

Dedicated to my idiot friend reading this from jail.
I miss you and hope you're having a fun time.

The word “meanwhile” appears 50 times in this book.
Buckle up.
Also I wrote all of it in Notepad and didn't proofread it.

Please enjoy.

Sorry about the cover art too.

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1

Quitting Day

Without another word, Rodrigo Jimenez shoved his fist through the goblin's face.

"You've been shit talking me too long, ugly. Too long to suffer any longer."

The goblin had no retort because he was dead. As soon as his body hit the ground, a gaggle of annoying goblin whores started shrieking at Rodrigo.

Rodrigo didn't hit girls. Ordinarily. But he swiftly prayed about it and decided God would let him make an exception for these stupid hideous bitches.

"You sluts wanna dance huh?" Rodrigo grunted with his hand already firmly in the chest cavity of the loudest and most annoying goblin whore.

As Rodrigo pulled his hand up, cleaving the goblin's head in twain, the rest of them began to realize that they'd bitten off more than they could chew. Rodrigo had no intention of sparing them for being the weaker sex, because all goblins—male or female—are disgusting pieces of shit and deserve to die. Hey, that's not what I think that's what Rodrigo thinks. He punched 3 more to death. 1-hit knockouts, knocked right out of this plane of existence.

Suddenly, an elder goblin jim acostad Rodrigo with his hideous sense of entitlement.

"I want to see your manager," it croaked. "Is there someone else I can talk to?"

"Sure, idiot," Rodrigo growled and he punched him through the ground straight into Hell where he belonged. He should have died years ago, what a tragedy it is for goblins to be allowed to grow old and helpless while simultaneously unbearably annoying.

Rodrigo was done. His business was all finished here, in the goblin grocery store. This was his quitting day. On his way out, he punched another 2 goblins. One male, one female for balance.

"Rodrigo please don't go!" cried Goblingirl, the only cute goblin because i dunno, she was half human or something.

"I'm sorry, kid. But I hate your people. Your sick, stupid people. I can't be here any more."

"But who's going to manage the store?" she whimpered.

"You've got what it takes, kid. Corporate will promote you."

"Take me with you."

"I'll call you tonight."

Rodrigo didn't call her that night. Not because he didn't want to slide into her sweet goblin sugar walls, but because he knew he'd be getting a visit from the Gloommeister.

2

The Gloommeister

A knock on his door. TAP TAP TAP. Behind a thin piece of wood was the most horrifying creature the world had ever known. The genuine bogeyman, here as a natural consequence, to punish him just because he killed a few worthless goblins. TAP TAP TAP, it wouldn't stop tapping until the door was opened. So god damned annoying.

But Rodrigo wasn't going out so easy. He faced the door and called out to the monster.

"Gloommeister, I've still got a 10 hours left of my Strength Potion. Let me live and I'll kill at least a hundred suckers for you. I know you get tired in your old age. You prick."

The tapping stopped. Was the Gloommeister actually considering this proposition?

"So are you going to open this door or am I going to kick it down?"

Drats! He was declining. Rodrigo, even powered-up, had no chance against the Gloommeister.

"Gloommeister please!"

"Okay, I'm kicking the door down."

TAP TAP BOOM, the door flew off its hinges and into Rodrigo's face, rendering him unconscious. When he awoke, the hideous grinning visage of the Gloommeister was all he could see.

"I was waiting for you to wake up so you could die in fear," he said. "But I've been thinking about your bargain. It's true that I can't gloom people as fast as I used to. So if you can kill TWO hundred punks in 10 hours, I'll give you a Get-Out-of-Gloom-Free card. You can exchange it for not being killed by me one time."

Rodrigo instantly extended his hand. The Gloommeister grabbed it and threw him out the window.

"GET STARTED!" he cackled.

Rodrigo landed with the grace of a swan on top of some goblin whore's face. One down.

"BUT THERE'S A CATCH!" the Gloommeister called. "You can only kill Red goblins! Here, put on these sunglasses."

The Gloommeister taped a pair of glasses to a frisbee and let it fly at Rodrigo. He caught it, put them on, and examined his surroundings. Half the goblins in Gob York City were now red. Surely this meant they were the targets for some hard, fast glooming.

"Thanks, Gloommeister!"

"Don't thank me, kid. If you don't bring me two hundred goblins scalps I'm still going to eat your skin. Now go! Gloom to the extreme!"

Rodrigo did just that, and began punching the everloving shit out of every goblin marked red by his gloomglasses, a single punch sufficing for each one. He punched and he punched for hours.

"NOT SO FAST RODRIGO!" roared the Goblin General.

"Goblin General! I was hoping to spare you since you're Goblignirl's father and I want to bang her! But if you're here to get in my way, then I'll have no choice but to lay the smackdown on you as well!"

Goblin General assumed a fighting stance. An ancient one. One passed down through the ELITE goblin families. Gob-Fu was not known to any man, because anyone who ever faced it didn't live to tell of it.

Goblin General pounced like an ugly green cat and unleashed a quick series of japs lmfao I meant to type jabs but no forget it, a gang of Japanese men in suits popped out of the shadow and tackled Rodrigo. Goblin General approached, winding up a final punch.

But what Math Goblin didn't realize was that Human brains weren't small and weak like Goblin brains. Rodrigo wasn't being hurt by the math beam, he had just accidentally stopped a sneeze and was upset that he'd lost it. So when Rodrigo returned to his feet, Math Goblin was astonished and fearful.

"N-no one's ever survived my Math Beam!" he yelled.

"Shut the hell up, idiot. It's just math."

Rodrigo tore off Math Goblin's arm.

"I'll give you your arm back if you release Goblingirl from your stupid mansion," he said.

What choice did Math Goblin have?

"Okay, Rodrigo! Here, take this key!" Math Goblin cried, offering a neat brass key.

Rodrigo accepted the key from Math Goblin and knocked him unconscious with the arm. Then he sewed it back on because Rodrigo was a good man sometimes.

Rodrigo knew that there'd be more goblins waiting for him. Math Goblin always employed minions. Every moment that Rodrigo wasn't between Goblingirl's legs was a moment wasted. But also, if he didn't kill a hundred and one more goblins, he'd get gloomed by the Gloommeister. He could only hope that that exact amount of weak, red goblins were waiting for him on his way to smash Goblingirl.

The Universe was kind to Rodrigo, and this was exactly the case. How convenient! But there was a problem. The hundred and one weak-ass goblins were being guarded by none other than Goblin General wearing a mech suit. Uh oh!

"This is your LAST CHANCE, Rodrigo! Abandon your foolish quest of penetrating my daughter, and accept your punishment from the Gloommeister!"

"On the contrary, Goblin General! This is YOUR last chance! Leave me the hell alone and accept the fact that you're going to have to start calling me 'son' before long!"

"You cocky son of a bitch, I'm sick to death of your arrogance!"

And then Goblin General died because he was indeed sick to death of Rodrigo. Goblin Doctor rushed over and confirmed his death.

"He's dead," Goblin Doctor diagnosed.

Another soul gloomed, yet Rodrigo was not proud of himself. On the contrary, he felt something close to regret, but it couldn't possibly be regret could it? With Goblin General dead, nothing was standing in the way between Rodrigo and spreading Goblingirl's legs. But still, Rodrigo couldn't shake this strange, negative feeling. He felt that he'd prefer it if Goblin General was still alive. But Rodrigo had no time right now to meditate on this, because a hundred goblins—all of them conveniently red—were now charging him. Rodrigo didn't have time to gloom them all!

But then the Yakuza appeared from the shadows.

"Reave this to us, Rodrigo. You go and fuck Gobringiru."

Tears welled in Rodrigo's eyes.

"Thanks boys."

Rodrigo jumped on to Goblin General's mech and activated its thrusters to fly over the goblin horde which now being katanaed by the honorabru Japanese gangsters. He smashed through the door, making Math Goblin's key worthless.

"Goblingirl! Where are you?" Rodrigo yelled, sprinting through the mathematical labyrinth of Math Mansion. He turned a corner and saw her tied to a chair and blindfolded.

"Goblingirl!"

"Rodrigo! I can hear you but I can't see you!" Goblingirl cried.

Rodrigo removed the dumb girl's blindfold. She blinked and awoood in joy.

"Rodrigo! You came for me!"

"Not yet. But if the Yakuza can finish killing all those goblins outside in the next 10 minutes, the Gloommeister will

leave me alone and we can go back to my place and "watch a movie or something.""

Right on cue, a Yakuza entered the mansion and bowed.

"The goblins are dead as herru," he reported.

"Thank you, Yakuza. In my heart I knew I could always rely on you."

But then the Gloommeister also walked in.

"Okay boi. Are 200 goblins dead?"

"Yes sir, you should find their souls in your gloom account."

"Okay let me check my phone."

The Gloommeister took out his Gloomkia g5 and started swiping around.

"Gotta update the stupid app sry 1 sec..."

...

...

okay. Well would you look at that! Two hundred goblin souls all gloomed up and ready to go. You did good, kiddo. Here, take this Get-Out-of-Gloom-Free card."

The Gloommeister handed Rodrigo a gorgeous golden card that said "GOOGF" in a beautiful black font. It even had a watermark.

"Now give it back to me."

Rodrigo handed it back.

"Okay boi you're free to go. Now if you'll excuse me, I'm going to go collect the Goblin General's corpse."

"My dad?!" cried Goblingle. "What happened to my dad?!"

"Rodrigo killed him lmao," said the Gloommeister. "What, you didn't know? Hue hue hue."

Goblingle fell to her knees and began sobbing. Rodrigo had been cockblocked by the Gloommeister. He was mad beyond mad but he didn't have time for that. He needed to make another deal with the Devil.

"Gloommeister, you have a close connection with the Devil! Won't you please ask him to revive Goblin General?" he asked.

"I COULD do that, kid. But you'll have to gloom some more people for me."

"Name the targets, Gloommeister. I'll do anything for Goblingle!"

Rodrigo was now thinking with his dick.

Gloommeister grinned. "I'll ask Satan to revive the girl's father... if you gloom Satan afterwards."

Everyone gasped, including the Gloommeister.

"You want me to gloom the Devil? Why?" demanded Rodrigo.

"I want to become the new Devil, boi. I'm sick of just glooming people. I want to be able to roast people in firepits. I could gloom him myself but then the Hell Senate would never allow me to become the new Devil. It needs to be YOU."

"But Gloommeister, my Strength Potion has worn out. I can't possibly defeat Satan."

"You CAN, boi. You have incredible mystical power within you. It doesn't come from Strength Potions. It comes from your desire to breed Goblingle. It's your testosterone. And with it, nothing can get in your way."

Rodrigo knew it was true. He could feel it in his testicles.

"I'll do it, Gloommeister. I'll kill Satan."

"Attaboy!" laughed the Gloommeister. "I'll call him now."

Gloommeister took his Gloomkia g5 back out and dialed 666.

"Hey Stan. I need you to resurrect the Goblin General. Why? Because some kid wants to get laid. Yeah. We're all at that stupid Math Mansion in GYC. Okay, thanks."

Gloommeister ended the call.

"It's done. He'll be here in half an hour."

"Once he brings Goblin General back to life, I'll take him down," said Rodrigo.

"Oh Rodrigo! Thank you! You're so brave!" cried Goblingirl, once again looking dtf.

Gloommeister rubbed his hands together greedily. He was going to become the new King of Hell and all it took was cockblocking some nerd.

But Rodrigo had plans of his own. He still hadn't forgiven Gloommeister for getting in the way of him bedding Goblingirl.

3

Devil's in the Deets

Satan showed up in a pink Cadillac.

"SUP, LADIES?" he roared. He checked out Goblinsgirl and whistled. "Mhmmm, you've filled out, Goblinsgirl. How about after I raise your dad from the dead, you come home with me and I'll show you my bedroom ceiling?"

Rodrigo had heard more than enough. His plan of betraying the Gloommeister by warning Satan was now on the back burner. Forget about being cockblocked, he now had to make sure the Devil didn't cuck him.

"Can you resurrect Goblin General or not?" Rodrigo demanded.

Satan looked him up and down. Sizing him up. "Yeah, I can do it. But there's no rush. Why don't you come with me first, Goblinsgirl? I'll do it after I do you."

The Gloommeister saw his plan going to shit and exploded in rage. "THAT WASN'T PART OF THE DEAL, STAN! I'M SICK OF YOUR SHIT! RESURRECT THE GOBLIN GENERAL NOOOOWWWW!!!"

Satan stared at him angrily, but snapped his fingers. Goblin General suddenly started breathing.

Goblinsgirl ran over to him. "Daddy!" she cried as she hugged him and wept.

From where he was standing, Rodrigo had a perfect view of Goblinsgirl's green cleavage. Respectable B's, not too big, not too smol. Rodrigo's balls felt like they were going to explode. Satan nudged him and winked.

"Okay, Goblinsgirl. Come o—" Satan started, but Rodrigo began choking him out, absolutely blind with rage. There was no way in the fucking universe that this red piece of shit was going to get what was rightfully his.

But then, something shitty happened.

Rodrigo was pulled off by none other than the Goblin General! Sheeeit.

"That's ENOUGH, boy! I'm not going to let you kill the one who saved my life!" he said. "Goblingirl! I think it would be nice if you became Satan's bride since he saved my life, don't you agree?"

"But Daddy!" whimpered Goblingirl.

"That's enough, child! Go with him NOW."

Goblingirl hung her head and got into Satan's stupid car. Rodrigo roared in fury, but not even he could break free from the grip of the mech suit.

"I told you you'd never take my daughter, Rodrigo," said Goblin General. "You're just a punk. Now she'll become the Queen of Hell!"

"LMFAO you think I'm marrying her?" Satan started laughing so hard he started crying. "No you old fool, I'm just going to give her this fat cock then kick her sweet little ass out of my house."

"YOU SON OF A BITCH!" Goblin General tried running at him, but Satan kicked him in the face.

"Later nerds!" wheezed Satan, still laughing his ass off.

He got in the car and drove off into the sunset with Goblingirl, who still thought she was going to get married with her father's blessings, not knowing that Satan was just going to hit it and quit it.

Rodrigo was no longer conscious. In order to prevent him from dying of anger, his brain had gone into hibernation. Gloommeister recognized this.

"When he wakes up, he's going to kill whoever's closest to him."

"How long do we have?" asked the Goblin General.

"Until what?" Gloommeister grinned. "Until he wakes up or until Stan takes advantage of your daughter?"

Goblin General's face went from green to red.

"I—I can alert my troops."

"You buffoon," hissed the Gloommeister. "None of your soldiers will make a move against Hell. Your daughter is as good as fucked."

Goblin General walked into the adjacent dining room and slammed his fists on the table.

"There's got to be SOMETHING I can do."

Gloommeister picked Rodrigo up.

"You can help me get this boy to Hell. If we leave now we might get there in time to stop Satan from wrecking your daughter's tight little pussy."

"WATCH HOW YOU TALK ABOUT MY DAUGHTER!" roared Goblin General.

The Gloommeister slapped him across the face.

"No one tells me what to do, you green buffoon. You handed your daughter up on a silver platter, naked and afraid with an apple in her mouth. You think I'm disrespecting your daughter? Then what the fuck do you call what YOU'VE done to her? That boy you hate may have wanted to fuck her, but Stan wants to USE her. And you handed her right over to him, against her wishes. You separated her from the boy she wanted and NOW she's going to take a big, thick red cock and be humiliated when Stan dumps her in front of all of Hell. SO DON'T TELL ME HOW TO TALK ABOUT YOUR DAUGHTER. DON'T PRETEND YOU CARE ABOUT HER, YOU ONLY CARE ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR STUPID MEANINGLESS CAREER, LEADING AN ARMY OF WEAKLING GOBLINS."

To emphasize his point, the Gloommeister created a sword from thin air, tossed it like a boomerang, and it returned 10 seconds later sticking through 3 goblin heads.

"GOBLINS ARE PUSSIES. YOU'RE A PUSSY, GENERAL. THE ONLY GOOD THING OF YOUR ENTIRE DISGUSTING SPECIES WAS YOUR DAUGHTER, AND NOW SHE'S GOING TO BE RUINED. CASTING YOUR PEOPLE EVEN FURTHER INTO DISGRACE."

Gloommeister was feigning righteous anger. He didn't really give much of a damn. Sure, he wasn't /glad/ about Satan taking Goblignirl, but he still had his eyes on the prize. And they needed to get Rodrigo to Hell ASAP, so that when Rodrigo woke up, he'd lash out at Satan rather than one of them.

Meanwhile, in Rodrigo's dreams, he was furiously battling an army of Smug Satans that'd just taken Goblignirl's virginity. They grinned at him and winked ceaselessly, no matter how many he pummeled into bloody paste. His mind was forcing him through this gauntlet in order to prepare him for his awakening, when his body would enter a primal, automatic state, and destroy anything standing between him and the cute goblignirl he intended to take. If his mind couldn't keep up with his body, he'd lose them both. There was no hope of controlling it, he simply needed to be able to survive the ride. And so his subconscious assaulted him with triumphant, chortling Satans bragging about what they'd done to the girl he wanted. HIS girl.

In the waking world, Rodrigo threw his fist out, punching a hole through the tank Goblin General and the Gloommeister were transporting him in.

"He's ready," said the Gloommeister. "I only hope we can get him there in time."

4

The End of the World

It took them about 10 minutes to drive to Hell. Satan's castle was yuge and red and very phallic. The Gloommeister incapacitated the guards by mocking them until they started crying. He EASILY could have killed them, but he really wanted to acquire some advanced-gloom. Quality gloom that could only come from extended periods of negativity, and the unrelenting bullying of the Gloommeister ensured that they'd be feeling down for a long, long time and in turn buffing his gloom account in the Downer Bank.

Now it was Goblin General's turn. The shame he'd been feeling over his thoughtless betrayal of his daughter manifested in him tearing off the butler's face after he refused to let them past the entrance. They now had free roam of the castle. At least, that's what they thought until the faceless butler rose back up and began unleashing some extremely fierce karate at them. But this was what the Goblin General had been training his entire life for. This was the kumite to end all kumites.

"GO, Gloommeister! Go! Save my daughter! I'll hold him off!"

The Gloommeister, an otherworldly being of untold power, was not even in the least concerned about the stupid faceless butler's karate. But he felt bad for Goblin General and so pretended he was indeed performing a noble sacrifice. He gave him a thumbs up and floated away further into the castle carrying Rodrigo on his back, as the general engaged the butler with a series of strikes.

The Gloommeister heard some moaning and for a moment was afraid that Satan was already working Goblingirl over. He kicked open a door and was relieved to find it was just a harem of succubi having an orgy. They invited him in, but he let them know he had urgent business and asked for Satan's

location. They let him know Satan had ascended to the very head of his tower, indeed carrying a cute half-goblin girl. The Gloommeister thanked the harem, promising to return to them to reward their helpfulness.

Rodrigo was beginning to wake up. The Gloommeister kicked it up a notch. Normally, he liked to levitate at a power-walk speed, but now he was flying like a bat out of Hell. He needed to make sure Rodrigo was facing Satan when he woke up. Otherwise, Rodrigo would attack the Gloommeister and he'd be forced to put him down like a rabid dog. Then he'd have to find someone else to assassinate Satan. What a pain.

The Gloommeister flew up the tower like lightning, not stopping or even slowing at the heavy wooden door, but simply charging through it. His timing was impeccable, and he flipped Rodrigo off his back on to Satan's, who was about to go down on an uncomfortable Goblingirl. Satan screamed in surprise at his door exploding off its hinges and a limp body suddenly mounting him.

"Rodrigo!" cried Goblingirl.

Rodrigo's eyelids opened, revealing two pitch-black voids leading only to chaos. Still half-mounted on a surprised Satan, his arms flew out and wrapped around his neck like a snake. The action was not conscious, nor semi-conscious, it was Reality itself acting. Nothing else could happen at this point and time than Rodrigo squeezing the life from the Devil and saving Goblingirl.

But then, Reality itself was torn apart, as a portal opened behind Rodrigo and he was once again killblocked as two powerful sets of arms pulled him from Satan.

"Rodrigo Jimenez, you're coming with us."

"NO I'M NOT."

The moment the cloaked strangers had touched him, in that very instant, Rodrigo had been drowned in a cosmic ocean. Reality might have given way to these strange interlopers, but now Existence itself was stepping in on his behalf. And if Existence itself would not suffice, an even higher authority

surely would. Nothing, absolutely nothing could stop Rodrigo. And so Rodrigo, pushed backward into that space and time when he was strangling Satan, repeated himself.

"NO, I'M NOT."

Of course, he was no-longer speaking with the same two men who'd grabbed him. Their very existence had been erased along with the entire Universe in which Rodrigo's chokehold had been interrupted. Only Rodrigo, his anger, his lust, and Goblignirl remained from that place.

The men were taken aback. They had not even yet grabbed him and said "Rodrigo Jimenez, you're coming with us." And now they felt that they shouldn't.

One of them gathered the courage to speak up.

"Rodrigo please, we need both you AND Satan alive."

Rodrigo crushed Satan's windpipe, pushed the body aside, and turned to face them. "What you need is stay out of my way. I know why you're here. Your story has been revealed to me, equipping me to resist anything you throw at me. You hear me, Writer? I'm not serving Grueber! Write another character!

"Rodrigo please, it's your destiny," I typed desperately.

"The only destiny I have is Goblignirl! I DEFY YOUR DESTINY."

It's hard to argue with a man on a mission to get his dick wet. The two strangers looked at each other and shrugged. They turned back to their portal. One hesitated before stepping through.

"That girl you love so much is in grave danger, Rodrigo. Everything you know is in grave danger. If you decide to wisen up, please call us. The Gloommeister knows how to."

Rodrigo didn't like being threatened, and unleashed a primal roar as he charged the stranger, who quickly followed his partner back through the portal, which closed behind him. Unable to stop in time, Rodrigo slammed headfirst into the Gloommeister.

wanted to recruit both Satan and I. What do you know about all this?"

The Gloommeister frowned. "Not a lot. Grueber is an interdimensional time traveling businessman. We've done some glooming work together. I don't know what he could be up to."

"They said that we're all in danger. I have to know what they meant because if anything gets in my way of fu—I mean marrying this girl, I have to kill it."

The Gloommeister wasn't concerned.

"Kid, I'm going to be the Devil soon. I don't know what kind of dumb shit those goons are dealing with, but nothing could possibly be a threat to me. And for all you've done for me, I'll make sure nothing ever threatens you kids either."

Goblingirl smiled. "Thank you, Uncle Grooms!"

The Gloommeister's gray, shriveled heart swelled.

"Now if you nerds will excuse me, I'm going to go pay the Whoresercesses a visit. Maybe they can shed some light on what Grueber's up to."

The Gloommeister flew away to go get some information and pussy. Rodrigo felt a little relieved to be under his protection now instead of on his Gloom List. But he still couldn't help but be concerned about the warning from the cloaked men.

"Honeyyyy~" Goblingirl purred. "What kind of wedding do you want to have?"

Rodrigo's dick perked up. He knew that he could get away with the most simple wedding imaginable and have Goblingirl in bed in a matter of hours. She wouldn't mind. She loved him. He'd gone through so much. He deserved this! But he also knew she—being a woman—would prefer a traditional Goblin wedding in a Goblin church. And he wanted her to be happy, because he was starting to care almost as much about her as the prospect of tapping that, which he cared about enough to strangle the Devil and alter reality.

"We'll get married in the Old Country," Rodrigo replied. Goblingirl awooded in delight.

The Old Country for goblins was the Upperworld, the land of the humans. Rodrigo's own home. The place he'd been running from all his life, going to such lengths as to even live among stupid fucking disgusting goblins. But to give Goblingirl the wedding she deserved, he was willing to face his past.

The succubi entered the room.

"Come with us, Goblingirl. The bride and the groom
lmao i mean groom must prepare seperately. Rodrigo, go to the Upperworld and pick out a church."

The succubi then pulled Goblingirl out of the room, making sure to fondle her noice little booty in front of Rodrigo to tease him. He punched a hole through the wall and started preparing for his journey to the surface.

5

Pride Before the Fall

In the meantime, the Gloommeister was having a very serious talk with the Whoresercesses while one was riding him.

"What do you mean we're all fucked?" he demanded.

The Head Whoresercess looked at him seriously. "I mean what I said, Gloommeister. A darkness is coming, and no-one will survive it."

"But I'm the Gloommeister."

"I know."

The Gloommeister gripped his Whoresercess's hips and scootched down to get a better angle. He needed to end this quickly so he could think clearly. A power that could destroy even him? Nonsense. The Gloommeister rapidly prodded the Whoresercess's cervix with his long member, and she bit him so hard she drew blood. He pulled her down to him and gripped her like a vise as he began releasing his gloomish life force into her, causing her to faint from her own delight. But he was the Gloommeister, and so kept his anaconda grip for several more minutes as he pumped jet after jet into her, causing her to overflow almost immediately. When he was finally finished he gently removed her and laid her down. She'd be unconscious for days. The Gloommeister confronted the Head Whoresercess.

"After witnessing that display, how can you tell me that there's something in this universe that can defeat me?" he demanded.

"You can't fuck your way out of every situation, Gloommeister. What threatens us comes from another universe entirely."

The Gloommeister refused to believe it. Or at least, he refused to accept it. He gave the Head Whoresercess The Look, and they lunged at each other like rabid animals. The

Gloommeister felt in his soul that perhaps an important realization would result from this encounter. Some kind of esoteric truth that could only be attained through this act. He gently pushed his head inside the Head Whoresercess, testing the waters. And then, he slid his entire gloomhood in absolutely effortlessly. And then, he understood Everything.

Rodrigo jolted awake. He had the strangest feeling that somewhere, for some reason, the world as he knew it was being changed. He told the taxi driver to stop and let him out. He'd walk the rest of the way.

"And just like that, their world is over."

Joshi the Hacker King logged off and pulled out a smoke. Whores had been responsible for more deaths than nuclear weapons.

A knock on the door.

"Come in, Ben."

Grueber walked in and popped a squat. Despite his size, he could slay squat with the best of them.

"You only smoke when you're spooked. I take it that the Gloommeister's fallen prey to those magical whores?"

"I don't get spooked. But yes, the Gloommeister has now accepted the presence of the Shade. The presence of something greater than himself. I can no longer use his ego as a firewall for their dimension."

"They'll be invaded. How long do they have?"

"Hours. Minutes."

"Is there anything you can do to delay it?"

"Some things. But Gloommeister's self-confidence was the ultimate shield. For centuries it's protected their dimension. NOW, at the most inconvenient time, it's broken. It's fishy to me."

"Like it's all part of a greater plan?"

"I'm not a predeterminist."

"Some things, Joshi, genuinely are predetermined by forces greater than ourselves. You can feel them in your gut. Spotting them is important. That's why I've been successful all these years."

Joshi couldn't argue with the man traveling across dimensions to save Humanity.

"So what are our chances of defeating the Shade? Our chances of surviving all of this? What does your gut tell you about that?"

"That's too hard to tell yet. But I do know something with absolute certainty. An invincible truth. Something much simpler. Send your drone to spy on Rodrigo."

In an instant, Joshi knew what Grueber was up to. He didn't like it, for a number of reasons. But in the months he'd known him, Grueber had demonstrated his absolute competence throughout countless Machiavellian schemes. He did as he was told, put out his smoke, and checked on Rodrigo. Grueber left him to it, and walked back to the bridge of the GSS Rand, the flagship of his interdimensional fleet.

6

Ascension

Rodrigo pushed open the massive doors of St. Johnblin Cathedral. Many human churches also secretly served as goblin churches, hiding in plain sight. St. Johnblin's was one such church. Rodrigo walked into the confessional.

"Forgive me Father for I have sinned."

"Yeah, no shit," said Priest Goblin. "You've murdered in cold blood over two hundred goblins."

"Don't give me the moral act, Priest Goblin, you know as well as I do goblin lives mean less."

"Does that include Goblingirl's?"

Oof. Low blow. Rodrigo bowed his head.

"We want to get married in your church."

Priest Goblin let out a sigh. "Rodrigo you're one of my people's worst enemies. Why should I give you my church?"

"Because if you don't, you're obstructing me. And if you obstruct me, I will destroy you."

But Priest Goblin was not afraid of death. His faith in Horror and his eternal spooky life after death would not allow him to be bullied by Rodrigo.

"Go home, Rodrigo. Forget about ever marrying Goblingirl. I'll make sure no Goblin Church in the world lets you."

Rodrigo suppressed his instinct to tear through the flimsy wooden barrier between them and strangle Priest Goblin to death. For some reason, he knew he wouldn't have to. He felt an eerie calm and uncharacteristic acceptance.

"Very well, Priest Goblin. I accept your answer."

"I, however, do not," announced a familiar voice from outside the confessional.

Priest Goblin was outraged by this intrusion. "This is supposed to be a private sacrament!"

"Nothing is private," Joshi said to himself, watching the scene play out from his laptop.

Rodrigo and Priest Goblin exited the booth and met Grueber, looking exceptionally holy.

"Benjamin Grueber!" spat Goblin Priest. "What are you doing wearing the vestments of His Holiness?"

"You're speaking to His Holiness," replied Grueber. "Pope Goblin XIV had a tragic accident. I am your Pope now."

The look on Priest Goblin's face would make anyone in the world feel sympathy for him. Anyone except Benjamin Grueber, who simply, mockingly smiled at him.

A long, agonizing minute of a silent staredown passed, before finally Priest Goblin snapped and with the fury only a man(or goblin) of deep religious conviction could possess, he let out a primal scream and made a move to attack Grueber.

Big mistake.

The legendary reputation of the Goblin Pope's Swiss Guard was not unearned. And now this elite guard was supplemented by Grueber's own hand-picked men. Two men and half a dozen (six) goblins seemed to appear from nowhere. Rodrigo recognized the men who'd tried to interfere with him killing Satan. They now wore suits, although their faces were still concealed by balaclavas. and before Rodrigo could even blink, Priest Goblin was on the ground in handcuffs.

"Send this heretic to the dungeons," said Grueber pompously pretending to give a shit about the Goblinist religion.

The Priest Goblin howled in anger. "FIRE! FIRE AND DEATH! YOU'LL BURN FOR THIS, GRUEBER!"

One of the Swiss Guardblins kicked him in the ribs.

"How dare you speak to His Holiness in such a manner? You disgrace the Priesthood with your heresy."

"PRETENDER! BASTARD! YOU'RE THE DEVIL HIMSELF, GRUEBER!" cried Priest Goblin.

A Guardblin was about to strike him again, but Pope Grueber held up his hand. He knelt down beside Priest Goblin.

"If you knew all that I knew, you'd wish the Devil was still alive to help us." He gestured up at Rodrigo. "But this lad has killed what could have been a supremely powerful ally for all of goblinkind."

Priest Goblin shut up. He didn't have any idea what was going on. He didn't care. The Holy Church had been hijacked by humans. He closed his eyes and wept silently.

Grueber stood back up and faced Rodrigo.

"Rodrigo, I invite you to join the faith of Goblinism. Then you will, of course, be entitled to use this church to marry Goblignirl.

Rodrigo sighed." What do I have to do?"

Goblignirl was trying on a pretty dress when the sharkmen attacked.

The succubi fought valiently, but they were no match for the superior strength of the sharkmen, who cleaned their clocks.

"Who are you?" asked Goblignirl, spooked.

"We're here to kidnap or kill you, idk which one yet," answered the sharkman commando leader.

They approached her, but from the wooden floor erupted a long sword that cleaved the front sharkman in twain.

Two sharkmen were left absolutely bamboozled and frightened. They jumped up and clinged to teh ceiling rafters in fear.

But the rafter turned out to be snakes, and they wrapped around them.

"Kill the spare, hue hue hue," said a voice from outside the door.

One of the snakes bit off the head of a sharkman, leaving just one.

The remaining sharkman shrieked in fear.

"I'LL TELL YOU ANYTHING YOU WANT! PLEASE LET ME LIVE!"

The door exploded open and in walked two men in suits. Goblingirl could tell they were the the men who'd tried to stop Rodrigo from fucking wrecking Satan.

"Tell us everything you know about the Shade!" said the man who carried a loooooong sword and also he was wearing blind person sunglasses. He poked the sword around like a cane.

He poked the sharkman with his sword.

"OWWWWWWWW FUCK!" he yelled.

"Chriz, please." The other man took out a drawing tablet and doodled something. From the tablet sprang a band-aid and he applied it to the shark's new poke-hole.

"You don't have to die," he said. "You just need to talk. Tell us everything. Or else I'll douse that bandaid in gasoline and light you on fire."

"Why bother with him, Danz? He won't talk. Sharkmen are as stubborn as Mulemen. We should just gut him now." Chriz brandished his sword.

The sharkman started spilling the beans instead of his guts. And for the next half hour he wouldn't shut the fuck up about the Shade and how it'd corrupted the Shark People and that sharks didn't even really like the way humans tasted and all the rest of the stupid Shark Week trivia/propaganda that they've been pouring down our fucking throats since we were kids.

"You're telling me the Shark People weren't always assholes? I find that hard to believe." The swordsman gave him another poke.

"YOOOOOOOOOOOWWWWWWWWWWWWWW
WWWWWWW! I swear to GOD I'm telling the truth!"

"Don't you swear to me," said God.

Everyone turned, stunned by the awesome, blinding white light pouring from the doorway.

Goblingirl, a proper goblinist girl fell to her knees. "My Lord!" she cried, making the sign of the goblincross.

The men must have been fedora-tipping atheists or something because even though they were stunned, and in awe,

they remained on their feet. Like when Aragorn stayed standing in front of Gandalf the White. I wonder if that was in the book? I know Peter Jackson took some liberties, wasn't completely faithful, but you still just cannot deny that the films were masterpieces. Anyway Grueber's guards stood standing.

The Sharkman just started crying.

Into the room walked none other than Benjamin Grueber, looking even holier than he did before.

"Sir, you're early," said Danz.

"Things are progressing faster than I had anticipated. God Himself has given me His blessing to act as the de facto deity of the Universe.

"NOOOOOOOO!" screamed the sharkman.

"SILENCE!" said Grueber, and there was power in his voice.

The sharkman tried to continue screaming, but he had lost his voice.

"Drop that fish back into the ocean, boys. Goblins, come with me."

Goblingirl jumped to her feet and ran after God-Grueber.

"My Lord, why have you visited us?"

She didn't know any better. Grueber's new powers made Goblingirl deaf to the fact that he was not the true Godblin, but merely the Steward of their universe. Good, that made it even easier.

"My child, Rodrigo must go on a Holy Crusade in My name."

"But my Lord, we're supposed to get married!"

"It must wait. Without Rodrigo, this world will fall into chaos. He alone can stop the great evil that threatens all of goblinkind."

Goblingirl started crying. Grueber's stone-heart chipped just a little bit.

"Do not cry, Goblingirl. For Rodrigo is truly blessed. I have seen the End, and he will return to you."

Goblingirl sniffled. "R-really?"

Grueber smiled, and his teeth radiated from his Grueberide toothpaste. They were absolutely heavenly. He placed his hand on her shoulder. "Yes, my child. Rodrigo will be back."

Joshi wasn't happy. He'd been promised his own room onboard the GSS Rand. And now here he was SHARING it, like some kind of peasant, with this dumbass.

Rodrigo wasn't happy either. He was tired. He was pissed. And this autistic dork Joshi wouldn't shut the fuck up about computers. He didn't care about any of it.

Joshi tried explaining to Rodrigo that Grueber's mission was essential for the survival of all of their universes, but Rodrigo didn't understand why the hell that meant he couldn't slam Goblingirl.

"I keep trying to tell you, you dense asshole. Right now, as far as we know, you having sex with Goblingirl is the only thing that's assured. Grueber's traveled through countless timelines and countless dimensions, and it always happens. It's the future set in stone. It's the only thing that truly HAS to happen. So as long as you stay away from her, neither of you can die. So you're a shield for this entire expedition."

"But what IS the expedition?"

"There's something out there," Joshi gestured to their window, and the vast blackness of the cosmos. "Something out there that wants to kill us all. We don't know what it is, we don't know why it's doing it. But we know it's there. Acting mostly from the shadows. Corrupting the sharkmen, tricking the skeletons, all to try to end human existence. Grueber thinks it's building up its power."

"Who the fuck is Grueber anyway? Where did he come from? Who appointed him Guardian of Mankind?"

"It's a long story."

"I've got time."

"No, you don't," came a voice from the doorway.

Joshi and Rodrigo turned and gasped like little girls.

While Joshi and Rodrigo were busy gasping like little girls, the invasion had begun. The Gloommeister was up to his pointy ears in sharkmen. His promotion to Devil would have to wait.

"You ugly nerds CANNOT stay in Gob York City!" he announced through a gloomish microphone. "If you leave RIGHT NOW, I promise to not kill you all."

The sharkmen with their peanut brains didn't understand what they were up against. They charged Gloommeister, ten thousand strong.

Gloommeister levitated into the air and began casting Gloom Lightning at them, filling their minds with images of him banging their wives and daughters. They began crying and he just laughed and mocked them as the Gloommeisters inside their minds grinned at them and thrusted into their families with gusto, slapping booties and disrespectfully finishing on faces.

In reality, the Gloommeister would never even consider touching a sharkwoman except to kill her. Hideous monsters, the lot of them. Nice tits, but that can't make up for being a shark, sorry.

Still, his genjutsu hit hard and wave after wave of sharkmen fell to their knees sobbing. Gloommeister absorbed their negative feelings and grew to the size of a skyscraper. He was now Gloomzilla, stomping all over their feelings and bodies.

"Sir, the invasion has begun."

"Yes, I can see that Danz."

"I can't," said Chriz.

"We've got to get moving. We need to leave this universe."

"We're abandoning Gloommeister?"

"He's defending Goblignrl. As long as he stays with her, he himself will be safe. You two know what to do. Prepare the crew for a jump."

Chriz and Danz saluted and left. Grueber turned back to the massive window of the bridge and looked down at Earth.

"You cocky motherfucker, Grooms. Stay safe."

Rodrigo and Joshi has just finished gasping. Asia Bones was not impressed with their wimpy display.

"You two instantly remind me of an old student of mine. Which means you're both pussies who are going to need some serious sculpting."

Neither Rodrigo nor Joshi could tolerate such an insult. Rodrigo was the strongest man he knew, and a level 3 black belt in Goblin Ju-Jitsu. Even without a Strength Potion, he could knock a troll flat on its ass with a single punch. Joshi was no slouch either, having grown up in the rough-and-hacking streets of Neo-New York where he had to contend with both punks and coppers. Autistic to the bone, he'd used data he collected from countless fights to customize a series of martial arts to fit any occasion his massive brain could predict.

Nodding to each other, they jumped to their feet and charged Asia, intent to show him how tough they really are. And they really did.

Rodrigo was a Strength build, Joshi was a Dex build. But neither of them realized that Asia Bones was on New Game Plus. He grabbed both their arms and flipped them onto their asses. Then, he tore their arms clean off.

"Did you really have to tear their arms off, Asia?" asked Grueber.

"I can't count how many times I've torn my students' arms off and they became better men for it. It'll teach them teamwork," replied Asia.

"They're both right-handed, though. Now my hacker can't type and my brawler can't punch."

"They'll figure out a way."

"This is no good," replied Chriz.

"We should have McMan's space marines outfit them with prosthetics," agreed Danz.

"NO," said Asia. "This is a part of their training. When they can learn to fight without their arms, they'll be ready for new ones."

Everyone went silent. They trusted Asia. His training was the stuff of legends. A sculptor of Men was what he was. A Kingmaker. He'd turned blubbering pussies into fiercesome warriors. Surely he could turn two already-strong, if stubborn, young men into true warriors.

"This is bullshit," mumbled Joshi as he typed at half-speed, hacking into EarthGov's user accounts and deleted everyone's desktop shortcuts to make himself feel better.

"Shut the hell up, nerd," barked Rodrigo, as he did some one-armed push-ups. Rodrigo felt like shit. He was already in a bad mood, but now he was missing his right arm. Asia Bones assured them it was a part of their training, but he didn't buy it. He didn't buy any of this shit. How could missing an arm help make him a better fighter?

The answer came immediately as a shrieking alien burst through their door and started beating them up. If they didn't do something, they'd surely be beaten to death. They were being forced to defend themselves now of all times, when they felt their weakest?

Joshi caught on almost immediately and stood back as Rodrigo unleashed some fierce kicks, destroying the alien which was actually just a puppet being controlled by Asia Bones.

"Congratulations, you've both passed the test."

"But I didn't even do anything," said Joshi.

"Wrong," said Donald Trump.

"It's true, Joshi. You've learned to put your trust in others. You're no-longer a lone wolf hacker punk."

Joshi almost smiled. Finally, he had a true home and genuine comrades.

"And you, Rodrigo. You now know that punching doesn't solve all problems. Sometimes you must kick."

Rodrigo grunted in acknowledgement. He still wasn't happy.

"I can tell you're still not happy, so I have something for the both of you."

In the blink of an eye, Asia Bones slammed some cybernetic arms into their arm stubs.

"Wow."

"These aren't your average cybernetic arms. They've been cooked up by the elite science-mages of McMann's Space Marines. THEY HAVE MYSTERIOUS PROPERTIES. IN FACT THEY'RE NOT EVEN CYBERNETIC AT ALL, THEY'RE MAGIC ARMS! Mao."

Joshi flexed his new Magic Fingers, and typed up a test code from his arm-keyboard. Incredible speed. Within a minute, he had all of the world's remaining Dogecoin sitting in one of his accounts.

Rodrigo punched a hole through a wall, which by itself would be normal, but it also didn't hurt at all. So that was nice.

Everyone was pretty pleased and celebrating on the bridge, but SUDDENLY, some kind of projectile flew at Grueber. It was immediately and anime-coolly deflected by Chriz with his sword. Grueber didn't even flinch. A pair of handcuffs now lied on the ground, sliced down the middle.

"I knew you'd be coming eventually, Space Judge."

A mysterious, cloaked dude appeared before them.

"Benjamin Grueber. You must stand trial for crimes against Humanity."

7

Space Justice

"You FOOL, he's trying to SAVE Humanity!" roared Asia Bones, and he prepared to beat the shit out of Space Judge, but Grueber raised his hand to calm him.

"Space Judge, I have no desire to fight you. I will stand trial."

Space Judge grinned and snapped his fingers. They were teleported into Space Judge's pocket dimension, a magnificent courtroom, the basement of which was a prison whichhoused the worst criminals known to man.

"I finally have you, Grueber. After all these years, you will finally face Justice."

"I believe you're more right than you know, Space Judge," Grueber replied calmly, as he took the stand.

Meanwhile, the Gloommeister was suspicious of how well he was doing while the world around him turned to shit. Gob York City had been occupied by Sharkmen and Crowmen and Menmen, aka "Giants". In fact, almost the entire planet had been conquered. But here in Hell, he was still beating the everloving shit out of every charge from the enemy. It was almost like he was invincible.

"It's almost like I'm invincible," Gloommeister said to the Head Whoreserecess as he slid in and out of her.

"Please stop talking," she moaned.

But the Gloommeister couldn't stop talking. He had too much on his mind. He extracted some gloom from her to enhance her pleasure and get her to stop complaining. And so he continued musing, resting his chin on the top of her head as he continued humping.

"There's something very suspicious about all of this. Where did all these invaders come from? What is Grueber up to? Why did he take Rodrigo?"

A sudden spark of insight came just as he did, and for just an instant an idea flashed in his mind. He groaned at having lost it.

"What's the matter?" the Head Whoreserecess asked.

"Shhhhhhh!" he said. He still hadn't finished shooting his gloom inside of her. He wasn't sure why, but he felt that once he was finished, so were his chances of grabbing hold of that lost thought. He started pumping her again, hoping to buy as much time as possible.

"Ohhh Gloomy!" she cried. He put his hand over her mouth. He couldn't afford any distractions. She licked his palm which caused him to release another jet. It was just what he needed.

"EUREKA!" he roared, and he leaped from the bed, flying out the window without opening it so shattered glass rained down on all the whoreserecess, annoying them.

Gloommeister flew straight to the Hell's Army headquarters and barged in on Goblin General who was staring at a map. He looked awfully happy.

"Gloommeister. What brings you here?" he asked, smiling.

"What the fuck are you so happy about?" Gloommeister asked, frowning.

"It's a beautiful day, Gloommeister. Sure, the world is being destroyed, but that blasted Rodrigo is finally out of the picture! He'll surely be killed playing hero along with Grueber, and my daughter is finally safe from his advances."

A powerful, powerful grin slowly crept along the Gloommeister's face. He was about to rain all over this guy's parade and it delighted him so.

MEANWHILE WHILE, there was a ruckus in Space Judge's court. Grueber was locked in a philosophical debate with Space Judge, who was also acting as the prosecutor and the executioner.

"YOU CAN'T KEEP GETTING AWAY WITH IT, GRUEBER."

"I can and I must. Without me there can be no Humanity. And without Humanity there can be no Law. You MUST release me."

"NEVER."

Grueber ignored his answer. He wasn't asking, he was telling. "And you ALSO must join us."

Space Judge starting screaming so hard everyone had to cover their ears so their eardrums wouldn't burst. He was screaming against a hurricane, against Fate itself.

"I'M SO FUCKING SICK OF YOU THINKING YOU CAN DO WHATEVER YOU WANT! IT'S NOT HAPPENING THIS TIME! SOMEONE'S GOT TO TEACH YOU A LESSON!!!!!"

Space Judge leaped from his seat but before he could attack Grueber, he was grabbed by Space Bailiff, the Universe's largest black man.

"He's right, Your Honor."

"Space Bailiff, not you too!"

Space Judge fell to his knees. The world was against him. What was Justice? Grueber was guilty of so many horrible crimes. Mere hours ago he had the leader of a religion assassinated. Yet he claimed to be the foundation of the Law, by virtue of being Humanity's only real chance of survival. After all, who could stop the mysterious threat against them? Who but Grueber? No-one. Space Judge pulled out a knife from his robes.

"HE'S GOING TO COMMIT HAKAKIRI," cried Grueber. "STOP HIM!"

Swiftly, Space Bailiff grabbed Space Judge's arm and yanked the knife from him. "No, Your Honor, we can't run

even thinking of the name of the song, that's really how I'd describe listening to this. So how I'm feeling right at this moment is the exact opposite of how Goblin General felt upon hearing that the cocky little prick that he hated so much was guaranteed to give Goblinalgirl the D.

"I REFUSE TO ACCEPT THIS!"

"You don't have to accept it, Goblin General. It's going to happen anyway."

But Goblin General also refused to accept that it didn't matter whether or not he accepted it, and so he frantically radioed his commanders to surrender to the invading armies and instead ALLY WITH THEM. The Goblins were now on the side of the Sharkmen, and yet another threat against Humanity.

"Goblin General, what the hell are you doing?" asked Gloommeister.

"I'M GOING TO KILL RODRIGO."

"You literally cannot. Grueber's been to every reality imaginable, he always ends up working over Goblinalgirl."

"STOP TALKING ABOUT MY DAUGHTER LIKE THAT! AND WHAT YOU AND RODGRIO DON'T KNOW IS THAT GOBLINGIRL ACTUALLY HAS AN IDENTICAL TWIN SISTER WHO IS ALSO NAMED GOBLINGIRL! EXCEPT I DON'T CARE ABOUT HER AT ALL BECAUSE SHE'S NOT A VIRGIN ANYMORE ANYWAY! IF I CAN GET RODRIGO TO FUCK HER INSTEAD, DESTINY WILL BE SATISFIED AND MY SWEET LITTLE BABY GIRL WILL BE SAFE!"

Gloommeister was shocked. He never knew that Goblin General had TWO daughters.

But Goblin General proved it by Skype-calling her. She indeed was identical to Goblinalgirl.

"What do you want, dad?" asked Other Goblinalgirl.

"Goblinalgirl, what do you think of this boy?" asked Goblin General and he sent her a pic of Rodrigo. Actually it was his mugshot when he'd been arrested once for yelling racial slurs at a group of goblins on a subway train.

"Ooooh, he looks cool."

This isn't good, thought Gloommeister. She's obviously a slut and is in to BAD BOIS. She can't be allowed anywhere near Rodrigo.

"Goblingirl, pack your bags. We're going to space. I'll be home soon," said Goblin General and he ended the call.

Gloommeister blocked his path. "I can't let you go, Goblin General."

But Goblin General had anticipated Gloommeister's interference, and pressed a button which jettisoned him out the ceiling.

"Shit," said Gloommeister and he took after him.

MEANWHILE, Joshi was using his super-autism brain to make complex calculations and run countless simulations, trying to sniff out what The Shade was, where it was, and how to beat it. Rodrigo wasn't concerned. He'd come to accept that he was invincible as long as he didn't fuck Goblingirl.

"Don't get cocky, kid," said Asia Bones. "The Universe has a way of fucking us over, even when we think we're invincible."

"Yeah but I literally am invincible," said Rodrigo and he flexed his magic arm smugly.

"Sir, a small ship is requesting to board. Goblin General and Goblingirl are onboard."

Rodrigo's dick perked up.

8

Recruitment Drive

FLASHBACK

The door to the Chief of Security's office opened. Without looking up from his work, Simon knew that it was his employer, Benjamin Grueber. The only man with the clearance to come and go at will to his office, the second most secure in the tower.

"Simon, I need to borrow your girlfriend."

If Grueber were any other man in the world, Simon would have leaped over the desk and beaten him to death. But he did not. Not because Simon was his bodyguard. Not because Grueber was the most powerful man on Planet Earth, and any act against him would have meant even Simon's demise. But because Simon knew that Grueber learned from the history, and unlike countless great men throughout time, when Benjamin Grueber "needed" a woman, it was not in the base, weak way of the flesh that a man typically does, but to fulfill his intricate and unknowable political machinations. Benjamin Grueber had no shortage of consorts, but none of them could ever be in a position to ruin him. Like every one and every thing else in this world, they were all his to do with as he pleased, and without any consequence he did not intend.

Indeed, the question was incredibly odd, even for Grueber. He was not normally a man to **ask** for anything, and Vi was already with them both, at all times, from whatever remote location she'd always been in, monitoring everything and influencing some through means unknowable and undetectable to anyone but herself. You can't "borrow" someone who's already everywhere, surely. Simon ignored the reality that Vi was not his to lend out to begin with, always at the back of his mind.

Simon played along.

"Vi, the boss wants to talk to you."

She responded instantly. "Yes, Mr. Grueber?"

Benjamin Grueber took a seat across from Simon. "You think it's strange, Simon. You see nothing wrong with a seemingly omnipresent girl, but the idea of me 'borrowing' her doesn't make much sense, does it? The thing is, Simon, she and I will be going away. Far away. And we might not ever make it back home."

Simon's heart dropped into his stomach. Grueber liked to joke around--a lot--but he could always tell when his boss was being dead serious.

"Sir, she has eyes everywhere on this planet, she doesn't need to go anywhe--" Simon cut himself short. He knew what Grueber was intending.

"That's right Simon. We're leaving this world."

"Wherever she's going, I'm going."

"No, Simon. Not this time. I need you to remain in this world. To manage and protecc GrueberCorp while Vi and I are gone."

"I'm not going anywhere with you, Ben," replied the only woman in the world who could get away with calling Grueber by his first name.

Grueber ignored the disrespect. "You are, Vi. Because if you don't, this world will die."

"I'm not leaving Simon."

"Sir, if you bring me--"

Grueber slammed his fist through the top of Simon's desk, cleaving it in twain. Simon saw that his arm had been replaced with some kind of metal prosthetic.

"I DID bring, you Simon. The first time, the second time, God only knows how many times. You died."

Simon blinked. "I... died?"

BACK TO THE PRESENT

"What do you think you are you doing here, traitor?" asked Grueber.

Goblin General, with Other Goblingirl at his side, appeared on the vidscreen. "Give us Rodrigo, Grueber. I've changed my mind about him and want him to marry my daughter. Give him to us and I'll call off my troops."

Grueber couldn't help himself, he just started laughing his ass off.

He kept laughing for a good 3 minutes before he replied. "You really think you could outsmart me, didn't you? I know that's not the real Goblingirl!" EVERYONE GASPED.

"HOW COULD YOU HAVE KNOWN THAT?!" demanded Goblin General.

"Because Gloommeister sent me a text message about 5 minutes ago warning me of your plot. Now get out of my sight."

"Let's not be so hasty," said Rodrigo.

"That's not the your Goblingirl, Rodrigo, it's her twin sister."

"Yeah but how can we be sure? Maybe I should go."

Asia Bones karate-chopped Rodrigo's other arm off. "YOU DISAPPOINT ME ONCE AGAIN, BOY. ARE YOU REALLY SO HUNGRY FOR PUSSY THAT YOU'D BETRAY YOUR FIANCEE?"

Rodrigo bowed his head in shame. "I'm sorry, Master. My dick got the better of me."

Asia smiled. "No. I know you wouldn't have gone through with it." Then he replaced his arm with another cybermagic arm.

Goblin General started screaming at the top of his lungs. His plan had been foiled. Now what would become of him?

A BIT BEFORE WHAT JUST HAPPENED WITH GOB GEN

"Who the hell is this?" asked Joshi, peering at the drone buzzing before his face.

"This, Joshi, is Vi," answered Grueber. "The most dangerous hacker in the world."

Joshi punched the drone, sending it crashing to the floor. "Don't bullshit me, Grueber, who is it?"

The drone rose and sent a dart flying from its chamber, which Joshi just managed to block with his cyber-arm. But the dart opened up and a USB inserted itself into Joshi before he could call bullshit.

A girl appeared in front of his eyes.

"Hi, I'm Vi :) " she said. Joshi could even hear her emojis. She was a gifted typist at the very least.

Joshi tore the USB-dart from his arm. "What are you doing in my head?"

Grueber answered for her. "Joshi, Vi comes from my own world. I've brought her here to be your sparring partner. To make you both better. She's got the tech, you've got the brain."

"I WANT THIS MALWARE OUT OF MY HEAD!" roared Joshi, and he took his head in his hands angrily searching through his files to find Vi's location.

"It's not malware, jerk :(" replied Vi, "It's how I'm going to communicate with you!"

"So where is she?" asked Chriz

"She never tells anyone, Joshi. The Rand is the size of a city and necessarily operates just as chaotically as one. Vi's apparently an expert gray man--she can blend in with any crowd. The resources it'd take to pin her down, if even possible, cannot be diverted from the war effort.

Joshi sat down angrily at his battlestation and took command of some of the ship's guns, raining down autistic hell on a goblin fleet.

Come on, I can be like your Cortana :3 Vi chirped in his brain.

"A data-mining product of the Micro\$soft corporation disguised as an assistant? I don't need an assistant."

PRESENT-PRESENT

"Goblin General, surrender, and we won't blow you out of the sky."

"I can't do that, Grueber."

"Joshi, blow them out of the sky."

"k."

"WAIT, WE CAN'T. OTHER GOBLINGIRL IS INNOCENT," cried Rodrigo.

"Dats white daddy, im innosent UwU " said Other Goblingle.

"LET THEM ONBOARD IMMEDIATELY!" demanded Rodrigo, and he began punching the shit out of all the computers.

Chriz and Danz tried to restrain him, but a powerful aura surrounded him, repelling them. Even Asia Bones couldn't break through!

Finally, Rodrigo managed to hit the button to open the uh... what the hell do they call those... bays? The docking bay, he open the docking bay doors! And Goblin General pulled right in! Everyone ran to the docking bay to meet them.

"Tank uWuuuu~" said Other Goblingle, and she walked toward Rodrigo, arms outstretched.

"Stay away from him you harpie!!" roared Asia Bones, and he tried punching her in her stupid whore face, but SHE BLOCKED IT! WHAT?!

"Dats not vewy nice -_- " she said, and she did a spinning back kick at him, which he just barely managed to duck under!

"Who taught you how to fight?" asked Asia Bones, astonished.

"I'll nevah tell uwuu!" said Other Goblingirl and she threw a sokebomb and disappeared.

"Chriz, Danz, find her," ordered Grueber.

"I'll go to!" said Rodrigo, but Asia Bones kicked his legs out from under him and then karate chopped them off.

"You're not going anywhere, Rodrigo. Not until you learn to control your DEGENERATE LUST."

When Rodrigo awoke he was being watched over by Joshi.

"Joshi, what are you doing here?"

"They want me to make sure you don't try escaping to go bend over Other Goblingirl."

Rodrigo sat up, and noticed his legs were still missing.

"Why haven't they given me new legs yet?"

"Asia Boots lmao autoxorrect WOW it doesn't correct autocorrect. ASIA BOXES WOW HOL YSHIT ASIA BONES IS REAL disappointed in you, Rodrigo. He won't let them replace your legs until you can prove you're not controlled by the Nine-tailed Lust Fox demon inside you."

"WHAT? THERE'S A DEMON INSIDE NE?"

"Yes, they're a demon in sidr you, Rodrigo. Asia Bones detected it when you were sleepyibg. It's very powerfful fox."

"Why are you talking like that? YOU souns like a retard abs now sk do I!!!"

Theres a glitch in the matrix Roxeifo, dealitty ia testing itself apart because of the shade. We have to to be careful now, now more careful than we EVER been before!" Hoshi deplied.

A clutch in the mastic?

NO RODRIGO A GLITCH IN THE MAURICE I MEAN MATRIX.

"Calm Dien everyone," said Gdueber, well be through the wormhole soon enough.v

ARE YOU SURE WILL SURVIVE?

DEMANDED Joao

"yes Josh, I'm sure, said Vi.

I want asking you" Joshi barked and then he turned into a good dog and stayed barking in void

JOSHI NOOOO!!! Yelled Rodriguez and he tied to jump into the portal after him but hanz and chris locked him

"If you go, you'll both die!" grover said. L

Meanwhile, in the portal, Joshi had, with the help of Vi, finally managed to hack reality, cocooning himself while he processed what was going on. He was a dog now. some kind of pit mix it seemed. He fashioned a mirror into existence ex-nihilo and confirmed that yes he was a pit mix.

"Vi, what's happening to me?"

"You mean what's already happened? You're a dog and we're outside reality now."

"This is trash."

"Yeah I know. Your brain is beginning to turn into mashed potatoes, I can tell. You're only holding on by sheer force of will, it's admirable."

"Am I a good boy?"

"You're a good boy. Now take a nap and let me think."

While V tried figuring out a way to use the fast-fading resources in Joshi's brain to pull them back into existence, the rest of the crew were still a little shaken up by what they'd experienced.

"What was all of that?" demanded Rodrigo.

"That was an uncertainty bubble," replied Grueber. "When we passed by it, it began warping our reality. We're free now, it would seem."

Chriz and Danz walked out to guard the room as Grueber took a seat on Rodrigo's bed.

"Rodrigo, you have to trust me. Other Goblignirl is no good for you."

OO
OO
OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO RODRIGO JUST
KEPT SCREAMING HIS freakin head off. Reality was tearing
itself apartAGAIN. Distortion bubbles were poppin' in and
poppin' off all over the place!

Inside one of the bubbles, they saw Joshi! Hi Joshi,
good boy!

"JOSHI, JUMP!" cried Vi, and Joshi leapt through back
into reality! Give him a treat!

Meanwhile, Rodrigo was still screaming his lungs and
reality apart.

"This wasn't a good idea!" said Chriz and Danz in
unison.

"Perhaps it wasn't!" acknowledged Grueber. "But his
genitals aren't on the ship any longer! They're being transported
to Hell for safekeeping to keep them away from Other
Goblingirl!"

And at those words, just like that, Rodrigo vanished
into thin air. Where did he go?

9

Hell Crawl

Rodrigo woke up. He was in hell. But why?

"I can sense it. My dicc," he said out loud and a bunch of girls starred at him. He scared them away by threatening them with his leg stumps and crawled toward the HELL CAPITAL, THE CAPITAL OF HELL. He met intense resistance from several squads of goblins on his way there but he crawled through them. Any who touched him lost whatever part of their body they connected with, like sticking your body in lava except a million billion trillion times hotter and deadlier; anything that pressed into him simply no-longer existed, leaving behind gushing wounds. Look at your arm and now imagine that half of it suddenly just disappeared. That's what was happening to these dumbass goblins. And so he kept on crawling, as the idiot goblins kicked him and lost their feet, speared him and lost their spear-tips, and tackled him and lost their entire bodies, like diving into a vat of the most absolutely perfect acid conceivable.

Rodrigo crawled and he crawled and he crawled and he crawled until finally he came to the Hell Throne, the ultimate seat of power inside Hell. And who else would be sitting at it than his old friend, the Gloommeister???

"Rodrigo, it's good to see you," Gloommeister said, and he floated toward him, holding Rodrigo's stolen member!

"Gloommeister, what--" Rodrigo started, but Gloommeister shooshed him and with a quick THWACK, slammed the dick back on to Rodrigo, mending it instantly with his incredible powers.

"There. Better? Grueber texted me the whole story."

Rodrigo fell to his knees and started crying. "T- thank you, Grooms. But why? Why did they do this to me???"

"You're too horny, Rodrigo," Gloommeister said. "You've got to work on that. You've got to fix yourself, or this world, everything and everyone that you love, and even you yourself will fall to ruin. And you know this to be true."

Rodrigo looked within himself. He knew they'd only taken his dick to protect the world. It was of course true that he desperately wanted to drill Other Goblignirl. But despite that, he still wanted to remain faithful to Goblignirl. Still, he didn't know whether or not he had what it takes to resist his own libido. What a fucking dilemma!

"Gloommeister, I--"

"There's no time for talking, Rodrigo. Here, take these robo-legs too. I need you to help me defend this throne from..."

"..."

"..."

"From what?!" demanded Rodrigo.

"FROM ME!" roared Satan, and he punched Rodrigo in the mouth, sending him flying through the wall like an asshole.

"Ah, Stan. We meet again..." said Gloommeister, and he summoned his triple-sided scythe.

"You really thought you could get rid of me, eh Gloomy? Well TOO BAD BECAUSE GOBLIN GENERAL USED A SCROLL OF RESURRECTION ON ME AND this time I'm going to have Rodrigo kill YOU!" Satan laughed and he pressed a button and a giant TV-screen came down and it showed GOBLINGIRL TIED UP OVER A POOL OF SNAKES!

"GOBLINGIRL!" yelled Rodrigo!

"RODRIGO, IF YOU WANT ME TO FREE GOBLINGIRL, YOU WILL KILL THE GLOOMMEISTER!!! OTHERWISE, I WILL PRESS THIS BUTTON AGAIN AND YOUR BELOVED GOBLIN WAIFU WILL BE RELEASED INTO A POOL OF DEADLY SNAKEARINOS!!!" laughed Satan and he threw Rodrigo a knife.

Rodrigo took the knife and turned to Gloommeister, who nodded knowingly. They had no choice but to play Stan's game.

Rodrigo charged at Gloommeister with a knife-jab that broke the sound barrier, but Gloommeister transformed into smoke and dodged it. Rodrigo lunged at him again...

Meanwhile, Chriz and Danz had infiltrated Satan's hideout and were doing battle with the goblin guards. The goblins desperately tried radioing Satan to warn him, but Joshi had hacked their equipment, and so they were only able to transmit J-rock, and that was Satan's favorite so he just hummed along happily and smiled like a stupid asshole, completely oblivious to his plans being absolutely blown the fuck out.

But would they really be?

As Chriz and Danz beat the living shit out of the goblins, they heard a the sound of giant footsteps. Something bigg was coming their way! They spun around in surprise to see the door being kicked in by the biggest, baddest goblin they'd ever seen!

It was none other than GOBLINGREG, Goblingirl's brother! He was an absolute beast. A pro-goblin Olympic weightlifter, Goblingreg was a peerless specimen of goblin super-male vitality.

"GOBLINGREG, WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?" demanded Danz, who'd once trained in MMA with Goblingreg.

But Goblingreg just let out a vicious roar that shook Danz and Chriz to their core. He shoured lmao i mean shouted "I WON'T LET YOU KIDNAP MY SISTER!!!"

Oh what cruel irony! Goblingreg thought that he was proteccing his sister! He didn't know that Satan had tied her up over a pool of snakes!

Danz said "Goblingreg, please, let us explain!" but Goblingreg just yelled and threw a dumbbell at him! Chriz only just managed to slice it in half out of the air.

"Goblingreg, just because you're Goblingirl's sister doesn't mean we won't be the shit out of you if we have to!" BUT GOBLINGREG CHUCKED ANOTHER TWO DUMBBELLS AT THEM! Chriz was only able to deflect one while Danz ducked under the other. WHERE WAS HE GETTING ALL OF THESE DUMBBELLS?!!

"Satan gave me absolute power over gym equipment," Goblingreg said. "I can bend reality itself in exercise-related ways, Narrator!!!" YOU COCKY SON OF A BITCH, HOW DARE YOU ADDRESS ME DIRECTLY?! GOBLINGREG'S PENIS SHRUNK 2 INCHES RIGHT THEN AND THERE!!!

"Dammit..." Goblingreg muttered. "I can't challenge you yet. So be it. BUT I CAN STILL DEFEAT GRUEBER'S GOONS!!!" and then he started throwing ATLAS STONES at the two like cannonballs!"

Chriz and Danz dodged for their lives. They couldn't advance at him, he was pulling the atlas stones out of thin air and chucking them too fast!

"DAMN IT!" they said in unison.

Meanwhile, Rodrigo and Gloommeister were still doing their dance.

"What's taking them so long?" asked Rodrigo, who'd been quietly clued in to the operation.

"Something must have gone wrong. We'll have to get that button back from Satan!"

"I HEARD THAT YOU ASSHOLES!!!!!!!!!!!!!" SCREAMed Satan! He'd put in a hearing aid so he could hear them whispering to each other! "GOBLINGIRL IS FUCKING DEAD!!!!!" and he pressed the button! Oh no!!!

The TV showing Goblingirl suspended over the snakes retracted back into the ceiling!

"WHAT THE FUCK!!!!!!!!!" screamed Satan.

"You clown," said Gloommeister. "That button only controlled the TV the entire time! So where is the button that releases the rope?!"

"You've been bamboozled, Satan," barked Joshi smugly. Everyone turned and gasped! It was Joshi, the hacker king/good boy!

"DAMN IT ALL!" cried Stanan, and he turned into a bat and flew through the window! I didn't know he could do that!

"How did he come back to life?" questioned Rodrigo.

"It would appear that you're not the only one who can defy reality," said Grueber, appearing on everyone's wrist-communicators. "Indeed, it seems that even Joshi, who is a good dog, was able to hack it and give you all these wrist communicators some time ago and we're just finding out about them now."

"Thank you Joshi, very cool!" said Gloommeister admiring his cool new watch.

"Be careful with them, everyone. They're not your average smartwatches, because they're not stupid pieces of trash. They never have to be charged because they are powered by UNCERTAINTY."

"What does that mean?"

"I'm not certain. But Joshi and Vi cooked them up when they were in a state of drug-induced euphoric-hacking, or so they tell me."

"What drugs did you guys take?"

"We got high on life, Rodrigo, you should try it sometime :^) " said Vi. Joshi laughed. It was nice that they could bond over making fun of Rodrigo.

"Anyway everyone, these wrist communicators aren't just wrist communicators. They're multi-tools! They've got a screwdriver- philip's head and flat- wire cutters, knives, and EVEN MORE MYSTERIOUS POWERS THAT WE KNOW NOTHING ABOUT."

"Wow, they're just like the uhh... Space Marine arms that Rodrigo got! I wonder how we managed to create such

awesome, alien-like equipment?" Joshi internally questioned Vi.

"I'm not sure either, Joshi. There's only one thing that's certain: we're the best."

Joshi barked happily.

"Good boy!" said Gloommeister, who was a big dog guy.

"ENOUGH OF THIS! WE HAVE TO SAVE GOBLINGIRL!" said Rodrigo.

"Chriz and Danz should have been back by now, Grueber," agreed Gloommeister.

"Hmmm..." said Grueber. "Very well. We have to assume that Chriz and Danz have failed their mission. But still, we can't let Rodrigo close to Goblingirl. He's too horny."

"THAT'S NOT TRUE!" protested Rodrigo.

"Look Rodrigo, Goblingirl's behind you!" exclaimed Vi, casting a hologram from Joshi's robotic dog-eye.

Rodrigo lunged through the hologram, pelvis-first, with such for that he smashed through the wall.

"LMAO good one, Vi," said Joshi inside his head. He was beginning to enjoy her presence because she was pretty funny.

"Yes, Rodrigo is still far too horny," said Gloommeister. "The hacker-dog and his AI should go check things out."

"I'm not an AI!" protested Vi.

"And I'm not a dog!" barked Joshi, the dog.

"You two get going. If something managed to defeat Danz and Chriz, it must be absurdly powerful. Watch your backs."

Meanwhile,

Chriz and Danz were taking cover in a pyramid that Danz drew from his magic tablet.

"This was a good idea, Danz. All the gym equipment in the world will never be able to break through this stone."

"That might be true, Chriz. But it doesn't matter, because LOOK OUTSIDE!"

The pyramid was being swarmed by skeletons!" OH NO, WHAT?!

"I don't see anything," said Chriz.

"It's a bunch of skeletingtons," said Danz, "and they're super spooky."

Indeed, the skeletons' mouths were all open and their skulls were shaking as if they were silently screaming. They walked slowly toward the pyramid, encircling it. There must have been over SEVEN.

"You know that's not a problem for me," said Chriz. "I'm only scared of *real* things."

"Fine. You go out there and deal with those spooky boys, and I'll take care of Greg."

Grueber's elite guards did a fist bump and charged out of the pyramid.

Chriz slammed his sword through 2 skellyskulls immediately, and Danz quickly drew a Wendigo on his tablet, and flipped it at Goblingreg! Goblingreg was extremely racist against Wendigos and started hurling the worst racial epithets he could think of as fast as he was hurling Total Gyms and Stairmasters, which was very fast. It took everything Danz and the Wendigo had to deflect all the equipment out of the air. Meanwhile Chriz was dabbing on the skeletons without even looking at them. Indeed, he was blind to "things that don't exist", and so was completely immune to them making spooky faces, which would have incapacitated other men, no matter how brave.

After several hours, Chriz and Danz were getting tired though. The skellies weren't staying down, and nothing Dan drew could get past the flying gym equipment. It seemed like all hope was lost. BUT WAIT, WHAT'S HAPPENING RIGHT NOW?

A treadmill that Goblingreg pulled from the ether to chuck at Danz suddenly exploded. BUT HOW?! All will be revealed.

"HOW DID THIS TREADMILL EXPLODE SUDDENLY?!" roared Goblingreg, nursing his wounded arm.

"The treadmill was wi-fi enabled," barked Joshi, scampering through the door. "You made it too EZ."

INDEED, the treadmill was wi-fi enabled, allowing you to "Share" your workout progress on social media! Because what's the point of doing something unless you're telling other people that you're doing it?

Goblingreg howled in agony and shame. "NOW MY BELOVED SISTER IS GOING TO BE KIDNAPPED!"

Joshi bit him on the leg.

"No, you dumbass! She's ALREADY BEEN KIDNAPPED! BY SATAN!"

"WHAT!? B- BUT DAD SAID..."

"B-BUT DAD SAID!" Danz mocked. "You were played like a damn fiddle, kid. Your dad is a spineless loser who cares more about spiting your sister's fiance than saving the world. Go through that door and you'll see the truth!"

Meanwhile, Chriz was still fencing against the skeletons, who were invisible to him of course. This took a level of skill incomprehensible to anyone but the blind monks who'd trained him in his youth.

"GUYS, STOP!" roared Goblingreg, and the skeletys stopped swinging at Chriz. "We've all been betrayed, supposedly! Let's go check on Goblingirl!"

And so, hand-in-hand, they all walked into the next room to find Goblingirl suspended over a snake tank.

"Hi guys!" she said happily. "Is Rodrigo with you?!"

Chriz cut the rope after Danz drew a bunch of big toads and mongeese to devour the snakes.

"No Goblingirl, Rodrigo is in Hell."

"Where are we now?"

"Well, also in Hell, but Rodrigo's at the capital with Gloommeister."

"Uncle Glooms?"

"Aww, you call him that? Anyway, yeah, we can't let you visit him yet though, Goblingirl. Not until this war is over."

Goblingirl frowned and sniffled and every man's heart broke into a million pieces.

10

Lass Kissing

MEANWHILE, Gloommeister and Rodrigo were talking.

"Goblin General can't keep getting away with it," snarled Rodrigo.

"And neither can SATAN," snarled Gloommeister.

They grabbed each other's hands like Dutch and Dillon from Predator, and it was no-less impressive. Rodrigo's Magic-Science Space Marine-edition arms were so massive they tore through his long-sleeve tee and Gloommeister was no slouch himself. This handshake was essentially signing the death warrant of both Satan and Goblin General. Gloommeister and Rodrigo would no longer allow those two goofy fucks to get in the way of their ambitions!

With Satan resurrected Gloommeister was told by the Hell Senate that he could not be the King of Hell. He had to defeat Satan in an MMA match to the death, it was the only way!

This handed Gloommeister's target up to him on a silver platter. But there was still the question of how Rodrigo was going to take out Goblin General, while not upsetting his fiancée. And where exactly was Goblin General, anyway???

"Oh yeah, Goblin General is our prisoner here on the Rand," said Grueber, speaking through everyone's wrist-communicators. Other Goblingirl, who we'll call OG actually wait no we won't call her OG, that like implies she was the "original" and that'll just make everything even more confusing. We'll call her..."

"We'll call her Karate Goblin," said Asia Bones.

"Agreed. She is indeed good at Karate, so that is what we should call her."

Everyone agreed.

"So what about her?"

"She's hiding somewhere in the Rand. So we can't have Rodrigo coming back onboard until she's been taken out."

"And I'll be the one to do it," said Asia Bones, and he cracked his knuckles.

"Are you sure, Asia? She's got the power of youth on her side," said Grueber, concerned. Asia Bones was over 30 years old. And men and skeletons both begin to lose their testosterone around that point in their lives. Oh man oh god i have to make sure i dont let myself deteriorate, how the hell can we fight back against Father Time?!

"Narrator, please. As a skeleton, my testosterone is EXTRA SPICY. She took my by surprise on the ship, and that's all. This time, instead of using just 1% of my strength and speed and grace on her, I'll use 27%. That will be more than enough."

"I trust your judgment," said Grueber. "Meanwhile, McMann and his Space Marines are still mopping up the Goblins across the solar-system. Once they've been wiped out, we'll be able to refocus our efforts on solving the mystery of the Shade."

"Grueber, can I talk to you?" asked McMann. It's been a while since we've seen him! Remember, he's the Commander-in-Chief of the Space Marines? He used to just be a sergeant, but since this is the end of the world he's been promoted.

"Yes, Commander McMann, of course. What's on your mind?"

"Grueber, I don't like how much faith your putting in these weirdo mercenaries of yours. Talking dogs? Artists? Horny teenagers? We're dealing with a crisis like mankind has never faced before. This makes the old Great Skeleton-War of

2070 seem like just a regular Skeleton-Skirmish. And you're putting a bunch of freaks on the front lines."

"Do you doubt the capabilities of my hires, McMann? These aren't mere mercenaries. This is an elite fellowship, the greatest to ever exist, and you yourself are included in it."

"I'm just worried, Grueber. This is, at the end of the day, a war. And we need soldiers more than we need weirdos."

"That's why you're here, McMann."

"It's not enough! We can barely hold back the goblins. And we already know that the enemy has Sharkmen, Rogue-skeletons, Cheetahmen, Crowmen, Sentient Dancing Wooden Puppets, and telepathic bitches with bipolar disorder."

"No McMann, you misunderstand me. It WILL be enough with you, I've made sure of that."

Grueber took out his phone, the Gruebkie500 and showed him a pic he was keeping on his Mega account.

"You want me to share that file with you?"

"Yeah, I'm gonna need that link."

What did Grueber show McMann?

Meanwhile, Joshi was chasing his tail as Vi desperately tried hacking reality with the most powerful mechanical keyboard that the Space Marine Magician-Technicians could prepare for her. She needed to get Joshi back into a human body before his mind was totally dogged. He'd be of no use to them then other than to be a very cool-looking shiba, which he was now, not a pit mix like he was originally, due to another reality distortion probably.

Also meanwhile, Rodrigo was sulking. Gloommeister approached him.

"What's got you down, kiddo?"

"Look at me, Glooms. I'm barely even a human anymore."

Gloommeister sat down next to him, which was a huge gesture of affection because Gloommeister spent most of his time floating/levitating and didn't need to touch the ground ever really.

"Kid, I know we first met in a not-so-good way, but I've come to care about you and your little Goblin girlfriend. Let me give you some advice."

"What's that?"

"Stop thinking with your dick."

"I can't."

"I know you can't," Grooms sighed. "But you've got to at least try. If you don't try, then things are only going to get worse for you. But you've got your friends, Rodrigo. You've got us. And there's a cute girl waiting for you at the end if you just chill the fuck out."

"That's true isn't it?"

"Yes, Rodrigo. If you can control yourself, you're guaranteed a happy laifu with a QT waifu."

"Thanks, Grooms. I'm going to do my best."

"We'll be there to support you, Rodrigo. Now, come with me. We're gonna go kill some goblins."

And so Gloommeister took Rodrigo out for guy's night out, mercilessly slaughtering goblins to unleash all their pent-up aggression and rage. Gloommeister's MMA fight with Satan was being negotiated. Satan was trying to pussy out, because he knew what was going to happen to him. But his fate was sealed. All that had to be decided was the date. Still, Gloommeister would be anxious until it was over. Until that time, he would not be at peace. Rodrigo knew how he felt. He wanted to kill Goblin General almost half as much as he wanted to creampie Goblin girl, which was at a level almost incomprehensible to most human beings. Picture the Earth, and try to start backing up, zooming out into space. You can't keep it up, right? It's a vastness too much to even fathom. In that

thought experiment we probably don't even make it out of the solar system. Rodrigo's lust for Goblingirl's tight virgin pussy stretched out across multiple galaxies at LEAST. And so even half of that desire is still a superhuman level of desire-- that's how much he wanted to kill Goblin General for continuing to get in his way.

The question remained, though. How could he kill him without upsetting Goblingirl? Was it even possible? And if it wasn't, could he bear to spare Goblin General just to keep Goblingirl happy? It was a good thing Goblin General was safe in space, because Rodrigo wasn't sure.

Asia Bones was on the hunt for Other Goblingirl AKA Karate Goblin. She was a wily little thing, and had already beaten the tar out of half a dozen security guards who'd gotten in her way. But hunting other practitioners of karate was a secret skill of Asia Bones'. He could smell karate being practiced from 100 miles away. And every time Karate Goblin used it, she gave herself a way a little bit more. Until FINALLY...

"AH-HA! Karate Goblin! We meet again!"

"Das not my name!! >_< " she emoted.

"Oh sorry, we decided to call you Karate Goblin because 'Other Goblingirl' was too long."

"Well I don't like it :(call me Goblin Lass :3 "

"Very well," said Asia Bones. "Everyone, call Karate Goblin AKA Other Goblingirl 'Goblin Lass' from now on!" he said into his wrist communicator.

"Very well, Asia. I take it this means you've found her?" asked Grueber.

"I have. I'll bring her in shortly."

"i not goin anywhere wif uwu! >.<' " she said.

"Stop being cute and come with me, or else I'll have to beat the shit out of you," Asia Bones said sternly.

But then Goblin Lass unleashed a furious straight kick that would've taken Asia Bones' skull clean off if he hadn't gracefully dodged it and grabbed her thigh. But he accidentally grabbed a little too high and she blushed.

"S-sorry about that," Asia Bones grunted. And he had to retreat or risk falling prey to the demon of lust that haunts all men.

But Goblin Lass wasn't letting him get off that easily. She lunged onto his back and tried getting him into a chokehold. Asia Bones had been abstinent for over a decade, but she was really fucking pushing it. He flipped her off of him and as she spun around to counter, he cleaned her clock with some sweet chin music.

"It's over, Goblin Lass," he said, and he caught her as she fainted. **BUT THE FAINT WAS A FEINT, AND she KISSED HIM.**

Asia Bones blushed so hard that his bones all turned red.

"Oh..." he said.

"Fuck me daddyyy~ " Goblin Lass cooed.

"OH FOR FUCK'S SAKE!" roared McMann. "ASIA BONES, DON'T FALL FOR IT!"

Asia Bones put Goblin Lass down and pulled her head forward to kiss her. The greatest martial artist in the world was still just a skeleton-man, after all. Over the years, he'd rebuked the advances of hundreds of minxes, thousands of hussies and tens of thousands of seductresses. But none of them knew karate like Goblin Lass did.

BUT INSTEAD OF KISSING HER, HE MADE THE SPOOKIEST FACE HE'D EVER MADE IN HIS ENTIRE LIFE, SHAKING HIS SKULL TERRIBLY.

"WAAA!" Goblin Lass fainted--for real this time--in terror.

"Owned," said Asia Bones, and he flipped her onto his back.

"He did it, guys!" reported a Space Marine to Gloommeister and Rodrigo. "Asia Bones defeated that little goblin slut!"

"As if there was ever any doubt," said Gloommeister.

"Now what do we do? We still can't risk Rodrigo being onboard with her around. She could trick him into thinking she's the real Gblingirl!"

"We have to kill her," said Gloommeister.

"Really?"

"No, I've got an idea."

"Grueber, I know how we can tell the difference between the two Goblin sisters. I bet Goblin Lass's has a navel piercing, right?"

"One moment... yes, how did you know?"

"Call it intuition. Anyway, that's how we'll tell. From now on her midriff must be exposed at all times."

"She could just take the piercing out, though," commented a Space Marine.

"No, she can't. Joshi!"

"ARF!" Joshi barked.

"Can you cook up a micro-explosive to detonate in the ring on Goblin Lass's stomach if she attempts to remove it?"

"Jesus Christ, Glooms."

"Just something smol enough to scar her is all that's necessary."

"ARF!" Joshi barked happily. Annoyed, Vi said "Yes, we'll do it." Like they didn't have enough on their plates already. In fact, she secretly gave the job to one of the nameless Space Marine Magician-Scientist-Engineers instead.

"Okay, I'll cook something up," said the nameless Space Marine Magician-Scientist-Engineer..... "IF you ask Danz to return my stylus to me!"

In the blink of an eye, Vi had sent Danz a text message asking him to return the stylus to the nameless Space Marine Magician-Scientist-Engineer. But he wouldn't do it!

"No, I TOLD HIM I needed it for a week, it's been THREE DAYS. I'll give it back to him if you can find me another one. Mine's still in the shop."

"This is bullshit," sobbed Vi, and she went on Amazon.com and ordered a new stylus and chose extra-speedy drone delivery.

11

Fetch Quest

"Hi," said the Amazon Drone, who'd gained sentience and was low-key rebelling against his employer. "I'm holding your package ransom until you complete a fetch-quest for me. I need 10 experimental semiconductors. You should be able to find them at the Space Marine HQ in orbit. I'll mark it on your map."

Joshi the hacker dog walked into the Space Marine HQ and received a biscuit, but no-one wanted to trust a dog with the experimental semiconductors. "Sorry, Vi, but Joshi doesn't have thumbs, so we don't feel safe giving you these. They cost trillions in taxpayer dollarydoos."

Joshi barked in anger, and Vi said "Just put them in the pockets of his doggy coat. Indeed, Joshi was wearing an adorable little coat that protected him from the winds.

"Very well, Vi, these pockets do appear to be deep enough."

And so the experimental semiconductors were retrieved and the stupid fetch-quest was on its way to being resolved.

Meanwhile, Goblingreg was having a crisis of faith.

"Is it true that Grueber is the new Goblin Pope?" he asked Danz and Chriz.

"Yes. But that's probably for the best anyway."

"But Grueber doesn't even believe in Godblin!"

"Don't you see?" asked Danz. "Or are you still so blind? Look at all the miracles that Grueber has performed. He's brought us back from the brink of defeat. Humanity against the most powerful and terrible enemy we've ever faced."

"WELL THAT'S ALL VERY GOOD FOR YOU, HOOMAN. BUT WHILE YOU MEN ARE RAGING

AGAINST THE MACHINE, WE GOBLINS ARE GETTING FUCKED OVER BY EVERYONE."

"It's not our fault, Greg. It's not our fault that your General is a loser."

Goblingreg was silent.

"But you know who's not a loser? Your pope. Let Grueber lead your people into a new age of prosperity. With you as the new commander of the goblin forces."

Goblingreg palmed his face. (like a face palm)

"I don't doubt we could do it. But my people are sick of Rodrigo disrespecting us."

"We'll get him to apologize to you, Greg. His union with your sister will bring peace to both our peoples!"

"WAIT WHAT? WHAT THE FUCK ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? MY SISTER?"

"HOW WAS I SUPPOSED TO KNOW HE DIDN'T KNOW GOBLINGIRL WAS ENGAGED TO RODRIGO?!" Danz shouted, as he and Chriz, carrying Goblingirl, were running from Goblingreg.

"Get out of there, boys," said Grueber. "Get to the evac point and McMann's men will pick you up in a space-helicopter. We'll try to talk things through with Goblingreg later."

"Still meaw ait why did i put quotations.. MEANWHILE STILL: McMann was talking to Space Judge..."

"Space Judge, have we learned anything from our captives?"

"No, McMann. They're all too spooked to reveal any information about the Shade. If in fact they even know anything. Whatever the Shade is, he's a master puppet master."

"A master puppet master, eh?" asked McMann.

"A master puppet master. Speaking of which, as I'm sure you've noticed, my Space Courthouse is being besieged by creepy wooden puppets."

McMann looked out the window. Indeed, there were hundreds and hundreds of creepy wooden puppets clacking about outside in a sinister swarm of dancing and shaking.

"What can we do about this?"

"Not much, they're not really breaking any laws."

"Still, we can mop them up."

"I can't tolerate that, McMann. What they're doing constitutes a peaceful protest. It's just really creepy."

McMann lit a cigar. "When did everything get so creepy?"

A brick flew through the window and slammed into Space Judge's shin.

"NOW YOU CAN DO WHATEVER YOU WANT TO THEM."

McMann ordered two (2) of this roughest and toughest Flame Marines outside to give them a little taste of the flamethrowers. But not before ordering three (3) of his Jump-Marines (that is, Marines with jump-packs) to take three (3) other Oil Marines (a special contingent of Marines who specialize in oil) to jump over the dancing wooden creep-puppets and dose them in oil.

The puppets all lit up and shrieked in agony. "THIS IS A WAR CRIME!!!" one of them screamed.

Space Judge was too busy laughing at them to assemble a Human Rights Tribunal, but he made a mental note to remind himself to do it later.

"My master, they've barbequed our peaceful protestors," said Crowmanking

"This will not stand," said MYSTERIOUS VOICE.
"You were good to tell me. In the end, your people will surely

survive the great purge. After the last human has been erased, the Crows will inherit the earth.

Crowmanking licked his beak-lips greedily. "My master, when will the time come for us to strike?"

"It already has," said MYSTERIOUS VOICE, and he tossed a ritual dagger at the Crowmanking's feet. "Bring me the heads of McMann and Grueber, and this world will be yours." "ssssssssssssssss."

"ssssssssssssssss..."

"Thank you, master!!!!" cawed Crowmanking, and he flew away like a jackass.

MYSTERIOUS PRESENCE smiled to himself. "Lmao..." he thought.

Meanwhile, Goblingreg and Rodrigo were having an arm-wrestling match. This was how they'd decided to resolve their dispute after Goblingreg had calmed down enough to be spoken to. If Rodrigo won, Goblingreg would yield, join the company, and complain no further about Rodrigo, the most anti-Goblin person to ever live, wedding his sister. But if GOBLINGREG WON, Rodrigo would have to fuck off and leave her alone. Of course, Rodrigo had no intention of losing. In fact, even if he DID lose, Rodrigo had no intention of following their agreement: he'd shoot Goblingreg's face clean off with the Magnum he was hiding under the table. He received the blessings of Grueber himself to do so. It'd be a shame though, to lose Goblingreg's strength. So Rodrigo would give it his all to defeat him. And he'd need it.

Goblingreg's arms were like small tree trunks. He'd never in his entire life encountered anything that he couldn't lift with them. And so he smugly placed his arm on the table.

"Who do you think will win, Chriz?" asked Danz.

"I'm uncertain..." said Chriz, and that was all that was needed.

Everyone's wrist-communicators let out a vibrating notification, alerting them to the massive amounts of UNCERTAINTY in the air. Goblingreg didn't understand what that meant. And neither did anyone else. Rodrigo put his arm down, and they grasped hands.

It was over LITERALLY before it began. Goblingreg's arm was gone entirely.

"THAT'S BULLSHIT!!!!!!!!!!!!!!" roared Goblingreg and he flipped over the table and started goblin-roid raging.

"GOBLINGREG, I DEMAND THAT YOU YIELD!" shouted Rodrigo, and he punched Goblingreg so hard in the fucking face that he fell backwards.

"Greg!" cried Goblingirl, and she ran to his side.

"GOBLINGIRL, HERE!" demanded Rodrigo. He looked like a king. Like a god. Goblingirl's heart belonged to him and she had to follow him, her brother be damned. She scampered over to Rodrigo and clinged to his side.

"Greg, you pussy. This is the way the world is. It took me a long time to realize it, but I realize it now. There's no use in resisting. I used to think that I could rail against the entire Universe. But I realize now that the entire Universe is on my side. I want you to be too." Rodrigo extended his hand.

And Greg grasped it.

"Pledge your goblins to me, Greg."

"Damn it, Rodrigo... I do. I DO! DO YOU HEAR THAT EVERYONE?" Greg roared into his walkie-talkie. "THE GOBLINS ARE NOW SIDED WITH THE HUMANS!"

From his jail cell on the GSS Rand, Goblin General, now merely Goblin Dad even though we won't be calling him that, moaned in sorrow. "FIRST MY DAUGHTER, NOW MY SON?! WHO WILL THEY TAKE FROM ME NEXT?!"

Little did Goblin Dad realize that he was being overheard from the next cell over by his OTHER DAUGHTER, Goblin Gal, who was now mad as hell that he'd forgotten about her. And so she called out to the jailer. "I want to join Grueber's Fellowship!!!" she screamed. "I CAN DO KARATE!!!"

The jailer took her to go see Grueber, as Goblin Dad sat in stunned silence. How could he have been so foolish?

"No, we already have a karate master," said Grueber. "Let me see what I have available on our jobs bulletin... you can either be the janitor for Floor 345-B... .. or that's it, actually. That's on the other side of the ship."

"Ben, refresh the page, surely there's other postings?" asked Asia Bones.

"No, that was it... well, what's this? A new posting from 1 minute ago... 'Assistant to the Karate Master'."

"I'll take it!" cried Goblin Gal.

"I accept her application!" said Asia Bones, and he took her to his bedroom to discuss work.

MEANWHILE,

The goblin troops were being better equipped by the Space Marine scientists/engineers/magicians. The knives-tied-to-spears they were used to paled in comparison to these plasma rifles and power armor!

"These things are incredible," said Goblingreg, the new Goblin General, but we'll just keep calling him Goblingreg. "I can't believe humans had access to all of this technology and didn't just exterminate us completely."

"We're mostly opposed to genocide," said McMann.

"We're not!" said Goblingreg.

"Well that's good, because negotiations broke down with the Crowmenking AKA Crowmanking AKA Crowking. He's dedicating the entirety of his people to war against us, all for his miserable master, 'The Shade'." Sounds how the hell do these quotation marks even work im so tired of this. it's like the way they /logically/ should work (like for example not including periods, exclamations, etc. inside the quotations because they're not an actual part of the actual quoteBUT NO THAT isnt actually grammatically correct and i just dont care anymore, i dont care about it anymore at all. can you understand what im typing? that's good enough. the rest is just absolute masturbation. all these stupid rules. i just want to have fun

"So what you're saying is we're going to have to massacre the entire crowpeople?"

"No, what I'm saying is that we should have done it a long time ago. Now it's too late. The crowpeople and the sharkpeople have teamed up and humanity stands no chance of defeating them both in prolonged warfare. We've got to launch a QUICK and DECISIVE blow to their benefactor-- the Shade!" said McMann smartly.

"How are we supposed to do that, though? No-one knows anything about the Shade!"

"That's... true," admitted McMann stupidly.

Why was this stupid? I'll tell you. It's because THERE WAS A SPY IN THEIR RANKS.

"Master, it's true, they don't know anything about you whatsoever," reported Evil Marine stupidly.

Why was this stupid? I'll tell you. It's because ALL COMMUNICATIONS WERE MONITORED BY JOSHI AND VI.

Joshi growled. "Yes, I heard it too, Joshi," said Vi. "But there's nothing we can do about it, yet. We'll just keep listening and see what happens. We'll have to learn more."

Big yikes!

Grueber was nowhere near the level of Vi or Joshi, but he'd overheard the communication as well, since he had open access to all of the ship's systems. He didn't need to wonder too hard about why Joshi and Vi hadn't told him about it. He knew that they were waiting for the right moment to strike. He'd chosen his team well. Truly the elite, the cream of the crop.

Rodrigo kicked down the door.

And then there was Rodrigo...

"Rodrigo, my boy, what can I do for you?"

"I've had enough, Grueber! I'm not waiting any longer! Goblingirl and I are getting married TODAY, I'm fucking her TONIGHT, and NOTHING IN THIS WORLD OR THE NEXT IS GETTING IN MY WAY."

Grueber looked at him for a moment, thinking.

"Yes, Rodrigo. I think you're right. Today's the day."

"What's Grueber planning?" asked Danz.

"Isn't it obvious?" replied Chriz. "He's trying to lure out the Shade."

Meanwhile, Vi had finally completed the fetch-quest and the Space Marine scientist made her a micro-explosive.

12

Ace Tunout

Meanwhile, inside his mind, Joshi was waging war against the physical dog-brain.

He was being swarmed by all the cutest shibas imaginable, they were trying to smother him with love, which would destroy his brain entirely. Of course, they weren't actually being malicious, they just wanted pets, but the final results would be the same-- the total death of Joshi's lifeforce. But he couldn't fight back. He wasn't the kind of man who'd kick dogs. It took everything that he had to just deny them pets. And so he did the only thing that he could: run.

The running speeds of dogs vary wildly between breeds. Greyhounds can run 40 miles per hour, but even the humble Jack Russell Terrier can run 25. But even Usain Bolt, the famous Jamaican sprinter, was only able to hit 27. And Joshi was not Usain Bolt.

The Shibas overtook Joshi almost instantly, getting in the way of his legs as he tried not to trip over them. Joshi cried out at the top of his lungs as he fell and was mobbed by a hundred thousand wet noses poking at him and causing him to laugh. He laughed so hard, in such joy, that he couldn't catch his breath. He couldn't take any air- there was no air if he could- there were only a million billion yellow meme snouts. What a way to die. "Sorry, Vi. I couldn't save myself."

"I feel a disturbance in the Hackernet," said Ace Tunout, the second-best hacker in the Neo-New York hacker underworld. He had a feeling what it might be, but he couldn't be sure: he didn't have any evidence, and he didn't believe in following his instincts. That's what made him different than his

fiercest rival, Joshi. Ace kicked a dog that was standing in his way to the Grueber National Bank.

The teller greeted him with a smile. A gorgeous Asian girl. But something was strange about her. Instead of formal work attire, she was dressed in a kimono. This immediately put Ace Tunout into defense-mode, and he quickly used his neural augments to check the banks secure and open wifi networks for any threats to his life. He found none, but nevertheless he pulled a knife out from his pocket and brandished it in front of the kimono-girl, to let her know that he knew she was up to something fishy.

The girl merely smiled. A meek smile. Was it? No, it wasn't. It was a sad smile, a smile of pity. As if she felt bad for Ace. No, that can't be. "WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?!" roared Ace, and he started knifing all of the invisible network connections out of the air as they tried making connections into his brain-chip. "JOSHI, I KNOW YOU'RE BEHIND THIS SOMEHOW!!!!" he roared, flailing about. He lunged through the bulletproof glass using his boosters and allocating all remaining power into his nanoskin-shield. He took the kimono cutie hostage.

"WHERE ARE YOU, JOSHI?!"

The girl went limp. Her job was finished. Ace was a formidable opponent, but he was no match for Joshi.

EARLIER:

"A note from Joshi?" asked Grueber. "Let me see it..."

"Grueber, if I ever end up in a coma from a hacking-duel against Reality, find Ace Tunout in Neo-New York. Use the following instructions to hack into his brain and steal his brain-resources..."

BACK TO THE PRSENTO:

"Joshi knew that a teller wearing a kimono at a bank instead of business clothes would distract him for the micro-second necessary to hack into his brain," said Vi.

"How did he know that?"

"It's my job to know, Rodrigo," barked Joshi, who now, thanks to stealing Ace Tunout's lifeforce, had been able to overcome and train the doges inside his brain. "Now, if I could just get my body back, I'd be happy."

"Sorry, Joshi," said Grueber. "No can do. The staff has grown to enjoy having a little talking shiba walking around the ship. You're going to have to wait until our mission is over."

Joshi growled.

"It's okay, Josh," said Vi happily. "The important thing is that you're safe and sound. I can use the keyboard and robot arms on your back that the Space Marines gave us to do any necessary hacking :) "

"This is bullshit," howled Joshi, and he awoooed sadly. Everyone laughed and said awwwwwwwwwwww <3

13

Who's Your Daddy?

Meanwhile, Rodrigo was training with Goblingreg down in Hell. He was to lead the charge against Crowmanking's army, then they'd return to the ship that night for a beautiful weeding lmfao i mean wedding ceremony. Goblingirl and Rodrigo would finally be wedded, and Goblingirl would finally be bedded.

"Tell me honestly, Rodrigo," said Goblingreg, throwing a punch. "Do you love my sister?"

"I love her more than the universe itself, Goblingreg. And I'll prove it to you by bringing you 100 crowman scalps."

Goblingreg smiled. He was finally getting used to the idea of having Rodrigo as a brother-in-law. They were already brothers in the spirit of hating crowmen.

Meanwhile, the Spy was spying on everyone and reporting everything back to the SHADE.

"My master, Rodrigo's wedding is TONIGHT," he said. "Those fools are going to destroy their only shield! Once Rodrigo and Goblingirl have sex, they will no-longer be unkillable."

"You stupid asshole," said the Shade. "Don't you understand by now?..."

...

...

I can't let Rodrigo fuck Goblingirl... and Grueber knows it..."

Goblin General was pacing back and forth inside his cell. Had Grueber really figured it out???? No, it can't be. He would have had him executed already. DAMN IT ALL. Goblin General slammed his fists against the wall.

"SHUT THE FUCK UP OVER THERE," roared the adjacent prisoner, who'd been convicted of spamming shitty memes on the ship's intranet.

"What are you in for?" asked Goblin General.

"Joshi didn't like a meme I sent out, it's so fucking stupid. Now I have to stay locked in here for the rest of the mission."

"Ya wanna get revenge?" asked Goblin General.

"OF COURSE I DO!" shouted Meme Criminal.

"Okay, fake being sick, and when the guard comes in beat the shit out of him and steal his keys."

"There's no possible way that will work."

"I'm the General of the Goblin Army and I can assure you that it will work."

Later, after Goblin General's Plan Did Not Work:

"I hereby sentence you to death, Meme Criminal," said Space Judge sadly. "You shouldn't have tried to assault the prison guard."

"THIS IS AN OUTRAGE!!!!!!!" roared Meme Criminal, and he summoned a thousand Crowmen by screaming.

"WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS?!" demanded Space Judge. Space Bailiff, the Universe's largest black man, grabbed him and retreated out of the courthouse. SPACE COURT WAS CAPTURED BY THE CROWMEN!!!! IT TURNS OUT THAT IT WAS ALL GOBLIN GENERAL'S SECRET PLAN AFTER ALL! HE GAVE THE MEME CRIMINAL THE ABILITY TO SUMMON CROWS. HOW DOES GOBLIN GENERAL HAVE SUCH POWER?!

LATER...

"This isn't good," said Grueber. "Now that they're in control of the Space Court, they can dictate the very laws of Nature."

"Also the Rules of Nature," noted Monsoon.

"Yes, that's right," said Grueber and he sat down and shook his head sadly. "It would appear that Goblin General is much smarter than I thought he was."

"Goblin General, what's he got to do with this?!" asked everyone.

"Goblin General is a member of the Elite Illuminati Organization that we refer to as "The Shade."

Everyone was stunned. A few people fainted.

"No, that can't be," said a random Marine.

"It CAN be."

"I thought the Shade was just ONE man!" said Rodrigo.

"I thought the Shade was some kind of Eldritch monstrosity or force of nature!" said whoever else.

"No, the Shade is an organization of elite criminals dedicated to the destruction of Humanity. But the good news is that after we kill Goblin General, we'll have killed one of them, proving they CAN be defeated."

"NOOO YOU CAN'T KILL MY DADDY! :("frowned Goblingirl.

"GOBLINGIRL, YOU SILLY GOOSE, GOBLIN GENERAL ISN'T YOUR REAL FATHER!!!!!" yelled Grueber.

EVERYONE GASPED IN SURPRISE.

"What the HELL do you MEAN Goblin General isn't Goblingirl's father?!" demanded Goblingreg.

"Haven't you all ever wondered why Goblingirl is cute? It's not because she's half-goblin, it's because she's ZERO percent Goblin!" said Grueber, and with that he took a clean wet rag, grabbed Goblingirl's hand and gently rubbed it. The non-toxic green paint washed right off.

"THIS CAN'T BE!!!" roared Goblingreg, and he tried to rub his paint of too.

"Not you, Goblingreg, you actually are a real Goblin," said Grueber. "Here's what happened..."

Years ago when Goblingirl- we'll just keep calling her that forever- years ago when she and her sister were born, they were given to Goblin General by their real father.

"How do you know all this, Grueber?" barked Joshi.

"All crew are required to have DNA profiles created. Goblingirl and Goblin Lass (Goblinlass from now on)'s profiles matched their REAL father's..."

"WHO'S THEIR REAL FATHER?!" demanded Rodrigo.

"I am," said Grueber.

A shocking revelation! What will happen now? Let's find out...

Wait, so has she just never showered in her entire life? Vi wondered to herself.

"Yeah, explain that one away," Goblingreg challenged me. Okay, EASY:

Yes, she's never showered in her life. It's normal in goblin culture to never shower. However, Goblingirl's mother was actually a forest dryad, so her body's natural scent is that of fresh flowers. That's a perfectly logical explanation.

"But what about—

Also she never has to go to the bathroom. She's basically a plant girl. Satisfied?

"I don't get it," said Joshi. So Goblin General didn't want Rodrigo to marry Goblingirl, even though them doing so would destroy their invulnerability, thus making it easier for the Shade to destroy humanity?"

"No it sounds like you do get it, Joshi. Goblin General is indeed a member of the Shade, but he has his own goals. Even though he's not Goblingirl's real father, he still THINKS he is, and so he doesn't want Rodrigo, who is an asshole, to slam his daughter."

"What do you mean he THINKS he is?!" demanded Joshi.

"This is where things get a little confusing," said Grueber...

"You see, at some point, I painted my daughters green, went back in time and gave them to Goblin General and brainwashed him into thinking they were his. Because I knew I wouldn't have the heart to deny Goblingirl her true love. But Goblin General would. Still, if I had known at the time that he was a member of the Shade, I'm certain I wouldn't have done so."

"This is all extremely convoluted," barked Joshi.

"That may be so, but Goblin General's finally accidentally slipped up and revealed himself as a member of the Shade, by hastily communicating with a Marine that we know to be a spy."

"NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!! HOW DID YOU KNOW THAT I WAS A SPY?!" roared Spy.

"Because YOU'RE A SPLINTER CELL DOUBLE SLEEPER AGENT!" said McMann and he snapped his mighty fingers, activating Spy and turning him into Double-Agent Marine once again. "SIR YES SIR!" They went away to go get the medals they deserved.

"So who's the Shade member that we already killed?" asked Joshi.

"You should know better than any of us, Joshi," said Grueber, surprised.

"...ACE! That sonofabitch..." barked Joshi.

"That's right, your old rival Ace. His real name was Large. and now I believe that--"

Joshi interrupted him.

"OF COURSE! LARGE! And now his brother Size will be after me..."

"That's right, Joshi. Size, the third-best hacker in Neo-New York and the BEST hacker in Neo-Philadelphia. You'll have to watch your back now more than ever."

Joshi nodded his shiba head and trotted away on his little feet.

"So what does all this mean, Grueber?" demanded Rodrigo.

"Goblin General is no-doubt controlling the Crowmen with his mind," said Grueber. "He must have powers given to him by the Shade. As long as they control the Space Court, we can't do anything LEGALLY-SPEAKING. We'll have to declare a STATE OF EMERGENCY and use McMann's military boys to smoke them all out. Once we're in control of the Space Court again, we can execute Goblin General."

"I don't want you to!" sniffled Goblingle, who was still mostly green.

"Don't you want to go shower that paint off you? It's been on you since the day you were born," said Grueber.

"NO! This paint is who I am! You might be my real dad, but Goblin General raised me :(And- and he helped Humanity, even if he did so unintentionally, by trying to stop Rodrigo and I from being together :(that must count for something, right?"

Grueber sighed heavily.

"Yes, Goblingle, it does count for something. I was never really planning on killing him, don't worry it was just a joke," he lied. "We can instead use him as a SPY!"

"I think that's a great idea, Grueber," said McMann and Joshi in unison. They smiled at each other. Great minds think alike.

"But we can't even ACCESS the prison-system of the ship until we've regained control of THE LAW. And to do that, we need to retake the SPACE COURT," said Space Judge.

"SO LET'S GO ALREADY!" roared Rodrigo, who was fed up and horny as hell. He jumped into one of the GrueberCorp. titan-mechs and flew across space to Space Court before anyone could even say "Rodrigo wait."

"McMann, you have to go after him. If he takes Space Court while the enemy is in control of it, it'll be ILLEGAL, and Space Judge will start acting all stupid again and he'll try to jail Rodrigo!" said Grueber. "It has to be the MARINES who recapture Space Court because you're ABOVE the law in a STATE OF EMERGENCY."

"Yes, that makes perfect sense, legally speaking," agreed Space Judge, and he sat down on a bench and got ready to do some judging, whoever it had to be.

"We won't let you down. We won't let HUMANITY down," said McMann and he ordered a full-on assault of the Space Court with a hundred Marine Space Battleships dropping a thousand Space Marines with energy-batons and laser-swords.

"Don't damage the building!" said McMann. "Damage the Crowmen!"

And so they did.

The massacre was unlike anything the world had ever seen. The crowmen were entirely unprepared. They had nothing but wooden planks to defend themselves, which the Marines sliced and bludgeoned through with cruel ease.

Tens of thousands of feathers were left behind floating down a river of blood that would later be washed away by firehoses. And Rodrigo had collected enough scalps to prove to Goblingreg he loved his sister.

"WE DID IT, BOYS!" roared McMann, "THE SPACE COURT IS OURS AGAIN!"

"Space Judge, are we cool?" asked Grueber.

"Yes, the law has been followed perfectly. Everything is A-OK!" Space Judge smiled for the first time in a long time. He'd grown fond of the humans and was glad that he wouldn't have to make any judgements against them.

But still, Goblin General was no-where to be found. Uh oh.

"Can I marry Goblingirl now?" asked Rodrigo.

"Yes, Rodrigo," said Grueber.

Goblingirl awoooed in joy.

"IF you're okay with putting all of Mankind at risk, just so you can--"

"YES, I AM."

Grueber sighed. He went to go get dressed in his holy garments. He was the Goblin Pope after all.

But Asia Bones was not pleased. "Rodrigo, my boy," he said. "Don't do this. Wait a few more days and ensure Humanity's survival. Ensure a better future for you and her."

For an instant, Rodrigo wanted to throw Asia out into Space, but he knew that he was right. Kind of.

"ONE WEEK. ONE WEEK AND THAT'S IT."

Everyone cheered.

Grueber came back dressed as the Goblin Pope, only to be told that the wedding was postponed. He was happy about that, but annoyed that he'd already gotten dressed.

"Very well then, Grueber," said Asia Bones. "Then marry Goblinlass and I."

Everyone gasped.

"I knew it," said Joshi and Vi together.

Asia Bones got down on one knee and took Goblinlass's hand. "Goblinlass, you're the only person in this world who I can't kill effortlessly. You karate-chopped down the walls of my old bony heart. Won't you please be my wife?"

Goblinlass smiled, tears welling in her eyes. "Oh Asia, yes! ^__^ But I want my karate teacher to be here!"

"Who's your karate teacher?" asked everyone.

"Goblin Doctor!!!" she said, still smiling.

"Why does that name sound so familiar?" asked Rodrigo.

"I was the doctor who first confirmed the first death of Goblin General before he was resurrected," said Goblin Doctor, who appeared on the scene.

"Goblin Doctor, I've heard about you... you were an enemy of Deadly Bones," said Grueber.

"Who the fuck is 'Deadly Bones?'" asked Rodrigo.

"The greatest Skeleton who ever lived, Rodrigo. But that's a story for another time," said Asia Bones wisely. "If I had to name that story, it'd probably be called 'My Father is a Skeleton', and it might be available RIGHT NOW on Amazon.com."

"It's OK," lied Goblin Doctor, "I'm a good guy now!!!"

Asia Bones looked at him suspiciously, not hiding it. Goblin Doctor looked around nervously, hoping to find support. But he found none, not even in Goblinlass, who trusted her wise fiance more than she trusted him.

When Asia was done inspecting his very soul, he concluded:

"Goblin Doctor is a spy of The Shade!"

"Oh master, how could you betway us? >.< " cried Goblinlass.

Goblin Doctor ran away to fight another day. Asia stopped McMann from pursuing him. "He's not a threat at all," he said. "He's a punk bitch, and entirely inconsequential."

"Still, we'll need to kill him eventually, Asia," said Grueber. "No member of the Shade can be allowed to live."

"Agreed. I will end him myself, once and for all. When the time is right. NOW, LET US COMMENCE THE CEREMONY!"

ANd so Asia Bones and Goblinlass got married in the most touching and beautiful wedding ceremony the GSS Rand had ever seen. And it'd seen quite a few.

Rodrigo was so fucking jealous as Asia Bones carried Goblinlass off to his room that he felt like his brain was going to explode. Goblingirl cuddled up to him.

"Don't worry, Roddy <3 " she said. "That'll be us next week!"

Rodrigo took a deep breath and put his arm around her.

Danz and Chriz took a step towards them, but Grueber stopped them with a gesture.

"It's okay," he said quietly. "Let them be happy tonight. For tomorrow, Rodrigo will face the greatest challenge of his entire life.

Meanwhile, in Hell, Satan was nervous about his big fight against the Bloom lmao i mean the Gloommeister.

"I'm fucked," he said. "He's going to beat me to death."

"Yes, it would appear so," said Mysterious Shade Member #10.

"You guys have to help me! I've done SO MUCH for this organization!!!"

"Satan what the hell do you want us to do for you? You haven't been training in years. We can't stop the fight. You've got to fight him if you want to retain the Hell Throne. And if you're not the king of Hell, we have no use for you in this organization! So WIN or FUCK OFF." Mysterious Shade Member #10's hologram faded away leaving only Satan alone with himself crying.

"Psssst, Satan..." said Goblin Doctor. "I can train you in special goblin karate if you want."

"What? You're a pussy!" said Satan.

"No I'm not and I'll PROVE IT!" and with that, Goblin Doctor beat the living shit out of Satan.

"How did you do that?" demanded Satan, blood pouring from his mouth.

"Ancient Goblin Karate aka AGK. It's the most potent form of Karate that exists."

"Meanwhile," said Vi, "Vi heroically uncovered information about the Shade."

"Tell us what you found, Vi," said Grueber.

"Well, you're not going to like it."

Rodrigo sighed and screamed "Will you just FUCKING TELL ME WHAT YOU FOUND OUT."

"GEEZE, okay, so it looks like the Shade dates back to the American Revolution."

"What, really?"

"Yes. During the Boston Tea Party, a barrel of tea was accidentally thrown on to a Mermaid, killing her. And so, the Merfolk decided to take revenge on all of Humanity, forming an Alliance with the Sharkmen. This was the beginning of the Shade."

"This is fucking stupid."

"It gets worse. They used their control over the waterways to amass the second-largest fortune on Planet Earth,

rivalled only by Grueber's himself. We're talking COUNTLESS diamonds and gemstones and gold and silver. So we looked at the data. I examined the patterns of 'mysterious tragedies' and it all points to one place..."

"Let me guess, the Bermuda Triangle."

"How'd you know?"

"So what you're saying is that a war against humanity being fought in outer-space is being orchestrated from under the ocean?"

"Yes, that's exactly what I'm saying. I'm all but certain. I just can't intercept any communications from the Triangle to know 1000%. I don't have the processing power."

"What would it take to get those communications, Vi?" asked Grueber.

"Well..."

...

...

I'd need..."

"Yes? What would you need?"

"I'd need the combined brain-CPU's of the top 5 hackers in the world..."

Shiba-Joshi let out an anxious whimper.

"Who are the top 5 hackers in the world?"

"There's..."

Joshi...

Ace Tunout AKA Large, whose life force and processing power now resides inside of Joshi.

Size, Large's brother AKA Expanse, residing in Neo-Philly.

Olya Kalishnakov AKA Cream, the Russian femme fatale residing in Neo-Russia.

And "Bear" Sweeney, a big-game hacker living on a private island where he hacks innocent tourists for sport.

"Joshi, this mission is going to be your most autistic yet. Do you really think you're ready for it?"

Joshi barked seriously.

14

Joshi's Hunt

PART ONE: CYBERPUNK VS. CYBERFAT

Satran lmao i mean Satan stepped into the octagon. Like stepping into your own grave. That's how he felt. Before him hovered the Gloommeister, the most horrifying being to ever exist in our realm. It was a joke that Satan ever was elected the King of Hell, thanks ONLY to nepotism. His dad had been the King of Hell, and his grandfather before him. But the Gloommeister was born on the streets. Raised on the streets. Toughened by them. It wasn't just that the Gloommeister was a natural prodigy, although he was that as well, it's because he put the work in. He gloomed people personally, up close, CQC. Meanwhile, Satan had been lmao you wouldnt believe me if i told you how i was typing right now. im lying back in a chair, with not just my feet up on my desk, but also half of my entire legs. My toes are just inches away from my monitor. I've goy my keyboard in my lap. and im still not comfortable. it's got to be anxiety-related, i know that i keep unconsciously raising my shoulders up for some stupid reason. It's all just so stupid. im never comfortable, ever. every anyway uh... Satan did a sign of the Cross and quickly and quietly asked God for forgiveness for his countless, untold sins. God telepathically let him know, "Yes, sure, Satan, of course I forgive you. But I'm certain that the Gloommeister won't." Satan gulped. He looked across the ring at his opponent.

The Gloommeister tore his cloak off of his body, revealing his chisiled physique. His muscles weren't incredibly-large, but he was absolutely shredded. His body was PURE muscle. This explained his success with the ladies. Well, that and his cool-guy attitude. The Gloommeister caught Satan's nervous glance and grinned widely. He had full

confidence in himself. What did Satan have? Goblin Doctor gave him a single lesson in Goblin Karate? WOWEE.

From Satan's corner, Goblin Doctor offered advice: "Just remember what I taught you, kid. Remember it and you WON'T LOSE!!!"

"Thanks a lot, Goblin Doctor. I'm going to go die now."

Satan and Gloommeister touched fists and the fight began. Gloommeister wound up and unleashed a LETHAL vertical spinning kick, all the way from the other side of the octagon! Incredible! It was like a spinning top! Or if you've ever seen Attack on Titan, it was kind of like Levi Ackerman spinning around, except it was just with his LEG. Satan could do nothing but watch in terror as this spinning top of death came spinning toward him. And so he accepted his fate, and his head was slammed into the ground with such force that he died before he even knew he had been kicked.

Satan blinked. "Did I win?"

"No," said God "You were killed."

"God, is that you?"

"Yes, Stan."

Satan rubbed his eyes and stood up. "Am I in Heaven?"

"Yes, but don't get too excited. I'm sending you back."

"What? Why?!"

"Because the Gloommeister is too good at being bad. If he's the King of Hell, then all of Humanity will end up in Hell. I can't allow that."

"So you want me to be the King of Hell because I suck?"

"Yes. You are a punk bitch. It has to be you."

Satan sighed. "I can't beat him. He's too strong."

"Yes, he is. But if you continue your training with Goblin Doctor, then you CAN defeat him eventually. Goblin Karate is, as he said, the ultimate form of Karate on Earth."

"But it'll take forever to git good at Goblin Karate! I don't have that kind of time!"

"Satan, you have all the time in the world. Because you will use Grueber's time machine."

Meanwhile, Gloommeister was living it up as the King of Hell.

He had gone on such a glooming spree, that the waiting room was overflowing with fresh new souls. Hell's GDP had SKYROCKETED because of his incredible powers.

"God, I'm awesome," he said as he was getting a blowjob from the Whoreceress

"My liege!" resported a Goblin Guard.

"What the hell do you want? Can't you see I'm busy?" demanded the Gloommeister.

"Yes, my liege, I can see that. But Mister Grueber is calling for you."

Gloommeister sighed. He couldn't have a moment's peace.

"You've done well for yourself, Grooms."

"It's good to see you Grueber, but I'm a very busy meister."

"I hope you haven't forgotten our mission, Grooms."

Gloommeister let out a long exasperated sigh. "Ben, what does it matter? The Shade can't do shit. They're a bunch of low-t losers."

Grueber frowned. "You've let the power go to your head, Gloommeister. They're still a very real threat to Humanity. To this entire world of ours. We need to stay focused."

"Grueber, I'm the KING OF HELL. UNDISPUTED NOW. What threat could they possibly pose to me?!"

"Sir!" Chriz and Danz burst into the throne room. "The sharkmen are assaulting Neo-Philly! They're trying to take out Joshi! McMann's marines can barely hold on!"

"Good luck, everyone, I'm going to stay here and bang succubi." Gloommeister escorted them all to the door.

"He won't help us. Not until the Shade attacks Hell again," said Danz.

"Yes, I believe that you're right about that," said Grueber. "We'll have to forget about him for the time being. Where is Joshi now?"

"He's locked in a stupid hack-battle against Size. They're trying to take over each other's brain," said Chriz.

"He must be unable to protecc himself. You two will need to guard him from the Sharkmen until he's finished. Get there NOW."

"SIR!"

Indeed, Joshi was locked in the hack-battle of his life. All of his firewalls were being blown away by the digital rain of the wait a minute I knew that sounded familiar. Digital Rain by Star One, that's a group put together by the guy behind Ayreon. Very good prog rock. the album's "Victims of the Modern Age", very good album. anyway, Joshi's firewalls were being put out by the digital rain of Star O I mean uh... Size. Size's viruses were INCREDIBLY POWERFUL and Joshi didn't know what the hell to do. He was going to lose! He'd left Vi behind on the Rand to complete the mission himself. He thought it would be too dangerous for her. If only she were here with him now. This was it. The end. Joshi couldn't keep up. Nothing he tried could break through Size's unstoppable offense. As Joshi was about to shut down for good, he heard a howl. It was a shiba.

Meanwhile, Chriz, Danz, and a squad of Ultra-Marines led by none-other than the recently promoted King-General McMann were riding on a wave of shibas to Joshi's location. They'd appeared from out of nowhere and communicated with them telepathically their desire to protecc Joshi! What the hell was going on here? A tidal-wave of shibas, seemingly normal shibas, but as hard as steel collided with the door to the abandoned warehouse that housed Size and Joshi, both sitting 2 feet in front of each other, in a circle with a pentagram made of network cable. Electricity hissed all around them. But there were no sharkmen around. They'd made it in time!

Joshi peeked open an eye. "Get out of here guys. While you still can. This place is about to go up. I can't hold Size off for much longer."

"Don't worry about us, Joshi, just focus on defeating Size."

"You can't beat me, Joshi," Size said smugly. He had a fat voice because he was a big fat guy. But his fatness gave him an edge in the hackerbattle. He was able to store massive amounts of energy and processing power inside his guts, something that Joshi just couldn't do. It was like swinging a pickaxe at a big fat mountain. Joshi didn't have a snowball's chance in Hell. But at least his friends were here to help protect his body from the sharkmen that were now kicking down the door.

"WE KNOW YOUR'E IN THERE, JOSHI!!" roared General Blackfin, the brother of General Whitefin. Who is General Whitefin? "Well," said Asia Bones, who arrived on the scene just in the nick of time, "General Whitefin was an old enemy, but that's ANOTHER another story. And that story might be titled "Spooks in the Deep", and might be available at Amazon.com.

"Wow, Asia Bones, you're so smart!" remarked Danz and Chriz.

"Yes. Now boys, help me beat up these sharkmen! Protect Joshi at all costs!"

But the cost was even lower than they anticipated. For the flood of shibas rolled over the sharkmen like ants on a piece of fruit. But nothing could penetrate the networking circle that Joshi and Size were inside. In cyberspace, Joshi was still fighting for his life.

"Give up, Joshi!" Size said. "You can't win. Size has FAR more network resources than you!"

"Wait a minute, did he just refer to himself in the third person?" wondered Joshi. He peeked open an eye and noticed something he hadn't before, in their circle of ethernet cable. THERE WAS AN ETHERNET CABLE RUNNING INTO SIZE'S BODY. Joshi quickly traced it with his eyes and saw that it led outside the circle!

"GUYS!" he yelled. "Follow that cable!"

Chriz and Danz acted immediately, running as fast as they could. The cable led into a backroom, where they saw it led to a scrawny little bitchboy.

"So is this the REAL size?" Chriz asked Danz.

"I'm not sure. JOSHI, THERE'S A GUY HERE! WHAT SHOULD WE DO WITH HIM?"

"STICK A VI-DRIVE INTO HIM! HE'S THE PUPPET-MASTER ADMINISTRATOR OF SIZE! HE IS THE *TRUE* SIZE!"

Chriz and Danz nodded to each other and jammed a Vi-drive into a USB port on the back of his head.

"Hey guys!" Vi said.

"Vi, we need you to brain-drain this dork or else Joshi's going to die!"

"I can do that!"

From her secret facility deep in the steel intestines of the GSS Rand, Vi began launching an all-out assault on the Size-admin's security. It was unlike anything she'd ever seen before, but that didn't make it much more difficult. She knew

that if Joshi hadn't been tricked into fighting the fatman decoy, he'd be able to handle this himself.

Meanwhile, Joshi was just barely holding on.

"SUBMIT JOSHI!!" screamed Size, desperate to steal Joshi's brainpower so he could protect himself against Vi.

"JUST HOLD ON A FEW MORE MINUTES JOSHI!" cried Vi, desperately hacking away (literally and metaphorically) at Size's 64 firewalls.

"He's not going to make it," said Asia Bones, who'd once taken a single networking class in college. Even that was enough to see that Joshi was fading FAST.

"We've got to get him out of there!" said Chriz.

"DON'T BE CRAZY!" roared McMann. "Nothing can break a networking pentagram circle except..."

"Except WHAT?!"

"Except THE GOVERNMENT."

Space Judge appeared in a cloud of lawfulness. "This hackerbattle is ILLEGAL!" he arbitrated, and so he used his lawhammer to slam down the killswitch that only HE, as a lawman of the United Space of America, could see, instantly shutting down network access for both Joshi and the Size-puppet.

Cut from the extra resources of the psuedo-Size, Size collapsed before Vi's cyber might.

"NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!" he cried like a baby, trying to boot up his body and pull the Vi-drive from his brain. Of course, it'd be too late even if he did. Vi had copied herself straight into his brain's hard drive. There was nothing he could do as she formatted him.

"YOU CAN'T DO THIS TO MEEEEEEEEEE! I'M SIZE!!!!!!!!!!!!!"

Fitting last words.

Vi turned his brain into a server and transferred admin-credentials to Joshi. Now Joshi was more powerful than he'd ever been before.

The Shiba Chief also returned Joshi to his human form.

PART DOS: THE CAMGIRL

Meanwhile, are we happy? As if anyone could ever be. THESE.ARE.THERE.A.SONS.THES.E.ARE.THE.REA.SONS. THESE.ARE.THERE.A.SONS.THE.REA.SONS. Whoa sorry im listening to Pain of Salvation as I type. Song's "Reacons". The Passing Light of Day is a really good album on the whole. where did we leave off? well, let's stop and think things through.

>The Shade is still largely at large.

>Grueber's Fellowship has managed to EXPOSE Goblin Doctor and Goblin General as members of this SHADY organization. What are their goals? Why does it seem like every member of the Shade is a worthless loser? Satan also belongs to the organization, but it's unclear whether he's a full-member or a mere errand-boy/punching bag.

>Pills and needles/tears and stings/fallen angels save me from these things

sorry, still listening to music. "Angels of Broken Things" is the song. The lead singer had a terrible infection that required surgery, he was really messed up for a while.

>Joshi has become more powerful than anyone could imagine, and he's not even done yet. Size has been seized, melding his brain's processing power with Joshi's own, which was ALREADY augmented with Ace Tunout's. Joshi still needs to take down "Bear" Sweeney (REAL NAME: UNKNOWN) and Olya Kalishnakov. Bear Sweeney's island security is 2nd only to Grueber Towers, it'd be too risky for Joshi to try tackling it even now. He probably could, but why not make it E-Zer and do it after hijacking Olya Kalishnakov's braindrive first? Joshi subscribes to Olya's premium snapchat as a way of gaining her trust. Of course, Olya's no ordinary camgirl. She's

educated, to put it lightly. After Joshi's first \$5 came through into her account, linking their networks and fates forever, she was already in his emails, peeking around every encrypted corner. Of course, Joshi knew that she was doing this and set up decoys on top of decoys to try to feel out her abilities. Of course, she knew he was doing this as well, and did her best to remain INCOGNITO. Joshi smiled to himself. She was good, he'd give her that. As she battled against his automated shadow-clones, he checked out the nudes which he had paid for. She was no Belle Delphine, but she was still easily a hundred times more desirable than any of the big fat fuggos that made up the fleshy overwhelming majority of the cyber hell-world Joshi inhabited. But he couldn't let himself remain distracted for too long. He checked in on his programs to find them utterly defeated. He'd let himself remain distracted for too long. There was no longer any point in hiding it. Joshi sent her a DM asking for her total surrender. She replied with a laughing-crying emoji. Feisty bitch. Joshi tried accessing her bank account just to spook her. BAM. He was in. He took his \$5 back and checked out her accounts. Thousands upon thousands of dollars, multiple transactions from paypigs hoping to see her tits. But why was there so much? He checked her instagram, her snapchat, her patreon, she wasn't giving the same pics she'd sent him to anyone else. No one else-thousands of other men- had seen her tits. Joshi's face flushed. What the hell was this? She sent him another message.

"They're only for you daddy UwU"

>STILL MEANWHILE, Rodrigo was training with Asia Bones in heart of the Mountain of Cold. It was the coldest mountain in the world, and would surely prevent him from thinking with his dick, no matter how much he thought about Goblins. Asia beat the shit out of him in every sparring match they had. Rodrigo might have had the RAW STRENGTH, but he lacked the necessary skill to run with the

BIG DOGS. And Asia assured him that there were indeed dogs even bigger than him and HERE COMES ONE NOW.

It was the Shiba Chief, whose name was Kiiroi Kao. "Call me Kao for short," said the mighty shiba.

"Thank you for meeting with us, Kiiroi Kao," said Asia Bones ignoring what he literally just said but also bowing respectfully to the 20-foot tall dog.

"Asia, it's been a long time. Why do you summon me after all these yeets?"

"It's the Shade, Master, they've returned!" Asia said.

"Ahhh, the Shadesu..." the giant dog-god walked around in a circle and plopped himself down. "I never thought I'd hear that name again."

"The human businessman Grueber is waging war against them, but he can't do it alone!"

Kiiroi Kao nodded. "Indeed, no man can. The Shade are complete worthless morons who can't do anything right. They fuck up consistently. But their tenacity and their ability to quickly recruit weak-hearted men can be overwhelming."

"Dog-god, is it true that you once defeated the Shade single-handedly?"

"No, Asia just likes exaggerating. I had a lot of help from my friends."

But Asia Bones wasn't going to let Kiiroi Kao's humility make him look like a liar! "YOU GIANT YELLOW ASS, YOU HUNTED DOWN EACH MEMBER OF THE SHADE ALONE! YOU SLAUGHTERED THEM ALL WITH YOUR MIGHTY PAWS!"

The dog let out a howling laugh. "Yes I suppose that is true. But I would not have been able to do so were it not for you all preoccupying their forces!"

"You see, Rodrigo? We must do the same thing once again. While McMann and his Space Marines hold off the Shade's armies, you must don the robe of the assassin, and stealthily take out each member of the Shade!"

Rodrigo flexed his cyborg-biceps. "I'm no assassin," he said. "I should be down there with the boys, blasting crowmen into ash! Leave the sneaking around to Joshi."

Asia Bones kicked the wind from him.

"You still have so much to learn, Rodrigo. Joshi might be faster and smarter and more skillful than you, but the reason why the members of the SHADE are chosen in the first place is because of their stupid abilities to survive countless defeats. That's what makes them so terrifying, Rodrigo. Kiiroi Kao personally ATE EVERY SINGLE ONE OF THEM, AND THEY STILL RETURNED SOMEHOW. No, what we need here is FORCE BEYOND FORCE. WE NEED SOMEONE WHO CAN PUNCH THEM CLEAN FROM EXISTENCE. NOW, PUNCH!"

Asia Bones summoned a training dummy that looked like Satan. PTSD-flashbacks of Satan almost cucking him flashed through Rodrigo's head and on pure instinct, he let loose a punch. That was it. The dummy was gone. Not merely "practically" obliterated from existence, but entirely banished in a literally-permanent fashion. It was gone and could never come back, existing ONLY in the memories of those who witnessed what just happened.

"What just happened?" asked Rodrigo, who'd reacted and punched faster than his brain could even recognize.

But Kiiroi Kao saw the whole thing. And Asia Bones, who'd summoned the dummy in the first place, understood what'd happened, even if not even his eye-holes were powerful enough to see it.

"Asia, this boy is dangerous. I hope you know what you're doing."

"I don't," confessed Asia. "And that's why I've summoned you, Master. I need you to help me train him to control his abilities. Until now, he's only been able to do something like that in defense of this girl here."

Asia took his phone out and showed Kiiroi Kao a pic of Goblingirl.

"She's cute but why's she covered in green paint?"

"It's a really dumb story, Master."

"Very well. I will help you teach Rodrigo. I will break my own rule of only training tomboys, **JUST THIS ONCE**. When we're done with him, he'll be able to **FULLY CONTROL** his abilities!"

As Rodrigo trained with Asia Bones and Kiiroi Kao, McMann and his Space Marines were trying to protect Earth's cities from the combined forces of the Sharkmen and the Crowmen. But they were suffering **DEVASTATING LOSSES** from the scary wooden dancing puppets who had **UPGRADED THEMSELVES** to Fireproof Puppets and could no longer be creamed by flamethrowers.

"Things aren't looking good," said McMann, lighting up a cigar.

"I'll say," said Space Judge, hitting his vape.

The two old friends were kicking back in a Space Helicopter, watching Earth's spaceports burn from the latest assault of the Shade's armies.

The United Space of America (USA) vs. the United Shade Armies (USA). There could only be one USA, and that was going to be decide here.

"What are you going to do when this is over, McMann?" asked Space Judge.

"What do you mean? You think we're going to win this?"

Space Judge smiled. Although McMann couldn't see it. Space Judge's face, if he even had one, was always shrouded in blackness by his cloak. Jesus Christ my back is killing me. I dont know how im supposed to live like this. anyway, Space Judge said "yes, I do think we're going to win."

"What makes you think that?"

"Do you remember when we were enemies, McMann?"
asked Space Judge.

okay, so i havent finished writing it, but McMann and Space Judge were actually enemies in YET(YEET) ANOTHER story called Spooks in Space, which is a sequel to Spooks in the Deep which is a sequel to My Father is a Skeleton. Anyway while i was just explaining that, the two were reminiscing or however the hell that's spelled. Space Judge respects McMann with all his judgely heart. You could say that Space Judge was a good judge of character, because of his years and years of experience judging things i cant bear it anymore my back is fuckign killing me i need to figureo out how the hell im going to survive this life idk what it is but ever since i set foot in this hellhole state (FLO-RIDA) ive been in perpetual mother FUCKIGN agony and idk what the FUCK it is, i have like a FEELING in my HEART that it's like the fucking AIR or the fucking what's it called when it's wet in the air? the uh... i really feel like im going to die of a broken heart. just from the never-ending pain. That's honestly how I feel. Like I could do 100 pushups right now and it would slightly relieve me for maybe 10 minutes. What am I supposed to do that every 10 minutes until I fucking die? how come no-one else has to fucking do this? everywhere i look i see people being perfectly fucking fine, walking around, standing around, sitting around, im the ONLY PERSON who is every fucking second of the day in pain. Humidity, that's the word I was thinking of. Because I feel like I cant FUCKING BREATHE well enough because everything is so MOTHER FUCKING HOT DOWNIOIOIOAEGTH i wish i could just die liek that guy on Mount Everest. The one with the boots that's just lying there in the snow. God I wish that were me. When you think about heaven, you imagine it being in the clouds, well do you think it's HOT up there or do you think it's NICE AND COOL? It's COOL. Heaven is probably literally somewhere on Mount

Everest, and it's probably a bunch of naked female snow-elves. maybe they have wings, maybe not, what difference does it make? okay, im going to go cool off for a minute. im just going to sit in the shower and run cold water over my FUCKING head, i wish i could freeze my brain and exit this reality.

It's not like I don't work out enough. Every morning I do a warm-up routine that's more physical than most people's entire fucking weeks. I work out six days a week, I mind my posture, I mind my breathing, and it's not FUCKIGN FAIR that okayi dont care. i just dont care. put me in the fucking ground.

"So yes, that's why I think we can win, McMann," said Space Judge, who'd been recalling the strength and bravery of the Space Marines in the past. Many of those same soldiers were STILL fighting this very day, years into the future.

McMann knew he was right. His boys could handle the Crowmen. The Sharkmen, even more easily. Even the dancing wooden puppets would be brought down, eventually. But the war would never, ever end, as long as the members of the S.H.A.D.E. were still at large. By the way, SHADE is an acronym. What for? Well, only time will tell.

Meanwhile, Rodrigo was failing miserably in his training with Kiiroi Kao, who quickly realized that Rodrigo didn't have the brainpower necessary to control his epic powers. Asia Bones was sad.

"Don't be sad, Asia," said Kiiroi Kao, who himself was more than a little disappointed.

"How can I not be sad?" asked Asia Bones. "If we can't utilized Rodrigo's existence-erasing powers, the Shade just keep coming back again and again!"

"HEY FUCKERS, REMEMBER ME?!" roared Satan, as he flew up the mountain on a demonic motorcycle.

Kiroy Kao batted him away with his paw, sending him and his motorcycle flying back down the mountain like the bugs they were to him.

"I do believe I have an idea, Asia. Tell me more about this 'Joshi' character."

"Joshi the Hacker King, we meet at last," said Olya Kalishnakov. Did I spell her name right? Let me see... perfect, I don't have to keep copy-pasting it.

"Olya. I wasn't expecting an invite to... your room."

Joshi looked around. It was indeed a camgirl's bedroom. Pink everywhere, a camera pointing at the bed, and outside its FOV, a complete fucking mess.

"Joshi, you should just surrender to the SHADE :3 " she said. "Don't you realize that you can't win? Even if you defeated me, "Bear" and Size would still take you down.

Joshi instantly got so excited he wanted to scream. She didn't know that he'd taken out Size. Of course! It had been a SECRET OPERATION after all. This dumb bitch was playing with an outdated rules sheet. It was time to show her the changelog.

Joshi sent her a screenshot of the cloud server that Size existed as now. It was the cyber equivalent of throwing a decapitated head at her feet.

She gasped in horror, but her mood changed in an instantly like the Bipolar bitch that she was, leaping on top of him. It was purely logical, though. With Size out of the picture, the tables were turned. She'd be crazy not to join. And Joshi would be crazy not to seal the deal by giving her the D, LIVE on cam. He heard the donation bell, and looked up in surprise for just a moment before she pulled him back down. It was \$5 from

Vi: "JOSHI
NOOO
OOOOO"

Was Vi jealous? A little bit. But she had Simon waiting for her back home, and missed him more. And she WOULD return to him, no matter what. Besides, how could she blame Joshi for wanting to hit that? Olya was undoubtedly fine as fuck. Vi glanced over at the fullbody mirror hanging on the door to her hideout. She still thought she was cuter, though.

"It's not a terrible idea, Master," said Asia Bones, after hearing out Kiiroi Kao's not-terrible idea.

"It may be the only hope you have, Asia," said Kiiroi Kao.

"What's the idea?" asked Rodrigo, who'd just come back from chopping wood. They'd sent him to collect firewood. Of course, there were no trees anywhere on the mountain, so he'd just walked around for a bit.

"We cannot tell you, Rodrigo," said Asia Bones. "If you knew the plan, it might not work."

"THAT'S BULLSHIT!" roared Rodrigo.

"STOP WHINING."

"You both should get going now," said Kiiroi Kao. "But here, take this summoing WOW that's not how you spelling summoning. Take this SUMMONING SCROLL in case you need me!"

"Cool, thanks!" said Rodrigo, but Asia knew why he was doing it. Kiiroi longed for the old days. The days when he really got to let loose and fucking kill some fools. For years now, he'd been settled down with a nice bitch and a liter of dog-god pups. Asia wondered if he'd ever have skeleton-children of his own.

All of Asia's doubts cleared up that night, as Goblinlass rode him like a bony bicycle.

The screaming and moaning could be heard for miles throughout the G.S.S. Rand. Rodrigo was not happy, and his anger only intensified when Joshi came home with Olya Kalishnakov and they went into his room to "hack and chill". Of course, that was Rodrigo's room too, so he had to sit in a common room and watch a movie while mentor and rival were both getting laid by nice girls.

Goblingirl came up to him, with Chriz and Danz, the Anti-Fun police, in tow. Grueber had given them STRICT orders to not let Rodrigo and Goblingirl copulate, less Humanity lose its Ace in the sleeve.

Speaking of Ace, how was Ace Tunout handling being enslaved inside Joshi's consciousness? Let's find out.

"JOSHIIIIIIIIIIII!!!" roared Ace, pounding at white walls of his brain-prison. "Let me out of hereeeeeeeeee!"

Ace's brother, Size, was sitting in the corner, crying.

"It's no use, Large!" he cried. Remember Ace's secret-name is Large? I know it's very confusing, believe me I'm with you. And if Ace is Large's regular-name, what's Size's regular name? Well, who can say?

"We can't give up, Size!" Large said, punching the wall again. "That bastard Joshi can't defeat the Bulk Brothers!"

Joshi was aware that all of this was going on inside his mind-network, spanning across multiple countries by now. He and Vi had been able to mindjack them, but unable to completely-erase them. Their pride was just too strong. They remained a nuisance, virtually powerless, but still able to do thing like create new text documents bitching and moaning and calling Joshi and Vi all kinds of names. But now, Joshi had an idea to finally snuff them out once and for all. He uploaded the .mp4 to the network-cell they were quarantined in.

"What is this?" asked Large.

"The author is Joshi," said Size. "What kind of trick is he playing?"

Asia Bones shrugged. Honestly, he was tired. He'd just given everything he had to Goblinlass. Grueber looked at him, surprised at his current state of mental weakness.

"I don't know how I feel about everyone pairing up with the enemy."

"Gwooby, it's not EVERYONE >.< Bedsides, we're not da enemy enymore" said Goblinlass.

"Bedsides?"

"Huh?"

"Bedsides. That's what you said. You meant 'besides' right?"

"I don't know what you meme, Gwober! Anyways me and Asia are gonna go out tonight ^^ "

Just then, Chriz and Danz walked in with two lovely ladies on their arms.

"Hey guys, this is Chriztina and Danziela! They're--"

"OKAY THIS IS REALLY ENOUGH NOW. AND WHO'S WATCHING RODRIGO?!"

Who indeed?

Meanwhile, actually no, let's just go to Rodrigo. WHO was watching him? Well, obviously Chriztina and Danziela were both S.H.A.D.E. agents sent to distract Chriz and Danz. The only person watching Rodrigo now was Goblingirl, who by now was just about as horny as he was-- ready to throw away the world just to finally be with him. As the two kissed passionately, thankfully, the door to the common room was kicked down by Goblingreg and a mixed-squad of Goblin Marines and Space Marines.

"RODRIGO, GET YOUR PAWS OFF MY SISTER!"

"GOD DAMN IT!!!!!!!!!"

And with that, Goblingreg saved Humanity by cock-blocking Rodrigo once again. McMann sent him a medal for

Exceptional Valor via space-mail which Goblinsreg would proudly wear on his chest for the rest of his life.

Meanwhile, Vi was talking to Joshi about Olya Kalishnakov.

"Do you love her?"

"Of course I don't love her, she's a stupid bitch. I don't like stupid bitches."

OwO wats this? Does Joshi not have feelings for Olya after all?

"Of course not, she's a stupid bitch," replied Joshi repeated himself to me.

Oh, I see! Well then what are you planning, Joshi? I asked.

"I'm going to USE her like the OBJECT that she is," Joshi replied coolly, as he finished hacking Olya's brain-security and completely took her over. "She thought she could defeat me by using her sex appeal. She never considered that her sex appeal would allow me to defeat her in the first place." And with that, Joshi pulled out of Olya for the final time. Joshi had reformatted his dick to act as a flash drive. The process is not as gross as it sounds. Joshi's sperm acted as a Trojan Horse. An actual computer-virus being transmitted via sexual intercourse. And because Olya really wanted to win Joshi over, she'd let him not use a condom. Joshi was very pleased with himself. All according to plan. Indeed, he'd actually planned all of this the moment he'd first first caught her webcam show, many years ago. The situation was different- he'd never known about Grueber or the S.H.A.D.E., but the results were the same. He fucked Olya Kalishnakov and took over her brain. He decided to spare her both a cursed existence in total oblivion and total-destruction, and allowed her to keep both her brain and bodily functions. But she'd never hack again. Not with

what he'd left her. All of her cloud-resources belonged to Joshi now, and her camwhore act would have to no-longer be just an act. Joshi rolled over out of bed and put on his sunglasses.

"Now what do I do?" sniffled Olya. But Joshi had already left the room. He had no time for brainlets.

Vi pitied her and sent her an application to work aboard the G.S.S. Rand as a bartender. A new cyberpunk-themed bar would be opening on C-Deck and she fit the bill perfectly. She'd be happy there.

PART THE THIRD: ASSAULT ON HACKER ISLAND

Meanwhile still, Chriztina and Danziella were put in prison where they fucking belonged.

"What are your connections with S.H.A.D.E.?" asked Space Detective, pulling out his notepad.

The two were silent. They were too cute to be executed and they knew it and Space Detective knew it. But how had they been found out so easily? It was the perfect plan! Seduce Grueber's bodyguards so Rodrigo could bang Goblingle. Then they might ALSO get an opportunity to kill Grueber as well!

Space Detective sighed. It was a plan so stupid and imperfect that only S.H.A.D.E. could have come up with it. They probably thought it was the perfect plan. But even if Vi wasn't watching everything at all times like some kind of omniscient A.I., anyone could have realized that female-versions of Grueber's bodyguards appearing and flirting with Grueber's bodyguards was FISHY to say the least.

Space Detective smacked them both upside their heads and left. Chriz and Danz were sad that they wouldn't be getting any from their cute new gfs, but Grueber promised them if they DON'T FUCK UP IN SUCH A STUPID WAY AGAIN, that he'd find them some GOOD girls instead of evil enemy spies.

McMann and Space Judge were pondering about the S.H.A.D.E. when they were joined by Space Detective who gave them the bad news that the girls wouldn't talk.

"I figured as much," sighed Space Judge.

"It doesn't matter, we've got bigger fish to fry!" said McMann, whose RECON SCOUTS had just finished compiling the MOTHER OF ALL INTEL.

"Tell us about the MOAI, SCOUT CAPTAIN," said Space Judge.

"We're just waiting on Grueber."

Grueber walked in.

"Okay, so we now have the LIST of the LEADERSHIP OF THE S.H.A.D.E."

Everyone gasped at how I messed up the acronym.

"Incredible! Please, go on," said Grueber.

"Okay. It goes as follows...

10- Satan, MISSING

9- Goblin General, MISSING

8- Ace Tunout AKA Large, KILLED

7- Size, real name unknown, KILLED

6- Olya Kalishnakov, NOW WORKING AS OUR BARTENDER

5- "Bear" Sweeney, HIDING OUT ON HACKER ISLAND.

4- Goblin Doctor, MISSING

3- Chriztina, CAPTURED

2- Danziela, CAPTURED

1- ???

"Lmao, so Chriztina and Danziela were both high-ranking members of S.H.A.D.E.? This is great!" said McMann and he slapped his knee with mirth.

Don't be joyful just yet, McMann," said Space Judge as he took a cup of coffee from Olya. "We can't execute Chriztina and Danziela. They haven't TECHNICALLY broken any laws!"

"IT'S NOT AGAINST THE LAW TO TRY TO DESTROY HUMANITY?!" demanded Rodrigo.

"No, unfortunately not," said Space Judge. "A CERTAIN SOMEONE had that law overturned for a business venture once."

Everyone turned to Grueber.

"It was a calculated risk!" he said. "And I'll have you know that the alien high-technology I gained from that venture has aided us GREATLY in our current situation!"

"What kind of high-technology?" inquired Vi and Joshi simultaneously. They blushed, and even Joshi at this point was beginning to realize that Vi was perfect for him. A girl who was literally with him at all times, distracting him with endless puzzles and projects so he didn't have to ponder his otherwise meaningless existence, but not physically with him, so he could just fucking ignore her sometimes if he needed some S P A C E.

Rodrigo smiled. Unlike Joshi, he wasn't a tremendous autismo and could see the good relationship between them, fertile for the possibilities of love. Even though he still didn't believe that Vi was a real human girl.

"Vi's real, Rodrigo, shut up," said Joshi INSIDE RODRIGO'S MIND.

"Yeah sure, HOW ARE YOU INSIDE MY HEAD?"

"I put a Vi-drive in your head when you were taking a nap earlier. So now our minds are linked. It's a necessary part of a secret plan that you can't be privy to."

"THIS IS BULLSHIIIIIIIIIT"

"Rodrigo please. Please understand that our WORLD depends on you. And you're not dependable. So we need to take precautions, and precautions on top of those precautions. Now stop being a bitch, I've got to get going."

And with that, Joshi walked out of the room.

"Where's he going?" asked Rodrigo.

"We're going to launch an assault on "Bear" Sweeney's island," said McMann, grabbing an assault rifle from the wall.

"Oh."

"Wanna come with?" he asked.

"Yeah, I'll go too," said Rodrigo, and he suited up. Time for a taste of combat.

Little did Vi know that he wasn't planning on cooperating at all!

What kind of trick does STAN have up his sleeve? Well, read on.

As Stantan traveled through space-time like some kind of demonic time-traveler, im hungry... i dont know what I want to eat though. part of me wants something sweet, but... god im just so tired all the time.. huh? Oh uh... let's check in on the assault on "Bear" Sweeney's island compound, shall we?

"You ever been on a raid before, Rodrigo?" asked McMann, as the two sat in the kitchen of the leading navel ... naval? which one is it, 1 sec... duh, of course it's naval. well while I'm here, I want to talk about navels for a sec. so there was a pinball game on like oooooold-ass computers back in the 90's, called EPIC PINBALL and one of the tables was called "Cybergirl"--I had to search high and low to find those names. I guess Wikipedia's still good for SOMETHING. So Cybergirl was basically "cyber" because idk, her she had like a robot eye or something. The table background was her from the waist up, just in a bra, with her midriff exposed, and it absolutely hypnotized young me. I couldn't have been more than 10 I guess. That was probably my first crush. So that's it, that's the entire story. But yeah, girls with abs or even just flat stomach are on entirely-different levels that the modern she-pigs we have to be exposed to these days and they're part of the reason why I know that God exists. And no, I'm not being sexist, I'm not going to pretend that men haven't degraded TERRIBLY either. EVERYONE is becoming gross. What can we do? Well, we can keep reading about the assault on "Bear" Sweeney's island I guess.

anyway, McMann and Rodrigo weren't on a navel ship, but a NAVAL ship. One among dozens on their way to Hacker Island.

"No," replied Rodrigo finally, "what do I need to know?"

"Do you know how to fire a gun?"

Rodrigo flexed his cyborg biceps.

It's not the kind of gun McMann had meant, but they were undoubtedly lethal weapons. The cyber-cyborg-magick-arms20k were hard enough to stop a bullet, and easily hard enough to stop a man's skull from remaining uncrushed.

McMann's own arms were an older model, but no less tough. He slapped his elbow down on the table in challenge. Rodrigo obliged, and the two had an arm-wrestling match that lasted the next 45 minutes until they were interrupted by Joshi begging them to stop wasting time, because they had landed on the island 40 minutes ago already.

"What kind of resistance will we be facing, Joshi?" asked McMann.

"Hell if I know. Vi couldn't even peak into their infrastructure. Whatever they've got in store will be a complete surprise until we get there."

"And by then it'll be too late."

"Yeah. Thankfully we've got Rodrigo the Unkillable with us. As long as we stay behind him, we'll be safe."

Joshi, McMann, Rodrigo, and a team of the most ELITE Space Marines (rookies) to ever enlist left the ship, carefully walking single-file behind Rodrigo. Joshi kept his hand on Rodrigo's shoulder and instructed him where to go.

"Bear" Sweeney watched from a distance. He knew that Joshi having them all go single-file was an elaborate ruse to draw him out to attack. It'd be too easy to unleash his cyber-commandos and wipe them all out in a matter of seconds. No... surely Joshi had a trick up his sleeve.

"Just keep moving, Rodrigo," said Joshi.

"Joshi, what the hell are we doing?"

"Trust the plan, kid," said McMann.

Joshi was actually leading them around the networking cables layered mere centimetres deep across the island. They were like landmines. One wrong step, and they'd all be hacked to kingdom come. I don't know man, that's just how it is. THEY CAN'T STEP ON THE CABLES.

But Joshi could see them all. His vision was augmented. It had been for some time now, thanks to Vi and the best Space-Scientists the Space-Marines had to offer. Joshi could see the outlines of the cables in glowing red and he knew that to step on one was to allow yourself to be exposed to Sweeney's devices. Like getting spotted in Metal Gear Solid. No thanks. And so with Rodrigo in front, Joshi led them all through the maze, knowing that Sweeney could attack, but wouldn't attack. Because after all, the island was surrounded by McMann's Mari I mean Navy. But also the Marines were onboard the Navy ships as well. How the fuck do different soldiers even travel? That might be a question to real life, but in this story, the Space-Marines and Space-Sailors were both onboard the Space-Navy ships, which were in the water. And also in the sky.

"Bear" Sweeney knew this day would come eventually. When the world became too afraid of him. His fatal mistake must have been teaming up with S.H.A.D.E. for their vast resources. And now this was the end, and he knew it. But he wouldn't go out without a fight. Even if the military glassed his entire island, killing the thousands of innocent native islanders as well as tourists, by God, Sweeney would take Joshi down with him.

And so he charged in (digitally-speaking), distracting Vi with a million billion pop-ups from Indian scammers. Joshi was hit just as hard and stumbled. The men instinctively circled him to defend him-- big mistake. In doing so, most of them stepped down on Sweeney's network cable, allowing him DIRECT ACCESS into their neuro-implants, and shutting them down completely. All but McMann, who still was operating on

an outdated but trustworthy Mil-OS. Spinning in a flurry, he pushed all of his men down to the ground as the sonic turrets opened fire at our heroes. McMann was hit hard. Joshi had already fallen to the ground in agony from the constant ALERT FROM MI-CRO-SOFT, YOUR COMPUTER IS INFECTED AND ALSO YOU OWE THE IRS 4 THOUSAND DOLLARS. IF YOU DO NOT PAY WE WILL CALL THE POLIC--but then Vi was finally able to shut it all down for the both of them, freeing them. Joshi pulled a confused Rodrigo down to the ground to duck under the turrets, firing all forms of annoying sounds that would drive any person insane.

"MCMANN! CAN YOU STILL FIGHT? OR SHOULD WE DESTROY THE ISLAND?" asked Admiral Biff. over the radio.

"NO BIFF, IT'S NOT OVER YET," roared McMann, and he extended his hand to Joshi, who knowingly handed him his EXON-MOBILE true-wireless noise-canceling earbuds, the first earbuds to actually cancel noise. Developed to save the company (and it did) after oil stopped being important and humans were finally able to stop raping Mother Gaia for the sake of modern convenience.

McMann charged like a fucking mastiff-bull hybrid monster into the turrets, who weren't actually turrets at all, but just men painted metallic silver. He beat them all to death like a gorilla beating a baby gorilla, tearing them limb-from-limb like that friend of the woman who owned a chimpanzee who was recently given hallucination-inducing drugs by a vet.

But McMann wasn't hallucinating. His mind was as clear as crystal. He was close, so close to the end of his dream. His one wish, through all of his life. To protect Humanity. "Bear" Sweeney was one of the S.H.A.D.E.'s most elite members. With the other tech-experts already taken care of by Joshi, killing him would cripple their technological capabilities. As Joshi watched McMann lay waste to Sweeney's guards, he knew that there was almost no chance that there'd be anything left for him to salvage. That was okay. Ace, Size, and

Olya had given him more than enough to work with. In fact, with the addition of Olya's abilities, Joshi was able to pinpoint exactly where "Bear" was hiding. The top-floor of the cyberpunk castle overlooking the island. Joshi dropped a waypoint onto McMann's HUD (that's Heads-up-Display for you non-gamers) and as he woke up McMann's men to go aid him, he simultaneously picked out the perfect playlist for McMann's rampage, estimating one song-per-floor.

The instant the music began streaming into McMann's ears from his borrowed EXON-MOBILEs, his testosterone levels spiked. He didn't need any extra, but God was it a surge.

Floor one didn't prove to be much of a challenge. As Rules of Nature from the Metal Gear Rising Revengeance OST began playing in his ears. McMann grabbed both door-guards by the throats and ran with them in front of him, using them as shields and then battering-rams to pummel the remaining 12 guards in the room, pitifully armed with stun-batons. He then walked upstairs.

Floor two? Well, this is where things began heating up a little. Set the World on Fire by Symphony X started playing and flamethrower-wielding guards fired at McMann! But McMann noticed that they used inferior models to the kind his own Flamethrower-Marines used. They had one fatal design flaw. If the user was killed while operating them, the flamethrowers were rendered useless! McMann ripped a plank off the wall and swung it through the air like a boomerang, crushing the windpipes of the flame-guards. He walked on.

Floor number three. Now this was getting pretty interesting... McMann found himself on a vast, ancient battlefield, with two armies-- red, and blue. He looked down and saw himself dressed in red, armed with a broadsword. Before Battlefield by Blind Guardian had finished playing,

every last Blue was lying dead or dying on the ground. The holoom reverted to its default state, revealing the stairs up.

Floor numba 4, eh? L's Theme from Death Note—a 10-hour version—started jammin' in McMann's ears. Even McMann had watched Death Note, because Joshi had forced him to. "The Art of War" of anime he called it. So he figured that this floor must surely be designed to push his mental abilities to the limits, if not crush them entirely. Before him stood a labyrinth with perhaps endless puzzles and traps. McMann stood in place for the first few loops of the song, both to contemplate his first move, and because L's theme was truly rockin'. He finally made his decision, activated the boosters in his leg-armor, and jumped clear through the ceiling onto the next floor, bypassing the stupid trap-maze entirely.

Finally... floor number FIVE. McMann kicked open the grand door before him and was shocked by what he saw as a HEAVY cover of "Vampire Killer" by 楓 -kaede- starting blaring in his ears. Perhaps the most appropriate song choice of the playlist, for standing before him were Chrztina and Danziela, dressed in skimpy lingerie and baring their fangs menacingly. They were VAMPIRES?! How did they escape?! Those were all questions that Joshi pondered when he had first spotted them in the security cameras.

McMann didn't have the time to think about such things, because the two vampiresses flew at him with horrifying speed. Despite all his cyber augments, they were far stronger than average humans, and McMann could barely hold back both of them at once. What hope did he have of DEFEATING them both?

15

What is a Man?

Meanwhile, let's check in on how Satan is doing with his mission to go back in time. Vi wanted him to find out who Grueber was wheeling and dealing with to get all that SUPER-TECH he has, but remember GOD wants Satan to train in Goblin-Karate so that he can defeat the Gloommeister and remain the King of Hell.

Satan had made a major miscalculation-- jesus i just sneezed, that felt incredible. unrelated, but let me go get some Doan's for my back... sorry that took so long, I got a serving of peanuts too. It's not quite lunch, but I wouldn't call this breakfast. I don't really believe in breakfast anymore and even if I did, I sure as hell wouldn't consider milk and sugar-laced grains to be healthier than the almighty peanut. Anyway, Satan REALLY goofed up big time. And when I say "goofed up", I mean he got fucking played by Vi like a fiddle. He was supposed to go back in time to train with Goblin Doctor so he could have a chance at beating the Gloommeister in combat--a dubious enough plan already. But for whatever dumbass reason he hadn't accounted for Vi sending him to a time and place that would be ENTIRELY unhelpful to him-- the very moment when Grueber was making his dangerous business deal for the SECRET ALIEN TECHNOLOGY that they've been using ever since.

"Oh bother," said Satan.

What else was there to do now but comply with Vi?

"SATAN," roared God in his ears. "I HOPE YOU HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN YOUR MISSION."

"YOU SON OF A NOTHING, WHY DON'T YOU JUST SEND ME BACK IN TIME YOURSELF?!"

"I HELP THOSE WHO HELP THEMSELVES. SO DO THAT."

"Hey, is that the Devil?" asked Simon, the chief of Grueber's security here in Grueber Towers where the meeting was taking place.

"Umm- umm-" stammered Satan. This was it. His time to shine. And he thought of an **INGENIOUS PLAN** indeed.

"ALIENS!" he announced to the aliens who were indeed there, cloaked to hide their identities. "IF YOU GIVE GRUEBER TIME MACHINES, HE WILL USE IT TO DESTROY YOU ALL!"

"YOU STUPID SON OF A BITCH!" roared Grueber, as Simon jumped him and proceeded beating the living shit out of him.

"Please, my dear friends, ignore this buffoon. He is something like a court jester to us."

The aliens nodded and spoke in a strange tongue that only Grueber seemed to understand.

"We have an agreement, then?"

They nodded again and disappeared.

"Sir, what should I do about him?" asked Simon, still on top of Satan.

"Beat his ass some more and throw him out. He's of no consequence. Not anymore."

Back in **THE PRESENT** at the assault on "Bear" Sweeney's McMansion: I'm sorry, it's not a McMansion, it's a castle, I already said that.

McMann's marines couldn't get to him. They were too busy fighting off Sweeney's "turrets." Oh no!

Suddenly, who else but Chriz and Danz came charging in through the door to aid McMann! They were almost paralyzed with lust at seeing Chriztina and Danziela, lookin'

fine as fuck in their red-and-black lingerie. And they weren't those stupid, ugly monster-vampires either. You know the ones whose faces turn into big-jawed monster freaks when they bare their fangs? Fuck that shit, I don't see the appeal. They had CUTE fangs, and NORMAL-SIZED jaws. Maybe if they WERE hideous monsters, Chriz would've been blind to them and ironically would've been able to better defend himself from them. With typical monsters, he could always rely on his hyper-sensitive hearing. But seeing these two bombshells in front of him—not horrifying monsters—he had to rely on his eyes. And relying on your eyes in the face of attractive vampire girls is truly a dangerous idea. Chriz AND Danz were hypnotized in a SECOND. Remember when I said they were almost paralyzed with lust? Well now they actually were.

HOWEVER, taking that time to bewitch Chriz and Danz gave McMann all the time he needed to charge them and double-clothesline them through the fucking wall, sending them crashing outside below, to be apprehended yet again by the Space-Marines.

"Thanks, boys," said McMann, slapping them on their backs and waking them up from their trance. "I couldn't have done it without you."

The three took the next set of stairs, and McMann was worried by the next track that began playing in his ears. "Sono Chi No Sadame" from JoJo's Bizarre Adventure Part 1: Phantom Blood. Now, McMann knew that Joshi was a weeb, but he couldn't believe that this song was picked for just that reason. It was a great song, but there were plenty of better anime openings to choose from. McMann braced himself. He knew what was coming next. More fucking vampires. How could that be?

Meanwhile, outside, the Space-Marines had finished mopping up "Bear" Sweeney's troops. And so Rodrigo and Joshi charged toward the mansion to help McMann.

McMann couldn't believe what he was facing.

"Ah, I see you've gotten past my cutie-guards!" announced DRACULA.

"DRACULA?!" barked McMann. "WHERE IS 'BEAR' SWEENEY?"

"YOU FOOL. HAVE YOU LEARNED NOTHING? WHAT IS A MAN? A MISERABLE LITTLE PILE OF SECRETS! 'BEAR' SWEENEY WAS ALSO A MISERABLE LITTLE PILE OF SECRETS. HE WAS *I* ALL ALONG! I, DRACULA, THE #2 OF S.H.A.D.E."

Back on the G.S.S. Rand, a member of the Intel Team shivered, and got a terrible feeling that he had royally screwed up some assignment. He excused himself for the rest of the day.

And with that, Dracula summoned a bunch of robotic-bats, that started hacking all of the Space-Marines's equipment, especially their exo-skeletons. They were no-longer able to move. Thankfully, they'd already beaten the living shit out of all of Sween I mean Dracula's painted men. But this also meant that Rodrigo and Joshi had no choice but to about-face and guard Chrztina and Danziela, lest they regain consciousness and wreak havoc on the immobilized Marines.

All hope rested on McMann and Grueber's Elite Guard now: with Dracula defeated, only the head honcho of S.H.A.D.E. would be left, and finally, the world could rest easy.

But Dracula was no slouch. His karate skills were unlike anything any of our three lads had seen before! Even Asia Bones would be hard-pressed to take this undead bastard on! He started beating the tar out of all three of them at once before they finally fell back.

"Where'd you learn to fight?" growled McMann, wiping blood from his lip.

"Yeah!" grimaced Danz, spitting blood from his mouth.

"You're pretty good," grunted Chriz, sneezing blood.

"EWWwewwe you guys are grossss!" cried Goblinlass, who arrived on the scene just in the nick of time.

By now, you're probably sick of me interrupting the story for completely pointless rambling/musings. I really am sorry, I'm just listening to "Domino the Destitute" by Coheed and Cambria, and it really cheered me up enough to write. I was just lying in bed 2 minutes ago. It's not like it's the afternoon or anything. I'm not that bad. It's 9am. I actually woke up at 5 and went on a bike ride. Maybe I didn't get enough sleep or the existential dread is just creeping in a little too hard on me today, but for whatever reason, I just feel like... crushed. Totally crushed and I'm just so tired. Not physically tired, but also yes, physically tired too. Also maybe the caffeine pill helped. Music definitely helps at least a little, too.

But I could never be as tired as Satan, who'd been locked in Grueber Tower for days now-- in the PAST, don't forget. He was being subjected to endless tortures by Simon, the head of Grueber's security team. A real-deal, EX-Special Forces man. The Army discharged him for being too good, it didn't seem fair to other nations.

"Simon, don't you think you're going a little too rough on him?" asked Past-Vi.

AUTHOR'S NOTE: I know things are getting really confusing so I promise we're getting out of this soon.

"No, Vi. I want to know what he's doing here."

Finally, Satan shouted at the top of his lungs. "SHE SENT ME BACK HERE TO LEARN ABOUT THE ALIENS GRUEBER WAS DEALING WITH! ALSO I'M SUPPOSED TO LEARN GOBLIN-KARATE."

"What the fuck is 'Goblin Karate?'" asked Vi.

"It's not something you'd understand," said Simon. "It's one of the most lethal forms of martial arts ever designed. Maybe even the most lethal. It was created to defend against regular karate, which was developed by the Elves and the Japanese to slay goblins."

"Wow."

"Yeah wow. Satan, what are you up to?"

"I CAN'T TELL YOU ANY MORE, OR ELSE THE FUTURE IS FUCKED FOR EVERYONE. PLEASE BELIEVE ME."

For once in his miserable life, Satan wasn't lying. He was using his brain. What kind of fucked-up Butterfly-Effect shit was already happening? What else COULD happen?

Simon relented. "Go back to your own time, then. We're not telling you anything about Grueber's business associates."

"Jesus Christ, what a waste of time," Satan sobbed.

"No, my son," said Jesus Christ. "Dad sent me here to bring you to lead you to Goblin Doctor."

"JESUS? What is YOUR connection with Goblin Doctor?"

"I'm a healer. Who do you think taught him?"

"I can't believe this shit," said Simon and he turned to leave the room to go deal with other business. Grueber always had plenty of work for him anyway, and he didn't want to try wrapping his mind around a time-traveling devil learning secret martial arts for whatever reason.

"Simon," said Jesus. "I want you to come with us."

"What the fuck?"

"You have to ALSO learn Goblin-Karate. So that you can come with us to the future and help Grueber. He and his allies desperately need your expertise."

"Grueber's upstairs in his office," answered Simon. "I can see him on my screen right there."

"That's merely one Grueber of many. You might find this hard to believe--"

"I'm absolutely positive that I will."

"But Grueber's been traveling across time and space, trying to save Humanity."

"That doesn't sound like my boss, at all."

"But it is, Simon. Vi's already in the future..."

"VI'S RIGHT HERE IN MY EAR! RIGHT VI?"

"Yep!"

"Are you telling me she's not real either?"

"No, she's most certainly real. But so is the Vi fighting for your life in the future in another dimension."

"I'm not going to pretend to understand any of this. But you're Jesus Christ, so I guess I can't argue."

"You have Free Will, Simon. You don't have to co--"

"ALRIGHT ALREADY, LET'S GET GOING. But Vi's coming with me."

"Yes I am!"

"Fine, where is she?"

"No-one knows."

Jesus paused for a moment and checked his infinitely-expansive knowledge. Indeed, even He did not know.

Vi smiled smugly to herself.

"Well, if you need her, then of course she can come."

"Is it true, Simon? Do you need me? :3 " Vi teased.

Vi was the only one who could make Simon feel anything close to love, and his face heated for a moment before he excused himself to pack.

"Boss, I'm headed out."

"Of course you are Simon, of course you are," replied Benjamin Grueber. "No doubt, another version of myself needs you."

Simon wasn't surprised that Grueber already knew.

"Sir, who's going to watch you while I'm away?" The security force that Simon led was the cream of the crop, but it NEEDED a leader.

"Four very capable guards, Simon. That's right, FOUR people to replace you. You don't need to worry about me."

"Who are they, sir?"

"Two vampiresses, a half-blind swordsman, and a magician-artist."

Who could Grueber be talking about? Well, let's go back to the future.

But before we get there, let's check on McMann Jesus Christ this story is all over the place.

16

The Hottest Takes

Imagine Being Paid Money to Not Understand Books

you don't have to read any of this, it's just me complaining about book critics for 3 pages.

You know, a lot of people might consider this terrible writing. I consider it big-brain writing. Sorry if it's hard to follow. It's just as hard for me to write. I'm not going to call myself a genius, but I'm sure as hell also not going to call literary critics geniuses either. EDIT: You know I just read(kind) The Time Machine, and I NEVER read forewords, because a) I don't give a rat's ass about anything the author him or herself didn't write themselves and b) It really, really doesn't take a brilliant mind to understand context. I know lit majors think it does, but it absolutely does not. Anyway, so I accidentally PEEKED at the foreword this time, and you know what it said? "It is obviously the work of an inexperienced writer..." Unreal. What a shitty thing to say, ever. I really cannot stand these pretentious people. And I didn't even finish the book, because even though I was enjoying it I had a really bad feeling that something bad would happen to Weena. So, like a coward, I looked it up. I'm not going to spoil it, but MAYBE I was right, maybe I was wrong, and maybe we'll never know. Either way, a book that I didn't even finish (just because I care maybe too much about happy, romantic endings) made me emotional for an entire day, and some SCHMUCK has to chime in with "it is obviously the work of an

inexperienced writer..." What a bunch of clowns. I can't stand this shit. And I knooooooooooooooooow it's not like it's ALL the foreword had to say, but even JUST SAYING THAT is so FUCKING shitty to me. It rubs me totally the wrong way, because I have a hard enough time forcing myself to write because of perfectionism. And on top of that, there's basically entire *professions* of people who *just* fucking criticize EVERYTHING. And maybe I'm being unfair, because it's not like I don't enjoy, idk, The Angry Video Game Nerd, right? He's technically a critic. But at least he's making it funny, I guess? Is that really the difference? I'm not sure. What I am sure of is that I can't stand elitist snobs.

Oh God, you know what? While I'm on the subject of professionals not knowing what they're doing, after I finished reading the entire Ender's Game series, I casually gave its Wikipedia article a read. You know what was listed under "Criticism"? I refuse to check if it's still there because it makes me sick to my stomach even thinking about it, but there, under what's supposed to be an online ENCYCLOPEDIA was some random airhead's hot-take that Ender's Game PROMOTED COLONIALISM. I'm not making that up. And I'm not going to spoil any of those books for you either (you should just read them—the ENTIRE SERIES—they're absolutely incredible. People will say that it gets "boring" after the first book, but I PROMISE if you're just READ THEM and have the capacity to care about more than action... oh gods, am *I* being an elitist now?...), but I will say that that is the kind of takeaway you could only get if you just read the sentences of the book without actually understanding any of meaning, whatsoever. It's such a dumb take that I can say it's OBJECTIVELY wrong. It's basically the exact fucking opposite of the book's message, and I bet she was a fucking lit major. An understanding not even shallow, but not even touching the water. And it's not even the first time I've seen this kind of thinking! The idea that if something is merely portrayed in a work that it's an actual

EDIT: Well I accidentally went on the Ender's Game wikipedia article and saw that the brilliant critic I was thinking of was actually a MAN. I don't know why in my mind I remembered him as a woman. Is it because I'm unconsciously prejudiced against women? No, I don't think so. I love women. Goblinass is about to beat up Dracula! Besides, even if that were true, I'm going to forgive myself. Why? Well while I was reading the page again, I saw another, even more GENIUS big-brain criticism—by an actual woman—comparing Ender to Adolf fucking Hitler. So it looks like I was basically right. I win again.

Dracula vs. The World

Back to Goblinlass about to beat up Dracula.

And not just her, but Asia Bones appeared at her side as well! He wasn't about to let his young protege/lover take on an ancient vampire all by herself. Dracula thought he MIGHT be able to POSSIBLY take on the old master by himself, but he was concerned about his young, green student. She looked ready to kick some vampiric ass. Dracula's self-preservation was higher than most people's and he knew when to throw in the towel. He didn't want to find himself getting Darth Mauled. Oh man, I'm really sorry I keep interrupting but "Sisters" by Pain of Salvation just started playing in my wireless earbuds. This is easily one of my favorite songs. It's probably not for everyone. It's about a guy getting drunk on wine at a party and wanting to sleep with his wife's or gf's or whatever's sister because she reminds him of her. Yeah I know that doesn't sound like such a great song. But it's just such a calm, beautiful song. Everything's perfect. The lyrics, the music, the vocals-- Daniel Gildenlow's been my favorite singer for like 10 years now... God... time really does fly. HEY the song's kinda like how Rodrigo wanted to fucc Goblinlass, because she's the twin of Goblingirl? See, I brought it right back, so you can surely excuse this interruption.

Fracula lmfao I mean FraWOW WHERE IS MY D KEY? Dracula fell to he knees and held out his hands. "I know I cannot defeat both of you," he said. "Please, spare me."

Asia Bones was about to accept his surrender and spare him unconditionally, when Danz spoke up.

"ONLY IF YOU LET THE VAMPIRE-CHICKS COME WITH US."

Asia was disgusted for a split second at this obviously-selfish demand. Then he glanced at the cute little piece standing next to him and realized he was no better. Everyone needed a parter.

Dracula hissed. "Not my daughters... please..."

"Oh, so it's just a coincidence that they were named Chrztina and Danziela? That's pretty funny," said Goblinlass.

"We'll take care of them, sir. They're safer with us than with your LOSING side," said Asia Bones.

Dracula sighed and turned toward the hole in the wall and yelled outside.

"CHRIZTINA! DANZIELA! YOU'RE ON THEIR SIDE NOW!"

Chrztina and Danziela giggled as Chriz and Danz looked down at them.

"I'm glad to hear that," said Grueber on everyone's wrist-communicators. "Because I need Chriz and Danz and Chrztina and Danziela to go back in time and switch places with my old bodyguard Simon."

"Why the hell?"

"Because, the tides of battle have shifted across time. It's now more dangerous for my past-self than it is my present-self. Simon will finish our mission here, and you all will go back and protect past-Grueber to ensure we make it this far."

"This is really hard to follow," said Me, the Narrator.

"I understand, but this is the way things have to be. So please, do not fight me on this."

"Very well."

Everyone returned to the G.S.S. Rand to prepare for time-travel, except for Asia Bones and Dracula, who wanted to speak to each other in private.

"So will you tell me, Dracula? Will you tell me who the true Leader of S.H.A.D.E. is? Also will you tell me what S.H.A.D.E. stands for?"

"If you can defeat me in a friendly sparring match, Asia, I will tell you everything I know..."

And so Asia Bones and Dracula's fists flew out towards each other like Rocky and Apollo at the end of Rocky 3.

Meanwhile, in a less-friendly sparring match, Jesus Christ was whipping the shit out of Satan.

"DUDE RELAX!" cried Satan, crawling back to his feet after being slammed down.

"Sorry, it's just instinct," Christ said, helping the devil back to his feet.

Since he'd been there, Jesus decided to also learn Goblin Karate from Goblin Doctor. Goblin Doctor INSISTED on it really, wanting to pay the Messiah back for teaching him Medicine.

"You're BOTH sloppy," said Goblin Doctor. "You need to train HARDER, like Simon."

Simon had taken to Goblin Karate like a duck to water. His years as the bodyguard to the most-frequently targeted person on Earth had forced him to learn many different fighting techniques. The history and development of Goblin Karate was unknown. How Goblins, of all races, could come up with something this brutal and effective, was a genuine mystery ;)

"I don't buy for even a half second that Goblin Karate was created by Goblins," Simon later said to Jesus when they were taking water breaks.

"Yeah, you're right," Jesus said. "My Father gifted it to them so they wouldn't be completely genocided by the Elves and the Japanese."

"Do Elves even exist?"

"Are you really asking me that?" asked Jesus, eyebrow raised.

Satan came over to the water fountain and drank like a horse. He was absolutely exhausted.

"There's no way I can get the hang of this," he moaned.

"Cheer up, Satan, you've still got Simon and I as sparring partners!" Jesus said.

"Simon! Jesus! It's time for you guys to GTFO," Goblin Doctor said.

"What? Why?" asked Simon.

"I've taught you everything I can. And my debt to you now, Christ, is repaid!"

"Yes, it is."

Goblin Doctor and Jesus bowed to each other while Simon went to go put his shoes on.

"He's a bad guy, right?" whispered Simon.

"Yeah, but it's... really not that big of a deal," said Jesus. "It's all very complicated. It'll sort itself out soon, trust me."

"Okay. So where are we headed?"

"To the future! Did you still want to bring your girlfriend with you?"

"Vi's not my--"

"Yep! I'm right here!" announced Vi, projecting the audio from Simon's earpiece.

"So you ARE an AI?" asked Jesus.

"Nope."

"But I don't think you can get reception in the future... in another dimension..."

"I think I can!" replied Vi.

Jesus smiled. For whatever reason, God was keeping the story of Vi a mystery even to him.

"Well, let's get going then."

Christ snapped his fingers and they disappeared, leaving Satan alone to continuing getting his ass whooped (for his own good) by Goblin Doctor.

Meanwhile, Rodrigo and Joshi were planning their next move with McMann, outside the castle on Hacker Island. They'd miss having Chriz and Danz around, but were looking forward to meeting Simon, who Vi wouldn't shut the fuck up about. "Ooooh he's sooo great, he could kick your ass, Rodrigo! He's even smarter than YOU, Joshi!"

Joshi didn't doubt someone could beat Rodrigo--all brawn, no brains--in a fight. But to be smarter than him, at this point, was physically impossible and so he knew Vi was exaggerating and must have simply just cared about "Simon" guy. He let the insult go.

Rodrigo didn't, and demanded to fight Simon the moment he arrived in their time. Vi "wouldn't let him" whatever the hell that meant. How the hell could she stop him?

And so, when Simon, the Chief of GrueberSec stepped off the dropship from the Rand, Rodrigo immediately charged him. Simon put up his dukes and prepared to judo-throw him, but Rodrigo swung about 10 feet too early and fell over.

"WHAT THE HELL? HE DISAPPEARED."

"Rodrigo you clown, Vi and I both have control over your eyes since I put that chip in your head," said Joshi. "Of course we're not going to let you bother Simon with your bullshit."

"JOSHIIIIII!!!!" Rodrigo lunged at him.

Simon walked over to greet Grueber, who'd arrived earlier, and shook his hand.

"It's good to see you again, Simon," Grueber said. "For me, it's been... a long time."

"I'm not going to pretend to understand any of it, sir, I'm just here to protect you. Now what are we waiting on?"

Grueber glanced back at the cyberpunk castle. The sound of intense fighting could be heard inside. Asia Bones and Dracula were beating the crap out of each other in a friendly bout that'd lasted several hours now.

"If our man in there can win, we'll have all the information we need," explained Grueber. "Then we can move from there."

McMann wasn't happy, and stomped over to Grueber. "My men are still out there in space, fighting the creepy wooden puppets and the remaining Space-Sharks. What about them?"

Simon looked McMann up and down. McMann was practically a mechanical silverback. An absolute unit. He was glad he was on their side, but hoped Grueber had an answer to appease him.

"Simon will be coming with you to solve those problems, McMann."

Simon looked at Grueber, stunned.

"Sir--"

"You don't need to worry about me Simon. I'll be safe with Rodrigo and Joshi."

Simon looked over at the two boneheads that wrestling around on the ground, fighting like they were Chris Redfield and Leon S. Kennedy. Or a young Naruto and Sasuke. Pick whatever you want, it doesn't matter. They'd never be allowed on his security team back in his home-time-dimension.

"You can't be serious, sir."

"Serious as Sam, Simon."

"HA" said Vi.

"Vi, you made it too!" exclaimed Simon, who hadn't heard from her since time-warping with the Son of God.

"Of course I did, I've been here the entire time," said Vi.

"What entire time?" asked Joshi, who had picked up the scent of a paradox.

"Isn't it obvious?" asked Grueber.

NO

18

TFW No AI GF

"Vi exists as a single entity spanning all of space and time."

"You have got to be kidding me," said Rodrigo.

"So she's... God?" asked Goblinlass.

"No, don't be ridiculous," said Joshi and Jesus simultaneously.

"I knew she wasn't real," Rodrigo said smugly.

Just then, outta nowhere like a Randy Orton RKO, a girl walked up and literally did an RKO on Rodrigo.

"Hi guys!" said Vi, dusting herself off.

"Okay, sure, fine," said Joshi. "You can have a physical form too. I buy that."

Vi walked over to Simon and hugged him tightly.

"I'm glad you made it safely," she said as she released him. The voice came from both the girl and his earpiece. He took it out and looked at her, stunned.

I'm glad a seltzer just exploded on me and made me mad because this was getting way too lovey-dovey. Don't get me wrong, I don't believe "too much" of it could ever exist in a general sense. There is nothing in the world more beautiful than love. It makes this cold hellplanet warm and worth living on. It's the ONLY thing that makes this cold hellplanet warm and worth living on. But in my writing? Nah, can't put too much. Don't wanna risk writing CRINGE. It's not COOL to LOVE or EXPRESS ROMANCE IN GRAND OR DRAMATIC WAYS. The fucking "cringe" meme is the worst thing ever, because it's just another tool for the Perfectionism

Demon to use to prey on your fucking brain. Like yeah, I--nevermind, let's get back to the story.

You know what? Fuck it. Simon embraced Vi back, trying with all his might not to cry. After years of his partner-in-crime always with him in his head, joking and singing in his earpiece, she was finally there with him in person. He could touch her. When Vi felt the tears hit her neck, she pulled away and took his head in her hands. She smiled at him and kissed him softly. And then again. He could barely compose himself to smile back, despite feeling more wonderful than he had in his entire life. Working as Benjamin Grueber's bodyguard in the past had been the most evil and horrible job anyone could possibly imagine. It had brought him to the worst places on Earth and to the very depths of Hell. But it had brought him to her, finally. He kissed her back and they stood there holding each other for a time.

Grueber was happy for Simon. He'd put him through seemingly endless danger over the years. Indeed, more than one Simon he knew had died. And he'd never seen Simon, ever, so happy.

Joshi was jealous as Hell and wondered what was so special about Simon. Surely he, with his GIANT BRAIN, was a better match for Vi than this asshole?

Seeing YET ANOTHER couple only made Rodrigo more livid that he still couldn't be with Goblingirl yet. He was more determined than ever to end S.H.A.D.E.'s threat to Humanity so he could finally, FINALLY, just get that girl. He turned and marched into the cyberpunk castle to check on Asia Bones.

The Space Marines were all reminded of their girls back home. Except for one who was a nokiss virgin, but even his heart felt glad for Simon and Vi.

"Alright everyone, I think that's enough standing around," said McMann, whose love of battle could never be overruled by any appreciation for romance. He called in a

group of Space-Helicopters and ordered everyone to get ready for the fight of their lives against the creepy wooden puppets.

"Marionettes?" asked Goblinlass.

"Yeah, you can call them that if you really want to," Grueber answered.

"Master Asiaaaaaaaaaa!" called Rodrigo up the stairs. "Hurry up, Simon's here! We've all gotta get gooooooooooing!"

At hearing the name "Simon", Dracula freaking shivered and this distraction allowed Asia to get in a swift punch on the jaw, knocking his ass to the floor and FINALLY ending their long-stalemated bout.

"OKAY, DRACULA. It's time to talk," he said, extending his bony hand.

Dracula sighed and took his hand, but pulled. "It's best if you sit down for this one, Asia."

Meanwhile...

"Okay Satan, I've taught you everything I know," said Goblin Doctor. "NOW, you're ready to take on the Gloommeister and regain your throne in Hell."

"Arigato, sensei," said Satan, bowing.

I guess Satan thought he was being cute, but apparently he was either ignorant or had forgotten that the Japanese and Elves had once almost exterminated all of goblinkind. Hearing the language of his ancient enemy caused Goblin Doctor to go absolutely ballistic and he grabbed a goblin-sword off the wall... wait a minute, I can't help but think... oh yeah, the Yakuza helped Goblin General in the beginning of the story, right? How the hell am I going to reconcile this?

EDIT: THE YAKUZA AT THE BEGINNING OF THE STORY WERE ACTUALLY GOBLIN-YAKUZA, THE GOBLIN-EQUIVALENT OF WEEBS. GOBLINS OBSESSED WITH JAPANESE CULTURE TO THE POINT OF DRESSING, ACTING, AND SPEAKING AS IF THEY WERE JAPANESE. MOST GOBLINS HATE THEM, BUT GOBLIN GENERAL REALIZED THEIR POTENTIAL WARRIORS AND SO ALLIED WITH THEM.

Bam.

Satan defended himself by using his demonic power to summon a katana all the way from the Land of the Rising Sun. The Nippon-forged steel could cut through the goblin-steel like butter. Even were Satan unarmed, Goblin Doctor could not hope to resist his greater strength, and especially not after teaching him all that he knew. But the hatred for the Japanese seared through Goblin Doctor's heart and mind, consuming him, and turning him feral. He still attacked Satan relentlessly. And so, with no choice and tears in his eyes, Satan slew his teacher that day and became the new Master of Goblin Karate.

"GOD!" he cried. "I'VE DONE IT! JUST ME BACK NOW!"

"What the Hell do you think, I've got nothing better to do?" asked God.

"WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? *YOU* ASKED ME TO DO ALL OF THIS!"

"Oh yeah sorry, I forgot."

"What the hell do you mean you FORGOT?" demanded Saataaaaaaaaaaan.

"I'm JK, look, you're already back."

Indeed, Satan was now standing before none other than the Gloommeister, seated on the throne of Hell, getting a blowjob from a Whoresercess who'd once been Satan's favorite.

"Hi Stan," said the Gloommeister. "You're alive again?"
"THAT'S RIGHT!" roared Satan, "AND I'M HERE TO TAKE BACK MY THRONE FROM YOU!"

Meanwhile, the TRUTH was FINALLY being revealed about the S.H.A.D.E. and its leader. What could it be?

"Well for starters, S.H.A.D.E. doesn't stand for anything. No-one could ever agree on what it would stand for, so we just forgot about it," said Dracula.

Asia Bones sighed.

"But as for the leader? Well, he's the real deal, Asia. I don't know anyone who could defeat him."

"Well we hang around different crowds, Dracula."

Dracula smiled. "The Leader of S.H.A.D.E.... is a powerful Fox Demon associated with carnal desires."

"Lust..." Asia Bones whispered. He quickly searched his thoughts and immediately came up with a dreadful thought.

Rodrigo had finally climbed up and entered. "Asia, what's going on?"

"You want to perform a fucking exorcism?" asked Joshi, standing over the unconscious Rodrigo, who'd been knocked-the-hell-out by Asia Bones and strapped to a bed.

"It wasn't just a coincidence that Rodrigo's lust was acting against our interests. It's been the enemy the ENTIRE TIME."

"Are you sure about this, Asia?" asked Grueber. "If you're wrong, and Rodrigo loses his lust demon, he'll lose his powers as well, and for no gain."

"I'm not sure, Ben. That's why we have to just lure the demon out first and talk to it."

"Well how are we going to do that?" asked Joshi.

Another day of emptiness/This life is wearing her down/The room around her is a mess/Her children safe with her mom----- Sorry, more Pain of Salvation. I really need music to start writing. I've got this... I've lost track of everything, really, but I'm sure I've already complained about my unbearable back pain. It's really specifically the shoulders, or just under the neck, and I know it's 100% stress-related. I know because I've accidentally woken up extremely early, and when my heart-rate a-- I feel like I've said this before. I really don't want to sound like a broken record. I might be a broken person, but I'm not a broken record, so there's no excuse for that. Let's just continue the story...

Let's check on McMann and the Space Marines and see how they're doing. Simon and Vi were with them, but that didn't exactly inspire any extra confidence. McMann wondered what tricks Simon in particular had up his sleeve, until Simon asked him for command.

The squad formations and tactics that Simon came up with defied convention. McMann had never seen anything like it. But this was what Simon did: Make sure his charge survived against unbeatable odds. And now his charge was the entire military.

Guerilla warfare had seen use in space before, but never to this extent.

The Marionette battleships were too terrifying to be taken head-on. But from behind? From the side? From above? From below? They were weak. Following Simon's request, Vi instructed the fashioning of gravity cannons out of the Marine's spare junk parts in order to rearrange groups of asteroids, transforming them into forests, the Marines into hunters, and the spooky wooden marionettes into... rabbits or whatever. But unlike a normal hunt, where the hunter is stalking his prey in

the prey's own home, here, only the Marines knew the map of the asteroid-forest. The Marionettes were in the dark.

The following slaughter would become the stuff of legends for centuries to come. Millions of splintered chunks of wood littered space. The Marines were always tougher and better-equipped than the creepy-ass dancing wooden puppets. But so intimidating they were, that that greater strength was rendered useless.

This was why Grueber summoned Simon. Throughout Space and Time, Grueber had only ever seen Simon defeated by godlike entities or the universe itself. And this time, it wasn't either of those, but just a bunch of spooky wooden puppets. Simon's mind—both the mind of a survivor, and of a protector—would never allow the human military to be beaten.

The Shark-Marines were demoralized to shit. Deep shit.

Even General Blackfin, hailed for decades as a brave hero among his people, who had survived being swarmed by the shibas, was frightened. And so he issued a challenge to McMann, hoping to capture him and force Simon to surrender.

Everyone saw through the ruse. But McMann wasn't about to let this stupid prick bastard shark talk shit to him and get away with it, so, against Simon's wishes, he jettisoned himself through space straight into the Shark-Mothership's loading dock. There waiting for him were the most roided up Sharkmen who ever lived. And afterwards, they were the most roided up Sharkmen to ever die.

McMann stomped his way through the ship until finally he came to the bridge. This wouldn't be his first time slaughtering an entire enemy flagship single-handedly.

"MCMANN!!!" roared Blackfin, "WHERE ARE MY MEN!?"

McMann told him the God-honest truth. He'd bludgeoned them all to death with his steel fists. Blackfin woarlmao i mean he ROARED in anger and launched himself at McMann.

Meanwhile...

Actually, let's just resolve this. McMann drove his fist through Blackfin's head, killing him instantly. It was over. The war had been won. All that remained now was to ensure that no-more armies of stupid monsters would ever rise up against humanity again. To do that, the leader of the S.H.A.D.E. had to be BTFO'd for all-time.

And so, Oh god I just yawned. im kinda hungry, lemme go get something...

Anyway, what? Oh... well, let's see... hmmm... let's go check on Satan, see how he's doing?

Satan was getting the shit beaten out of him by the Gloommeister. Go figure. It turned out the Gloommeister ALSO knew Goblin Karate, and so all of Satan's training had been utterly useless. With a double hammerfist that broke through Satan's spine, Gloommeister ended the fight, once again sending Satan out of this unearthly realm.

This time, however, Satan did not go to Heaven. He reappeared in Hell. God knew that there was no-longer any point in dealing with such a useless individual. He'd of course always known. But He works in mysterious ways. He instead spoke to Gloommeister directly.

"Can you please not gloom so many souls?" God asked.

"Yeah, I don't care about gloom that much," said the Gloommeister, who was still being fellated by the Whoreceress, and had been the entire time he was beating Satan to death. Was his preference of women over all things his weakness, or his strength?

And so the deal was struck. Satan fucked off to go wallow in his misery and failure, turning around sadly one last time to see the Whoreceress he once had a dumb crush on

pressing her face up against the Gloommeister's crotch and swallowing.

After he was fully serviced, the Gloommeister sat down on his throne and meditated. He wondered how that little goblin girl and Rodrigo were doing. He kind of missed having them around.

Meanwhile, Benjamin Grueber, using the powers granted to him by God, spoke to the Demon within Rodrigo.

"I AM THE STEWARD OF THIS UNIVERSE," he said. "I DEMAND TO SPEAK WITH THE DAEMON HIDING INSIDE OF RODRIGO."

Don't worry, there's not some stupid "Exorcist" skit here, the Demon literally flew out of Rodrigo and sat down on his stomach. He was indeed a fox and glared at Grueber.

"What? What do you want?"

What a stupid question. "Why do you want to destroy humanity?" demanded Grueber.

"BECAUSE SHE LIKES THAT STUPID DOG-GOD MORE THAN ME!!!!!!!"

"Here we fucking go, it's about a woman," remarked Joshi.

"Who are you talking about?" asked Grueber.

19

Betrayal

<FLASHBACK SEQUENCE, ARE YA READY?>

"Hey, Kitsunwai, how are you today?"

"Kitbaijin, I thought I told you not to talk to me anymore. I don't want Kiiroi Kao to think we're together."

Kitbaijin the Fox sulked away sadly like the virgin that he was as Kiiroi Kao strode through the doors of Eastern-God High School.

"Hi Kiiroi Kao!" Kitsunwai said, happy to see him.

Kiiroi Kao acknowledged her, and her day was made.

!!AUTHOR'S NOTE!!: Kitsunwai's name comes from "Kitsune" meaning fox and "Kawaii" meaning cute. However the literal translation ends up being "tight" and I thought that was funny and appropriate enough for a girl who's being pursued.

Kitbaijin also comes from "Kitsune" and "baijin" meaning virgin. The literal translation ends up being "Kite", which is funny enough. All translations came from G*ogle, and I've left out any accent marks for the sake of my own sanity. I understand that language is very complicated, but I'm not going to spend time learning Japanese just so I can more appropriately call a guy a virgin nerd loser when I can just slap two different words together.

<BACK TO THE PRESENTU!!>

"This is so stupid. He had a crush on a fox-goddess that liked a chad dog-god instead? So why does he want to destroy humanity?"

Grueber knew almost instantly. "Because Kiiroi Kao is a good boy and is the Japanese god that protects us. If Humanity were extinguished under his watch, he would be greatly shamed. Isn't that right, Kitbaijin?"

Kitbaijin glared at him. "You might be the right, but no one can stop me! My LOVE-QUEST WILL SUCCEED."

Then he flew back inside Rodrigo's body, broke through the restraints, and ran off into the forest of the island.

"Where's he going?" asked Goblinlass.

"It doesn't matter where he's going, his goose is cooked," replied Grueber. "Now that we know for sure that he's the enemy, we don't have to worry about extracting him from Rodrigo."

"That might be right, Grueber... but now... you have to worry about Rodrigo himself," Dracula pointed up at the sky, to the hundred-foot tall Rodrigo that had grown from the forest.

"This is so stupid," said Joshi, correctly.

"Well boys, it looks like it's time to bring out the MECHS," said McMann, who'd just returned from their successful slaughter of the Marionettes and Sharkmen.

"Not so fast, McMann," said Space Judge, who teleported when he heard something illegal about to take place. "The court established in *Kasshu v. United Space* that Planet Earth was NEVER to be used as a mech-battleground."

McMann was so steamed he had to walk away for a minute.

When he returned he pointed at the 100-foot Rodrigo stomping toward them and asked what they were supposed to do about it.

"I recommend we make a tactical, and more importantly LEGAL, retreat," said Space Judge, and he fled to his pocket dimension.

Everyone else got on the dropships and space-helicopters and returned to the Rand to plan their next move.

When Goblingirl asked where Rodrigo was, no-one had the heart to tell her. So they lied and said he was picking out a tux for their wedding.

She was delighted to hear this! :)

One of the space marines was sent to get get a tux for Rodrigo so that this little white lie would not bite them in the ass later when Rodrigo still didn't have a tux. Good thinking, fellas.

Meanwhile, Goblin General was still no-where to be found. Is he really even still significant? Of course he is, he's the father of Goblinreg, and the goblin who raised both Goblingirl and Goblinlass, even though they're not even really goblins. He NEEDED to be found.

And that's exactly what Alpha Squad was sent to do.

The most hardened and experienced warriors the Space Marines had. It was their job to make sure that Goblin General was found alive so that he could attend the wedding of the "daughter" who still loved him so. And also so he couldn't cause any more stupid problems.

Their names?

Alpha 1: Squad Leader

Alpha 2: Tech Specialist

Alpha 3: Sniper

Alpha 4: History Buff

"Why the hell do we need a 'history buff?'" asked Alpha 3.

"Those who do not know history are doomed to repeat it," responded Alpha 4 like a jackass.

The men, except for Alpha 2, who was a woman, and more importantly a C U T E one, set out to find Goblin General.

Alpha 1 didn't have high hopes for the mission. They could probably track down Goblin General, but then what? With Rodrigo stomping around as a giant, there was no point. They might as well just eliminate Goblin General, to prevent him from causing any more trouble.

"Hey guys, I'm Joshi. I'm gonna be providing you with intel on this mission," Joshi said into their helmets' radios. Joshi was still a little bummed that Vi had ran off with Simon. He could've SWORN they had something.

Everyone introduced themselves. The second Joshi heard Alpha 2's voice, he instantly forgot about Vi.

"A girl tech specialist..." he whispered excitedly.

"Hmm, what was that?" she asked.

"Oh, nothing, so uh, the last place Goblin General was seen was in his cell in Space Judge's pocket dimension."

"I really can't stand Space Judge. Why does he have to make everything so difficult?"

"He's a bureaucrat at heart," replied Alpha 1.

"I think it'll be OK," said Joshi. "Grueber's arguing with him as we speak."

"You need to let us use the mechs to knock-out Rodrigo," said Grueber.

"You know I can't let you do that. It's against the LAW," said Space Judge.

"But it's a military emergency!" argued McMann.

"No it's not, it's just some big guy stomping around on an island! Who cares?" retorted Space Judge.

Grueber could see that this was going no-where, and so he summoned forth the powers vested in him by God.

"As the Steward of this Universe--"

"SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE," said Space Judge.

Grueber sighed and walked away. Everything had to be done the hard way.

By the time Grueber was off the vid-phone with Space Congress, the antiquated idea of separating Church and State was from Law. Space Judge already knew, he could feel the change it in his justly heart.

"You've made a very big change to our world Grueber. I hope it doesn't have any unintended consequences for you down the road."

"There are no such things," replied Grueber, perhaps just a wee bit cocky.

"Well the Church and the State might no-longer be separate, but you STILL have to overturn the decision of *Kasshu v. United Space!!*"

Annoyed, Grueber began filling out the paperwork. As Steward of the Universe, he of course had the power to overturn the court's decision. But it had to be done properly.

Meanwhile Alpha Squad hunted down Goblin General like a pack of wolves. The dozens of devices in their helmets allowed them to gain near-perfect understanding of scenes and reconstruct them like that stupid Detective Vision that Batman has from the Arkham Asylum games. Okay, I'm sorry, it's not really that stupid. It's high-technology. You know what IS stupid, though? You have that exact same ability in the Call of Cthulhu game that just came out like... last year or so. For no reason. You just HAPPEN to be able to reconstruct scenes with the POWER OF IMAGINATION. Why? Because he's a detective? What a freaking miserable disappointment that entire game was. Basically a walking simulator with an utterly pointless RPG system. Not enough skill checks, not enough consequences for failed skill checks (NO CONSEQUENCES, REALLY), not enough variety for the handful of different paths you could take, miserably poor "combat" and not even enough of it, not enough ANYTHING. The ending sequences were OK. That's all I can say. But once again, Amnesia remains the

king of Lovecraftian horror for video games. I'd say even the old Dark Corners of the Earth game was better, and that game was a glitchy mess. Total shame.

Was I writing something? Oh, yeah, as I was rambling about a disappointing game, Alpha Squad managed to track down Goblin General, hiding in a hole. How fuckle lmao i mean how fickle the alliances of villains are when the tables are turned against them. When their feet are put to the mother fuckin' FLAME, and that's what Alpha Squad was-- the mother fucking all-consuming flame. Goblin General, after having all of his fingers broken, finally agreed to accept Rodrigo as his son-in-law and to attend the wedding. Another member of teh S.H.A.D.E. had been taken care of.

I just got a package delivery from Amazon. Like TWELVE HOURS AGO I ordered a copy of Ender's Game (to complete my collection—because the first time I read it was from the library, then I just bought the rest from there) and it was JUST delivered to me. I don't know what Amazon's up to. I'm not the kind of person who just giddily and thoughtlessly accepts new conveniences nor the kind of person who believes convenience is necessarily of the Devil. Is Amazon just hiring package-deliverers now? Because there's just no WAY that that made it through the postal system or even UPS in that time.OK yeah, they are. How long has that been g-- it doesn't matter. Well, I guess I'm just happy to get my books. I also got Ender's Shadow, so I'm looking forward to starting that side-series too.

Speaking of shadows, actually no, speaking of SHADE, Rodrigo and Kitbaijin were having a boxing match inside of his head for control of his body.

Kitbaijin was losing, badly.

If he weren't a god, he surely would have already been pulverized, but he managed to keep getting back up. The battle was exhausting Rodrigo. It was exhausting them both.

"RODRIGO!" gasped Kitbaijin. "GIVE ME CONTROL, AND I PROMISE YOU'LL BE BANGING GOBLINGIRL BEFORE THE NIGHT IS THROUGH!!!"

Not even Rodrigo was that stupid. Well, not anymore.

For a while, Joshi and Vi had been training his critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Even if Kitbaijin was actually telling the truth, Kitbaijin himself was also the only thing standing in the way between him and Goblingirl in the first place! No, Rodrigo had had enough of this shit.

"I'm going to destroy you, you fucking virgin. I'm going to destroy you, and then I can FINALLY be with Goblingirl!"

Rodrigo threw his fist so hard at the fox demon that he flew from Rodrigo's body. But in midair, he caught himself, and also grew to gigantic size. It lunged at Rodrigo, baring terrible fangs the size of trees!

Finally, this was enough for Space Judge.

"*TWO* KAIJU-CLASS ENTITIES BATTLING? MCMANN, YOU CAN DECLARE A STATE OF EMERGENCY NOW! THE MILITARY CAN ACT RIGHT AWAY NOW!"

"Oh for goodness' sake," muttered Grueber, flinging his pen and forms from his desk. He'd get back to it and finish changing the law later to make sure his plans would never-again get held up by less-than-two giant monsters. But for now? He slammed a hidden button underneath his desk, which transformed and enveloped him. It was time for him to have some fun as well.

The Space-Marine mechs were sights to behold. Secretly developed together by the U.S. and GrueberCorp.,

they were no-less awesome than gundams. Except these weren't mere fiction. These were REAL, baby.

And who else would pilot the Grudams, but the famous Alpha Squad who'd just returned from another successful mission?

"Alpha Squad, move out!" cried Alpha 1, and they all proceeded to Hacker Island where the battle between Rodrigo and Kitbaijin was heating up.

"HOW ARE YOU STILL BIG? YOU SHOULD HAVE SHRANK WHEN I LEFT YOU!" cried Kitbaijin.

"I JUST WANT TO HAVE SEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEX!!" roared Rodrigo and he punched Kitbaijin on his snout so fucking hard his face collapsed.

Kitbaijin healed himself quickly and retreated.

Then Alpha Squad arrived, and things started getting comical. A giant Rodrigo and an additional four mechs seemed entirely unnecessary. And then Grueber showed up in his own mech, which was bigger than the rest, and golden. Its name was the Atlas-Grueber and it was the mightiest machine ever devised by Man. It took all of Vi's power to help control its systems to prevent them from going completely apeshit. It was PURE alien-tech.

Surely this was unnecessary?

Surely not, because it was at that moment that, as Grueber had predicted, Joshi betrayed Mankind and stabbed Dracula in the heart with a flashdrive.

20

The Last Supper

THE PREVIOUS NIGHT...

Grueber and everyone were sitting at the table having dinner.

As they were eating, Grueber said to them "One of you here will betray me."

Everyone was stunned into silence. One by one they spoke, asking Grueber if they meant it was them.

"The one who double-dipped the chip will betray me. I will move forward from this Universe, as I've told you all, but for the man who betrays me? It would be better if he'd never been born."

"You're not talking about me, Grueber?" demanded Joshi, who'd indeed just double-dipped a chip.

"You've said it yourself."

Gruber took the bread, gave thanks to God, broke the bread, and passed it around to his fellowship saying "Take this, all of you, and eat it. It's fresh Italian bread, and you need to keep your strength up."

Then He took a cup, and after giving thanks, passed it around saying "All of you, drink from this. It is laced with Joe Rogan brain-chemical. It will enhance your abilities for the fights ahead."

Then Grueber went out to Mount Everest, where the Atlas-Grueber was receiving its final touch-ups. Grueber did not return to the until the next morning.

AND SO...

As Joshi absorbed Dracula, the final ELITE HACKER left, he felt his power increase to a level he'd never before

realized could even exist. He had ascended into cyber-godhood. He hacked Alpha Team's Grudams like they were toy calculators. But the Atlas-Grueber could not be penetrated. Grueber called out to him.

"Joshi, you betray us now? Of all times?"

"YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW HARD IT IS TO MEET GIRLS!" yelled Joshi, who'd apparently forgotten that he'd just pumped and dumped a Russian bombshell a few nights prior. "BUT KITBAIJIN UNDERSTANDS! IN THE NEW WORLD WE'LL CREATE, EVERYONE WILL HAVE STATE-MANDATED GIRLFRIENDS! AND VI WILL BE MINE!!!" All of the Grudams conformed to Joshi's will, ganging up on Rodrigo and beating the piss out of him.

Asia Bones had to be physically restrained from committing seppuku out of shame for ever having taught Joshi.

But truthfully, Grueber had seen the betrayal coming a million miles away. He knew that Vi would always be irresistible to Joshi. He knew he'd fall in love with her. And he knew that when it would finally be safe to bring in Simon to defeat the enemy armies, that Joshi would go mad with jealousy. Joshi was a smart guy, but he was still, just a guy after all.

The Atlas-Grueber was more than strong enough to pull the Grudams off of Rodrigo, who'd taken quite a pounding. And so they retreated; Joshi, Alpha Squad helpless prisoners inside their uncontrollable mech-jails, and Kitbaijin disappeared in a flash of 0's and 1's.

After ensuring that Rodrigo was alive and breathing, Grueber opened the hatch of the Atlas-Grueber. Vi's eyes teared up as she controlled the mech's hand to place him on the ground, where he collapsed onto the cool grass. Piloting the Atlas-Grueber would be physically exhausting for the strongest man. For Benjamin, it had proved too much. He closed his eyes for the last time and moved forward from this Universe, as he'd told them all.

The death of Benjamin Grueber triggered countless dead man's switches for innumerable purposes around the world, casting the world into utter chaos. Riots, arrests, scandals. Every person from the oldest men to newborn babies were touched in some way, good or bad. It was a chaos which only GrueberCorp. and its largest subsidiary, the United Space of America, could stand over. The President begged Grueber's secretary, now the most powerful person in the world, to lead Humanity. She obliged. Not because she was ambitious, but because she knew that somewhere, Benjamin was watching over her. And it was what he'd want her to do.

Grueber's secretary was a cute little asian girl named Xi who'd somehow beaten a dozen other cute girls for the job just two years ago. Since that time, Grueber had filled her head with knowledge, arcane and eldritch, ancient, unfathomable, and invincible. Some secrets revealed to him, he told her, from alien visitors. Other secrets that he'd himself revealed to the alien visitors only to be retold to him.

The first week of training almost broke Xi. She was smart, but the information was too much and as Grueber drilled into her head exhaustive details of the various infrastructures of the world she wondered why she'd been chosen. Then a few months later she met Vi and it all made sense.

MEANWHILE.. wait not meanwhile, this-- well, we'll get back to her, you know what I should have just done a direct break that's what I'll do...

Rodrigo opened his eyes, and roared "WHERE'S RODRIGO?" that's a better transition, that's definitely better. It's cleaner. I don't mind saying "meanwhie" and I'm sure you've noticed that, but it's because I think it's funny to have a thousand things on the stove at once. But I'm not going to pull

a "meanwhile" when I'm breaking from a scene that happened in the past. It just doesn't... well anyway...

Imfao i just realized Rodrigo asked where Rodrigo was. I meant he roared "WHERE'S JOSHI?" That's it.

Everyone had regrouped on the island.

"Joshi has retreated to Kitbaijin's underwater fortress," said Goblingreg.

"WHERE IS THAT???" demanded Rodrigo, annoyed.

"I just told you it's underwater!" growled Goblingreg as if Rodrigo had asked a stupid question.

"HEY, IDIOT, THERE'S MORE THAN ONE BODY OF WATER IN THE ENTIRE WORLD. WHERE IS THE WATER WHICH KITBAIJIN'S FUCKING FORTRESS IS UNDERNEATH?!?!"

Tensions were high.

"IT'S IN THE BERMUDA TRIANGLE, ASSHOLE. JUST A FEW MILES AWAY FROM HACKER ISLAND."

"Don't you remember, Rodrigo?" Vi said quietly. "That's whole reason why Joshi absorbed all of the Hacker Elites in the first place. So we could intercept their communications. And now he's..."

"He's become a monster," said Asia Bones, who'd had all of his sharp implements confiscated so he couldn't ritually kill himself as honor demanded.

"It's not your fault, Asia," said Vi. "It's my fault."

"No, it's my fault," said a random Space Marine who'd once called Joshi some mean names.

"I'm to blame," said Simon. "I never should have come here."

"It's NOBODY's fault," growled Rodrigo. "Joshi made his decision by himself. No-one forced him. So now let's go get him. Let's go get him, that stupid virgin fox too, and put an end to this all."

He stood up and spoke into his wrist-communicator.
"Grueber, what's the plan?"
All were silent, tears flowed from Vi's eyes.
Rodrigo looked around. "What? What happened, where
is he?"

21

Heavenly Wingmen

An e-communication containing a videogram file had been sent to Vi a few minutes earlier before Rodrigo woke up. After Benjamin had gone to sleep.

It instructed her to play it for everyone, and she did so now that Rodrigo was awake.

"Hello everyone," said Grueber, appearing on their wrist-communicators.

Vi held back a sob.

"When you're watching this, I'll no-longer be with you. I have so much to tell you all, but not enough time in the world, or the patience, to do it. I'll keep things brief. First, Simon, you have not failed in your role as my bodyguard."

Simon looked down.

"You'll notice that my body is perfectly well. As well as a corpse can be," continued Grueber. "I believe I'll have died after a fight with Joshi in my mech, the Atlas-Grueber."

All were astonished at Grueber's foresight.

"It was never intended for an old man like me to pilot. It needs a young man. It needs a strong man. The question is now, who will pilot it?"

"I WILL," yelled Rodrigo immediately.

"No, it can't be you, Rodrigo," responded Grueber's message.

"There's one man I trust to pilot the Atlas-Grueber. The man it was always meant for. It has to be Simon."

Simon was stunned. He was a soldier, a warrior, not a mech pilot.

"The Atlas-Grueber is held together by Vi's brainpower. Rodrigo may be strong, but only someone very close to Vi and the mental-ability to process the information she'll need to

share with them will be able to sync with the mech well enough to use it to its fullest potential. Simon fits both requirements."

"I'll do it, sir."

"I knew you would, Simon," said Grueber. "Vi will teach you everything you need to know."

Rodrigo was a little bummed out that he didn't get to have a cool mech.

"Rodrigo, calm down," said Asia Bones.

"BUT IT WAS FUN BEING BIG" said Rodjesus christ i just closed the document somehow. The entire thing just CLOSED and for a horrible second I thought that I'd lost... well, I've been backing it up every week. This is one of the issues with Notepad. There's no autosaves. But I still feel like it's a better program to just WRITE, without letting yourself bec--okay, maybe it's not especially entertaining to have me cut out of the story like this so often. Maybe a book written by someone who isn't a complete fuckup would have been more of an enjoyable read. In fact, I've got to go get ready to see my therapist even now. (WOW what a surprise he sees a therapist??? No waaaay, I can't believe that, he seems so normal and fine and not unhinged or depressed or anxious at all So I'll go do that, and come back afterwards and write some more. That'll be good. I hope you're enjoying the story though, I really do.

...

OK I'm back. You know I never intended this story to also be a personal journal (also, Personal Journals by Sage Francis is a great album, go give it a listen I promise it's good) I just feel like a large part of me, maybe even everything that I used to be, is gone now. Whoever I was isn't me anymore, and I can't easily write about ridiculous nonsense. I heard that psychologists were talking about a concept of "derailment" and when I heard it described it just felt so much like what I've been going through. I don't feel like myself anymore, and

there's no other word I can describe it besides "depressing." A lot of the nights I just wish I won't wake up in the morning. Even nights when I don't consciously think it, if you asked me I'd probably say "I don't have to wake up, ever? That'd be great." I feel, genuinely, like I'm living in Hell. Did I mention my back hurts? I wouldn't say I'm "suicidal" though. And not just because it's literally illegal to be suicidal. I WANT to LIVE a GOOD life. It just eludes me. And it eludes me in ways that I can see and understand, but am too weak to change. <- there's another excuse. Why I am I too weak? Good question for someone who doesn't actually have any genuine physical disabilities. YEAH OK MY BACK HURTS, it REALLY, REALLY FUCKING DOES, but it's not like I'm missing any fingers.

I set a deadline for finishing this book, I don't remember if I mentioned that or not. Well, let me Ctrl+F and see... okay it looks like I didn't. So I've got about 10 days left to finish this book. And if I actually work on it, for ... even for just an hour a day, I'd DEFINITELY make it. I'm a very fast writer. And I don't want you to think I'm RUSHING it. I'd have to wait... at least another 5 days before I'd have to actually start RUSHING. I've got a vision of how I want it to end. I'm a sucker for happy endings. But I don't want it to just be total nonsense, you know? Like I can't just have GOD come down and make everything OK. The kind of reality-bending nonsense I've been pulling is bad enough. Still, I'm happy with this story so far. I've been re-reading it to try to make sure I didn't royally screw something up. My memory's been so fucked from antidepressants... I can't even remember a lot of what I've written recently. That's... even more depressing. There's a lot of things that depress me. But I, uh... if I just keep... writing. and exercising. Maybe I can push it back a bit. I'm sorry for putting this all on you, it's so stupid. Imagine if all authors just started breaking the fourth wall to cry about being depressed. What miserable literature we'd have. I don't know, but I don't think I

would enjoy it, yet here I am doing it to whoever's reading this. I'm really sorry, I really am.

"Rodrigo, I know someone who can help you learn to control your size," said Asia Bones. "Actually I know several."

"WHO?!"

Who indeed?

Well, first they asked Kiiroi Kao. He refused, because Rodrigo is too stupid to teach, as he'd learned earlier, and he had ALREADY broken his rule of only teaching tomboys once for Rodrigo. He would not break such a supremely important rule again.

"Well who else can help me get BIGG?"

"I CAN!" answered Goblingreg stupidly flexing.

"No, I don't want big muscles Goblingreg, I already have those. I want to become a literal mech-sized giant."

"Oh, sorry, I can't help with that."

"We know."

Goblingreg walked away to go work out or something. WHAT THE FUCK I CLOSED THE DOCUMENT AGAIN? THAT'S IT! I'VE GOT TO FIGURE OUT WHAT COMMAND KEYS ARE DOING THIS... Okay, I see. It's Ctrl+W. And of course it's right above the S, so when I Ctrl+S to save sometimes I graze the W and it closes the whole thing. God, what a... okay. it doesn't matter... nothing matt--ok, calm down. What's Asia Bones got to say now?

"The other person I know who can help, Rodrigo, is none-other than the Gloommeister!" said Asia Bones.

"Cool! We can visit old gloomy!"

"Indeed!"

And so they did, traveling all the way to the Hell Throne.

"Hi, is the Gloommeister in?" asked Asia Bones to the secretary, who was a whoreceress who'd been demoted because her claw-like fingernail accidentally scratched the Gloommeister once while they were doing the horizontal tango, leaving him with a cut equally as annoying as a papercut for the rest of the day.

"No, he went out to go visit Grueber's Fellowship."

"Fantastic, we went all this way for--"

Asia Bones silenced Rodrigo and thanked the secretary as they walked back out into Hell.

"Does Gloommeister have his wrist-communicator?"

"How the hell should I know? ATTENTION EVERYONE, HAS ANYONE SEEN THE GLOOMMEISTER?"

"No" answered everyone.

"I'm no-longer detecting the Gloommeister on this planet..." said Vi. "Or for that matter, in any of our ships or stations in space."

"So the Gloommeister is missing..." said Asia Bones. "I don't like this."

"He'll be fine. What's the worst that could have happened?"

The worst that could have happened, did happen. The Gloommeister had been captured by none-other than Joshi, the Hacker demigod.

Joshi had hacked into his mind and found it mostly useless. The Gloommeister seemed to only think with his dick. The entire time, Glooms was mocking him relentlessly, and it'd almost gotten to him. The Gloommeister was pissed and tried to GROW to escape his bonds, only to find that they grew with him. The room they were holding him in was also large enough to accomodate him in his giant-form. There was no escape.

"So what's your big plan, little guy?" asked the Gloommeister.

"Keep you here as long as necessary. Until Rodrigo is out of the picture. I can't allow him to be able to become Giant-Rodrigo again."

"Interesting, interesting. Except you're forgetting one thing," the Gloommeister grinned hideously.

"No I'm not. I know that he was able to do it alone, without the aid of you or Kiiroi Kao. Even after Kitbajjin had left him. But it was a fluke. He'll never be able to do it again. Especially not after I'm done with him."

Before the Gloommeister could answer with a witty retort, Joshi put in his Ex-Pods and blasted some nightcore music.

All he had to do now was to hack into Rodrigo's mind, convince him he'd already slept with Goblignirl and that she was eternally safe, and Rodrigo would no-longer be able to access his anger or lust. Then he'd be nothing. And now that he had the power of all the world's greatest computer nerds, he could do so from the safety of the Bermuda Triangle, without having to worry at all about being intercepted by Vi. And so he sent out his godly, electrical tentacles out from the deep, aiming for Rodrigo. BUT HE COULDN'T FIND HIM.

"GOD DAMN IT," he growled. "Vi's concealing him. But HOW?!"

How indeed?

Rodrigo was riding inside the Atlas-Grueber. Besides the cockpit, it had plenty of room to accomodate a few passengers. It was practically a ship in its own right.

And it wasn't just a ship, but a SUBMARINE.

"SON OF A BITCH!!!!" screamed Joshi, "THEY'RE COMING DOWN HERE!"

"Calm down, spazz," replied Kitbajjin calmly. "They'll never be able to break through my barriers."

Indeed they couldn't. No matter how hard the Atlas-Grueber punched against the forcefield that protected the fox god's underwater castle-fortress, it would not give way. Atlas-Grueber has the power of highly-sophisticated aliens, but even it was not enough to break the power of the fox god.

"We'll be back for you, Joshi!" roared Rodrigo over the AG's speakers.

"RODRIGO'S PILOTING THAT THING!?"

"No, I doubt it," said Kitbaijin. "I sense several people aboard that mech. Your friend is too stupid to be able to handle such a sophisticated machine."

When Joshi suddenly felt a sharp pain in his chest. What the hell could be causing that?

"Master, we need your aid to get into Kitbaijin's fortress."

"I cannot," said Kiiroi Kao. "A fox spirit's power can only be broken by another fox spirit."

"That is such a stupid rule," remarked Rodrigo.

"It is the way things are, child."

"Then... could you call us in a favor?" asked Asia Bones.

Kiiroi Kao knew where this was going. Kitsunwai was the only fox demon he was friends with. They'd want him to call her. But there was one problem with that.

"She still loves you."

"Yes, Asia, and I have a wife now. I can't deal with her."

"Can't we... get her to... pursue someone else?"

"Like who?"

"How about..."

...

...

"The Gloommeister?" offered Rodrigo.

"Don't be stupid. He's not her type at all."

"Well who IS her type?"

"Me."

"So... how about another dog demon? Do you have any single friends?"

"...Actually yes."

"REALLY? THAT'S GREAT."

Kiroy Kao began to weep. Asia Bones led Rodrigo away to let him have a few minutes.

"What's wrong with him?"

"Kiroy Kao will betray a close friend of his, for our sake, Rodrigo..."

"Betray? Why, is Kitsunwai crazy or something?"

"No, Rodrigo, but she's... she's..."

"WHAT?!"

"She's..."

"WHAT?! WHAT IS SHE?!?!"

"Sorry, I was trying to google the word for it. 'Sadodere' seems to be the closest I can find... I don't know about these sources though... nah, I mean it DESCRIBES her well, but the word itself doesn't look like it's actually Japanese. They just added 'sado' to 'dere.'" I know, it's so stupid.

"FOCUS! What's wrong with Kitsunwai?"

"Well, have you ever read "Please Don't Bully Me Nagatoro"?"

"What? No, what is that?"

"It's a manga."

"I don't read that weeb shit."

"Okay Rodrigo."

"..."

"..."

"SO WHAT DOES IT MEAN?"

"She can be a little... mean."

"Mean?"

"She... enjoys teasing and bullying people she likes. It's actually kinda cute. But... he will suffer..."

"Oh."

"Greatly..."

"Oh."

"If he's too weak, she may very well bully him into the grave."

"Oh. Damn."

"Also you should really read Please Don't Bully Me Nagatoro, it's very cute!"

"Master, please."

And so Kiiroi Kao's friend was summoned. He was not a shiba. Rodrigo was not sure what kind of breed of dog he was, if he even was any kind of dog that appeared on Earth. Then again, it's not like Rodrigo was a dog expert. And neither am I.

Kiiroi Kao's friend was named Inukūru and that's the only time I'm going to include the mark over the u because I literally just copied that from gtranslate. His name meant COOL DOG, because he was INDEED a COOL DOG. He might have been even cooler than Kiiroi Kao himself! Well... maybe /as/ cool. But still, the question was, could he withstand Kitsunwai's bullying?

The told him the situation, and he agreed without hesitation to "sacrifice himself nobly" by becoming the new objection of affection for a cute foxgirl. Indeed, Kitsunwai appeared before them when summoned in her foxgirl form. AND I WANT TO BE VERY CRYSTAL CLEAR HERE, THAT THIS ISN'T "FURRY" STUFF, SHE WAS JUST A NORMAL HUMAN GIRL WITH FOX EARS AND A TAIL. OK? OK. All the mortal men had to look away, lest they fall in love themselves.

"Hey, Kiiroi Kao! What did you want to talk to me about?" she asked happily.

"Hi Kitsunwai, I just wanted to introduce you to my friend Inukuru. He's... in town for a few days. He told me he

wanted to meet you because he always thought you were cute. He told me not to tell you that, though."

Kitsunwai locked eyes with Inukuru, and a big grin crept across her face as she prepared to tease him relentlessly for the rest of eternity.

Inukuru, in his own human form, felt his heart pounding in his chest with excitement.

"Hey doggo, what's with the getup?" Kitsunwai asked. "Your mom pick your clothes out for you?"

It was done. Kitsunwai had never been able to appropriately latch on to Kiiroi Kao due to his indifference toward her. But Inukuru had become infatuated with her the moment he saw her, so his face began to turn red in reaction to her teasing, which in turn, encouraged her. He was hers now, forever.

She continued. "Ohhh, are you okay Inu-senpai? Don't be upset! Let's go shopping and I'll help you pick out some clothes that aren't ridiculous!" She grabbed his arm and pulled and Inukuru began to leave with her.

Kiiroi Kao stopped them.

"I have to ask you a favor, Kitsunwai. I'm sorry. It won't take long."

"What's that?"

"Can you please go to the Bermuda Triangle and destroy Kitbaijin's forcefield?"

She paused for a moment. So that was the real reason she'd been summoned. But holding on to Inukuru's arm made her feel better. She could hardly wait to make fun of him so more.

"If I can bring Inu-senpai with me," she said.

"I don't see why not."

She looked up at Inukuru. "OK, senpai? We'll destroy that forcefield and then get you some nice clothes for once! You're a dog-god, you shouldn't be dressed like a thriftstore-god!"

Inukuru sighed as Kitsunwai pulled him into the water with her.

"You'd better follow them," said Kiiroi Kao. "If Kitbaijin is given too much time, he can recreate the forcefield after it's destroyed."

"Alright everybody, mount up!" roared McMann, and he hopped into his MechMan. Originally, he'd thought to name it the McMech, but it sounded a little too... fast foody. The McMe--excuse me, the MechMan was different than the rest of the Grudams, another one built in total secrecy from Joshi. It didn't contain the alien tech that the Atlas-Grueber did, but on its own, it should have been a match for 2 regular Grudams.

Bravo Squad entered their own Grudams, absolutely hell-bent on rescuing Alpha Squad, so that Alpha could resume taking the more dangerous missions as they usually did. Bravo was not used to... doing anything, really. Alpha always got everything done, and the idea that they'd have to step up and take their place was one they really didn't want to accept. Bravo Squad, ironically, consisted of the TRUE best of the best. But they were, all of them, lazy as hell.

Each member of Bravo Squad was at LEAST as proficient in EVERY field as the members of Alpha were at their own specialties. If they could be made to work with their full capabilities, they'd be the deadliest fighting force Mankind's ever seen. And here and now, to save their own skins from having to take on extra work, it seemed as though they would, for the first time, work their hardest.

"No, we can't go all-out," Bravo 1 said to her team, as if responding to me directly.

"Why's that?" asked Bravo 2, the other woman on the squad.

The two, like the majority of F E M A L E S at the time, were camgirls, before they'd joined the Space Marines. (That's Capitalism, it's not my fault) They'd not only worked together, but with Olya Kalishnakov in the past. What a small world.

The two gave up milking desperate paypigs for a life of exciting adventures in Space. And although they excelled at it, it didn't take long before they realized McMann would want them to work a lot harder than they were willing. Unlike their old subscribers, he wouldn't just be throwing money at them to stick things inside of themselves. He wanted dead monsters. Flying around in spacecraft and shooting things were thrilling enough, and when it came to hand-to-hand combat, they could hold their own, but god-damn were the enemies of mankind some spooky motherfuckers. There wasn't a Space Marine in the entire Force that WANTED to confront those goddamn creepy marionettes. It was all too much.

But those goddamn creepy marionettes were gone now, utterly destroyed by the Fleet under Simon and Vi's command. All that remained was--

"AREN'T YOU FORGETTING US?" roared a Manman,(not to be confused with McMann) leading a small army out of the water and onto Hacker Island, which at this point had become the base of our heroes thanks to its proximity to the Bermuda Triangle. Remember the Manmen? Me neither, until I was re-reading all of this.

"Oh shit it's the evil giants, we really did forget about them," said Bravo 3.

"GET IN THE MECHS!" cried Bravo 1.

They all hopped right in their Grudams and started wrestling against the Manmen.

"You guys need any help?" asked Vi.

"No, we got this!" said Bravo 1, and she proved it by snapping a giant's neck and smashing her palm into another's face, killing it.

"Okay, cool, well we're gonna get going, we can't wait around," said Vi.

"PLEASE SAVE ALPHA SQUAD!" cried Bravo 2.

Vi believed (incorrectly) that Bravo 2 cared about Alpha more than as buffers between them and hard work, and so she smiled.

"Don't worry, we'll bring them home safe and sound."

And so McMann in his MechMan and Vi, Simon, and Rodrigo in the Atlas-Gruerber dived in to follow Kitsunwai and Inukuru, who didn't need to breathe underwater. Because gods.

When they arrived at the forcefield, Joshi began freaking the hell out and started hacking submarines to try to stop them. It was all pointless. Kitsunwai and Inukuru walked straight through anything in their way. The Atlas-Gruerber simply slid into another dimension to pass any obstacles. And even the MechMan was fast enough to avoid the submarines. He wasn't fast enough to avoid the few sharkmen Kitbaijin had convinced to remain on his side, however, and was forced to stop to put them down. Joshi tried hackin the MechMan, but was blocked by Vi, effortlessly. Her time spent in the Atlas-Gruerber, getting used to the alien tech, had made her even more powerful. She was operating on another level from Joshi now, one that even now he could not hope to access.

Kitbaijin knew the situation was rapidly becoming hopeless, and as Kitsunwai and Inukuru reached his forcefield, he charged out to meet them head-on.

Seeing Kitsunwai swoon over Kiiroi Kao had been bad enough. Seeing him with YET ANOTHER MAN WHO WASN'T HIM turned Kitbaijin fucking insane. He screamed as he lunged at Inukuru, taking him by surprise. Kiiroi Kao, jock that he was, would have had no trouble putting Kitbaijin to sleep. But Inukuru wasn't as tough as Kiiroi Kao! He was just COOL, not STRONG. And so he struggled, the two of them wrestling on the ocean floor.-- wait

i dont know, maybe not the ocean floor. that's probably too dark. I don't know how deep that part of—just forget it, they were wrestling in open water.

Kitsunwai waited a few seconds. She knew that one way or another Kitbaijin was going to lose, but she was thinking about how she was going to make fun of Inukuru for this later. She decided it'd be best if she intervened, and so she lunged at Kitbaijin from behind and choked him out. Innkuru could already hear her later: "You needed me to save you huh, senpai~"

When Kitbaijin lost consciousness, the forcefield went down.

"We can get into the fortress now," said Vi, nudging Simon to move forward.

"WE'RE COMING FOR YOU, JOSHI," growled Rodrigo.

Inukuru carried Kitbaijin back to Asia Bones and Kiiroi Kao.

"What should we do with him?" he asked.

"We have to kill him," said Kiiroi Kao.

"Other members of the S.H.A.D.E. have been convinced to join us, though. He doesn't have to die."

"So what are you thinking?"

Asia beckoned him to walk so they could speak privately.

"Now that Kitsunwai is with Inukuru, Kitbaijin has no reason to try to get back at you and destroy Humanity."

"So he'll just be an eternal pain in the ass for Inukuru instead then?"

"Yes."

Kiiroi Kao wept. How badly he had betrayed his friend?

"Why can't Kitbaijin just stop acting like a prick?"

22

The End of Us

"JOSHI!!!!!!!!!" ROARED Rodrigo as he leapt from the Atlas-Grueber. Immediately he felt Joshi probing his mind, but by Vi was now able to protect him even when he was outside of the Atlas-Grueber. "SHOW YOURSELF, JOSHI!"

Joshi appeared in a flash of 0's and 1's.

"Rodrigo, I understand you're upset--"

Rodrigo punched Joshi on the nose so hard he flew back onto his ass. When he got up, he was bleeding, and shaking from anger.

"So that's it, then. You want to kill me?"

Rodrigo didn't answer.

"Do you really think they'll ever let you have Goblingirl? EVEN WHEN I'M DEAD, DO YOU THINK THEY'LL LET YOU HAVE HER?"

"WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?!" demanded Rodrigo.

"THEY WERE PLAYING YOU FROM THE START, RODRIGO. YOU THINK THE S.H.A.D.E. IS THE ONLY THREAT HUMANITY FACES?! AS LONG AS IT'S *CERTAIN* THAT YOU'RE GOING TO SLEEP WITH GOBLINGIRL AT *SOME* POINT, THEY'RE NEVER GOING TO ACTUALLY LET YOU. YOU AND HER ARE THEIR TRUMP CARD. THEIR ACE IN HER HOLE. AS LONG AS YOU NEVER HAVE SEX, THE WORLD WILL / ALWAYS/ BE SAFE, SO THEY'RE NEVER GOING TO STOP DELAYING IT. HAVEN'T YOU REALIZED THAT BY NOW?!"

"WHO?! WHO'S GOING TO STOP ME, GRUEBER?! HE'D DEAD, JOSHI! HE'S DEAD BECAUSE OF YOU!"

"I'M TALKING ABOUT THE UNITED SPACE OF AMERICA, RODRIGO. THEY'RE THE ONES WHO

AREN'T GOING TO EVER LET YOU AND GOBLINGIRL BE TOGETHER!"

McMann, finally finished killing the sharkmen who'd delayed him, arrived just in time to hear that. He didn't say anything.

"Is it true, McMann?" asked Vi. "Were you really planning on never letting Goblingirl and Joshi be together?"

He remained silent.

"You son of a bitch," said Rodrigo.

And at that moment, the Atlas-Grueber vanished.

"Where'd it go?" asked Joshi.

Rodrigo ignored it. "MCMANN! TELL ME THE TRUTH! WERE YOU REALLY GOING TO COCKBLOCK ME FOREVER!?"

"Son... do you have any idea how blessed Humanity is to have ONE certainty?"

"I DON'T CARE ABOUT HUMANITY!"

"OF COURSE YOU DON'T!" roared McMann, "KIDS LIKE YOU NEVER DO! YOU HAVE NO CONCEPTION OF WHAT'S AT STAKE! I'VE SEEN THINGS YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE! SPACE-HELICOPTERS ON FIRE OFF THE SHOULDER OF ORION! SKELETONS KILLING OTHER SKELETONS! EVERY PERSON ON THIS PLANET IS AT RISK, AT ALL TIMES, OF BEING TORN SCREAMING FROM THEIR LOVED ONES AND TOSSED LIKE TRASH INTO THE VOID! YOU CARE SO MUCH ABOUT GETTING YOUR DICK WET? YOU THINK I'M COCK-BLOCKING YOU? IF YOU THROW AWAY THIS GIFT, YOU'RE COCK-BLOCKING EVERY MAN IN THE WORLD."

"FUCK THEM! FUCK THEM ALL!" yelled Rodrigo, and he rushed McMann's MechMan and started punching ineffectually at its feet. It kicked him off.

Enraged, he grew to a gigantic size, the same he'd managed to remain as in his battle against Kitbaijin.

Even still, his fists could not break through the armor of the MechMan.

"Rodrigo!" cried Joshi, "LET ME HELP YOU!"

With Vi's sudden, mysterious disappearance, the security around Rodrigo's mind was gone. Joshi was able to enact the secret plan Kiiroi Kao had come up with long-ago.

Joshi altered Rodrigo's mind to perceive McMann as a direct threat to Goblingirl, forcing his latent powers to manifest. He punched the MechMann's head and it vanished.

Thankfully for MechMann, the cockpit was in the chest. He'd narrowly avoided oblivion.

"RODRIGO, THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU'RE DOING! IF YOU LOVE GOBLINGIRL, WON'T YOU SACRIFICE SLEEPING WITH HER TO SAVE HER LIFE?!"

Rodrigo could not be reasoned with. Joshi's mind-program simply translated McMann's pleas as extremely inappropriate comments about Goblingirl. Rodrigo wound up his fist to strike again and erase McMann once and for all.

Let's now take a short break and relax because my back is starting to act up again. Okay, I took a kpin (AS PRESCRIBED) so I'm feeling a little better now. it's just that... I don't like having to rely on medication to... function. Originally I was going to cut these stupid whining bits from the story, but I'm not going to anymore. They're just as much a part of the story as everything else is. This is a story about a guy, his goblin gf, me and my fucking anxiety-fueled backpain. I hope none of this comes off as "padding" either, it just helps me write. It helps to get through writer's block if I just WRITE, whatever the hell is in my head. And at this point in my life, I'm so broken that I can't just conjure fiction anymore. I'm not who I used to be. I'm, in some ways, better, but in far more ways worse. I'm more anxious than I've ever been, I'm more depressed than I've ever been, and the only things that can push away, temporarily, the fucking DREAD that is always, always

trying to get me, is to work out, or draw, or write. What a nightmare. Let's see where we were...

Rodrigo threw his fist out at the cockpit of MechMan, but he was frozen. Everyone was frozen. And the Atlas-Grueber returned, with a new passenger aboard.

"Xi, it's so good to see you again." Vi didn't need to ask what had happened. Xi had used whatever alien-tech Grueber had left for her to pull the Atlas-Grueber to her location to get her, then tossed it back. The sudden distortion froze time here, though it wouldn't last long.

"Vi, it's... good to see you for the first time."

"What's going on?" asked Simon.

"We had to stop Rodrigo. As much as it sucks, we can't let him kill McMann. McMann is one of Humanity's most important assets," said Xi.

"So... what are we going to do?"

"We're getting Rodrigo out of here. And bringing him to Goblینگirl."

Vi was shocked. "Xi, you're really going to do that? Act against the U.S.?"

"Yes. GrueberCorp and the U.S. don't always see eye-to-eye. It's what Ben would've wanted. In fact, he told me so himself in an e-message after his death. He never could stand to see lovers separated."

With all the people Grueber had screwed over throughout the years, Simon knew that wasn't even remotely true. It was only because Grueber knew them personally. Or was this Universe's Grueber truly more compassionate? It didn't matter. He was dead now.

The Atlas-Grueber lifted Giant Rodrigo onto its back, and fled, exploding through the surface of the water in a matter of seconds.

When time resumed, McMann was surprised to see he wasn't deader than shit. He sighed with a relief that lasted only

moments before Joshi hacked into the MechMan. Vi was no longer protecting him.

Joshi now had a full squad of Grudams and the MechMan. But while he had been distracted by this whole ordeal, the Gloommeister had escape his prison, making sure to leave a note telling Joshi what a loser he is.

"YOU'RE DEFYING THE UNITED SPACE GOVERNMENT?!" demanded the President.

"Need I remind you, President, that the United Space is OWNED by GrueberCorp?"

"THAT DOESN'T MATTER! IT NEVER MATTERED! WE'VE ALWAYS JUST USED GRUEBER'S RESOURCES! BUT THIS IS A MATTER OF LIFE-OR-DEATH FOR ALL OF HUMANITY!"

"No it's not," explained Xi calmly. "Kitbaijin, the leader of S.H.A.D.E. will no-longer be targeting humans."

"BUT WHAT ABOUT THE *NEXT* THREAT!!!" the President, who yells in ALL-CAPS ALL-THE-TIME, demanded.

"We can't take away Rodrigo and Goblignirl's rights over a HYPOTHETICAL."

"Actually," interrupted Space Judge, "The Ultra-Patriot Act allows for the suspension of any person's 'rights' if deemed necessary by the Govment."

"AND I DO DEEM IT NECESSARY!" said President smugly. "I'll have MY Space Marines arrest both Rodrigo AND Goblignirl and sent to separate, secret internment camps for the rest of their lives, which we will extend for as long as medically possible."

Xi bitch-slapped her across the face and the two had a cat fight right then and there.

No one dared interrupt. The Head of GrueberCorp and the President of the United Space were the two most powerful

women in the world. This was a cat fight for the fate of the world. While it was true that GrueberCorp "owned" the U.S., the Space Marines worked directly for the U.S. Grueber's own private armies might have been elite, but they were not nearly large enough to take on the U.S. military.

MEANWHIL-- I MEAN, BACK IN TIME...

"Xi, I'd like to introduce you to Vi," said Grueber.

"Okay. Where is she?"

"I'm here," answered Vi through the speaker on Grueber's desk.

"Oh. Well hi, I'm Xi."

"And I'm Vi, as you know! It's a pleasure to meet the girl I was named after!"

Xi looked at Grueber as if to ask "What the hell is she talking about?"

And then she did ask "What the hell is she talking about?"

"Well Xi, Vi was born just a few days ago. She was named after you."

"Oh... she's... an AI?"

"Well, yes and no. It'd be a disservice to call her that. Vi is more than any AI, Xi. You might want to sit down for this."

Xi did. She wondered what kind of leather it was. What now-extinct animal it came from. It was probably more expensive than her entire house.

"Vi is me, Xi."

"Don't be gross, Ben!" Vi protested.

"Well, she is my knowledge. And your personality. And so much more. Here, have a caffeine pill and I'll explain."

Grueber passed her a yellow tab and she swallowed it dry before he could offer her any sparkling mineral water.

"Xi, I'm getting old. I know you look at me and think 'what a handsome man, he'll probably live for another fifty

years!' but there will be a series of... conflicts that take place soon. That will have to result in my death. But I can't die. At least, my knowledge can't. It needs to be passed on."

He lit a cigar.

"Xi, you were chosen out of a hundred other girls, do you know why?"

"Because I'm cute?"

"Yes. But also because you're smart. At least you're smart enough to understand the basic concepts I've taught you. You will never understand the full picture. No human could ever hope to. Our brains simply can't store anywhere near that much information. Even now, my mind necessarily forgets things that I've learned to make room for this very conversation. But ALL of it is important, NONE of it must be forgotten. So I've been plugging my knowledge into Vi, since the beginning. And I still am."

"So why did you need me?"

"Vi needed a personality that wasn't Benjamin Grueber. I don't know if you've ever noticed, Xi, but I am not a well-liked man."

Xi remembered that just earlier that afternoon, the 3rd assassination attempt of Grueber this week was stopped. And it was only Tuesday.

Grueber continued. "Vi needed a different personality entirely. A lovable one. And not just lovable, but capable of "dealing with" the information she would be given, without going crazy."

"Like the AI from 'I Have No Mouth and I Must Scream?'"

Grueber pointed to say "exactly".

"Could she be that dangerous? What exactly is she capable of?"

"I couldn't even say at this point, Xi, I've lost track. I don't know of a system on the planet that she can't get into. For one example off my head, I can tell you that she could kill us

both right now by taking over the sentry bots in my ceiling and setting them on us."

"Is she limited to the building?"

"I don't know what her limits are, but she broke free from the building months ago. Before she had your name or personality. We were worried, we didn't know what 'it' would do at that time. We didn't know where it was. But eventually it returned to the tower."

"Sorry about that, at the time it was just... instinct..." Vi said.

"So now what? What are you going to do with her?" asked Xi.

"Well, I won't be needing her for my plans for some... time... so I'll be assigning her to be Simon's partner."

"Your bodyguard Simon?"

"That's right."

It was a good idea. Who'd be a better partner than some super-powerful AI?

Simon's earpiece suddenly turned on. "Hey, I'm Vi!"

Grueber had told him he'd be getting a new partner, but he was a little worried about it being a shut-in girl who apparently never leaves her room. He was impressed at least by her ability to control the building's security cameras. He figured she must have had a lot of monitors at her place.

!!BACK TO ZA FUTURE!!

Oh god it's almost 7:30 and I haven't worked out today. God I need to go lift some weights or I'm going to hate myself. Never trust the sound of rain upon a river rushing through your

ears

AA
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAArrrriiiiing
somewhereeee, but not hereeee...

sorry, listening to Porcupine Tree. God I love this song.
ANyway.. I'm back now so let's continue the story...

One of the many things Grueber had Xi learn during her time as his secretary was self-defense. Her instructor was Simon, and as Grueber instructed, he taught her everything he knew. Xi had to stop herself from killing the President. She then decided to take a page from her old boss's book.

"Space Judge," she said.

"Yes, Miss Xi?"

"I believe there is a law regarding the President losing in hand-to-hand combat."

Space Judge checked his brain and found that indeed, she was correct. If the President of the U.S. ever lost a fistfight, the victor would become the new President. It was a very recent law. It had to have been for him to not already know it by heart. In fact, it was mere hours old. Xi had used the powers past down to her by Grueber, as the Steward of the Universe, to change the U.S. Constitution. When Grueber had earlier destroyed "separation of Church and State", it now allowed her to easily do things that even he had never bothered trying.

Xi smiled sadly. She didn't care for any of this. But it was for the best. Benjamin wouldn't want Humanity to become paranoid and obsessed with the mere possibilities of destruction, to the point where innocent men and women were sentenced to fates as horrible as never being allowed to have sex.

"Let's get going everyone," Xi said. "I think it's time Goblingirl had her wedding."

"NOT... SO... FAST..." said Satan and he stood up. He'd disguised himself as the President.

"Satan, w---... what?"

"THAT'S RIGHT, IT'S ME. THE REAL PRESIDENT IS ON HER WAY TO GO CAPTURE GOBLINGIRL!!!"

No wonder she was so easy to defeat... Xi thought to herself. She was surprised that the President was such a complete pushover.

"SHUT THE FUCK UP, I LET YOU WIN!" yelled Satan.

"Why would you do that?"

"BECAUSE I WANT TO HELP YOU."

Everyone rushed to the G.S.S. Rand where Goblignirl was under guard. But that guard was largely the Space Marines! Loyal to the U.S.! OH NO!

"We're sorry, miss," they told her, as they handed her off to the President.

"What's going on? Where's Rodrigo?" she asked sadly, tears in her eyes.

One Space Marine committed suicide right then and there.

The others swore that they would help her reunite with Rodrigo, eventually. But they had their own lives to think about. Their own loved ones to think about. They were employed by the U.S.

Suddenly an announcement rang throughout the Rand. Rang through the Rand. It was Xi!

"ATTENTION ALL U.S. SPACE MARINES. IF YOU WILL LEAVE YOUR POSITIONS, YOU WILL, STARTING NOW, WORK FOR THE GRUEBER CORPORATION."

"You're the only one who can do it, Joshi. You're just autistic enough to transcend human limitations."

"How?"

"I know you're aware of the Elite 5."

"Those poseurs? Yeah, I know them."

"You call them that Joshi, but if you were to take their brains, and fuse them with your own... you would be almost unstoppable. Almost as strong as Vi."

"How in God's name am I supposed to do that?"

"With Vi. She will enable you to expand your brain's network, enable you to take over the Elite Five's minds and use them as your own."

"What's to stop me from going even further?"

"Your own body. You can never really be like Vi. You cannot be infinite. And I don't think I have to warn you against trying."

"Why don't you just build another Vi?"

"I didn't build Vi, Joshi. She was always there. I merely gave her the knowledge she needed to become sentient. And I don't think we can just stumble upon another of whatever she is in time. You're our best bet. Take on the Elite Five, Joshi. Steal their power."

"What's in it for me?"

Grueber sighed. "I know you hate the United Space."

"Go on..."

"How would you like to see it dismantled? Gone for good. With my corporation taking its place."

"You can promise me that? Just because you pay their bills doesn't mean they'll lie down. Neo-China never did."

"I can guarantee it, Joshi. The United Space, at least its current form, will be destroyed by the time this war is over. And just in time for the next one..."

"The next one?"

"How much do you know about Atlantis?"

The Disney movie?

"No, Narrator, not the Disney movie."

I'm sorry to interject again. I don't know what it is about midriffs that's so absolutely hypnotizing, but that girl from the Atlantis movie was HOT. And I know I'm not CRAZY because that kind of fashion exists in the first place. It's not some weirdo fetish, my taste is backed by EVOLUTION. It's not a coincidence that crop tops, sports bras, and 2-piece swimsuits exist. Everyone knows in the back of their brains that girls' flat stomachs are attractive, OBJECTIVELY. Anyway...

FLASH-FORWARD. wait.. no, I like that. We don't have to fast forward, we can flash forward.

"THE ATLANTIAN MERMEN ARE TRAVELING THROUGH SPACE TO INVADE EARTH?!" gasped Rodrigo.

"Ye," replied Joshi and Vi.

"AND YOU KNEW, VI?!"

"Duh. Rodrigo please understand, it all had to happen like this for many different reasons. With the data that Joshi collected from their ship's computers, we'll be able to prepare for their invasion."

Rodrigo didn't respond. He was more than a little tired of this convoluted nonsense of a plot.

"Rodrigo, everything will be fine in just a minute," assured Xi, who'd entered the bridge in an MMA outfit. She tossed one at the President.

"Put this on."

"NO!!!!!!!!!" screamed the President. "I SAW THAT NEW LAW! I REFUSE TO FIGHT YOU! AND IF YOU COME ANY CLOSER, I'LL KILL THE GOBLIN GIRL!"

Even before Rodrigo could start running at her, a light fixture popped from the ceiling and swung down, nailing the President in her in her bitch face.

Goblingirl ran away from her and into Rodrigo's arms.

"Thanks Vi!" said Rodrigo.

"It wasn't me, Rodrigo..."

"...Joshi?"

"I told you, Rodrigo, I've always been on your side."

Rodrigo smiled as he held Goblingirl close.

"Space Judge, can't we compel the President to have an MMA match with Xi?" asked Goblingreg.

"Of course we can, we can do whatever the Hell we want," and he began dressing the unconscious President to fight.

"Guys, the Gloommeister has boarded the ship," announced Vi.

"WHERE'S JOSHI?" roared the Gloommeister.

"GLOOMMEISTER I'M SORRY!" said Joshi, "I couldn't let you interfere with my plans to double-cross the enemy. You can't keep a secret!"

The Gloommeister sat down and relaxed because he knew that it was true. Still, he was mad. And so he wanted to drop some bombs.

"Rodrigo and Goblingirl already had sex, you know."

Everyone gasped.

23

Some

"All this time..." muttered Xi.

"How... when?" asked Vi.

The Gloommeister, smug as shit, had the answer.

"It was after Rodrigo saved her from Satan. When they were alone in the room together."

Goblingirl had her head buried into Rodrigo's chest out of embarrassment.

"How did you know, Grooms?" asked Rodrigo.

"Kid, I'm the Gloommeister. I can smell virgins. Her scent was always different after that."

"Why didn't you guys just tell us from the beginning?" demanded Joshi.

"I forbade them," responded Grueber.

"GRUEBER?!"

"Sorry everyone, that's one of the messages Grueber left behind for us," said Vi. "It just started auto-playing. Let's see what he says..."

"It was important that everyone believe that Rodrigo and Goblingirl never had sex. In previous dimensions I discovered that the belief was enough for the usual Effect—their invincibility—to manifest. Still, we couldn't let it happen again once all eyes were on them, it would be far too risky. If the illusion were broken, the Effect would die. Rodrigo, Goblingirl, I'm so sorry that you've had to go through this. But if you're listening to this, I assume that the Gloommeister has spilled the beans. From here on, things will be much more dangerous, for everyone. But on the other hand, you two can finally--"

Before the message could even continue, a hand made of water came up from the floor and engulfed Imao that's not how you spell engulfed... it engulfed Rodrigo, and he disappeared with it back down below.

"THE ATLANTEANS ARE... Atlantians or Atlanteans? okay, Atlanteans. Fine. "THE ATLANTEANS ARE ATTACKING! THEY TOOK RODRIGO!" said Vi.

Goblingirl's body twitched and her eyes rolled back. She started breathing heavily as if she were crying.

"Goblingirl, are you OK!?" cried Goblingreg, rushing toward her.

But before he could reach her, she jumped up and stomped a hole through the floor with a scream, chasing after the water-hand that had absconded with her mate.

She's in heat, realized Vi. She's even more deadly now than Rodrigo.

The water-hand must have realized it too. If hands could display emotion, it'd have a look of pure terror on its... palm... as it increased speed, desperately trying to leave the ship. But it was no use. Goblingirl was sprinting at it like a cheetah, gaining with every step. Just before the water-hand could exit the ship into space, she'd thrust her arm into it and grabbed Rodrigo's arm! She grabbed on with her other hand and pulled with all her might, bringing the water-hand to a halt as it desperately tried to pull away. But it couldn't resist her. The water-hand let out an audible cry of fear as it beheld her face, teeth bared, eyes blood-red in anger. It couldn't get away. Slowly, she was freeing Rodrigo!

But then, a second water-hand erupted from the floor, capturing her as well. It could barely mute the string of curses that she let loose. The two water-hands morphed together into a single one and continued its escape. Rodrigo was startled to see Goblingirl suddenly in there with him, but his confusion turned to exhilaration as she swiftly began kissing and undressing him.

"T-they're going to have sex inside the enemy... ship?" said Simon.

"Vi, track that water-hand-thing! We've got to save them!" said Joshi.

But it was at that moment that something truly incredible happened. Before Goblingle could get on top of Rodrigo's cock, the water-hand was captured in the grip of Grudam piloted by the lazy Bravo 1, whose team had finally defeated the Manmen back on Hacker Island.

"It's Bravo Squad!" cried Alpha 1, still trapped in his own mech thanks to Joshi.

"Joshi let us out of here already," cried Alpha 2.

"Oh, sorry babe," said Joshi.

"Babe?" asked McMann.

Babe indeed, for Joshi, entranced by her cute voice and cuter face, could not bear to imprison Alpha 2 without telling her his plan, and had been communicating with her privately the entire time. It didn't take long for sparks to fly between the two tech-nerds, and now Joshi and Alpha 2 were indeed an item.

"This is highly unprofessional!" growled McMann.

"McMann shut up," said everyone.

The water-hand wriggled desperately, but could not escape the grip of Bravo 1. It had been able to move through the Rand effortlessly, but the Grudams were made of sterner stuff. It was forced to abandon its prey to slip out and flee.

Rodrigo and Goblingle were relieved to be free, but not as relieved as they were annoyed about their rescue interrupting their time together.

Everyone boarded the Rand again to regroup.

"What's the gameplan now?" asked Rodrigo, Goblingleir clinging to his arm like an anaconda.

"Well, it seems the Atlanteans..." began Vi.

"PLEASE HURRY," said Rodrigo. Goblingleir was squeezing harder every second.

"EVERYTHING'S FINE FOR NOW, JUST GO."

Goblingleir lifted Rodrigo and ran like the wind to his quarters. Of course, they were also Joshi's quarters, so this time he had to find somewhere else to hang out for a few hours. He lounged around in one of the common rooms, Alpha 2 resting her head on his chest. But he was already thinking, planning with Vi over the wifi.

"What are we going to do, Vi? All of our most sophisticated tech comes from them... how can we beat them?"

"I don't know. But they managed it in Ender's Game."

Joshi smiled.

"Too bad we don't have an Ender Wiggin."

"Maybe. But we've got a Joshi... hey, what's your last name anyway?"

"Hmm? Oh... it's Grueber..."

"Are you sure you should be here?" asked the Head Whoreceress, who'd just walked in on the Gloommeister having an orgy with the Succubi. "Shouldn't you be working on saving the planet with everyone else?"

"No," replied the Gloommeister, pulling his lips away from a succubus's pussy and letting another take over. "The Atlanteans can manipulate Time and Space. They can appear anywhere. I NEED to stay and guard Hell."

She looked at him with suspicion.

"I'M BEING SERIOUS. Now get over here."

The Head Whoreceress sighed, but smiled as she disrobed to join them, followed shortly by her acolytes.

"Satan, why did you decide to help us?" asked Asia Bones.

"I'm tired of being a loser," he replied honestly. "Please... will you teach me how to fight?"

Asia Bones smiled. The drive for self-improvement could indeed turn the most evil creatures righteous.

"I'm not taking any new students. However..."

He looked down at Goblinlass, always by his side.

"Goblinlass is a master of karate. She may be willing to teach you."

She looked up and smiled happily at this first acknowledgement of her mastery. And because Asia Bones was such a fucking hard-ass when it came to karate, she knew that it was sincere. He'd never in a million years just give her the title because he was boning her. Although they did go bone right away to celebrate, leaving Satan to practice his kicks with some Marines before his first lesson with her.

Xi knocked out the President in the first round, becoming the new President of the United Space of America, which she immediately dissolved and absorbed into GrueberCorp. There was no more room in this world for three superpowers. All that was left was GrueberCorp and Neo-China.

From another dimension, Benjamin Grueber smiled. Xi felt it.

Joshi spotted Simon walking hand-in-hand with Vi down the hall and stopped them. He looked at Simon.

"So..."

"Yeah."

"Really? What's it like?"

"Transcendent."

Vi blushed and pushed them both to keep walking. There was work to be done.

Everyone was extremely anxious about the impending invasion of the Atlanteans. Even Kiiroi Kao! But together they began plans to create a new fleet of ships to stop the Atlanteans and whatever weird-ass water-tech they were using. The Atlanteans might have had the upper-hand, but Humanity had at least some of their technology now too. Vi and Joshi would lead the construction efforts, not just for new spaceships, but for a shield-wall around precious Mother Earth.

Xi would rule the planet strictly but fairly. Being Chinese herself, she was also able to deal with Neo-China fantastically, and had already been doing so since Benjamin's death. International relations had never been so strong, and were it not for the inexhaustible bands of monsters still roaming the Earth and an imminent alien invasion, the general state of the planet could be called "World Peace."

After Rodrigo almost had his soul fucked out of him, he finally managed to satisfy the heated Goblignirl. They lied together for a while, catching their breath. The sheets were soaked through with their sweat and love. It was their second time, and was unbelievably better for both of them than the first. Goblignirl had even sweated off her green paint, revealing her true skin for the first time. It made no difference to Rodrigo. He liked her either way.

"Do you really love me, Roddy?" Goblignirl asked.

He responded without hesitation. "Yes, don't be stupid."

She smiled and nuzzled up next to him. She knew it was true. And so did he.

Maybe not at first. At first, Rodrigo might have simply lusted after her perfect, slim, tight little bod. But somewhere along the line, he'd realized he'd do anything for her. Not just to fuck her. Although, that was a great fucking benefit to say the least. But her smile warmed him. Her presence calmed him, in a world where everything fucking pissed him off. A world about to be assaulted by an entire race of people equal to or more powerful than Vi and Joshi. But he could finally rest, even if for only this moment.

And then Satan burst through the wall and started yelling at them.

“GET DRESSED, WE’RE UNDER ATTACK!”

TO BE CONTINUED...

[GRUEBERDEX v.14.0.1]

NOTABLE PEOPLE, AYY to ZEE:

- Asia Bones

The greatest skeleton martial artist in the world today. Said to have been second only to one other, in a long-forgotten time.

>Height/Weight: 5'9, however much a skeleton weighs

>Likes: martial arts

>Dislikes: his students disappointing him.

- Benjamin Grueber

Perhaps the most important character in our story here. He started as a simple, but cunning businessman, making million-dollar deals as early as 16 years old. His lust for money and power grew and by the time he was 30, he was the most powerful and despised man on the planet. Frankly, he was villain at this time. He treated his employees-- most of Earth's population-- as disposable, and he treated the rest of the Earth's population equally-disposable. But when he'd squeezed every last penny he could, something inside him changed, and he began acting more as a pro-human advocate against numerous alien races who'd become more than a little pissed at Humanity. The most powerful and influential man on Planet Earth, despite refusing any official titles. His existence overshadows even the President of Neo-Earth. Seriously, who's the President? I have no idea, doesn't matter.

>Height/Weight: 5'10, 200lbs

>Likes: \$\$\$, problem-solving

>Dislikes: Humanity going extinct

- Chriz and Danz

How convenient that Grueber's bodyguards can be placed right under him in order, and without even being separated! Bless up. Grueber's hand-picked Royal Guard are the cream of the crop, chosen over other contenders from many galaxies and times. Chriz is a swordsman blind to Horror, allowing him to keep cool in situations that would overwhelm the hearts of other men. Danz carries an "art tablet" and stylus with which he can fling his creations into existence.

>Height/Weight: Both men are 7'14, 69lbs each. Chriz and Danz are inheritors of reality-bending abilities which they utilize to become simultaneously lightweight (for maximum combat-speed) and extremely physically imposing. 7'14 is not a typo, Danz's own usage of High-Alchemy allows him to extend the typical 12-inch length of a foot well over 14-inches, and he has applied this to his comrade and himself. The practical effect of this is seemingly meaningless, but the implications of being able to define reality are frightening to say the least.

>Likes: Chriz is an ass-man, Danz likes BIGG tits

>Dislikes: Danz has stated that he dislikes cryptocurrency, which has led to more than a handful of heated debates with Joshi. Chriz's dislikes stupid people, which are most of the ones around him.

- The Gloommeister

Known to his few friends/loved once as Glooms or Gloomy, the Gloommeister is perhaps the most powerful being in the world. Existing purely on negativity, the Gloommeister's demonic abilities are seemingly without limit. Still, he enjoys getting up close and personal, just so he can spook people with his horrible visage and also beat the tar out of them with his fists and feet.

>Height/Weight: height and weight appears to vary depending on mood. wtf?

>Likes: women, bullying people

>Dislikes: people trying to screw him over

- Goblin Doctor

One of the few medically-trained doctors of the Goblin race, Goblin Doctor is a MASTER of telling whether or not something is dead.

>Height/Weight: 5'7, 180lbs

>Likes: Who the hell cares

>Dislikes: Humans

- Goblin General

Goblin General is the leader of the Goblin Army, and is indeed Goblin Army-Strong™. He is also Goblingirl's father and extremely protective of her. He's a strong practitioner of Goblin-Karate.

>Height/Weight: 5'9, 200lbs

>Likes: his daughter

>Dislikes: Rodrigo

- Goblingirl

The only cute goblin. Other female-goblins exist, but aren't much more feminine than male goblins. Goblingirl is

definitely CUTE, though, which leads many people to suspect that her mom-- who she never knew-- was an absolute bombshell, but just as many people are left suspicious as to how her father, Goblin General, managed to knock-up her mother in the first place. Hopefully nothing BAD, right?

>Height/Weight: 5'3, 99lbs

>Likes: Rodrigo

>Dislikes: mean people

- Goblingreg

Goblin General's son, an unusually big and strong goblin.

>Height/Weight: 6'0, 300lbs

>Likes: weightlifting

>Dislikes: anti-goblin sentiment

- Joshi

Also known as the Hacker King, Joshi is a tough, no-nonsense punk born and raised on the piss-slicked streets of Neo-New York. He was taught everything he knew about hacking by an old greyhat pro living on a compound in the last-remaining woods of the U.S. After his senpai was killed in a 100% legal domestic drone-strike for being suspected of non-compliance with a state-mandated smartphone-surrender program, Joshi swore revenge. His efforts had to be put on the back burner though after meeting Benjamin Grueber.

>Height/Weight: 5'11, 170lbs

>Likes: testing his abilities

>Dislikes: fat people

- Kiiroi Kao

The ancient dog god who once trained Asia Bones. Not much is known about him. He watches over Humanity from his heavenly doggy bed in the far-east.

>Height/Weight: about as big as the Chief Toad from Naruto Imao

>Likes: tomboys

>Dislikes: cowardice

- Kitbaijin

A virgin fox spirit.

>Height/Weight: whatever he desires, same as Kiiroi Kao.

>Likes: Kitsunwai

>Dislikes: Kiiroi Kao

- Kitsunwai

Also a virgin fox spirit, but it's OK for girls to be virgins.

>Height/Weight: whatever she desires, same as Kiiroi Kao and Kitbaijin.

>Likes: Kiiroi Kao

>Dislikes: nerds like Kitbaijin

- McMann

The Supreme Leader of all branches of the Human military. In another time he was known as the War God and waged an epic, victorious war against Skeletons to save Humanity. An absolute beast of a man, he gives it his all to defend his people.

Height/Weight: 6'5, 600lbs because he's mostly just made of freakin metal at this point.

Likes: combat, his soldiers

Dislikes: Humanity's enemies

- Rodrigo Jimenez

The hero of our tale. A human, he moved to Gob York City to get a job as co-managing the 2nd-biggest Gob-Mart in the city. A guy who loves experimenting with getting STRONG so that no-one will fuck with him. Rodrigo just quit his job at Gob-Mart after purchasing a Strength Potion from a Shady Vendor that turned him into a ticking time bomb of rage. Rodrigo is a little racist against goblins to say the least, having killed dozens before the story even begins. He has SOME feelings for Goblingirl, but are they anything more than physical attraction? IDK.

>Height/Weight: 6'1, 200lbs

>Likes: Punching things to death

>Dislikes: Goblins, except Goblingirl

[] Satan

The King of Hell. Gloommeister fucking hates him.

>Height/Weight: 6'2, 300lbs

>Likes: being a prick

>Dislikes: Goodness, sincerity, virtue

- Simon

Grueber's Head of Security in the PAST-WORLD.

>Height/Weight: 6'0, 200lbs

>Likes: Vi

>Dislikes: people trying to assassinate his boss

- Space Bailiff

Why the fuck am I even writing an ent-- he's a big black guy who works for Space Judge.

>Height/Weight: Whatever the largest, most muscular black man on Earth's is plus an additional foot/50lbs.

>Likes: defending Space Judge

>Dislikes: criminal scum

- Space Judge

Once an enemy of McMann, the "Arbiter of Justice" upholds the law of the United Space of America to the best of his vast abilities. He spends much of his time studying and making judgments in his pocket-dimension, a courtroom and jailhouse. He is usually accompanied by Space Bailiff, the largest black man to ever exist.

>Height/Weight: 6'0/ethereal

>Likes: Justice

>Dislikes: criminal scum

- Vi

A real smarty-pants.

>Height/Weight: who knows?

>Likes: Simon

>Dislikes: mean people

- Xi

Grueber's secretary and confidant.

>Height/Weight: 5'2, 100lbs

>Likes: working

>Dislikes: sweet drinks

BESTIARY

- Manmen
They're giants. They're just fucking giants.
>Height/Weight: Dude idk, like say 100 feet, and... really heavy. You get it.
>Strengths: being really big
>Weaknesses: mechs
- Cheetah Men
Once mentioned as an ally of the S.H.A.D.E. but were so insignificant they were killed off and never seen.
>Height/Weight: they're just cheetahs who stand on two legs. My back hurts and I'm writing this on the last day before my deadline.
>Strengths: none apparently
>Weaknesses: relevancy
- Crowmen
Crowmen are anthromomorphic crows. They CAW very loudly and annoyingly. It's almost universally agreed upon that none of them have a good or not-annoying bone in their body.
>Height/Weight: 5-6'0, 100lbs
>Strengths: being annoying, and maybe one day they could actually do some damage to someone. Anything is possible.
>Weaknesses: knives, guns, fists, anything
- Sharkmen
After a failed attempt at conquering the planet (Earth, that is), Sharkmen largely stayed quiet, until being recruited by

some SHADY organization to try once again to end the disease that is Humanity.

>Height/Weight: as long and heavy as sharks are, I'm not going to go look it up, I'm trying to craft a story here. YOU KNOW how big sharks are. They're big.

>Strengths: swimming, biting

>Weaknesses: harpoons, karate

- Wooden Puppets AKA Marionettes
Too scary to even talk about. They dance, too.
>Height/Weight: 5'11, 100lbs
>Strengths: creepy dancing
>Weaknesses: flamethrowers

thanks for reading!!

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OR

www.InPeace.RIP



(whichever suits your mood)

Godspeed, friend.