

ORIGINAL PAGES

ARCHIVE

The charge released and the transport took place. Archive stepped off of the platform, now in 2-D space. His eyes no longer worked, so he closed them. The guard handed him a special viewfinder to interface with, which allowed him to get bearings on his surroundings, so that when the guard said, "Follow me," Archive knew what direction to move. The information of his 3-Dimensional being had been zipped, ready for him when he returned, like leaving a coat at coat check, and he ventured forth in his new form. 2-D space felt more floaty, and mirrors didn't work, or even exist. To him it was like playing Final Fantasy on the Famicom, with the top down view of the Castle at his fingertips. It takes a certain amount of time to get to any point, just like in 3-D space. You may have to grab a key first, but it is possible. However, time marches on nonetheless. That was one of Archive's problems.

"If only there was a world where time stood still" he thought, "something like a pause menu or an inventory screen".

As he learned more about the dimensions, he was eventually able to confirm for himself what every hobo and billionaire on Earth in any of the three dimensions will tell you if you give them a dollar and ask for advice: it's all about time. And when it comes to time, there's no free lunch, no cheating, no stealing, no trading.

Time progressing across dimensions universally was the thing that made it possible for them to travel in-between in the first place. "At least I don't have to fetch a key." He thought.

The problem was that a donut shaped cut of the city, back in 3-D space, had been laser-baked. A great floating beacon had appeared at the top of the Nakatomi building. Anyone within eyesight of the thing had had their ribcage exploded. About 1,800 people were killed. Then another 1000 more died before people figured out not to enter the donut zone. Calling it a donut isn't exactly accurate. It was more like a bagel, the 'hole' was very small. The destructive beacon had a root, like tributaries of a river, or nerve endings, growing beneath it that extended below into the top floors of the Najuma Building. These roots delineated a bubble of safety, extending out from the beacon with a radius of about 150 feet. No one within that bubble had their ribcage exploded, but now they were hostages.

EDITED AND FORMATTED PAGES

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By Narwhal

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The information of his 3-Dimensional being had been zipped, ready for him when he returned, like leaving a coat at Coat Check, and he ventured forth in his new form. 2-D space felt more "floaty," and mirrors didn't work or even exist. To him, it was like playing an old video game on the Famicom, with the top down view of a castle at his fingertips.

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"Archive!" The king of the 2-D kingdom of Monze called. "To what do I owe the pleasure?"

This was Archive's second stop, so he already had some information to work with to formulate useful questions. "Did you torture a 2nd-dimensional beast of immeasurable power and release it into the third dimension?"

The king stood. "Ok, first off, I didn't release it. It was stolen. And, as for the torture, that was the zoo, that wasn't me, that wasn't even in our dimension that that happened. And I wouldn't even call it torture, it's just how animals don't like to be imprisoned, you know how it is." The king had heard about what had happened already.

"Ok, how do I stop it?"

"Beats me, old sport. What happened? It was those bastard Pings that took it. I haven't gotten around to slapping them back for it." In truth, the King had lost interest in his latest pet, and he had sold it to the Pings, to which the creature was still quite exotic and fascinating.

Archive cursed the fact he had to make another stop. "Can I talk to it?"

"You don't have direct experience?"

"I'm documenting as I go."

"If you get close enough, yeah. It's not like talking to a tree or anything. It's more like talking to a ghost"

"Can it understand me?"

"If you imitate my voice and language, it will understand."

Archive had the king's data on deck, he turned. He had a theory already, but he needed to speak to the Pings. "It's angry."

"Archive, where are you going? Won't you stay for a cup of tea?"

Archive ignored him, which in Monze was an act of war. But the king decided to let this one go, and enjoyed a cup of tea by himself.

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The Beacon creature was called a Dordent. In low gravity it resembles one of Nikola Tesla's experiments, with roots shooting out in all directions like electric strands. But on Earth the roots spine and twine downward. Archive was able to identify it with a telescope. They didn't call him 'Archive' for nothing.

Dordents were passed and bred among kings, collected, in 2-D space. But moving them to 3D space was obviously dangerous, and ripped out parts of them that would have been zipped if they were 3-D going 2-D, but going the other way the process is reverse engineered, creating something out of nothing. For most 2-D beings, the process is still stable. But for Dordents, anything could happen.

"It's like rolling for stats on a unique item", Archive thought to himself. If dealers were farming Dordents into 3-D space, they would rip them into a space without other living beings around. You could technically rip them into populated 3-D space as an act of war, a powerful weapon. But why would the 2-D and 3-D realms fight? A vendetta had been settled here or there, a romantic rivalry, but never war. There was nothing to fight over. It's like motion smoothing televisions vs 24fps, each camp felt extremely uncomfortable amongst the other. True, you could have various beings, human or otherwise, in either dimension 'switching sides', like the phenomenon of the white settler-girl kidnapped and raised by Native Americans, or vice versa, but it was rare. Not to mention the extensive facilities and infrastructure required to even make interdimensional travel possible in the first place, the zipping mechanism, the 'coat check'. You can't just wander freely, even, or you can, but it's extremely dangerous, extensive tools and training are required to just navigate. A 2-D being would have no understanding of how space is oriented in 3D. Our sense of sight and our "first-person" perspective are only possible in 3-D space for example. It's extremely confusing to the uninitiated.

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