***Verse 9: Musical Portals?***

As soon as they both had a visual on the portal the map updated with a new symbol over the arrow. Repeating the procedure, Richter created the next key.

The pond didn’t look particularly dangerous or deep.

The map flashed with the countdown of 2 hours and 32 minutes remaining.

As Richter started forward, Zev reached out and stopped him.

“Hang on. I’ve seen something like this before. Stand back.”

Curious yet anxious, Richter took a small step back.

Zev looked at the hulking man and shrugged. He walked to the edge of the pond and gazed hard at the water and then he touched the water with one outstretched glowing finger.

The water ripped where he touched as one would expect and then the ripples grew into waves crashing on the shores of the island and surrounding land.

Then the water started to rise to the height of Zev as he stood hand outstretched, fingers twitching.

“Gotcha!” Looking over his shoulder Zev grins. “I saw one of these eats a whole party one time. I wasn’t sure my power would work but it felt like the right time to try. And what do you know? Success!”

“What is it? Oh, fuck! Is that a Water Mimic?

Richter used Analyze.

Water Mimic

Level 83

Has the ability to disguise itself as water in many shapes, sizes, forms, and enticements.

Young Water Mimics are said to seek out lost coins and form puddles over them making sure to make the coin shine hard. When the prey reaches for the coin and touches the water, the Mimic attacks.

These are among the most dangerous of the Mimic because this one can get under your skin.

A favorite technique that has been observed is entering a victim’s body through any hole or even bare skin. Once inside, they begin to feed.

Mimics are dumb but deadly and single-minded. They can be easy to distract.

Water Mimics are particularly fond of disguising their trap with beauty; Often found with flowers and other calming aquatic plants.

Zev manipulated his water monster puppet out of the pond bed and with it came the illusory portal on the island. On the pond bed sat a portal. It was askew and covered in slimy algae but started to glow as soon as they both saw it.

Setting the key in place, the portal hummed, clicked, sparked, then a blast of hot dry air shot out knocking them both back slightly.

…8…7…6…

The map counted down. Zev and Richter ran the last 20 feet and both dove into the portal as the countdown reached one.

“Fucking sand. I hate sand. It gets everywhere and I can never get it out of my hair.”, Richter cursed as Zev spit sand out of his mouth.

Quickly looking at the map, It appeared they had about ¾ of a mile to the portal. It was in the middle of a dusty Oasis town.

Even though they were strangers they curiously not drawing attention.

As they rounded the corner to see the Portal sitting in the middle of the square. There was a line of about 15 people waiting.

“We don’t have time for this. We will piss someone off here and now.”

Richter cupped the newly transformed portal key and ran to the front of the line and slammed the key into the destination groove. The Portal popped and a seascape could be seen on the other side; a harbor in the distance.

Zev ripped by the line and they both ran through the Portal to the ocean village.

3 hops later and the map showed an arrow that led to a Dungeon entrance.

The symbol on the map changed to the same one Richter had taken an etching of before. His suspicions were confirmed when the map indicated the destination key to the Mist Village.

But now they were in a Dungeon with no way home.

Starting to get frustrated, Richter swore.

“If we could find a node, then maybe we can finish this…”

Zev spoke up. “There’s usually a node at the beginning of every dungeon. We should check.”

Zev was right and when Richter put his hand on the node his world exploded with information.