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## \*Chapter 1\*: The carpenter

What the fuck is wrong with me?

"What has Sally Acorn ever done for you?"

Silence mostly. Some coughing. A couple of boos.

"Seriously! This question is not rhetorical. What has Sally Acorn ever personally done for you?"

A mangy cat up front raises his hand.

"Yes sir! You, up front!" he calls down from his stage. His hand-built platform that he stands on, high and mighty over everyone. "Why don't you tell us all what the mighty Princess Acorn has done for you?"

He's suddenly very nervous. Hands trembling, and wrapping around each other, he begins to mumble and no one can understand him.

"Speak up, boy. What has Sally Acorn done for you?"

"She established this colony, and held it stable for ages."

"Ah, yes. She picked a piece of dirt, and sat behind her blue puppet, pulling the strings. We all heard tales of her early days, her "heroic" days. But the simple truth is that Sally only protected us because she had a shield. A blue one. Can anyone tell me who that was?"

"Sonic!" a child cries from the crowd. "Sonic the hedgehog!"

"Precisely! Sonic the hedgehog, her little puppet. Can anyone tell me where this mighty hero is now?"

"Enough!" He makes his way forward with confidence, the crowd parting before him. Creating a path.

His voice was strong. Strong and loud.

"Enough?"

"Enough of this!"

"Enough of what, good sir? Can you not handle the truth, for if you cannot, make your way home. This is a spectacle for open minds!"

"Speak you not of truth, vermin! You are far more aware of the nonsense you spin than I. You challenge our queen, our very leader. For what? Have you a better agenda? Pray, what is your master plan?"

The crowd turns its gaze to the man up high, waiting for an answer. Most of them don't even fully understand the issue.

"Something new" he says, pausing. "I have in mind something entirely new. What have you now? At this moment? What does your almighty princess have? A sinking ship? You, who is so afraid of change should even be able to tell that we're fighting a losing war!"

"There's hope!" cries a small voice from the cluster of people surrounding this man's stage.

"There is hope!" a quick response; almost as if it was timed. Planned. "The hope lies with change! The hope lies with me! Can you not see that this current leader is so stubborn that she is willing to sacrifice us all for the ways of the old? We need change! Something must be done!"

The crowd is roaring.

"Are you getting this shit?" my colleague yells into my ear over the shouting.

"Yeah."

"What?"

"Yeah."

"What?!"

"YES!"

"Good, because this shit is wild! I-"

He goes off into a tangent that I don't understand. Rather than trying to let him know I can't hear him, I just kind of nod and smile.

What he doesn't get, is that this story isn't about us. It's about them.

The roaring dies down, and someone can be heard from the back of the crowd.

"What says that you should be the leader? What's to say I couldn't do it?"

"What is to say you couldn't do it, my boy? Have you the qualifications or the experience to do the job? Keep in mind, my good people, that I proudly stood by the queen for many years. For as many years as I can remember, I guarded Knothole by the queen's side. Believe me, I know all of her little tricks of the trade. There are things you don't even want to know about our 'infallible' queen."

"Such as?!"

"My boy, I am not here to mudsling! I am here to promote the idea of change. Something isn't working, people. Something needs to be changed. Do you want to meet the same fate as Sonic?"

The crowd goes wild. He takes a sip from a canteen.

From all the way out here in the middle of it, I can see the look on his face. The smug grin he looks over us with.

I don't like it.

"I'll be back here" he says, as he steps off his stage, maintaining his smirk "the same time tomorrow!"

I don't like it in the slightest.

"Excuse me sir, what is your name?"

"My name? Why? You with him?"

"No, sir! I'm Vernon from the Knothole weekly. I just wanted to get a statement."

"A statement? Fuck you. Piss off."

"Sad."

"What?"

"It's sad that your voice was so strong and loud before, yet now you do not speak."

"I spoke before because I had to. He needed to be stopped. He's out of his mind. He's been planning this forever. He's the carpenter."

"The carpenter?"

"The carpenter. Watch out for the walrus, too. He won't be able to help you."

"What do you mean?"

"Nothing. Fuck it. I'm going."

"Wait! Can I get your name, good sir?"

A sigh.  
A pause.

"Miles."

He's walking away.

"Miles what?"

"Prower"

"You want a beer, Vernon?"

"Nah. I need to keep my head clear. Water, please."

## \*Chapter 2\*: The walrus

"I hear ya" he says, as he hands me the glass. "Especially on a story like this."

He cracks open his beer, and tosses the cap onto the glass table before him. Coffee table. Not even knee-high. He plops back onto the armchair behind him, footstool protruding from the bottom as he leans back.

The chair is worn out; old and dirty. About twenty-five percent wicker. The rest is gray, rough material.

"What do you make of him?"

Sipping his beer, you can almost see the cogs turning in his head.

"Are you asking what I make of him, or what I make of his little performance?"

"Both, of course."

"Heh. Of course."

Another sip from his bottle. I haven't even touched my glass. It just rests on the coffee table, sweating."

"You can have a seat if you'd like"

"Right" I always need permission, for some reason. Even for little things. Like sitting.

Taking him up on his offer, I sit on the love seat across from him.

Leaning back, and crossing the right leg over the left. I pick up where we left off.

"So," I start "what did you think?"

"Of him? The same thing I've always thought about the snaky bastard. He's a slimy piece of shit, and he looks to be seizing a very inappropriate opportunity to dupe people into putting him into the position of power he's always wanted."

"You know him?"

"Sure. We go way back. Way back to my younger years."

"And the performance?"

I sip the water. It tastes funny. Not like normal.

"He's one hell of a showman."

"You're definitely right about that. Balls on."

"You sure you don't want a beer?"

After taking another sip of the water, I decide it tastes too funny.

"Fuck, why not? This water tastes funny."

"Directly from tap."

Rotor gets out of his seat, and snatches the cup from the flat surface, leaving only a couple of rings overlapping each other. He takes the water to the kitchen, and pours the contents into the sink, leaving the glass on the counter.

Opening the refrigerator, he retrieves an unopened bottle from some unknown shelf, and brings it back with him, popping off the cap with the ass end of a plastic lighter.

"Thanks"

"Don't mention it."

He sits down, and I sip it. It tastes a bit odd. Like normal beer, but with an aftertaste like someone dropped a bunch of fruit snacks into the brew, and they melted in there. No shit.

"What did you think, Vernon?"

"Of what?"

"Antoine and his little performance. What's your take of it?"

"Antoine?"

"Mr. Showman."

"Right."

I feel a bit funny. I can't explain it, I just feel… weird.

"So?"

"I don't know him. I don't know him, but I don't really like him. I get a bad vibe, if you know what I mean."

"Sure"

"And it feels like there's a lot more to this than we're seeing. I have a feeling this will all unfold into something very big. Very big."

"And you're here to get it all down, eh? Record this big event that has yet to happen?"

"Heh. Right."

Downing my beer, I finish it off. He notices me looking around his kitchen from my seat.

"Trashcan?"

Nod.

"Under the sink."

Standing up , I almost stumble. Hm. Strange. My legs feel like jell-o.

Walking over to the sink, I open the cabinet underneath the sink. Throwing the bottle away, I can't help but notice my giggling. For no apparent reason. Giggling. This makes me laugh even more.

"You okay Vernon?"

My moment is shattered as I look up at the walrus in the living room, his head rubbernecking around the wide back of his armchair.

Watch out for the walrus, too.

he h  
ad said,  
...……--…--…--…--…--…--…--…………......He won't be able to help you.

"Vernon?"

A nasty vibration.  
A very nasty vibration.

"Yeah. I'm fine. I feel a bit funny, though. I think I had better head home."

"Alright then, man. You take it easy."

"Yeah. You, too."

Can't sleep. Haven't been able to for hours.

Just been laying here with my eyes closed. You ever see vivid cartoons when you close your eyes? It's never happened before now, but this is some of the strangest shit I've ever seen.

Psychedelically colored spider webs, with mobian children caught all throughout it. A giant multicolored spider feeding on them. What the fuck?

My head hurts. I'm sweating. I don't feel good at all. Mental and physical discomfort. I want to snuff the life out of something.

On the inside of my eyelids, a clown's face melts off. But why?

It doesn't fucking make any sense. Puppies eating each other. Of all things, why the fuck am I picturing that? And why in the name of whatever god I'm supposed to believe in, is it so fucking vivid?!

My head hurts.

I'm sweating my balls off here. Why is it so hot?

A rotting corpse of a squirrel. Days and days of decomposition happens in my head in under about thirty seconds, and the only thing I can ask myself is WHY?!

I feel sick to my stomach. I just hope I can fall asleep.

I just want to fucking fall asleep.

Why is that so god damn hard?

Why do I instead lay here and picture death in various forms?

The tornado crashing into the death egg. Everything's colored red.

Doesn't make sense. I shouldn't feel like this.

Is this insanity?

Idosposdic

Suddinnnly it becumz hrd 2 thnk. Thnkng nl n cnsnnts. Wht th fck?

I'm having a hard time with things. And walking feels funny.

Almost impossible.

..-/--/-/-/--/-/-/--………………….-  
Until I fall a few steps later.

Then it is impossible.

..  
.

I think I've pissed myself.

/And I can't stop laughing.

## \*Chapter 3\*: The clams

Dehydration.  
My head hurts.  
No more beer. Not ever. I don't know what kind of fucking beer that was, but I'm never drinking it again.

Last night was horrible. This morning was horrible. Right now is horrible.

Unlike any hangover I've ever felt before. Like I'm uncomfortable in my own skin. Like I can't feel comfort in itself any longer. Like I'll never be normal again.

Melancholy times infinity.

I simply do not wish to be.

Fuck. I need something.  
Breakfast. However, the idea of ingesting anything at this point is sickening.

I suppose I'll try and drink some milk and then get to work. There's the job to do.

"Antoine? Yeah. I know him. Or, I knew him before, rather."

"What can you tell me about him?"

"Sweet little thing, he is. Kind of infatuated with me at one point."

"Oh?"

"Yeah. Don't print that, though. I hated to hurt the little guy's feelings, but what he couldn't seem to understand was the fact that I don't.. I can't.."

"What?"

"I can't have… relations."

"Meaning?"

A sigh.

"Look at me, hun. I don't have any lady parts. I'm seventy-five percent robot. Twenty-five percent rabbit. That's where the nickname comes from."

"Bunnie Rabbot isn't your real name?"

She laughs at me, holding her mechanic arm over her stomach, and partially doubling over. Her regular arm over her steel one.

"Heavens no, sugar!"

"What is it?"

"My name? Scarlett O'Hare. Heavens, it hasn't been said in ages."

"And what's your take on Antoine's little rebellion?"

"I don't rightly understand it. We're all under a lot of stress here in Knothole, so it's understandable. I'm sure you know that as well as I do. Who knows? Maybe we do need a new leader. Sally-girl has been completely broken up since Sonic was… well, you know. They had a thing for each other. I don't think she can hack it, anymore. I don't know. I really try not to think about all of this."

"Where do you stand on the subject of the war?"

This makes her uncomfortable. Her ears are twitching, and her good arm is scratching her mechanical one.

Looking away.

"There's hope" she says. "There's always hope."

Does she believe this? Or is she just trying to stuff comfort up her nose, and into her brain? Into mine?

People seem to feed off solace, false or sincere. Comfort in telling yourself something. Comfort in others telling you the same.

We're all high on hope.

"Is that everything?"

"Yeah, just about. You mind if I include your statements in our paper?"

"Sure. Whatever you want. Just remember to leave out the stuff about his infatuation, okay?"

"Right."

Took an early break. I feel better now.  
Some food did me right. Feel pretty good.

Eggs and coffee.

Filled up the canteen with water.

I'm ready to take on the day. I feel restored entirely.

"Hey sir, can I talk to you for a minute?"

"Me? Sure."

"Were you here yesterday?"

"What do you mean? Around what time?"

"For the speech, I meant. Did you hear the speech?"

"Yeah. I heard it, alright."

"What did you think?"

"I think he's right, man."

"About what? Would you care to elaborate?"

"Sure, man. There needs to be some god damn change around here, you know? I mean, Sally has been leading us nowhere except downhill. Think about where Sonic is. He was our primary defense, and he's fucking gone, man! Sally hasn't come up with any plan, man. The queen won't even leave the fucking castle. She hasn't come out with any solutions, or messages of hope for days."

"Have you ever thought about the stress one must be under in a position like that? Don't you think that even you might need time alone to sort things out?"

"No, man. We don't need a fucking quitter in charge. If you can't handle the stress, don't try to do the fucking job, you know?"

"Right, and you think that this Antoine can do a better job?"

"It's better than sitting around here, waiting to die. You know?"

"Friends! Humble citizens of this fine community! I ask you where your leader is."

Some murmuring throughout the crowd. Indecipherable mumbles and whispers. Half-spoken answers.

Coughing.

"I'll tell you where your leader is. Your leader stands before you. Here on this very platform."

"You aren't our leader!" unknown faces shout from the crowd.

The group in undeniably bigger today.

"Oh? And who is your leader, my fair people?"

"Sally Acorn!"

"Ah yes. The loyalists. Tell me, if you are so loyal, why are you not by her side right this instant? Bowing and scraping at her feet, and telling her how great of a leader she is? The answer is most likely that she has locked herself away. Now, why would someone who represents the people isolate herself from them? Surely your mighty leader can do better without her dumb servants, yes? Her slaves? Her pawns in a chess match that she's losing?? Do not even try to make me laugh with this nonsense. This loyalty. Hah. Loyalty. Why? Why are you so afraid of change? Can you not see this ship is sinking? Are you going to sit around sucking off the captain, or are you going to fix the god damn ship?!"

"That's crude!" a faceless mobian woman shouts from the small sea of people.

"But it's true. Please, if any of you adults simply can not handle the truth, please go to your homes. We do not need you here. But hopefully none of you will leave. Hopefully we are all grown ups here."

"Fuck yeah!"

A cheesy smile spreads across Antoine's face, as he shifts his weight back and forth on his stage. In his spotlight.

"Tell me. If your leader cares about you so much, than why has she just given up? Why is she not here right now, fighting for the title herself?"

"Hey, yeah!"

More shouts from the crowd. He's gaining their favor for the most part, yet there are still boos scattered all around me.

"She isn't here because she isn't your leader. I stand before you, your leader."

"What do you think of Antoine's campaign?"

"It's strange, really. I'm not sure what to make of it. I don't know, I feel a bit funny at the moment, and I think I need to go home."

"Could you just answer a couple of questions, please?"

"….I suppose"

"Great. Do you know Antoine personally?"

"No. I seen him guarding the ring pool back before the incident with Sonic. He might have actually gone on that mission with him. I think I heard something like that."

She's staring off into the skyline while talking to me. Her voice fading, her expression is stone. Her mouth starts twitching.

"See something interesting out there?"

"What? No, I.. I was. I. Uh. Birds."

"Are you okay, ma'am?"

"I'm fine. I love birds."

"I didn't ask about birds. I asked about Antoine."

"Antoine? He seems nice. He seems like he really wants to help us. I like him. I like his face."

"Right. Uh.. right. Are you okay, ma'am? Seriously."

"I'm" she pauses, looking down at the ground, and slowly dragging her gaze up her legs and up to her hands. Her left hand starts slowly opening and closing. Her right hand is waving back and forth. Her mouth is agape, her eyes wide. "….fine. I think I'm fine. I feel pretty okay. How are you doing?"

"I'm okay. I'd like to continue with my questions though, if that's okay."

"That would be fine. Just fine. By me. Fine by me."

"Right. What are your feelings on the war?"

"War is definitely bad. I don't like it. This is making me feel uncomfortable. Who do you work for?"

"Knothole weekly. I'm covering this event."

"Oh. With what?"

"Excuse me?"

"I'm not.. I think I have to go."

"Alright."

Picking my pen from my coat pocket, I flip open the notepad and get it ready.

"Can I get your name?"

Looking up, I notice her stumbling away. What the fuck? Is she drunk? Probably on that same fucking beer Rotor drinks.

People these days.

"I have a plan, people."

An extremely confused mob demands answers in at least twelve different manners. At the exact same time.

The questions are almost all identical. What is this plan? The people want to know. Can this man deliver?

"I'll tell you what I have planned. Better than that, I'll tell you what we have planned. I say we, because we are a team, yes?"

More uproar. Some against, others in favor. Most of them basically say "get on with it!"

"Why are you dancing around it, Antoine?"

"Answer us!"

"Show them!"

"What are you going to do?!"

"We are going to stop living in fear, that's what! We're going to stop living in fear! We're going to take back what's rightfully ours! Friends! I implore you; let us **bring justice back!**"

Cheering. An uproar.

Taking a sip from the canteen, I finally notice.

He's won the crowd. And that's all it took.

"Say, you think I could talk to you before you go on?"

"Sure. I suppose I could spare a moment for a humble citizen such as myself."

He notices me removing the pen and pad from my pocket.

"I just want to ask you a few questions."

"What is this about? Who do you work for?"

"Knothole weekly. About your campaign."

"Oh, you're a writer? For the paper, huh?"

"That's right. You mind if I interview you for the paper?"

"How about this; I'll answer a few questions after the speech. You may find most of the answers your looking for there."

"BRING JUSTICE BACK!"

"**BRING JUSTICE BACK!!"**

The crowd screams his own words back at him.

How the fuck did this happen?

"STOP THIS!"

You can hardly hear him over the crowd.  
His voice, so strong and loud.

"STOP THIS NOW!"

He's pushing his way through the crowd, making his way up to the stage.

Miles.

Antoine is backing to the other side of his stage as Miles advances towards it. Closing in fast, Antoine's trembling voice tries to fend him off.

"Please step back from the-"

Miles is already on top of him before we have any idea what the fuck is going on.

The people start to react. The larger fraction of the group advances as well.

A fist to the temple sends Antoine's face into his metal stage. A line of blood from his nose to the steel, as he tries to push himself up with his arms.

The crowd is advancing. Only a few of are left, mere spectators to this chaos. Unsure how to react.

What the fuck is going on?

"THE WALRUS! THE FUCKING WALRUS! THE CARPENTER ISN'T EVEN FUCKIn-"

Overwhelmed by an angry mob, Miles disappears. A pissed off tangled mess tries to make sense out of itself.

Slowly they back away, about three of them carrying what looks like an unconscious fox.  
Miles.

At least, I think he's unconscious.  
Or is he dead?

I can't exactly process this shit..

Where are they taking him?

## \*Chapter 4\*: The madness

"What?"

"…"

"What are you staring at?

I shake my head. Turn my gaze away from him. Take a big sip from the canteen.

"What?!"

"Nothing, Rotor. We need to catch up to that fucking mob."

"I don't know, Vernon. This town's gone fucking nuts. Insane. Let's get the fuck out of here."

"What?"

"Vernon, I have a really bad feeling about this, man. I really do. I'm getting bad vibrations and shit."

"Are you okay?"

"No. No I'm not. I need to get the fuck out of here."

He just starts walking. Turns around and walks away.

I jog to catch up to him.

"Rotor!"

He doesn't stop. He doesn't turn.

"Where the fuck are you going, man? Where the fuck are you going to go?"

He stops. He turns.

"I don't know, man. West? I think I'll go west, or something. Look for another colony. Build a place in the woods, maybe. With my hands. I can't fish. Can you fish?"

"Rotor, just calm down, okay? Take a breather."

"No, god damn it! Did you see what that mob did to Tails? And the way they looked at me.. I gotta go. I have to get out of here."

He starts rapidly walking away again. Almost jogging.

Things click into place.

"What are you hiding, Rotor?"

He stops. This time he doesn't turn.

"What?"

He can't even face me.

"What are you hiding?"

He looks over his shoulder.

"What the fuck does that mean?"

"I think you know what it means, 'walrus'."

His expression changes for the worse. He turns his head and starts walking again.

"Rotor!"

"Eat shit, Vernon. Fuck you."

"Rotor!"

He doesn't look back.

In the back of my head, a little voice tells me he is right. Perhaps I'm just being a jackass, but it is imperative I get this story down.

The facts.  
The truth.  
How it happened.

My body tingles.  
Something is wrong.

I feel sick.

Doesn't matter. I have a mystery to solve. A mystery. That's right.

Where they dragged Miles off to. That's what I'm supposed to find out.

And what the fuck is going on. That is what I'm supposed to find out too, I think.

Woah…

Didn't that beer wear off?

Falling into the dirt, I throw up on my hands. The ground won't stop… wobbling?

This is nonsense. This is all nonsense.

The voices in my head are shouting to **BURN HIM at the stake**, but I don't know who him is. Or why I should be burning he. Him.

"BURN HIM!"

A lot of people. Saying it at once. This is hard to absorb.

It's too far away to be in my head…

Looking over the hill to my left, I see a stake being hoisted up. Flames ignite, and float by themselves, in a large mob around the blurry stake.

I think I need to get closer.

This isn't real. I'm dreaming.

I must be.

Miles.

The voice so strong and loud amongst the people.  
But now he's silent.

He doesn't speak a word. He just hangs limply on the fat stake, crudely tied and supported with nails.

I approach from a distance.  
The stake gets closer.

It's like a movie, or something. A dream, maybe. So surreal. I'm having trouble distinguishing when I left reality. I know I'm not still there. I can't be.

This wouldn't happen. This simply could not happen.

The floating flames actually sit atop sticks. The sticks rest in the arms of those who form the mob. Their incoherent shouting and unheard of noises.

Antoine is nowhere to be seen. They didn't even need his influence for this.

Or did they?

It's hard to judge what's happening clearly. The world is shaking, and it's hard to balance, so I have to lean against this hut.

I can't feel my skin. Does that ever happen to you?

After checking to make sure it's still here, I look back up to see tender being placed all around the pole. Dried wood and leaves, and shit.

They all step back.

Screaming and shouting at the unconscious being before them, I manage to stumble closer and lean against a nearby tree.

I have to get the facts. We're recording history here.

I'm recording………………………………... something.

Right.

This is how it happened.

The floating balls of light kiss the mound of dead sticks and leaves on every side. A moment of unity, and the balls depart, leaving a little something behind.

A piece of themselves.

This spreads quickly. First it grows outward, and the pieces meet. They become one, and then it starts growing upward. Getting taller.

"This is necessary!" Antoine shouts. I don't see him, but I know his voice.

Miles stirs. I can barely see him squirming from over here. My vision is out of focus, because I think this fucking tree keeps wobbling, or something. Moving.

I need to sit, so I do. The constant shaking and rocking doesn't stop.

Something is wrong with the world.

I don't thing he realizes what's happening. I don't think I necessarily realize what's happening. He just kind of squirms for a minute, until he notices the light. The light scares him. The fact that he started to scream led me to this conclusion.

He just started screaming. His voice, so strong and loud.

"STOP THIS! FUCKING STOP THIS!"

More incoherent shouting drowns him out. His voice breaks in and out. I'm not entirely positive whether or not he's screaming, or trying to say something.

Perhaps both?

"Do you see what irreparable damage your so called queen has done to this place?"

Antoine, speaking so clearly. Where is it coming from?

The light is well past his legs, as his agonizingly loud screaming gets even higher in pitch.

"YOU FOOLS! YOU FUCKING I-"

Rocks hit him from all directions. Rocks and sticks. Torches.  
Shouting nonsense, the crowd has reduced to hurling objects at the now giant blazing pile of light. What stood there before has been engulfed entirely.

The screams remain. It doesn't die down.

I need to get the fuck out of here. I need to get the fuck out of here right now.

Nasty vibrations. Really dark clouds, so to speak.

Using the tree to support my weight I manage to lift myself to my feet. Turning away from the light and the mob, I turn and start running.

I don't like the light, and the people that are using it are scaring me.

Of course, this probably isn't real. It can't be. Light doesn't float.

Still running away, though.

I'm not sure what's real and what isn't. That having been thought, I would like to make it clear that I really want this shit to end. Really. Discomfort. That constant feeling of discontent is back. Like nothing will ever be right again. Like I need to make some sort of change. What the fuck is going on?

I need this to stop. This walk seems to be going on forever.

Staring at the ground, I have no idea where it's taking me. Looking up, I see a large pile of light in the distance. The mass shouting is suddenly apparent.

I've been here before. A circle? The world is playing tricks on me. Or is it my mind? The world is playing tricks on my mind? Something like that?

Whatever. Doesn't matter. The fact is, that I have been here before, and this was where I was trying to escape from. Oddly enough, I'm staring it right in its ugly eye.

But I wasn't here, because my tree isn't on this side of the…  
Okay, so after further investigation, the examination of my surroundings leads me to believe I walked in a giant half circle. Facing the middle of town from the opposite side, you see.

And I can hear Antoine speaking once more.

"In order to claim this land for ourselves, we must remove the one who calls it her own!"

Sally. The princess.

She lives behind me?  
I think so.

Hmm.. I should probably go.

Go find Sally. Find Sally before they do, and get the fuck out of here.

It seems only right.

Sally's hut is exactly the same as everyone else's.  
She doesn't feel she is superior in any way. It's because of this that I can't fucking find her.

Rows and rows of huts passing me by. Or am I passing them by?

Doesn't matter. Don't worry about it. I think it's this way…

When I meet forest, I decide to turn back.

"On the far corner!"  
Faint shouts getting closer.

I see the light starting to shine over the horizon.  
They're coming.

Fuck.

At least I know I'm headed the right direction.

God damn it, princess. I guess I just try random doors in this direction?

Four houses, I've tried. Just knocking and shouting.  
Nothing. Maybe she just ignored me. Maybe she's dead.

They're getting closer. Oh fuck, they're getting closer.  
Fuck.  
One more. One more, and I'm out.

"Sally?"

"Go away."

"Oh thank god!"

Without trying to open it, I kick the door open.

"Sally!"

Fumbling for a light switch I manage to shed light in the place.

There she is, on the floor. Rocking back and forth with her arms folded around her knees. Mascara running down her face. It looks dried.

"We have to get out of here."

She just stares at me.

"Sally, we have to fucking go!"

She just fucking stares at me.

"Sally?"

"He's still alive" she says in a creepy monotone voice. I'm suddenly uncomfortable. "Somewhere inside of all of that cold, cold metal… but I can't do anything about it. He's gone forever."

"I.."

She looks away.

"Who are you?"

Suddenly the door is kicked open.

OH FUCK

/-/-/pause/-/-/

That is to say that things stop. A second that lasts an infinity occurs, and I catch sight of what my life could very well become. I see myself getting swarmed by this mob of people. I see myself engulfed in people, being pushed and forced into darkness. I see myself waking up to light. I don't want to wake up in the light, because I don't know where it's going to take me, and I simply can not face something I don't understand. I just can't. But what can I do? And that's when it hit me. In that one instant. In that one second.

/-/-/end pause/-/-/

That is to say that things resume. Life itself resumes, as if from on break. I grab her hand and pull her up roughly, twisting it and forcing it behind her back and pulling her close.

"Guys, I found her!"

I'm such a piece of shit. I'm such a cowardly piece of shit.

"Get some rest tonight, soldiers. Gather as much water and food you can. Tomorrow, we make our way to Robotropolis. Tomorrow we make change."

The crowd goes wild.

Shit

What the fuck is happening?

No. No, this can't be real.

It isn't. It's a dream. A fucking crazy nightmare. I'll wake up from this in good spirits.

## \*Chapter 5\*: The dawning

I already know it. I'm fucking insane.Or am I just on my way there?

i can't seem  
to get my h  
ead straight  
for some str  
ange reason  
i can't seem  
to think righ  
t-- i'm not i  
nsane. not l  
ike the othe  
rs... i know  
the differenc  
e. i can tell t  
he difference  
between insa  
ne and not...  
now that we'  
ve establishe  
d that, i can /--/--/i can't focus  
safely.../--/--/it's almost impossible when  
what was i d/--/--/my brain keeps jumping back  
oing? i was t/--/--/and forth between thoughts  
rying to get t/--/--/like this. my mind simply can't  
o sleep, but i/--/--/take this kind of nonsense.  
can't get to s/--/--/it's impossible to focus.  
leep, not for h/--/--/i need something; more  
ours, because/--/--/water, or something. i need  
the funny bee/--/--/some kind of change or something.  
r is back, and/--/--/it's hard to breathe. i have to  
it won't go aw/--/--/moniter it. make sure it's happening.  
ay, it just kee/--/--/i can't see. i can't see anything.  
ps going and g/--/--/i think my eyes are open. i think.  
oing and going/--/--/this isn't right. things haven't been  
and going and/--/--/right for quite some time now. i just  
going and goin/--/--/want this shit to be over. i just want  
g and going an/--/--/this shit to fucking stop as soon as  
d going and go/--/--/possible. just stop, please just fucking  
ing and it neve/--/--/stop. my mind is going off in a  
r ever stops. e/--/--/hundred/--/--/round  
ver.../--/--/different/--/--/and  
i always heard /--/--/directions/--/--/round  
that counting s/--/--/at/--/--/the  
heep would hel/--/--/once./--/--/mulberry  
p you fall aslee/--/--/please/--/--/bush/--/--/F  
p, and i suppos/--/--/someone/--/--/the/--/--/U  
e that it's wort/--/--/help/--/--/monkey/--/--/C  
a try. it has to/--/--/me/--/--/chase/--/--/K  
be better than/--/--/i/--/--/the/--/--/!  
just sitting her/--/--/need/--/--/weasel/--/--/!  
e in torment a/--/--/sleep/--/--/something/--/--/!  
nd discomfort./--/--/or/--/--/something  
i count one sh/--/--/death/--/--/something  
eep as it gets /--/--/or/--/--/some  
eaten by the w/--/--/life/--/--/thing  
olf. the wolf rip/--/--/or/--/--/and  
s off the head /--/--/SOMETHING/--/--/suddenly  
of the second /--/--/stop this fucking craziness/--/--/...  
one and uses i/--/--/some one/--/--/p  
t to slow down/--/--/something/--/--/o  
the third one b/--/--/help me./--/--/p  
y lobbing it at i/--/--/make it stop./--/--/goes  
ts poor little sh/--/--/please./--/--/the  
eep head.. ... ./--/--/MAKE IT FUCKING STOP!!/--/--/weasel  
The rest of the sheep explode, and my world shatters with it.

And suddenly I'm free.

My eyes pop open before I even realize I'm awake.  
When did the pounding start? Is it in my head, or at the door? Perhaps both?  
Fuck.

The door opens.

Suddenly I notice that I'm laying on the floor. My body is extremely stiff. My joints ache. It hurts to move.  
I also notice that this isn't my hut.  
I also notice that I'm surrounded by others, all sleeping on the floor as well. Too many people for one room.

The light from the door hurts my eyes.

Some goon I don't recognize at the door, shouting at us all to wake up. We have a meeting in the center of town. He says "get yourself something to drink and eat, and meet in twenty."

It wasn't a dream. As unclear as everything was, I know the events of last night weren't natural. Not in the slightest.  
Shit.  
What exactly did happen last night?

Ugh.

My mouth feels like wet paper.  
Stomach is turning on me.  
Something's knocking on the back door, and they're bringing some bad news with them.

My head hurts.

I need to take something.

Digging in my pockets, I find one of those packages with a single dose of generic pain meds.

Now all I need is a glass of water…

I feel better. Loads better. Like, not even hungry. These are some badass painkillers. Perhaps I wasted them? Maybe I should have saved them for something more serious.

I'm numb.

Such a strange numb.

What was that about a meeting?

Making our way to the center of time, we all walk like little drones. We do not speak to each other, nor do we make a sound otherwise.

Nobody wants to say anything. At all.

We're all walking so slow, as well. As if to prolong the journey. As if we are all dreading the destination. Why? Why this craziness? I don't even know what I did last night; I don't have any idea what is going on. Are we under alert? Some sort of weird defense routine we don't know about?

Straining to think.  
Pictures. Random instances. Rotor, running away. "Fuck you, Vernon. Eat shit!"

I remember someone saying he was bad. Miles. "Watch out for that walrus" or something. "He might eat you, because you're a clam"

Something like that. But why? What do I make of this utter nonsense? My brain simply can't handle this shit. Not now. Not this early.

Shit, I haven't even had my coffee. I'm running on water and pain meds.

I'm tired.

My head doesn't feel necessarily attached to my body. That shit ever happen to you? I think I might be getting used to it. But why? Is this the first time?

My head isn't… right.

Maybe it's not attached under a symbolic respect.

Whatever. I feel fucking weird.

I think that about sums it up.

The only thing is, I can't distinguish the difference. I'm not sure what's currently adverse to normal. All I know is the fact that it isn't normal.  
But what do I normally feel like?

Not like this.  
Shit. I'm talking in circles.  
I'm such a whore.  
Fuck. Why can't I answer such an easy fucking question?

Because I'm lame in all ways. Is that it?  
I think it might be.

Ugh.

My head hurts again, despite the painkillers.

Suddenly a flash, and in my head I can see Miles surrounded by light. The princess. Sally. Did I see her last night? I can't remember.

Strange vibrations from the cloudy events that took place. It's almost like I'm blocking it or something. Mentally.

Hell.

Let's see where this nonsense takes me. Maybe I'm still asleep. I feel invincible enough. Soon enough, I'll test the limits of this world.

Soon.

Suddenly we arrive. Antoine stands tall among us on his stage.  
Standing at the very end of it. Just behind him on his gigantic platform are scattered piles of rocks. I wonder why.

I don't like him. He gives me a bad feeling. The look on his face. The deadness of his eye. The tone of his voice. His demeanor. I don't like it. Reminds me of a used car salesmen. Fake.

I don't like it. Not one bit.

"Attention citizens of Knothole!"

Nobody says anything. I've seen this before, but this time it's different. There's something wrong.

People aren't responding to him anymore. Just listening.

"You are no longer citizens of Knothole. Do you know why?"

Dead silence.

"Because you are now citizens of Mobotropolis. That's right; it will no longer be referred to as Robotropolis. Today we take it back. Not only that, but today we take our dignity back. We bring justice back. Today, citizens… friends… we take back what is ours. We take back what has been missing. Have all of you had a glass of water?"

Nothing. He just blankly stares at us.

"Alright then. In order to truly be able to step forward, we must clean the slate. To rise clean, we must wash away the filth. Before I can proceed as your true leader, I have to know if I am your true leader. Understand?"

…

"Now I want you all to come up here, and stand in a circle, alright? Go ahead."

We all start making our way in the direction of the stage. Some of us take the small steps on the left. Some of us take the small steps on the right. A few others and I just hopped up the middle.

We form a crude circle on the wide platform. He is standing in the center of the crowded circle.

"This is a test" he goes on to say. "A test of your loyalty. A test of your will. For I am afraid that if you cannot pass this test; you are shit out of luck. You will not be able to take on Robotnik today, and more importantly, you will not be able to take on Robotnik ever. If you cannot complete this simple task, than you will be completely worthless. Are you ready to prove your worth?"

"…"

"I asked if you were ready to prove your worth!"

"Sir, yes sir!"

"Excellent. I present to you; your old leader."

He whistles, and calls his goons. Two of them make their way through a sudden break in the circle. Their arms are linked around the bound arms of one Princess Sally. She is gagged, and her bound feed drag across the ground as the two weasels carry her by her harms. Drag her by her arms.

The circle closes.

She is dropped onto her knees, and the circle reopens as the two weasels make their way off the stage.

The circle closes.

"Citizens- friends. It is time. It is time that we wiped the slate clean. It is time we cleaned this stain off our record forever. Ladies and gentlemen; pick up as many rocks as you can hold."

The circle breaks as the mobians scurry to the rock pile near them. I turn around, and snag one off the top of a pile. Turning back around, I notice Antoine is making his way to the very back of the stage.

The circle closes, once again.

"Ladies and gentlemen. This leader has done you wrong. She, who supposedly represents us and everything we're supposed to stand for, has shamed us far too greatly for us to ever forgive, or forget this travesty. She didn't care for you; she only cared for herself. We could have reached utopia, but she wouldn't have it. Let's wipe this mark from our record. Let's prove to god and Satan alike that we won't take shit from any leader who fucks over his people! Let's put fear in the hearts of the immortal and mortal alike! Ladies and gentlemen; AIM AND FIRE!"

And as if everyone was at the ready, rocks soar to the center of the circle.

One hits her throat causing a gurgling and cracking noise.  
One goes to her back with a thud.  
One bounces off her tit.  
One cracks against her face.  
One hits her temple, and knocks her over sideways.

Rocks fly upward, and shower down upon her, while I stand there and do nothing.  
My fist tightens around my rock.

She isn't moving anymore.

This isn't real.Just a dream.

Fuck it.

Turning around I use my entire body's momentum to push over the fucker behind me, tossing his rock up into the air. I smash into him, and he tumbles over.

Running as fast as I can, I leap from the stage. My legs still in motion in the air, when they hit the ground, they take off, my body almost dragging behind it.

"ABANDONER! KILL THE ABANDONER!"

"STOP HIM NOW!"

Rocks fly passed me in all directions. Jumping behind a hut at a vertical angle, I sprint for the hills.

Fuck that. I don't care if it's real or not, I don't want to be around that shit.

I can hear them behind me. Shouting and running. Their noisy shoes pounding across the metal stage, and leaping off after me. I think I even hear some of the assholes using the stairs. Stupid fucks. Veering away from the trail, I can't exactly be too sure where I'm going. Trees moving past me, almost like I'm moving the ground. Is this what it was like for Sonic?

Not even looking back, I can hear the shouts getting more and more faint.

I don't stop though.

Fuck that shit. Fuck that shit right to hell.

The rock is still in my hand.

Only now do I notice how badly my hand was hurting.  
Dropping the rock into the other hand, I squeeze my hand open and closed.

I'm sitting by a creek. There's this large drop-off of land; a sort of trench. I can comfortably sit here without being seen, or getting wet. My back against the side, the next drop-off for the water to rush silently down at my feet.

I'm so tired.

It's been hours. I don't have a watch, so I can't say accurately. I've been sitting here for a long ass time.

The sun is high overhead.

Looking down at the rock, and the way it glistens in the sun. Very shiny rock, it is. Very pretty.

I need to start looking for a place to sleep soon. A place to hide for the night. Thank god I have the canteen filled. I'd hate to have to drink creek water. That stuff tastes awful.

Ugh.

I don't want to think about all of this now. I want to look at my rock. I want to admire how precious it is. The beauty.

One could lose themselves in beauty like this.

I've been searching for hours. I'm going east; Robotropolis is north. Hopefully I've gone far enough out of their way by now that they have just given up. Started for the city.

Bah. Not like any of this is real anyway.

It can't be. It isn't. I'm making all of this up.

Take a large sip of the water.

I mean, nothing makes sense. If this was real, shit would make sense. That's all there is to it.

Am I right? Am I right?

I'm right. I have to be. This is a dream. This is my head. In my head, I am always right.

The sun is setting. Off in the distance, I can see some sort of structure. A large tree that has fallen over, and caught onto another tree against a wall of sorts. A drop-off from higher land. Large branches, and a mass quantity of leaves cover a close to the ground section of a tree. A shelter. A place to sleep.

A sanctuary.

Fuck yes.

Making may way over, walking around the right side of the shelter. Craning my neck to look in the opening, I see-

Oh fuck.

"Hey Rotor."

"What the fuck are you doing here?"

I stammer. I can't seem to find the right words. Not exactly sure what to say to the guy. He scoots forward, and gets up out of his shelter. I guess this solves the question of how it got here. Who built it, that is.

"I asked you a question, Vernon! What the fuck are you doing here? Shouldn't you be recording something?"

He pushes me, and I stumble backwards, into a tree.

Fucker.

Don't trust the walrus.Look out for the walrus.The walrus can't help you.The walrus won't help you.THE WALRUS WILL EAT YOU BECAUSE YOU ARE NOTHING BUT A WORTHLESS FUCKING CLAM!!

And it was in that instant that something snap. My right fist tightens around the rock, and I raise it high in the air …. …

And bring it down on the fat face of that conniving walrus. Blood spurts from his nose as he stumbles backwards.

Bringing the rocks pointy edge against his face once more, his skin flakes and tears.  
Blood runs down his cheek.  
I bring the point down hard onto his head again and again.  
He falls. He falls hard.  
I dive in after him, all of my momentum behind this rock.

I beat his pudgy head until there's nothing left of it.

Sitting on his chest, hyperventilating.

Fuck me. What just happened?

No, no, no.

This didn't happen.

I didn't do this.

I just need to drag his carcass out of my line of view, build a fire, and everything will be alright.

I chug what's left of the canteen.

Fuck it.

Besides, it's a dream.

And now I have a shelter for the night.

How do you like that?

## \*Chapter 6\*: The feast

-

It's been hours. Hours stacked on top of one another.  
I've been tired. I've been aching. I've been suffering.

I've been scared.

I've been confused.

It happens to the best of us.

Even if it didn't, who's to stop me from saying it is? This is my dream, after all. My fantasy.

My nightmare.

The sun is setting over the horizon. An orange hue shining over at me through the trees.

I haven't been this awe-struck since I noticed the beauty in the rock.

I'm starting to notice there's beauty in everything. Even the ugly shit I don't want to think about. Like the light. Or Rotor.

Rotor. Laying over there behind that tree. I can feel his presence without looking. I thought he would have disappeared by know, but I guess I was wrong.

Hmph. Whatever. Stay there if you want, imaginary body. You aren't bothering me any.

I reach in my jean pockets and dig around all the junk I keep on me.

As luck would have it, I have a book of matches. This means fire. This means warmth. This means light.

Light. Hm. Seems significant.

Whatever. Doesn't matter.

Don't worry about it.

I'm hungry, but the idea of food is sickening. That ever happen to you?

My stomach growls at me, in protest. Shut the fuck up, I can't do anything for you.

You're just pissing me off, stomach.

It growls again. It has a point, but I can't hunt. I sure as fuck can't go back to Knothole. Shit, I have no idea where I am right now.

East, right?

It seems like I'm east. Which way does the sun set? Fuck. I knew I should have paid attention to that shit.

I don't even know where the information initially came from. What day is it? Wednesday?

I guess days are meaningless when it's a dream. Or am I just saying that?

Shoving comfort up my nose?

I wish I was home. This dream gets boring and it doesn't end. I've been trying to ride it out for ages.

I keep hearing noises in the brush. It's fucking with me. Can't stop thinking about it. What could it be?

Some little animal? The wind?

Mobian?

Fuck, I don't know. I don't want to think about it, but my mind keeps coming back to it. Every time I try to dodge a thought it makes me think about it even more.

It's starting to piss me off.

I wonder how Rotor is doing over there.

"Oh, I'm just fucking great, Vernon."

Heh. Sarcasm.

"Ass!"

You can't blame me.

"I can and I do."

Ouch. After all we've been through together?"

"When did you start talking?

"What?"

"Never mind. Don't worry about it."

"I've been trying not to, Rotor. Hard."

"That might be your problem. Avoiding things."

"Nah. I think it would be figuring them out."

"The answer is pretty clear, Vernon. Crystal clear."

"Explain it, then."

"I cannot."

"Why?"

"You still refuse to accept it."

"I can't accept something I don't understand."

"Exactly."

"What?"

"…"

"What is that supposed to mean?"

Nothing. He ignores me.

"Rotor! What the fuck did that mean?"

I get up and walk towards him.

"You think just because you're 'dead' that you can ignore me? Answer me you fucker!"

Kicking him, he doesn't respond. He just sits there.

Lifeless.

Sigh.

I'm lonely.

I wish everyone wasn't a fucking nut job in your dreams.

I managed to start the fire after accidentally burning up the entire fucking match book.

The crackling fire pops while illuminating my meager camp site.

Sleeping is going to a be a bitch tonight. A total fucking whore, if you know what I mean.

Who am I kidding? Of course you know what I mean. I know what I mean. That must mean you know what I mean. Know what I mean? Of course you do.

Gah. I'm so tired. But sleep is out of the question.

Out of physical reach entirely. It kind of pisses me off.

It's a little bullshit, if you ask me. If I ask myself. I do.

Damn. I wish I knew what time it was. I don't know why I would need to but I guess it would just be nice to know. It's weird.

I can't explain it. I don't want to. Don't worry about it.

For some reason, I taste blue. But why? Is it the wind? The air?

Is the sky calling me? I don't hear shit…

Weird.

That shit ever happen to you?

….

Who the fuck am I talking to?

Bring justice back.

These words ring in my head, but why?

And where the fuck has justice been off to?

Strange sounds throughout the night.

Rustling leaves. It's to loud not to be mobian.

Fuck investigating. I just hope whoever that is doesn't find me here.

Whatever they bring with them, I don't want. Fuck that.

This is my head. I'm on my own.

Prithee, my dearWhy are we here?

Nobody knows.We go to sleep.

Sleep was achieved. Though I feel far from restored.

In fact, I feel like three hundred pounds of shit in a half-ounce bag. That's how I feel.

And the worst part is, I don't even know where the fuck I am. Or why I'm in the woods. Why am I in the woods? This is fucking ridiculous.

What's going on?

This is some unfunny joke, or something. But why?

Why can't I remember shit?

My name is Vernon. I know where I live. I know all about me. But what the fuck is going on? It's as if I were thrown into some sort of situation, and told to deal with it while having no experience or idea whatsoever with what is happening.

Fuck. This is such bullshit.

Why can't I remember why I'm in the fucking woods? You would think that would be an easy one.

God. How did I even get out here? Which direction do I walk to get back to Knothole?

The sun. It rises in the east? West? Fuck. I knew I should have paid more attention to that type of shit. Have I lived this moment before? What's the term for that shit?

I can't figure anything out today. I'm stuck on retarded.

At a time like this. When thinking is critical.

I need to get my wits about me. Okay. I just need to examine the area. Study my surroundings.

I check the canteen around my left shoulder. Fucking empty.

Great.

My head hurts. Pounding and aching. A ringing in my head. It shakes my teeth.

I need some fucking water. I just really need some fucking water right now.

I fucking need it.

Looking around, I see something, or… someone?

Rotor?

His shoulder pokes out from the side of a tree.

Oh thank god! I'm not alone.

That makes me so happy.

"Rotor!"

No response. I feel funny about approaching him.

I almost don't want to.

Maybe I shouldn't.

"Rotor?"

Nothing. Maybe he's asleep. I don't want to disturb him? Maybe I should just stand back.

Wait…

"Rotor?"

I don't know what the fuck to do. What the fuck do I do? Who am I asking?

Alright. I'm going to approach him.

Slowly, I make my way over to him sideways

Peaking around the tree to see him, I- FUCK!

Shit! Shit!!

I'm at a loss for words. Confused and scared. I don't know what to make of this. Is this real?

No. It can't be.

I don't want it to be.

I refuse to accept this.

That is not what it looks like. It can't be.

Oh fuck.

Looking at his shoulder, I notice the canteen strap…

Water. I need it.

He has some. He doesn't need it.

Why does my head hurt so bad?

Fuck! Rotor is dead, and I'm contemplating taking his water!

What the fuck is wrong with me?

Okay. So there is the possibility that this is real. That is out there. If this is real, on the off chance that it is, the first question I need to be asking is who could have done this? And when? They could still very well be around. The could be after me, as well. But why didn't they take me out, too?

Are they fucking with me? Is this some game?

Some sick demented fucking game?

I'm hoping this is some fucked off dream. I really am.

Leaning forward to relieve him of his canteen, I hesitate.

It's like I just don't want to touch him. I just really don't want to confirm that he's real. I'm afraid of that, I think.

If I can touch him and feel him, than he might be real. We couldn't have that.

But above my own personal desires, I NEED THAT FUCKING WATER!

This is beyond me.

I snatch the water from his shoulder, and let out a high pitch yelp when I discover that I can in fact touch him, so he is in fact real.

I grab the strap and pull hard. I have to get the fuck out of here.

The strap snags on the back of his head, and I cry out as I have to double back, and remove the strap.

After that I run.

Fuck it.

I'm out of here. No looking back.

I think I'm going west.

I've been wandering for hours.

My legs are exhausted, but at least my headache is gone.

I drank some water. I feel better.

Rotor actually had a full canteen. I was so relieved.

It feels like I'm floating.

Mmm.

I want to call out for help, but for all I know that could be calling unwanted attention. I'm incredibly paranoid at this point. Someone has beaten my comrade's face through the back of his head, and I don't have the slightest idea who or why.

Or why I was spared.

Maybe he's after me. Maybe he isn't.

We'll find out soon enough.

Rotor.

I just can't wrap my head around it. I don't know how to feel.

I can't seem to convince myself it's real. I mean, why would something like that just happen?

Was I hallucinating? Was the lack of water getting to me?

Maybe I'm mad. Maybe I'm dreaming.

I don't know. I might not ever.

Over the horizon, through the trees I can make out Knothole in the distance.

I've made it.

"Hello?"

I've never seen Knothole this quiet during the day time. Not ever.

"Hello?!"

Nothing. Silence.

Not so much as a fucking tumbleweed.

The air is still. Stale, almost. Stagnant.

Is that the word? Doesn't matter.

"Hello?!"

Making my way past the desolate huts. Most the doors are open. One has been kicked in. What the fuck? Isn't this around where the princess lived?

Shit.

This is… I don't know what the fuck this is. I think that might be the problem.

It's what I'll blame. That's for fucking sure.

Looking straight ahead, I see the a stage in the distance. What's that there in the center? A crumpled heap surrounded by what looks like rocks.

I want to investigate, but my body has gone cold. Still.

Almost can't move. Or is it that I don't want to?

I'm such a coward.

I want to know but I don't. What the fuck is wrong with me?

Conflicted.

I should already know, anyway. It's my fucking head.

But I don't.

I must be hiding things from me. But why? For the better?

Fuck it. Let's go.

I mean I'm going.

Alright. Force myself to walk forward, approaching the stage. I keep my eyes on my feet, as I make my way up to the side, and hop up.

Directing my gaze upwards, I see it. Her.

Sally. Princess Sally.

The crumpled heap in the center of the stage. The only person in the whole town.

Dead. Fucking dead.

But why?

And why her?

Flashes. Snippets come back.

Tomorrow we take back Mobotropolis.

But why is Sally dead? Why would that happen?

I can't fit the pieces together. And I keep fucking losing them. There's something extremely frustrating about this shit, that I'm not even aware of.

I can't help but stare at her. The look of terror in her face. What happened?

I feel like I should know, for some reason. But why?

I pick up a rock. The rock has been stained red.

Gosh.

I drop it.

I need to get out of here. I need to find the others.

Robotropolis. That's north.

Maybe they did it. Perhaps they actually took the city back.

I made sure to grab a lot of water before leaving.

Three canteens.

I need it.

Not sure why, but I can't feel my face.

My head still hurts, though. How does that work?

I can feel my face twitching through the numbness of it.

What the fuck?

I need some more water.

Take a long sip from the canteen.

I feel better. More relaxed. My steps are lighter. It almost feels like I'm floating. Gliding along, maybe.

Pins and needles in all four limbs. Tensing my hands is almost unbearable. Each step feels weird as shit, increasing the odd sensation.

That whole gliding thing was short lived. Now walking sucks.

I don't know how far I've gotten. I just keep walking north. Is Robotropolis really this far away? Shit.

I keep thinking of Sally. Pictures of her face flashing in my mind. Surprised.

Scared.

Terrified.

What did she see? I wonder.

What scared her so badly?

Is it something I'm looking for? Something I'm missing?

Something I don't see, that's for sure. Something I don't currently understand.

Something I may never understand. But I have to try, you know?

My thoughts f

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My mind is a blank. I'm just walking at this point. But why?

I haven't thought about it.

Something about bringing justice back, I think.

I'm not sure I understand it. I'm just grateful to have some sort of purpose in the world, I suppose.

I can't explain it.

It's like; something to be proud of? No. No, that's not it.

It's weird. I'm not sure I understand it, myself.

It just is. You know?

It just is.

Trees are pretty.

Sun is pretty, too.

More water.

Mmmm.

Sun is pretty, but hurts to stare at.

I guess it's too pretty.

Look at the ground.

The leaves are pretty, even in death.

Death. It makes me sad.

The world is dim.

I look up into the sun again.

Floaters and spots invade my vision. My eyes chase them, but they never stop running.

My legs hurt. I want to sit, but I can't.

I won't. I refuse.

Dirt is pretty. I like it.

Is anything not pretty?

That would be just terrible.

Hmmm….

Where am I walking to, again?

Scaling this steep ass rocky hill isn't fun, as pretty as the thing is.

Was. It was pretty from far away. Now it just sucks.

Every time I look up, it seems like no progress has been made.

I've been climbing for what has felt like hours, and I'm not even half way.

Fuck.

Oh well.

Bummer may Horus.

I've reached the top.

The view is magnificent.

There it is.

I think.

The mechanical city.

It's so pretty from back here. Up here

It looks barren, though. Lifeless.

I wonder why.

Hope that the mission was successful.

In all likeliness it did. It's my dream, after all.

I can will shit to happen, right?

Right.

As if I needed confirmation.

Because I don't. This is my brain. My brain. I have shit under control.

The city is getting closer, as I carefully step my way down the long, steep hill.

A tumble down this hill could be fatal. If this weren't a dream, of course.

But it is.

But still..

Better not chance it.

Right?

Uh.. Right.

The city gets closer and closer with every step.

It's so close; resolution.

I can feel it.

It's so close I can taste it, you know?

There has to be some sort of answer. Some sort of resolution. I'm the protagonist to the story that my own mind has created; there has to be an answer.

I couldn't let a mystery like this go unsolved.

Not even entirely sure that I remember the mystery; just that it needs to be solved.

By someone.

By me.

It's my job. My purpose.

The justification of my existence.

The whole reason for my being.

I have to hold on. I have to see it through.

I have to find answers.

Here and now.

The city is getting closer.

I can smell it; quite literally.

The smell of sulfur and smog.

The city leaves the taste of gray in my mouth. I don't care for the taste of gray at all.

Ashy.

Unpleasant.

The city gets larger. Closer.

How long have I been walking?

Do I need rest?

I can't tell.

It's odd.

Before I know it, the city is right on top of me.

Or I'm on top of it, rather.

Something of that nature.

Basically it means that I'm here.

And it looks dead.

Just as dead as Knothole.

"Hello?"

It's a big city. Perhaps a meeting is being held?

A celebration indoors?

Who knows?

I don't see any robots, though. Don't see any mobians, either.

Hell.

What am I doing?

Stopped. I need to sit down, or I need water, or… something.

I already drank two of the canteens.

I've been thirsty, I guess you could say.

Craving water.

Needing it.

Just like the purpose.

Sitting here makes me uncomfortable.

I need to be moving I think. Sitting still doesn't feel right.

Maybe I can walk it off?

Who knows. Maybe.

Shit.

Standing up, I hear a grunt.

Who was that?

"Hello?!"

…

Was that me?

Do I sound like that?

Uh.

I need to walk.

Now.

I need to get the fuck out of here. This place.

Need to find someone or

something.

Walking as fast as I can through the desolate city, I look up to the sky.

I never noticed how beautiful it was before with the clouds like that an-

**WHAT THE FUCK!?**

Thud

…

I.

.

.

My leg hurts.

That's the first thing I notice.

That my leg hurts. A lot.

Opening my eyes, I notice the walls around me. Not walls, but… dirt?

A hole in the ground. A big one.

Very carefully dug.

Very precisely dug.

My head hurts, too, but not like my leg.

Look down at it.

I don't think it's supposed to bend in that direction.

After throwing up, I notice what's under my leg.

Another leg. Other limbs.

Belonging to other people.

Oh god.

They belong to other people.

I would throw up again, but there isn't anything in my stomach so I just gag painfully over and over again, my eyes filling with water. My vision blurring.

The stench choking me.

This is the worst nightmare ever.

drank a lot of water

now feel okay

the bodies are soft.

okay to lay on.

they make me feel sick.

I don't like them, but

I can't leave them.

they make me sad.

I need more water.

I know these people.

I know them, but I can't remember their names.

that ever happen to you?

it bugs the shit out of me.

I wonder who they is.

do do do da da da do da.

lalalalalalalaaaa……..

humm

singing pass time

sleeping pass time.

cant sleep.

not like always.

not like should.

dont like.

want to leave, but cant

this stupid.

is.

so hungry

so desperate for food.

do desperate things.

try eat old friends.

they no taste good.

they just come back up.

they come back up red.

I'm out of water….

been out of water

make me sad.

that was all I had left….

I can't sleep anymore. That gets me nowhere.  
Looking up, I notice the bright light shining in my face.

But wasn't it night time?

I think I'm finally waking up……………… . …….. . . .. …. ….. ………. .. .. …. .. .. .. .. . .. .. . .. … . . ….. .. . . . . ….. …. … ….. …. ….. …. …… ….. ….. ….. ….. … …… ….. ….. ….. ….. …. …… ….. ….. …. ………. …… ……… ……….. …………. ….. …………….. …… .. .. .. . .. . . .

## \*Chapter 7\*: The water

**The Walrus and The Carpenter**As told by Lewis Carroll;  
From Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There, 1872

The sun was shining on the sea,  
Shining with all his might:  
He did his very best to make  
The billows smooth and bright--  
And this was odd, because it was  
The middle of the night.

The moon was shining sulkily,  
Because she thought the sun  
Had got no business to be there  
After the day was done--  
"It's very rude of him," she said,  
"To come and spoil the fun!"

The sea was wet as wet could be,  
The sands were dry as dry.  
You could not see a cloud, because  
No cloud was in the sky:  
No birds were flying overhead--  
There were no birds to fly.

The Walrus and the Carpenter  
Were walking close at hand;  
They wept like anything to see  
Such quantities of sand:  
"If this were only cleared away,"  
They said, "it would be grand!"

"If seven maids with seven mops  
Swept it for half a year.  
Do you suppose," the Walrus said,  
"That they could get it clear?"  
"I doubt it," said the Carpenter,  
And shed a bitter tear.

"O Oysters, come and walk with us!"  
The Walrus did beseech.  
"A pleasant walk, a pleasant talk,  
Along the briny beach:  
We cannot do with more than four,  
To give a hand to each."

The eldest Oyster looked at him,  
But never a word he said:  
The eldest Oyster winked his eye,  
And shook his heavy head--  
Meaning to say he did not choose  
To leave the oyster-bed.

But four young Oysters hurried up,  
All eager for the treat:  
Their coats were brushed, their faces washed,  
Their shoes were clean and neat--  
And this was odd, because, you know,  
They hadn't any feet.

Four other Oysters followed them,  
And yet another four;  
And thick and fast they came at last,  
And more, and more, and more--  
All hopping through the frothy waves,  
And scrambling to the shore.

The Walrus and the Carpenter  
Walked on a mile or so,  
And then they rested on a rock  
Conveniently low:  
And all the little Oysters stood  
And waited in a row.

"The time has come," the Walrus said,  
"To talk of many things:  
Of shoes--and ships--and sealing-wax--  
Of cabbages--and kings--  
And why the sea is boiling hot--  
And whether pigs have wings."

"But wait a bit," the Oysters cried,  
"Before we have our chat;  
For some of us are out of breath,  
And all of us are fat!"  
"No hurry!" said the Carpenter.  
They thanked him much for that.

"A loaf of bread," the Walrus said,  
"Is what we chiefly need:  
Pepper and vinegar besides  
Are very good indeed--  
Now if you're ready, Oysters dear,  
We can begin to feed."

"But not on us!" the Oysters cried,

Turning a little blue.

"After such kindness, that would be  
A dismal thing to do!"  
"The night is fine," the Walrus said.  
"Do you admire the view?

"It was so kind of you to come!  
And you are very nice!"  
The Carpenter said nothing but  
"Cut us another slice:  
I wish you were not quite so deaf--  
I've had to ask you twice!"

"It seems a shame," the Walrus said,  
"To play them such a trick,  
After we've brought them out so far,  
And made them trot so quick!"  
The Carpenter said nothing but  
"The butter's spread too thick!"

"I weep for you," the Walrus said:  
"I deeply sympathize."  
With sobs and tears he sorted out  
Those of the largest size,  
Holding his pocket-handkerchief  
Before his streaming eyes.

"O Oysters," said the Carpenter,  
"You've had a pleasant run!  
Shall we be trotting home again?'  
But answer came there none--  
And this was scarcely odd, because  
They'd eaten every one.

**,',',',',',',',',',',',',',',',',',',',',',',',',',',',',',',','**

Ending number one;  
that is to say **End no. 1**

It wasn't a dream. Vernon mumbled crazily to himself that is was, but it wasn't. Antoine made a deal with Robotnik on the mission during which Sonic was roboticized. After returning to Knothole with the bad news, and a made up story of how he escaped, he managed to contaminate the colony's water supply with a new psychedelic drug that had been engineered and provided by Robotnik. The drug eats away at the brain; leaving you permanently effected after the first dose. However the "trip" so to speak is always greater than the actual damage. Slowly over time the individual will be entirely unable to distinguish reality from fantasy, while simultaneously going insane on a permanent level.

As the 'walrus' led the delusional clams to the slaughter, he realized a bit too late that he was not the walrus at all. Neither was Rotor.

No. I am the walrus.

Antoine was simply another clam to be duped and feasted upon. And he was.

Vernon the fox stumbled into a pit, where many mobians, or 'oysters'/'clams' (whatever the fuck you want to call them) had been pushed into and executed without quarter. Even though a large pile of dead bodies broke his fall, he still managed to break his leg. He managed to live on for days and days off the water from the canteens of the fallen soldiers. His infected leg getting worse, and the lack of nourishment on top of the drugged out state he was in, he endured sixteen or so hours of nightmarish despair in a catatonic like state.

He was pulled out of the hole by one of the robots with fistfuls of his own gray fur; and bloody patches where it should have been all over his head.

He was covered in bloody puke, and his eyes had clouded over entirely. He was taken to the lab for scientific study, with all of the others.

I know all of this, because I've been watching it from the security cameras.

It's times like these I'm so glad that I'm on the winning side.

-

Snively.

THE END

Or; ending number two;  
That is to say **End no. 2**

I wake up before I even realize it.

My eyes pop open; a ceiling.

A familiar ceiling.

Mine.

Last night was… the party.

That's right. The party.

Looking down at myself, I gag and push away the puke covered blankets, and stand up.

Oh god.

It call comes back to me in quick flashes and blurry outlines.

I took mushrooms. Rotor supplied them, I think.

Fuck. That's the last time I'm doing that shit. Ever.

I feel terrible.

What a horrible nightmare.

THE END!!

And finally, what REALLY happened. Ending number three;  
That is to say **End no. 3**

Robotnik explodes due to being wired by anthrax-laced explosives by the evil terrorists from Sandland. There are no known survivors, and, as a result of this act of demonic evil, the world erupts into flames.

Shortly afterwards, the world explodes, too.

Sadly enough, the terrorism found a way to spread its tendrils of evil through the universe, and lacing every star with anthrax. Every star would shortly afterword explode, and survivors are not to be expected.

At the very least

VT2/SBAC

THE END.

Inspired by a vague recollection of the obvious poem above, but it was also partly inspired by Sonic: Sketchy (which was written by Sean Catlett(which I haven't even finished reading, pathetically enough(I should take this opportunity to apologize to Sean, for attaching his name to this piece of shit. Sorry (this one is solely for the sake of having another set of parenthesis.(because I find it funny))))) and some shitty movie that really sucked. Terribly, it sucked. Even if I remembered the name, I doubt I'd mention it here. I wouldn't want my name anywhere near that piece of shit. Real ending worded properly by the great Niggerlips, or as you white people know him as Wingless Rain(VT2). Lyrics used in chapter six stolen directly from the song "I Bleed" by the pixies. I would also like to thank Tool, Modest Mouse, and glorious intoxication for the creation of this utter piece of shi-… masterpiece.

Yesss…..

"What the fuck? That was such a cop-out!"

Uh… don't worry about it?