(Before Main menu)

0

Introduction:

Welcome to SAVED. In the lower right corner you can see the settings button, which will allow you to change settings, load, and SAVE your game. There are NO CHECKPOINTS, and if you are not careful you will be forced to load your last save or start a new game. You can SAVE and load your adventure any time you wish; however every now and then you will get a save point recommendation to help you along. Try to make sure you have at least an hour of reading time before starting so that you aren’t forced to abandon progress.

The game sometimes plays music or sounds so it is recommended you keep the volume on your computer on. You can mute the background music in the settings menu but Important audio will still play.

This game is not recommended for those easily disturbed or have a sensitivity to violence. Good Luck, and choose well.

First thing’s first: What is your character’s Name?

Upon selecting “New Game”:

8

I dreamt I died last night.

It started with me falling, or rather floating downwards, through an invisible ocean. I was surrounded by black, an impenetrable fog devoid of light. Hindsight always allows us to scoff at the peculiarity of dreams but when you are in the moment it all seems perfectly acceptable. As I fell It eventually occurred to me to peer through the gloom towards where I was falling, and it was then I noticed a faint glow. The glow was intensely colorful, and precluded its source; A massive circle of stained glass, like something out of a cathedral. Depicted in the center of the glass was an oak tree in the fall, and it’s vibrant shades of yellow, orange, and red were cast all around me as I neared it. I feared I might shatter the glass upon contact but instead I gently touched down upon it’s surface and felt through my soles the glass must be extremely thick.

[???] “It’s not real you know”

A whisper of a voice called out from across the glass, and I noticed an old man in a rocking chair staring at me intently. He wore the plain habit of a monk and lacked any hair except the enormously bushy brows that hid his eyes from view.

[old man] “None of this is real. I’d wish to say it’s because you are dreaming, but that is not entirely true either. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say you are a part of someone else’s dream.”

I had no idea what he meant by all of that but decided to resign myself to seeing where my strange vision would take me. I suppose the other weird thing about dreams is sometimes you can know you are dreaming and yet still take the whole thing too seriously.

[old man] “Listen closely, for this old soul speaks not to you, but to you. It won’t be long before you find yourself free to go and do as you please, yet be trapped completely. You will find yourself fighting for a cause you don’t wholly understand, and sacrificing everything when you have nothing. Like a moth drawn to a flame, your wings will burn in anguish time and time again but you will be helpless to stop striving ever closer. This is your last chance to end, before it has begun. But then again, if you are here it must already be too late.”

The old man lurched back suddenly, and erupted into smoke. At the same time, the stained glass below me shattered launching thousands of vibrant shards in all directions. Instead of floating like I had before I fell at full speed but upwards, back the way I had come, and straight towards a lizard like maw which had burst out of the darkness and bristled with thousands of fangs. The moment the jaws snapped around me, I woke up.

…

ARC 1, THE STORE

1

Outside the grocery store close to where you live, you decide to take an extra moment to appreciate the sunset. It has a particularly lurid haze of orange and maroon this evening, and it strikes you that it has been a while since you last saw such a pretty sight. Then again, you haven’t been outside as much as you’d like to lately so maybe enjoying something that isn’t a screen simply feels better than usual. You turn around, and head inside. The grocery store is about as average as it gets, with the usual bright lighting and manufactured cheer you would expect. Annoyingly, this one keeps the junk food a bit further from the front than most stores so you have to pass by quite a few aisles to get there. As you walk, you ponder whether you are in more of a sweet or salty mood tonight and realize that it’ll probably have to be a choice between chocolate or potato chips. “A person is nothing more than the sum of their choices” is a quote you feel like you heard somewhere before but you don’t quite remember when or who by. Anyways, time to choose.

Chocolate

Potato Chips

Neither

2

The Chocolate bar catches your eye and seems like the obvious choice. Deciding between the two isn’t worth awkwardly standing in the aisle for any longer anyways so you grab the bar and make your way to the register.

3

Imagining the saltiness of the potato chips makes your mouth water and seems like the clear winner. Not all choices in life are worth agonizing over, so you decisively grab a bag of the chips and head over to the register where the cashier lady is waiting.

4

You’ve always had a problem with being decisive and today is no different. You awkwardly gawk at your choices for what feels like ages, but no matter how hard you think you simply cannot choose between them. You feel the judgmental gaze of the bored cashier burn into the back of your head as you stand staring blankly. You palms begin to sweat. Now you find yourself thinking about how embarrassing the situation is more than you are even thinking about which item you want, and the entire situation is becoming altogether overwhelming. Defeated, you close your eyes and reach out at random and let fate decide. In the end, you grabbed the chocolate. (You realize this is a choose your own adventure game right? Try choosing next time)

5

As you get closer to the exit you notice with some dissatisfaction the self checkout section is closed and you will have to make small talk with the cashier. There is no one else in the entire store so you walk right up and hand your selection over. The cashier discards her bored expression for a new one of mild amusement and scans. According to her nametag her name is Debbie, a 30 something year old woman that looks like she enjoys jigsaw puzzles and smells like she enjoys cigarettes even more. You realize “looks like she enjoys jigsaw puzzles” isn’t exactly a vivid description but its accurate all the same.

Eager to get the process moving along so that you can enjoy your treat, you move to insert your debit card into the card reader. It beeps cheerfully and you twiddle your thumbs for a second while it loads painfully slowly.

Please enter your name:

$pName

This is going to be your name for the rest of the game. Are you sure?

Yes /no

6

The machine beeps in confirmation that you made your payment, and Debbie lets loose a huge yawn. As she presses the last few buttons on her register she attempts a bit of small talk, which you are now totally ready for.

[Debbie] You find everything alright?

[$pName] Yep, thank you.

It looks like she pressed one of those buttons in the wrong order because the system starts beeping at her.

[Debbie] Whoops, one second…

Absentmindedly, you browse the shelves next to you filled with tabloids. One of them promises to give you the latest scoop on a famous celebrity, and another promises a list of “top 20 ways you can satisfy your partner… In crime”. Who knew splitting the loot after a big heist was so good for criminal relationships?

[Debbie] Damn thing…

Debbie mutters her frustration under her breath as she pokes around on the machine. You are starting to get to the end of your patience now so you look around some more to distract yourself, but unfortunately for you it’s a store and not a ‘Where’s Waldo’ book.

While you were busy doing nothing Debbie finally manages to finish the order and hands you your receipt. Triumphantly, you grab the $food and exit the store. On the horizon, the sunset is finishing its grand performance and exits gracefully with a swirl of Dark Blues and purples.

7

Leaving the store, you take one last moment to gawk at the sun before settings off. The way the store is positioned by the road, you have to cross a large street before heading for home, and you look both ways before stepping off the curb and onto the asphalt. Suddenly, you feel incredibly off balance and a little nauseous. You stagger and manage to keep your balance, but not without sticking your arms out like a bird and twisting oddly. A feeling of panic creeps up in the back of your mind, this is all happening way too quickly. You glance around yourself, and see turning onto your road is a black sedan with no headlights. You fix your eyes on it, as if this car is the most important thing you have ever witnessed. Gliding along the street, as if in a dream, it veers off course and heads straight towards you. The driver is slumped in their seat as if they were suffering some kind of stroke, but there’s not enough time to inspect any further. You stumble backwards, trying to avoid the vehicle. The dizziness you were experiencing a moment ago at that instant overwhelms you and you fall completely backwards, unable to process what is going on let alone whether or not you can avoid the car. You close your eyes.

A loud rushing sound bursts out, and then a high pitched squeal like something out of an old CRT TV. You feel no impact, despite bracing yourself for it, and it is an agonizingly long amount of time before you finally realize you aren’t dead yet. Oddly, you feel the strong warmth of sunshine on your skin which makes little sense considering the time of day. Perhaps it isn’t sunlight at all but the warmth of your blood, and the pain associated with that blood loss is so extreme you haven’t even felt it yet.

Unable to hold back any longer, you open your eyes, and gasp. What you see boggles the mind.

END OF ARC 1, THE STORE