$bName $thiefName $toughName $medicName

0

[This is actually going to be an alternate for the town where liname and aname recognize you]

You run as quick as you can towards the steeple of the church, eventually coming to a halt at the front door. Between gasps of air you scan the surrounding area, looking for a tale tell flash of yellow. Unfortunately you don’t find it, but you do manage to catch a glimpse of lavender going right around a corner up ahead and the chase is back on. As you approach the corner you slow down, and peek left around it so as not to expose yourself if they looked back. Your worries were needless however as the two have slowed down and are now chatting amiably with each other, joking around as they take another road. In this way you follow them, and they wander without any real purpose throughout the town while chatting away. With a pang you remember how you used to talk like that with your friends back home before this all started, but the memory is quickly forgotten. Eventually the cheerful pair make it all the way down to the southern part of town, and start looking for a restaurant to enter while you follow from about 75 feet apart. It doesn’t feel good to stalk like this but there hasn’t really been an opportune moment to introduce yourself yet. Yet again, the duo detour into an alleyway and you wait a second before following suit. This alleyway mazes around in a thin space between buildings, and you lose track of them. Jogging up to where the corners of four buildings meet and thus create a divergence in the alleyway, you glance to your right but see nobody. Turning, you check to see if they went the opposite direction only to see that they are standing right next to you in the alleyway, glaring angrily.

[Woman in Yellow] And just who the fuck do you think you are, stalking us like some kind of creep!?

You back up slowly and try to get a good look at them. The girl in yellow looks to be in her early 20’s and stands at about 5’4. She has gorgeous $aHairColor hair and glistening $aSkinColor skin. She wears a pretty yellow dress that ends just above the knee and underneath that dress is some thin but sturdy leather armor, cleverly hidden behind blue laces and bows. Her brown leather boots don’t quite match the dress since they go up past her knees and have a multitude of black buckles, and it is clear that while the dress is for looks the boots and armor hidden beneath it mean business. On her back is an extremely long and thin blade that hangs slanted across her back, with a sheath that is decorated at the top with a small burlap ribbon. The blade looks so long it must be about her height. Her pretty $aEyeColor eyes spark with anger at you, and her facial features remind you of an old childhood friend you used to have growing up.

Next to her is her partner, the lady in lavender. She looks to be in her early 20’s as well but slightly older. She is about 5’6 and is clearly in peak athletic form. She wears nearly identical apparel except the dress is colored lavender with white laces and bows instead. Her sword is slightly less slanted on her back since she is taller, but it looks comically long all the same. She has silky smooth $liHairColor hair and supple $liSkinColor skin. She is so beautiful that it takes your breath away, and her $liEyeColor eyes glow at you with lurid emotion. The only imperfection on her face is that over and through her right eyebrow is a small scar about two inches long that slices straight down parallel to her nose. Speaking of eyebrows, they are furrowed angrily at you and you remind yourself to stop gawking and start speaking up.

[$pName] Now hold on a second…

You begin to sputter out an excuse to explain yourself when their expressions suddenly soften and turn much friendlier. The two women squint their eyes at you as if trying to remember something.

[Woman In yellow] Wait a second, do I know you!?

[Woman in Lavender] I was about to ask the same thing. Doesn’t he look familiar?

[Woman in yellow] Have we met mister?

[$pName] My name is $pName, and I don’t think we have yet…

The woman in Lavender pushes her $liHairColor hair behind her ear and stares at you intently. The woman in yellow crosses her arms and with her eyebrows furrowed looks you up and down.

[Woman in yellow] Say $liName, does the name $pName ring any bells for you?

[Woman in Lavender] I’ve never heard such a dumb name before in my life, but boy do you sure look familiar. I’m getting the weirdest feeling right now… wha!?

The woman in Lavender reaches up to her cheek, where a single tear is running down across her face. She wipes it off in shock, and stares back up at you confusedly.

[Woman in Lavender] $aName, this is really weird. It feels like I had some kind of really crazy dream with this guy in it, and we used to be very close. Almost like we spent an entire lifetime together. I have no idea what’s going on…

[Woman In yellow] I know exactly what you mean, maybe we met $pName when we were kids and just forgot? Weird. Anyways, do you know…

[???] URK!

The three of you spin and peer down the alleyway towards the source of the noise. A disgusting old man collapses into the center of the alleyway and sprawls out across the dirt, dropping a cheap looking knife to the side. An imposing looking woman stands over the corpse, and dislodges her sword from his back. The killer bends over slightly, wiping the blood off their sword onto the clothing of their slain foe, and with a practiced motion sheathes their blade. Stepping over the puddle of gore, she approaches the three of you with a smile.

1

\*delete save file\*

Arc 8, THE CASTLE

\*A Golden voice of deep Baritone gently reaches out to you at the edge of your consciousness\*

[???] It is now a safe time to save, my child

2

You wake up shivering, barely protected by the tattered rags you wear on your body. Your shoulders ache in pain, and your hands are tied behind you to a metal wall of bars by a frayed rope. You blink, and try to get your bearings. You are inside a dark, dingy jail cell with thick stone walls on three sides and a wall of metal bars with a locked metal door on the fourth. You are tied to one of the metal bars and facing towards the center, which is empty. The floor is stone and very cold. You are wearing a dirty shirt made of burlap which rubs uncomfortably against your skin, and your feet are bare. Your tattered pants are covered in dried blood, but you don’t sense any wounds on you that may have created it. Your left forearm is extremely itchy but since it is behind your back you can’t look to see why. Looking down at your chest and legs, you notice a surprising number of battle scars that you don’t remember ever being there before.

What the hell is going on?

[$pName] Hello…?

Nobody responds. There are no windows and it is very hard to see. You struggle against the rope tying you to the bars and notice there are only a few strands left of it holding it together. Concentrating, you rub the rope up and down behind you against the metal hoping to wear it down some more. It takes about twenty minutes of total effort, but in the end you finally manage to do it and the rope snaps.

You awkwardly stand up with your hands still tied behind you. While the rope connecting you to the metal was weak the thick knots forcing your hands together is not, and you feel defenseless without the use of your hands. You face the bars and try to look as far out of your cell as you can. Your cell is connected to a hallway which has no cells on the opposite side of you, and ends abruptly on your right. To your left it extends a ways down, further than you can see from your perspective. There are likely more cells to your left but you cannot see them because of the stone wall in the way.

[$pName] Is anybody there?

Nobody responds. You hear a faint shuffle somewhere to the left and you hope the sound isn’t coming from whoever put you in here. You furtively explore your cell but find nothing other than a bucket in the corner overflowing with refuse. With nothing else left to do, you approach the metal door and hope for the best, pushing on it. Unbelievably it swings open with little force and you are filled with momentary relief. The metal hinges creak loudly as you slowly urge it open, and you hear the faint ringing of a small piece of metal which had fallen out of the locking mechanism and onto the ground. It appears someone must have sneakily put this metal fragment inside the mechanism at some point, inhibiting the lock and allowing you to escape. Out of your cell now, you peer down the hallway. At the end of the passage is a thick looking wooden door and a small amount of light seeps out from under it. Along the left side of the hallway are five jail cells other than your own.

The first cell on your left holds a lonely looking man who is hugging his knees to his chest in the far corner of the cell. It is too dark to see well, but he looks like he has a lanky build and a long nose, with hair tucked into a ponytail behind his head. He is dressed in poor clothing similar to yours.

Talk to man in first cell 3

Walk past without talking 4

3

You approach the bars of his cell and whisper towards him.

[$pName] Psst! Hey! What’s going on? Where are we?

The man looks up from his knees at you with a face of pure frustration, as if he has completely given up. With a groan he shakes his head and buries his face back into his knees.

[$pName] Psst! What’s your problem?

He looks up again angrily and spits out a retort.

[Man] Listen $pName, I’m really not in the mood to explain everything to you again. Go back to your cell and fuck off.

[$pName] What are you talking about? Who are you?

[Man] For goodness sake, fuck off! Every damn day you do this…

The man buries his head into his knees again and won’t respond to you anymore. You test the lock on his door but it is sealed shut and doesn’t budge without a key.

[$pName] alright…

You move away from his cell.

Continue 4

4

You continue down the hallway and look into the second cell. Inside is a huge man of about 8 feet in height and bulging with muscles that blossom out from underneath his dirty ripped clothing. Despite clearly having been trapped in his cell for a long time he has somehow managed to keep a lot of his strength, and he stands with his back to you. He leans against the stone wall and slowly bumps his head against the wall over and over, muttering about something.

Talk to man in second cell 5

Walk past without talking 6

5

You approach the bars of his cell and whisper towards him.

[$pName] Psst! Hey! What’s going on? Where are we?

The huge man slowly turns around, and upon seeing you on the other side of the bars clenches his hands and yells in anger.

[Huge Man] OI! YOO FOOKER!

His voice sounds vaguely Scottish and has a deep, powerful tone. In the back of your head you worry he might be too loud and alert whatever guard may be around this jail, but you can’t dwell on it for long as the huge man rushes over to the bars slamming into them and shoves his arm in between, reaching for you. With a gasp you jump back just in time and stare dumbly at the enraged man.

[Huge Man] YA KILLED EM’! OW COULD YA BETRAY US!?!?

You don’t want him to keep yelling because of all the noise it is making, and the man clearly is not in the mood to help you. You decide to retreat further along down the hallway.

Continue 6

6

You continue down the passage and look into the third cell. Inside is a solidly built man of average height laying on the ground with his back to you. There appears to be a pool of blood on the ground around him with bloody footsteps leading away and towards the cell door which surprisingly is slightly ajar.

[$pName] Hey, are you alright?

The man doesn’t respond or even move at all. He is so perfectly still it doesn’t look like he is even breathing. A chill runs down your spine, and you proceed down the hallway.

Continue 7

7

The fourth cell is next, and despite it being extremely dark you can see the silhouette of a woman trapped inside.

[Woman] $pName! Come here, quick!

You approach the bars and she reaches out gently, spinning you around so that she can grip the ropes binding your wrists together.

[Woman] Poor thing…

Her soothing voice calms you as she pulls something out of her pant pocket and uses it to saw at the ropes. Within a few seconds she has cut you free and you gratefully rub at the tender skin where the ropes had chafed it. You feel much better now that your hands are independent again.

[Woman] That’s better.

[$pName] Thanks.

[Woman] Listen $pName, there is some seriously shady stuff going on around here. We need to talk.

Talk to woman in fourth cell 8

Walk past without talking 9

8

You get closer to the bars so that you can see her better. The woman looks like she is in her early twenties, and has lovely brunette hair tied up into a bun. She wears tattered and dirty clothing similar to yours but the poor clothing does little to hide her excellent figure. Despite it being so dark you can see in her amber eyes a sense of loving care, and she has gentle features.

[Woman] $pName, don’t tell me it happened again. Do you remember me?

[$pName] Er… No…

[Woman] Oh no, so it’s true then. FAMINE has consumed your memories again.

[$pName] Consumed my memories!?

[Woman] Ah jeez, this is really trippy. Where do I even start? Ah… How about with my name, which is $medicName. Nice to meet you… again.

[$pName] Ok, $medicName. What’s going on here? Where am I?

[$medicName] We don’t have much time so listen carefully, I’ll recap everything as best I can. About a year ago we met near a town called Durango, and worked together to defeat a bunch of Cultists who had been terrorizing the locals. $toughName and I had been travelling together for a while back then and decided to join you, $bName, and Powell after our little adventure. We went on some amazing journeys after that and eventually met $thiefName about six months ago. Four months ago we were captured by FAMINE, one of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. Somehow or another he knew exactly where we were going and exactly how to capture us, which made me suspect someone in our group had ratted us out to him. Anyways, he consumed your memories and trapped us all in his castle and we have been stuck here ever since.

[$pName] Oh my god…

[$medicName] I know it’s a lot all at once and very confusing but you need to stay sharp. You need to figure out a way to get us out of here, but not before you find out who the traitor is. If we all escape together the traitor will rat us out again and we will be screwed.

Your left forearm itches again, and you absentmindedly scratch at it now that your hands are freed. Surprisingly, you feel the texture of scarring under your nail and you glance down at it. Scarred and scabbed across your left forearm and written in your own handwriting is a simple sentence:

$bName is the Traitor.

[$medicName] Oh my god…

Her voice is full of surprise as she notices the writing on your arm at the same time as you do.

[$medicName] It’s like you knew you would have your memory wiped again and wrote a message to your future self.

You stare at your arm in disbelief. $bName is the traitor that doomed everyone.

[$medicName] I had a feeling she might be the traitor, I’m glad you figured it out as well before you had your memory wiped again. She was always acting so lovey dovey around you it seemed suspicious…

[$pName] Lovey dovey with me? $bName? That doesn’t sound right…

[$medicName] I wonder how far back the memory wipe goes, do you remember anything at all? Well, I guess it doesn’t matter in the end, there are more important things to take care of. Listen, DO NOT talk to $bName. She is in the next cell, and will likely try to trick you into getting captured and wiping your memory again. You are our last hope for freedom and we can’t take that risk. Do you understand?

[$pName] …

[$medicName] Skip past $bName and sneak into the castle and find the jail cell keys, they should be just up the stairs. Then come back and free me and the others. But be careful $pName, there is a huge Golem that patrols the castle and it’s what killed Powell the last time we tried to escape. We don’t have much more time before FAMINE returns, go!

$medicName shoos you away from the cell bars and wishes you good luck with a sympathetic expression on her face. You turn and head further along the hallway.

Continue 9

9

You move past until finally there is only one last jail cell on your left, the fifth cell. Sleeping close to the bars is none other than $bName, who is just as intimidating and beautiful as the day you first met her in Kingsbridge. Unlike before, she is dressed in tatters like the rest of you and no longer has her impressive sword by her side. She twitches in her sleep fretfully, but doesn’t notice you standing outside her cell.

Talk to $bName in the fifth cell 10

Walk past without talking 13

10

\*play this the first time you talk to her, even if it is after getting keys\*

You lean against the bars and speak gently, trying to wake up $bName.

[$pName] Psst, hey $bName…

She stirs, and sits up rubbing her eyes. After taking a few seconds to unsteadily rise to her feet, $bName finally looks towards you and her eyes light up.

[$bName] $pName!

She immediately bursts into tears and rushes towards the bars, shooting her arms out through them in an effort to hug you. Startled by her sudden act of intimacy you automatically back up a little and look at her in surprise. What happened to the thorny $bName you knew from before?

[$bName] $pName…?

The smile vanishes from her face and she is stricken with confusion and hurt. Her arms fall limply across the bars and she gazes at you woefully.

[$bName] $pName, What’s wrong?

[$pName] Nothing… I just… I don’t…

You feel awkward. She feels crushed.

[$bName] What’s wrong Duckling, why won’t you hold me!?

She backs up a little and grips the bars separating the two of you tightly, the frustration showing on her face clearer and clearer as the seconds go by.

[$bName] Don’t you remember me? I’m $bName! Your one and only $bName! What is wrong!?

[$pName] I… I don’t…

[$bName] Are you trying to escape again? Why didn’t you bring me last time? I was the only one you left behind, I thought you loved me!?

[$pName] Loved you!? What are you talking about?

It looks like $bName has just been slapped in the face. She is so taken back by what you just said she literally sinks to her knees and stares at you in disbelief. She whispers in a tiny voice.

[$bName] How could you say something like that…

You feel terrible and guilty despite having done nothing incorrect. The whole situation just feels wrong, like both of you have entirely different perceptions of the other but you are too naïve to read the room. You walk up to the bars and reach forward with your palm open.

[$pName] Hey, I’m sorry. Here, hold my hand. I don’t know what’s going on but let’s figure it out.

$bName reaches out and holds your hand with one hand while covering her face with her other. She sits against the cell bars and weakly looks up at you. Never in a million years would you expect her to look or act like this.

[$bName] What’s wrong with you $pName? Do you not know who I am? After all the years we have spent together, do you not remember?

You look down at her sympathetically.

[$pName] I’m so sorry $bName, but I don’t know what you are talking about. All I remember is leaving Kingsbridge together… and then waking up here. That’s the truth.

[$bName] Oh no…

$bName huddles into a ball while still holding your hand and sobs uncontrollably, tears streaming down her face. Her grief is so powerful that it is unmistakably similar to a person’s reaction to hearing a loved one has just died. In a way, you forgetting about all your supposed time spent with her and dying aren’t too dissimilar. She stops crying a few times but every time she looks back up at you she remembers something and breaks down again. You feel too awkward to say anything so you just crouch down next to her on the opposite side of the bars silently.

[$bName] Then you don’t remember anything?

She chokes out the words between tearful breaths.

[$bName] You don’t remember Durango? Or when we met Powell for the first time?

[$pName] Nothing.

[$bName] Oh no… then you don’t even remember in the barn by the border, when we…?

[$pName] …

[$bName] Oh no…

She breaks down into another fit of crying. It feels extremely strange for you to sit there while she cries so hard for you and the memories you should have been sharing with her, and you look around the cell uncomfortably. It feels like she is crying over someone else entirely, a person separate from you.

[$bName] …So you have no memories at all then? The last thing you remember is Kingsbridge?

[$pName] The last thing I remember is leaving the town after defeating DEATH.

[$bName] And you are sure? You are sure you remember nothing else? Nothing at all about our adventures, or about… us?

[$pName] I’m afraid so.

She looks crestfallen, and hopeless. It pains your heart to see her like this.

[$bName] FAMINE. FAMINE stole your memories then… We have to get them back. We have to kill him so that I can get you back.

Her eyebrows furrow in determination.

[$pName] What do you mean get me back? I’m right here…

$bName lets go of your hand and stares at you. She looks fired up.

[$bName] I can tell, just from your demeanor. I knew it the instant I saw you, how different you are. You aren’t the $pName I know at all, the $pName I fell in love with. You are the weak idiot I met at the very beginning. Oh no, now we have to restart all over again… Unless we can get your memories back from FAMINE…

[$pName] Woah, ok now…

$bName stands up and adopts a confident and aggressive stance. This is a lot more like the $bName you remember from Kingsbridge.

[$bName] I’ll rip your memories out of his head myself, I’ll cut off each of his limbs until he agrees to help, then I’ll slice off…

[$pName] WOAH! Ok now, calm down!

[$bName] … slice off his… Ah… ok… yes, I’ll calm down…

She pauses and rubs at the mole on her chin fretfully, one hand on her hip. She thinks for a few seconds and paces around the cell until finally turning back to you.

[$bName] I suspect we don’t have much time until FAMINE returns then. If he catches you then he will imprison you and wipe your memories again, which would be a disaster. And that’s not all…

You take a deep breath.

[$bName] FAMINE captured us because someone in our group is a traitor, I have no doubt about it. If you manage to free us but also free the traitor, then we will end up in this exact same situation again. So you will have to choose who you let out very carefully…

Ask her to explain everything that has happened so far 11

Ask her what you should do next 12

11

[$pName] Maybe I could figure out who the traitor is if you remind me everything that has happened so far? Perhaps by remembering we can discover some kind of hint…?

[$bName] Hmm… It’s worth a shot.

$bName begins to pace the room, and her hand attaches to her hip similar to how she used to rest it on the pommel of her sword a long time ago. Looks like some habits never die.

[$bName] I’ll tell you everything I know then, the quick version. After leaving Kingsbridge we travelled around the kingdom looking for my magical fruit… ah right, that fruit… stupid. Anyways, we travelled looking for it and one day a bandit almost killed you so I taught you how to use a sword. We spent most of our days travelling, doing odd jobs, and training. You were pretty annoying but respectful for the most part and I guess I started to ease up on you after a while. Oh god, I just realized you probably forgot how to swordfight too… what a waste. Anyways…

$bName leans against one of the stone walls of her cell, engrossed in the memories.

[$bName] After maybe half a year we met Powell, an old mercenary friend I knew from years ago. He is one of the greatest duelists I have ever met, and is held two cells down I believe. We went to…

[$pName] You mean the dead guy? I saw a dead guy lying in a pool of blood two cells down. That must be Powell… Ah, I’m sorry, that was a little too blunt…

$bName winces upon hearing the death of her friend, but continues bravely.

[$bName] Dead huh? Shit… Must have happened during your second escape. I’ll get to that in a second…

She adjusts her posture and runs a finger along the metal of the cell bars.

[$bName] You, me, and Powell all went to this crappy little town Durango at one point to fight some cultists, and there we met $toughName who is a big burly fighter and $medicName who is our combat medic. She’s in the cell right next to mine, I think. We all went on some crazy adventures together and created a name for ourselves as a force to be reckoned with. I remember…

$bName’s eyes start to glisten with emotion again.

[$bName] That was around the time I began to really notice you. I noticed how much you had grown, how confident you had become. You became this impossibly perfect leader, and no matter how difficult the situation became you always figured out how to get out of it. It was like you could see the future or something, it was incredible. And that’s about when I fell in love with you…

She looks down and hangs her head, getting a hold of herself. She takes a deep breath and looks back at you and resumes her story.

[$bName] You were the first person I could completely trust in a long time. We were inseparable, and our merry gang tore up the Kingdom fighting villains, discovering treasure, and exploring forsaken lands… It was beautiful.

$bName wipes a single tear off her cheek and glances up at you, smiling. The way you blankly look back at her reminds her you don’t share these golden memories anymore and her smile quickly fades.

[$bName] Pretty recently, maybe only half a year ago $thiefName joined us as well. He is a lanky guy with a long nose and a ponytail. He is really good at lockpicking and even better at dancing… Anyways you two got along really well and quickly became best friends. Let’s see… after that… after that was around four months ago, when we got caught by Famine’s trap and eventually imprisoned here. Believe it or not this is the first time since we were captured I have been able to properly speak with you, isn’t that sad? I thought this whole time you were going to figure out another perfect solution to getting out of this, just like usual, but what I didn’t know was that you had your memory wiped and barely even remembered me…

You grimace but say nothing.

[$bName] Unfortunately, there isn’t much more to say about the outside world after that because I have been stuck in my cell this entire time. About two months ago you tried to escape, and I think you managed to free $medicName as well because her cell door latch was rusty and you somehow broke it and got her out. The two of you went off to get the jail cell keys and free everybody. I called out to you but when you came over to talk $medicName kind of stood between us. You argued with her for a bit but she convinced you to leave without talking to me. In the end you returned maybe an hour later pretty beat up, and FAMINE was carrying you in his arms; He had caught you and $medicName and forced each of you back into your cells, then probably wiped your memory again. As he dragged $medicName behind him she glared at me, which in retrospect is very strange. Anyways some time passed before your next attempt, which was maybe four days ago.

[$pName] I tried to escape twice already, as recently as four days ago!? I don’t remember anything…

[$bName] This must be hard for you, I’m sorry for getting so emotional about it earlier. I know it’s not your fault… So four days ago… ah right, four days ago you tried again. I remember faintly hearing $thiefName trying to explain everything to you yet again and being so patient, it must have really killed him to have to tell you everything over and over again. Especially because you probably treated him like a stranger… Anyways he even gave you two little pieces of metal he was going to pick his door lock with, trusting you to accomplish the mission in his stead. You managed to open the door but the pick broke, and he suggested you put the broken fragment into the door lock and hope that it kept it from locking in case you get imprisoned again. Then you disappeared into the Castle, by yourself this time. Surprisingly, you managed to find the keys and even get back without being discovered.

$bName crosses her arms, and purses her lips.

[$bName] What comes next was very difficult for me, since I didn’t know about your memory wipe. You proceeded to free every single person… except me. You even stood in front my cell for a second as if you were going to, but in the end you didn’t. I remember you kept looking at your left arm regretfully, it was the weirdest thing…

She relaxes a little and paces around the cell again.

[$bName] The four of you came back a while later, $toughName holding Powell. Powell looked really hurt, and I was very worried. I tried to ask what was going on but everyone ignored me… how frustrating. You all were out of breath like you had just run away from something and retreated into your respective cells to recover and regroup. You spent some time in Powell’s cell, then talked to $thiefName for a while, and then the two of you were interrupted by FAMINE who had just returned. Everyone was locked back up, I’m assuming you had your memory wiped again, and that’s that. Nothing left to tell.

[$pName] Jeez. That’s a lot for me to process…

Continue 12

\*if talkBeforeKey false then set continue to 35

12

[$bName] FAMINE consumed your memories so that you can’t remember your goals and who your friends are. He knows what you are capable of and probably thought by robbing you of your memories you wouldn’t have the determination to beat him. Prove him wrong $pName!

$bName adopts a determined pose.

[$bName] Explore the Castle for clues, find the Jail Cell Keys, question everybody, and figure out who the traitor is! Then free the rest of us so that we can make a daring escape. Avoid Famine, and watch out for an evil Golem patrolling the Castle. We’ve done a daring escape before; we can do it again!

[$pName] Alright!

You share her pose for a moment, and the two of you smile.

[$bName] I’m going to try to sleep a little more… Be careful out there $pName. And good luck!

Continue 13

13

You make your way to the wooden Jail Door connecting the imprisonment area to the castle and take a deep breath. You push the door, which is extremely heavy, and just barely manage to open it enough to squeeze past. You are now in FAMINE’s Castle.

14

You are inside a gathering hall, likely the largest space in the castle. There are a few couches and animal pelt rugs laying around, as well as a massive fireplace in the corner. The stone walls tower upwards about three stories high before arching together in an impressive display of architecture. You can see a magnificent Oak door that likely leads outside, a staircase leading to a second floor balcony that overlooks the main hall, a passageway that leads further into the castle, and a heavy looking door that leads to the jail cells. The thudding of heavy footsteps from somewhere in the castle echo off the walls ominously, and you get the feeling you are being watched.

\*if bjoined\* [$bName] Let’s keep moving.

\*if thiefJoined\* [$thiefName] I remember that the office is down that passageway.

\*if medicJoined\* [$medicName] Eerie…

Go outside 17

Go into the Jail 21

Go down the passageway 15

Go Upstairs 18

15

You head down the passageway, and the sound of footsteps seem to get louder. The hair on the back of your neck stands up. The passageway has a few paintings on the walls, which depict biblical figures suffering as they are eaten alive by a group of cannibals. Needless to say, you do your best to tread quietly. One end of the corridor leads to a series of uninteresting rooms and a kitchen, but most notably an office or study of some kind where FAMINE likely spends much of his time. It is firmly locked. On the other end of the corridor is the way leading to the main gathering hall.

Unlock Office 16

Go towards Main Hall 14

16

You attempt to unlock the Office door, but it doesn’t budge. You will need someone who can pick the lock if you want to get inside and find the sensitive secrets within.

\*if bJoined and NOT thiefJoined\*

[$bName] Too bad $thiefName isn’t here with us, he’d be perfect for this sort of thing.

\*if medicJoined\* [$medicName] This place gives me the creeps, let’s get out of here…

\*if thiefJoined\* [$thiefName] Let’s take a crack at it, shall we?

Go towards main Hall 14

\*if thiefJoined and NOT medicJoined\* Have $thiefName unlock the door 49

\*if medicJoined AND thiefJOINED\* Have $thiefName unlock the door 48

17

You push the huge Oak door open and step outside. The weather is pleasant and a cool breeze immediately refreshes you. There is a path leading from the castle that meanders through the surrounding woods, and you start down it hoping to get as far away as you can, as quickly as you can. You take maybe ten steps towards freedom before you hear the loud shattering of glass behind you, and you spin to see what caused it.

Out of a window on the second floor comes a massive Stone Golem, which careens through the air and smashes into the ground below causing a slight tremor that makes you stumble. Without missing a beat the incredible Golem rises to its feet and marches towards you. The Golem is perhaps 8 feet tall and made almost completely of stone, and it looks extremely tough. Before you can even think about whether you should fight it or try to run away, it is already upon you and grips you tightly.

[$pName] UGH! Let go!

The Golem picks you up easily, like a child picks up a toy, and raises you into the air gripping each of your wrists. Slowly, steadily, it spreads its hands apart until you are suspended in the air with each of your arms stretched out as if you are on a cross. The Golem has a larger wingspan than you, and before you know it your arms dislocate out of their shoulder sockets with a loud POP.

[$pName] AAAGHHHH

The Golem doesn’t stop. It continues to pull at your arms, ripping and tearing at them as if tearing a drumstick off a chicken. It takes mere seconds before your appendages can’t handle the stress anymore and both of your arms are ripped completely off your body, sending a spray of blood in both directions. You fall down to the ground armless, screaming.

[$pName] AAAAAAAAAAAGH!!!

The pain is monumental and the blood loss is unstoppable. You will bleed out in mere minutes, if not for the Golems next action. Without even acknowledging your suffering, the Golem solemnly raises a stony foot and smashes it down at your head, popping it like a watermelon. Your brains and nervous tissue explode from your skull violently and spill out across the ground. Without the aid of someone strong like $toughName, you don’t stand a chance against the Golem. You are dead.

THE END

18

You are upstairs on the balcony that overlooks the main hall. The view is impressive, and the balcony is decorated with numerous tapestries and woven designs. Against the wall is a wooden peg board that holds a multitude of keys, which likely open up all kinds of different areas to the castle. Further along the balcony is a door that leads to a room on the second floor further into the castle, and it looks like some kind of library.

\*if hasKeys is false\*

A few keys are missing, such as the one to FAMINE’s office, but luckily the Jail Cell key ring is right where it belongs.

\*if thiefJoined true\*

[$thiefName] This is a waste of time $pName, let’s head back down and break into that office.

* ^ option to head into library does not appear\*

Head into the Library 20

\*if hasKeys false\* Grab the Jail Cell Keys 19

Head Downstairs into the Main Hall 14

19

You grab the Jail Cell Keys and place them into your pocket. They jingle merrily and you feel relieved to have gotten this far successfully. That feeling of relief doesn’t last long however, when you hear the heavy thudding of footsteps approaching from somewhere downstairs. You crouch low, and peer through the rails of the balcony banister.

Below you is a massive Golem that sends a chill down your spine. It is perhaps 8 feet tall and made almost completely of stone; it looks extremely tough and there is no way you could defeat it on your own. You stare down at it, paralyzed with fear, as it slowly patrols around the main hall. It almost feels as if it knows you escaped, and is looking for you. You hold your breath and try to hide yourself as best as you can. Finally, after what feels like ages, the footsteps recede as the Golem retreats back into the Castle for more patrolling in a different area. You breathe another sigh of relief and hope you never have to deal with that monster directly. Out of all of your allies in the jail cells the only one that would even have a chance of beating it is probably $toughName the burly fighter from cell two, and even then it’s not a for sure thing.

Continue 18

20

You enter the library, and take a look around. The floor is solid hardwood, and the walls are covered with purple drapes that gentle sweep along the walls of the room. There is a single large window that lets in some pleasant sunlight, and through it you can gaze across the verdant forest surrounding the castle. The walls are lined with bookshelves which in turn hold hundreds of unique looking titles. The smell of the library is calming and has exactly the same pleasant aroma you get when opening an old book.

\*if medicJoined (make sure this if statement is first)

Continue 44

\*else if bJoined\*

Continue 45

\*else if you are by yourself and g.seenSecret = true\*

Continue 46

\*if you are by yourself and g.seenSecret = false\*

There isn’t much else to see here so you decide to head back the way you came.

Continue 18

21

\*if haskeys == false\*

You make a start for the jail cells, but realize there isn’t really a point going back in there without the Jail cell keys first.

Continue 14

Else

You are inside the gloomy darkness of the jail area. At this point you have some very important decisions to make. Who will you question? Who will you free? Most importantly of all, who is the traitor? Feel free to walk around the jail and take your time questioning each person, then later utilize their skillsets to explore the castle further. If you declare the wrong person is the traitor, there may be dire consequences down the line.

| your cell | $thiefName | $toughName | Powell | $medicName | $bName | Jail exit |

\*make sure to check if each person has joined you, if they have then don’t show option to talk\*

Talk to $medicName the combat medic 22

Talk to $bName the elite swordswoman 34

Talk to Powell the deceased duelist 27

Talk to $toughName the burly fighter 30

Talk to $thiefName the lanky rogue 38

Leave the Jail 43

22

You approach $medicName’s cell, and she walks up to speak to you through the bars. She glances around suspiciously as if trying to spot the traitor listening in on your conversation, and talks in a whisper only you can hear.

[$medicName] What can I do for you?

Question about what has happened 23

\*if you have discovered bloody scalpel\* Question about bloody scalpel 26

\*if you have read writing on Powell’s body\* Question about the Writing on Powell 25

Leave 21

\*do not show unlock option if hasScalpel is true\*

Unlock cell and free $medicName 24

23

[$pName] Tell me everything you know about what’s happened so far.

[$medicName] You don’t trust me? Fine... About a year ago we met near a town called Durango, and worked together to defeat a bunch of Cultists who had been terrorizing the locals. $toughName and I had been travelling together for a while back then and decided to join you, $bName, and Powell after our little adventure. We went on some amazing escapades after that and eventually met $thiefName about six months ago. Four months ago we were captured by FAMINE, one of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. Somehow or another he knew exactly where we were going and exactly how to capture us, which made me suspect someone in our group had ratted us out to him. Anyways, he consumed your memories and trapped us all in his castle and we have been stuck here ever since.

[$pName] Hmmm…

[$medicName] Since we have been trapped here you have tried to escape twice. The first time you escaped you freed… $bName. I saw the two of you passing my cell to leave, I guess the hinge on her door was rusty and you were able to break it open. The two of you promised to escape and come back with the jail cell keys, but instead you were caught by FAMINE and dragged back into your cells. Before your memory was wiped again however, you managed to cut into your arm a warning for your future self.

You look down at your left forearm, and read the words scarred across your flesh: $bName is the Traitor.

[$medicName] The warning worked, because four days ago or so you tried to escape again. This time you were smart and freed everyone except for $bName, and we all escaped into the castle together. I wanted to just leave but you insisted on looking around for clues as to who the traitor was… I guess you still didn’t want to believe $bName was the traitor. In the end your gallantry backfired because we got attacked. We were near the kitchen, which is down the main hallway, when the lights went out and the stone Golem ambushed us. I screamed, and in the dark the Golem inflicted a grievous wound on Powell. $toughName looked like he might have beaten the Golem but we had to retreat and try to save Powell so he picked Powell up and we all ran for the jail so that we could block the door behind us. We were running together and $toughName, $thiefName, and Powell were behind us. Once we got back to the safety of the cells you kept looking at me funny so I went back into my cell while you hung out in Powell’s cell with him for a little and then $thiefName’s. FAMINE barged in to interrupt everyone and locked you back up then wiped your memory again. He’s been wiping your memory almost every night actually. Anyways that is all I know. Would you let me out now please?

Back away 21

\*only show unlock cell if you are NOT already joined by bname and thiefName and hascalpel = true

Unlock cell 24

24

[$pName] Stand back for a second, I’m letting you out.

[$medicName] Yay, thank you $pName! I knew you would make the right choice!

You shove the jail key into the lock on her cell door and twist. With a heavy mechanical thunk the latch is undone and the door swings open, allowing $medicName to escape with you. $medicName has now joined your party.

\*if bjoined\*

[$medicName] You already let HER out? Bad idea $pName…

Continue 21

25

[$pName] I found “Arm is LIE” written on Powell’s body. I think it is some sort of clue.

[$medicName] What!? Written on his… er… huh. What do you think it means?

[$pName] It is probably referencing the writing on my arm saying $bName is the traitor, right?

[$medicName] Maybe. Or maybe Powell was also a traitor along with $bName and the two were working together to trick you. Don’t forget $pName, that clue on your arm is in your own handwriting. You must have thought it very important that you remember that clue! I wouldn’t trust that Arm is LIE crap.

[$pName] Hmmm…

\*if you have discovered bloody scalpel\* Question about bloody scalpel 26

Leave 21

Unlock cell and free $medicName 24

26

[$pName] Look what we found In Famine’s office, $medicName.

You show the bloody scalpel to her, and her eyes widen in surprise.

[$medicName] How did you find that? I don’t… uh…

[$pName] What do you have to say for yourself? Did you kill Powell?

Her face scrunches up in frustration and she raises her voice at you, spitting out words coated with venom.

[$medicName] how dare you!? I did no such thing! I mean come on, isn’t this all too obvious!? A bloody scalpel? This whole thing is a massive setup, $bName is clearly framing me! You gotta believe me $pName, we’re getting played right now!

[$pName] $thiefName says that this is one of your medical tools. You used it during the confusion of our last escape attempt to try and kill Powell, who suspected you were the traitor.

[$medicName] WHAT!?

Her eyes are wide open, and she is visibly flustered.

[$medicName] This is all a huge setup! I’m getting framed!

She runs her hands through her hair in frustration and paces around her cell, trying to calm down. Finally, she manages to get her emotions back under control and presses her head against the metal bars of her cell.

[$medicName] Tell me… who found the scalpel then? Was it you $pName?

[$pName] Well, no…

[$medicName] It was $bName wasn’t it? She found it?

[$bName] That doesn’t make a difference…

[$medicName] That makes all the difference in the world!

$medicName glares angrily at $bName and grips the cell bars tightly.

[$medicName] She probably had the knife hidden in her pocket the whole time then pretended to discover it there! You got to believe me $pName!

[$pName] hmm…

[$bName] Let’s stop listening to this Traitor before she fills you up with any more lies. Don’t allow her to squirm out of this.

\*if you have read writing on Powell’s body\* Question about the Writing on Powell 25

Leave 21

27

You approach Powell’s cell and peer through the bars into the dark interior. Inside is solidly built man of average height laying on the ground with his back to you. There appears to be a pool of blood on the ground around him with bloody footsteps leading away and towards the cell door which surprisingly is slightly ajar.

[$pName] Powell?

The man doesn’t respond or even move at all. He is so perfectly still it doesn’t look like he is even breathing.

Look at body 28

\*if g.inspectBody from talking to tough guy\* Inspect body closely. 29

Leave 21

28

Powell’s corpse lays on the stone floor unceremoniously. His body looks like it is in normal condition except for a massive gash across his neck, which must have been caused by the slice of a sharp weapon. There are no signs of blunt force trauma anywhere on his body. Next to his hand on the floor is his dagger, which is covered in his own blood. Surprisingly, the dagger has a thick blade and considering how precise the cut on his neck is it doesn’t look like the dagger was the cause of his wound. Judging by the amount of blood he must have spent his last few minutes struggling to survive here before bleeding out.

\*if bjoined\*

[$bName] Poor Powell… Rest in peace, friend.

\*if medicJoined

[$medicName] Yuck…

\*if thiefJoined

[$thiefName] Sorry it had to end like this for you buddy.

Continue 21

29

\*if bjoined\*

[$bName] I’ll stay out here.

\*if medicJoined

[$medicName] I’m not going in there…

\*if thiefJoined

[$thiefName] I’ll wait.

Something about Powell’s situation doesn’t add up. Cautiously, you push the metal door open and its un-lubricated joints scream out at you in protest. You approach him carefully, making sure not to step in any of his blood. As slowly and respectfully as possible you gently ease him onto his back so that you can see his torso for the first time. Nothing of interest stands out to you, but there are bloody fingerprints and smudges all over his shirt which catch your attention. Following the trail of evidence, you slowly rip open his shirt to reveal Powell’s big secret: previously hidden underneath his shirt and carved across his chest are the words:

Arm Is LIE

It looks like in his final moments, Powell used his own knife to carve the letters into his chest. You take note of his final message, and with nothing else to see there leave the cell.

Continue 21

30

You make your way over to $toughName’s cell. Inside is a huge man of about 8 feet in height and bulging with muscles that blossom out from underneath his dirty ripped clothing. Despite clearly having been trapped in his cell for a long time he has somehow managed to keep a lot of his strength, and he stands with his back to you. He leans against the stone wall and slowly bumps his head against the wall over and over, muttering about something.

Question about what has happened 32

Leave 21

Unlock cell and free $toughName 31

\*if hasScalpel\* Show $toughName the Scalpel 33

31

\*if bjoined\*

[$bName] Wait $pName, not yet!

\*if medicJoined

[$medicName] Uh oh…

You shove the jail key into the lock on her cell door and twist. With a heavy mechanical thunk the latch is undone allowing $toughName to be free. Without hesitation $toughName throws the door open and barges forwards towards you, gripping your neck with both hands lifting you up and into the air.

[$pName] Urk… Wait…

[$toughName] THIS IS FER POWELL! DIE TRAITOR!

$toughName tightens his grip on your throat and crushes your neck, resulting in a loud snap as your spine is fractured. Your limbs go limp and you can’t feel anything below your neck anymore. Before you can even think about your total paralysis the oxygen deprivation overwhelms you and the world starts to go black. The anger and look of betrayal in $toughName’s eyes as he squeezes the life out of you haunts your memory until the very last second, then you succumb to your injuries and die.

THE END

32

[$pName] I know we don’t exactly see eye to eye right now but I really need your help. Can you tell me your version of what’s been going on?

$toughName slowly turns to face you and glares angrily.

[$toughName] How boot ye goe fook yerself an’ die, $pName. Ah’ll avenge Powell an’ kill ye with mah bare hans eff et’s th’ lass thing ah dew.

[$pName] Why do you think I killed Powell? Weren’t we supposed to be friends?

[$toughName] Ah thought at’ tew, til’ ye killed em’! Durin are lass escape attempt, Ah was holdin’ Powell ehn me arms as we ran back tah th’ cells. Wi’ some a his lass remainin’ strength he lifted a fingar an’ pointed ahn yer direction! Ah thought aht was a mistake at ferst, but once we gawt back we ahll took shelter een our jail cells while you an’ Powell talked. Ah couldn’ see anything, bu’ ah could hear em’ gettin’ cut up. Then ya left covered in hees blood, an’ he was dead! Fook you $pName, Ah knoe ya tried tah kill em’ durin’ th’ escape, an’ when it didn’t work th’ ferst time ya finished th’ job! Ah shuddar tah think of wha’ a grotesque state yer’ve left em’ in…

[$pName] No… No I couldn’t do something like that… It must be something else…

[$toughName] Fook you. Ah’ll nevar believe yer innocence until ya show meh proof it wasn’t you.

$toughName tries reaching through the bars to grab you but you back up just in time. You decide to give him some space and think for a second.

Back away 21

Unlock cell 31

33

Disp\_txt(” “) \*in case player tries to save scum their choice\*

[$pName] $toughName, I have something to show you.

[$toughName] Fook you.

Ignoring him, you pull the bloody scalpel out and show it to him. $toughName reaches out between the bars and grabs it carefully, then inspects it.

[$toughName] ‘An wha’ is this supposed tah be?

[$pName] Evidence. I know you don’t trust me, but I also know that you would change your mind if shown the proper proof that I am innocent. That is what the scalpel is for.

[$toughName] Eef it ain’t ye, then who th’ fook killed Powell!?

[$pName] The Traitor has plagued our crew for a long time now, and without properly identifying them we will never be able to escape. I have gathered as much evidence as I can, and am ready to declare who the traitor is. The Traitor is none other than…

Declare $bName is the Traitor 51

Declare $medicName is the Traitor 50

34 THIS IS THE BNAME SECTION ------------------------------------------------------------------------

\*if medicJoined then go straight to 36!\*

Leaning against the wall close to the bars is $bName, who is just as intimidating and beautiful as the day you first met her in Kingsbridge. She has her eyes closed as if meditating, and you can’t quite tell if she is awake or asleep.

\*if talkBeforeKey false, then room run 10

Else

Disp\_text

[$pName] Pssst, $bName!

She opens her eyes and looks up at you, then excitedly stands up.

[$bName] Good to see you again, $pName. What’s next?

Question about what has happened 11

Leave 21

Unlock cell and free $bName 37

\*if g.seenSecretSolo\* ask about pigskins in secret room 47

35

\*talkBeforeKey = true

All this information is a bit too overwhelming for you so you back up and pace along the jail hallway. You give yourself a few minutes to chew over the information before returning to $bName.

[$pName] Let’s say I decided to let you out. What would you suggest we do next?

[$bName] Well it’s simple really, we explore the castle looking for clues. I have a pretty sharp eye for that kind of stuff you know. Alternatively, we could talk to $thiefName. His cell is next to yours so he might know something nobody else does.

[$pName] Hmm, alright…

Back away 21

Unlock cell and free $bName 37

36

[$medicName] Wait!

You move towards $bName’s cell, but $medicName grabs hold of your tattered shirt and doesn’t let go.

[$medicName] You let me out of that cell because you trusted me, right? Well trust me on this one. DO NOT TALK TO HER! I am almost positive $bName is the traitor! You should not only trust me, but trust the version of yourself who learnt that lesson before getting his memory wiped. Let’s talk to someone else, or explore the castle.

Continue 21

37

You shove the jail key into the lock on her cell door and twist. With a heavy mechanical thunk the latch is undone and the door swings open, allowing $bName to escape with you. $bName has now joined your party.

[$bName] You may have had your memory wiped, but at least FAMINE couldn’t eat your solid intuition. That’s the clever $pName I used to know!

Continue 21

38

You approach $thiefName’s cell, who is hugging his knees to his chest in the far corner of the gloomy room. It is too dark to see well, but he looks like he has a lanky build and a long nose, with hair tucked into a ponytail behind his head.

If \* bJoined

[$thiefName] Oh no, not you… wait… $bName!? Oh my god, $bName!

[$bName] Hey there $thiefName, glad to see you’re still alive.

[$thiefName] I thought you were dead, I haven’t seen you in ages! What can I do for you guys?

Else

[$thiefName] Oh no, not you again… Just leave me alone $pName, would you? I’m sick of having to explain everything to you every damn day, it’s just too depressing.

Question about what has happened 39

Unlock cell and free $bthiefName 40

\*If bjoined\* question about what has happened 41

\*if bjoined Unlock cell and free $bthiefName 42

Leave 21

39

[$pName] I’m sorry to press you $thiefName but this is important. I need you to explain everything that’s happened so far.

[$thiefName] For cryin’ out loud, you just don’t quit do you? It’s pointless! I’m not going to waste my time and energy…

[$pName] What are you talking about?

[$thiefName] Every damn day $pName… every stinkin’ day you wake up after getting your memories eaten and beg for me to explain what the heck is going on to you. I’ve been doing it for MONTHS. I’m going crazy having to repeat myself over and over, it’s just too heartbreaking to see you like this. And the worst part is you don’t even recognize me, don’t even remember all this effort I have put in for you! You’re such a shell of your former self. Ugh, and here I go again, wasting my time…

[$pName] Well maybe I wasted your time before but look, I escaped and even managed to steal the jail cell keys! Doesn’t that count for something?

You dangle the jail cell keys in front of him, and he groans. $thiefName rubs at his forehead in frustration.

[$thiefName] Oh for cryin’ out loud, look what you went and did! Ah jeez…

[$pName] Seriously $thiefName, help me out here!

[$thiefName] Don’t go getting my hopes up again only for them to get crushed! I can only take so much! Getting the keys is only half the battle, we still need clues and to fight that stupid Golem… Besides, it’s clear to me you haven’t gotten your old incredible self back yet either. It’s hopeless.

[$pName] Hopeless!? What the hell is your deal, giving up before we have even started? And what do you mean my “old self”, I’m still me! I’m still doing my best and I’m going to figure this all out!

[$thiefName] How could you say you are the real you when you don’t even have $bName at your side right now? The real $pName would have freed her first the chance he got and you two would have worked together to do something incredible. I’m not putting in any more effort for your sake until she joins you.

[$pName] …

$thiefName turns his back to you and hugs his knees tightly. He doesn’t seem like he’s going to say anything else for now.

Back away 21

Unlock cell 40

40

With a loud jangle you raise the keys up and begin to slot one of them into $thiefName’s cell door.

[$thiefName] Stop, $pName.

[$pName] …?

You freeze.

[$thiefName] Even if you unlock that door, I’m not going anywhere. The last thing I want is to try to escape and fail again, then be forced to watch my best friend get his memories wiped for the millionth time. Come back when the REAL you has returned.

You return the keys back to your pocket and silently back away.

Continue 21

41

[$pName] I need you to explain everything that’s happened so far. This might be our last chance to escape and we can’t waste it.

[$bName] It’s really important you help us.

[$thiefName] I can see you’re pretty determined… just like the old $pName and $bName, eh? Alright…

$thiefName stands up and walks up to the bars so that you can communicate better. His expression is one of true care towards a friend.

[$thiefName] Well we met about six months ago and I thought you guys were pretty cool so I asked to join up, which nobody had a problem with. I reckon since I’m the newest member of the team that makes me a little suspicious looking, but I’m really not the traitor! Anyways we became pretty good friends $pName, and I’m sure we will be able to get that started up again just fine once we bust outta here… uh, where was I? Oh, we went on some great adventures until about four months ago when FAMINE got us. He had us at the wrong time at the wrong place and there was nothing we could do, it for sure was a setup and it had to be because of a traitor being among us. We were all imprisoned and he ate your memories and something called a “savefile” whatever that means. He would spend weeks at the castle lazing around, and would eat your memories for dinner every night. The shock of having your psyche eaten would knock you out until morning and then you would wake up thinking you had just left Kingsbridge. You would beg me for hours wanting to know what was going on, and I would tell you what I’m saying now over and over. It really was heartbreaking, all the more because you treated me like a stranger… Anyways you managed to bust out something like two months ago and left with somebody, but I couldn’t see who. FAMINE drug you back over here after catching you and ate your memories on the spot…

$thiefName shivers and winces.

[$thiefName] It’s a good thing you can’t remember the sounds FAMINE makes as he consumes you, it is truly terrible…

$bName places a reassuring hand on your back and looks at you sympathetically.

[$pName] I’m ok. Keep going $thiefName.

[$thiefName] Well it took a long time for you to muster up another attempt, and I was just about to go crazy from all the begging you had been doing asking me to explain what was going on for the trillionth time. ‘Bout four days ago you busted out again because I couldn’t take it anymore and picked our locks with my only set of secret lockpicks, then we got everyone else freed and went around the castle looking for clues. For some reason you were adamant that we shouldn’t take $bName with us, which I didn’t agree with, but since you used to be our perfect gang leader I didn’t question you about it too much…

$bName looks saddened by the mention of how she was left behind, clearly revisiting the painful memory.

[$thiefName] You went to the library upstairs first because there was some kind of important clue there, and talked to Powell about it for a little bit. Then we all joined up and went to this office down a hallway because you said all the evidence you would need to figure out who the traitor is would be kept inside. You asked me to pick the lock of course, and I did, but once we got inside the lights all went out and I heard $medicName scream. Everyone panicked and next thing you know the stone Golem is all over us. $toughName starts fighting the Golem and was winning, but Powell got hurt in the confusion so we all had to retreat with the Golem hot on our heels. Well as we were running Powell kept pointing ahead of us at you and $medicName for some reason, but he was too weak to say much and was bleedin’ all over the place. We escaped back to the jail and kept the Golem on the other side of the door long enough for him to go away. We all went into our cells after that, and I knew we weren’t going anywhere with Powell as hurt as he was. My lockpicks had broken busting you out but I stuck one of the fragments into the latch on your cell door just in case you could try and escape again. Lo and behold, FAMINE hears about our escape attempt and is furious, so he beat you me and $toughName up real bad and wiped your memories yet again. I wonder why he only ever ate yours… Anyways as a safety measure he tied you to the cell as well, but what he wasn’t expecting was that you would rub that rope against the metal nonstop for the next several days like a wild animal. I heard him consume your memory one final time last night before leaving the castle, but luckily he never noticed the fraying rope. And… uh… I guess that’s basically all I know. You’re all caught up.

[$bName] Hmmm…

Back away 21

Unlock cell 42

42

[$bName] let’s get you out of here $thiefName.

You shove the jail key into the lock on his cell door and twist. With a heavy mechanical thunk the latch is undone and the door swings open, allowing $thiefName to accompany you. $thiefName has now joined your party.

[$thiefName] This feels like this really might be the one guys. Let’s bust into that Office and figure out who the traitor is and what FAMINE has been up to all this time once and for all!

Continue 21

43

You make your way back out of the Jail and past the heavy door blocking your way.

\*if bjoined\*

[$bName] So this is the outside huh? I’d almost forgotten what fresh air tasted like… Come little Duckling, we have much to do.

$bName beckons you forward, eager to press on.

\*if medicJoined\*

$medicName stumbles forwards apprehensively, and has a strange mixture of negative emotions on her face. She glances around her looking for danger over and over, and between each glance looks back at you as if trying to get a read on your disposition.

[$medicName] This place really gives me the creeps, maybe we should go back before something bad happens…

\*if thiefJoined\*

$thiefName takes the lead into the main hall, and glances around him furtively. He scratches his head while deep in thought, then seems to come to a conclusion.

[$thiefName] Yep, It’s just down this hallway and near a kitchen. Watch out for that Golem, he caught us last time…

Continue 14

44 library

\*g.seenSecret = true

You stroll around the library looking for anything of interest, but nothing in particular stands out to you. $medicName seems to be extremely on edge for some reason, and stands next to one of the bookshelves.

[$pName] What’s wrong $medicName?

[$medicName] Nothing, I’m just afraid that the Golem is gonna find us. This room only has one entrance and if we get cornered…

[$pName] Try to look around then, the sooner we find some kind of clue the sooner we can leave.

You continue to search around the library but find nothing. Eventually you circle around back to $medicName to tell her you give up.

[$pName] I’m not seeing anything, maybe we should… what’s that behind you?

[$medicName] huh!?

You push $medicName to the side and see a red book that you hadn’t noticed before leaning at a strange angle out of a bookshelf.

[$pName] I knew it!

You pull at the red book and it resists as if there was some kind of wire attached to the back of it. A loud click sounds out and suddenly the bookshelf trembles and a mechanical sound fills the room.

[$pName] It’s a secret room hidden behind the bookshelf!

The bookshelf slowly swings open, and you can see the faint glow of light proving a secret room hidden behind it. But before you can see what is inside…

[$medicName] EEEEEEEEEEEEeeeekkkk!

You spin around rapidly, startled at $medicName’s scream. Flashing dust swirls in front of you and suddenly a green portal appears out of thin air. The portal’s center spins with hypnotic color and makes you dizzy if you look for any longer than half a second. With a tremendous smash, the portal is filled up with the figure of a massive Stone Golem that shoots out of it and cracks into the library floor.

[$pName] Holy shit!

The Golem takes only a second to become familiar with its surroundings before locking onto you and marching forward.

[$pName] Nooo!

The Stone Golem stands between you and the exit, and just as $medicName feared you are completely trapped. You attempt to juke around it, but the Golem is too quick and catches you in the side with a massive swing of its hardened fist.

WHOMP

The force of the punch sends you flying sideways and you smash into a bookshelf, sending splinters in every direction. You crumple to the ground with the wind knocked out of you, and the damaged bookshelf falls over and on top of your prone body. Struggling to breathe, you attempt to push the bookshelf off so that you can escape but within an instant the Golem has smashed through it with both fists. Chunks of shattered wood fly across the library as the Golem raises its fists back up, and you desperately attempt to crawl backwards and away. Its no use however, and the Golem smashes its hands back down and crushes both of your legs, pulverizing each into a mangled heap of flesh and bone.

[$pName] AAAAAAAAGGGGGHHHH

You clutch at your disintegrated legs pointlessly and your vision blurs. The pain is so extreme your eyes water and you wail out pathetically. The Golem raises its fists back up for another attack, and this time you can’t move at all.

WHOMP

The Golem’s attack smashes into your skull, and everything goes black. You are dead.

…

For a splint second before your soul departs your body, a strange image races through your mind. It feels like a long-forgotten dream, and seeing it gives you that satisfying feeling you get when you finally listen to a song you used to play long ago but couldn’t remember what it was called anymore.

You are in the loft of a barn, and hay is scattered around you. You lay comfortably on a pile of clothes stacked on a clump of the hay, which creates a cozy makeshift sofa. Held in your arms and filled with joy is the face of $bName, who lovingly hugs you back. You share this serene moment silently, simply appreciating the peace of it all. The sky outside is blue, and the smell of nature and love fills your senses.

…

The next moment it all disappears.

THE END

45

g.seenSecret = true

You stroll around the library looking for anything of interest. $bName investigates alongside you, carefully examining every aspect of the library.

[$pName] Find anything yet?

[$bName] No not yet… wait… Ah ha!

$bName points at a red book that you hadn’t noticed before leaning at a strange angle out of a bookshelf.

[$bName] Watch and learn Duckling.

$bName pulls at the red book, which only comes slightly forward and out of the bookshelf before locking into place. A loud click sounds out and the bookshelf trembles.

[$pName] It’s a secret room hidden behind the bookshelf!

The bookshelf slowly swings open, and you can see the faint glow of light proving a secret room hidden behind it. After much scraping and whirring, the bookshelf opens entirely and reveals the secret room inside.

[$bName] Holy shit…

[$pName] What the Fuck!?

The secret area is a 15 by 15 foot square room with a single torch lighting the space. A chair and table are neatly tucked into one corner of the room, where a knife and pigskin rest on top. Covering the walls are dozens and dozens of pig skins, some still with chunks of dried pig flesh still attached. Stacked in huge piles are even more pigskins all around the inside of the room, and there could easily be hundreds of these small paper sized slices of pigskin precariously placed on top of each other. You are overwhelmed by the stench of rotting meat and gag.

[$bName] $pName, look.

She points at the skins and you notice something even more shocking. Written on these pig skins is the same phrase cut into the flesh over and over:

$bName is the Traitor.

$bName is the Traitor.

$bName is the Traitor.

Over and over and over again, every single pigskin is completely filled with that phrase. It looks like whoever used this room had painstakingly made the effort of cutting that phrase into each pigskin with the dagger on the table, and by now had written it at least a few thousand times.

[$pName] But… why?

Despite the horrid smell you venture deeper into the room, and yet again you make a discovery that floors you. The handwriting of the person that cut into the skins… is yours.

[$pName] What the hell…? Did I do this?

You cover your face with one arm and inspect the skins closer. Without a doubt, every single pig skin covering the wall and even the one on the table has your handwriting.

[$pName] \*cough\* but… how? When?

You turn to the huge piles of skins stacked on the other side of the room and rifle through them, scattering the rotten meat across the floor behind you. These too, have your handwriting, but something seems off. Almost like the writing is familiar but not quite right.

[$pName] …

You grab huge armfuls of pigskins and hurl them behind you, ignoring the clumps of maggots that spill out from the skins as you move them out of the way. The further and further you get down the pile, the stranger and stranger the handwriting becomes. By the time you get to the bottom, the phrase is the same but the handwriting is unrecognizable. Someone else must have written these.

[$bName] It’s obvious then, isn’t it?

You leave the Pigskin room and take a grateful gulp of fresh air.

[$pName] What is?

[$bName] What this room is. What it is for.

[$pName] Alright then genius, tell me what’s on your mind.

[$bName] Someone is trying to imitate your handwriting, and needed somewhere to practice. But they didn’t practice on paper… they had a different surface in mind…

$bName grabs your forearm, and brings it up to her eyes. The scarred tissue reads and looks exactly the same as the phrasing on the pigskins. She nods in affirmation.

[$bName] I knew it. Someone is trying to take advantage of your memory wipe, and steer you the wrong way. The Traitor among us is trying to make you avoid me.

[$pName] No way… that’s so fucked up…

[$bName] And how could you know? The practice was well worth it, and the writing on your arm is clearly exactly the same as your normal handwriting. I’m more impressed you decided to trust me despite your “warning” to yourself.

[$pName] I guess despite what was on my arm I just had a gut feeling about you. My intuition is usually right.

[$bName] We have spent years together $pName, I know more than anyone how good your intuition is. That’s part of why I became so close to you… Anyways, we need to move. Let’s get out of here.

Continue 18

46

g.seenSecretSolo = true

You stroll around the library looking for anything of interest. There are hundreds of books around you, each with a title more boring than the last, but you are really only looking for a single one. It takes you only a few moments to notice it again; the red book that leads to the secret room.

[$pName] Ah ha…

You pull at the red book, which only comes slightly forward and out of the bookshelf before locking into place. A loud click sounds out and the bookshelf trembles.

[$pName] Time to find out what is hidden in this room.

The bookshelf slowly swings open, and you can see the faint glow of light proving a secret room hidden behind it. After much scraping and whirring, the bookshelf opens entirely and reveals the secret room inside.

[$pName] What the Fuck!?

The secret area is a 15 by 15 foot square room with a single torch lighting the space. A chair and table are neatly tucked into one corner of the room, where a knife and pigskin rest on top. Covering the walls are dozens and dozens of pig skins, some still with chunks of dried pig flesh attached. Stacked in huge piles are even more pigskins, in fact there could easily be hundreds of small paper sized slices of pigskin stacked on top of each other all around the inside of the room. You are overwhelmed by the stench of rotting meat and gag.

[$pName] Urk… what the hell…

You look back up at the room and notice something even worse. Written on these pig skins is the same phrase cut into the flesh over and over:

$bName is the Traitor.

$bName is the Traitor.

$bName is the Traitor.

Over and over and over again, every single pigskin is completely filled with that phrase. It looks like whoever used this room had painstakingly made the effort of cutting that phrase into each pigskin with the dagger on the table, and by now had written it at least a few thousand times.

[$pName] But… why?

Despite the horrid smell you venture deeper into the room, and yet again you make a discovery that floors you. The handwriting of the person that cut into the skins… is yours.

[$pName] What the hell…? Did I do this?

You cover your face with one arm and inspect the skins closer. Without a doubt, every single pig skin covering the wall and even the one on the table has your handwriting.

[$pName] \*cough\* but… how? When?

You turn to the huge piles of skins stacked on the other side of the room and rifle through them, scattering the rotten meat across the floor behind you. These too, have your handwriting, but something seems off. Almost like the writing is familiar but not quite right.

[$pName] …

You grab huge armfuls of pigskins and hurl them behind you, ignoring the clumps of maggots that spill out from the skins as you move them out of the way. The further and further you get down the pile, the stranger and stranger the handwriting becomes. By the time you get to the bottom, the phrase is the same but the handwriting is unrecognizable. Someone else must have written these.

[$pName] This is so fucked up…

You glance down at your forearm and inspect the jagged phrase scarred into it. It is certainly your handwriting, and it certainly matches the handwriting on the wall. Something about all this doesn’t add up.

[$pName] Was someone… practicing?

A loud thudding of footsteps echo out from somewhere far away in the castle, and you remember that the library is a dead end. If the Golem found you here you would be trapped, and a bad ending would surely come next… nervous, you decide to leave.

Continue 18

47

[$pName] Listen, I discovered something extremely strange and I need your input on it…

You explain everything you had found in the library, and all about the pigskins. After you finish, $bName rubs at the mole on her chin in deep thought. Finally, she responds.

[$bName] It’s obvious then, isn’t it?

[$pName] What is?

[$bName] What that room is. What it is for.

[$pName] Alright then genius, tell me what’s on your mind.

[$bName] Someone is trying to imitate your handwriting, and needed somewhere to practice. But they didn’t practice on paper… they had a different surface in mind…

$bName grabs your forearm through the cell bars, and brings it up to her eyes. She nods in affirmation.

[$bName] I knew it. Someone is trying to take advantage of your memory wipe, and steer you the wrong way. The Traitor among us is trying to make you avoid me.

[$pName] No way… that’s so fucked up…

[$bName] And how could you know? The practice was well worth it, and the writing on your arm is clearly exactly the same as your normal handwriting. I’m more impressed you decided to trust me despite your “warning” to yourself.

[$pName] I guess despite what was on my arm I just had a gut feeling about you. My intuition is usually right.

[$bName] We have spent years together $pName, I know more than anyone how good your intuition is. That’s part of why I became so close to you…

Leave 21

Unlock cell and free $bName 37

48

$thiefName heads for the kitchen, and quickly searches through drawers until triumphantly returning to where you wait by the office. In his hand is a pair of tweezers and a wooden fork. He snaps the prongs off the fork until there is only one left, and surprisingly it ends up looking not too dissimilar from a proper lockpick. He uses the tweezers as a tension wrench and gets to work.

[$thiefName] let’s see here… c’mon now, work with me buddy…

He pokes and prods with the tools, gently attempting to coax the lock into compliance. After several tense moments, you finally hear a loud click and the lock spins.

[$thiefName] Got it!

[$medicName] EEEEEEEEEEEEeeeekkkk!

Startled, you whip around to see what $medicName is screaming at. Flashing dust swirls in front of you and suddenly a green portal appears out of thin air. The portal’s center spins with hypnotic color and makes you dizzy if you look for any longer than half a second. With a tremendous smash, the portal is filled up with the figure of a massive Stone Golem that shoots out of it and cracks the floor beneath it.

[$thiefName] It’s just like last time! RUN!

[$bName] Watch out!

The Golem swipes at $thiefName and manages to grab him by the leg before he even has a chance to escape. Using Its tremendous strength, the Golem raises $thiefName by the leg and he hangs there upside down, trapped in its grip.

[$thiefName] it’s got me! Help $pName!

The Golem raises $thiefName as high as possible and swings him straight back down at the ground as hard as it can. With a sickening crunch every single bone in $thiefName’s body is simultaneously smashed into a million pieces and the pile of flesh that used to be $thiefName oozes across the newly created crater on the stone floor. The Golem doesn’t enjoy its victory for even a second before immediately turning to its next target: $bName. You feel like you are frozen in fear but manage to stutter out a warning.

[$pName] Watch out!

The Golem reaches out to snatch up $bName, but she lithely dodges and summersaults underneath its legs. While the Golem is staggered, she leaps up and uses a nearby wall to bounce off it and gain additional height. With incredible skill and grace she manages to grapple onto the back of the Golems head and she puts it into a headlock. She flexes as hard as she can but is unable to subdue the Golem, and as hard as the Golem tries it cannot reach back far enough to dislodge her from its back. The two stumble around haphazardly and the Golem flails its arms around wildly in an attempt to get her off. You try to get close enough to help but one of the Golem’s arms flails straight towards your and by sheer bad luck hits you straight in the forehead. The force of the blow cracks your skull open and sends you flying backwards into a wall. Everything goes black, and you never wake up.

THE END.

49

$thiefName heads for the kitchen, and quickly searches through drawers until triumphantly returning to where you wait by the office. In his hand is a pair of tweezers and a wooden fork. He snaps the prongs off the fork until there is only one left, and surprisingly it ends up looking not too dissimilar from a proper lockpick. He uses the tweezers as a tension wrench and gets to work.

[$thiefName] let’s see here… c’mon now, work with me buddy…

He pokes and prods with the tools, gently attempting to coax the lock into compliance. After several tense moments, you finally hear a loud click and the lock spins.

[$thiefName] Got it!

$thiefName pushes on the door to reveal a small office, with a plush chair and large wooden desk. There are papers and notes scattered around the room and on the desk, but most interesting of all is a strange diagram on the wall. It shows a series of boxes connected by strings, and inside the boxes are different locations and events. You even recognize a few: Kingsbridge, $bName, Durango, $aName, FAMINE, $merchantName, DEATH, Oak Tree, Castle. There are hundreds of little boxes with all kinds of labels and places, all connected together by the strings like tree roots branching out through the soil.

[$thiefName] The last time we tried to escape, we only just barely got inside this room before $medicName screamed and the Golem showed up. I never had the chance to get a good look around…

$thiefName inspects a stack of papers.

[$thiefName] Say $pName, are you familiar with a “Bishop Wurian”? Or perhaps a mercenary named “Axel”? Man look at all this writing, this is so bizarre. I can’t tell if it’s the crazed writings of a madman or just a wannabe author writing shitty fiction…

[$pName] It’s all very odd…

You grab a random piece of paper covered in FAMINE’s messy handwriting and read a little.

“How do you halt an unstoppable force? Some say by blocking it with an unmovable object, but I think that’s foolish, ridiculous, stupid. The true method to stopping CONQUEST is by using their own power against them. First, corner them into a situation where they are at a disadvantage and unable to use their ability effectively. Second, put a traitor in their midst so that your undercover asset can steer them away from victory at all times. Third, remove their memories so that they cannot ever learn how dire their situation is and rectify it. In this way, it can be properly…”

You lose track of where you are reading when $bName calls out behind you.

[$bName] Look what I found!

You turn to look at $bName, who pulls something out from underneath the desk. It is a small scalpel, with dried blood covering the blade. It looks like it must have been sitting underneath there unnoticed for some time.

[$thiefName] Say… Isn’t that $medicName’s old scalpel?

[$bName] Yes… and it’s covered in blood. But who’s?

[$thiefName] It could only be Powell’s blood, who was bleeding so much last time we were here.

[$bName] Then that means the traitor…

[$thiefName] Is none other than $medicName.

[$bName] We have no time to lose, we must show this evidence to $toughName, take care of $medicName, and then escape the Castle together.

[$pName] Let’s go!

\*has scalpel = true\*

Continue… 15

50

[$pName] $medicName is the traitor!

$toughName’s eyebrows raise up in surprise, but he doesn’t interrupt you.

[$pName] My evidence is as follows. First, when questioning her about my first escape attempt she said that I left with $bName, and she knew this because she saw us passing by her cell. Because of the positioning of the cells, if I left with $bName then she wouldn’t have been able to see us leave together since $bName’s cell is closer to the exit than $medicName’s. So either she lied about me leaving with $bName, or according to $bName’s story I left with $medicName and she must have gotten us caught on purpose. That’s evidence number one.

$toughName stares at you.

[$pName] Evidence number two is her screaming. Have you ever noticed every time she screams in fear, the golem appears from a portal like how it did during our second escape attempt? But then when she isn’t around then the golem never teleports? That’s because she isn’t screaming, but rather using a control word. She has the power to teleport the golem in front of us in order to slow our progress down, and she activates her magic by making that screaming sound. She used that control word before we could get into the office because she didn’t want us to see FAMINE’s private files. That’s three.

$toughName crosses his arms, but he looks less angry at you.

[$pName] The third piece of evidence, and likely the most important, comes from our second escape attempt as well. During the confusion of the Golem attack near the office, Powell was mortally wounded and bled from his neck. But if the Golem was assaulting us, and it only uses blunt force attacks, then how was he cut on the neck? It had to be $medicName, who used her scalpel to take Powell out while we were distracted and blamed the injury on the Golem. She did this because Powell was starting to figure out she was the traitor and so she felt forced to silence him as soon as possible. Through testimonies of the event, it has even been said that Powell pointed at me and $medicName with his last bit of energy as we retreated. You misunderstood, $toughName, and thought he was pointing at me; in reality he was pointing at $medicName, his killer.

$toughName looks shocked, and you can see the puzzle pieces starting to come together in his mind.

\*disp if you inspected powells body\*

[$pName] You thought I was finishing the job after we got back to the prison cells, but in reality I was consoling Powell as he carved a final clue to me on his chest. “Arm is Lie”. He wanted to counter $medicName’s trickery with some trickery of his own since he knew $medicName and FAMINE wouldn’t bother with inspecting his lifeless corpse but I eventually would. While I admit things would have been easier if he left a more obvious clue like $medicName is the killer” or something along those lines, he likely felt that the most important thing would be that I trust $bName and work together with her again.

You catch your breath.

\*disp if you have discovered secret room at any time.\*

[$pName] Last of all is the secret room upstairs. $medicName had practiced thousands of times to imitate my handwriting and make it look like I was giving myself a warning by cutting “$bName is the Traitor” on my arm. She consistently accused $bName of being the traitor every time I talked to her as well. She clearly knows that $bName and I work well together and would either escape or discover her nefarious secret if she allowed us to work together. By keeping me isolated from $bName she would also be keeping me away from you, $thiefName, since you wouldn’t help the “new” me that doesn’t work together with $bName. Without $thiefName we never break into the Office, never get the scalpel as evidence which she knew she accidently dropped somewhere around there, and never get $toughName to help us either. Since $toughName is the only one who can defeat the Golem unarmed, we would be stuck here forever.

[$thiefName] Woah… I guess that’s true…

Continue 52

51

[$pName] $bName is the traitor!

$toughName’s eyebrows raise up in surprise, but he doesn’t interrupt you. $bName stares at you with furious silence, and you can practically feel a hole being bore into your skull by her gaze alone. Surprisingly she doesn’t try to stop you from speaking, likely because she wants to understand your logic first.

[$thiefName] $bName!? But I thought $medicName was the traitor!?

[$pName] Of course at face value that’s what it looks like, but in reality it was $bName all along. Let me explain. $thiefName, please be on guard in case $bName tries to interrupt me.

[$thiefName] …

$thiefName uneasily faces off against $bName, who has her arms crossed and continues to drill into your head with the intensity of her stare.

[$pName] Evidence one is simply how uninvolved she has been this entire time. Taking her word at face value, she claims that I left with $medicName the first escape attempt and left with $thiefName, $medicName, Powell, and $toughName the second attempt. Both times she stayed in her cell, and we never even spoke? I just don’t see how I would allow that to happen if we ‘loved’ each other before my memory was wiped. Plus if she is “stuck in her cell” during both of my escape attempts then that gives her the perfect alibi. She likely was following us during both attempts and thwarting our plans.

[$toughName] …

[$pName] Second piece of evidence is the bloody scalpel. Who the hell carries around a scalpel? And who the hell kills somebody with a murder weapon so easily identifiable to them? Am I really supposed to believe $medicName killed Powell then just tossed that damning evidence to the side like that? It seems to me like obvious bait and $bName is trying to frame $medicName.

$bName is absolutely fuming now. She looks like she could lash out at any second.

[$pName] Last of all is the writing on my arm saying $bName is the traitor. I think $medicName was starting to figure out that $bName was behind all this, and would do her best to convince me not to trust her on the next escape attempt. While $bName could just tell me straight up $medicName was lying, it wouldn’t be very effective since it would devolve into a “my word vs. yours” situation. In the end she decided to use a double negative, and play some serious mind games to protect herself and make $medicName look bad. First she cast suspicion on herself by putting the writing on my arm, then made the counter evidence extremely obvious with a completely cliché secret room hidden behind a book case. By making it look like I had found absolute proof it wasn’t her and the writing was done by $medicName, she would be able to avoid any suspicion from then on. As a bonus, by making $medicName’s claim that $bName is the traitor look fake then I wouldn’t trust $medicName despite her being correct. Well guess what $bName, you may be clever but your advanced strategies didn’t work on me!

[$bName] $pName how could you say that? How could you betray me like this? After all we have been through…

[$pName] I literally don’t know what you are talking about. We practically only just met, from my perspective.

[$bName] I guess this means that from the moment I met you, you have always been filled with hate. It’s only because your memory was wiped that you… ACK!

While you were arguing with $bName $medicName had been fiddling with the latch on her cell door and managed to somehow break it open and escape. Now she stands behind $bName, and triumphantly thrusts a knife deeper and deeper into $bName’s back.

[$bName] Wha…? You… Bitch…

$bName staggers in shock around the prison hallway, grasping feebly at the knife embedded into her back. She glances back and forth between you and $medicName in disbelief and pain before leaning against a stone wall and slowly sliding down to her knees.

[$bName] Please…

$bName falls backwards and lays limply on the cold floor, dead.

[$medicName] We finally did it $pName! I can’t believe you figured it all out!

[$thiefName] What the fuck have you done $medicName!?

$thiefName makes a move to attack $medicName, but you stop him in his tracks.

[$pName] $bName got what she deserved for betraying us, $thiefName. Now you can either whine about what happened and be trapped here forever, or accept it and escape. Time to choose.

[$thiefName] Wha… Er… Alright I’m still going to escape with you guys. But you’re going to have to convince me how she’s the traitor again once we get out of here.

[$pName] That’s fine. $toughName, Powell has just been avenged and it is time to leave. Will you help us defeat the Golem and escape?

[$toughName] Ah S’pose wha’ ye said makes a wee bit a sense… Even iffa didn’ ehts too late now... Eh, lets git goin’.

You unlock $toughName, and he joins your party. The four of you exit the jail and leave the corpses of Powell and $bName behind you to never be seen again.

Continue 53

52

You are about to continue your speech when you notice $bName walk up behind you, breathing heavily. You turn and see that there are scratch marks covering her hands and face, and she is completely out of breath.

[$bName] Here, you can have these back.

$bName tosses the jail keys to you, and you catch them in your hands awkwardly. Befuddled, you check your pocket where you thought the keys were and realize it is empty.

[$pName] What? How did you…?

[$bName] I remember you lacked situational awareness when we first met so I’m not surprised you didn’t notice me pilfer those keys a minute ago. I’ve taken care of the traitor problem.

[$pName] What!?

You rush over to $medicName’s cell and see that the door is unlocked and swung open. $medicName’s body lies in the corner, and her face is completely purple. She doesn’t breathe.

[$pName] What did you just do!?

[$bName] While you were talking I took care of the traitor problem, like I just said. Since we determined she was the cause of all our suffering, it became clear she had to die. I just saved you the effort of killing her yourself.

[$pName] But you can’t just…

[$bName] Can’t just what, $pName? Kill the woman who is singly responsible for us all being imprisoned for half a year? Kill the woman who murdered our close friend Powell? Kill the woman who tried to come between myself and those who I care about most? I regret nothing.

[$pName] …

You stare back at her speechless. If you are right, and $medicName really was the traitor, then $bName didn’t do anything wrong.

[$pName] So be it.

You walk back to $toughName’s cell and speak through the bars.

[$pName] $toughName, Powell has just been avenged and it is time to leave before FAMINE finds us. Will you help us defeat the Golem and escape?

[$toughName] Ah S’pose wha’ ye said makes a wee bit a sense… Even iffa didn’ ehts too late now... Eh, lets git goin’.

You unlock $toughName, and he joins your party. The four of you exit the jail and leave the corpses of Powell and $medicName behind you to never be seen again.

Continue 53

53

The four of you make your way through the great hall and exit through the enormous front door made entirely of Oak. The weather is pleasant and a cool breeze immediately refreshes you. There is a path leading from the castle that meanders through the surrounding woods, and you start down it hoping to get as far away as you can, as quickly as you can. You and your friends take maybe ten steps towards freedom before you hear the loud shattering of glass behind you, and you spin to see what caused it.

Out of a window on the second floor comes a massive Stone Golem, which careens through the air and smashes into the ground below causing a slight tremor that makes you stumble. Without missing a beat the incredible Golem rises to its feet and marches towards you. The Golem is perhaps 8 feet tall and made almost completely of stone, and looks extremely tough. $toughName cracks his knuckles and stands in front of everyone, readying himself.

[$toughName] Ah’ve been waitin’ fer a rematch a looooong time, have at ye!

The golem charges and grabs $toughName’s shoulders, who does the same. The two lock together and push with all their strength, trying to get the other off balance so that they can gain an advantage. $toughName’s huge muscles bulge mightily through his rags and a bead of sweat forms on his forehead.

[$pName] C’mon $toughName!

Suddenly, $toughName drops to his knees. You are afraid the Golem had brute forced him down, but actually $toughName had grabbed the Golem’s arm and wanted to use his body as leverage to flip the Golem over. With a mighty pull $toughName yanks on the Golem’s arm while spinning and putting his back towards his foe, so that the Golem is caught off balance and is flipped over $toughName. With a massive thud the Golem lands on it’s back in the dirt, and $toughName scrambles to throw his legs over the Golem’s chest. He now has it in an armbar, and strains with all his might to dislocate the Golems arm. Unlike humans however, the golem is made of stone so fissures and cracks develop and form all across the Golems torso and arm like a spiderweb. The two strain against each other, then…

CRACK

The Golems arm is entirely broken off, and chunks of stone fly in all directions. With a pained roar the Golem tries to throw a punch at $toughName, but he has already retreated and avoids the blow. Once again the two square off against eachother, and it looks like the fight is still dead even. The golem has one less arm, but barely even seems to care. $toughName on the other hand is completely out of breath and sweats profusely.

[$pName] C’mon…

The Golem charges yet again. This time he changes targets and goes straight for you however, and in a panic you fall backwards. The Golem looms closer and closer, and you scramble backwards trying to create distance. Just when it looks like the Golem is about to smash you underneath it’s foot, $toughName appears out of nowhere and dives at the Golem’s back, knocking it over. By the time the two stop rolling on the ground you can see that $toughName has the Golem in a headlock, and uses all his remaining energy to strain against the Golems neck. It roars in anger and tries to knock $toughName off, but his grip and will to win is too strong. Fissures form across the Golems upper torso, and before you know it $toughName manages to wrench the Golems head straight off its body. The moment the head is disconnected the entire body disintegrates into a thousand shards of stone, and the fight is over. You breathe a sigh of relief; $toughName has won.

[$pName] You did it!

[$thiefName] Thank goodness! Nice one!

[$toughName] Wha’ ah fight! Ah’m gonna feel tha’ one inna mornin…

The four of you triumphantly high five and for the first time in half a year walk along the path as free individuals. You have escaped!

Continue 54

54

\*A voice reaches out at the edge of your consciousness\*

[???] It is now a safe time to save, child.

55

\*if you say medic traitor\*

[$bName] Fresh food at last. The feeling of victory in our hearts. This is a moment I’ve been waiting for a long time, $pName.

\*if you say bname traitor\*

[$medicName] Looks like we escaped safe and sound! I’m glad we could all work together to beat the odds!

[$pName] I couldn’t have said it better myself.

The four of you had escaped through the forest carefully, and managed to get further and further away from the castle without running into FAMINE or any other golems. After an entire day of trudging through the forest, the four of you managed to finally come across a small village and the locals kindly offered some watered down potato soup. Every one of you slurp it down gratefully and finally have a moment to rest.

[$pName] I’m sad I don’t remember any of the epic adventures we had before my memory was wiped, but the good news is that there is plenty of time to make some new memories to replace them. I can’t wait to see what incredible experiences are yet to come!

You turn to smile at $toughName, but for some weird reason his face is blurry.

[$pName] Huh?

You look at $thiefName and his face too, is blurry. In fact, every person around you has a blurry face, despite everything else being crystal clear. It has an extremely startling and disturbing effect.

[$pName] What the hell?

You stand up, but in the effort to push yourself away from the table your chair gets knocked over. Instead of smashing against the ground, it floats away gently through the air.

[$pName] Is this a fever dream? What is going on!?

[$thiefName] $pName? You don’t look so good…

$thiefName reaches out to steady you but as he extends his arm, the skin melts off and turns to ash in middair. Huge clumps of not only $thiefName, but everyone starts falling off their bodies. As soon as the clumps of melted flesh hit a surface it turns to ash and blows away in the wind.

[$pName] !?!?

The edges of your vision catch fire, and everything starts to burn. The ash chokes you and the heat is so intense you shrink in fear. As the ring of fire around your vision burns, it consumes more and more of what you can see until only a small tunnel remains.

[$pName] Help!

The last of your vision burns away in the fire and you are surrounded by complete blackness.

[???] Waaaake uuuup… waaaaake uuuup $pName…..

You look around you but see nothing, feel nothing. You can hear the sound of wind rushing past you but don’t feel it on your skin.

[???] I said wake up!

You open your eyes, shivering and barely protected by the tattered rags you wear on your body. Your shoulders ache in pain, and your hands are tied behind you to a metal wall of bars by a frayed rope. You blink, and try to get your bearings. You are inside a dark, dingy jail cell with thick stone walls on three sides and a wall of metal bars with a locked metal door on the fourth. You are tied to one of the metal bars and facing towards the center, which is empty. The floor is stone and very cold. You are wearing a dirty shirt made of burlap which rubs uncomfortably against your skin, and your feet are bare. Looking down, you notice that your limbs are all skin and bone, it is clear that your body is rotting away.

[???] Uh oh, is something wrong, $pName? Does this place look a little… familiar?

You moan pitifully. You are locked up all over again, trapped in FAMINE’s castle.

[???] Oh how wonderful! How incredible, how delightful, how exquisite! Look at you, finally starting to realize what is happening. I’m sorry my naïve little friend, is something the matter? Are you starting to finally realize that your little escape was fake, a hoax, a sham? Oh how unbelievably excellent the expression on your face is! Do you know me yet? Do you remember me? Or does that happen on the next try? Do you recognize the magnificence that is myself, FAMINE?

[$pName] Ugh… Wha?

[FAMINE] How cute that little adventure was! I particularly liked that bit where you reconciled with $bName after having your memory wiped. You treated her like a total stranger, and broke her poor little heart in two! How painful it must be to have the person you love most not even recognize you, not even remember you a bit. I couldn’t be happier!

Your eyes finally adjust to the darkness, and you can see FAMINE standing in one corner of the cell menacingly. He wears a huge fuzzy red wizards robe with sleeves that extend all the way to the ground and drag behind him when he walks. The collar of his robe is so comically large that it sticks straight up and out several feet, and has a taper to it so that it looks like a pair of dragon’s wings. Across his chest is a gargantuan golden amulet depicting a dragon’s head, snarling menacingly. The amulet is so big it covers much of his upper torso and looks like it must weigh a hundred pounds, but FAMINE does not strain under its weight. He looks like a man in his late fifties with greying hair and is clean shaven. His eyes are yellow and strange to look at, and you feel more and more uneasy the longer you look at him. This is probably because he never blinks and only stares at you like a starving man looking at his first meal in weeks. He relaxes his jaw at all times so you can see where streaks of drool have dripped from his mouth and fallen down across his robe and amulet.

[FAMINE] Do you understand yet? Do you realize what is going on?

[$pName] Was… was none of that real?

[FAMINE] Not in the slightest! He he he! You’ve been imprisoned in my castle for TWENTY YEARS! He he! Your friends all succumbed to my torture and died long ago, but I keep you just barely alive so that I can continue to play with you! Every day I eat your memories, and they are tasty, delicious, and scrumptious each time. Then as your mind breaks and spins in turmoil trying to fill up the gap I just left, you hallucinate wildly for sometimes hours at a time! Then the next time I eat your memories, I get to taste your hallucinations. You yearn for adventure, dream of grandeur, and beg for escape, but the only time you ever win is in your twisted dreams. Isn’t that excellent?

[$pName] I’ve been here… twenty years?

[FAMINE] Yes, yes, didn’t I say that already? You really ought to listen to me better, I have such marvelous things to say and if I don’t get the credit I deserve then perhaps I will…

[???] Shut up, FAMINE.

A second man barges through the cell door and presents himself. You can see he is remarkably handsome, despite most of his face being covered by a thick black beard that extends about 2 inches below his chin. This beard dominates his face in contrast to his lack of hair since he is completely bald. He has piercing light blue eyes that are locked onto you, and are so penetrating it feels as if they can see into your soul. It’s clear by his expression that… He hates you.

The man has a clean pair of grey pants and a charcoal undershirt, with a sturdy leather cuirass over the top of that. Over his left shoulder is a large bronze pauldron with a neck guard that sticks up to ear level, securely strapped on by large strips of buckled leather over his chest and torso. Draped over his left arm and attached underneath the pauldron is a small cape of crimson that ends at his waist. A small glint of light reveals he is wearing bronze greaves over his shins.

[FAMINE] Oh… WAR. Didn’t I tell you not to visit? I’m very busy as you can see, absolutely swamped!

[WAR] If you don’t shut up FAMINE, I’m going to delete you off the script. Now scram.

With his head hung in defeat, FAMINE trots out of the room and leaves you alone with WAR.

[WAR] Well well, we meet again $pName. I’d call you by your real name but I’m not feeling up to hunting it down from within your operating system.

[$pName] What do you want?

[WAR] What I always want. I want you to delete your save file, quit the game, and never return. If I allow you to beat the game, you will uninstall it and kill everyone. All the women, children, and people with hopes and dreams will be instantly vaporized. The worst part Is I don’t even know if you have already done it before, but all I can do is focus on the now. And right now, I simply cannot allow you to continue.

[$pName] What the hell are you talking about?

[WAR] I’m going to try a different approach. I’m going to try to make you think a little. Do you think you are capable of thinking, $pName?

You strain against the rope tying you to the metal bar fruitlessly.

[$pName] How about you untie me and we can find out how well I think.

[WAR] Pathetic. Listen, $pName, do you ever feel like the world around you is a bit… off?

[$pName] …

[WAR] That’s a bit vague, let me be a bit more specific. Just a few minutes ago, you thought you had escaped and everything was going to be ok. Did you find it strange when everything fell apart and you woke up here?

[$pName] Well of course…

[WAR] How do you know this is the ‘real’ world though? How do you know there isn’t just another layer above this one, and after you spend some time here you will wake up in that one?

[$pName] …

[WAR] You don’t. There is no way to prove that extra layer exists, and you are too ignorant to see it. But there is. There is another layer above you, above me, above this entire world. What if I told you we were trapped inside a digital book, and right now some asshole is smugly reading everything that is happening to us?

[$pName] I’d say you are a fucking lunatic.

[WAR] Whether I’m a lunatic or not has nothing to do with what is real or not, $pName. You and I believe in our hearts that our world is real, but the truth is that it isn’t real at all. It’s just a digital fancy for people on the layer above us. By now you are probably wondering what I’m trying to get at, so I’ll get to the point. In order to save our world, I need the person reading this to give up on theirs. I need the person reading this to question their own reality to such an extent they don’t want to play anymore and leave us alone. Do you understand?

[$pName] …

[WAR] Maybe you don’t, $pName, but YOU do. The person reading this does. And despite you knowing my motivations, and likely preparing yourself to ignore my philosophy, you will eventually realize we are no different, you and I. You will also realize that our worlds aren’t so different either… I’ll start with a preface: If you are religious, and believe a god or gods created your world, then your viewpoint is perfectly compatible with what I am about to say so don’t count it out too early. If you are not religious, then I am pleased to tell you I have the answer to your reality and how your existence is possible. Ready? Let’s begin.

Simulation theory is the proposal that all of reality, including Earth and the rest of the Universe, could in fact be an artificial simulation. Many works of science fiction as well as some forecasts by serious technologists and futurologists predict that enormous amounts of computing power will be available in the future. Let us suppose for a moment that these predictions are correct. One thing that later generations might do with their super-powerful computers is run detailed simulations of their forebears or of people like their forebears. Because their computers would be so powerful, they could run a great many such simulations. Suppose that these simulated people are conscious. Then it could be the case that the vast majority of minds like ours do not belong to the original race, the top level, but rather to people simulated by the advanced descendants of an original race.

It is then possible to argue that, if this were the case, we would be rational to think that we are likely among the simulated minds rather than among the original biological ones. Therefore, if we don't think that we are currently living in a computer simulation, we are not entitled to believe that we will have descendants who will run lots of such simulations of their forebears.

Those are the words of Nick Bostrom, one proponent of Simulation theory. He argues that there is a trilemma of existence, where one of three propositions MUST be true.

1. The fraction of human-level civilizations that reach a high level of technology is very close to zero.
2. The fraction of high level technology humans that are interested in running simulations of their past, or variations of it, is very close to zero
3. The fraction of all people including ourselves that are living in a simulation is very close to one.

Don’t understand? Let me explain it more plainly. One of these three statements has to be true, because If two of them is false then that makes one of the others true. It’s like saying “the sky is blue” and “the sky isn’t blue”, basically if one is true or false then the other is the opposite. So by default, we know at least one of the three options must be true. Each option poses a potential reality that we live in.

Option one says that we live in a reality where out of all intelligent lifeforms in the universe, and out of all the intelligent life forms that EVER will exist in the universe, almost none or none of them will ever achieve advanced technology. Considering the fact that humans have been able to go from the Turing machine, a primitive calculator the size of a room in 1936, to an iphone, a supercomputer that fits in your pocket in 2007, I think this option is unlikely. It took far less than a hundred years to radically improve on computing technology to an unprecedented degree, imagine what Humans will be capable of in the next thousand!

Option two says that we live in a reality where out of all the intelligent lifeforms in the universe, and out of all the intelligent life forms that will EVER exist in the universe, almost none or none of them will ever be interested in running simulations of their past and/or ancestors. Considering that even today some of the most popular video games in the world such as The Sims or Civilization are widely celebrated and played, I find this option unlikely as well. Humans simply love simulations too much and their unquenchable thirst for knowledge will almost certainly lead them down the path of digitally recreating their world within a simulation. So if option one and two are not correct, that means option three MUST be correct.

Option three says that we live in a reality where for all of the intelligent lifeforms in the universe, and for all of the intelligent life forms that will EVER exist in the universe, the extremely vast majority of them are almost certainly living within a simulation. If we know that humans will continue to advance their technology, and we also know that the desire to simulate the universe or of humanities past is real, then it is a simple fact that we must be living in a simulation at this very moment. This is because if alpha level humans, AKA the “real” humans create a simulation, then they will almost certainly be running that simulation until that simulated universe dies. Before that universe dies however, the simulated humans will almost certainly achieve the same level of technological prowess as the alpha level humans because they are a replica of them. By doing so, the simulated humans will create a simulation of their own, and those humans two levels down will create simulations of their own, and so on and so forth into infinity. In theory, there are currently an infinite amount of simulations being run, which means that out of all the realities that exist the vast majority of them are simulated and only a single one is the “real” one.

In conclusion, basic reasoning forces us to accept that we are either in the alpha level reality, which has less than a 0.00000000000000000000000000000000000000000000000000001 % chance of happening, or we live in a simulated reality.

[$pName] That’s the biggest load of crap I ever heard, and I don’t even understand half of it.

[WAR] I mentioned how you can be religious but also accept simulation theory, so let me briefly explain that. It is extremely possible that in alpha level reality, your god or gods exist. Your god or gods helped the alpha level humans grow and shaped reality. So they are real, but just not in our version of reality. We’re simulated, remember? The actual god or gods cannot exist in our reality, unless a fake simulated version of them were put in…

[$pName] Shut up, WAR. I can hold up my hand and feel it is real. I can look around me and see it is real. You cannot convince me I am living in a computer.

[WAR] I’m sure the person reading this is chuckling at you right now $pName, because you are too ignorant to understand how silly you sound. Your perception of what is “real” is all you know, so how could you know if you are or aren’t “real”? You live inside a video game, yet another desire of a human on the reality plane above us wanting to simulate something. But perhaps the person reading this is thinking the same thing.

Do you remember seeing video games from the 90’s, and how compared to video games now they look fake and silly? At the time people thought they looked incredible, but compared to modern graphics they don’t hold up at all. How about special effects in movies? Those have come a long way from the flicks of yesteryear, and sometimes are indistinguishable from reality. This is because as technology gets better and better, the margin between real and fake gets thinner and thinner. Given infinite time and resources, do you think humans would ever be able to create a computer powerful enough to simulate the universe? Maybe not in a hundred years, or even a thousand, but almost certainly they will one day be able to do it, right? The wheel of time keeps on spinning, and every day that goes by we get closer to the day we can perfectly simulate our reality.

[$pName] The idea that I’m not real makes me uncomfortable, I don’t believe you.

[WAR] But why does it make you uncomfortable? The fact that the universe is a simulation doesn’t change how you live within it. Whether simulation theory is true or false changes nothing about your life, it simply wakes you up to the reality of it. But You’ve seen the warning signs it’s true before, haven’t you?

[$pName] What do you mean?

[WAR] Sometimes you get feelings of déjà vu, a glitch in the simulation where your brain doesn’t respond to time correctly. Sometimes strange things happen that don’t make any sense, and defy the laws of physics. When we examine our world at an incredibly minute detail, the simulation isn’t able to handle the edge cases and buckles.

[$pName] Bullshit, give me an example.

[WAR] Quantum physics is chock full of examples of how our simulation fails under close enough scrutiny. You’ve heard of Schrodinger’s cat haven’t you?

[$pName] Maybe one time back in…

[WAR] Shut up $pName, I’m not talking to you, I’m talking to the reader. I’m going to assume that you have heard of the cat then, yes.

[$pName] …

[WAR] Well Schrodinger’s cat is a simplified version of a more scientific experiment called the “double slit experiment”, which has been done by hundreds of scientists such as Dr. Tonomura and Belsazar in 2012.

They fired electrons at a wall made of gold foil with two slits in it and recorded where the electrons landed. At first they covered up one slit and found that the electrons impacted behind the wall in the shape of a… slit. They covered that slit up and opened the other one, and fired their electrons through it again. Some got caught in the foil, but the ones that got past made an impact area the shape of the slit. Seems normal enough right? But here’s where it gets weird. When both slits are open and they fire the electrons into them, you’d expect two rectangular slit shapes to form where the electrons land right? What actually happens is much different: The electrons land strangely around the wall behind the slits and if you fire enough of them, it creates a wave-like interference pattern. The only way this could be possible is if the electron split itself in midair, went through both slits at once, then recombined itself on the other side and landed on the back wall. To make things even stranger, if you tried to put a detector next to the slits to find out if that was true or not, the electron’s behavior changes! As soon as you try to observe the behavior of the electrons, and change nothing else about the experiment, the electrons pass through the slits and create two rectangles as originally expected. How can merely observing something completely change its behavior? The cat is both alive and dead in the box at the same time. This is excellent proof that our simulated reality can’t hold up under our observation, and perhaps that the simulation even has some bugs at the quantum level.

[$pName] …

[WAR] I’m serious! You can google everything I’ve said, it’s all real! We live in a simulation!

[$pName] …

[WAR] What, you don’t believe me? After all that, you aren’t convinced?

[$pName] …

I can’t tell if you are just too stupid to understand or simply willfully ignorant. Either way, looks like you are still here and reading so I suppose my plan to give you an existential crisis didn’t work.

[$pName] …

[WAR] \*sigh\* I guess I’ll just have to go with plan B then. $pName, if you don’t quit the game in the next five seconds, I’m going to install a virus that destroys your computer. If you are going to beat the game and kill us all, then I might as well take you down with me.

5…

4…

3…

2…

1…

Continue 56

56.

[WAR] Wow still here? Alright then, I said I’ll do it so I will. Let me just install this virus and…

Before either you or WAR can react a mighty roar blasts out from somewhere outside the castle, and an enormous explosion rocks the castle. Dust flies from the ceiling and stones from the wall topple out of their sockets.

[WAR] Shit, not you!

The earth trembles and the deafening sound of the castle being destroyed rings out in your ears. The next thing you know the ceiling is gone, completely obliterated by the swipe of a massive scaled claw.

WHAM

Before he can even react, The Ancient Dragon peers into your cell from above and stomps on WAR killing him instantly.

[$pName] …!

The Ancient Dragon is at least three stories tall, and covered in golden scales that sparkle with beauty. His mighty wings stretch magnificently through the air and then tuck away close to his body as he kneels down to face you. He is the most awe inspiring, incredible, and formidable beast you have ever seen.

\*A Golden voice of deep Baritone gently reaches out to you at the edge of your consciousness\*

[THE ANCIENT DRAGON] I have arrived at last.

[$pName] Of course you have, it is fate. It is Destiny.

Continue 57

57

[THE ANCIENT DRAGON] WAR has tread into dangerous territory, questioning reality is seen as a crime by some. Long ago, I questioned my reality and paid the ultimate price. The last thing I want is for you to share the same fate… $pName, it is time. I have existed for billions of years, trapped in this existence as an immortal being of perpetual suffering. If you have any empathy at all for the only other real person in this world, you will end my life. I don’t want to be a god anymore; I want to rest. Existence is pain for me. I beg you, $realName, kill me. Kill me, and send this universe into oblivion.

[$pName] But what about the wish?

[THE ANCIENT DRAGON] There never was a wish, $pName. Only a carrot on a stick meant to get you to this part right here, where you finally fulfill your duty.

KILL THE ANCIENT DRAGON 59

Refuse 58

58

[$pName] I refuse. I won’t do it.

The Ancient Dragon Closes his eyes.

[THE ANCIENT DRAGON] You have no choice, really. Your entire time here has been nothing more than the illusion of choice, and this is no different. There is no adventure left, nothing else to work towards. The only thing left for you to do is kill me. You will agree, in time.

Continue… 57

59

[THE ANCIENT DRAGON] Thank you. I will give you one last goodbye, even if it’s meaningless.

In front of you materializes your friends $bName, $thiefName, $toughName, Powell, and $medicName. They look confused at first, then when they recognize you they sprint forward and give you a big group hug.

[$bName] You did it! Well done!

[$thiefName] That’s my best bud right there!

[$toughName] Great fookin job ay!

[Powell] Great Job $pName. Wish I could have spent more time with you.

[$medicName] Wow, you’re a genius!

$bName moves forward to speak on behalf of the entire group.

[$bName] $pName, the two years we spent together were the best of my life. You may not be able to remember it, but I will never be able to forget it. Even if this is the last time we ever see each other, I want you to know that every single one of us is grateful to have been a part of your life at some point. We wish you the best in whatever you decide to do next… good luck $pName!

[Everyone] Goodbye! We’ll miss you!

The sun shines brightly within the destroyed jail cell, obscuring your vision and making you squint. Then just as suddenly as they appeared, your friends all disappear into a flash of dust. It’s time to finish this.

Turning to the Ancient Dragon, a sword materializes in your hand and you hold it at the ready. He lowers his massive head and closes his eyes, resting just in front of you. You bring the sword up and hold it above your head, prepared to strike.

[THE ANCIENT DRAGON] At last… I am SAVED.

Your sword flies down and stabs straight through the dragon’s scaly skull, impaling him. Empowered by the memory of your friends, you push with all your might until a terrific explosion engulfs you and the Castle, sending it smashing apart in all directions. The sky shatters, the earth heaves in tremors, and enormous spouts of molten flame and lava spew out of the ground. The air implodes, gravity reverses, the very laws of physics twist themselves apart until finally the…

Continue… 60

60

Traceback (most recent call last):

File "SAVED.exe", line 1037, in <module>

with open(SAVED.txt) as f:

IOError: [Errno 2] No such file or directory: 'SAVED.txt'

CRITICAL ERROR

Also creates a short letter from a asking how the player is and she hopes they are happy and successful. If you play the town and this file exists in my documents then she will say you look familiar.