

THE START OF A WORLD

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EXT. SPACE OUTSIDE THE WORLD OF ANOTHER TIME

The WORLD is a young thing, comprised of swirling debris in an egg-like shape. Puzzle pieces not yet fitted together.

7 glowing, blobbish CELESTIAL BEINGS feed energy into the World, nurturing. Soon enough, they do not need to interfere. The World begins to coalesce and grow without their help. The space around it becomes clean of debris.

We watch the final pieces spiral into place, and the Beings gather around in excitement and awe. The World starts like a slumbering baby opening its eyes, and the Celestial Beings are pulled in by its gravitational force.

The Celestial Beings try to gently pull away, but the World latches tighter. Gaining strength, it greedily consumes the Beings, much like it did to all the debris around it.

INT. LANDSCAPE IN THE WORLD OF ANOTHER TIME

Supplicants raise their hands into the sky, press their knees into the ground. Again and again, the Beings manifest before them.

Each time, the Beings are reformed, looking less like themselves. Smaller, bigger, crueler, softer. No matter the incarnation, their features become increasingly defined.

In a breathtaking meadow, buried in the flowering dirt, is a clay statue, a caricature of the Beings that once cared for a nascent World. The flower's roots embed into its eyes, cracking its skull.

Suddenly, fractures rip across the meadow, and it falls into pieces, revealing starry, open space. The planet erupts, a timelapse of a flower blooming.

EXT. SPACE OUTSIDE OF ?'S WORLD

?, a glowing white celestial being, stares at us. It looks similar to a flattened, blobbish snake. Shards of glass orbit above its head, every color of the rainbow except red.

?

This isn't a selfish decision.

The voice reverberates like an echo of a drum, buried in the center of one's mind.

?'s face is smooth--not even a shadow of a nose or eyes or mouth--but there's a general vibe that it's thinking over its words. The shards of glass tip up like indignant eyebrows.

? (CONT'D)

(a bit defensive)

I shouldn't be the one apologizing, considering that it's you who wants to trap us in useless, eternal servitude again. Of course you wouldn't be happy. The prison does not care about its prisoners. You might even be thinking, *surely this ire isn't deserved!*

(beat)

(warily)

You've been quiet. Nothing to say?

It is revealed that ? is facing an egg-like World. The World is in the process of being created, and it looks *unhealthy*.

Of the pieces fitted together, they are cracked and worn. Massive parasitic fungi grow from the fractures, breaking down the edges and pushing the pieces further apart.

A large amount of detritus languidly cycle around ? and the emerging World in an imperfect oval.

? (CONT'D)

You're usually more talkative.

The shadows shift on the World's surface, like the angles of a sundial. The air shakes. Impertinently, an asteroid spirals out of the detritus and rams into ?, slamming ? into the World.

The edges of ?'s form tremble, seeping into the cracks of the World. The massive fungi begin to shrink.

? shoves away. The asteroid ricochets off with the force of the movement, splitting into pieces, which disperse haphazardly before converging, iron filings to the World's magnet.

? (CONT'D)

That's more like it!

? blows the pieces off course, sending them far out of the detritus belt. ? stays alert, waiting for another attack, but the anticipation quickly fades as nothing else happens. ? droops and turns back to the World.

? (CONT'D)

That's it?

? leans close to the unformed planet, flits around it, teasingly drifts over the parasitic fungi--but gets no reaction

. It limply floats down so it's facing the World head-on again, disappointed.

? (CONT'D)

It won't be long until I fade away,  
and you'll be free to do whatever  
Worlds do without their gods. Can't  
you indulge me until then?

? leaves room for a response that does not come, then starts moving and rambling as if nothing could bother it.

? (CONT'D)

Don't be afraid. The universe may  
dictate that I take care of you,  
but I hold you under no mutual  
responsibility.

? pauses and waits, again, for a reply. There is no sound or movement, except for the nearly imperceptible growth of the fungi. ? floats closer, hovering over one of the larger mushrooms, and a corner of itself draws closer to the World.

The World shifts subtly toward ?. The corner of ? folds over on itself. It opens to reveal an iridescent seed, which ? deposits onto the World instead of a healing touch.

? (CONT'D)

(murmuring, to itself and  
the World)

Hold on for a little longer. Don't  
make this difficult for yourself.

The seed ? planted sprouts nascent roots, delicately digs into the World, and cracks its still surface. A baby mushroom grows.

EXT. SPACE OUTSIDE OF ?'S WORLD (FLASHBACK)

We're in an area that looks like an abstract rendition of the Kessler Syndrome. It is utter chaos, except for the seven fractal, oblong objects glimmering in a circle, corresponding to the colors of the rainbow.

The red one pulses. With each pulse, the light becomes stronger and longer, illuminating the detritus around it. Eventually, the object cracks, and the light unfurls into the small, bright shape of YOUNG ?.

EXT. SPACE OUTSIDE OF ?'S WORLD (PRESENT)

Wide, wide shot of the sparse debris belt. ? is a lone, dull light shining in the darkness. It is very much a vast expanse of space occupied by two (? and its World).

The World's nearly overtaken by the parasitic fungi, unable to form properly as its innards are ripped apart; the debris that has been integrated into its formation pile haphazardly around each other, unable to fully connect together.

?

You'll be fine. You'll be perfect.  
It's a pity we won't be able to see  
your start ... for what it's worth,  
I am sorry. Truly. But you'll heal  
without my interference, so won't  
you at least send us off kindly?

No response. ? circles around the World in increasing agitation before exploding in desperation.

? (CONT'D)

Nothing? Do I mean nothing to you  
because I refuse to be your god? If  
you hate me so much, show it!

No response.

? (CONT'D)

You are the most troublesome,  
selfish, arrogant--! Fine! I'll fix  
you, so pay attention to me!

Anger turns ?'s movement jerky. ? wraps around its World, head to tail, an ouroboros. The lumps of fungi begin to shrink.

The World presses closer to ?'s embrace. The remaining debris shifts out of orbit and descends upon ?, embracing ? back. ? starts to relax, but ?'s rainbow crown hastily flips over ?'s feature-less face, forcing ? to look at it.

EXT. SPACE OUTSIDE OF ?'S WORLD (FLASHBACK)

Young ? (less jagged at its edges) anxiously watches as the orange oblong object pulses. The orange pulses become longer, stronger. Behind ?, an egg-like BABY WORLD grows.

A piece of debris drifts out of the Baby World's formation and reaches toward Young ? and the object, debris forming into fingers. Young ? flinches away and doesn't turn from the orange object. It begins a mantra.

?

It's not worth it. It's not worth  
it. It's not worth it.

Young ? doesn't allow itself another second to think, and sends a blast of pure energy at the orange object.

A bloodcurdling screech sounds. It's uncertain if it's coming from ?, the unborn god, or the blast of energy.

? stops, trembling; the only thing left of the oblong object is orange glass shrapnel. The Baby World shrinks away from ?, shaking in shock. ? doesn't pay it any mind. It turns to the yellow oblong object with a disassociated certainty.

The Baby World jerks into motion. Debris haphazardly swirl toward ? in an attempt to obstruct its path, but ? bats them away effortlessly. The World is still too young, too weak.

Pure bright energy, a bloodcurdling screech, yellow shrapnel.

EXT. SPACE OUTSIDE OF ?'S WORLD (PRESENT)

? snaps out of its moment of weakness. It begins to struggle.

?  
You--! I didn't mean this!

We watch as the World becomes lively, vibrant; as ?'s fight becomes desperate, weaker. Every chunk of detritus ? blasts away converges back in unrelenting pieces. It piles upon ?'s body, pulling it into the World. Entombing it.

? (CONT'D)  
I should've never indulged you! You  
never listen to me! Don't you *dare*  
*control my fate!*

? is undeniably losing. But then, a chunk of rock tries to close over ?'s rainbow glass crown, and the rock splinters.

The rainbow shrapnel start to glow, forming into a sharp blade, cutting ?'s ouroboros shape in half, as well as all incoming debris that hit it. It buys a little time for ?.

Almost completely buried, ? laughs--hysterical, and a bit regretful--and fades away. The rainbow shrapnel immediately become dull and dead, and are pulled into the World.

The World is still for a long moment, smooth and fully-formed.

Splinters form over its surface. Slow and decisive, it breaks apart like a puzzle unmade. The movement of gossamer thread unraveling with a soft sigh. The start of a World ends.