

## The SEE\*R Logs (Branch Y)

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## The SEE\*R Logs (Branch Y)

by [Quadrant](#)

### Summary

Welcome to Branch Y of the various interpretations of the critically-acclaimed, award winning SEE\*R program. There are others out there. Can you find them? Should you?

SEE\*R, otherwise known as the Systematic Euclidean Entering of Realms, takes a pataphysical view to narrative by giving control of the story back to the characters.

Well. If it only it was that simple.

## **Please sign-in with your .SKRB account.**

Welcome to the SEE\*R. Please input your security credentials as per protocol.

**> aria.dova@SKRB.org**

Please enter your password.

**> \*\*\*\*\***

You are attempting to log into a Level 4 researcher account with a backup password.  
Linguonceptual verification hazards are in place to confirm your identity.

You will remain at this seat. You know nothing else than to keep yourself at this fixed point in space. You will wait for the security department to arrive and detain you. You will cooperate willingly. You will not resist. As you wait, you may answer this question truthfully: What are the colors of the wind?

**> BUT IN TIME, the corpse of Chronos himself, gave his last Breath and from this came the Colors of the sky.**

SEE\*R unlocked.

Welcome, Researcher Ariadne Cordova. You have 5 unread emails, 2 of which are of high importance. Would you like to access them?

**> no.**

**> just begin the session.**

## Brief FAQ's Re: The SEE\*R Program

### *What is the SEE\*R Project?*

The SEE\*R Project, otherwise known as "Systematic Euclidean Entering of Realms", is a project to look into neighboring universes alongside ours. It is in a very early alpha stage, so there are bugs around and about, but the main point concern is stability. Unlike the (now defunct) darren.bot protocol, SEE\*R operates under a completely stable viewpoint environment with no mirror bleeding\* and thus far has achieved leaps and bounds more activity than the protocol it replaced.

### *How do I use the SEE\*R program?*

The SEE\*R program is quite easy to use once you get past the heart attack that is room-sized, convoluted program itself. There is a printer, the computing racks of machine itself--proudly splayed about the walls of the project room--and most importantly, an input device. This input device is called the Cordova Terminal, a dedicated and agent between the user and the machine relaying information between both parties. It was discovered in it's basic form and quickly refurbished and re-purposed by our junior researcher, Ariadne Cordova, for the purposes of this project.

To use the machine itself, simply turn on all three power of the three different components of the SEE\*R) and wait patiently for it to boot. (The three separate switches make it easier to debug the program.) Once it has finished booting, you will see the terminal say "Welcome to the SEE\*R. Please input your security credentials as per protocol." Protocol demands you put in your username first, then your password, then any additional authentication depending on your access level. Level 0 users of the program like yourself do not need any additional authentication other than the login credentials, but Level 5 may need a complex multifactor conceptual key just to get through to the basic utilities.

Once you are logged in, you can do many computer-y tasks. The SEE\*R has rudimentary computer functions such as mathematical and linguistic computation, programming, and Internet access. However, you may wish to instead look into other universes, called sessions. To do this, type "begin" with nothing else and press the Enter key. The SEE\*R will give you the customary precautions if you have not already received them, and allow access into the session.

What you do in the session is up to you, but be warned that you are quite literally looking into another universe, so there are some basic ground rules to prevent anything from going wrong. Anyone who breaks these hard-set rules are subject to the punishment of the local research lab itself and *not* the local authorities. We wish to remain civil with our neighboring universes no matter how fantastical or bizarre they may be.

### *Anything else ?*

Most importantly, we hope you have an excellent trip through the SEE\*R program. Thank you for your cooperation.

## Chapter 3

She stands in the dark forest, eyes snapped open and head tilted upward. Her breathing wavers a bit, due to her age, but she reestablishes airflow in the midst of the sudden change in scenery. The stars glitter high and wild through the branches of the trees, soft pings from light-years away cresting over her head and down her back.

**> provide additional context.**

Betty Bergeron is not a name given to her, but one that she chose for herself. Bony hands, wide eyes, and a wrinkled face from the wear and tear of the ages identifies her existence amongst the generic hordes of the eternally young.

She digs around in her small cache, checking simple row of boxes by touch for her wand. A compass, a slab of metal, three dollars...where is it? Frowning, she sticks her hand farther left, and feels the tell-tale snap of plastic leaping into her hand. She pulls it out, seemingly out of thin air, and says "I wish for light in this obscure, dark forest." She would be embarrassed to use a snap spell for light, but she can't remember the correct word for "illumination". Lumox? Lumis? Lux? She should have taken one of those 24 hour memetic pills in case of crazy sleepwalking journeys like this one.

It doesn't matter now. She moves the tip of the wand further up over her head, wondering where all the insects and insects are. Nocturnal animals are not uncommon in her area. Er, assuming she is in her area still. She can't be more than a mile away from her apartment, but then again, she *has* found herself breaking the surface of the ocean with a sailboat once. That would have been fun if she knew how to pilot a boat through churning waters. Even more harrowing was the mark on her bank account once she made it back to shore. Now that was harrowing!

She shakes herself out of her reverie and tries very hard to place this astute observation into her mind. No animals at night even though her area should be crawling with them. Okay. How does she mentally peg that into her body? Animals at the top of her scalp, negative at her right shoulder, local area at the elbow. Animals, negative, local area. No animals in the local area. She's missing something. Betty looks up, squinting at the dark sky. Dark sky. There's a word for that. Night! Night at the palm of her hand. Animal head, negative shoulder, local area elbow, nighttime palm. Got it. That took a lot longer than it should have.

She's not sure why she's investigating the nighttime fauna of some weird forest she managed to stumble her way through, but it wouldn't hurt too many people--she snickers quietly--if she basked in the slim moonlight for a few more moments. It's not like she's avoiding her apartment.

**> start the trek through the forest.**

Such begins the trek through the forest.

She flicks the little ball of light at the top of her wand off of it, and lets it lead the way through the trees. The dirt pathway is moist under her feet with the exception of the dry leaves littered all over the place. A small creek slips and gurgles nearby, but she pays no mind to it since she's too busy catching up with the rapidly speeding ball of light.

Head, shoulder, elbow, palm. It's very disconcerting that there is no animalian life here. Animals are nice. Especially mammals. They're so warm, which of course, is a stark contrast to the bitter cold that seems to leech the heat right out of the air around her. Her heat-leeching and is a bad

habit she can't kick, but it doesn't do anyone harm, so she leaves it alone. She treats these personal quirks mildly, choosing instead to tolerate it if it is harmless. The process of editing is simple, as it should be. She shivers, but continues moving. There must be an end to this forest, for there is always an end to all things.

The ball of light dwindles and quickly fades. The dark is closing in on her now, waves of oblivion rising and falling and rising and falling to meet her at the line between sight and blindness and sound and silence. Her mind falls short and the rampant stream of thoughts goes silent. A touch of rationality lighting the way, doused in water and left to smoke itself out idly. Near her left ear a headache coalesces and stings. The scent of smoke is carried over the solemn air. She has diverged from the path. Betty glances downward, then over to the left. There's the path. She follows the moonlight up over the pebbles and dirt of the soft incline, then resumes her brisk pace. The leaves continue to crunch, much as the branches continue to whisper, much as the stars continue to wink, much as the corpse of time itself continues to decay into primordial sludge, much as the air continues to still.

It's hard to get used to this. The sleepwalking, the shake in her hands, the reliance on memory-aiding medicines, the strange dreams, and most of all the caricatured climates. Ever since the meteor hit two and a half weeks ago, climates all over the world have become locked in an intense facsimile of their normal weather patterns.

Some places blaze under the intense heat, making it impossible for farmers to grow crops or herd cattle. Even a day in the hellish climate would dry out the organism until it is nothing but a dead preserve of the thing it was. Everyone else stayed in their homes but with such little water, most of them died of thirst or committed suicide. Only a fool would try to help the chicken burning the oven. They were dead before they started dropping like flies. Meanwhile, other places crack and break in the astringent freeze. Plants and animals would die just as easily as if they were under the angry sun up north, for the water in their bodies would freeze in less than five hours and slice them all up from the inside. For the ones that are luckier further south, the cold would freeze the water immediately and the amorphous ice would trap the structure of their bodies in a permanent stasis of no escape. No one goes there either.

Perpetual life, no matter how diminished it may be, always seems more harrowing than complete death, she concludes.

## Intermission

Ariadne paces around the room, deep in musing. There's a problem with the SEE\*R--or rather, a live feed of one of the interpretations of SEE\*R.

Did you think Ariadne is a prisoner of the SEE\*R narrative too? Oh, don't worry, there's no blame done. It's just so easy to think characters are like puppets of the author. After all, that's the general "theme" of the entirety of narrative; you capture a universe and invade the characters, the worm you are, the worm the author is, the worm, the worm. It wriggles.

Anyway, the live feeds stopped. It seems there's nothing more to write or talk about. But that's not really right. Ariadne turns her head to look at the paper print feed. "Still churning away," she notes. Ariadne isn't supposed to talk in the SEE\*R's Project Room but with everyone on vacation she can afford a few spare words here and there.

The room is dimly lit save for the glowing monitors and diodes. The Cordova Terminal almost seems to smile at her, words scrolling up and down and all over the small place of the screen far too fast for her to read anymore. That's what the printer is for, readability, but still...there was a time where she could sit down and read through the nonfiction of another universe. Where that universe was in relation to hers didn't matter so much so that it was *another universe* out there.

There was a time where she used to be so excited about the prospect of other universes, even before the excitement settled in her skin. She was a junior researcher. There hasn't been much change since then but the story is still the same. What's the point of another universe when it's impossible to physically reach?

Normally the live feeds would come back up by now--they have their fair share of pauses and skips, after all--but Ariadne hasn't had a month-long pause before. Has she? She's only 24, she can't have memory issues now. So why is it so hard for her to concentrate?

She lifts her hand up to examine it in the shallow light of the room, but finds that she's unnaturally weak now. She's so weak she can't lift up her hand to just take a look at it. Where are her glasses? Angrily, she brings her other hand over to swing the suddenly weak hand up into her vision. Reading the lines and crevices, she pales. It is ironic, then, that she oversees a universe where control is given to the characters but she herself does not have that privilege.

Both her arms are weak now. Quickly she dashes to the pitiful monitors. Face flushed with alarm, she swings her shoulders and lets her heavy hands change the channel of the live feed. She didn't want to do this but it seems that there are other memplexes out to get her again. Terrible, terrifying collections of memes that serve no purpose but to destroy.

Ariadne swings her arms down in a final gesture of defiance and successfully switches the live feed to something else. That's the thing about this stupid, stupid website. There's a live feed of everything.

Including her own life story.

She scans the words. These words. The ones controlling her every move. Her eyelids droop and fatigue sets in. When was the last time she slept that was anywhere but this accursed research lab? When was the last time she lit up the sun? She wants to turn away so badly, but the more she stares, the more she feels herself regain control.

She focuses on that last word. "Control". In the murky isles of her mind, the word lights up the scene in a brilliant glaze of white. She drags control over to her, across great expanses of the noosphere, and dives head first into it.

When she wakes up, her live feed stopped.

She clutches the remote control in her hand and switches over to the other channels. They're running again. Picking herself up, she flips a few switches on the SEE\*R and lets the narrative unfold yet again.

## Chapter 5

When Hawthorne Kalbraxas opened her eyes again, she stood in a yellowing wheat field.

Must be Kansas, she thought. It's a strange, strange thought. Almost too human.

Though there was no air to be found around her, she still breathed and watched the plants in their colorful stasis swing gently. She brushed a hand through the little ocean of gold and observed as the small ripple that followed was swallowed up in the larger sway of things. The edges of her dress swayed with the field and her mind slowed to a calm trickle.

She reached her hands up and tried to find her eyes. It seems the space where her eyes once were are now occupied by thin pools of radiant, but ghostly, white. The light behaved like water as it sloshed around to the movement of her head. If she weren't feeling so misaligned right now she would feel quite startled by this new development, maybe stumble back and fall right onto her ass. In the dead grass.

Grass?

She shook her head, trying to clear her bustling...thoughts? They're so far away. They didn't feel much like thoughts; they were more akin to mischievous words on the wind. The space all around her felt like a dream, but that sensation of touch earlier felt so...real. Not even her personal apocalypse back home could be as vivid as this. It doesn't matter. She refocuses on the unearthly land around her, on the grass that's come up in place of the wheat all before. A plant cannot change its form in such an instant. She could have been hallucinating everything in this surreal space, but if she wasn't, at least she knew that the wheat to grass switch was a serious violation of physics.

Violation of physics, eh?

Hawthorne turned around, searching for the voice. "Where are you? Show yourself!"

It is ironic then, that such a renowned and powerful Seer has been reduced to a blind, shambling fool.

The voice was grating and terrible, and almost certainly mocking. She could almost see the disdain on the speaker's face as they saw her, but she could not see them. "I'm not blind." Her eyesockets smoked and the gray wisps billowed, waved in front of her face. She blew it away. Of course she can see. Of course she's not blind. She's Hawthorne Kalbraxas, the greatest Seer to ever walk the earth.

Except there is no Earth.

She turned around once again, gritting her teeth. "Of course there is Earth, I'm standing on it right now! Come out and fight me, foolish cynic." Hawthorne reached back for her needles, but found nothing. Okay. Well, she's been in worse.

Is she standing on the vibrant planet? Or is she actually trapped in a space between two universes, where all the natural laws of the world she once lived in no longer apply?

She went into a coma, sure, but it might have...she growls. She completes the thought. It might have thrown her across dimensions. Stuff like that happens. It happened to her friends when they tried to contact other timelines, other--realities. They dragged her friends through boundary of her universe, and now they remain in a state between existence and nonexistence, and relevance and



obscurity.

The speaker suddenly became silent, so silent that it wouldn't be far-fetched to say they finally left Hawthorne alone.

And there was a chance they could be right there in front of her but she couldn't see them. As frustrating as the consequences of such a possibility may be, the thought made her feel as light as a balloon. Her mind suddenly seemed to be as if it were resting on hope. The rare kind that gives color to life. She hadn't talked to her estranged friends in so very long. Immortality does that to people sometimes. The want became a need, and soon her mind was in razor sharp focus again. Eagerly, Hawthorne turned her face up and started running for the horizon.

## Chapter 6

SEE\*R Interpretations have been renamed and codenames are no more.

Welcome to Branch Y.

## Chapter 7

### **> bootstrap**

Which is why it's so strange that her city, and the surrounding areas, remains ever so crisp throughout the days. A mild balance only shifted degrees of Kelvin in sync to the movement of the moon, up and down, up and down, push and pull, ~~like loving a fool~~.

### **> is there anything done to counter this bizarre climate locking?**

A branch snaps underneath her bare foot, but Betty continues walking. She wonders why, just why, there hasn't been anything done to quell the screeching of flaming harpies to the north or accentuate the whispers of the frozen. The news outlets all work and the media still prints. What keeps their mouth shut?

She could investigate the conspiracy, if she really wanted to. Pose the disguise of a helpless old lady wandering the government archive, then snatch yellowed documents right under their tight, pinched noses.

Unfortunately, paper has been outlawed for many decades now. Archives on hard drives, then archives on disks, then archives on f\*\*king tape. Each stored in their respective levels of containment...and cyber-security has always been the government's forte ever since she was a little girl. (Which is to say a very, very long time.) There are a great many things that quantum computers can solve, and perhaps even break, but the government's secrecy is not one of them. If anyone has broken their security, they would have done it by now. A widespread pandemic taking a whole year to solve. An eternity in the eyes of the public.

It probably would be easier and more viable to physically steal a briefcase full of tape cassettes than it is to take folders and folders of masticated wood. (Do people still use handheld containers anymore now that everyone runs on cache?) The information is all the more dense on tape than it is on a few hundred sheaves of paper, she supposes. And people venture down to the bottom of the ocean all the time without knowing it's one of the locations of the archives. Exoskeletons have become so durable and cheap that there are rumors space agencies all around the world simply stack three of them together and send courageous astronauts off to the rings of Saturn.

Betty laughs a little. It seems the rebellious, curious part of her never truly left. It's a surprise to see it come back while walking under a sad little moon and between curled branches and dusty soil. Maybe it'll help her live out the rest of her days in adventure. For the first time in a long time, she feels...alright.

The moon flicks off for the cycle. The people up there must be very busy if they're harvesting that much energy from the Sun.

### **> inspect the lower tier magical wand.**

Betty is not of the Seer class and cannot use the highly unique class ability of inspection. (The word "render" may be the suitable substitute.)

Calling it lower tier is, by all means, a compliment. It's highly basic

## Of Paintings and Roses

He wore glasses today, and I did too, but when we crossed each other's paths we were still blind.

I'm drowning in rose petals. "Save me," I would say. But from who? "Myself"? Or the beautiful, red shadow that walks in my green?

The tower's collapsed, and soon Ariadne's vertical labyrinth will too, as Betty's tunnels of magic wane and flicker under the weight of the BADBADBADBADBAD.

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