

The role of arbiter and judge of the transience of dimensions is changed each day. From the collection of beings going through, the first of the capable within this cycle is used and replaces the prior so they can pass on.

Offered the position, but having never held such a position, there is a curiousness and nervousness as to whether you can keep the balance stable and manage. Will it collapse, along with and from the pressure of the dimensional rift?

Can you hold the arbiter seat and keep it open?

Another being comes and offers to fill your position.

You accept and the clench of guilt holds as you pass onto the other side.

Lost in it.

You are from another place, but this is the second time you have been in this dimension.

In many ways a place like our own, but from a distorted future.

An attractive woman is being placed through a collection of experiments. Each one modifying her in some faculty. Her sight, smell, and skin density.

"Until now, he has been the most successful"

One of the experimenters refers to another with hardened green skin. The density of his skin gives the impression concrete would break if dashed against it.

The girl struggled and the green man held her down until, with her modified strength, she broke his arm.

The small city you have not visited, and only heard of it as "the most beautiful dirty city on the planet".

Inspecting each detail as if new, you pass through the streets.

Aliens, pasty white, wrinkly skinned, with black eyes and unconventionally thin teeth, bulbous shaped heads and enormous bodies almost a relative three times larger. Leisurely they sit in the middle of a city street in a rough circle while others walk around them. They were all wearing what looked like barber's aprons as they appeared to be smoking from the heads of crouched humans.

These smoking tools curved over the heads of the humans they were smoking from, and were made of a transparent glass like substance. The smoke could be seen being drawn from the humans heads. These humans were paralyzed, or asleep... At your distance, and at your brisk pace, it was difficult to discern. The humans also looked prematurely aged. They suffered by such a quiet means, that it is likely they only knew it subconsciously.

The aliens were smoking the ideas, thoughts, and creativity of the humans. Seemingly not to increase their intelligence, but for the fun of how it affected them temporarily. They were engaged in a malicious and indulgent play that was taking the life of these humans. A decadence, if it wasn't seemingly given normalcy through casual acceptance of others on the street.

None of this made sense. Moving hurriedly through the streets seemed to be the only way to keep objectivity... and not get caught.

From within you, you knew the necessity of this moment. Go to the one place you had been before, a quiet one, and from there begin to make sense of this world.

You side-step the commotion of the street and go to a trade-in shop. There waiting for you is a person from the same dimension. Having once been here before, he was much more comfortable and it showed in his mannerisms. He was wearing a gaudily colourful shirt he had once worn to a stage performance in this dimension, however, when the performer signed it, they signed it as their persona. Most people of this world would likely have scoffed at him for holding in esteem the small performer's signature, and one improperly signed... he loved it.

You do not have an item valued as much as does that shirt.

One of the experimenters was being swayed romantically in light of this girl's new abilities. Finding time to be alone with the girl, he used a technology he had snuck into the laboratory to make himself invisible. In the process of invisibility turned his vision to a hue of orange with a tiled surface texture. Certain objects became highlighted in different colours.

He stalked the girl. His mouth with its deteriorated teeth neared her. In a desire and anticipation he was making a contorted face, a face he only dared make knowing he wasn't being observed. As he approached her the orange tiles of his vision disappeared, and at the same time so did his invisibility.

She turned to look and, in the experimenters place, she saw her lover. It was the man with the gaudy-shirt. Through some trick of the technology the researcher had taken on his appearance.

Her face softened into happiness and a smile. Barely able to believe it in this current situation, and barely able to care. What mattered to her was that he was here. A foolish, natural, rapturous ignoring of context.

Her soft lips touched his.

She closed his eyes, and she continued to kiss.

Transport is needed. It was obvious now this quiet place you are going to was a great distance from this small city. Now you at least knew the name of the quiet place: 'Shieryong'

The transport carriage you approached was very crowded, but you were happy. The gaudy-shirt man had decided to catch up to you later. The transport itself contained three levels of seating. At each entrance was a wide staircase that went directly up to the top level.

On the top level you take a seat. And it is there you meet the girl of experiments. Just as beautiful as you remembered.

You move over to make room for her and she sits next to you.

A young girl in the seat in front of you, aged 20 or so with dark hair, turns around to talk to you.

"Have you seen the M.A.B.T?" she says.

You don't actually know what this term means, but you at least know what it is in reference to.

"Yes, was Shieryong in it?"

"I think they had entrants last year." She replied.

You smile, people you knew of, even if only slightly, were doing well. The girl of the experiments looked puzzled, and you acknowledge this.

"Oh you haven't been here long."

The girl in front answers.

"It is not like she is stupid or anything."

You respond.

"No. She is perfectly intelligent. Smart as anyone, just she doesn't know terms like M.A.B.T. or C.B.B." You invent this new acronym and hope it is received well, or their hesitancy prevents them from enquiring further.

"What is it?" The girl of the experiments asks.

"A competition for students."

As this is being said, the girl in front speaks up.

"Your clothes..."

The side of your clothes that had been touching the wall were shredded in the way hair shrinks back as it is burnt. The contact of your shirt to the wall, potentially any surface, had caused this.

The girl from in front looks up at you.

"You're not from here are you?"

The very fabric you wore was aware you were mismatched in this dimension, and the mismatch was causing it to be eaten or deprecated away. New clothes would be needed and quick.

"We'll be persecuted..." The girl of experiments said under her breath.

Quickly you grab a singlet and other clothes from your small backpack that you purchased at the trade-in store. With less sleeves, or excess fabric means it is less likely to touch surfaces unexpectedly. It was also bought here so less likely to be eaten by contact in this dimension.

Soon people would come for the girl of the experiments, as well as you for your transgression of being there.

Once the carriage stopped the girl you were with pulled down the window and jumped out. Hastily you joined her, however, your movement was paltry compared to her anomalous speed.

As you exited you looked back at the carriage and realised your bag is still in there. A shadow man with glasses held it in the air for you. The carriage began to move back in the direction it came from.

Whatever was in that bag, it was important to you.

You look back at the girl and she continues to run away from the transport carriage. Knowing your decision already, you run back to the carriage.

Luckily the transport was so long and with so many carriages that, even though one section of the transport had reached the next station, one end of the carriage is still on your current platform. You try to get on but so many people and creatures move their way down the stairs it is difficult.

You move yourself against the wall, to get up the stairs, carefully to not have your clothes touch the surface. And against the tide of traffic make your way to the top level.

Expecting to see the shadow man with your bag you move down the carriage. Surprisingly he is not there or anywhere to be seen.

After walking some distance you see him sitting down, arms clutching around your bag. He shakes his head at you and gives you the bag back.

It has been such a time getting the bag back, and this transport is so fast, that this carriage has almost returned back again to the stop where the girl of experiments jumped off.

Closing in on the transport destination, a younger boy stops you and asks.

"Howlfelger yeip, doen weempshim?"

You shake your head unable to respond. It seems this language is not uncommon here. He smiles and looks away, as he tries to think of how to make it easier and rephrase it for you.

He begins breaking up his speech and making it slower

"lee-whelemp-ourru-a...." He stops to find the word.

"Zheig hem?"

Shaking your head. You piece together what you can... But nothing sounds coherent. In an attempt at a response you say.

"No. Zheig?"

The boy smiles more.

"Ahh-ahhh!"

He realises something, though in truth it is perhaps he has made something in his head. He now believes that his communication had gone wrong, and it was not you who was at fault.

The transport stops at the location you were supposed to leave with the girl earlier. You thank the boy, he smiles and extends his hand for a shake. You move off the carriage clutching your bag in your arms the same way the shadow man from before did.

On this platform, hovering in the sky, you now have two goals: the beautiful girl, and Shieryong.

And now you were escaping two things also: the inevitable spider-robots who will chase you for being in this dimension, and the man with the gaudy shirt, at least while you were near that girl anyway.

Otherwise you would be quite happy to have his company and big smile.

For now, riding on more transport carriages would be needed, running between stations, over property and land. Flight travel is also a possibility... One thing felt for certain.

Less city, less robot-spiders, less experimenters for the girl, more grass, and more rest.