHERE THE CHAIRS AND DESKS WERE.

2. POSTERIOR PARIETAL CORTEX (PPC) CONVERTER [Spatiotemporal Kit]

INSTRUCTIONS:
To use this Converter, look around 360 degrees, to grip his focus on the depth and field of objects. Once you've scanned your environment, you may close your eyes, and you will have complete memory and perception of the depth of your environment.

HE EXPOSED HIS TEETH WITH EACH CROOKED SMILE HE RELEASED WHILE READING THE DESCRIPTION.



HE LOOKED AT HIS ENVIRONMENT WHILE SPINNING 360 DEGREES TO TEST OUT THE CONVERTER. HE TOOK NOTE OF THE CHAIRS'S POSITION AND ALL THE DESKS IN THE ROOM.

HE FINISHED TURNING AND CLOSED HIS EYES. HE HAD COMPLETE BIRTH RECEPTION OF WHERE EVERYTHING WAS. HE COULD WALK WHILE KNOWING EXACTLY WHERE THE CHAIRS AND DESKS WERE.

4. DORSOLATERAL PREFRONTAL CORTEX (DLPFC) CONVERTER [Spatiotemporal Kit]



HE HAD A BETTER TIME WITH INSERTING IT INTO THE #3 HOLE OF HIS HUB.

HE NAVIGATOR REVEALED A NEW TAB AND INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW THE CONVERTER WORKED. TWO KNOBS APPEARED TOO.

3. DORSOLATERAL PREFRONTAL CORTEX (DLPFC) CONVERTER [Spatiotemporal Kit]

INSTRUCTIONS:
To use this converter, adjust the left knob to increase or decrease your reaction time speed. If you—

REACTION TIME SPEED: [0%] [0%]

KEITH HAD A BUCK GRIN WHILE READING.

HE GRINDED HIS TEETH.

HE CONTINUED READING.

INSTRUCTIONS (CONT.):
If you adjust the right knob, your perception of time increases or decreases.

REACTION TIME SPEED: [0%] [0%]

CHAPTER 7: IRRITATION

HE DECREASED THE LEFT KNOB TO HAVE A REACTION TIME OF 0.0001 SECONDS. VISUAL INFORMATION RETAINED INTO HIS VISUAL CORTEX FELT ALMOST LIKE LIGHT-SPEED.

2. DORSOLATERAL PREFRONTAL CORTIX (DLPFC) CONVERTER (Synthetic/operational)
REACTION TIME SPEED: 0.0001 sec
VISUAL FRAME RATE: 10,000 FPS

THE KNOB ALSO DISPLAYED HE COULD NOW SEE IN 10,000 FRAMES PER SECOND AS OPPOSED TO A NORMAL 30-60 FRAMES PER SECOND.

HE INCREASED THE RIGHT KNOB TO 2.0X SPEED. HE PERCEIVED TIME AT DOUBLE SPEED.

HE WALKED TO WITNESS THIS. HIS PERCEPTION OF THE SPEED OF THE DIDN'T MEAN TIME ITSELF SPED UP. IT WAS JUST KEITH'S PERCEPTION.

TIME PERCEPTION SPEED: 2.0X

HE TRIED 0.5X. EVERYTHING FELT SLOW. HOWEVER, HE WAS GIVEN MORE TIME TO THINK. THOUGHTS WALK HIS PHYSICAL BODY MOVED SLOWER.

TIME PERCEPTION SPEED: 0.5X

HE MOVED THE KNOB BACK TO 1.0X.

TIME PERCEPTION SPEED: 1.0X

HE SELECTED THE FOURTH TAB, THE NEURAL LAG CONVERTER, FROM THE WATER SHEET.

1. Neurotransmitter Converter
2. Prefrontal Prefrontal Cortex (PFC) Converter
3. Dorsolateral Prefrontal Cortex (DLPFC) Converter
4. Neural Lag Converter
5. Occipital Thought Converter
6. Neocortex Converter
7. Fusiform Converter
8. Thalamus Converter
9. Medial Prefrontal Cortex Converter
10. Visual Cortex Converter
11. Hippocampus Converter
12. Cerebellum Converter
13. Motor Prefrontal Cortex Converter
14. Striatum Converter
15. Amygdala Converter
16. Basal Ganglia Converter
17. Caudate Putamen Converter

HE POKED UP THE CONVERTER FROM THE CYLINDER.

HIS VISION BEGAN TO FEEL BLURRY AROUND HIS PERIPHERAL VISION.

THE NEURAL LAG CONVERTER HAD THE SAME DESIGN AS ALL THE OTHER ONES EXCEPT THAT THE ART ON THE METAL PIECE END WAS A RED AND BLUE NERVE SPRAWLING IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS.

KEITH GOT THIS CONVERTER INTO HIS #4 HOLE FIRST TRY.

IT READ THE FOLLOWING: TO USE THIS CONVERTER, ADJUST THE KNOB TO THE TIME LENGTH TO WHICH YOU WANT TO PERCEIVE NO PAIN.

NO PAIN DURATION: 0:00

THE KNOB WAS AT ZERO. KEITH ADJUSTED THE KNOB TO THE MAXIMUM WHICH WAS 5 MINUTES.

NO PAIN DURATION: 5:00

KEITH BIT HIS RIGHT RING FINGER.

HIS PAIN RECEPTORS DIDN'T REACT. HE FELT NO PAIN. ADDITIONALLY, HE DIDN'T FEEL THE PAIN OF HIS MUSCLE ACHES ANYMORE.

KEITH SMILED MORE CROOKEDLY.

HE ADJUSTED THE RIGHT KNOB OF HIS DUPIC CONVERTER TO 3.0X SPEED. HE WAS TIRED OF THE LONG WAIT. HE WANTED ROBERT TO BE DEAD AND OVER.

NO PAIN DURATION: 3:00

HE FELT AS IF EVERYTHING HAPPENED QUICKER. HIS PHYSICAL ACTIONS SEEMED TO MOVE QUICKER THAN HIS PERCEPTIVE THOUGHTS. HE FELT HE DIDN'T NEED TO GRAB ANYMORE NEURO-CONVERTERS.

HE RAN OUT OF THE SUPERVENTION ROOM. HE BURST INTO ROBERT'S OFFICE SUCCESSFULLY WITHOUT ANYONE NOTICING HIM.

A BIT OF DUNGEA SPLATTERED IN HIS PANTS.

HE CONTINUED RUNNING AT 3.0X SPEED.

HE RAN PAST THE LOBBY AND ENTERED THE CAFETERIA. NO ONE WAS THERE AS EXPECTED. EVERYONE WAS IN THE AUDITORIUM TAKING THE SOCIAL STATUS TEST.

HE WALKED TO THE END OF THE CAFETERIA AND SAW THE DOOR WITH THE STAIRS THAT LED DOWN TO THE AUDITORIUM.

BEFORE HE ENTERED, HE STOPPED. HIS LOGIC OF REASONING KICKED IN FOR THE ONE LAST HIS CONSTANT EMOTIONAL REPERCUSSIONS.

HE NEEDED TO ENTER THE AUDITORIUM FROM BACKSTAGE SO THAT NO ONE WOULD NOTICE HIM.

HE LEFT THE CAFETERIA, LOBBY, AND THE PRISON BUILDING ENTRANCE ITSELF.

HE ADJUSTED THE RIGHT KNOB OF HIS DUPIC CONVERTER BACK TO 1.0X SPEED SO THAT HE COULD THINK CLEARER.

TIME PERCEPTION SPEED: 1.0X

HE WALKED TOWARDS THE SIDE OF THE OUTSIDE OF THE PRISON BUILDING WHERE THE CAFETERIA COULD BE SEEN THROUGH A WINDOW.

THERE WAS A SMALL FINGERPRINT SCANNER ON THE OUTSIDE WALL AS CHEF OF SECURITY. HE HAD ACCESS TO ALL FINGERPRINT SCANNERS.

HE SCANNED HIS FINGER, AND THE MANAGE BELOW HIM CUT ITSELF INTO A SQUARE.

THIS MANAGE SQUARE BEGAN TO DESCEND UNDERGROUND QUICKLY.

HE ROSE THE SECRET ELEVATOR. HE WAS NOW 50 FEET UNDERGROUND.

A NEW MANAGE SQUARE COVERED UP THE TOP OPENING TO CONCEAL THE ELEVATOR.

HE LOOKED AT HIS NEURAL LAG CONVERTER TO SEE HOW MUCH TIME REMAINED.

NO PAIN DURATION: 2:31
2 MINUTES AND 31 SECONDS.

HE REGRITTED NOT STARTING THE TIMER LATER.

AS KEITH DESCENDED DOWN TO 100 FEET, HE HAD FORMULATED A PLAN. HE WAS EMOTIONALLY STIMULATED, COGNITIVELY ENHANCED SPATIENTEMPORALLY AND RECEPTEVLY NABLE TO FAIL.

HE WAS READY.

THE ELEVATOR DOOR OPENED QUIETLY.

KEITH HEARD ROBERT SAY "THREE MINUTES REMAIN."

KEITH GRABBED THE GUN OUT OF HIS RIGHT HIP HOLSTER.

HE POKED HIS HEAD OUT OF THE RIGHT SIDE CLOTHING AND SCANNED THE DEPTH OF HIS ENVIRONMENT.

HE NOTICED THE GUARD'S POSITIONS ON THE SECS. THE PRISONERS: SITTING POSITIONS, AND LASTLY, NOTICED ROBERT'S POSITION.

KEITH SAW GENERAL WARNE IN WHITE GARMENTS FACING THE OPPOSITE WAY LAYING DOWN ON THE GROUND.

NO ONE WAS BACKSTAGE BUT WARNE.

KEITH SILENTLY POKED HIS HEAD OUT OF THE ELEVATOR DOOR AND TURNED TO THE RIGHT.

HE SAW THE ENORMOUS SCALE OF THE AUDITORIUM BUT JUST ONLY THE RIGHT SIDE OF IT. THE AUDITORIUM WAS ILLUMINATED BY ONE LIGHT ON THE GLASS CEILING.

HE TOOK TEN STEPS UNTIL HE WAS AT THE EDGE OF THE BACKSTAGE EXIT, RIGHT NEXT TO THE CURTAINS.

HE GOT A BLOOD RUSH TO HIS HEAD FROM LOOKING AT HIM.

CHAPTER 7: IRRITATION

HE DECREASED THE LEFT KNOB TO HAVE A REACTION TIME OF 0.0001 SECONDS. VISUAL INFORMATION RETAINED INTO HIS VISUAL CORTEX FELT ALMOST LIKE LIGHT-SPEED.

3. DORSOLATERAL PREFRONTAL CORTEX (DLPFC) CONVERTER (Spatiotemporal K/K)

REACTION TIME SPEED: 0.0001 sec

VISUAL FRAME RATE: 10,000 FPS

HE INCREASED THE RIGHT KNOB TO 2.0X SPEED. HE PERCEIVED TIME AT DOUBLE SPEED.

TIME PERCEPTION SPEED: 2.0X

HE WALKED TO WITNESS THIS. HIS PERCEPTION OF THE SPEED OF THIS DON'T MEAN TIME ITSELF SPEED UP. IT WAS JUST KEITH'S PERCEPTION.

HE TRIED 0.5X. EVERYTHING FELT SLOW. HOWEVER, HE WAS GIVEN MORE TIME TO THINK THOUGHTS WHILE HIS PHYSICAL BODY MOVED SLOWER.

TIME PERCEPTION SPEED: 0.5X

HE ADJUSTED THE KNOB BACK TO 1.0X.

TIME PERCEPTION SPEED: 1.0X

HE SELECTED THE FOURTH TAB, THE NEURAL LAG CONVERTER, FROM THE HATCHER SHEET.

- 1. Neuroanatomical Converter
- 2. Neurological Response Converter
- 3. Neurological Response Converter
- 4. Neural Lag Converter
- 5. Neurological Response Converter
- 6. Neurological Response Converter
- 7. Neurological Response Converter
- 8. Neurological Response Converter
- 9. Neurological Response Converter
- 10. Neurological Response Converter
- 11. Neurological Response Converter
- 12. Neurological Response Converter
- 13. Neurological Response Converter
- 14. Neurological Response Converter
- 15. Neurological Response Converter
- 16. Neurological Response Converter
- 17. Neurological Response Converter
- 18. Neurological Response Converter
- 19. Neurological Response Converter
- 20. Neurological Response Converter

HE POKED UP THE CONVERTER FROM THE CYLINDER.

HIS VISION BEGAN TO FEEL BLURRY AGAIN AS PERIPHERAL, VISUAL.

THE NEURAL LAG CONVERTER HAD THE SAME DESIGN AS ALL THE OTHERS EXCEPT THE ART ON THE METAL PLATE DID HAVE A RED AND BLUE NERVE SPRAWLING IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS.

KEITH GOT THIS CONVERTER INTO HIS IN-HOLE RIGHT TRY.

TO USE THIS CONVERTER, ADJUST THE KNOB TO THE TIME LENGTH TO WHICH YOU WANT TO PERCEIVE NO PAIN.

4. NEURAL LAG CONVERTER

NO PAIN DURATION: 0:00

HE ADJUSTED THE KNOB TO THE MAXIMUM WHICH WAS 3 MINUTES.

NO PAIN DURATION: 5:00

HE FELT NO PAIN.

HE BIT HIS RIGHT FINGE FINGER, HIS PAIN RECEPTORS DIDN'T REACT.

HE FELT NO PAIN.

ADDITIONALLY, HE DIDN'T FEEL THE PAIN OF HIS MUSCLE ACES ANYMORE.

KEITH SMILED MORE CROONLOCK.

HE ADJUSTED THE RIGHT KNOB OF HIS PULSIC CONVERTER TO 3.0X SPEED.

HE WAS TIRED OF THE LONG WAIT. HE WAITED ROBERT TO BE DEAD AND OVER.

TIME PERCEPTION SPEED: 3.0X

HE FELT AS IF EVERYTHING HAPPENED QUICKE. HIS PHYSICAL ACTIONS SEEMED TO MOVE QUICKE THAN HIS PERCEPTIVE THOUGHTS.

HE RAN OUT OF THE SUPERMARKET ROOM.

HE ENKICKED PAST ROBERT'S OFFICE SUGGESTIONALLY WITHOUT ANYONE NOTICING HIM.

HE RAN PAST THE LOBBY AND ENTERED THE CATERINA.

NO ONE WAS THERE AS EXPECTED. EVERYONE WAS IN THE AUDITORIUM TAKING THE SOCIAL STATUS TEST.

HE WALKED TO THE END OF THE CATERINA AND SAW THE DOOR WITH THE STARS THAT LED DOWN TO THE AUDITORIUM.

BEFORE HE ENTERED, HE STOPPED HIS LOGIC OF REASONING KICKED IN FOR ONCE OVER HIS CONSTANT EMOTIONAL REPERCUSSIONS.

HE NEEDED TO ENTER THE AUDITORIUM FROM BACKDOOR SO THAT NO ONE WOULD NOTICE HIM.

HE LEFT THE CATERINA LOBBY AND THE FRONT BUILDING ENTRANCE ITSELF.

HE ADJUSTED THE RIGHT KNOB OF HIS PULSIC CONVERTER BACK TO 1.0X SPEED SO THAT HE COULD THINK CLEARER.

HE WALKED TOWARDS THE NOSE OF THE OUTSIDE OF THE PRISON BUILDING INTO HIS HATCHER COULD BE SEEN THROUGH A WINDOW.

THERE WAS A SMALL EMPLOYMENT SCANNER ON THE OUTSIDE WALL.

AS CHIEF OF SECURITY, HE HAD EMPLOYMENT SCANNERS THAT ACCESS TO INVA.

AS CHIEF OF SECURITY, HE HAD ACCESS TO ALL EMPLOYMENT SCANNERS.

HE LOOKED AT HIS NEURAL LAG CONVERTER TO SEE HOW MUCH TIME REMAINED.

HE BOOED THE SECRET ELEVATOR HE CHANGED IN THE NIGHT.

A NEW SQUARE COVERED UP THE TOP OF THE ELEVATOR TO CONCEAL THE ELEVATOR.

HE LOOKED AT HIS NEURAL LAG CONVERTER TO SEE HOW MUCH TIME REMAINED.

HE REBETTER NOT STARTING THE THIRD LAYER.

HIS NUMBER SLOWLY THE SPEED IT SKE OFFER. METROLOGICALS, HE SLOWLY.

HE POINTED HIS GUN AT THE BRIGHT LIGHT ABOVE AND SHOT.

BANG!!!

EXPLOSION FILLED THE AUDITORIUM.

KEITH PROPPED HIS GUN AND PULLED OUT A KNIFE FROM HIS LEFT HIP HOLSTER.

KNOWING ROBERT'S POSITION, HE CHANGED IN THE NIGHT.

A FEW SCREAMS OCCURRED.

HE THROUDED ROBERT TO THE FLOOR. IMMEDIATELY, KEITH FELT ROBERT'S RESISTANCE.

"WHAT THE FLOOR"

WHILE KEITH SCREAMED PERIODICALLY WITH HAPPINESS, HE SUGGESTIONALLY PUT ROBERT IN A SUBMERGENCE HOLD AND CLASPED HIS HAND TOWARDS ROBERT'S HEAD.

THE HANDS COULD ONLY BREAK SKIN. KEITH WAS CONFUSED.

"TITANUM SKULL... HA... HA..."

HE SALVAGED HIS RIGHT HAND AND GRABBED KEITH'S LEFT HAND. KEITH DIDN'T REACT TO THE BURNING METAL.

IT ONLY BREAKS SKIN. KEITH REBETTER LOWER AS GALIA PROBLETS HELD ON HIS DOWNSTREAMING BLOODY LEFT HAND.

KEITH BOWED HIS HEAD REBETTER LOWER AS GALIA PROBLETS HELD ON HIS DOWNSTREAMING BLOODY LEFT HAND.

HE STARED LAZARD AND REALLY FACE HIS SKIN.

STABBING AND SLAMMING THE TITANUM SKULL WITH HIS KNIFE, KEITH FELT AS IF THE SKULL WAS BEGINNING TO CRACK.

ROBERT WAS BEGINNING TO LOSE CONSCIOUSNESS. KEITH COULDN'T BRING HIS RIGHT.

ROBERT LAUGHED MORE. HE HEARD THIS ONE'S BUBBLES.

KEITH PULD THE KNIFE IN BUT IT CROONED KEITH'S ORGAN.

KEITH PULLED THE KNIFE OUT OF ROBERT'S GUT AND SLAMMED IT INTO ROBERT'S HEAD REBETTER.

HORROR. GUSTOOF KEITHS KAP THE FACE OF HORROR. HIS SCARE WAS IMPRESSION.

HEARD KEITHS RIGHT HAND HIT KEITH WITH HIS OTHER HAND.

THERE WAS A BLUR AT THE END OF IT.

THERE WAS A DARKENED END OF IT.

CHAPTER 7.1



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CHAPTER 8: ASSIMILATION

CONSCIOUSNESS TARGET: MAXWELL RUTANO

IT WAS DARK.

IT WAS LOUD.

IT WAS CHAOS.

MAX COULDN'T SEE A THING EXCEPT THE FAINT LIGHTS THAT ILLUMINATED FROM THE GUARD'S HELMETS.



MAX HAD FINISHED HIS TEST, AND HIS DIVIDERS WERE DOWN. IT WAS SO LOUD THAT HE COULD HEAR THROUGH HIS EARMUFFS. HE NO LONGER HEARD ROBERT TALK FROM HIS EARMUFFS. HE HEARD MUFFLED SCREAMS AND GUNSHOTS.



MAX WAS #0081 OF PRISON ROTATION E. HE HAD SPOTTED WHERE HIS FATHER SAT BEFORE THE TEST HAD ENDED. HE WAS SCARED, YET HE REALIZED THIS COULD BE THE ONLY POSSIBLE TIME TO REUNITE WITH HIM.



THE HEADGEAR GADGET HAD DETACHED SINCE HE FINISHED HIS TEST, SO HE COULD MOVE FREELY. GUARDS ON THE AISLE NEXT TO HIM WERE SPENDING DOWN THE STAIRS TOWARDS THE MAINSTAGE OF THE AQUATORIUM.



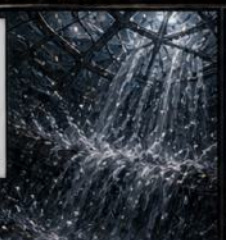
MAX TRIED TO GET OUT OF HIS SEAT BUT WAS TOO SCARED. SOME PEOPLE SEATED IN FRONT OF HIM TRIED BUM-RUSHING GUARDS WITH THEIR FISTS. SOME PEOPLE WERE STILL IN THE MIDDLE OF THE TESTS, SO THEIR DIVIDERS BLOCKED THEM.



MAX HEARD A LOUD CRACKLE SOUND TO HIS LEFT. THERE WAS NOTHING TO HIS LEFT SIDE BUT THE AISLE. HE LOOKED UP.



THE GLASS CEILING HAD CRACKED, AND WATER FLOODED IN RAPIDLY. THE WATER REACHED THE AISLE, AND A NEW WATERFALL FORMED FROM A FOLLOWING CRACK IN THE CEILING.



THE WATERFALL SPLASHED ON MAX AND OTHER PEOPLE SURROUNDING HIM. THE WATER CARRIED HIM DOWN THE AISLE STAIRS. THE WATER'S FORCE PUSHED HIS EARMUFFS OFF. HIS BODY TOSSED AND TURNED OVER STAIRS, AND SEVERAL OF HIS VERTEBRACHONDRAL RIBS BROKE.



MAX WATER FINALLY STOPPED PUSHING HIM. THE GUNSHOTS AND SCREAMS WERE EVEN LOUDER NOW.



HE COULDN'T GET UP. HE HEARD PEOPLE YELLING THINGS LIKE "THIS WILL BE THE ONLY TIME TO REBEL," "EVERYBODY FIGHT," AND "ESCAPE."



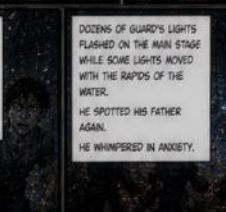
MAX SET HIS ROUTE FOR HIS FATHER. MAX BEGAN TO CRY AS HE STRUGGLED TO RUN DOWN THE STAIRS IN THE DARK.



HE LOOKED UP AGAIN AND SAW AN EVEN BIGGER CRACK DEEPER IN LENGTH. THE NEW WATERFALL MADE ITS WAY DOWN AS MAX DROVE TO THE SIDE WHERE ALL THE SEATS WERE.



HIS VISION SLOWLY ADJUSTED TO THE DARKNESS. HE COULD MAKE OUT FACES NOW. HE ROSE UP AND LOOKED DOWN THE BOTTOM THIRD OF THE ALIPTORIUM.



DOZENS OF GUARD'S LIGHTS FLASHED ON THE MAIN STAGE WHILE SOME LIGHTS MOVED WITH THE RAPIDS OF THE WATER. HE SPOTTED HIS FATHER AGAIN. HE WHIMPERED IN ANXIETY.



A GUN WAS POINTED AT HIM TOO.



FOLLOW ME OR I'LL SHOOT YOU!



MAX COULDN'T MOVE. HE HAD TO REUNITE WITH HIS FATHER. THERE WAS NO OTHER WAY IN HIS MIND.



A CRACK ABOVE THIS GUARD FORMED A NEW WATERFALL AND BATTERED HIM DOWN THE STAIRS.

CHAPTER 8: ASSIMILATION

THIS WAS MAX'S CHANCE.

A PRISONER STUCK IN HIS SEAT STRUGGLED TO BREATHE AIR OUT OF HIS TEST DIVIDERS.

HE WAS DROWNING FROM A SLIGHTLY-LEAKING WATERFALL ABOVE HIM.

MAX CLIMBED OVER THE NECESSARY SEATS TO REACH HIM AND SITUATED HIMSELF ABOVE THE TEST DIVIDER POOL.

THE PRISONER'S HAND ONLY TOUCHED THE AIR. MAX GRABBED HIS HAND AND TRIED TO PULL HIM OUT.

THE PRISONER HUNG ON TO HIS HEADGEAR. THE HEADGEAR LOCKED HIS HEAD IN PLACE SINCE HE WAS IN HIS TESTING PHASE STILL.

MAX CRIED. HE WANTED TO SAVE HIM BUT COULDN'T.

I'M SORRY!

HE YELLED.

THE MAN SCREAMED UNDERWATER.

MAX LET GO OF THE PRISONER'S LIFE AND PROCEEDED TOWARDS HIS FATHER.

HE WAS ON THE WOODLON PLUGE. HIS FATHER STOOD IN SPLENDOR, LOOKING AT THE MAIN STAGE.

DAD!

MAX YELLED TEARS STREAMED DOWN HIS FACE.

MAX!

HIS FATHER TURNED AROUND. HIS EYES WIDENED.

SEVENTH AND SIXTH ROW DOWN.

A CRACK, THE LENGTH OF AN ENTIRE ROW, FORMED ABOVE HIM.

A WALL OF WATER SHIELDED HIS FATHER AND THE ENTIRE MAIN STAGE.

MAX SCREAMED AND STOPPED ON THE FIFTH ROW.

HE WATER'S POWER WAS TOO DANGEROUS FOR MAX TO BURROW THROUGH. HIS CHANCE ENDED.

THERE WERE ALMOST THIRTY WATERFALLS SPENDING FROM THE CEILING.

MAX PLANNED A ROUTE TO THE EXIT. CLIMB UP TO THE MIDDLE OF THE 30TH ROW, CLIMB UP THE LEFT ASIDE, CLIMB UP TO THE MIDDLE-ISH RIGHT OF THE 20TH, AND CLIMB UP THE LEFT ASIDE TO THE EXIT.

MAX WORRIED IF HIS FATHER DIED. HE COULDN'T HAVE KNOWN MAX SURVIVED THOSE WATERFALLS. YET THIS WATERFALL WAS THE SUGGEST AND MOST POWERFUL.

MAX'S WORRY OVER HIS OWN GUARDIANSHIP KICKED IN AGAIN. HE FOCUSED BACK ON HIS ROUTE.

THE PRISONER WHO HE HAD TRIED TO SAVE WAS DEAD.

MAX FORCED HIMSELF TO LOOK AWAY.

MAX CLIMBED UP THE SEATS. HE GRASPED PERCEPTIVELY MORE OF WHAT WAS GOING ON AROUND HIM.

A HERD OF ABOUT SIXTY PRISONERS FOUGHT AGAINST AN ASSEMBLY OF ILLUMINATED GUARDS ON THE LEFT ASIDE NEXT TO THE 30TH ROW.

SOLDIERS SPENT THEIR RIFLES LIKE HORSES. PRISONERS DROPPED DEAD LIKE FLIES. EVERY FEW SEATS OR SO, MAX SAW A DEAD PRISONER OR GUARD. MORE DEAD PRISONERS THAN GUARDS.

MAX WAS ON THE 30TH ROW NOW. HE NEEDED TO GET UP THE ASIDE, BUT THE PRISONERS-GUARD BARRAGE BLOCKED HIS WAY.

HE CHANGED COURSE AND TURNED RIGHT WHERE A WATERFALL FLOURED. HE DROVE THROUGH THIS WATERFALL AND FELL IN THE RIGHT ASIDE.

HE SAW THREE GUARDS IN CLOSE PROXIMITY IN FRONT OF HIM. HE DON'T KNOW IF A GUARD WOULD EITHER ESCORT OR KILL HIM.

HE KICKED THEIR STREAMS OF LIGHT AND CRAWLED PAST THEM. HE SPURTED UP THE ASIDE STAIRS.

A HUGE WATERFALL BLOCKED HIS PATH AROUND THE 30TH ROW. HE ATTEMPTED TO DIVE THROUGH IT, YET ITS FORCE PUSHED HIM INTO A TUMBLE.

HE DROPPED TO THE 30TH ROW. MORE OF HIS RIBS CRACKED. HE COULDN'T GET UP ANYMORE.

HE CRIED IN PAIN.

MAX FELT HIMSELF BEING PICKED UP.

A BRIGHT LIGHT SLIGHTLY BLUNDED HIS EYES.

A GUARD HAD PICKED MAX UP. NOT KNOWING IF THIS GUARD WOULD KILL HIM OR NOT, MAX TRIED TO RESIST.

STOP! I'M HERE TO SAVE YOU!

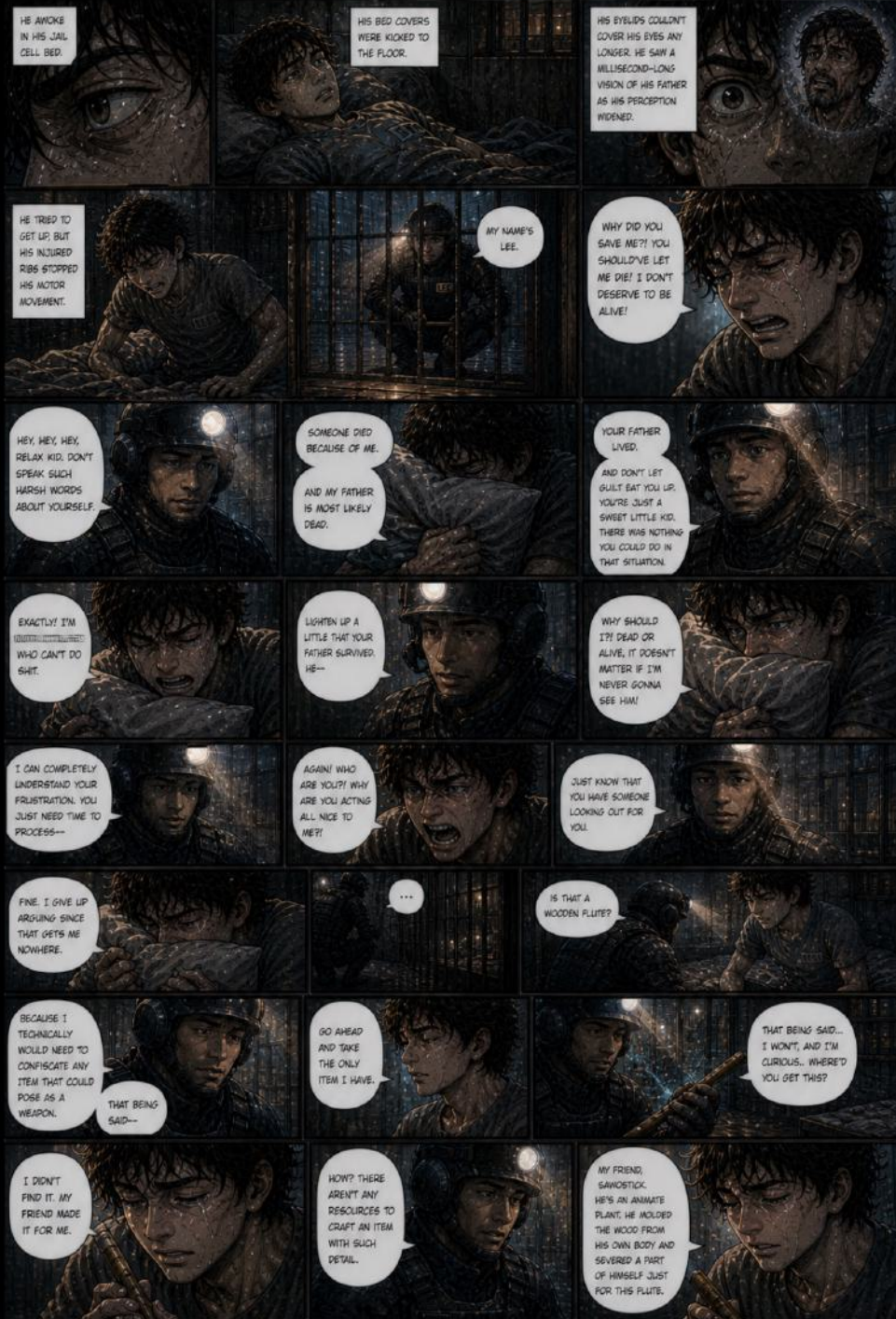
THE GUARD YELLED.

MAX WAS TOO HURT AND EXHAUSTED TO FIGHT BACK.

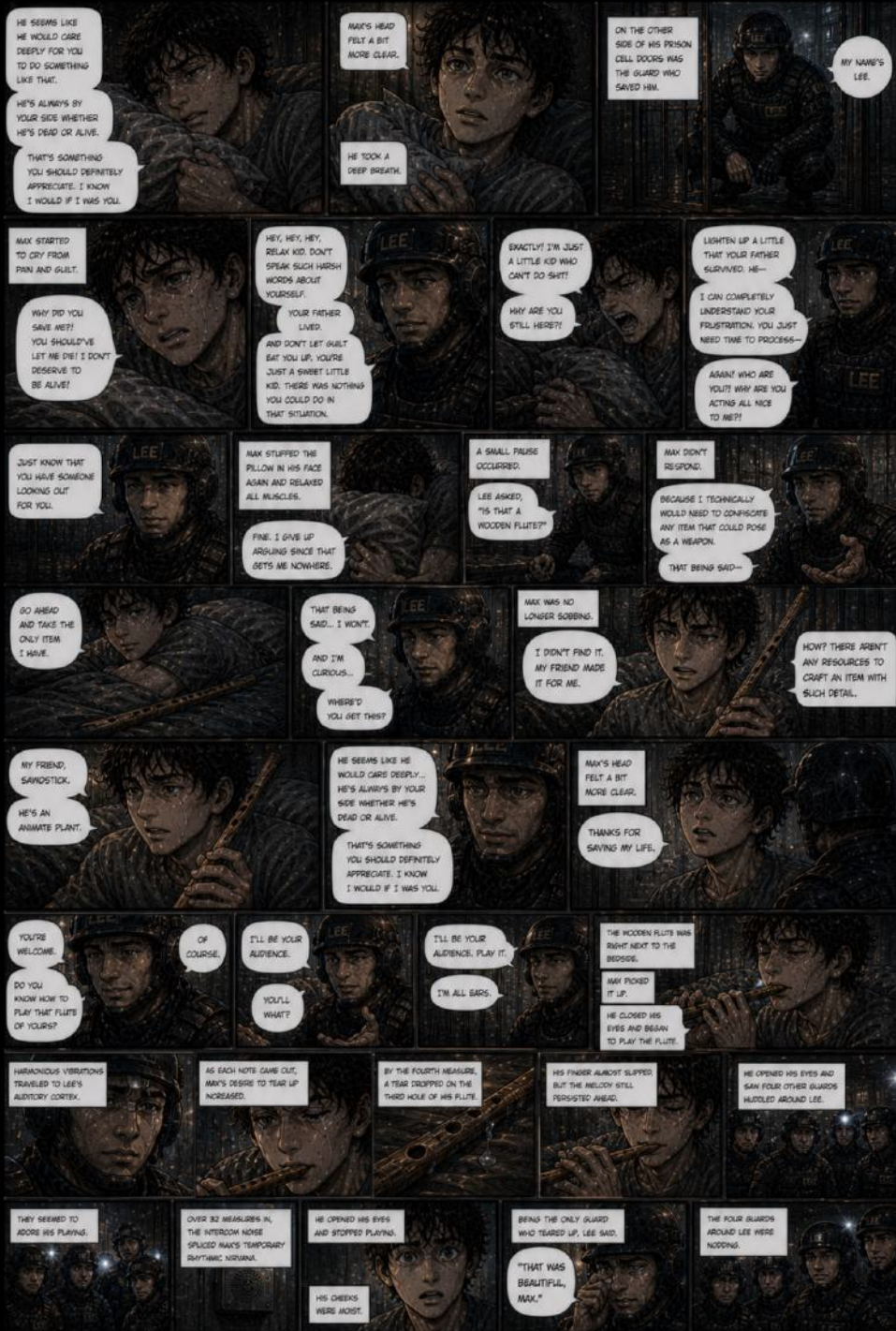
THERE WERE LESS SCREAMS NOW DUE TO EITHER NONE ESCAPED OR DIED. 30TH ROW.

MAX PASSED OUT.

CHAPTER 8: ASSIMILATION



CHAPTER 8: ASSIMILATION



CHAPTER 8: ASSIMILATION

HE SEEMS LIKE HE WOULD CARE DEEPLY FOR YOU TO DO SOMETHING LIKE THAT. HE'S ALWAYS BY YOUR SIDE WHETHER HE'S DEAD OR ALIVE. THAT'S SOMETHING YOU SHOULD DEFINITELY APPRECIATE. I KNOW IT WOULD IF I WAS YOU.

MAX'S HEAD FELT A BIT MORE CLEAR. HE TOOK A DEEP BREATH.

LEE STOOD UP.

YOU'RE WELCOME.

DO YOU KNOW HOW TO PLAY THAT FLUTE OF YOURS?

OF COURSE.

I'LL BE YOUR AUDIENCE.

YOU'LL WHAT?

I'LL BE YOUR AUDIENCE. PLAY IT. I'M ALL EARS.

THE WOODEN FLUTE WAS RIGHT NEXT TO THE BEDSIDE. MAX PICKED IT UP.

MAX CLOSED HIS EYES AND BEGAN TO PLAY THE FLUTE.

AS EACH NOTE CAME OUT, MAX'S DESIRE TO TEAR UP INCREASED.

HIS FINGER ALMOST SLIPPED, BUT THE MELODY STILL PERSISTED AHEAD.

YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT IT'S LIKE TO HAVE EVERYTHING TAKEN AWAY FROM YOU. THIS FLUTE IS THE ONLY SENSE OF SOMETHING THAT I HAVE.

HARMONIOUS VIBRATIONS TRAVELED TO LEE'S AUDITORY CORTEX.

BY THE FOURTH MEASURE, A TEAR DROPPED ON THE THIRD HOLE OF HIS FLUTE.

HE OPENED HIS EYES AND SAW FOUR OTHER GUARDS HULDED AROUND LEE.

THEY SEEMED TO ADORE HIS PLAYING.

OVER 32 MEASURES IN, THE INTERCOM NOISE SPLICED MAX'S TEMPORARY RHYTHMIC MIRVANA.

THAT WAS BEAUTIFUL, MAX.

HE OPENED HIS EYES AND STOPPED PLAYING. HIS CHEEKS WERE MOIST.

BEING THE ONLY GUARD WHO TEARED UP, LEE SAID.

THE FOUR GUARDS AROUND LEE WERE NODDING.

THE INTERCOM SAID, "ROTATE."

WHY THE FUCK ARE YOU CRYING? YOU'RE SOFT AS A FUCKING TEDDY BEAR.

I-I-I'M SORRY.

LEE WIPED THE TEARS FROM HIS FACE AND FIXED HIS POSTURE.

MAX'S JAIL CELL OPENED.

DON'T FORGET WHERE YOU ARE. THIS ISN'T A FUCKING CONCERT!

I WON'T AGAIN.

HE ASSIMILATED WITH THEIR FACIAL EXPRESSIONS.

THE OTHER FOUR GUARDS ASSIMILATED WITH THE FOURTH GUARD'S FACIAL EXPRESSION. THEY NODDED ALONG.

YOU DEAF TO THE INTERCOM?!

LEE APPROACHED MAX AND PULLED HIM BY THE RIGHT ARM OUT OF HIS BED. MAX'S BODY LUNGED FORWARD.

LEE LINKED HIS OTHER ARM TO GUIDE MAX'S BACK UP.

THE FOUR OTHER GUARDS MAINTAINED THEIR FACIAL EXPRESSION: EMOTIONLESS.

OUT OF YOUR BED! COME ON!

AGH! IT HURTS!

HE FELT AN ABNORMAL SENSATION IN HIS RIBS. A PAINFUL ONE.

HE PUSHED HIM FORWARD OUT OF THE JAIL CELL.

WHY'D YOU CHANGE BEHAVIOR ALL OF A SUDDEN? ARE YOU THE SAME AS EVERY GUARD HERE?!

CHAPTER 8: ASSIMILATION





HUBS: NEURAL INTERFACE IMPLANTS USED FOR PRISONER MONITORING AND ASSIMILATION CONTROL.





I WON'T GO THROUGH WITH IT. I HAVE TO TELL THEM, BOBBY.

WHAT YOU HAVE DISCOVERED IS AN EXTREME INVASION OF SOMEONE'S MENTAL PRIVACY.

IT HAS THE POTENTIAL TO HELP PEOPLE, BUT I SEE IT MORE AS A THREAT TO HUMANITY.

DR. AUSHTEV. COME ON. PLEASE DON'T TELL ANYONE.

WITH A NEUROPSYCHODYNAMIC MASS-ENERGY OSCILLATORY HOLONALUM, WE WOULD BE ABLE TO FIX ANYONE'S PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS.

ISN'T THAT WHAT OUR ORIGINAL PLAN WAS WHEN WE PARTNERED TOGETHER.

WE BOTH SAID WE WANTED TO ELIMINATE ALL SUFFERING IN THE WORLD OF MENTAL HEALTH. AND WITH SPEED TOO. WE'VE DONE RESEARCH FOR ALMOST 15 YEARS TOGETHER NOW.

DON'T RUIN OUR CHANCE OF SAVING THE WORLD.



I TOLD YOU BEFORE, BOBBY.

IT CAN SAVE THE WORLD. BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY, IT CAN DESTROY LIVES.

IT CAN DO MORE THAN THAT.

IT COULD ALLOW ANYONE TO CONTROL AND TINKER ONE'S MIND TO THEIR LIKING.

IT'S TOO EXTREME FOR THE HUMAN SPECIES. IF THIS SORT OF TECHNOLOGY FELL INTO THE WRONG HANDS, THEY COULD LEAD ARMIES OF PEOPLE WITH MIND-CONTROL.

NOT ONLY MIND CONTROL. BUT THE ABILITY TO CHANGE ANY COMPONENTS OF THEIR ID, EGO, OR SUPEREGO.



SO YOU'RE STUBBORN TO THE IDEA?



YES, BOBBY. I'M SORRY.

I HAVE TO TELL THEM. CARRYING INFORMATION AROUND LIKE THIS IS TOO HEAVY AND DANGEROUS.



DR. AUSHTEV.

I'VE KNOWN YOU SINCE HIGH SCHOOL. WE'VE GOTTEN TO KNOW EACH OTHER OVER THE YEARS.

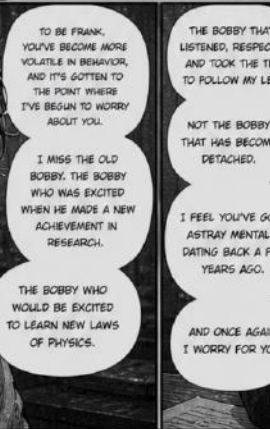
WE BONDED AND WE GREW CLOSER AS FRIENDS DAY BY DAY. AND—



I AGREE, BOBBY.

I'VE ENJOYED EVERY MOMENT OF RESEARCH WITH YOU. I ALWAYS LIKE TO STICK AROUND WHEN THERE'S A GENIUS AROUND.

HOWEVER, I'VE SEEN CHANGE IN YOU OVER THE YEARS.



TO BE FRANK, YOU'VE BECOME MORE VOLATILE IN BEHAVIOR, AND IT'S GOTTEN TO THE POINT WHERE I'VE BEGUN TO WORRY ABOUT YOU.

I MISS THE OLD BOBBY, THE BOBBY WHO WAS EXCITED WHEN HE MADE A NEW ACHIEVEMENT IN RESEARCH.

THE BOBBY WHO WOULD BE EXCITED TO LEARN NEW LAWS OF PHYSICS.



THE BOBBY THAT LISTENED, RESPECTED, AND TOOK THE TIME TO FOLLOW MY LEAD.

NOT THE BOBBY THAT HAS BECOME DETACHED.

I FEEL YOU'VE GONE ASTRAY MENTALLY DATING BACK A FEW YEARS AGO.

AND ONCE AGAIN, I WORRY FOR YOU.



YOU MISS THE OLD ME? DR. AUSHTEN, WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? I'VE ALWAYS BEEN THE SAME. YOU CAN TRUST ME.

I'M SORRY, BOBBY. I CAN'T KEEP THIS A SECRET.



IT'S NO SECRET THAT EVERYONE AROUND THE LAB HATES YOU. IN FACT, I HATE YOU MORE THAN ALL OF THEM.



BOBBY. PLEASE GET OUT OF MY WAY.



I'VE ALWAYS HATED YOU. YOU ANNOYING OLD PIECE OF FUCKING FILTH.



WHAT ARE YOU DOING??



ELIMINATING YOUR SUFFERING!



LET GO OF MY NECK, PL-PL-PLEASE!



I'M SORRY. I CAN'T.



KHAAA--

CHAPTER 9: MANIPULATION

CONSCIOUSNESS TARGET: ROBERT RUTANO

ROBERT WOKE UP. HE WAS ON A TINKERBOT IN HIS OFFICE. THOM, HORACE, ZIM, CONLEY, AND BANDU WERE Huddled AROUND HIM.

HE HAD TROUBLE FEELING. HE OPENED UP BOTH OF HIS PALMS. HIS RIGHT PALM WAS NOW ROBOTIC, AS WAS HIS ENTIRE RIGHT ARM. THE ARM WAS MADE OF TITANIUM. A GALVANIC TITANIUM STIMULATOR CHAMBER WAS ALSO IMPLANTED IN HIS TITANIUM ARM. AND THIS TIME IT WASN'T CONCEALED.

THE ENTIRE CROWN OF HIS HEAD WAS WRAPPED WITH BANDAGES, AS WAS HIS WHOLE CHEST AREA.



THE BOT'S GOT YOU ON MANY PAINKILLERS AS OF NOW. YOUR TITANIUM SKULL AND HEART CHAMBERS WERE PARTIALLY FRACTURED.

HOW DID I LIVE? WHO STOPPED KEITH?

THE VISUAL CORTEX CONVERTER... SAVED YOUR LIFE. I MANAGED TO SENSE KEITH IN THE DARK. MORE IMPORTANTLY, I GOT BIGGER NEWS.

WHY-- "COUGH"

WHY WASN'T THOM THERE TO STOP HIM?

I WASN'T TOLD ABOUT THE SOCIAL TESTING.

YOU WEREN'T TOLD? I WASN'T TOLD TO SURVIVE THIS AMBUSH. NOR WAS I TOLD BY MY BODYGUARD HE WOULD BE ABSENT SUPPOSEDLY THE MOST LIKELY TIME FOR A SURPRISE ATTACK.

I'M SORRY. LOOK, I KNOW I FUCKED UP, BUT JUST KNOW THAT I WON'T MESS THINGS UP NEXT TIME.

FATE CHOSE ME OVER YOU. IF I HAD DIED, YOU WOULD'VE LIVED, BUT I'M SORRY. I DON'T CONTROL FATE'S GAME.

ACTIVATE, GALVANIC STIMULATOR.

AS HIS SCREAMS WERE MUFFLED, THOM FELL TO THE FLOOR AND INVOLUNTARILY SLAPPED HIS HANDS OVER HIS FACE.

MORE TITANIUM DRENCHED HIS HANDS AND FACE. HIS BODY OSCILLATED ALL OVER THE PLACE. ROBERT CUT THE TITANIUM FLOW.

THOM MOVED LESS AND LESS AS HIS AIR CIRCULATION WAS CUT. ROBERT STOPPED DIRECTING HIS ATTENTION TO THIS SITE. ZIM, CONLEY, AND BANDU HAD STEPPED BACK FROM THE BODY WHOSE HEART WOULD STOP BEATING IN ABOUT 30 SECONDS.

SO WHAT'S THE BIGGER NEWS, HORACE?

THE ANIMATE PLANT AND HUMAN CROSS-BREEDING TRANSPIRED.

THOM'S BODY LAY MOTIONLESS.

YOU TOLD ME TO INITIATE THE GO-AHEAD ONCE THE "INFIRMARY" WAS FULLY CONSTRUCTED.

CHAPTER 9: MANIPULATION

CONSCIOUSNESS TARGET: ROBERT RUTANO

ROBERT WAKE UP.

HE WAS ON A TINKERBOT IN HIS OFFICE. THOM, HORACE, ZIM, CONLEY, AND BANDU WERE HIDDEN AROUND HIM.

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THE ARM WAS MADE OF TITANIUM. A GALVANC TITANIUM STIMULATOR CHAMBER WAS ALSO IMPLANTED IN HIS TITANIUM ARM, AND THIS TIME IT WASN'T CONCEALED.

THE ENTIRE CROWN OF HIS HEAD WAS WRAPPED WITH BANDAGES, AS WAS HIS WHOLE CHEST AREA.



HORACE SAID,

THE BOT'S GOT YOU ON MANY PAINKILLERS AS OF NOW. YOUR TITANIUM SKULL AND HEART CHAMBERS WERE PARTIALLY FRACTURED.

HOW DID I LIVE?
WHO STOPPED KEITH?



HORACE SAID,

THE VISUAL CORTEX CONVERTER... SAVED YOUR LIFE.

I MANAGED TO SENSE KEITH IN THE DARK. MORE IMPORTANTLY, I GOT BIGGER NEWS.



WHY--
"COUGH"

THOM DISPLAYED FEAR BUT DIDN'T SHOW IT.

I WASN'T TOLD ABOUT THE SOCIAL STATUS TESTING.



YOU WEREN'T TOLD? I WASN'T TOLD TO SURVIVE THIS AMBUSH. NOR WAS I TOLD BY MY BODYGUARD HE WOULD BE ABSENT DURING SUPPOSEDLY THE MOST LIKELY TIME FOR A SURPRISE ATTACK.

THOM SAID,

I'M SORRY. LOOK, I KNOW I FUCKED UP, BUT JUST KNOW THAT I WON'T MESS THINGS UP NEXT TIME.



FATE CHOSE ME OVER YOU. IF I HAD DIED, YOU WOULD'VE LIVED. BUT I'M SORRY. I DON'T CONTROL FATE'S GAME.

ROBERT IGNITED HIS NEW GALVANC STIMULATOR AND GALVANIZED HIS METALLIC RIGHT HAND.

HE SPEWED OUT LIQUID TITANIUM AT THOM'S FACE.

AS HIS SCREAMS WERE MUFFLED, THOM FELL TO THE FLOOR AND INVOLUNTARILY SLAPPED HIS HANDS OVER HIS FACE.



MORE TITANIUM DRENCHED HIS HANDS AND FACE. HIS BODY OSCILLATED ALL OVER THE PLACE.

ROBERT CUT THE TITANIUM FLOW.

THOM MOVED LESS AND LESS AS HIS AIR CIRCULATION WAS CUT.

SO WHAT'S THE BIGGER NEWS, HORACE?



ZIM, CONLEY, AND BANDU HAD STEPPED BACK FROM THE BODY WHOSE HEART WOULD STOP BEATING IN ABOUT 20 SECONDS.

HORACE, WHO NEVER DIRECTED HIS ATTENTION TO THE SITE OF THOM, LEANED CLOSER TO ROBERT.

THE ANIMATE PLANT AND HUMAN CROSS-BREEDING TRANSPIRED. YOU TOLD ME TO INITIATE THE GO-AHEAD ONCE THE "INFIRMARY" WAS FULLY CONSTRUCTED.

ROBERT JOLTED HIS POSTURE FORWARD.

HOW'D IT GO?

IT WORKED OUT. HOWEVER, THERE WAS A MINOR PROBLEM IN WHICH A SENTINEL SOLDIER, NAMED LEE HARVEY, ESCAPED WITH AN ANIMATE PLANT CONSPIRE.

DON'T GET TOO WORKED UP ABOUT IT. I'VE ORDERED HARRY TO LEAD A SEARCH TEAM TO FIND THEM.



I DON'T CARE ABOUT ONE FUCKING GUARD. TELL ME HOW MANY PRISONERS SURVIVED.

6,386.

WHAT A FUCKING DISASTER.

NONE OF THIS SHOULD'VE HAPPENED.

I SHOULD'VE TWISTED HIS NECK THE FIRST INFRACTION HE MADE!

WHY ARE YOU THREE HERE?

HORACE SAID,

YOU WOULDN'T BE HERE WITHOUT THEM. THEY SAFELY EVACUATED YOU OUT OF THE AGUARITORIUM.

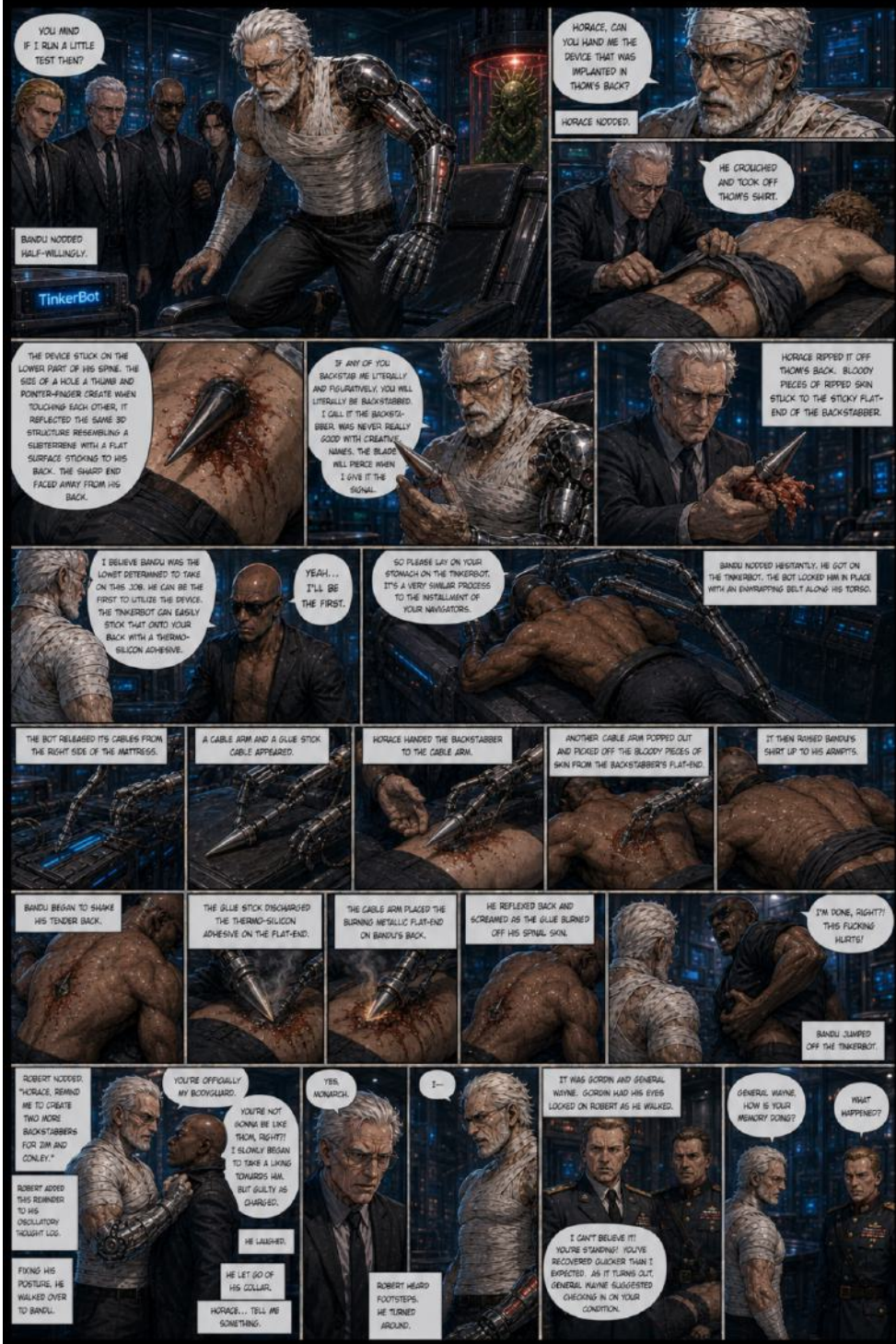


CHAPTER 9: MANIPULATION

CONSCIOUSNESS TARGET:
ROBERT RUTANO

ROBERT JOLTED HIS
POSTURE FORWARD.





YOU MIND IF I RUN A LITTLE TEST THEN?

BANDU NODDED HALF-WILLINGLY.

TinkerBot

HORACE, CAN YOU HAND ME THE DEVICE THAT WAS IMPLANTED IN THOM'S BACK?

HORACE NODDED.

HE CROUCHED AND TOOK OFF THOM'S SHIRT.

THE DEVICE STUCK ON THE LOWER PART OF HIS SPINE. THE SIDE OF A HOLE A THUMB AND POINTER-FINGER CREATE WHEN TOUCHING BACK TO BACK. IT REFLECTED THE SAME 3D STRUCTURE RESEMBLING A SUBTERRANEAN WITH A FLAT SURFACE STICKING TO HIS BACK. THE SHARP END FACED AWAY FROM HIS BACK.

IF ANY OF YOU BACKSTAB ME LITERALLY AND FIGURATIVELY, YOU WILL LITERALLY BE BACKSTABBED. I CALL IT THE BACKSTABBER. WAS NEVER REALLY GOOD WITH CREATIVE NAMES. THE BLADE WILL PERCE WHEN I GIVE IT THE SIGNAL.

HORACE RIPPED IT OFF THOM'S BACK. BLOODY PIECES OF RIPPED SKIN STUCK TO THE STICKY FLAT-END OF THE BACKSTABBER.

I BELIEVE BANDU WAS THE LOWEST DETERMINED TO TAKE ON THIS JOB. HE CAN BE THE FIRST TO UTILIZE THE DEVICE. THE TINKERBOT CAN EASILY STICK THAT ONTO YOUR BACK WITH A THERMO-SILICON ADHESIVE.

YEAH... I'LL BE THE FIRST.

SO PLEASE LAY ON YOUR STOMACH ON THE TINKERBOT. IT'S A VERY SIMILAR PROCESS TO THE INSTALLMENT OF YOUR NAVIGATORS.

BANDU NODDED HESITANTLY. HE GOT ON THE TINKERBOT. THE BOT LOOKED HIM IN PLACE WITH AN ENWRAPPING BELT ALONG HIS TORSO.

THE BOT RELEASED ITS CABLES FROM THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE MATTRESS.

A CABLE ARM AND A GLUE STICK CABLE APPEARED.

HORACE HANDED THE BACKSTABBER TO THE CABLE ARM.

ANOTHER CABLE ARM POPPED OUT AND PICKED OFF THE BLOODY PIECES OF SKIN FROM THE BACKSTABBER'S FLAT-END.

IT THEN RAISED BANDU'S SHIRT UP TO HIS ARMPITS.

BANDU BEGAN TO SHAKE HIS TENDER BACK.

THE GLUE STICK DISCHARGED THE THERMO-SILICON ADHESIVE ON THE FLAT-END.

THE CABLE ARM PLACED THE BURNING METALLIC FLAT-END ON BANDU'S BACK.

HE REFLECTED BACK AND SCREAMED AS THE GLUE BURNED OFF HIS SPINAL SKIN.

I'M DONE, RIGHT? THIS FUCKING HURTS!

BANDU JUMPED OFF THE TINKERBOT.

ROBERT NODDED. "HORACE, REMIND ME TO CREATE TWO MORE BACKSTABBERS FOR ZIM AND CONLEY."

ROBERT ADDED THIS REMINDER TO HIS OSCILLATORY THOUGHT LOG.

FIXING HIS POSTURE, HE WALKED OVER TO BANDU.

YOU'RE OFFICIALLY MY BOONSGUARD.

YOU'RE NOT GONNA BE LIKE TACON, RIGHT? I SLOWLY BEGAN TO TAKE A LOOK TOWARDS HIM, BUT GUILTY AS CHARGED.

HE LAUGHED.

HE LET GO OF HIS COLLAR.

HORACE... TELL ME SOMETHING.

YES, MONARCH.

I--

ROBERT HEARD FOOTSTEPS. HE TURNED AROUND.

IT WAS GORDON AND GENERAL WAYNE. GORDON HAD HIS EYES LOCKED ON ROBERT AS HE WALKED.

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! YOU'RE S'SANDING! YOU'VE RECOVERED QUICKER THAN I EXPECTED. AS IT TURNS OUT, GENERAL WAYNE SUGGESTED CHECKING IN ON YOUR CONDITION.

GENERAL WAYNE. HOW IS YOUR MESSKRY DOING?

WHAT HAPPENED?



GENERAL WAYNE NOTICED THE BODY. HE SAID, "YOU'RE NOT GONNA TELL US WHAT HAPPENED?"

FATE HAD CHOSEN ME OVER HIM.

GORDON ANALYZED THE MISSING PIECE OF SKIN ON THOM'S BACK.

HE WAS A MISTAKE FROM THE START. A FAT PIECE OF SHIT WHO SLEPT ON THE JOB. AND HE ALMOST COST ME MY LIFE.

WHAT HAPPENED?

I FUCKING TOLD YOU ALREADY.

WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU SPECIFICALLY?

YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENED.

I DON'T REMEMBER.

I WOULD EXPECT YOU TO NOT REMEMBER YOUR PAST LIFE, BUT YOU WITNESSED THIS INCIDENT IN YOUR NEW LIFE. THE MEMORIES OF YOUR PAST LIFE WILL COME TO YOU WITH TIME. HAVE YOU LOST ALL OF YOUR CRYSTALLIZED INTELLIGENCE?

I FEEL LIKE MYSELF. HOWEVER, I FORGOT ALL ABOUT MY GOALS AND MOTIVATIONS I HAD IN THE PAST. I'VE LOST MY SENSE OF PURPOSE. I FUCKING HATE BEING CONFUSED.

ROBERT! TELL ME! WHY AM I ALIVE? WHY DID YOU BRING ME BACK? WHAT WERE WE PLANNING TO ACCOMPLISH?!

A LIFE WITHOUT PURPOSE IS A LIFE NOT WORTH LIVING.

I CAN GIVE YOU A MENTAL REFRESHER. I REPROGRAMMED YOU SO THAT WE COULD FULFILL WHAT WE ORIGINALLY HAD PLANNED. TO RULE A KINGDOM SIDE-BY-SIDE.

I KNOW MYSELF, AND THAT DOESN'T SOUND LIKE SOMETHING YOU'D SAY.

YOU SHOULDN'T BE ONE TO MAKE JUDGMENTS. CONSIDER THE FACT THAT YOU ARE STILL GOING THROUGH A HEAVY METAMORPHOSIS. YOU DON'T KNOW YOURSELF. IT'S ONLY AN IMPRESSION.

MEMORIES MADE UP A PERSON. NOT ASSUMPTIONS AND INFERENCE.

NOW GET YOUR HANDS OFF ME. SO IT'S TRUE? WE'RE GONNA RULE AN EMPIRE TOGETHER?

OF COURSE. YOU POSSIBLY DON'T REMEMBER, BUT WE WERE BEST BLEDDES IN HIGH SCHOOL. WE BOTH MADE SO MANY SACRIFICES TO GET TO WHERE WE ARE NOW. YOU PHYSICALLY SACRIFICED YOUR BODY FOR US. IT WAS COMMENSURABLE. AND YOU WOULDN'T REMEMBER THAT EITHER.

ALL I REMEMBER IS BEING IN AN ETERNAL PLANE OF EMPTY DARKNESS.

YOU HAVE EVERY RIGHT TO BE TERRIFIED. MOST IMPORTANTLY, YOU SHOULD LET ME HANDLE EVERYTHING FROM HERE ON OUT. YOU'VE DONE MORE THAN ENOUGH. THE LAST THING I NEED YOU TO DO IS TO GIVE THE GO-AHEAD OF INSTALLING HUBS FOR YOUR MYRIAD. YOU JUST NEED REST UNTIL ALL OF YOUR MEMORIES RETURN.

THANK YOU. HUBS? MYRIAD?

THE MYRIAD ARE YOUR SOLDIERS. WE REQUIRE HUBS OUT OF EVERYONE WHO WILL LIVE IN THE KINGDOM OF OURS.

I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THAT. GORDON HAS BEEN HANDLING ALL THAT BUSINESS.

WELL THEN, YOU CAN HAVE GORDON TELL THEM FOR YOU THEN. ONLY THEN I CAN DO THAT.

I'VE TAKEN COMPLETE CONTROL OVER THE MYRIAD UNITS, GENERAL WAYNE RECOVERS. WHAT'S THIS YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT REGARDING HUBS?

IT'S A REQUIREMENT. GENERAL WAYNE IS ON BOARD SO IT WILL BE YOUR JOB TO INFORM MYRIAD TO COMPLY.

WHAT'S THE PURPOSE OF HAVING HUBS? DON'T THE SENTINEL HAVE THEM ALREADY? I THOUGHT WE HAD ENOUGH NEURO-ENHANCED GUARDS.

DON'T ARGUE WITH ME. GENERAL WAYNE IS YOUR SUPERIOR, SO YOU WILL COMPLY, AND THE MYRIAD WILL FURTHER COMPLY.

ANYWAY... PLEASE TELL ME WHERE WE STAND WITH NUMBERS WITH THE MYRIAD.

...

...



WE LOST AROUND A FOURTH OF OUR MEN, BUT I HEARD THE SENTINEL SUFFERED GREATER NUMBERS.

SO YOU GUYS LOST AROUND 250 MEN?

THE SENTINEL LOST 667 MEN TO BE EXACT.

SOMETHING NOT TO BE PROUD OF.

FUCK!

I HAVEN'T REALIZED WE LOST THAT MANY MEN. GODDAMN THAT KEITH SON-OF-A-BITCH!



HEY, RANDOM QUESTION. WHY IS THOMAS'S BODY MISSING A PIECE OF SKIN THERE?



GET THE FUCK OUT, GORDIN!



WHY? WHAT'D I DO WRONG?



EVERYONE IN THIS ROOM DID SOMETHING WRONG! I DID SOMETHING WRONG! YOU DID SOMETHING WRONG! GO BACK TO YOUR OFFICE AND FIGURE OUT PREVENTATIVES TO STOP BEING WRONG IN THE FUTURE!



WHY DO YOU ONLY DESIRE THAT I LEAVE THOUGH?



YOU WANNA KNOW WHY? IT'S BECAUSE YOU'RE A FUCKING NEUROTIC! LEND ME A BREAK ONE TIME!



ROBERT, I DON'T REMEMBER YOU BEING LIKE THIS. I SENSE YOU'VE CHANGED SINCE I DIED.



WELL, MAYBE YOU DON'T REMEMBER THE OLD ME THEN. DO ME A FAVOR AND GET SOME REST UNTIL YOU'VE REGAINED YOUR MEMORY.

I WANT YOU AND GORDIN OUT OF HERE!



WHAT ELSE DO YOU HAVE PLANNED THAT WE AREN'T AWARE OF? THERE'S SOMETHING YOU'RE NOT TELLING US.



YOUR HEAD'S OFF-CENTER. MY ONLY PLAN IS THE PLAN I TOLD YOU BOTH. I DON'T NEED TO FURTHER EXPLAIN MYSELF.



WHAT, THAT YOU'RE GOING TO RILE A "KINGDOM"? I FIND THAT WHOLE SOCIAL STATUS TEST A LOAD OF HORSESHIT! I FIND BELIEF IN THE FACT THAT YOU'RE ENGAGING YOURSELF IN SOMETHING MUCH MORE ASTRONOMICAL, SOMETHING FAR MORE COMPLEX.



BELIEVE WHAT YOU WANT TO BELIEVE. REGARDLESS, YOU'RE OBLIGATED TO TAKE HEED OF MY COMMAND.

DO I NEED TO ASK TWICE?



...



OKAY, WE'LL LEAVE.



I'M THE ONE WHO'S WINNING THIS GAME!



I GALVANIZED HIS HAND AND SPEWED TITANIUM OVER THE LAKE OF BLOOD.

THE BLOOD MIXED WITH THE LIQUID TITANIUM. BLOOD STEAMED.



WE LOST AROUND A FOURTH OF OUR MEN, BUT I HEARD THE SENTINEL SUFFERED GREATER NUMBERS.

SO YOU GUYS LOST AROUND 250 MEN?

YES.

THE SENTINEL LOST 869 MEN TO BE EXACT.

SOMETHING NOT TO BE PROUD OF.

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I WANT YOU AND GORDIN OUT OF HERE!



WHAT ELSE DO YOU HAVE PLANNED THAT WE WON'T ANSWER ON? THERE'S SOMETHING YOU'RE NOT TELLING US.



YOUR HEAD'S OFF-CENTER. MY ONLY PLAN IS THE PLAN I TOLD YOU BOTH. I DON'T NEED TO FURTHER EXPLAIN MYSELF.



WHAT, THAT YOU'RE GOING TO KILL A "KINGDOM"? I FIND THAT WHOLE SOCIAL STATUS TEST A LOAD OF HORSERSHIT! I FIND BELIEF IN THE FACT THAT YOU'RE ENGAGING MUCH MORE ASTRONOMICAL SOMETHING FAR MORE COMPLEX.



BELIEVE WHAT YOU WANT TO BELIEVE. REGARDLESS, YOU'RE OBLIGATED TO TAKE HEED OF MY COMMAND.

DO I NEED TO ASK TWICE?



...



OKAY. LEAVE.



IT'S TIME! TRULY TELL YOU ALL WHAT'S REALLY GOING TO HAPPEN.

CONSCIOUSNESS TARGET: LEAFLET



LEAFLET WAS AN ANIMATE PLANT CONCUBINE. SHE WAS ASSIGNED TO MATE WITH SENTINEL SOLDIER LEE HARVEY IN THE CROSS-BREEDING QUARTERS, WHICH WAS ORIGINALLY PREFACED AS THE INFIRMARY. THEY BOTH ESCAPED TOGETHER.



ARE WE SAFE?



I THINK SO. FOR NOW.



WELL, HOW LONG WILL "NOW" LAST US?

TRY NOT TO WORRY. I'M HERE TO PROTECT YOU NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS.

WHEN'S THE BABY EXPECTED TO COME?

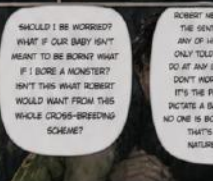
HORACE TOLD US WITHIN THE NEXT FOUR HOURS.



HOW MANY HOURS HAS IT BEEN?



HOW ARE WE ABLE TO CROSS-BREED SUPERB?



SHOULD I BE WORRIED? WHAT IF OUR BABY ISN'T MEANT TO BE BORN? WHAT IF I BORE A MONSTER? HAVN'T THIS WHAT ROBERT WOULD WANT FROM THIS WHOLE CROSS-BREEDING SCHEME?



ROBERT NEVER ALERTED THE SENTINEL ABOUT ANY OF HIS PLANS. HE ONLY TOLD US WHAT TO DO AT ANY GIVEN MOMENT. DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. IT'S THE FUTURE THAT DICTATE A BABY'S FUTURE. NO ONE IS BORN A MONSTER. THAT'S NOT HOW NATURE WORKS.

BUT WHAT IF OUR BABY DOESN'T WORK WITH NATURE?

YOU'RE THINKING TOO MUCH. JUST KNOW HOW MUCH I LOVE YOU.



I LOVE YOU TOO.



WHAT'S THE POINT?



OF THIS. WHAT'S THE POINT OF BEING TOGETHER IF IT'LL ONLY LAST A FEW MOMENTS? WE CAN BE KILLED AT ANY MOMENT.



IT DOESN'T MATTER THE TIME WE LIVE. ALL THAT MATTERS IS THE EXPERIENCE WE LIVE. EVEN IF OUR LOVE LASTS A FEW MINUTES, THAT'S OKAY. DEATH IS AN IMMINENT UNKNOWN. LOVE IS A KNOWN FORCE. WE CAN ONLY PERCEIVE WHAT WE KNOW, AND THEREFORE, WE SHOULD APPRECIATE THIS FORCE.

IT'S THE UNKNOWN THAT SCARES ME. IT CAN STRIKE AT ANY TIME, AND I WISH I KNEW WHEN.

DO YOU THINK THE MONSTER IS MORE THAN THE SENTINEL?



HOW CAN YOU MAINTAIN YOURSELF? WHY DID YOU, OF ALL GUARDS, DECIDE TO ESCAPE WITH AN ANIMATE PLANT?

WHY DID I, OF ALL ANIMATE PLANTS, DECIDE TO ESCAPE WITH A HUMAN? WERE WE SO HOOKED ON THE IDEA OF LOVE THAT WE LOST ALL SENSE OF RATIONALITY?

WE WERE THE ONLY RATIONAL ONES. EVERYONE THERE IS GOING TO DIE BECAUSE OF ROBERT. I CAN SENSE HIS RADIATING EVIL... HE'S A TIME BOMB. HE'S MENTALLY SICK. FLUCKED IN THE HEAD. BEYOND THAT, IF NO ONE STOPS HIM, THE HUMAN RACE WILL MOST LIKELY COME TO AN END.



WHY MUST EVERYONE SUFFER SO MUCH? HOW CAN ONE MAN INHERIT SO MUCH PAIN INTO OTHERS?

REASON WHY I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE SO WISE AND NOT LIKE THE REST OF THOSE MONSTERS. YOU'RE KIND. YOU HAVE EMPATHY. YOU'RE CAPABLE OF LOVING OTHERS. NOT ENTIRELY TRUE. I'M NOT PROUD OF SOME THINGS I DID.



LIKE WHAT?

LIKE, FOR EXAMPLE, I--



STEP STEP STEP...

HEY, I HEAR VOICES!



!!

FLUCK.



STEP! STEP! STEP! STEP!

THE FOOTSTEPS MULTIPLIED IN NUMBER AND INCREASED IN VOLUME EXPONENTIALLY.



LEAFLET'S BODY WAS SHAKING.



LEAFLET. YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO SAVE US. DO YOU THINK YOU COULD JUMP US OUT THROUGH THAT WINDOW? CAN YOUR BODY HANDLE THE FALL?



YEAH, I CAN HANDLE THAT FALL. BUT I DON'T THINK WE'D MANAGE TO ESCAPE THAT HORDE THE SECOND WE LAND.



ARE THERE ANY OTHER WINDOWS? HOW MANY STORES IS THIS BUILDING?



FLUCK! I'M NOT SURE.



YEAH, I CAN HANDLE THAT FALL.

BUT I DON'T THINK WE'D MANAGE TO ESCAPE THAT HORDE THE SECOND WE LAND.

ARE THERE ANY OTHER WINDOWS?

HOW MANY STORIES IS THIS BUILDING?

STEP! STEP! STEP!

WE HAVE TO GO UPSTAIRS THEN.

FUCK! I'M NOT SURE.

COME ON! I'LL CARRY YOU!

OPEN THE HATCH! HIDE ON THE ROOF!



LEAFLET PICKED HIM UP WITH HER VERSATILE BODY AND MALLEABLE ROOTED ARMS.

UTILIZING HER SPRINGY LEGS, SHE SPURTED UP EACH FLIGHT OF STAIRS THIRCE THE SPEED OF A HUMAN BEING, SKIPPING 6 STEPS WITH EACH STRIDE.

THE FOOTSTEPS DECREASED IN NOISE. THEY WERE ON THE EIGHTH FLOOR.

LEAFLET'S DESIRE TO BE WITH LEE MASQUERADED ALL OF HER PAST FEARS.

SHE YELLED, "HOW MANY FLOORS ARE THERE?!"

HER PHYSICAL HEART CONTINUED TO POUND. HER HEART FOR LEE WAS LOUDER.



THE FLIGHTS OF STAIRS ENDED. THEY WERE ON THE TENTH FLOOR.

A HATCH TO THE ROOF APPEARED ABOVE HER HEAD.

OPEN THE HATCH! HIDE ON THE ROOF!

STRETCHING HER RIGHT ARM, SHE PULLED DOWN THE HATCH LEVER. IT WAS ALMOST NIGHT.

SHE PROPELLED LEE AND HERSELF UP WITH A POWERFUL HOP.



SHE LANDED ON THE CONCRETE ROOF.

EVERY OTHER BUILDING IN THEIR VICINITY WAS THE SAME HEIGHT.

LEAFLET STOOD STILL. SHE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO.

CLOSE THE HATCH SO THEY CAN'T GET TO US.

OKAY.

LEAFLET NODDED AND CLOSED IT.

CLANG!

LEAFLET COULD STILL HEAR THE APPROACHING FOOTSTEPS, BUT THEY WERE MUFFLED.



THEY'RE STILL GONNA REACH US! WE HAVE NO OTHER OPTION BUT TO JUMP.

TO THE GROUND?! THAT'S A 10-STORY DROP! NO WAY YOU CAN SURVIVE THAT.

TO THE OTHER BUILDING, I MEAN IT'S RISKY, BUT IT'S ALL I CAN THINK OF.

AROUND 20 FEET



LEAFLET! LOOK AT ME!

ALL OF YOUR FEAR LAYS IN YOUR GREEN EYES. YOU'RE REFLECTING THIS FEAR TO ME.

YOU CAN DO THIS!

I FUCKING BELIEVE IN YOU!



LEAFLET TURNED AWAY FROM THE WINDOW.

WE HAVE TO GO UPSTAIRS THEN. COME ON! I'LL CARRY YOU!

HE NODDED.

SHE PICKED HIM UP WITH HER VERSATILE BODY AND MALLEABLE ROOTED ARMS. UTILIZING HER SPRINGY LEGS, SHE SPURTED UP EACH FLIGHT OF STAIRS THIRDS THE SPEED OF A HUMAN BEING, SKIPPING 6 STEPS WITH EACH STRIDE.

TMP!
TMP!
TMP!

THE FOOTSTEPS DECREASED IN NOISE. THEY WERE ON THE EIGHTH FLOOR.

HOW MANY FLOORS ARE THERE?!

HER PHYSICAL HEART CONTINUED TO POUND.

HER HEART FOR LEE WAS LOUDER.

THE FLIGHTS OF STAIRS ENDED. THEY WERE ON THE TENTH FLOOR.

A HATCH TO THE ROOF APPEARED ABOVE HER HEAD.

CRADLED LIKE A BABY, LEE YELLED.

OPEN THE HATCH! HIDE ON THE ROOF!

STRETCHING HER RIGHT ARM, SHE PULLED DOWN THE HATCH LEVER.

IT WAS ALMOST NIGHT. SHE PROPELLED LEE AND HERSELF UP WITH A POWERFUL HOP.

SHE LANDED ON THE CONCRETE ROOF.

EVERY OTHER BUILDING IN THEIR VICINITY WAS THE SAME HEIGHT.

LEAFLET STOOD STILL. SHE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO.

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TO THE GROUND?! THAT'S A 10-STORY DROP! NO WAY YOU CAN SURVIVE THAT.

TO THE OTHER BUILDING, I MEAN. IT'S RISKY, BUT IT'S ALL I CAN THINK OF.

AROUND 20 FEET

LEAFLET! LOOK AT ME!

YOU CAN DO THIS! I BELIEVE IN YOU!

LEAFLET PUT ON THIS MASQUERADE AGAIN.

SHE RANSED HER RIGHT FOOT HIGH UP IN THE AIR. SHE DISTRIBUTED ALL OF HER PHYSICAL ENERGY INTO THE FIRST STRIDE.

SHE SPURTED FOR THE OTHER BUILDING.

ONE STRIDE.

TWO STRIDE.

THREE STRIDE.

SHE LEAPED.

SHE FELT THE AIR TICKLE ALL OVER HER BODY.

HER POTENTIAL ENERGY WAS EQUIVALENT TO THAT OF HER KINETIC ENERGY, YET SHE FELT MORE OF AN ENERGETIC RUSH FROM THE KINETICISM ITSELF.

SHE LANDED ON THE OTHER ROOF WITH BOTH FEET.

SHE EXHALED WITH MANIA.

SOMEONE FROM BELOW YELLED.

I SAW THEM!

HER MASQUERADE AND MANIA QUICKLY DISSIPATED. SHE STOOD STILL AGAIN. SHE PANICKED.

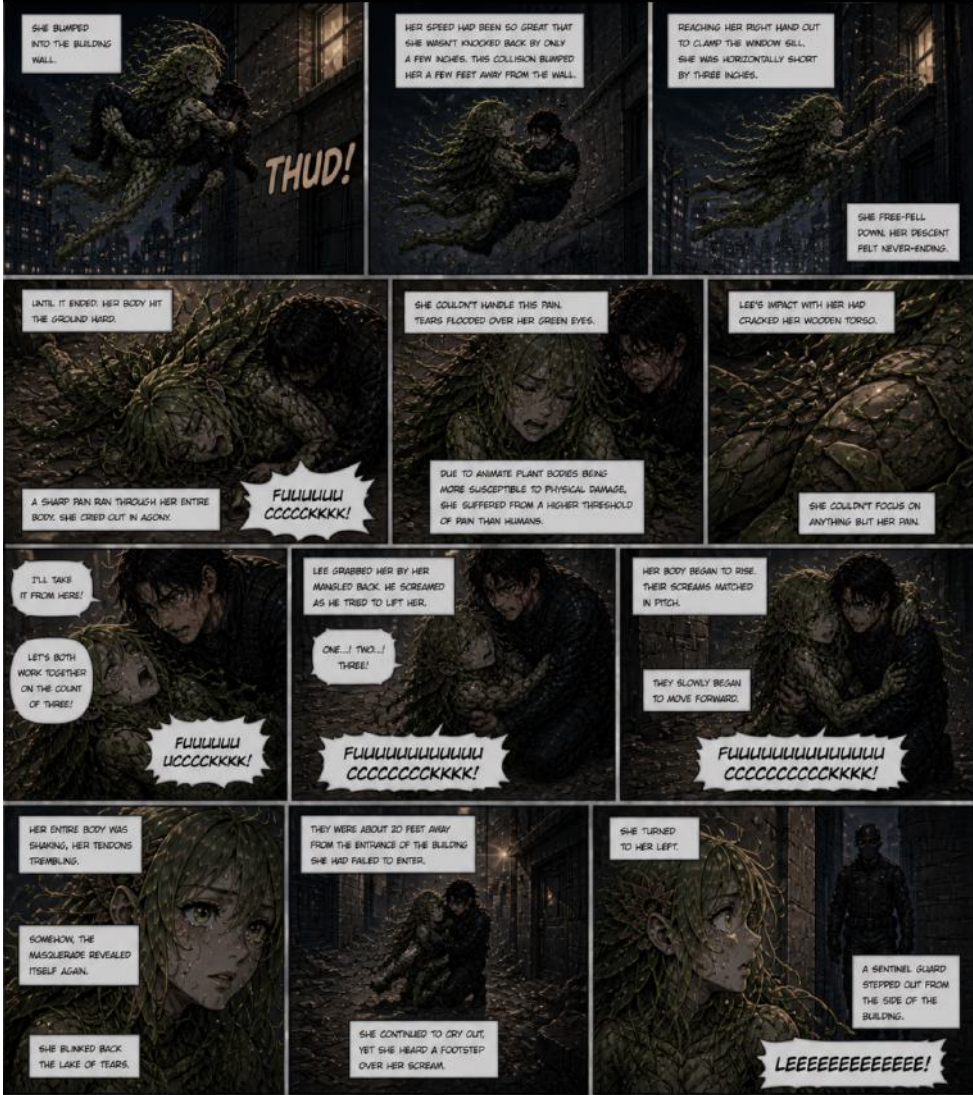
WHAT DO I DO?!

LEE YELLED.

YOU DO IT AGAIN! KEEP GOING!

SHE SCANNED AROUND FOR OTHER ROOFTOPS. THE CLOSEST ONE WAS TO HER RIGHT, YET THE GAP WAS CLOSE TO AROUND 30 FEET.

AROUND 30 FEET



SHE BUMPED INTO THE BUILDING WALL.

THUD!

HER SPEED HAD BEEN SO GREAT THAT SHE WASN'T KNOCKED BACK BY ONLY A FEW INCHES. THIS COLLISION BUMPED HER A FEW FEET AWAY FROM THE WALL.

REACHING HER RIGHT HAND OUT TO CLAMP THE WINDOW SILL, SHE WAS HORIZONTALLY SHORT BY THREE INCHES.

SHE FREE-FELL DOWN. HER DESCENT FELT NEVER-ENDING.

UNTIL IT ENDED. HER BODY HIT THE GROUND HARD.

SHE COULDN'T HANDLE THIS PAIN. TEARS FLOODED OVER HER GREEN EYES.

LEE'S IMPACT WITH HER HAD CRACKED HER WOODEN TORSO.

A SHARP PAIN RAN THROUGH HER ENTIRE BODY. SHE CRIED OUT IN AGONY.

FUUUUUUU CCCCCCKKK!

DUE TO ANIMATE PLANT BODIES BEING MORE SUSCEPTIBLE TO PHYSICAL DAMAGE, SHE SUFFERED FROM A HIGHER THRESHOLD OF PAIN THAN HUMANS.

SHE COULDN'T FOCUS ON ANYTHING BUT HER PAIN.

I'LL TAKE IT FROM HERE!

LET'S BOTH WORK TOGETHER ON THE COUNT OF THREE!

FUUUUUUU UCCCCCKKK!

LEE GRABBED HER BY HER MANGLED BACK. HE SCREAMED AS HE TRIED TO LIFT HER.

ONE...! TWO...! THREE!

FUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUU CCCCCCCCCCKKK!

HER BODY BEGAN TO RISE. THEIR SCREAMS MATCHED IN PITCH.

THEY SLOWLY BEGAN TO MOVE FORWARD.

FUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUU CCCCCCCCCCKKK!

HER ENTIRE BODY WAS SHAKING, HER TENDONS TREMBLING.

SOMEHOW, THE MASQUERADE REVEALED ITSELF AGAIN.

SHE BLINKED BACK THE LAKE OF TEARS.

THEY WERE ABOUT 20 FEET AWAY FROM THE ENTRANCE OF THE BUILDING SHE HAD FAILED TO ENTER.

SHE CONTINUED TO CRY OUT, YET SHE HEARD A FOOTSTEP OVER HER SCREAM.

SHE TURNED TO HER LEFT.

A SENTINEL GUARD STEPPED OUT FROM THE SIDE OF THE BUILDING.

LEEEEEEEEEEEEE!



LEE LOOKED TO THE SIDE. HE DROPPED LEAFLET'S BODY TO THE FLOOR.



WHAT ARE YOU DOING?! ARE YOU SEEKING TO DIE?!



DON'T DO THIS! I GIVE UP! DON'T KILL US!



IF YOU AGREE TO BE A PRISONER, I WON'T SHOOT!



HLB?!

HE RAPIDLY PULLED OUT HIS GUN.



HARRY PULLED OUT HIS GUN.



HARRY WAS TOO SLOW.



LEAFLET CONTINUED TO SCREAM IN PAIN.



HE RAWLED. HE ATTEMPTED TO PICK UP LEAFLET'S BODY AGAIN BEFORE SENTINEL GUARDS ARRIVED.

I'M SORRY!



LEAFLET'S ENTIRE BODY SHUT DOWN FROM THE PAIN. SHE LOST CONSCIOUSNESS.



SHE WOKE UP. IT WAS ALMOST PITCH BLACK. LEE AND SHE WERE UNDERNEATH A STAIRCASE ON THE FIFTH FLOOR OF A BUILDING.

A SMALL POOL OF BLOOD SAT STATIONARILY NEXT TO HER TANKS.



LEE HAD AN INCREASING SMILE ON HIS FACE.



WE LOST THEM.

THE BLOOD ON HIS FACE HAD BEEN ALL DRIED UP, LOOKING LIKE HE WORE RED FACE PAINT.



LEAFLET'S PAIN CONTINUED TO PERSIST. SHE BEGAN TO MOAN.

HAINGH...



SH-4-4-4-4. WE DON'T WANT TO MAKE ANY NOISE JUST IN CASE THEY'RE CONTINUALLY SEARCHING.

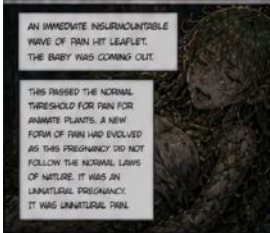
IT'S BEEN TWO HOURS SINCE YOU WENT OUT COLD.



WE WERE LUCKY HARRY LOWERED HIS GUARD.

I STILL FEEL GUILTY FOR SHOOTING HIM THOUGH.

...



AN IMMEDIATE INSURMOUNTABLE WAVE OF PAIN HIT LEAFLET. THE BABY WAS COMING OUT.

THIS PASSED THE NORMAL THRESHOLD FOR PAIN FOR ANIMATE PLANTS. A NEW FORM OF PAIN HAD EVOLVED AS THIS PREGNANCY DID NOT FOLLOW THE NORMAL LAWS OF NATURE. IT WAS AN UNNATURAL PREGNANCY. IT WAS UNNATURAL PAIN.



THE BABY WAS BORN.

THIS NEW SPECIES WAS AN UNNATURAL PRODUCT OF AN ANIMATE PLANT AND A HUMAN.

IT WAS AN ANIMATE HUMAN.



LEAFLET FOUND IT HORRIFIC.

THE BABY ACQUIRED BONES WITH LEAVES AND BRANCHES WEAVING AROUND THEM.

IT HAD A HUMAN FACE WITH A VENUS FLYTRAP MOUTH. IT ACQUIRED LEAFY HAIR.

ITS INTEGRAL STRUCTURE WAS MADE OF WOOD AND BONE. ITS HANDS FLAUNTED FLESH WHILE ITS FEET FLAUNTED WOOD.

SHE FAINTED AGAIN FROM THE PAIN OVERLOAD.



SHE WOKE UP. IT WAS THE BRINK OF DAWN.

HER VISION WAS BLURRY. SHE COULDN'T GET UP FROM ALL THE PAIN SHE'D ENDURED.



SHE SAW LEE CROUCHING IN THE CORNER STARRING AND APPEARING HORRIFIED.



SHE LOOKED TO HER RIGHT.

THE ANIMATE HUMAN HAD COMPLETELY EVOLVED IN SIZE. IT CROUCHED WITH ITS HANDS FOLDED IN ITS LAR. IT WAS 12 FEET TALL. IT WAS MORE HORRIBLE THAN BEFORE.



I WAS WAITING FOR YOU TO WAKE UP.

I WAS TRYING TO MAKE CONVERSATION WITH MY FATHER, BUT HE DOESN'T SEEM TOO INTERESTED.

LEAFLET. I WAS WRONG. SOME THINGS CAN BE BORN MONSTERS.



I DECIDED TO NAME MYSELF OMEGA.

WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF THAT MALE NAME?



ANYWAY...

I WAS TELLING YOUR 'LEE' HOW MUCH I LOVED YOU AND WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO YOUR WAKEFULNESS.

HE KEPT INSISTING THAT I WAS GOING TO HURT YOU, BUT I NEVER WOULD LAY A FINGER.



YOU LOVE ME?



OF COURSE.

I DON'T.

HE STOOD UP AND MOVED TOWARD LEAFLET.



LEE PULLED OUT HIS GUN.

HE SHOT OMEGA IN THE HEAD.

THE CREATURE, HOWEVER, DIDN'T DIE. IT ONLY FUNDLED AS THIS BULLET WAS MINUSCULE AS A SCRATCH.



I'LL BE BACK WITH MORE OF MY KIND!

HE SHATTERED THE WINDOW AND DROVE OUT OF IT.



LEAFLET MOANED AND MOANED. LEE PUT AWAY HIS GUN. HE PUT HIS FACE UP TO HERS.

HE CRIED IN EMPATHY.

I NEED YOU TO RUN AS FAR AWAY FROM HERE AS YOU CAN!

I'LL COME BACK FOR YOU!



WHY ARE YOU LEAVING ME?!



ABOUT THAT THING I WASN'T PROUD OF DOING...

I WANNA MAKE UP FOR IT.

I'M GOING BACK TO SAVE THIS BOY NAMED NAK.

HE DOESN'T DESERVE WHAT'S COMING TO HIM. NOBODY IN THAT PRISON DESERVES IT.



WHAT ABOUT ME?!

DON'T YOU LOVE ME?!



IF YOU COME WITH ME, YOU'LL DIE.

IF YOU LOVE ME, YOU WILL LISTEN TO ME!



LEE RAN DOWNSTAIRS.



CHAPTER 9.1:



CHAPTER 10: RESOLUTION

CONSCIOUSNESS TARGET:
ANDREW RUTANO

SOMEONE
KILL ME.

ANDREW FELT THE MANURE FIELD ON HIS BACK. HE HAD TROUBLE MANEUVERING HIS BACK. HE SMELLED THE SHIT. HE SAW DARKNESS SINCE HIS EYES WERE CLOSED. TO HIS LEFT, MIDDLE, AND RIGHT, HE SAW KEVIN, RUFUS, AND SHRUBBURB ALL STANDING ABOVE HIM.

NO. FLICK OFF. I CAN'T HANDLE THE PAIN. I CAN'T HANDLE BEING AWAY FROM MY CHILDREN AS THEY SUFFER. I WANT TO DIE. YET I CAN'T HANDLE DEATH AS I WOULD BE LEAVING MY CHILDREN BEHIND. I WISH I DIDN'T HAVE TO EXIST FOR A BRIEF PERIOD OF TIME!

GET UP.

PAIN. IT'S WHAT DIFFERENTIATES US BETWEEN THE LIVING AND THE DEAD. THOSE WHO CANNOT HANDLE IT SIMPLY DIE. I AM TELLING YOU THIS BECAUSE YOU MUST DESEGMENTIZE YOURSELF TO THE PAIN. PAIN IS WHAT MAKES YOU STRONGER. AVOIDING THE PAIN MAKES YOU WEAKER. IT MAKES YOU PRONE TO DEATH.

ARE YOU THIS WEAK? THIS IS NOT THE ANDREW I KNOW! YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH SO MUCH ALREADY, AND YOU WANT TO THROW IT ALL AWAY! YOU'VE COME TOO FAR TO GIVE UP!

FLUCK!

WHAT THE FLUCK IS WRONG WITH ME?!

NOTHING IS WRONG WITH YOU, MAN. WE ALL FEEL LIKE DYING. YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONE.

BUT YOU GOTTA KEEP PUSHING THROUGH. WE ALL DO.

THEN WHY ARE WE ALL STILL HERE?!

THEN WHY...

WHEN ARE WE GONNA BUST OUT OF HERE?!

WHEN ARE WE FINALLY GOING TO ESCAPE?!

CHAPTER 10: RESOLUTION

DO YOU EVER JUST WONDER HOW WE END UP PLACED? DO YOU JUST—DO YOU JUST THINK WHAT LIFE WOULD'VE BEEN LIKE IF ROBERT HAD NEVER DONE ANY OF THIS SHIT?

I SHOULD BE IN MY APARTMENT WITH ANDREW.

I SHOULD BE PLANNING ON HAVING A WIFE SOON.

I SHOULD BE PLANNING ON HAVING A FAMILY.

WHAT'S A MAN IN HIS MID-THIRTIES DOING IN AN ENSLAVED VIRTUAL WORLD?

LOOK, WE COULD ALL GO AROUND SHARING SAD PERSONAL MONOLOGUES.

IF WE'RE GONNA ESCAPE, WE'RE GONNA NEED HELP.

ME.

I CAN GENUINELY ASSIST YOU ALL NOW. I'VE DEVELOPED A PLAN THAT'S MORE THAN FULL-PROOF.

ALONZO

NATASHA

OR WE CAN ACT AND FIND A STOP TO THIS BULLSHIT.

WHERE'S THAT MAN WHO WAS SO INSISTENT ON HELPING US?

IT'S GOING TO BE EXTREMELY RISKY.

HOWEVER, I'D SAY OUR ODDS OF STAYING ALIVE INSIDE THE PRISON ARE SLIMMER THAN ESCAPING THE PRISON SUCCESSFULLY.

ARE YOU ALWAYS HEARING IN ON OUR CONVERSATIONS?

IT'S A POSSIBILITY.

FORGET THAT.

TELL US YOUR PLAN.

WAIT. IF WE'RE LEGITIMATELY ESCAPING, I'LL NEED MY CHILDREN WITH ME.

NOT POSSIBLE.

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO ESTABLISH CONTACT WITH INMATES FROM OTHER PRISON ROTATIONS.

WHY CAN'T WE BREAK THAT RULE?

FOR YOU NOT HEAR ME CORRECTLY?

THERE'S NO REMOTE POSSIBILITY.

OKAY, FINE. OUT WITH THE PLAN THEN.

ARE ANY OF YOU FAMILIAR WITH THE CONSCIOUSNESS INVERSION NEURO-CONVERTERS?

THE WHAT?

GUESSED NOT, NO. I LISTEN TO THIS. IF YOU WOULDN'T GUESS, I WAS LISTENING IN ON ANOTHER CONVERSATION OF TWO GUARDS A FEW DAYS AGO BEFORE THE AQUARIUM DISASTER.

THEY SPOKE ON HOW ROBERT WAS CONSIDERING UTILIZING THESE NEURO-CONVERTERS ON HIS SENTINEL BEFORE PRISONERS.

FROM WHAT I GATHERED FROM THEM, THESE NEURO-CONVERTERS ARE A MEANS OF ESCAPE. THEY LEAD TO A SUB-VIRTUAL WORLD OR AS THEY PUT IT: "YOU ARE FREE TO LIVE LIFE BY YOUR OWN CHOOSING AND WILL."

APPROXIMATELY, IT'S A WORLD WHERE YOU CREATE YOUR OWN REALITY WITH YOUR OWN IMAGINATION, AND YOU LIVE EVEN IF YOUR PHYSICAL BODY PASSES.

I'M LASTLY GUESSING THAT ROBERT CREATED THIS DIMENSION FOR HIS SENTINEL AS A RELAXATION PLACE FOR WHEN THEY ARE EXHAUSTED FROM THEIR JOB.

IF WE COULD OBTAIN ACCESS TO THESE CONSCIOUSNESS INVERSION CONVERTERS, WE COULD PERHAPS ESCAPE TO THIS SUB-VIRTUAL DIMENSION.

I DON'T BELIEVE A WORD OF THAT.

SHUT US RUFFUS.

HOW WOULD WE GET OUR HANDS ON THEM?

THAT'S GONNA BE THE TRICKY PART.

WE'D NEED A SENTINEL GUARD TO COOPERATE WITH US.

HOW COULD WE POSSIBLY REASON WITH THE SENTINEL?

THEY'RE PRACTICALLY PROGRAMMED TO BE MONSTERS.

THROUGH BRUTE FORCE.

KIDNAPPING AND TORTURING THEM SEEMS TO BE OUR BEST OPTION.

AS MUCH AS I WISH TO ESCAPE...

KEVIN'S RIGHT.



I ALSO FEEL THE NEED TO TELL YOU ALL...

ALONZO



THAT WHILE LISTENING IN ON THE CONVERSATION OF THOSE TWO GUARDS I HEARD THEM SAY THAT ROBERT HAD BEEN PLANNING ON MAKING AN "ANNOUNCEMENT" TO ALL PRISONERS AND ANIMATE PLANTS ANYTIME SOON, AND USING MY BEST JUDGMENT BASED ON HOW HOSTILE ROBERT CAN BE, I DON'T THINK THIS IS SOMETHING TO TAKE ON LIGHTLY.



MEANING WHAT EXACTLY?

ANDREW



AN "ANNOUNCEMENT" MOST LIKELY IMPLIES AN IMPENDING DOOM FOR-- I CAN'T COMPARE SPECIFICALLY WHAT ROBERT COULD HAVE IN MIND, BUT I CAN IMAGINE IT BEING AN EVENTFUL DISASTER.



WHY SHOULD WE TRUST WHAT YOU SAY?

RUFUS



WHY IN GOD'S NAME WOULD I LIE TO YOU ALL? WHAT WOULD I GAIN FROM SHABING THIS? THINK IT ALL OUT. IF YOU TRY TO DEDUCE, YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO COME UP WITH ULTERIOR MOTIVES.

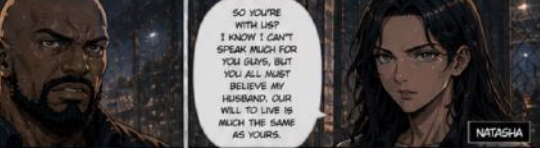


HE'S SPEAKING THE TRUTH. HE REALLY WANTS US TO ESCAPE WITH HIM, EVEN IF HE DID LIE, HE WOULD HAVE NOTHING TO OBTAIN FROM DECEIT.

SHRUBURB



I GUESS.



SO YOU'RE WITH US? I KNOW I CAN'T SPEAK MUCH FOR YOU GUYS, BUT YOU ALL MUST BELIEVE MY HUSBAND. OUR WILL TO LIVE IS MUCH THE SAME AS YOURS.

NATASHA



ANDREW SAW THE GROUP OF FIVE AS A WHOLE. HE ASKED,

SO WHAT SHOULD OUR PLAN BE?



WE FLICK A GUARD UP.

BUT WE HAVE TO LURE HIM TO AN AREA WHERE THERE ARE NO WITNESSES.



BUT HOW?



I'LL DO IT.



WHEN THOUGH?



I'M GONNA DO IT FLICKING NOW.



HE TURNED AROUND FROM THE COLLECTIVE FIVE. HE WALKED AWAY.

BUT HOW ARE WE GONNA CONVINCE THEM?



WHERE THE FLICK ARE YOU GOING, ANDREW??



ANDREW WALKED FASTER. HE WAS OUT OF YELLING RANGE.



ANDREW STOOD IN THE MIDDLE OF THE MANURE FIELDS. HE WAS SURROUNDED BY WHITE GARMENTS OF OTHER INMATES.



HE WAS SHAKED TO THE FLOOR.



A MAN GRABBED HIM BY THE SHIRT COLLAR. THE FACE OF THIS MAN WAS NOT BRIGHTENED. HIS FACE WINCED.



ANDREW WAS PUNCHED IN THE FACE. HIS NOSE CRACKED. BLOOD SEEPED.



ANDREW WAS PUNCHED AGAIN. HIS VISION GREW BLURRY.



THE MAN CRIED. I'M SORRY.



HE DRAGGED ANDREW BY THE SHIRT COLLAR. ANDREW WAS STILL CONSCIOUS. HIS PHYSICAL BODY SAID OTHERWISE.



THE WHITE GARMENTS IN THE CROWD REMAINED STAGNANT. HE WAS PULLED ALONG THE MANNER. ANDREW DOZED OFF. TIME PASSED.



ANDREW WAS SLAPPED.



HE LOOKED UP. THREE MUSCULAR MEN SURROUNDED HIS FIELD OF VIEW.



THE MAN IN THE MIDDLE PULLED OUT HIS DOPAMINE COIN TRANSFER FROM HIS HUB AND PUNCHED IT INTO ANDREW'S DOPAMINE WITHDRAWER.



THE MAN WITHDREW LOCO COINS FROM ANDREW.

DOPAMINE COIN TRANSFER -1,000



THE MAN DISCONNECTED THE TRANSFERDER FROM ANDREW'S HUB.



YOU DID WELL, CAMERON.

I DID WHAT YOU SAID.

COULD YOU PLEASE SPARE SOME OF YOUR DOPAMINE NOW?



I DON'T SPARE.



YOU EARN THROUGH ACTION AND--



I DID ACT! WALDLINE SAID.

AND BEGGING, WALDLINE SAID.

I AM BEGGING!

WHERE'S THE BODY MOTION? WHERE'S THE PERFORMANCE?



I BEG!

NOW THAT'S SOMETHING. SINCE I'M FEELING A TAD GENEROUS, I'LL LEND YOU 5 COINS.

DOPAMINE COIN TRANSFER
+5
BALANCE:
-11,301 → -11,296

THANK YOU SO MUCH!



"SCB"
"SCB"

DISCONNECT. TRANSFERRED CABLE FROM HIS HUB.

ANDREW WITNESSED THIS ENTIRE EXCHANGE AS HE RECOVERED PHYSICALLY.

SO THIS IS WHAT YOU DO, HUH? TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE DEPRIVED. YOU'RE A SICK MAN.



WALDLINE DOPAMINE COINS
33,131
CAMERON DOPAMINE COINS
-11,301

YOU'RE A DOPAMINE-POOR MAN. YOU'RE ALMOST AT ZERO WHILE I'M AT A HAPPY 33,131 COINS. YOU'RE THE NEUROCHEMICALLY-SICK MAN. NOT A NEURO-DEGENERATE THOUGH. THIS MAN BELOW ME, CAMERON, HE'S A NEURO-DEGENERATE. THE POOR FELLA IS AT -11,301 COINS. HARDSOME, DEPRESSION, LETHARGY, AND DESPERATION ARE ALL THAT MAKES UP THIS PERSON.

CAN'T YOU EMPATHIZE WITH THE MAN? ARE YOU NARCISSISTIC OR ARE YOU JUST SO PLENTYFUL ON DOPAMINE THAT THERE IS ALL YOU'RE ABLE TO FEEL? YOU'RE NEUROCHEMICALLY SICKER THAN ALL OF US.

I'D BE MORE CAREFUL OF WHAT YOU SAY NEXT. IF YOU THREATEN ME IN ANY WAY, MY BLOODS WILL GLADLY PULVERIZE YOU.



SO GET THE FLUCK OUT OF MY SIGHT.

"KICK"



GOD FLUCKING DAMNIT!

HE STRUGGLED TO GET UP. THE MAN WITH THE FOOT PLOUGHED HIM EVEN FARTHER FROM HIMSELF AND WALDLINE'S GROUP DIRECTION.

HE DROVE INTO THE AMBERE HOOKER. ANDREW BLINKED IT OUT. HE GOT UP WITH STRUGGLE.

HE WALKED FAST AS HIS HEARLES COLLAPSED. HE SAW A SENTINEL GUARD ON THE INSIDE PERIMETER OF THE MANURE FIELD. THE GUARD WAS SHORTER THAN HIM. ANDREW FOUND THIS MORE APPROACHABLE. HE DODGED ALL OF THE WHIS GARMENTS. HE WAS A FEW FEET AWAY FROM THE GUARD. HE GRIPED HIS ANKLE.



HE WAS PULLED TO HIS RIGHT SIDE BY HIS WHITE COLLAR. HIS COLLAR HAD BEEN STITCHED TREMENDOUSLY.

HE SAW THE MAN WHO PULLED HIM. IT WAS KEVIN.

LET ME GO!

I DON'T THINK SO.

"FLUCKING LET GO!" ANDREW PUNCHED KEVIN IN THE JAW.

KEVIN LET GO OF HIS SHIRT COLLAR. ANDREW RAN FOR IT. HE CRIED. HE YELLED, "TH SHUCK OF THIS SHIT! WHEN WILL IT END?!"



WHERE THE FLUCK ARE YOU GOING, ANDREW??

ANDREW TRIPPED ON A PRISONER'S SHICE. HE FELL.

KEVIN CALLED UP TO HIM. HE GRABBED ONTO ANDREW'S LEFT ARM.

WHEN WILL YOU LET GO OF ME?!

RELAX, ANDREW!



NOT
I WANT
TO DIE
BUT I DON'T
WANT TO DIE
I'M TIRED OF
THE SUFFERING!
I DON'T GIVE
A FLICK WHAT
SHOULDERS SAID
ABOUT DESENSITIZING
YOURSELF TO THE
PAIN IT'S TOO
MUCH!



ANDREW,
PLEASE.
GET A HOLD
OF YOURSELF!



I WISH I COULDN'T
PERCEIVE PAIN!
I WISH I WAS
EMOTIONLESS!
WHY HAVE
EMOTIONS IF
ALL THEY DO
IS BRING CONSTANT
EXCOURAGING
PAIN?
MAYBE ALL OF
THESE APATHETIC
MONSTERS HAVE IT
BETTER THAN US!
MAYBE THAT'S WHY
THEY STILL HAVE THE
WILL TO LIVE WHILE
I DON'T!



NONE OF THAT IS
FUCKING TRUE!
PEOPLE WHO
DON'T HAVE
EMOTIONS
SUFFER MORE!
BEING UNABLE
TO PERCEIVE PAIN
BRINGS THEM MORE
PAIN! BUT THEY
DON'T SHOW IT!
BECAUSE THEY
CAN'T SHOW IT!
THEY'RE LOST
SOULS!



BEING
EMOTIONLESS
IS WORSE
THAN DEATH!



HOW
WOULD YOU
KNOW?!



LOOK AT THEM ALL
FUCKING YOU!
LOOK AT YOUR
FATHER!
YOU THINK HE
LIKES WHO HE IS?
HE'S GIVEN THE IMPRESSION
THAT HE LIKES HIMSELF
BECAUSE ALL OF HIS
EXCESSIVE VIOLENCE
OVERSHADOWS HIS
LOGICAL THINKING!
LET ME REPEAT
AGAIN!



ANDREW LOST ALL
ENERGY TO SPEAK
ANYMORE. HE LET
HIS TEARS DO THE
TALKING.



OUR EMOTIONS
DON'T BRING US PAIN.
THEY HELP HANDLE
THE PAIN.
TAKE A
DEEP BREATH.
I ACTUALLY HAVE
GOOD NEWS FOR
ONCE.
ALONZO IS IN THE
PROCESS OF TURNING
A GUARD TO AN AREA
WHERE NO GUARDS
HAVE SIGHT.



OOO
EXHALE



EXHALE



I'M JUST
SO TIRED



WELL,
ASSEMBLE
ALL YOUR
ENERGY
BECAUSE WE
NEED YOUR
HELP IN
EXECUTING
OUR PLAN.



THAT
PAIN?



ALONZO ALREADY
TOLD US ABOUT IT.
I'LL TELL YOU
LATER.
WE SHOULD
HEAD OVER
THERE RIGHT
NOW.
THEY MIGHT NEED
OUR HELP IN CASE
THINGS DON'T GO
TOO SMOOTHLY.



YOU'RE A
BIGGEST FRIEND.



I HOPE THEY'RE
ABLE TO SUCCESSFULLY
SUPPRESS THE
GUARD.



I WISH I
WOULD WANTED
SO MUCH THE
TO BE HONEST.



HELLO,
ANDREW.



WHERE'S
THE GUARD?



GOOD.
THIS IS THE
REACTION WE
WOULD WANT
OTHER GUARDS
TO SUSTAIN.



THANKS.
WE BETTER
RUN. FOLLOW
ME.





IT'LL DO! ALONZO SAYS 'SO WHO WILL BE THE ONE TO--'

I'M GONNA DO IT. I'M GONNA GET US OUT OF THIS MESS.

OHAY. THAT'S SORTED THEN.

OH. I HAVE MY HELMET BACK?



BY THE WAY, I WON'T HELP UNLESS YOU UNITE ME FROM THIS PLACE.



AND I WANT DICK OVER THE COMBUSTER TOO. WANT OUT OF THIS PLACE TOO.



DOESN'T MAKE A DIFFERENCE WHO GETS THEM FIRST. BUT SURE, YOU CAN BE THE FIRST.



SO WHO'S GONNA BE MY LUCKY PRISONER?



I AM.



LET ME DO IT, ANDREW. YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH MUCH AS OF LATELY.



NO. ALREADY TOLD YOU. I'M DOING IT.



I'M COMMANDED. I DEVELOPED ANTIWEIGHTS FROM MY POSITION. I WAS N. SO... ARE YOU READY? WHAT'S YOUR NAME?



ANDREW.



ALRIGHT, THEN. I'M GONNA NEED TO CLIP YOU.



DO IT.



DON'T SAY A WORD ABOUT PLANNING. YOU'LL HAVE TO BE PEOPLE WHO WANT YOU DEAD.



DON'T SAY A WORD WHEN I'M AROUND GUARDS.



JUST LOOK STRAIGHT.



WHAT THE FUCK YOU DOING?



PLEASE OPEN THE GATE FOR ME. I WAS ORDERED BY THE MONARCH TO RUN A SERIES OF COMBUSTERS ON WHEELS BY--



SINCE WHEN?



SINCE NOW.

WE WERE NEVER ALERTS ABOUT ANYTHING OF THAT NATURE.

NO. I--

LOOK, DO YOU REALLY WANT ME TO TELL THE MONARCH THAT YOU ARE RESISTING ORDERS?

GOOD. THEN OPEN THE FLOODING DOOR.



THE GATE BEGAN TO OPEN.



I PLANNED THAT WILL DON'T IF



JUST HURRY UP. HE CAN'T BUY MORE TIME.



WE'RE ALMOST THERE.

OHAY. YOUR FRIENDS, THE MONARCH WANT IN HIS OFFICE.

YOUR MOTHER IS THE MONARCH!



YEAH, IS THAT AN ISSUE OR SOMETHING?



NO. I DON'T EXPECT THAT. THAT'S ALL.



NOW WE KNOW NO ONE IS IN THE EXPERIMENTATION ROOM.



THIS SEEMS TOO DARK.



I CAN UNCLIP YOU HERE.



HURRY UP AGAIN, GET COMBUSTERS HERE.



JESUS, WHAT'S THIS?



RELAX, YOU DOWNER.

LET'S BRING SOME 'EM. WHAT'S A 'NEUROTRANSMITTER COMBUSTER'?

YOU'RE JOINING THE NEW PERSON.



I CAN UNCLIP YOU FROM HERE.



HURRY UP AGAIN, GET THE COMBUSTERS HERE.



WHAT DO ALL OF THESE MEAN? WHAT'S A 'NEUROTRANSMITTER COMBUSTER'?



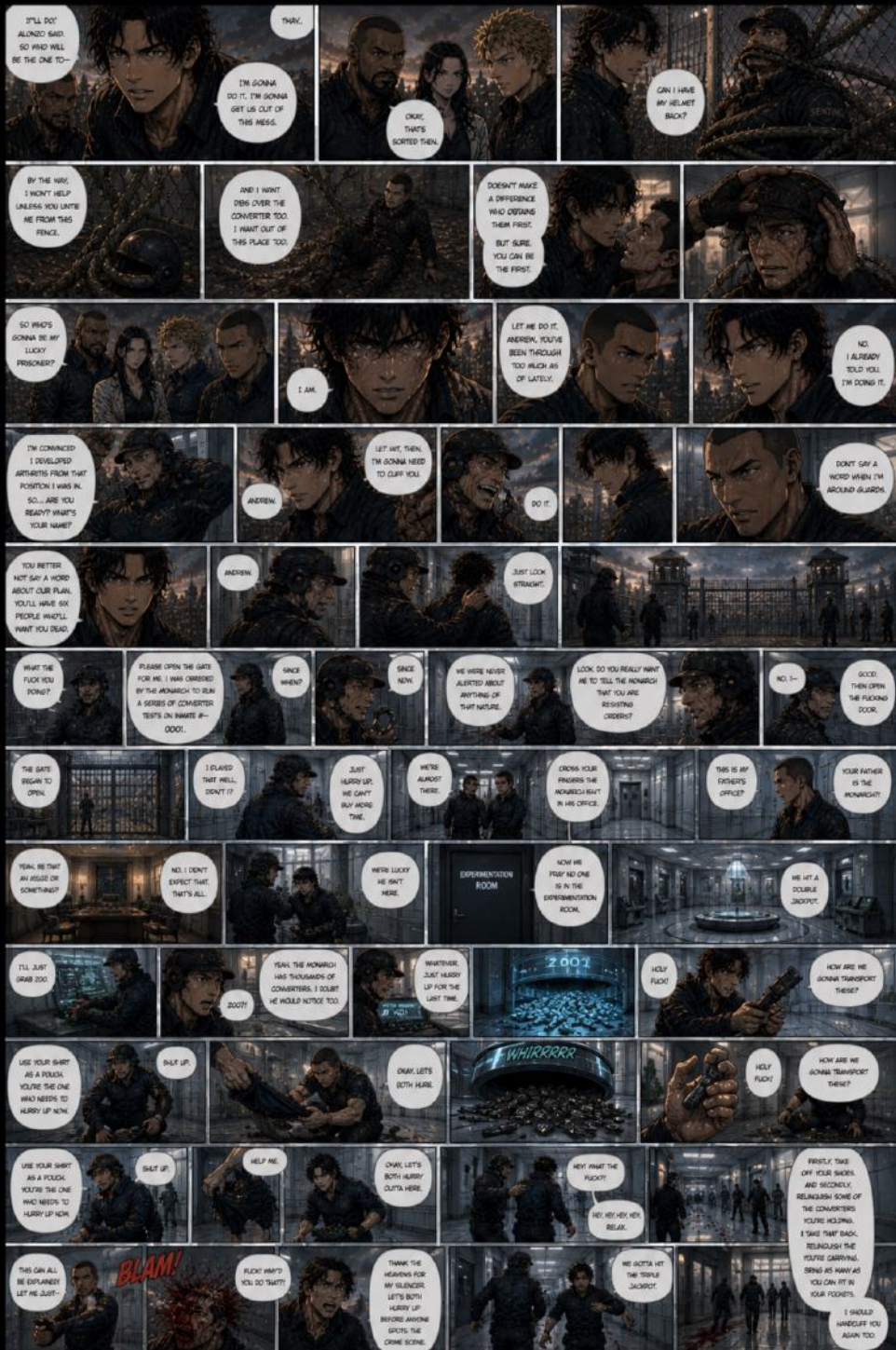
YOU'RE JOINING THE NEW PERSON.

NO. THAT WASN'T PART OF THE DEAL.

THEY WOULD JUST BE AN ARMED AND DANGEROUS PERSON.

NO. HOW MANY COMBUSTERS WOULD YOU BUY? NEED?

- #01 NEUROTRANSMITTER COMBUSTER
- #02 DOMINANCE STABILIZER
- #03 SENSORY ENHANCER
- #04 BRAIN SUPPRESSOR COMBUSTER
- #05 MEMORY REGULATOR
- #06 EMOTIONAL REGULATOR
- #07 AGGRESSION CONTROL UNIT
- #08 SENSORY AMPLIFIER
- #09 MOTOR RESPONSE OPTIMIZER
- #10 SLEEP CYCLE REGULATOR
- #11 PAIN SUPPRESSOR
- #12 COGNITIVE CLAMPER
- #13 STRESS RESISTANCE UNIT
- #14 IMPULSE REGULATOR
- #15 RECOVERY ACCELERATOR
- #16 HORMONAL BALANCER
- #17 CONSCIOUSNESS INVERSION COMBUSTER



IT'LL DO? ALONZO SAID SO WHO WILL BE THE ONE TO—

THANK.

I'M GONNA DO IT. I'M GONNA GET US OUT OF THIS MESS.

OKAY, THAT'S SORTED THEN.

BY THE WAY, I WON'T HELP UNLESS YOU LAISE ME FROM THIS FENCE.

AND I WANT THEM OVER THE CONCRETE TOO. I WANT OUT OF THIS PLACE TOO.

DOESN'T MAKE A DIFFERENCE WHO OPENS THEM FIRST. BUT SURE, YOU CAN BE THE FIRST.

CAN I HAVE MY HELMET BACK?

SO WHO'S GONNA BE MY LUCKY PRISONER?

I AM.

LET ME DO IT, AMBERK, YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH TOO MUCH AS OF LATELY.

NO. I ALREADY TOLD YOU I'M DOING IT.

I'M CONVINCED I DEVELOPED ANTIBODIES FROM THAT PORTFOLIO I WAS IN. SO... ARE YOU READY? WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

ANDREW.

LET ME, THEN, I'M GONNA NEED TO CLIFF YOU.

DO IT.

DON'T SAY A WORD WHEN I'M AROUND GUARD.

YOU BETTER NOT SAY A WORD ABOUT OUR PLAN. YOU'LL HAVE SIX PEOPLE WHO'LL WANT YOU DEAD.

ANDREW.

JUST LOOK STRAIGHT!

WHAT THE FUCK YOU SAYING?

PLEASE OPEN THE GATE FOR ME. I HAVE ORDERED BY THE MONARCH TO RUN A SERIES OF COMMENTS TESTS ON NAME #—

OOO!

SINCE WHEN?

SINCE NOW.

WE WERE NEVER ALERTED ABOUT ANYTHING OF THAT NATURE.

LOOK, DO YOU REALLY WANT ME TO TELL THE MONARCH THAT YOU ARE RESISTING ORDER?

NO, I—

GOOD. THEN OPEN THE FUCKING DOOR.

THE GATE BEGAN TO OPEN.

I CLASSED THAT WILL DON'T IT?

JUST HURRY UP, WE CAN'T BUY MORE TIME.

WE'RE ALMOST THERE.

CHECK YOUR PHONE, THE MONARCH MUST IN HIS OFFICE.

THIS IS MY PROJECTS OFFICE?

YOUR FATHER IS THE MONARCH?

YES, HE THAT AN ASS OF SOMETHING?

NO, I DON'T EXPECT THAT. THAT'S ALL.

WE'RE LUCKY HE SAIT HERE.

EXPERIMENTATION ROOM.

NOW HE FEEL NO ONE IS IN THE EXPERIMENTATION ROOM.

HE HIT A DOUBLE JACKPOT.

I'LL JUST GRAB ZOO.

YES, THE MONARCH HAS THOUSANDS OF COMMENTS. I DOUBT HE WOULD NOTICE TOO.

WHATEVER, JUST HURRY UP FOR THE LAST TIME.

2002

HOLY FUCK!

HOW ARE WE GONNA TRANSPORT THESE?

USE YOUR SHIRT AS A POUCH. YOU'RE THE ONE WHO NEEDS TO HURRY UP NOW.

SHIT UP!

OKAY, LET'S BOTH HURRY UP HERE.

WHIRRRRR

HOLY FUCK!

HOW ARE WE GONNA TRANSPORT THESE?

USE YOUR SHIRT AS A POUCH. YOU'RE THE ONE WHO NEEDS TO HURRY UP NOW.

SHIT UP!

HELP ME.

OKAY, LET'S BOTH HURRY UP HERE.

HEY! WHAT THE FUCK!

HEY! HEY! HEY! RELAX.

THIS CAN ALL BE EXPANDED LET ME JUST—

BLAM!

FUCK! WHAT'D YOU DO THAT?!

THANK THE HEAVENS FOR MY SILENCE. LET'S BOTH HURRY UP BEFORE ANYONE SPOTS THE CRIME SCENE.

HE GOTTA HIT THE TRIPLE JACKPOT!

FIRSTLY, TAKE OFF YOUR SHOES AND SICKLY RELAX. SOME OF THE COMMENTS YOU'RE HOLDING. I SAID THAT BACK. BECAUSE THE YOU'RE CARRYING. BRING AS MANY AS YOU CAN FIT IN YOUR POCKETS. I SHOULD HANDCUFF YOU AGAIN TOO.





WHO WANTS TO ESCAPE FROM THIS PRISON? I'M OFFERING A CHANCE TO ESCAPE TO ANOTHER DIMENSION FOR 10,000 DORMINE COINS!



I ONLY HAVE 23! THIS IS A FIRST-COME, FIRST-SERVED OPPORTUNITY!

FWOOOSH



WHAT ARE YOU TWO UP TO?!

WE'RE TAKING AN OPPORTUNITY.

GET OUT OF MY WAY, KEVIN.



EVERYBODY STOP! THIS IS ALL A SETUP! DON'T USE THE CONVERTERS!



FUCKING STOP USING THE—



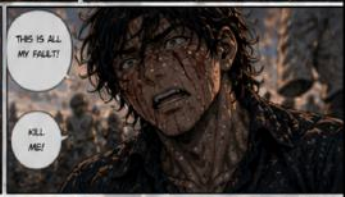
THIS EXACT SUPPOSED TO HAPPEN, THIS NIGHT SUPPOSED TO—



STOP USING THE CONVERTERS!



I'M GONNA GET YOU OUTTA HERE, ANDREW!



THIS IS ALL MY FAULT!

KILL ME!



ANDREW!

FUCK! WE'RE GONNA FIGURE ALL THIS SHIT OUT! DON'T GIVE UP!



JESUS, ANDREW, ARE YOU OKAY?!



YOU NEED—
YOU GUYS NEED TO
WIN EVERYONE THAT
THE CONVERTERS
ARE A TRAP!

A TRAP?!
HOW?!

HOW DO
YOU KNOW?

IT'S MY
FUCKING FATHER!
HE'S BEHIND ALL
THIS SHIT! TELL
THEM FOR ME!
TRUST ME!
PLEASE!



JUST
FUCKING
DO IT!



ALRIGHT!
ME AND RUFUS
WILL SHRELBUR,
YOU PROTECT
ANDREW!



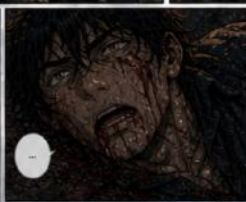
SHRELBUR
NODDED.



GO!



YOU'RE RIGHT,
ANDREW.
YOUR FATHER
MUST'VE PLANNED
THIS WHOLE
CHAOS-EVER
SINCE WE FIRST
MET ALONZO.
BUT I DON'T
UNDERSTAND.
WHAT WOULD HIS
MOTIVE POSSIBLY
BE?



...



ANDREW JUST
NOTICED ENZO'S
UNCONSCIOUS
BODY.



YOU LOOKS
LIKE HE'S
BREATHING
STILL.



HE GRABBED ONTO
ENZO'S SHOULDERS.
HE TRIED TO PUSH
ENZO'S BODY CLOSER
TO HIS CHEST.



ENZO'S BODY
WOULDN'T
BUDGE.



SHRELBUR
PULLED HIM
HARDER.

ANDREW HEARD
THE LOUDEST
CRACK.



ENZO'S SKULL
DISCOMBATED
AND CRACKED AS
SHRELBUR PULLED
HIS BODY AWAY.
A SUPERNOVA
OF BLOOD
EXPLODED.



AS SHRELBUR'S
FULL MOTION ENDED,
A FLOATING GOLD
CLEAR SUBSTANCE
APPEARED WHERE
ENZO'S HEAD USED
TO BE.
A THIN SHEET
RESTED ON THIS
FLOATING
SUBSTANCE.

ENZO'Y LONGER
HAD A FACE.

FRACTURED BONE
AND BLOOD LAD ON
THE MANURE.

HIS BRAIN
SUFFERED A
HEAVY
REWORKSHAGE.



ANDREW GARGLED
BLOOD AS HE
SCREAMED AT HIS
SIGHT.



SHRELBUR
HOPPED AWAY
FROM THE BODY
AND SCREAMED.



ANDREW'S SCREAM
WAS IN COMPETITION
IN NOISE LEVEL WITH
THE NEW SCREAMS
OF THE WHITE
GARMENT MOSH-PY.



STILL LYING ON THE
MANURE, ANDREW
SHIFTED HIS HEAD
TO THE SCREAMING
COMPETITORS.



ALONZO STILL
LEVITATED ABOVE,
YET HE WASN'T
HOLDING WALDINE.
HE WAS HOLDING
ONTO SOMEONE
ELSE.



ANDREW
FORCED HIMSELF
TO GET UP.



WHITE GARMENTS
VOLUNTLY DANCED
AROUND IN A CIRCLE.

INSIDE THE CIRCLE
WAS WALDINE.



EVERY INDIVIDUAL'S
SCREAM COULDN'T BE
SEPARATELY DECIPHERED.

THERE WAS ONLY
ONE UNIFIED SCREAM.



WALDINE HELD
THE KEY UP WITH
HIS RIGHT HAND
AS HE WAS BRUTALLY
BATTERED
AND SHOOK.



WHITE GARMENTS
CLAWED AND
SCRATCHED HIS
BLEEDING ARM.



SOMEONE DROVE
ON HIS HEAD.

WALDINE'S ARM SANK
AS HE HIMSELF SANK
INTO THE SEA OF
WHITE GARMENTS.

HE COULDN'T SEE
WHERE KEVIN OR
RUFUS WERE.



THE PRISON
INTERCOM
WENT OFF.

PRISON
ROTATIONS
A-E, PLEASE
REPORT TO THE
OUTSIDE FIELD
AT ONCE.
ROTATE!

CONSCIOUSNESS TARGET: INMATE #7031
(DA - 29)

Too many people... Too loud...

BACK OFF... JUST— BACK OFF!

I need it.

I need it more than all of you.

Why can't I think straight?

The key... it's right there...

GIVE IT TO ME! I NEED IT!

Hands everywhere.

Fushing. Pulling.

I can't breathe.

I used to be someone... I swear I did...

Now it's just this. This feeling. This emptiness.

Please... just let me have it...

The key gets closer...

NO... NO... NO!

I hit the ground.

THUD!

Foot everywhere. Pressure. Noise.

GET OFF ME! MOVE!

No one listens. No one cares.

Everything blurs. Everything spins.

This can't be it... I'm not done... I can't be...

THIS CAN'T BE IT... I'M NOT DONE... I CAN'T BE...

WAAAAAHHHH!!

CONSCIOUSNESS TARGET: MAXWELL RUTANO

Max stood in line, about forty people from the gate.

Almost two-fifths of the inmates were gone.

Past the gate, Max heard distant screams.

Even with its grand size, the manure field was almost packed to the brim.

About 3% of the white garments paraded in a rough pit far out in the right hemisphere of the field.

As each person in the line passed the gate, Max breathed heavier.

He decided to see his father.

However, in a sea of around 6,000 white garments, Max downgraded this idea.

He decided to see Roots and Sawstick.

As #9081, Max planned to meet them to his left in close proximity to the gate where they usually played their music.

Sawstick was #9005. Roots was #9007.

Max went next in line to enter the gated entrance.

He looked above at the two watchtowers.

They wore helmets.

His facial expressions were identifiable.

Max entered the manure field.

The presence of white garments increased.

The distant screams increased.

But he couldn't pinpoint the location of them due to his height.

No results.

He did a quick scan to find his father.

He decided to evade the plan and wait to the side for Sawstick and Roots.

He dodged the white garments.

He ambled at the spot.

He waited for their presence.

Nothing happened the whole time. Also there was someone wearing garment towards his platform.

The white garment was a few feet away.

The white garment maintained the same directional movement.

Max stopped to the right a bit.

The white garment changed his directional movement.

He yelled, "Back off!"

The white garment maintained the same unrightened face and directional movement.

Max wanted to run, but he needed to meet Sawstick and Roots.

WHY CAN'T ANYONE LEAVE ME ALONE? STAY AWAY FROM ME!

He reached his right arm out.

He touched Max's Pub.





CONSCIOUSNESS TARGET: MAXWELL RUTANO

ALL HUMANS, PLEASE REMAIN CALM AND TRY YOUR BEST TO STAY AWAY FROM ALL ANIMATE PLANTS AS THE GENOCIDE PROCESS COMMENCES ITSELF.

PRISON INTERCOM

THE GROUND RUMBLLED.

LOUD GRUNTS CRESCENDED.



STILL RELATIVELY CLOSE TO THE GATED ENTRANCE.

MAX SAW A HOARD OF MONSTERS ENTER THROUGH THIS.

ALMOST 200 ANIMATE HUMANS LOUDLY STOMPED THEIR WAY IN ON ALL-FOURS.



MAX'S TEARS HAD VANISHED. THE GUARD ROSE FROM THE FLOOR WITH AN EXPLOSION-FACE.

HE PULLED OUT THE FLUTE FROM HIS RIGHT EYE. KNUTING A BLOODY VOLCANO.

HE THREW THE FLUTE TO THE SIDE. TOSS

HE PULLED OUT HIS GUN.

HE AIMED IT AT MAX. BANG! HE SHOT BUT MISSED DUE TO HIS SKINE.

HE SHAVED HIS ARM MORE TO HIS LEFT. BANG!

TACKLE!

MAX WAS TACKLED TO THE SIDE. THE GUARD MISSED AGAIN. IT WAS TERRY.

CONSCIOUSNESS TARGET: SENTINEL GUARD #1322 [DOXYTOCIN, SUBSTANCE P, AND GLUTAMATE EXTERMINATED]

JACOB! OPEN YOUR EYES! I'M YOUR WIFE! I KNOW YOU'RE MY WIFE!

WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS TO ME? I LOVE YOU JACOB! THINK ABOUT OUR KIDS WHO DIED BECAUSE OF ROBERT!

DON'T BE UPSET OVER ROBERT! NEUROSCIENTIFICALLY MANIPULATING YOU AND ALL OF HIS OTHER MEN!

#1322 THOUGHT: FUCK! I LOVE HERE.

FIGHT THAT MONSTER IN YOUR HEAD FOR THE SAKE OF LIFE! DON'T KILL ME! I LOVE YOU MORE THAN ANYTHING!

#1322 THOUGHT: I HATE HER! I HATE YOU! WHY THE FUCK AM I LIVE THESE I LIVE UNDERSTANDING WOMEN AND CHILDREN I LOVE YOU! I HATE ROBERT! SHE ISN'T ME! THE GUARD TO KILL HER!

JACOB! PLEASE!

FUCK! I'M GOING TO KILL HER! SHE DESERVES TO DIE!

FUCK! HE STUCK THE GUN UP TO HIS EAR.

HE SHOT. BANG!

IT BEGAN TO RAIN. LEAFLET LAY IN HER SAME SPOT ON THE FIFTH FLOOR. SHE FELT TOO HEAVY TO MOVE. SHE WORRIED FOR LEE.

SHE HEARD A GRUNT. FOUR GRUNTS. THE GRUNT OF AN ANIMATE HUMAN. SHE WAS THEIR PREY.

SHE HAD TO GET UP. SHE FORCED HER DISFIGURED BACK UP. SHE STOOD. ALL OF HER NUMBNESS MORPHED INTO PAIN.

THE GRUNTING ARRIVED AT THE BOTTOM OF THE STAIRS. I HEARD A FOOTSTEP.

YOU MEAN FOOTSTEPS! IT'S DEFINITELY HER! OHGAS!

LEAFLET TOOK OFF. SHE HEADED UP THE STAIRS.

SIXTH FLOOR. SEVENTH FLOOR. EIGHTH FLOOR. NINTH FLOOR. TENTH FLOOR.

END OF STAIRS. THERE WAS A HATCH. SHE PULLED THE LEVER.

RAIN POURED ON HER. SHE HOPPED THROUGH THE HATCH AND LANDED ON THE ROOF.

SHE SCANNED HER SURROUNDINGS. ONE POSSIBLE ROOF JUMP AHEAD OF HER. SHE TOOK THE FIRST STRIDE. SHE SLIPPED.

HER FEET LOST CONTACT WITH THE BUILDING ROOF, AND HER BACK SLID OFF THE EDGE.

SHE GRABBED ONTO THE EDGE WITH HER RIGHT HAND. ALMOST LOSING GRASP, SHE GRABBED ON THE EDGE WITH HER LEFT HAND TOO.

THE GRUNTING NOISES BEGAN TO ECLIPSE THE SOUND OF RAIN. GRUNT! GRUNT! GRUNT!

SHE TRIED TO LESSEN HER SWAYING AND LEMBE HER BODY TO THE SIDE OF THE BUILDING. LIGHTNING STRUCK. SHE ALMOST LOST GRASP AGAIN. SHE PULLED HERSELF UP.



Leaflet's mechanical fuel tank was almost on empty.

Down the alley and across the mud road was the back of the infirmary.

She dedicated every stride towards the infirmary.

There were no doors in the back of the infirmary.

Only a large complex with an array of glass windows that stood five feet above the ground on the wall.

She devoted all her energy into her last stride and leapt up five feet.

She broke glass and dove into the interior of the infirmary, landing on her right shoulder.

Too many of her branches had been mangled from physical falls and cut from glass.

Inside was pitch black. Only the bleak brightness from the rainy outside barely illuminated the outside floor of the interior through the windows.

Her mechanical energy tank was empty. She couldn't get up.



She crawled to her right on the cold tile floor.

She tilted her head back to the shattered glass above her.

The grunting noise grew vicious, louder, and quicker, morphing into a panting grunt.



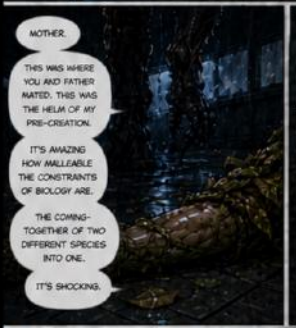
Omega dove into the window where Leaflet had originally shattered the glass.

He landed on all a few feet further from where Leaflet had originally landed.



Only Omega's disgusting legs appeared in the bleak brightness.

She sealed her eyes hoping he didn't spot her.



MOTHER.

THIS WAS WHERE YOU AND FATHER PARTED. THIS WAS THE HELM OF MY PRE-CREATION.

IT'S AMAZING HOW MALLEABLE THE CONSTRAINTS OF BIOLOGY ARE.

THE COMING-TOGETHER OF TWO DIFFERENT SPECIES INTO ONE.

IT'S SHOCKING.



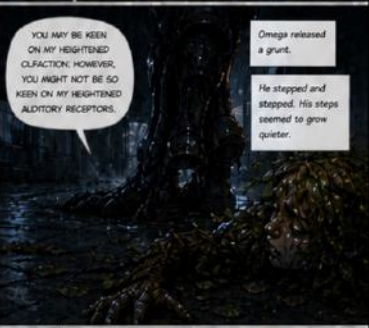
Leaflet, without trying to emit noise, waded her left hand horizontally to feel the something that was blocking her crawling path.

She felt the edge of the something.

She grabbed onto it and pulled herself forward with her left hand.

Her moist wooden chest squeaked across the wet tile floor.

She immediately stopped all movement. Her body jittered from coldness, pain, and anxiety.



YOU MAY BE KEEN ON MY HEIGHTENED OUSAFATION; HOWEVER, YOU MIGHT NOT BE SO KEEN ON MY HEIGHTENED AUDITORY RECEPTORS.

Omega released a grunt.

He stepped and stepped. His steps seemed to grow quieter.



TOO BAD YOU COULDN'T HAVE GIVEN ME HEIGHTENED VISION.

MY HEARING ISN'T AS KEEN AS MY SMELL.

AND YOUR SMELL DECREASED QUITE A BIT FROM BEING IN THE RAIN FOR A LONG TIME.

YOU ARE ONE LUCKY PLANT.



BUT THAT'S OKAY.

I'LL FIND YOU SOME TIME.

YOU CAN'T CONCEAL YOURSELF IN THE DARKNESS INDEFINITELY.

Leaflet's anxiety overtook coldness and pain.



Leaflet had no way to move without emitting noise.

She didn't know what to do.

She began to hopelessly cry.

SON?



WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS?

WHY DON'T YOU LOVE ME?



LOVE IS AN INEFFICIENT ANOMALY.

I WAS BUILT FOR SURVIVAL.

SENTINELS DON'T NEED LOVE.

WE NEED LEGACY.



YOU GAVE ME THIS BODY.

THIS MIND.

THIS PURPOSE.

I WILL COMPLETE IT.

His breath was fetid, like rotting metal and soil.

It filled the dark.



Omega stopped with the footsteps.

I know you were going to talk some time," he said. "Your voice is relatively far from me. Perhaps this supposed heightened auditory ability is nothing but a fluke. Perhaps a disadvantage.

In any case, I know your location. I could immediately target you. But please, go on. I'm interested to learn more about how my other half would normally behave.



Pain overtook her.

She said, "What's controlling you to behave this way? Do you really not feel any attachment to your mother?"



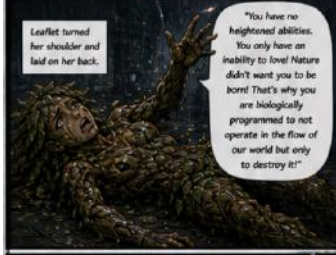
Anxiety overtook her.

"Please-- please-- please-- please don't hurt me! I love you no matter how and you are! You are a part of me! You are loved!"



Omega laughed.

"Loved? How can a concubine love her own production? There's no substance in what you're trying to refer to. I was simply born to murder your kind. What's so complex about this that you don't understand?"



Leaflet turned her shoulder and laid on her back.

"You have no heightened abilities. You only have an inability to love! Nature didn't want you to be born! That's why you are biologically programmed to not operate in the flow of our world but only to destroy it!"



She slowly stood up and cried uncontrollably.

"Please look past this inability! Say no to nature! Break free from how you are programmed! Learn to love me! Love me! Please! Love me!"



Omega laughed again.

"I'll never understand your kind."

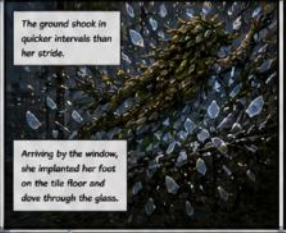
He gave out his loudest grunt and pounded the floor with a shake.



Leaflet's mechanical energy fuel had been filled partially.

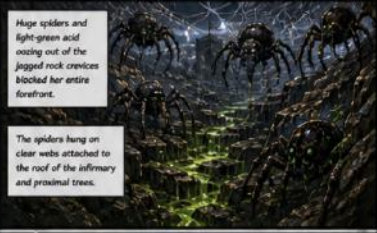
She took a huge stride to her right.

She headed for the windows again.



The ground shook in quicker intervals than her stride.

Arriving by the window, she implanted her foot on the tile floor and dove through the glass.



Huge spiders and light-green acid oozing out of the jagged rock crevices blocked her entire forefront.

The spiders hung on clear webs attached to the roof of the infirmary and proximal trees.

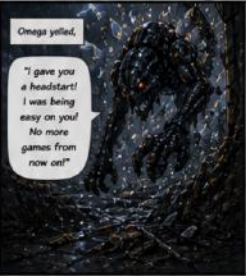


The terrain was rough.

Past this forefront was the prison about a quarter of a mile away, specifically, the side of the cafeteria.

There was no other route to avoid this forefront.

She pursued forward with more strides.



Omega yelled,

"I gave you a headstart! I was being easy on you! No more games from now on!"



As Leaflet hopped on the rocks,

he shook the ground as he clamped the floor with his strides.



Hopping from unlevelled rock to another, Leaflet avoided the chasms.

Omega continued stomping but halted his vocal grunts.



"We have a fun playground ahead of us. The famous thalvic chasms and renowned avahits.



I may not be gifted in loving as you say, but I am certainly more than gifted in physical maneuvering.

There's no escaping from here."



Leaflet was perched on top of a high-leveled rock that was separated from a low-level rock by a long chasm.



She took one stride. Two stride. Half of the surface area of her fibrous left foot landed on the jagged rock, cutting her foot inches deep.



Her green eyes reflected a lighter glow from the acid as her tears bursted from the pain. She caught her momentum with her right foot.



She looked back. Omega was almost ten rocks behind her.



The farther forward she strode, the bigger the chasm got.



She hopped from the low-leveled rock to another high-leveled rock with her right foot. The chasm wasn't as big, but landing on her left foot left her in even more pain.



She turned back again. Omega was around five-to-six rocks behind her.



She hopped to another rock. And then another. The chasms began to take such great shape that an acidic lake began to take over this shape.



The next rock she had to jump was the biggest gap. She took one stride. Two stride. Three stride.



She landed on the rock with her right foot, yet she wasn't able to land her left foot to stop the momentum.



The rock itself moved and carried her momentum. She panicked. Almost losing balance, she horizontal movement and surfed the rock with her left foot.



She maintained balance. The rock stopped moving. There were no chasms beyond this point. Only floating rocks in a thick lake.



She looked back. Omega, still hopping on all-fours, was on the third-to-last chasm from the lake. LIZARD BALANCED! THAT'S VERY SAD. TOO BAD YOU HEBENT DOES WITH AN ENHANCED VESTIBULAR SENSE. MY BALANCE CAN'T BE OUTMATCHED.



She continued forward. The rocks were getting smaller. She took one stride. She landed on the next rock with her right foot. She surfed it.



She looked back. Omega hopped the last chasm. He followed the same pattern of rocks she stepped on.



The rock trembled with Leaflet's dying and feeble body. She was on the verge of giving out at any moment. Leaflet formed an idea. She waited for him.



Omega hopped the first floating rock. YOU GIVE UP? DON'T THINK ABOUT JUMPING INTO THE ACID. I AT LEAST DESERVE THE SATISFACTION OF THE HILL.



She waited. I RESPECT YOUR WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT DEFEAT. GOODBYE, ANOTHER.



Taking a gigantic stride on all-fours, he dove for her.



At the same time, she took a big stride and hopped to the next rock.



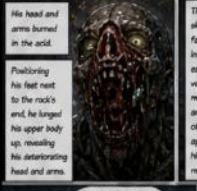
She propelled his rock back, sending Omega to overcalculate his jumping force.



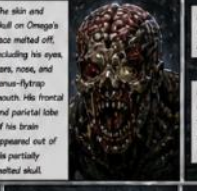
Omega's two feet and knees landed on his rock, but his entire upper body fell in the acid.



He caught his momentum by leaning his upper body under the rock and grabbing onto the bottom end of the rock with his hands, the same end his feet were on.



His head and arms burned in the acid. Positioning his feet next to the rock's end, he langed his upper body up, revealing his deteriorating head and arms.



The skin and skull on Omega's face melted off, including his eyes, ears, nose, and venus-flytrap mouth. His frontal and parietal lobe of his brain appeared out of his partially melted skull.



His two arms only floated limp and a few ligaments. He pressed his honey arms against the rock and situated all of his limbs on the rock.



He stood up with his two feet.



Leaflet was beyond horrified. Her son only had a brain for a face. She screamed.



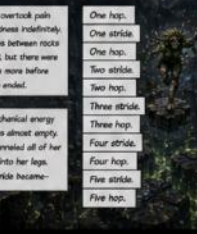
Yet she continued forward. I MAY NOT HAVE THE FLUBBY FOR A MOUTH, YET MY FIBROUS BRANCH SON PROTECTED MY NECK AND VOCAL CORDS. AND WHILE I MAY NOT POSSESS THE ABILITY TO SEE, I STILL HAVE ACCESS TO MY OLFACTORY BULB. EVEN WITHOUT THE NEED OF A FLESHY NOSE. I CAN SMELL YOUR SCENT. BUT I BETTER SPEED UP THE PROCESS BEFORE THE RAIN ERADICATES YOUR SMELL.



AS I SMEL, I CAN TRANSLATE YOUR MOVEMENT FROM YOUR FOOT SCENT LOCATIONS. He hopped on the next rock with his two feet.



Leaflet's green eyes dilated. She immediately hopped to the next rock.



Anxiety overtook pain and sickness indefinitely. The gaps between rocks widened, but there were only five more before the lake ended. Her mechanical energy tank was almost empty. She channeled all of her energy into her hops. Each stride became... One hop. One stride. One hop. Two stride. Two hop. Three stride. Three hop. Four stride. Four hop. Five stride. Five hop.



Half of the base of her left fibrous foot landed on the jagged fine rock. She caught her momentum with her right foot. Her whole body fell on the rock. Both of her feet were severely cut.



Pain temporarily overtook the coldness and indefinite anxiety.

FUUUUU
CCCCCK!

She turned back. Faceless Omega was on the third hop.

Indefinite anxiety retook the throne. She had to get up.



Fourth Hop.

Omega's right foot landed on the rock, yet his left foot dipped in the acid for a temporary second as he bent down from landing.



Fifth Hop.

He landed on his left knee, and his right leg dipped in the acid for a temporary three seconds.



All four of his limbs had partially deteriorated. His wooden legs and feet were only bone and a few ligaments.



She got up.

She could only apply pressure on the ground one foot at a time.



She hopped on one foot.

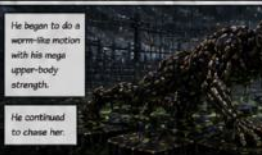


Pain and anxiety shared the throne.

Her tank only had a sliver of mechanical energy remaining.

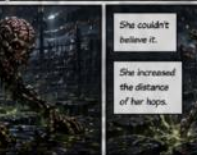


Too bad you have a sense of pain. My limbs may be immobile, but that doesn't mean I myself am immobile.



He began to do a worm-like motion with his mega upper-body strength.

He continued to chase her.



She couldn't believe it.

She increased the distance of her hops.



Using his mega strength towards his mid-body, he matched the same distance of her stride.

One stride. Equal stride.



Leaflet saw the metal fence of the manure field.

She was less than 100 feet away.



"I have to admit," Omega said. "I may have miscalculated a few things. But that's alright because you have nowhere to escape. It will be impossible to hop the fence in your condition."



She screamed as she hopped on each foot.

Her hops increased in speed.



She soon began running on both feet.

Her anxiety helped her manage the influx of pain.



Omega began to grunt.

He increased the speed of his worm-like strides.



She was 20 feet away from the metal fence.

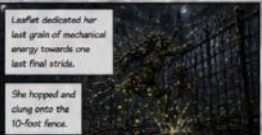
She looked back.



He was a few feet away from her.

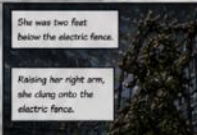


You're running out of energy.



Leaflet directed her last grain of mechanical energy towards one last final stride.

She hopped and clung onto the 10-foot fence.



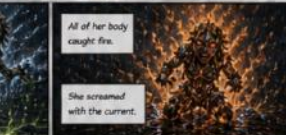
She was two feet below the electric fence.

Raising her right arm, she clung onto the electric fence.



Electricity ran through her entire body.

Her wood began to crisp. Her limbs caught fire.



All of her body caught fire.

She screamed with the current.



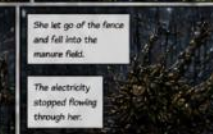
She clung on with her left hand, creating a closed circuit.

Her insides began to flame. Her green eyes began to rodden.



She pulled herself up.

Her upper body reached above the fence.



She let go of the fence and fell into the manure field.

The electricity stopped flowing through her.



The rain slowly began to put out her fire.

Ashes floated out of her branchy crevices.



Her mechanical top of her.

His brain juices slobbered all over her face.



The aftershock of electricity superseded all of her coldness, pain, and anxiety.

She smiled and laughed as she felt her entire body burn.



She looked at her merrily disfigured son past the fence.



You haven't escaped.

He took a ginormous stride and hopped the fence with his worm-like catapult.



HELLLPPP
MEEE!



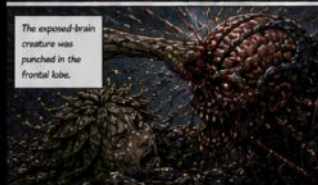
Omega slashed again, Leaflet jolted her body up and down and cried. Pain was her ruler.



This moment was the highest threshold of pain she ever felt. Burned, motionless, and mangled, she suffered more slashes on the wet manure.



She was on the brink of death. She grabbed onto her left foot that was sprained.



The exposed-brain creature was punched in the frontal lobe.



Omega granted and strode in his worm-like motion away.



"Help me, Doctor!" a voice yelled.
"Rose, relax!" another voice yelled.



DON'T USE THE CONVERTERS!



Andrew screamed, still lying weak on the floor next to Enzo's dead body.
The noise level could only be heard by Shruburb's, Natasha's, and his ears.
It began to rain.



A deafening clicking sound went off across the entire manure field.
CLIKKKKKKKKKKK



Andrew covered his ears as the short-listening sound came to a stop.

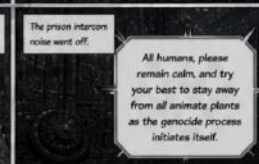


Andrew cleared out his bloody septum.



WHAT THE FUCK IS HAPPENING?!

He took his hands away from his ears.



All humans, please remain calm, and try your best to stay away from all animate plants as the genocide process initiates itself.



The manure floor rumbled.



Grants superseded the noise of the white garment's screams.
GRUUUNNNNTTT!!!



Andrew's inferior-oblique muscles in his eyes raised themselves as his eyebrows lowered.
Shruburb? What did they say?!



"Get up, Andrew," Shruburb said.
GET UP, ANDREW!



The grunts grew louder.



I CAN'T!
Andrew screamed.
The first animate human appeared in Andrew's vision in the sea of white garments.



The monster pounced in Andrew's direction.



Andrew screamed.
SHRUBURB! RUN!



Andrew battled his volition to stay on the floor.
He bit his jaw forward.



He dug his hands into the manure and pushed the ground of Nivana 74.



A guard shot the charging animate human.



The monster changed its course.





Marco grabbed Andrew's neck with two hands and punneled him to the manure floor.



Marco's whole body vibrated and discombobulated. Andrew couldn't breathe.



Using his only hand, Andrew poked Marco in the eyes.



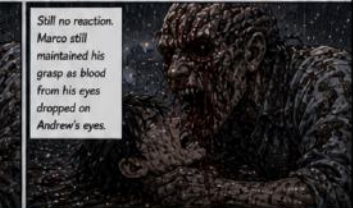
Marco didn't react. Andrew pressed Marco's eyes tighter.



Andrew popped Marco's eyeballs out of his eye sockets.



Still no reaction. Marco still maintained his grasp as blood from his eyes dropped on Andrew's eyes.



Andrew grabbed onto Marco's neck and tried to nudge him away.



This nudge managed to throw Marco to the side and lose grasp of his neck.



Andrew's pharynx was filled with air.



Andrew was greeted by another familiar family-oriented face.



MARIE.

It was his mother, Marie. She dove and directed a knife at Andrew's head.



Andrew impulsively covered his head with his right arm. His right arm was trimmed even shorter now.



AAAGH!

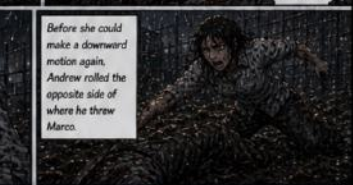
Andrew screamed.



She slowly raised her knife again.



Before she could make a downward motion again, Andrew rolled the opposite side of where he threw Marco.



IN PARALLEL...



A white garment hung on an animate plant's back, trying to topple it down.

The animate plant enraptured its branches around the white garment's arms and pushed him to the manure floor.



Marie knifed the manure floor.



I'M SORRY!

She raised the knife.



Andrew tried pushing himself up with his left hand. His entire right arm went numb.



I DON'T WANT TO DO THIS, ANDREW! MY MIND IS POSSESSED! PLEASE STOP ME!



CONSCIOUSNESS TARGET:
ROBERT RUTANO

HEY!
BANDU
YELLED.

BEFORE THE EXECUTIVE
SECURITY GUARDS PULLED
OUT THEIR GUNS, ROBERT
RAISED HIS LEFT HAND IN
A STOP MOTION.

HORACE HAD
HIS HAND ON
HIS CANE.

LET ME HEAR
WHAT HE HAS
TO SAY.

THE EXECUTIVE SECURITY
GUARDS LET GO OF
THEIR GUNS.

I'M THE ONE
WHO IS LUCID
NOW, BOBBY.

HE STEPPED CLOSER.

YOU REALLY DON'T THINK I KNOW
WHAT'S GOING ON? YOU ONLY
RESUSCITATED ME FOR MY MEN!

THEY WOULDN'T HAVE AGREED TO
FOLLOW THROUGH WITH YOUR HUBS
IF IT WASN'T FOR MY COMMAND.

IF I HAD BEEN COMPLETELY LUCID,
I WOULD NEVER HAVE GIVEN THE
GO-AHEAD.

YOU TOOK FULL ADVANTAGE OF
MY FORGETFUL VULNERABILITY.

MY QUESTION THOUGH... WHY
WOULD YOU GO THROUGH THE
TROUBLE OF ESTABLISHING A
FISCAL ENDEAVOR OF CREATING
THE SPIRIT WORLD WITH ME IF

ALL YOU WERE GOING TO DO WAS
BACKSTAB ME?

ANOTHER QUESTION THOUGH.
WHY WOULD YOU GO THROUGH
THE TROUBLE OF IMPLANTING
MEMORIES IF ALL YOU NEEDED
ME TO DO WAS SAY A SIMPLE
"YES" WITHOUT ME NEEDING TO
GAIN LUCIDITY?

LAST QUESTION THOUGH... WHY
WOULD YOU HAVE ME ETERNALLY
SUFFER IN THE NOTHING DIMENSION
WHERE I FLOATED CONSCIOUSLY
IN A DARK VOID?

IT TRAUMATIZED ME
INSURMOUNTABLY.

DO YOU JUST LIKE TO
TOY AROUND WITH
PEOPLE? ARE YOU JUST
SO EVIL THAT YOU FIND
OTHER PEOPLE'S
SUFFERING COMICAL?

WE NEVER AGREED TO
INSTALL HUBS INTO PEOPLE
WHEN WE WOULD RULE THE
SPIRIT WORLD.

OUR ORIGINAL PLAN WAS
TO RULE THEM PHYSICALLY.
OUR PLAN WAS NEVER TO
CONTROL THEM
NEUROCHEMICALLY.

THAT'S BEYOND EVIL.
IT'S MORE DEPRIVING
THAN ANYTHING!

I ADMIT I DID
NOT NEED TO
REINSTATE YOUR
FULL MENTAL
STATE WITH YOUR
MEMORIES.

HOWEVER,
I MISSED YOU
HOWIE.

I THOUGHT YOU
WOULD BE MORE
THAN APPRECIATIVE
OF THIS WORLD
THAT I'M SAVING.

"SAVING" HOWIE SAID.

YOUR MIND IS MORE
THAN FUCKED UP.

THINKING BACK ON MY
OWN LIFE, I WAS FUCKED
UP TOO.

THE FACT THAT I NEVER
PUSHED YOU TO PURSUE A
WORLD OF GOOD WITH YOUR
SCIENTIFIC INVENTIONS AND
INSTEAD GAVE IN TO YOUR
CORRUPTED HAND OF WORLD
DOMINATION WILL CONTINUALLY
HAUNT ME IN THIS SECOND
LIFE OF MINE.

TO THINK THAT YOU ARE
NEUROCHEMICALLY DESTROYING
PEOPLE INSTEAD OF
NEUROCHEMICALLY SOLVING
EVERY KNOWN MENTAL DISORDER
IS DEVASTATING FOR THIS WORLD.

YOU COULDN'T EVEN SOLVE
YOUR OWN MENTAL DISORDER.

SO WHAT DO
YOU PLAN TO
ACCOMPLISH IF
YOU SHOOT ME?

ETNA BOMBS
THE DRY PNER.
YOU THAT?

I-I-I WOULD
CURE THEM
NEUROCHEMICALLY
BY--

I CONTROL EVERY MAN,
WOMAN, AND CHILD
NEUROCHEMICALLY WITH
MY NAVIGATOR.

I EXTERMINATED OXYTOCIN,
SUBSTANCE P, AND
GLUTAMATE FROM ALL OF
MY GUARDS, INCLUDING
YOURS.

IF I WERE TO DIE, MY
NAVIGATOR WOULD
DEACTIVATE, RENDERING
YOUR PLAN USELESS.

FORGET THAT THEN.

YOU MAY HAVE ALREADY
DESTROYED THIS WORLD,
BUT I CAN STOP YOU
FROM FURTHER DESTROYING
IT EVEN MORE.

KILLING YOU IS ENOUGH
ALREADY FOR ME.

YOU'RE
FORGETTING
ONE MORE
THING.

I'M NOT
FORGETTING
ANYTHING.

IT'S YOUR
FATHER!
MARIE YELLED.

SHE CRADLED
HER KNIFE AND
MISSED ANOTHER
KNIFE SWING.

GENERAL WAYNE
SHOT.

THE BULLET
PUNCTURED
ROBERT'S
FOREHEAD SKIN.

YET HIS
TITANIUM SKULL
STOPPED THE
BULLET'S
MOMENTUM.

ROBERT SAID, "YOU CAN'T
FORM NEW MEMORIES IN
YOUR SECOND LIFE.

HE GALVANIZED HIS
RIGHT ROBOTIC HAND
AND SPEWED LIQUID
TITANIUM AT GENERAL
WAYNE'S FACE.

GENERAL WAYNE REENACTED
THE PAST PHYSICAL MOTIONS
OF THOM.

HE COVERED HIS FACE
AND FELL TO THE
GRANITE FLOOR AS
HE SCREAMED.

HE DRAPED HIM
IN A COMPLETE
COAT OF
TITANIUM.

GENERAL WAYNE'S
DISCOMBINATION
CAME TO A QUICKER
STOP THAN THOM'S.

HE DIED.

ROBERT CONTINUED
TO SPEW TITANIUM
POST-DEATH.
THE ROOM WAS
SILENT.



CONSCIOUSNESS TARGET:
ROBERT RUTANO

HEY!
BANDU
YELLED.

BEFORE THE EXECUTIVE
SECURITY GUARDS PULLED
OUT THEIR GUNS, ROBERT
RAISED HIS LEFT HAND IN
A STOP MOTION.

HORACE HAD
HIS HAND ON
HIS CANE.

LET ME HEAR
WHAT HE HAS
TO SAY.

THE EXECUTIVE SECURITY
GUARDS LET GO OF
THEIR GUNS.

I'M THE ONE
WHO IS LUCID
NOW, BOBBY.

HE STEPPED CLOSER.

YOU REALLY DON'T THINK I KNOW
WHAT'S GOING ON? YOU ONLY
RESUSCITATED ME FOR MY MEN!

THEY WOULDN'T HAVE AGREED TO
FOLLOW THROUGH WITH YOUR HUBS
IF IT WASN'T FOR MY COMMAND.

IF I HAD BEEN COMPLETELY LUCID,
I WOULD NEVER HAVE GIVEN THE
GO-AHEAD.

YOU TOOK FULL ADVANTAGE OF
MY FORGETFUL VULNERABILITY.

MY QUESTION THOUGH. WHY
WOULD YOU GO THROUGH THE
TROUBLE OF ESTABLISHING A
FISCAL ENDEAVOR OF CREATING
THE SPIRIT WORLD WITH ME IF

ALL YOU WERE GOING TO DO WAS
BACKSTAB ME?

ANOTHER QUESTION THOUGH.
WHY WOULD YOU GO THROUGH
THE TROUBLE OF IMPLANTING
MEMORIES IF ALL YOU NEEDED
ME TO DO WAS SAY A SIMPLE
YES WITHOUT THE NEEDING TO
GAIN LUCIDITY?

LAST QUESTION THOUGH. WHY
WOULD YOU HAVE ME ETERNALLY
SUFFER IN THE NOTHING DIMENSION
WHERE I FLOATED CONSCIOUSLY
IN A DARK VOID?

IT TRAUMATIZED ME
INSURMOUNTABLY.

DO YOU JUST LIKE TO
TOY AROUND WITH
PEOPLE? ARE YOU JUST
SO EVIL THAT YOU FIND
OTHER PEOPLE'S
SUFFERING COMICAL?

WE NEVER AGREED TO
INSTALL HUBS INTO PEOPLE
WHEN WE WOULD RULE THE
SPIRIT WORLD.

OUR ORIGINAL PLAN WAS
TO RULE THEM PHYSICALLY.
OUR PLAN WAS NEVER TO
CONTROL THEM
NEUROCHEMICALLY.

THAT'S BEYOND EVIL.
IT'S MORE DEPRIVING
THAN ANYTHING!

I ADMIT I DID
NOT NEED TO
REINSTATE YOUR
FULL MENTAL
STATE WITH YOUR
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DISCOMBINATION
CAME TO A QUICKER
STOP THAN THOM'S.

HE DIED.

ROBERT CONTINUED
TO SPEW TITANIUM
POST-DEATH.

THE ROOM WAS
SILENT.



He saw a guard aim a gun at his head.

He heard him say,

“Hello, child.”

He felt the guard grab his hair and push his face into a thylacine-webbed discombobulated brain of a white garment.

He smelled the manure.

He tasted the brain’s blood.



He saw the guard leave him.

He perceived his sister, Lisa, crawled up in a ball and staring up at the rain in fear.

Reality ended.



CONSCIOUSNESS TARGET: LEAFLET

It stopped raining.

“We can’t just leave her here!” Rose yelled.

“Since when did you show sympathy for animate plants?” Doctor yelled. “We don’t have the time to save her!”

“Have some compassion!” Rose picked up Leaflet and carried her on her back.

Doctor yelled, “Do you know how much of a target that makes us?” “What the fuck are you thinking?”

“I’m thinking about doing something kind for once!”

“You chose the worst time to do something like that! We still need to find Andrew!”

A grunt ignited.



Leaflet looked behind.

Out in the open manure, next to the metal fence, and 30 feet away from the sea of white garments, she saw an animate human leap out of the sea.

Landing 10 feet away in front of them, the animate human pounced on all-fours straight at them.

The animate human dove and saving its claws for Leaflet.

Rose twirled with Leaflet on her back and dodged the animate human in action.

Leaflet felt a surge of fear override her pain in reaction.



Rose headed for the sea of white garments while Leaflet still had her eyes on the monster.

15 feet behind them, the animate human shifted its body around and strode after them.

The animate human dove in for a tackle.

Rose averted her body to the right by applying all of her body weight on her left foot for a side-stride in action.

Rose entered the sea and white garments.

31 feet behind them, the gr in rounon.



The animate human peeled off Leaflet’s ash back with its claws.

Leaflet screeched as pain overtook the throne in reaction.

Rose still sprinted forward in action.

Rose entered the sea of white garments.

Five feet away from the sea of white garments, the animate human dove inside the sea. The animate human reached both of its claws out.



Rose evaded its attack and lunged left in action.

Leaflet continued to cry in reaction.

They escaped the animate human.

Directly in front of them, a pack of depleted white garments punched each other. A white garment threw a punch for Rose.

Rose veered away from this punch and sprung through the pack in action.

Leaflet wanted to let go of Rose’s back due to the painful throne in reaction.

Rose headed deeper inside the sea.



THEY ESCAPED THE PACK.

CLOUDED THEIR RIGHT PERIPHERAL. A GUARD WHO HELD A TASER RAN PARALLEL TO ROSE'S STRIDES. THE GUARD AIMED HIS TASER AT ROSE'S HUB. ROSE DUCKED AND THE TASER LANDED ON ANOTHER WHITE GARMENT'S HUB TO HER LEFT PERIPHERAL IN ACTION.

LEAFLET WAS TRAUMATIZED BY THE SIGHT OF ELECTRICITY AGAIN IN REACTION.

ROSE RAN PERPENDICULAR TO THE GUARD.

THEY ESCAPED THE GUARD. THEY HAD ALSO ESCAPED DOTOR EVER SINCE THEY ESCAPED THE ANIMATE HUMAN.

HOWEVER, LEAFLET SAW DOTOR AGAIN, 50 FEET AWAY FROM THEM IN THE MIDST OF THE SEA CHAOS. DOTOR HAD HIS HANDS GRASPED TO A BOY. THE BOY WAS RESISTING. A GIRL CRAWLED UP IN A BALL AND STARED AT THE MANURE FLOOR.

ROSE DIRECTED HER MOVEMENT TOWARD DOTOR. SHE ACCIDENTALLY STEPPED ON A THALYIC-WEAVED DISCOMBOLATED BRAIN.
I'M COMING!

LEAFLET ATTEMPTED TO PAUSE ALL PAIN AND TERROR. SHE ASKED,
WHY IS HE TYING UP THESE POOR CHILDREN?

ROSE CONTINUED TO SPRINT THROUGH THE SEA WITHOUT A RESPONSE. THE INCREASED NUMBER OF DEAD WHITE GARMENTS, GUARDS, ANIMATE HUMANS DECREASED THE NUMBER OF PERSISTENT SCREAMS.
ANSWER ME!

IT'S NOT ON YOUR AGENDA! ROSE YELLED. SHE STEPPED OVER A DECAPITATED ANIMATE PLANT.
25 FEET AWAY.

THE BOY SCREAMED AND RESISTED DOTOR. THE GIRL SAT HELPLESSLY.
LET GO OF THEM!

DOTOR USED A SLIVER OF A BRANCHY ANIMATE PLANT ARM AS A ROPE TO TIE THE BOY'S HANDS.
10 FEET AWAY.

LEAFLET LET GO OF ROSE'S BACK AND SPRINTED PAST HER STRAIGHT AT DOTOR. VIGILANCE OVERTOK THE THRONE OF PAIN AND TERROR. SHE STRODE.

SHE TACKLED DOTOR BEFORE HE COULD TIE THE BOY'S HANDS COMPLETELY. SHE PUNCHED DOTOR WEAKLY.
THUD!

DOTOR KICKED HER BURNT BODY OFF.
I'LL SAVE US, LISA!

THE BOY SPRINTED AT LAYING DOTOR. BEFORE LEAFLET COULD SEE THE BOY'S ATTACK. ROSE GRABBED HER BY THE BACK AND PUNCHED HER FACE.
SMACK!

LEAFLET'S MECHANICAL ENERGY TRAIN HAD BEEN NEGATIVE SINCE THE START. SHE COULD ONLY ACCEPT PUNCHES. HER VIGILANCE COULDN'T MAKE UP FOR THE FUEL.

I'LL STOP BEING USELESS! I'LL FIGHT FOR US UNTIL I DIE!
LEAFLET WAS PUNCHED AGAIN.
SMACK!

AAAGH!
SHE CRIED.
THE PUNCHES STOPPED. ROSE WAS THROWN TO THE SIDE BY A YOUNG LADY.
WHO CAPTURES A PAIR OF INNOCENT CHILDREN?!

THE LADY PUNCHED ROSE.
POW!

A MAN WITH GREEN GLASSES HOPPED OVER LEAFLET'S BODY AND GRABBED ONTO THE WHITE COLLAR OF THE LADY.
HE THREW HER TO THE SIDE.
THROW!

TERRY, WHAT ARE YOU DOING??
GETTING OUR REVENGE AS SPIRIT RADICALS!

CONSCIOUSNESS TARGET: ANDREW RUTANO



ANDREW SCREAMED.
**"DON'T
KILL HIM!"**



KEVIN TOOK
HIS HANDS OFF
MARCO.

MARCO'S NOSE
AND MOUTH
SEEMED TO
BLEND INTO
ONE BLOODY
SHAPE AS HE
LAY ON THE FLOOR.



KEVIN YELLED,
**WHAT THE
FUCK IS
GOING ON?!**



ANDREW
YELLED.

**HE'S MY
BROTHER!**



"ANDREW ..."
RUFUS SAID.

"YOU'RE
BLEEDING.
BAD."



A KNIFE POKED
OUT OF RUFUS'
HEART.



MARIE'S FACE
RESTED ON HIS
RIGHT SHOULDER.
MARIE'S FACE
WINCED.

SHE SCREAMED.
**PLEASE STOP
ME BEFORE I
KILL YOU,
ANDREW!**

SHE PULLED THE
KNIFE OUT OF RUFUS.



RUFUS DROPPED DEAD.



SHE CHARGED AT
LAYING ANDREW.



MARCO STOOD UP. HE
SPRINTED TOWARDS
ANDREW AND STEPPED
IN FRONT OF HIM.



A KNIFE POKED OUT
OF MARCO'S
DISCOMBOLATING
HEART.



MARIE SCREAMED
IN TERROR. SHE
PULLED THE KNIFE.



MARCO DROPPED DEAD.



"IS THIS REAL?"
ANDREW ASKED
WEAKLY.

HE WAS AT A LOSS
FOR WORDS AND BLOOD.



MARIE CHARGED
AT ANDREW.

NO ONE WAS
IN HER WAY
OR COULD GET
IN HER WAY.



"ANDREW!"
KEVIN SCREAMED.



ANDREW CLOSED HIS EYES
AWAITING HIS DEATH.

DEATH DIDN'T STRIKE.
HE WAITED. YET IT STILL
DIDN'T STRIKE.



HE OPENED
HIS EYES.



THE KNIFE
FLOATED NEXT
TO HIS HEAD.

TWO HANDS
SHAKING THE
FLOATING BLADE.



MARIE'S EYES
SQUINTED
WITH TEARS.

BODY SHOOK
WITH FEAR.

JAW JITTERED,
WITH SADNESS,

AND LIPS SMILED
WITH BLOOD.

FULL BODY
DISCOMBOLATION.



SHE SCREAMED.

**I HOLD THE
POWER OVER
MY MIND!**

SHE REVERSED THE
BLADE'S DIRECTION
AND STRUCK HER HEART.



MARIE DROPPED DEAD.

**CONSCIOUSNESS TARGET:
ROBERT RUTANO**

ROBERT DUCKED BESIDE
THE LEFTMOST BED OF THE
IRREGULAR ROOM.

HIS GALVANIC
TITANIUM STIMULATOR
CHAMBER HAD RUN
OUT OF TITANIUM.

HE REACHED WITH HIS ROBOTIC
ARM FOR HIS LAST TITANIUM
PELLET HE KEPT ATTACHED
TO HIS LEFT LEG.

HE WAS LOSING BLOOD
QUICKLY FROM HIS
LEFT ARM.

HE FAILED TO INSERT THE PELLET
INSIDE THE CHAMBER DUE TO ITS
LOCATION BEING THE FOREARM
REGION OF HIS ROBOTIC ARM.

HE PUT THE
PELLET IN HIS
MOUTH AND BIT
ON IT.

ROBERT!

FOR AN OLD
MAN, YOU FIGHT
LIKE A CHEATER!

ROBERT BEGAN
TO SWEAT.

HE DROPPED
THE PELLET FOR
THE CHAMBER,
IT MISSED.

ROBERT BIT DOWN
ON THE PELLET AGAIN.

HE DROPPED
THE PELLET,
IT LANDED
INSIDE THE
CHAMBER.

ROBERT CLOSED HIS
ROBOTIC FIST AND
EXHALED.

HSSSS...

HE PEEKED
OVER THE BED.

CONLEY'S LEGS WERE DRENCHED
AND STUCK IN LIQUID TITANIUM.

GENERAL WAYNE'S DEAD
BODY LAY NEXT TO HIM.

CONLEY HAD HIS HAND
REACHING OUT FOR
GENERAL WAYNE'S GUN.

ROBERT FULLY STOOD UP.

HE WALKED AROUND
THE BED SLOWLY AND
LOOKED INTO THE EYES
OF CONLEY.

YOU ALL THOUGHT
YOU COULD TAKE OUT
THE OLD MAN, HUH?

CONLEY'S ARM SHIVERED
FOR THE GUN IN CLOSE
PROXIMITY.

ROBERT'S FEET STOOD
NEXT TO THE GUN.

IT WAS SILLY
OF ME TO HAVE
FORGOTTEN TO INSTALL
TWO MORE BACKSTABBERS
FOR TWO MORE
BACKSTABBERS.

MAYBE HOWE WAS
RIGHT, MY MEMORY
SEEMS TO WORKEN THE
OLDER I GET.

HE SPEWED A PUDDLE
OF TITANIUM ON
CONLEY'S TREMBLING
HAND.

AAAAHHH!!!

HE SCREAMED
FROM THE BURN.

HE MAYBE...

HE STEPPED
ON THE GUN.

MAYBE I KNEW ALL
ABOUT YOUR PLAN.
MAYBE I ENJOY
PLAYING A GOOD
MATCH WITH WORTHY
OPPONENTS.

YET YOU THREE WERE
NOT WORTHY IN THE
SLIGHTEST.

YOU FAILED
MISERABLY.

AND THOSE WHO
FAIL MISERABLY
FALL IN THE HANDS
OF FATE.

WHICH IS ME.

HE TOOK HIS FOOT
OFF THE GUN AND
PICKED IT UP.

HE SHOT CONLEY
IN THE HEAD.

ROBERT HEARD A GUN
BEING RELOADED
BEHIND HIM.

HE TURNED
AROUND.

NEXT TO THE WALL
SEPARATING THE ROOM
FULL OF STRIPPERS
AND BED, ZIM LAY
ON THE FLOOR WITH
ONLY A RIGHT LEG
AND A LEFT ARM.

ZIM PICKED UP THE
RELOADED GUN AND
AIMED IT AT ROBERT.

ZIM WAS SHOT
IN THE HEAD.

ROBERT TURNED
AROUND AGAIN.

BY THE ENTRANCE
OF THE
EXPERIMENTATION
ROOM, FABIAN
STOOD HOLDING
A GUN.

BLOOD DROPPED OUT
OF HIS REVEALING
TEMPORAL LOBE.

HIS HUB WAS
NONEXISTENT.

IT HAD BEEN
PULLED OUT.



ROBERT STOOD MOTIONLESS.

YOU REALLY FORGOT TO DISABLE NEUROTRANSMITTER EXTERMINATION FROM MY HED FROM THE REST OF THE GUARD. WHAT THE FUCK IS WRONG WITH YOU? REGAINING MY SUBSTANCE P BACK WAS NOT FUN, ESPECIALLY WHEN I HAVE THE HEMORRHAGE THE SIZE OF THE FUCKING GRAND CANYON IN MY SKULL AND BRAIN.



THANK YOU FOR SAVING ME. DON'T WORRY. I'LL FIX YOU UP AS SOON AS I CLEAN UP A FEW THINGS.



YOU MIGHT WANNA START WITH THAT TRAIL OF BLOOD. AND YOU'RE WELCOME YOU OLD FUCK.

ROBERT NODDED AND FOLLOWED THE TRAIL OF BLOOD THAT EXITED THE EXPERIMENTATION ROOM. IT WAS BANDU'S.



CONSCIOUSNESS TARGET: MAXWELL RUTANO

TIED UP NEXT TO MAX, LISA SOBBED SILENTLY.

TERRY HAD MAX TIED UP.

ROSE HAD LISA AND THE LAST ANIMATE PLANT ALIVE TIED UP.

DOTOR HAD HARRIET TIED UP.



I'M A FAILURE!



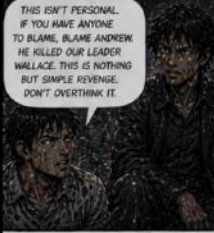
SPIRY RADICALS



SPIRY RADICALS



FUCK YOU, TERRY! MANIPULATIVE SCUMBAGS!



THIS ISN'T PERSONAL. IF YOU HAVE ANYONE TO BLAME, BLAME ANDREW HE KILLED OUR LEADER WALLACE. THIS IS NOTHING BUT SIMPLE REVENGE. DON'T OVERTHINK IT.



MAX GAVE UP MENTALLY AND PHYSICALLY. HE FAILED HIS SISTER. HE FAILED HIS FATHER. HE FAILED HIMSELF.



THE DEAFENING CLICKING SOUND WENT OFF AGAIN.

CLIKKKKKKKKKKKKKKK



ALL OF THE GUARDS REGAINED THEIR NORMAL NEUROTRANSMITTER LEVELS BACK.



THIS LOUD NOISE MADE MAX SCAN HIS ENVIRONMENT.



ALL ANIMATE PLANTS WERE DEAD.



ALL ANIMATE HUMANS AND GUARDS STOPPED FIGHTING.



EVERY WHITE GARMENT WHO ATTEMPTED TO ESCAPE THE PRISON OR REBEL WAS DEAD.



ALL OF THE DEPLETED WHITE GARMENTS WERE EITHER UNCONCIOUS OR DEAD OF THALAMIC-WEBBED BRAIN DISCOMBOLATION.



THE REST OF THE WHITE GARMENTS SAT TRAUMATIZED ON THE MAJORE, ANALOGOUS TO LISA A FEW MOMENTS AGO.



MAX HEARD A NEW FOOTSTEP. HE LOOKED TO HIS RIGHT. IT WAS LEE. HE HELD A GUN.



HE DISTRIBUTED AIM TO ALL THREE SPIRY RADICALS.

UNTIE THEM.



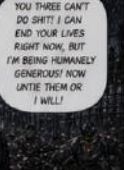
WHO THE FUCK ARE YOU?



I'M THE ONLY PERSON WITH A GUN HERE. I'M HERE TO FOLLOW THROUGH WITH MY PROMISE. TWO PROMISES.



WE COULD EASILY TAKE YOU—



YOU THREE CAN'T DO SHIT! I CAN END YOUR LIVES RIGHT NOW, BUT I'M BEING HUMANELY GENEROUS! NOW UNTIE THEM OR I WILL!



FUCK!

FINE.



TERRY GRABBED ONTO MAX'S ROPE.



I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU CAME, LEE! I LOVE YOU SO MUCH!



I LOVE YOU TOO.



TERRY LET GO OF MAX'S STILL-TIED ROPE.



A grunt emanated.
Behind Lee, a limbless exposed-brain animate human hopped and bounced in huge strides with its worm-like motion.

The animate plant screamed.
LEEE!

Dotter said, "It's back again?"

Lee turned around. The animate human catapulted itself and landed on Lee's face.



The monster unsheathed a shape-shifted fibrous blade.



Before Lee could get up, the blade sliced off his head.



The animate plant screamed in sorrowful pain.



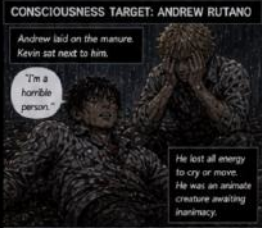
I never forget a person's scent. You're next.



The monster catapulted itself on the animate plant's face.



The animate human catapulted itself away from Max's vision.



CONSCIOUSNESS TARGET: ANDREW RUTANO

Andrew laid on the manure. Kevin sat next to him.

I'm a horrible person.
He lost all energy to cry or move. He was an animate creature awaiting inhumanity.



"What hell are we living in?"



Robert said, "You're living in my hell."



"Do you wish to know why I built what you say, this hell?"



Kevin looked up at the new speaker. He jumped up. He placed his hands around Robert's neck and choked him.

Fuck you! Life-destroyer!

I created this world to feel.
With my neurochemistry, I don't possess the ability to feel or share a sense of empathy that most people have. I'll get to the gist.
He coughed up a bit of blood.
Inside each person's Hub is a special neuro-converter that no one knows about. It's an Empathizer. It accumulates and collects oxytocin from a person and transmits this neurotransmitter energy to my Hub.
This neurotransmitter energy can only be collected when there's, what I call, a "Witness of Suffering".
When a person empathizes with someone's pain, oxytocin is naturally released in their brain. This is how I accumulate my source of oxytocin.
This is how I feel. This is why so many people suffered. This is why I created monsters. Animate humans. Oxytocin-less guards. Dopaminergic-depleted inmates.
This is why I committed genocide on all animate plants.
Every person in that manure field with a somewhat normal brain felt a flourish of oxytocin for their loved ones. And I embellish on this feeling. I crave this feeling.
Feeling makes me feel younger to when I wasn't a psychopath. When I had a normal brain that could experience simple but great feelings of life.
I unfortunately never figured out a way to create artificial precursor cells for oxytocin. With the neurotransmitter converter, I could lower it but I couldn't create it.
I have another reason for doing all of this. I may have been doing all of this at a smaller scale, but it's health. I may hope, being it that to reality was my hope of this world, only a few believe in this. I want couple down to exterminated inmates.
I want to be as fit as you are to what they. I may have been doing it. If things, perhaps not that to why it was then they. I want couple down to exterminated inmates. I want couple down to exterminated inmates. I want couple down to exterminated inmates.

I have another reason for doing all of this.
I may have been doing all of this to benefit me, but in reality, I was also doing it to benefit you.
I want you to suffer.
I want to be like to have zero emotions.
I want you to be like me.
I want you to empathize with zero empathy.



CONSCIOUSNESS TARGET:
ROBERT RUTANO

ALONZO FLEW IN ON HIS FLESHY JETPACK AND LANDED NEXT TO ROBERT.

HOW'D I DO, MONARCH?

FANTASTIC WORK. YOU'VE COMPLETED YOUR MISSION SUCCESSFULLY.

YOU ALSO CAME AT A GREAT TIME. I WAS IN THE MIDDLE OF DISCUSSING WITH MY SON WHY I DID ALL OF THIS.

WHAT THE FUCK HAPPENED TO YOUR ARM?

I HAD A LITTLE ISSUE WITH BACKSTABBERS. THEY—

WAS IT ZIM, CONLEY, AND BANDU?

YES. AND GENERAL WAYNE AND EVEN GORDIN.

GORDIN'S DEATH IS THE MOST COMEDIC.

HE HID BEHIND MY DESK IN MY OFFICE, WAITING FOR ME TO COME OUT OF THE EXPERIMENTATION ROOM. HE CRIED PATHETICALLY, HAVING A GUN AIMED AT MY HEAD, AND HE ASKED ME IF GENERAL WAYNE WAS OKAY.

BEFORE I COULD ANSWER, FABIAN PEEKED OUT OF THE ROOM AND LUCKILY SHOT HIM DOWN FOR ME.

THEY WERE ALL NEUROTIC. I'M GLAD THAT AT LEAST YOU'RE OKAY.

I ACTUALLY DIDN'T. BUT I'M HAPPY YOU BROUGHT THAT UP.

WHY DON'T YOU TELL HIM ALL ABOUT MY NEXT VENTURE?

HE 'SO ANYWAY... REMEMBER THOSE CONSCIOUSNESS INVERSION KEYS?

THOSE WERE LEGITIMATE CONVERTERS, BUT THEY—

THEY DIDN'T SEND YOU TO A UTOPIA-LIKE DIMENSION OR ANY OF THAT SHIT.

THEY SEND YOU TO THE PSYCHOZONE.

WHICH IS BASICALLY A PHYSICAL DIMENSION FOR YOUR MENTAL WORLD.

A WORLD WHERE PHYSICAL MANIPULATIONS CHANGE YOUR PSYCHOLOGY.

THAT'S THE SIMPLEST I CAN PUT IT.

IT'S A PRETTY FUCKING COMPLICATED PROJECT.

I DON'T EVEN UNDERSTAND MOST OF IT.

BUT ALL IN ALL, WE PLANNED FOR YOU TO INADVERTENTLY DISTRIBUTE THOSE KEYS SO YOU WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR DEATH OR UNCONSCIOUSNESS.

YOU FORGOT TO BRING UP THE THLAVIC PRINCIPLES AND WHAT THE AQUARTORIUM WAS ACTUALLY USED FOR.

MY FAULT. WHEN THE CONSCIOUSNESS INVERSION CONVERTER IS INSERTED, A BABY ANALIT SPIDER, NESTLED IN A LITTLE POUCH INSIDE THE... U.S., PRODUCES A WHITE MATTER TRACT OF THLAVA THAT CHANNELS THE CONSCIOUSNESS SINGULARITY TO—, I DON'T KNOW, IT'S COMPLICATED STUFF.

AND AS FOR THE AQUARTORIUM...

THE "SOCIAL STATUS TEST" WAS ACTUALLY SOMETHING MUCH BIGGER.

CORRECT ME IF I'M WRONG, MONARCH, BUT WASN'T IT CALLED PARALLEL ARTIFICIAL NEURONAL TRANSCRIPTION FITTING.

BUT IF YOUR BRAIN MOVES WHEN YOU ARE IN THE PSYCHOZONE, YOUR HEAD DISCOMBIBULATES DUE TO THE THLAVA BEING AN IMPENETRABLE FORCE.

SO YEAH.

THE SERIES OF TESTS YOU TOOK REQUIRED YOU TO USE EVERY REGION OF YOUR BRAIN. AND WHEN THIS REGION OF INTEREST WAS USED, ARTIFICIAL NEURONS WOULD CLONE OFF OF THE ENERGETIC STIMULATION OF YOUR ORIGINAL NEURONS.

THE HUB BASICALLY CREATED A SECOND ARTIFICIAL BRAIN IN YOUR HEAD FOR THE PSYCHOZONE.

SO THAT A PHYSICAL LAYOUT OF THE PSYCHOZONE'S PHYSICAL DIMENSION COULD BE FORMED.

THAT'S ENOUGH LECTURE ON NEUROSCIENCE.

THE PSYCHOZONE WOULD ALLOW ME TO PSYCHOLOGICALLY TINKER ANYONE'S MIND.

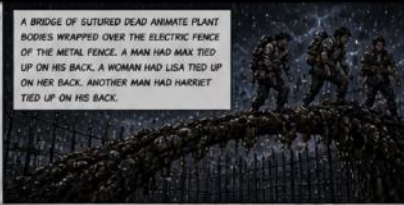
I'VE ALREADY COMPLETED PHYSICAL AND NEUROCHEMICAL DOMINATION.

THIS IS THE LAST ON MY LIST.

DAAAAADDDD!



ANDREW'S MIND
AWAKENED. HE WOKE
UP. HE JOLTED HIS
BODY UP.



A BRIDGE OF SUTURED DEAD ANIMATE PLANT
BODIES WRAPPED OVER THE ELECTRIC FENCE
OF THE METAL FENCE. A MAN HAD MAX TIED
UP ON HIS BACK. A WOMAN HAD LISA TIED UP
ON HER BACK. ANOTHER MAN HAD HARRIET
TIED UP ON HIS BACK.



THEY SLOWLY CLIMBED UP THE
ELECTRICITY-TRAPPING-ANIMATE-
PLANT-BODIED BRIDGE.



MAAAA
AXXXX!



HE SPURTED FOR THE
METAL FENCE, COMPLETELY
DISREGARDING ROBERT AND
ALONZO SITTING ON THE
MANURE. "I'M COMING!"
BLOOD Poured OUT OF HIS
MISSING AND DANGLING-
FLESHED ARMS.



"GO! GO! GO!" THE MAN
WHO CARRIED MAX YELLED.



STOP!



HE THREW OF THE
GARRISON. IN ADDITION
TO HIS LOVED ONES,
FELL ON THE FLOOR.

I'LL KILL
YOU ALL!



HE HOPPED FOR
THE FENCE. NO
ARMS OR HANDS. HE
BIT DOWN ON THE
MAX CARRIER'S
PANTS. HE BIT DOWN
THE OTHER TWO
CARRIER'S PANTS.



HE REARBITTED
THE MAX CARRIER'S
FACE.



HE KICKED THE
LISA CARRIER'S
FACE.



HE DRAMMED HIS BODY
INTO THE HARRIET
CARRIER'S BODY.



HE REPEATEDLY KICKED
AT THE THREE OF THEM.



HE FELT A
GANDRACIOUS
BRAIN ZAP. HIS
MUSCLES
FASCICULATED.



HE FELL TO THE FLOOR. HIS
MOUTH WENT NUMB. HIS TONGUE
TWINGLED. HE GOT BACK UP.



HE SCREAMED
MANIACALLY.

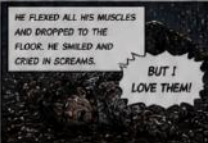


HE LOOKED AT HIS SON.
HE CHARGED, READY TO
STRIKE HIS SON WITH
A KICK.



HE STOPPED
MOVING HIS
BODY. HE WHINED
HIS FACE.

I'LL KILL MY
CHILDREN! I HATE
THEM!



HE FLEXED ALL HIS MUSCLES
AND DROPPED TO THE
FLOOR. HE SMILED AND
CRIED IN SCREAMS.

BUT I
LOVE THEM!



HIS LEGS BECAME PARALYZED. HIS
WHOLE BODY SHIVERED AND
DISCOMBOBULATED.

BUT I
HATE THEM!



HE TRIED LEANING HIS
UPPER BODY UP.



HE SAW HIS
DAD? BY LISA.
LISA CRIED.



HE SAW HIS
SON'S FACE.
HE HAD
TEARS DOWN
HIS CHEEKS.



THE THREE CARRIERS
GOT UP.

THE MAX
CARRIER
YELLED.
"SHOULD
WE FIGHT
AGAIN?"

"HE'S TOO
UNPREDICTABLE!"
THE HARRIET
CARRIER YELLED.



ANDREW SO RECKED TO THE METAL FENCE AND
THE DANCING LIGHT-GREEN BIOLUMINESCENT
FLOWERS DIED. SO DID EVERYONE ELSE.



"DAAAAADDDDD" MAX
SCREAMED AS HIS CARRIER
CARRIED HIM UP THE
METAL FENCE.



THE THREE CARRIERS LIFTED THEM UP
THE FENCE AND THREW THEM OVER.
THEY HOPPED OVER IT.



THEY PICKED UP HIS LOVED ONES AGAIN AND RAN AWAY.



ANDREW'S FACE HIT
THE MANURE FLOOR.
HIS MUSCLES STOPPED
ACHING. HIS BODY
STOPPED DISCOMBOBULATING.
HIS VISION BECAME CLEAR.

HE CRIED.



"NOT BAD." ROBERT
SAID. "I SNEAKED IN
A NEUROTRANSMITTER
CONVERTER INSIDE YOUR
HUB BEFORE YOU TOOK OFF
AND CHANGED YOUR LEVELS
EXTREMELY IN VOLATILITY."

"WELCOME THAT FEELING
OF DEFEAT UNTIL YOU
BECOME NUMB TO APATHY."



ANDREW LOOKED TO THE METAL FENCE.
THE DANCING LIGHT-GREEN BIOLUMINESCENT
FLOWERS DIED. SO DID EVERYONE ELSE
NEUROCHEMICALLY.

MIND IS THE ULTIMATE WEAPON

LUCID

ARRIVAL



SPIRIT INTERCOM
OFFICIAL TRAILER
▶
WE HEAR EVERYTHING.
WE CONNECT ALL.

A SYSTEM
THAT LISTENS.
A VOICE
THAT STAYS.



1.5 MILLION
FOR IMMORTALITY

