# Reset

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## \*Chapter 1\*: Take one

Take one

My head feels like a broken net, riddled with too many holes.  
Some things catch, but it all gets tangled. Most things slip through, though. Maybe getting caught for just a second before twisting free. It can almost be felt, the memories slipping away. You ever feel like you've lost everything, but you can't seem to remember what it all consisted of?

I feel empty.  
Hollow.  
Broken.

Eyes open to a cloudy blue sky. Certain things come to me. The template of my existence. I remember me, and what I am. I remember details about the world, but that is all. My name comes to me in a flash. My purpose has yet to be defined.

Is this coming to, or is this slipping away?  
Have I been born again, or is this the bitter end?

It can be difficult to tell where things begin, and when things are over. You can never be sure that you missed the boat without a working timepiece. My head hurts. It becomes hard to think. Or was it always this way?  
It almost feels like that.

Get up.God…?  
I told you to get up.Instinctively follow his directions. My joints ache like they've never been used as I manage to collect myself to my feet. Dizziness. Am I supposed to be feeling this?  
I know you're confused right now. As you very well should be. You had a terrible accident, child.What kind of accident?  
It matters not. The important thing is that you're okay.I guess.  
I have a job for you.A job? What kind of job?  
Listen to my instructions very carefully.

A light whirring in my head, and it starts to get loud. My top row of teeth is grinding against the bottom. White noise, as static fades through the world I see before me. The field before me turns white and everything fades away.

Record.

He's giving me instructions, but I can't focus on his words. They register by themselves. Everything seems to click into place. I'm a gadget that's too complicated to understand. God is programming me. My body acts on its own.

Gliding. Feels like I'm running on an automatic track. Knowing the way without the slightest clue of the destination. The vibrant colors of the vivid forest around me blend and blur together as I race passed trees and over streams.

Feet don't even touch the ground. Something's pounding away inside my chest. My brain no longer controls me. My body runs on auto-pilot.

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The silhouette of an island hangs, suspended in thin air. A gigantic black splotch, sitting in front of a blue canvas, clouds smeared in pink and top of the sky tinted orange. Rays peek brightly around the giant formation.

Squint. The edge of my hand meets my eyebrow as I look off into the distance.  
Everything is calm. Quiet.

Not a bird so much as chirps in the distance. Make my way back to the tree line and pick a shady spot to sit down. Lean my back against a thick trunk. Wait for sunset to come.

A snap from above breaks through the atmospheric tranquility.  
Something catches the edge of my eye, falling down beside me.  
A faint thud as the object disappears into the tall grass to my left.  
Eyes dart after the source of disruption. Eyes quickly scan the tall grass.  
Red catches my eye in a sea of green. Fingers clasp around it through the long blades.

In my palm rests a bright apple. Shiny and perfect. Roll it into my right hand to notice a bruise on the opposite side. A large brown stain somewhere near the center. My thumb slides down the side of the apple, and stops on the brown, soft surface. Thumb gently pushes down, causing the skin to stretch and break.  
Cloth soaked with its yellow juices.

Grip loosens and the apple drops. To the ground it falls again.

A feast for the worms.

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A flash of red and white.  
He swoops towards me quickly. He's fast, but not fast enough.  
Sidestep and barely manage to duck beneath his giant swinging fist. Weight shifts to left leg, and I launch myself to the right. Right fist meets left palm and presses against my chest. Protruding elbow slams into his side and knocks the wind out of him.  
One hundred and eighty degree turn to catch him falling to his knees.  
A strained attempt to breath in as a string of spittle ejaculates forth from his mouth.

He's struggling not to fall. Both forearms wrapped around his stomach. He doubles over and gags.

"You… can't" he wheezes, fighting just to speak "win"  
I can and I will.

Left foot meets his neck. A snap and crunch as his throat caves in. The force sending his limp body head first into the soil. Step on the side of his head and gently grind his face into the ground. Blood spills out of his oral cavity onto the luscious grass. Bright green spattered with dark red.  
Lift my foot to just hovering above his head.

He tries to speak, but this only evokes more suffering out of the poor thing. Sputtering, blood dribbling down his chin. He wears scarlet on his face like crude makeup.

He rolls over to his back, expending great effort.  
His eyes wide and glistening with tears. He reaches out for me.

He reaches out for darkness.

What a fool.

Jets on the bottom of my shoes power on, and works as a torch on his mouth and neck. Black eating its way through red skin and thin lips. Gums melting, teeth sinking in. He tries to scream, but he can't.  
Flame eats a black hole into his neck. Red and black pit.  
Blood collecting and clotting. Flesh melting and burning away. Singeing.

I bring my fire spewing foot down onto his face, crushing in the bottom half of his head. Flame extinguishes.

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Surrounded by them.  
Not sure how many, but I can hear them closing in.

All of them want my blood.

It strikes me odd that they don't make a move. They just stand around me in all directions and stare at me. Studying me from just beyond the tree line. Trying to figure out what I am.

One of them, he looks like the leader, he starts pointing his spear at me threateningly and speaks. He demands to know why I'm here. He demands to know what I think I'm doing. He demands to know what I am.

I don't know, I tell him.  
Don't speak god says don't say a word to the likes of them.

He tells me not to listen. Says I don't need to communicate.

I have my instructions.

The echidna jabs the spear in my direction to scare me.  
All that does is put the weapon within reach.  
Snatch the spear just passed the crudely fashioned blade and snatch the weapon from his grip.

The handle is wrenched from his hands, and sent right back into his face. Nose caves in and two separate fountains of blood erupt from its black nostrils as the idiot falls back and hits the dirt.

Swing the spear with a loosened grip, making my gloved hand slide down the wooden handle. Grip tightens and it stops. He rolls over to get up. Flip the spear around and stick the blade into the dead center of his back, snapping his spine.  
Footsteps.  
Their reaction time isfar too slow.

An arch of blood follows the blade as its forcefully ripped from the fallen mobian's back and plunged into another's face. Limp feet swept from under him hick me as he falls to my feet.  
A blade flies at me from my left. Turn to meet the warrior while bringing up the horizontal spear with both hands. The blade just misses my right hand and hits the wood, cracking it and sending splinters flying into the air. The tip of the blade grazes my forehead, slowly digging into my brow. Cuts through the side of my right eye and through my cheek. Metal scrapes my teeth as an imperfection in the blade mangles my face, and tears off more than it should. Blood fills up my right eye, and it closes. Step back and duck. Move back in. Left hand jabs the broken wood through the rough skin covering the echidna's throat. He coughs and gargles; spitting and coughing up blood. My hand snatches the falling sword from his hands.  
Another blade wedges between my neck and left shoulder. A quick turn as the blade snaps from the handle. Something cracks inside me, and my left arm is dead, hanging limply off the left side of my body. The broken blade's tip protruding out an inch or so above my armpit line. Right arm brings the blade vertically down into his neck. The blade is dull. Instead of a clean cut, it gets stuck halfway through, and I have to use my foot to pry the sword free.

Left eye scans the area to discover I've taken out all the minions. Sad. I would have thought there were more than that. Stagger forward, out of the clearing and passed the tree line. Can't open my right eye. Dried blood acts as glue on my lids. I'm sure I can no longer see out of the eye anyway.

An unknown force pulls me the direction I think I'm supposed to go. My head hurts. My face stings. Constant throbbing pain from the cut tendons and sliced muscle in my shoulder. I think I've bled too much. Feeling lightheaded. Woozy, even.

World seems to be spinning as I approach the cave.  
The mouth is nothing but shadow. Complete darkness. Walk through and follow the curves like I've been here before. Like there aren't any surprises at the end of this.

The deeper I get, the more apparent the green glow emanating from the end of the tunnel becomes. It beckons me.  
It's calling me.

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There it is.

The master emerald.

My objective is nearly complete. All I have to do is pick it up.

But suddenly

something cracks down on my head with great force

and

it brings me down with it.

I can feel my

head denting in

as another blow \\

cracks against my skull

and another

my head caves in and

breaks into a million pieces.

-

I've failed you, father. Please forgive me.

## \*Chapter 2\*: Take two

Take two

Where does it begin?  
Is this the beginning?  
Hard to tell.  
My head hurts.  
Hard to think.  
Open my eyes to bubbles rising around me.  
Submerged in murky liquid. Lights and figures distorted around me.  
Try to move, but my muscles don't work for me. Fingers refuse to so much as twitch.  
Eyes start to sting. Roll back into their sockets as lids force themselves closed.

My name is Shadow.

This isn't the beginning. This is far from it.

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Falling.  
It's dark.  
Face first towards the ground, from the sky.  
Look down just in time to see a large machine escape my line of vision.  
The shadow disappears from beneath my feet, to reveal bright blue skies blotted with fluffy white clouds drift further and further away.  
The clouds quickly float along to the left, covering the sun. as peek around and through the breaks in the sections of clouds.  
Look up. Or down, rather.  
My up. The down.  
I'm closer than I thought.  
Close my eyes and

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a man plants a seedand that seed, it grows roots.those roots grow upward, out of the ground.it sprouts into a plant.that plant grows into a tall tree.the tree grows leaves and beautiful, bright red apples.the apples that grow soon start to bruise and die.the tree, it sheds the dead apples, and they're eaten by insects.

...

i'm not too sure this is relevant.

-

open them once more to a bright, beautiful blue sky.

Only this time it's stationary.  
I'm stationary, rather.  
There's a loud ringing in my ears.  
Feels like someone's slowly pushing a needle through my head.  
Strain to get up. Back aches tremendously. Dizzy.  
I've landed in a small clearing on the island.  
Gaze drifts to the northern sky. Dark clouds drifting slowly in this direction. Not too distant.  
A storm is headed this way. Looks like it's going to be a big one.

And it was such a pretty day, too. Oh, well.

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It started to rain by the time I got to the cave.  
The dark gray skies flashing with bright webs of lightening seconds before the loud crashing of thunder.  
Hanging by its feet from the tree closest to the cave is a dead black hedgehog.  
His head caved in, his arms handing limply. Covered in gashes. The grass beneath him is red. He's still dripping blood.  
The rain gets heavier.  
Louder.  
Make my way by the dead body and enter the cave.  
I feel like I've been through here already. Or like I'm running on a track I'm unaware of. Like some unknown being from above is pulling all the strings.  
Doesn't matter. I have a job to do.

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There it is.  
My prize.  
The emerald.  
Hands grasp the base of it, as I gently lift it from its station.  
As it becomes dismantled, there comes a loud rumbling from beneath my feet.  
Something tells me it would me in my best interest to get off the island as soon as possible.

-

As I exit through the mouth of the cave, I can see a figure running towards me. Get a better look at him as he gets closer.

Knuckles.  
Guardian of the island.  
Race; echidna.  
Age; unknown.  
Threat; high.

A dirty shovel in hand.  
He stops maybe ten feet shy of me.  
An expression of bewilderment draped across his face.

"You.." he says, dropping the shovel. "You're dead. I killed you."

He points to something behind me and I begin step forward.  
I have my orders.  
The ground underneath us begins shaking violently. Only now does he notice the emerald in my arms.

"What have you done? What in god's name have you done?!"

Before I can react, he uses the shovel to knock the emerald out of my arms.  
Emerald is top priority. It must be recovered at all costs.  
Dive for it. Unfortunately, he sees this coming. A shovel meets my back as I meet the ground.  
It appears I'll have to take care of this nuisance, after all.  
Roll over to my back.  
Eye contact.  
He pulls the shovel back to swing down upon me, but I'm too fast for him.  
Push myself onto my knees and launch forward. Head meets his chest. Air loudly escaping his lungs and mouth, as spittle lands on the back of my neck. He limply falls to the ground.  
More rumbling and shaking causes me to stumble back down to my knees.  
Get up again, and run over to the emerald and suddenly he's all over me again. Jumping on my back and wrestling the jewel out of my hands, he throws it as far as he can in a random direction.  
My elbow meets his stomach as the back of my head meets his nose.  
Dive forward and turn around to see him holding his oversized mits over his face. Blood leaking from the sides and bottom. His eyes glare at me as his hands leave his face and tighten into fists. He rushes me, and I use his momentum against him by grabbing his arm, twisting it around his back and face-planting him into the grass beneath. Turn to leave, but his feet kick my own out from under me. Roll over, but it's too late. He's on top of me already. His spiked fist meets the right side of my face and knocking my head to the left. When my eyes open, my vision's all fucked up. Doubled and blurry. Another punch lands on the right side of my head. My vision is strangely beaten back into place. Grab his fist as he swings it toward me for another hit. He tries to uppercut me with the other fist, but my hand wraps tightly around his wrist. His knuckles inches from my face.  
Dirt and rocks start rolling passed out hands. His 'locks start to drift upward and it suddenly hits me. The emerald dismantled the island. It's tipping over. Top siding.  
The emerald rolls past us, bouncing on the tilted ground. Feet instinctively curl and I roll him over me. He lands on his back and skids across wet grass as I compose myself and run by him, towards the emerald.  
It's like running down a hill that just gets steeper and steeper. Turn my head to look back to see Knuckles gliding towards me. Jets kick on and I dive at an angle, with the island. The emerald and I are falling at the same rate, so I use my jets to propel me towards it. Hands reaching out before me, stretched as far as they will go. Fingertips straining from the stretch. The island is completely sideways now, crashing into the dark pit that is the canyon below. The distant landscape disappearing into shadows blurs out of focus as I hone in on the diamond. Fingers clasp around the glowing jewel, and I hug it to my chest as my feet curl, forcing my momentum in a different direction. Swooping upward towards Knuckles, I smash the emerald into his head. He goes limp except for his flailing arms as he falls, one of his hands managing to clasp firmly around my ankle. The flame from my boot melting it's way through his wrist, he swings his other arm around to grab my shin as he starts dragging his limp body up to my thigh. He fucks up my flight pattern, crashing us into the side, or surface, rather, of the falling island. My frame goes limp. Firmly clutching the emerald, he's squeezing the shit out of my leg. Suddenly, my chest and stomach crashes into something. My fingers desperately try to hold onto the diamond as my sternum cracks and my chest caves in.  
Somehow I manage.  
Open my eyes to find myself wrapped around a tree trunk. Look straight forward to see Knuckles falling after me, desperately chasing the object his sole purpose is to guard. I can feel myself smirking. My teeth taste like copper.  
Start coughing uncontrollably. Strings of blood and spittle ejaculating from my mouth.  
Suddenly the edge of the island hits the bottom of the canyon.  
How do I know this? The tree stops moving. I do not.  
Launched from my secure position of being wrapped around the tree, I begin to fall towards the bottom of the canyon.  
I can see the speck that is Knuckles desperately trying to catch up with me.  
But I can also see what he can't.  
It doesn't occur to him that the top of the island is heavier than the bottom.  
It doesn't occur to him that the shadow around us is growing larger and larger as the island topples over us.  
It doesn't occur to him until it's too late. Until the island is crashing down on top of him.

My back impacts against the rocky bottom of the canyon, and my skin rips and tears as my bones snap and break. Clutching the Master Emerald and staring up at the island that's about to land on us both, crushing us to death. I try not to think about how much of a failure I am as I close my eyes and think about the pretty blue sky.

## \*Chapter 3\*: Take three

Were you holding your breath?.....

I am..

Take three

Shadows.  
I am lost within a sea of darkness.

My eyes are open, yet I see nothing at all.

My whole world is constructed of nothing. I sort of just float here, lost within meaningless thoughts. Thoughts that go nowhere. Meaningless pictures and flashes that do nothing but confuse me further.

Faces. Names. Lost memories pummel me from all directions. For each, I get but a fraction of a second of recognition. A fraction of a second of vague remembrance, and it's all gone once again.

Feet touch the ground. Like a droplet hitting a body of water, color ripples outwards through the ground beneath me. Bare feet stationed about ankle deep in the cold, wet grass. Watch as more of the ground in front of me is unveiled. Trees appearing in the distance. The sky around me still black. Lightning flashes. Thunder booming. It's right on top of me. Rain drips color down the sky, but it's not blue, no it isn't. Instead it's a dark red with clouds of black and fire rains down upon us. The green grass and pretty trees are set ablaze around me as the sky bleeds napalm.

Large mechanical birds cut through the skies, a tremendously loud rumbling and whirring coming from within them. Suddenly large eyes grow appear on everything. The trees, the sky, the grass. The fire. The machines. They all stare at me through mechanic eyes and they can see me, they can see everything I do and there's someone's laughter echoing through my brain, deep laughter that doesn't die down. It just gets louder. It just gets faster.

The machines swoop down from the sky and land all around me. The mechanical grinding noise gets even louder before they start sucking in the ground behind me and all of the noise fades out. Muffled vibrations. I'm swept from my feet and sucked into the machine. Consumed by it.

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Bright lights beating down on me from florescent bulbs.  
A sharp pain in my forehead.  
Everything's too bright. I can't keep my eyes open.  
The light manages to penetrate even my eyelids. I hold a hand out in front of my face.  
Open my eyes again to light peeking around a five fingered silhouette, casting an irregular shadow over my face.  
I sit up.  
Dizzy.  
A bit disorientated.  
Sitting on a metal table. The walls of this place are grimy and dark, making it a bit hard to see in here, despite the bright overhead lights.  
Eyes scan the place. Gurneys lined up and stained with blood fill the room. At the end sits a row of eight or so gigantic glass tubes, all of which contain identical black hedgehogs. Submerged in green liquid.  
Bubbles rising around them. All of their eyes closes. All of them are unmoving. All of them are exactly the same.  
I back away.  
It's hard to think in here.  
Feels like I'm not getting enough air.  
Hyperventilating.  
Couldn't tell you what's wrong with me.  
I need to get out of here.

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Some hallway.  
They all look the same.  
This aimless wandering triggers questions of which I cannot seem to find the answers for.  
Where is this?  
What is my purpose?  
It feels like I require some sort of directives that either haven't been given, or I've missed out on them.  
The hallway comes to an end and I am faced with these large double doors.

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Upon entrance, I hear voices.

"We've been able to locate the master emerald by excavating the area. It shouldn't be long before it arrives, doctor."

"Excellent. Go over to storage facility C and acquire those items we discussed earlier."

"Right away, sir."

The sound of footsteps against the metal floor echoes through the room, until it's cut off by the closing of a door.

A million monitors surround me, all watching different things. The hallways I was just lost in. The Some screens show forests, canyons. What looks like some construction sites. People digging something up in some canyon.  
Turn my head to catch a village. Mobian species mingling amongst themselves. Look over to catch a young fox picking up a flower and sniffing it. Eyes wander to catch a blue hedgehog leaning in for a kiss with an attractive squirrel. She pushes him away and starts to cry. Look over to see a half breed coyote/dog with a blue jacket touching himself to some a picture of the squirrel in some dimly lit room.

"Impressive, isn't it?" a familiar voice asks.  
What is it?  
"It's my world, son. It's our world."  
God?

In the center of the room sits a large mechanic chair. It spins around to reveal him, smiling at me.

"The one and only."  
There are so many questions I need to ask you, but I'm currently at a loss for words.  
"That's alright, Shadow. There will be plenty of time for questions later."  
Shadow?  
"Yes, my boy. You're special. You aren't like all of the others."  
The others?

He just smiles and looks down at me. He chuckles to himself.

"You have much to learn, Shadow. I have high hopes for you."

He stands up, dusting himself off. He removes this object from a holster at his side and flips it around in his hand. He holds out the handle in my direction. Being much taller than I, he leans down to get the object within reach.

"Go on" he says. "Take it."

I reach out and fingers grasp around the object and something collapses underneath my finger and the gun goes off with a loud bang as lead tears through god's throat. Droplets splashing across my face as the force of the bullet forces him onto his back in a pool of his own blood.

And God starts to gurgle and twitch uncontrollably.

Dad?  
No response.

He stops moving and everything goes silent.

What have I done?

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God's gone. I don't exactly know what happened, but I couldn't stick around. The world is going to collapse at any minute. I don't know how long it is going to take.  
Wandered around the maze of hallways until I finally found a door that lead to the outside. It's pretty outside.  
Seem to be in a city of some sorts. Searching the horizon, I notice some mountains off in the distance. East. Looks like I'm going east.

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Standing on the top of the short mountain facing the great forest. The mechanical city sleeping behind me.  
The sun's going down to the east.  
Behind me the sky is blue. Before me the sky is red. As if aflame.

It's pretty. I don't want to be here to see it fall apart.

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Lean forward. Gravity takes its toll.  
Head first, I fall.  
Face hits the rocky surface and I can feel the skin tearing away as I skid a few inches before my legs catch up with me and the momentum sends me tumbling down the rocky mountain.

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static

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"I don't like the look of this."

"It'll be okay!"

"Tails, no!"

"He could need our help!"

Thudding....

"Mister?"

Hnnn...

"Are you okay, mister?"

My eyes open to reveal a blurry orange and white figure. A curious young fox looking down upon me with a backdrop of blue, cloudless sky. I know not what to say. I know not what to do.  
Other figures catching up, silhouettes behind him. All seem to just be staring at me.

"What's wrong with his face?"

"Are you okay mister"

I know not what I am.

God is dead, I whisper to him.

And he says;

"What?"

Nothing, I tell him. Nothing at all.