

*This is a cross between lived experience with Bipolar 1, a fiction narrative, and an autobiography. We also go through a journey and files that I created for a mod for the video game franchise of Command and Conquer, and all I care about.*

## **Solving The Equation of Love: A Manic Imagination [Equation Of Humanity Book 1]**


By Eric J. Chou

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EQUATION OF HUMANITY BOOK 1

TOGETHER WE STAND  FOR TOMORROW!



SOLVING THE  
EQUATION OF LOVE:

A MANIC IMAGINATION

ERIC J. CHOU

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## Table of Contents

Chapter 1: A Job Too Well Done .....	1
Chapter 2: The Manic Gateway .....	8
Chapter 3: The Universe Multiverse Experiment.....	17
Chapter 4: When Gods play Peek-A-Boo: .....	63
Chapter 5: In the Service of Humanity.....	85
Chapter 6: Do you Hear What I Hear? .....	116
Chapter 7: Worm Hole Anchor Established .....	161
Chapter 8: The PPF model of life and Mental Health - Creating Ripples in Time .....	167
Chapter 9: Proposals to change the world.....	197
The Job Description of The Job Hunter.....	218
Chapter 10: Clan Research Paper.....	233
Chapter 11: Clan and mod activity records:.....	278
Chapter 12: Activity log:.....	288
Chapter 13: Select Tiberium Secrets Management files .....	305
Chapter 14: Select Tiberium Secrets Narrative Files.....	344
Chapter 15: Game dev Tib sec Research:.....	370
Chapter 16: Select Tiberian Eclipse files .....	418
Chapter 17: C&C3: The Chronicles of The Forgotten Heroes.....	458
Chapter 18: How to Solve The Equation of Humanity .....	509
Conclusion.....	532

## **Chapter 1: A Job Too Well Done**

I met God in the summer of 2013, and he wasn't an old white Jew, Shiva, a magnificent ball of light, or anything in between. He was simply a presence of life, community, love, and unending mercy. Love being all-inclusive; all types of love from brotherhood, parenthood, romantic, positive passion, etc., etc., etc. On that day I had complete and utter certainty that God existed, and I thought the scientific equation of love would be finally revealed to me. The price of this immense knowledge and serenity? My life. Where was I? What was going on? The first answer was a church of all places. As for the second: well, I was in the midst of my first major manic episode.

But before I can go into the details of that day, and before my other manic episodes can be fully understood, I have to back up a bit and give significantly more background.

I was born in May 1990, and on August 1, 1993 I nearly drowned in a pool. I was fully blind for a year, though my vision has slowly improved throughout the years. We moved from Cupertino to Palo Alto when I was in second grade because of the resources available for special education. We now live in this first-world community because of my accident. Both of my divorced parents on occasion thank me for bringing them here. My dad once told me, "You raise all of us up."

I went to a library in 1999, and little did I know that my life would be changed forever. I found a copy of the video game *Command & Conquer: Tiberian Sun*, sitting there, and I thought it was so strange that there were video games in a library. It came with this black and white booklet detailing the entire game. I got it, and well, it was my first step into what would later become the rest of my life. I still remember the mail-order Westwood Studios store they had at the time, which sold Command & Conquer merchandise. At that time, I was too young to have any money of my own, so I let it be. Eventually that changed; I remember that day so clearly. I came back from

school, and all I could think of was Command & Conquer. So, I finally filled out the form for the store and ordered some merchandise.

I eagerly waited, but when it finally came, it wasn't a box or package at all, but a simple letter saying that the Westwood store had shut down and that they were so sorry that they weren't able to process the order. Now that I think about it, that's the first time I would buy anything for a brand name.

Sure, I had continued to play the game, but I had largely forgotten about the franchise until one day in 2007 when I was in a Fry's Electronics. I saw a Command & Conquer game on sale, and I was certain it was the next game in the franchise. I remember there was some issue with the sale price, where they thought it wasn't on sale, but they finally figured it out. Up until this point I had only played single-player (I didn't get involved in online play). I found this huge online community around the game and the associated franchise, and I fell into a rabbit hole. Interestingly enough, I had more fun communicating on the forums about the game than actually playing the game itself.

I was in high school during this time, and I had gotten keen on psychology. This was what I'd later study and I found the subject fascinating. Little did I know, but I was approaching the rest of my passions in life from exactly the right angle. Because of my visual disability, I had trouble connecting with people in person, so I went deeper and deeper into the online aspect. I discovered something interesting, that I wouldn't fully understand until years later, that personalities seem to flip online. Introverts become extroverts and extroverts become introverts.

I had a friend who had graduated in 2007, who was also named Eric, and he got me into his clan. For those who don't know, a clan is the same as a guild or a league, where people gather on a voice chat system and play games together. I joined TAW (The Art of Warfare), and I was happy there for a while. One thing that is important to note

is I took up the responsibilities of a staff officer, which is a recruitment manager. Little did I know then, but this type of responsibility would follow me for years to come.

This was where I recruited my best friend Jason, who I later fell in love with.

One day I had to make the hard decision to leave due to some rule violations by the upper brass. This might not have been a big issue, but the clan had a military structure, so the rules and expectations were a bit stricter. Due to these issues, 200 people left along with me, and we formed the 102<sup>nd</sup> multi-gaming community. That time was very hard for me because I felt a responsibility to let everyone I had recruited know what had happened and what was going on. It was also hard, because this was when Eric started to reach out to me more, and he had been the one to invite me into this community. Furthermore, I came to understand that this all happened as a direct result of my actions. The World of Tanks North America division was simply growing too fast, as a direct result of my recruitment efforts. This made the other division commanders uncomfortable, so they aimed to stop our growth. In other words, I was doing my job too well and it was making others look bad. This kind of politics is common in large guilds, and I have proven that gaming guilds are perfect training grounds for real-world transferable leadership and other skills.

During this entire time, I was going through community college. I graduated with an Associates in psychology, and I transferred to UC Irvine. Here is where I spent most of my days when I wasn't doing schoolwork.

The other thing I got involved in at the time was a mod called *Tiberian Eclipse*. For those who don't know, a "mod" refers to modification. This is where people take an existing intellectual property and change it for free as a hobby.

I joined the project in November of 2010, and the aim of the project was for the community to redo *Command & Conquer 4: Tiberian Twilight*. I was the lead writer and co-lead from November 2010 to April 2011 but the project ultimately failed due to a variety of reasons, prime among them that it was fueled by negative passion. I joined the team of another mod run by one of our members in July 2011. Seth was his name, and the project was called *Tiberium Secrets*. Little did I know then that I just got involved in something that would shape years of my life to come, and much of my manic episodes, and would make me the man, leader, president, and Founder that I am today.

Our project overview:

“Tiberium Secrets was a total overhaul mod set in a parallel universe to the Command & Conquer canon. It introduces three new factions that can stand in conjunction and potentially independent from the others within the Command & Conquer Tiberium universe. These new factions come complete with diverse units, structures, mechanics, and lore. Players will take command of a shadowy human faction intent on ensuring the survival of its species without concern for red tape or ideologies, (Orange) a biological experiment turned hunter of their creators, (Green) and an artificial intelligence believing itself to be the next evolution of humanity, (Cyan) Comparatively minor, but fundamental changes will also be made to the original factions.”

The thing that I found when doing these online projects and getting involved in these online communities is that you get to know people for who they really are, or who they want to be. Since it's all voice and text, there is no room for the physicality of things to get in the way.



And that is the entire point of my revelation in the summer of 2013: pure communication from person to person, mediated by a computer. I got to know people for their words and their actions, nothing more, nothing less. The other important thing about this type of communication that has been noted, is that it's possible to get very personal surprisingly fast. I've experienced that first-hand multiple times, especially with Jason.

I remember countless times when we were talking about deeply personal topics and times in which I cried a river. There was a lot of stress on me due to me being involved in so many things, but the thing that I remember the most is just being there for him, and him for me. We supported each other through some tough times, and we got really close, first as friends, then as best friends. I didn't realize it at the time, but he was becoming my one release. Years later, I wouldn't be able to cry unless he was there. It's important to note that we never met in person, and to this day I don't know what he looks like, beyond some general demographics. I later found out he was only twenty minutes away.

What we had was pure, unburdened by the community that I had helped build, and we got to know each other on deeper and deeper levels. As time went on, he began to symbolize that time in my life, and all that came with it.

I remember the day I fell in love with him, sometime around March 7, 2013. I only remember that date because I had to interview someone about their coming out experience and write up an article for a class on sexuality. After I turned the assignment in that day I had come back and spent the time trying to explain how I felt. It was hard, not just because I was confessing my feelings, but because I had a hard time coming to the point: I was in love with him.

Some people discount online relationships because they consider them shallow. To that, I ask, is it shallow to talk to someone almost every day for hours? Being face-to-face, you only get a certain

amount of time to discuss things; when you're online, you can be anywhere, doing anything: being behind a computer, a smartphone, or any kind of device, for considerable lengths of time.

After I told him how I felt, he tried to process it. The problem was that he processed things relatively slowly, while I processed things very quickly. I cried and cried because I wouldn't hear from him after I sent email after email, trying to understand and process how I felt and getting nothing in return. It was like sending letters into a black hole. The other thing that didn't help, was that I was on academic probation for the third time. My classes were slipping and I was doing all I could with my other commitments. I realized something had to give, so I resigned from the staff officer position with the 102<sup>nd</sup>, which I'd been filling for a year (almost to the day I resigned from TAW). They successively tried to fill this position, and we even had someone from West Point try, but he couldn't so the job led to a restructuring, and the position was broken up into five separate jobs. For a long time, I didn't fully understand just how capable I was, and just how many hats I can wear. But I fully understand now. I would not recommend bearing the strain of that much responsibility to anyone. It will break you like it nearly broke me several times. I was always too busy online; I didn't fully explore my local resources and relationships at school, and that is one of my biggest regrets in life. But it will all work out in the end. I have certainty in this, brought about all that I've discovered on my journey.

I also didn't know it at the time, but I was experiencing my first manic episode, and all the stress and racing thoughts were not just the above stressors magnified by love.

I had tried to see the school psychologists, but I was told that I had to wait, because I hadn't been in the system for more than six months. I found out later that if I had categorized it as "an emergency," then I would have gotten 20 minutes.

It also didn't help that my sleep schedule was off because of all the papers and exams that were due. Those were the most stressful months of my life, and between confessing my feelings to Jason and keeping up with classes, the balancing act was bound to break one way or another. However, when things finally came to a head, it literally felt like I had broken reality, not reality breaking me.

## **Chapter 2: The Manic Gateway**

It began on Friday, May 17, 2013. I was sitting in a classroom, watching the documentary *Super Size Me*, supervised by a teaching assistant when something changed. At first I didn't know exactly what had changed, but then I could smell something -- something that wasn't there before. I moved my head around, sniffing the air, thinking that something must have been introduced to the air circulation of the room. I looked around to see if anyone else had noticed something off. But as far as I could tell, no one had.

I finally discovered that the smell was emanating from my skin. I wasn't sure what to think of it, so I went back to my dorm to take a shower after the class was over.

I took a shower, but I could still smell it afterwards. Then I remembered this odd little fact about body odor: a person can't smell their body odor. And for some reason, I had a flash of insight, and instantly knew it must be coming from Jason. So I logged on to the voice chat system we used, and I tried to contact him. After all this time, I can't remember if I actually reached him, but as soon as I logged on, I felt this beam of pressure on my chest. It was as if my soul were being cut open. I got up from the chair, and I sat on the couch, directly parallel to the computer, and then it happened again. It was almost as if something were being transferred from the computer directly into my soul. I couldn't see any physical objects, but I got the sense that there was some kind of spiritual connection established.

Immediately after this, I put my hand over the spot, right over my heart. The odd thing was, it felt warmer than before and warmer than the other parts of my body. My roommate John was next door in the other room, so I asked him to feel my chest. He did, and he agreed with me that it was a bit warm. I also asked him to smell me, but he declined.

At that point, I had a racing thought that there must be something wrong with me and that I should go to the health center. Furthermore, I thought that all my health records should be documented for posterity. So, I proceeded. On my way there, the presence developed and started to speak to me. It didn't fully identify itself, but I surmised that it was a version of Jason that chose me. During this time, it felt like I had a telepathic connection with Jason, and my chest temperature rose. Along with this connection was a connection to pure love, that aspect of God. It asked me if I'd give up all conventional communications with Jason and if I could prove that love was a force in the universe. It promised me that I could uncover the equation and reveal it to the rest of the world. The only communication with Jason for the rest of our lives was to be through this telepathic link. Every turn as I went to the student health center, it asked me this question. In my mind, I repeatedly responded, "Yes, I would."

When I arrived at the health center, they gave me a standard examination. My blood pressure was abnormally elevated—so much so that as they were trying to take a reading, the inflatable cuff kept getting too tight and would stop as if my arm were too big. I told them about the heart temperature, and they gave me an EKG. They took a blood sample as well. Everything seemed to check out, and they said I was fine. So they discharged me to carry on with my day.

Halfway through the parking lot, the presence interjected to tell me that I had forgotten about the strange smell and that I hadn't told them about it. It repeated this a few times, and at first I figured that it wasn't important. It told me that it was very important and that I should go back, so I finally did.

When I returned to the student health center, I asked to see the same doctor again. After some objections, they finally let me see him. Once in the room with the doctor, I asked him to smell me. He said I was being ridiculous, and from the look on his face he seemed to be very

annoyed that I was wasting his time with such a request. I pleaded with him though, and he finally relented. After smelling me, he told me that I smelled fine, and that was that.

I went back to the dorm, and tried to call Jason. He texted me back saying that he was tied up at work. Then I had a flash of insight, telling me that he was writing all of this down and he was tied up in a police station somewhere, only able to respond with what I was sending him.

Another very important thing I felt later on that day was that my mod project, *Tiberium Secrets*, was finally finished. It felt as if I could jump to the end of my life and review the fruits of my labor. My project, started in the summer of 2011, was completed and just as I had imagined! The sense of accomplishment felt enormous. But I had resigned my position on *Tiberium Secrets* in August 2012 because I had too much going on in my life; I was barely keeping my head above water as it was. I would return to this sense of accomplishment frequently, reminding me that although the journey was long, I would find meaning in the end goal.

That night something stranger happened. I was awake, but it felt like a dream. I experienced what felt to me like Jason and I were having sex. There was pressure on different parts of my body and it would be warm on those parts. I was a virgin, so I had no idea what was going on, but it felt like what I imagined sex to be, at least in a metaphysical sense.

Something else that was going on was that my sleep patterns were off entirely. Jason would regularly get up at 5:00 AM to go to work, so when I started to wake up naturally around the same time, I figured that our circadian rhythms had synced up.

The next morning was a Saturday, so I slept in until 8:00 AM. As I began my day, I noticed that the clocks—from my watch to my smartpen—were out of sync. I knew they were synchronized the day

before, so I jumped to the conclusion that I had traveled to the future. I spent my time roaming the campus of UC Irvine, confidently collecting clues as to what time it really was.

The main time difference I noticed was between my watch and a smartpen I had. This smartpen could record audio, so I used it to record my revelations as they came to me.

I walked all around the campus, certain that I knew where I was going without knowing where to go. I had purpose, visiting rooms and finding clues. The other important thing was that at this point in my life, I still had a flip phone. I can't help but think that everything would have been documented properly if I had a smartphone instead.

Soon I found myself in the information technology center, a squat two-story building. As I roamed the halls, I saw more and more symbols, each in different colors. It wasn't until the later continuation of my episodes that the colors would continue and become more insistent. The colors would later shout at me, telling me their secrets.

I walked into a room with chairs all facing a wall with a whiteboard describing several environmental worst-case scenarios, most of them related to climate change. There was also part of a very complicated unfinished chemical formula equation on the whiteboard. I used a blue marker to add the formula for water,  $H_2O$ . The thing about the chairs was there were 3 sets, each of them a different color: green, cyan, and orange. Around the walls were brown couches, each accompanied by an orange chair.

This was where the colors began to shout at me. They meant something like this: cyan and blue meant the future; orange meant teacher or one who understood; and green meant nature. The other thing was if the upper part of a person's body was wearing the color, it meant that the person consciously understood what was going on, but if it was the lower body, it meant they subconsciously understood.

I thought that this must be the place in the future where I would be meeting with the rest of the *Tiberium Secrets* team to launch the mod and pursue future game plans. Matt (Project Director), Seth, (Project Originator), Chad (my Project Coordinator Replacement), and Jason were all there. Matt was orange, Seth was brown, Chad was cyan, and Jason was green. It's important to note that Jason, although a writer himself, was never part of the project. I had thought that since he was there, he would then later become a core pillar of the project. The other reason he was green was that he's always been interested in horror and nature, which is what green symbolized in the project.

Then I wandered into a computer lab. I thought I was invisible, so I began to move the furniture around. I thought everyone who was in the room knew what I was doing and why. I went to the front, where there was a microphone, and I said, "Wormhole anchor established" (meaning that time and space were now connected in this room). I got the impression that Matt, our project's creative and art director, was teaching Jason art.

I put my watch down on a piece of furniture in the front of the room, facing up, as I continued to move things around. Someone had a look at it, and he said, "Mark this as the time we have the empathy equation."

There was an old computer in the corner of the room, a computer so old it just looked out of place. I got the sense that it was how we communicated with the fifth floor and other floors of the building. (Remember, at this point, the building only had 2 floors.) I left the room at this point to go use the restroom. When I came back, I noticed that the entire room had changed. The pictures on the wall, detailing our rise from Earth and celebrating colonizing a new world, were all gone. The desks were all in a different configuration, and the whiteboards were all gone as well (it turned out that there were two different computer labs, and I had just been in the other one). In my state, it seemed like the entire room had changed. The computer lab



I was now in seemed to be of higher tech than the one I visited earlier, contributing to my narrative that I had moved in time again.

As I was leaving the building, I put all my clues in the mail slot of the lobby. That way, I'd be able to send them to myself when the time was right.

Around 4 PM, I made it back to my dorm. Suddenly, as if on a timer, all the alarms in the cars in the nearby parking lot went off all at the same time, and I knew that it was exactly 4:00 PM.

Another important thing to mention was that the numbers four, eight, and twelve had special significance to me, given their relation to time and all. When I mentioned this number association to my roommate, he said he got a little freaked out because those were his old address numbers. He called my dad and told him that something was wrong. I began to think of a numbering system in which it was 'base two', meaning that there is no one in the system. So, the numbers would start with 2, 4, etc. This would solve the problem of one being the loneliest number, as one would not be lonely anymore.

At this current point in time, I was on a bridge. As I gestured forward, a wind gusted, and I did the same in the other three directions. The same thing happened each time. I was defining north, south, east, and west, and the powers were humming through me.

I then went under the bridge and started crying, upset because since I was moving into the future, Jason would have been moving into the past. He and his three roommates would have to battle their way through time to catch up with me in the present. They would have the opportunity to rewrite and document history; something that Jason, being a history buff, would have found naturally attractive.

In one of my later manic episodes, he would be going back in time with 150-200 people from the 102<sup>nd</sup> (my gaming clan), not just the three roommates. At this point, I had also the impression that Dan,

who led the 102<sup>nd</sup> with me, was across the field in the courtyard. This set up for what I'd later refer to as the "102<sup>nd</sup> Reunion."

After I finished crying under the bridge, I went to the amphitheater. Here I got the sense that Jason was projecting his life onto a screen, in front of the tree that I cried so intensely in front of just the other night. He was doing this because he loved me, and he wanted to show the gathered 102<sup>nd</sup> members what his life was like before we met. During this time, I gulped, and it was as if Jason had drunk a glass of orange juice that morning before he arrived. The consciousness that he was streaming onto the screen in front of the tree started this morning, and it went back day by day, the first slowly but then quicker and quicker. He had to get through his past so he could show us his future, which was to go back in time.

As this was occurring, Dan struck up a band and singer who sang "Turning Tables" by Adele, and the strange thing was my tongue mirrored the singer as well as the keystrokes of the piano in this set rhythmic fashion. This would be the first time my tongue would dance of its own volition.

The next day I got up, and a 6-foot-tall athletic white guy in a blue button-down shirt and jeans whose name was Radcliffe was in the dorm. I was situated on the ground floor next to the living room, and he and two of his dance crew were practicing for a performance they had later. Since the other restroom was in use, I offered him mine, being that my room was a double suite. He thanked me and shook my hand mightily. When he came out, they turned on the music. He asked if the music was faster than it normally was, and the other two said that the music was as fast as normal. So, they began to dance. I took this to mean that, given he was wearing blue, his comment meant he was from the future. I watched them dance for a while.

Now I got the impression that the walls of the building were gone, and that those inside could see straight into the courtyard (where I had been the day before) and that those in the courtyard could see

them. It was as if Radcliffe and his crew were on a stage. Although there was no screen there, I got the sense that they could see the screen in front of the tree where Jason had projected his life story the day before.

As I stood at the entrance to the house, I gazed over the amphitheater. I knew Jason was coming. My eyes tracked his spirit as he ran from the amphitheater to me standing there at the front of the sidewalk. I could feel his spirit hug and wrap itself around me with such love and intense excitement! The immensity of the emotion took my breath away. We were now one in mind, body, and soul, in a way that has never before been experienced. The feeling of excitement and love coursed through my veins and all over my body. Now that we were one, it was time to explore.

As I woke up to the new power in me, I felt a new sense of purpose, freedom, and strength. I thought that I was getting taller, and Jason asked me how skinny and how tall I wanted to be. I didn't know, so I just said to keep going. I felt myself grow. I showed him the rest of my dorm.

At this point, I was found by someone, and they took me to their resident assistant because they were concerned about me. They called the campus police, and I was escorted back to my room. As I walked from one house to the other, every time I talked, the volume would be magnified as if I had a microphone. The fact that I was in the open-air courtyard had no impact on the acoustic effects.

Now, at this point, they had me pack up:

1. My laptop
  2. My water bottle
  3. My shoes
  4. My watch
-

This is purgatory. It's structured like a panopticon, with everyone in soul cells in which they can only let themselves out. The warden sits in an ivory tower in the middle of the complex. Given how old purgatory is, they're still using DOS computers.

The warden's office sits at the top of the tower in a walled-off room where it's totally quiet.

Eric is Hephaestus: he crafted the key to your soul. You were in a prison of your own design.

In the prison, there were angels disguised as daemons and daemons disguised as angels. They had been in disguise for so long that they didn't know who they once were.

You thought Eric was a guard, who would come and visit you and talk to you, where in fact he used to be in prison himself. He just got out of his cell because he had someone to love, and that person was you.

We were all imprisoned gods, but we didn't know we were in prison, and we didn't know who we were. We thought they were suits, but we didn't realize it was just our skin. We thought our skin was just a suit, and some of us tried to hurt ourselves trying to remove it. But now we know who we are, and who we were. We will find and craft all the keys, so purgatory need never be a prison again. There will be heaven on earth for all eternity. We are now charged with the responsibility of never slipping into our old habits, our old mistakes, are old cycles. We are charged with this responsibility so that we can one day ascend and join our maker, our God, our cosmos in the mind of eternity. And when we do, we will have and hold the pledge and promise of eternal life.

## **Chapter 3: The Universe Multiverse Experiment**

### Universe 0

Welcome to The United States Department of Multiverse Relations (DOMR) formerly known as The Federal Multiverse Authority (FMA) under the Department of Transportation. We became our own federal agency due to the increased security and transportation concerns of traveling, defending, and interacting with parallel worlds.

We work with all foreign government agencies to research, survey, document, secure, transit through, protect, and otherwise relate to the multiverse. We also liaise with any other multiverse authorities that may be contacted on parallel worlds.

As an employee, contractor, or consultant, there are specific standardized forms for requesting information from another universe, based on your employment type.

We at heart strive to understand the rich ecosystem of the multiverse, and we discourage any entity that desires to harm the multiverse, either in part or as a whole. Although it is far beyond our duty or ability to defend the sanctity of the entire multiverse itself, we can provide limited protection, research, and training to allied universes.

Whether this is your first assignment dealing with the multiverse or you're a veteran of multiverse affairs, we welcome you.

I stood in the doorway of my boss's office and knocked.

The culmination of my life's work is at hand, and all that I need to do is to ignore one outlier—well, technically two...

Tom Anderson, Secretary of Multiverse Relations, sat behind a console in his office with multiple dials and monitors, viewing the screens. If you didn't know better, you would think he was viewing security cameras, but instead of viewing images of inside a building, he was viewing images from other worlds. He adjusted a knob to his left, and the voices and images became clearer. He swiveled in his chair to his desk and checked a box on the form he was filling out.

I glanced at all the screens, and I instantly recognized the American Reich, where the Nazis won World War II. This was the 36<sup>th</sup> parallel world discovered, and thus was just known as universe 36 (U36).

I've worked for this man directly or indirectly my entire career, and we are this close to starting the second phase of our generations-long research directive, solving the "equation of humanity" (EOH). The EOH project was started generations ago when DOMR was founded.

The goal of the EOH study strives to understand people by comparing parallel worlds. By comparing the decision points and lives of the same person across parallel worlds, you can scientifically get at the human experience. For generations, social scientists had been limited with the bio-psycho-social model, studying people independently in quasi-experimental conditions. Nowadays, with the advent of parallel universe traversal and observation, scientists can critically track cause and effect in ways never before possible with single universe experiments. Ever since we were able to observe and travel to parallel worlds, we've been on the lookout for two identical worlds that could serve as a control group for future baseline studies. Once we have this nailed down, we'd be able to use it as a jumping-off point in studying decision trees that we all make. Once the control worlds are identified, we can use them to comprehensively analyze the human experience by comparing such experiences to other worlds where variables are slightly different.

“We’re ninety-eight to ninety-nine percent there, isn’t this good enough?”

Oh sorry, I got ahead of myself. I’m Hugh, Hugh St. James. Chief Scientist of Multiverse Relations. I specialize in quantum psychology, how the quantum differences in our world and worlds beyond affect, interact, and change human behavior. I also study the effect of quantum technologies on people. My field of study arose after we discovered there were other worlds out there. For decades, we theorized they existed. But one day we developed the Quazi net, a device network that could see into parallel worlds, and the floodgates were opened.

The Quazi net is like a mega internet; it can tap into the internet and any hardware connected to the internet of any parallel world, from phones to computers to cameras. In short, it allows our quantum computers to analyze the qualitative and quantitative data of the entire world. Anywhere the internet reaches, we have eyes and ears.

Once our society discovered this technology, it became akin to an addiction. People were constantly viewing parallel worlds. At the flip of a switch, we could view alternate versions of ourselves, alternate versions of our friends and family, alternate histories, and so much more. For many, it became more interesting to view these alternate realities than to live in our own.

Citizens have access to the Quazi net based on their employment history; it all depends on what you need for your job. Students have educational access, which focuses on any subjects they are enrolled in.

In addition to these access levels, people can purchase access to other parallel worlds and specific regions in the world. There are currently about a thousand known parallel worlds. New ones are constantly being discovered and added to the network.

Traversing the multiverse is also a highly regulated affair; there are procedures that we've developed throughout the years. The Federal Multiverse Authority (FMA), now known as the Department of Multiverse Relations (DOMR), was founded to help to manage, document, govern, regulate, and control these technologies.

Ever since the beginning, we have been on the lookout for two worlds that are the same, down to the atom, so we can designate them as control worlds. We've been searching for so long that we'd almost given up hope. Don't get me wrong; documenting and surveying alternate worlds is fascinating, but we are on the frontier of a new social science revolution, and that requires diligence of the highest regard.

We also hope to find a universe corresponding to our own, but time will tell.

Tom looked up from his screen and focused on me. I handed him two file folders, each as thick as a book.

"This could be it. I know it's a lot of data, but we had to be sure. I have the digitals backed up on the server. The entire team is ready for the next phase."

He gave me a skeptical look while thumbing through the files.

"After sifting through mountains of data, we managed to find two universes that are exactly the same except for one decision made between two people. All of the comparative algorithms agree, sir. This is one isolated event; can we call them our control group and move on?"

He swiveled in his chair and set a Newton's cradle on his desk in motion. "Well Hugh, I want to say yes, but what if you're wrong? What if there are more pivot points? If there are, that would jeopardize things down the road. If there is a crack in the foundation, no matter how small, it could cause drastic effects. Could it not?"



“I suppose, but this could be negligible, sir. All the other variables line up, and by all, I do mean ALL.”

“Hmm. You’re sure about this?”

The metal balls clicked and bounced rhythmically, underlying his point.

“Yes sir, *all* the variables between these two universes are exactly the same from atoms to natural laws, including all the human elements. Their lives, their decisions, and the results. It’s all the same. I had my team double and triple-check. We had thought we’d found the control, and we were so excited, but then we found one pivot point, just one, and we were so disappointed. But when the analysis was complete, it only stated that one pivot point was there. We thought it must be a mistake, so we checked twice more. Crunching that much data was such a pain, but it came out validated all three times. We even deployed agents to the worlds to check and they reported the same: all instruments operating nominally.”

Tom sighed. “So we are indeed this close, eh? I want you to deploy on these worlds, and figure out why this occurred. You must have missed something. We need more data, eyewitness data. If I’m to sign off on the next phase, we must be assured that this was an isolated event and that it won’t happen again.”

“Yes sir, I thought you might say something like that. I’ll be packed up and ready to depart in two days.”

As if the cradle knew the conversation had reached its conclusion, it slowed down, jangled, and stopped.

“God Speed.”

I returned to my lab, where all my associates were narrowing down the location of the anomaly. We did this by isolating the data region by region.

“Dr. St. James, looks like it’s in North America, West Coast, California.”

“You can’t get any closer than that?”

“It’s going to take 24 hours for the quantum computers to process the rest of the data. We are cross-comparing everything in the region, so we can give you the exact coordinates of where they are.

Best check in tomorrow, and we will have it for you. I’d recommend you go home, Doctor. There is nothing more you can do.”

But there was more I could do. I entered my credentials at my computer, and continued the process of selecting my team for the trip. Everything else was settled on my end. Time to see who would make history with me.

### Universe 1001 & 1002

It had always been Austin’s dream to start his own gaming company. Games have always been a hobby of his. People often asked him why he didn’t just study game design. Despite it being a popular choice, it was too narrow a field.

He’s seen those looks on employers’ faces. “So, you make games huh? And what good is that going to do for me? How is that related to this job you’re applying for?” In the non-games industry, conventional recruiters and other professionals don’t know what to do with people with such backgrounds; as a bad compromise, they usually choose to do nothing. Not to mention he couldn’t do any programming, art, or music.

The thing he was good at was being a writer as well as what they call a producer. A producer’s job in the games industry is similar to a producer’s job in other creative media, such as TV, music, and film. They are the front man and the business person. They coordinate all communications and assets and track tasks, schedules, and budgets.

It's their job to motivate and inspire a team to do its best work, as well as to fill any gap in a team.

Austin's been doing it as a hobby for several years, getting involved in a project called *Tiberium Secrets*. It was a modification of a real-time strategy war game in the *Command & Conquer* series. His project introduced three new factions, each vying for dominance, to the game.

The first faction was called The ASI (short for Artificial Systematic Intelligence). Their faction's color was cyan, and they were religious fanatics bent on uploading humans into a computer-operated collective consciousness to save humanity from their frailties. The next faction was known as the Colony, a race of green alien dinosaur bugs seeking to reclaim their previous glory, but turning undead in the process. And then there was Dream 51, also known as the Special Strategic Lunar Division. These were orange-clad secret shadow government mercenaries that sought to lead humanity into their space-based future.

Each of these new factions originated from one of the three existing factions in the game *Tiberium Secrets* was based on. The game as a whole is a simulacrum of war, where players deploy vehicles, infantry, and aircraft and against each other in a real-time battle. Players view the battlefield and command their units from an overhead view, trying to outsmart, outproduce, and outmaneuver each other during the course of a match. The goal of the game is to destroy your enemy's main base.

Chris, the project's art director, got to know Austin better by joining his clan. Austin's clan was a gameplaying group, whereas the team was a game design group. The clan was known as the 102<sup>nd</sup> multi-gaming community. Clans are groups of online gamers who choose to play games together through voice and text chat mediums. They can be any age and can be from anywhere around the world.

At this current point in time, *Specter Force* was where it was at. This game was a first-person shooter where you were a ghost recon special forces soldier, battling your way stealthily through enemy facilities. Austin took up the role of a staff officer, which was a recruitment manager for the clan.

After working on the project for a little while, Chris and Austin would blow off some steam by blowing stuff up. The clan had about 100 people.

Austin is recruiting one day when he runs into someone that will change the rest of his life.

“Hello, anyone looking for a clan?” Austin asks.

“Yes, I’m looking,” Roman replies.

“OK, I’ll contact you after the match.”

“Sounds good.”

Austin contacts Roman and asks if he has any questions about the clan. Roman asks how big they are, and Austin answers with about 100 people, adding that members play different games. Roman also asks how old are most of the members. Austin replies with a range from eighteen into the fifties.

Austin gets Roman on the voice chat system and introduces him to the clan.

“So, what makes this place different than all the other clans?”

Without hesitation, Austin replies, “Structure. We are a very structured group around here. We have a commander and executive officer first Sgt. and platoon Sgt. Each level of organization has its own responsibilities in managing the entire system. We hold regular elections every four months.”

Roman tells him it sounds good and he's excited to be part of a clan that's so organized. "So, Austin, what do you do?" Roman asks.

"Well, around here I'm the recruitment officer. I spent my time looking for new people and bringing them into this environment."

"No, I meant in meat space. I'm a warehouse manager for a chemicals company."

"Oh, I go to UC Irvine, I study psychology."

"Nice, nice."

"Let me introduce you to a few people, and you can get into another game."

"Don't you want to play with us?"

"Maybe later. I usually spend my time recruiting."

Austin brings Roman into another channel with some other people, introduces him, and then returns to his recruitment channel office to recruit in silence.

Austin sits in front of his computer with his headset on, just minding his own business, when his roommate Kyle walks in. He quickly presses the mute microphone button, so his friend on the other side of the computer doesn't hear the oh-so-predictable conversation that is about to take place.

"Hey Austin, you want to go to a bar with me right now? I and a few of my frat buddies are celebrating the long weekend."

"Um, not really, I don't feel like it."

"Come on, it's a Friday night."

"No thanks."

"You never feel like it."

“I’ve told you, I don’t like bars. It’s so noisy and crowded, I can barely hear anything, let alone the sound of my thoughts.”

Kyle sighed. “One of these days... one of these days I’m going to get you out on a weekend and have some fun, maybe meet some hot babes.”

“I don’t think so. I’d rather just sit here and play my game.”

“Fine, your loss.”

Kyle gets his keys, puts on a belt, and rushes out the door.

This was the blueprint of almost every Friday. Kyle wants Austin to go out with him, and Austin wants to stay in.

Austin ruminates on whether it would be worth the effort to correct his roommate about his sexuality, but he buries the conversation deep down. He just doesn’t know how his roommate would react. Hell, he doesn’t know how anyone would react. He doesn’t fit the stereotype of the gay guy and is afraid that people would look at and treat him differently. There’s only one person who knew, and that was the person on the other side of the computer. He had come out to his friend years ago because his friend was also gay; it felt safe knowing that someone else he trusted had gone through similar experiences. The truth is that it just felt comforting knowing that the path to being out could be a bright one—that he doesn’t have to wander it alone.

Austin had been attending his university for five years: four for his undergraduate, and he was one year into his Technological Psychology Masters Tech psych/psych tech/techno psych, which was the merging of similar fields of psychology and technology. It included things like cyber psychology and media psychology, media studies, informatics, human-computer interaction game studies, game design, and so much more. It studied anything that lived at the intersection of people and technology. It studied the effects of

emerging technologies on people, as well as how technology changes society.

After some time of independent research by multiple fields, the academic world finally saw the sense of pooling all technical, scientific, and humanity disciplines into a singular field. Anything that had to do with psychology and technology finally was recognized under the school of technological psychology.

It's been his passion for as long as he could remember. It's always frustrated him to no end that different fields, even closely related ones, would refer to the same thing with different terminology. It illustrated the disturbing point that academics didn't fully collaborate across disciplines.

"Austin, you there? Hello? I thought you had my back, but I just got sniped."

Austin quickly unmutes his microphone.

"Oh, sorry Roman. my roommate walked in, and..."

Austin sighs. "Again?"

"Yeah... You think he knows by now that this was my weekend routine."

"He's just trying to be friendly."

"I know, but you think he'd get the hint after one year of knowing me. I just don't like being social in the environments he enjoys."

"You mean out in the sun in the real world?"

"What sun are you talking about? It's 8 o'clock."

"You know what I mean. It wouldn't hurt to get out there sometimes, you know? Did you even go outside today?"

"Outside, outside?!? Who needs outside when you got inside!"

“Um, most people. Hell, I don’t feel right unless I’ve been outside breathing fresh air for at least an hour a day.”

“Fresh air, eh? How fresh are those cigarettes?”

“Come on, that’s not fair. You know I’ve been trying to quit for over six months.”

“Try harder, Roman”

“Yeah, yeah, says Mr. Straight Edge here. You don’t know what it’s like.”

Austin chuckles. He knew he was right. They are best friends; they have known each other for going on three years now. They met playing *Specter Force*. Right now, they were playing *World of Yankees*, a Civil War-inspired first-person shooter.

They get along famously, despite never having met face to face. Some alarmists get concerned about that; they are paranoid. Most of them are parents with young kids. It’s understandable to have such concerns if your child is vulnerable or doesn’t understand how to use the internet, but those in their 20’s and under understand that it’s just a fact of life. You wouldn’t mistrust someone just because you’re talking over the phone and never met them face-to-face, would you? People like to treat this online aspect as the Wild West, when in fact it’s more regulated than one would think. It’s just regulated on a local basis, not a global one. By this, I mean site by site, not based on region. You can think of each website as its own sovereign country, each with its own rules, regulations, formats, and permissions.

Some people wonder how you can develop such close relationships with someone you never met face-to-face. Well, when you talk with someone every day for hours, you get to know them on a much deeper level than meeting at a place in meat space and talking. Sure, there are limitations, but Austin didn’t care about them. He was fascinated with how people interacted in online spaces.



The other thing was that Austin has a vision impairment. This limits his life in several ways, such as making him unable to drive a car or ride a bike. Thus, getting online was a way to transcend these barriers. This impairment was something that he's lived with since he was three years old when he nearly drowned in a pool. He sees understanding online communication as his pathway to getting around all of his conventional real-world barriers.

Austin leans back in his chair and stretched. "So, Kyle also asked me if I wanted to go meet some chicks with him. I didn't feel the need to correct him, should I have?"

"Well, it depends if you feel ready on coming out. Everyone comes out differently at their own pace on their own time in their own way. Does anyone else know?"

"You know... But besides you, no." Austin hunches over his computer in shame. "I know. I'm twenty-three and not out yet. When did you come out?"

"I kind of didn't have a choice. I was forced out of the closet when I was fifteen. It was Christmas, and I had told my sister. she promised not to tell our parents, but she betrayed that trust. Doubtless, I and her don't talk anymore."

"That's so sad. It's not just because of that, is it?"

"Yes, it was. I don't have much contact with my family." Roman's normally calm voice chokes a little bit.

"Don't you consider me your family? We've known each other for a long time, and we've always been there for each other."

"I'm sorry, Austin, but I just don't see it that way. Family is something different from friendship. I could know you for 10 years, we could spend every day talking, but that doesn't mean you're family."

Austin's heart breaks a little. He feels something different for Roman for the first time. He's unsure what it is at first, but then he just knows. Austin sits there at the edge of his chair, with his head in his hands as tears begin to drop from his face. "I..." he stutters, "I..."

"What is it, Austin?"

"I mean, we spend every day talking to each other. I talked to you around my classes, and you talk to me around your work. We've been doing this for three years, and I know you're my best friend, and I hope that I'm approaching somewhere near that for you. But how long are we going to keep doing this? I mean online friendship is good and all, but I want more..."

Roman is silent, and Austin recognizes the silent sound of Roman thinking and listening. Austin never knew how he could identify this silence as different from regular silence, but whenever Roman was listening, there was a certain energy in the air, even though they were just online. He can tell Roman was uncomfortable and trying to process everything Austin was telling him.

"Is this about meeting face-to-face? Because I told you I'm not ready for that, I know it's difficult for you to understand, but I trust that you can respect my wishes. You're right, we spend every day together. If I'm not at work I'm most likely here with you. Isn't that enough?"

Austin leans back, wiping his face with his sleeve.

"That's not exactly what I mean. I understand and respect your boundaries, believe me, I do. I think I demonstrated that every day. But now I'm trying to tell you something else..."

There's a pause, Austin expects Roman to say something, but he doesn't say a word.

"Roman, I think I love you." Austin is crying a river now, with his head in his hands.

Roman continues his silence.

Taking this as an invitation to continue talking, Austin starts to ramble. "Now I'm just afraid. I'm afraid of how you're going to react. I'm afraid of what other people will think. I don't want this to change anything between us, I want to be able to continue to tell you anything, and you able to tell me anything. But now I just don't know... I don't know what's going to happen now, and that scares me!"

Roman sighs. "I think you're brave; I think you're really brave for telling me how you feel. I don't know if I would have that kind of courage."

"Well, thanks, but..."

"Can you give me some time to think about it?"

"How long?"

"A week. Give me a week."

"OK."

(1 week later)

We are back in Austin's room, it's neat as always, or at least his side of the room is. Kyle's side of the room is as messy as can be, with clothes and papers everywhere.

Austin sits down and boots up TeamSpeak. He searches the clan chat for Roman but can't see him. He jumps around a few channels, asking if anyone's seen Roman today: no one has. Mark, the commander, asks him if he wants to get into the game with them, but he politely refuses.

Austin waits there for a few minutes, just listening to his clan mates chatting and playing the game.

Roman gets online, and Austin quickly joins him. They moved into a private channel and began to talk.

“So... What’s the verdict?” Austin starts off.

“I love you too, Austin, but I’ve got some guidelines.”

“What do you mean?”

“Well, first you have to be out. I’m sorry, but I’m not dating anyone in the closet. I’ve done that before, sneaking around, pretending like we’re just friends, but that’s not going to work. Second, coming out will change you. I don’t know how, but it always does. The person in the closet is not the same as the person outside the closet, and I don’t want to get in the way of that. Third, you have to be upfront with me because this is online. I can’t just see how you’re feeling, you have to tell me. Does that sound fair?”

“Yes.”

“OK then, let’s go for it.”

“Shouldn’t we meet in person soon to see if the spark carries?”

“Well...”

Universe 1001: “No”

Universe 1002: “Yes”

“Let’s just see if we can handle this for now. If we do meet, it’s something to think about for sure. I’m sorry, but I’m not ready to meet in person right now.”

“Okay, I understand, in due time...”

“Let’s just take it one day at a time,” Roman says.

### Universe 1001

Austin is sitting in a classroom, watching *Super Size Me*, when he starts to smell something strange in the room. The smell isn't unpleasant, just unexpected. He moves his head around, sniffing the air, thinking that something must have been introduced to the air circulation of the room. He looks around to see if anyone else had noticed something off. But no one is visibly reacting.

He finally discovers that the smell was emanating from his skin. He wasn't sure what to think of it, so he goes back to his dorm to take a shower after the class is over.

He takes a shower, but he can still smell it afterwards. Austin then remembers this odd little fact about body odor: a person can't smell their own body odor. And for some reason, he has a flash of insight, and instantly knew it must be coming from Roman. So he logs on to the voice chat system he used, and he tries to contact him. But as soon as he logs on, he feels a beam of pressure on his chest. It's as if his soul were being cut open. He gets up from the chair, and he sits on the couch, directly parallel to the computer, and then it happens again. It's almost as if something were being transferred from the computer directly into his soul. He couldn't see any physical objects, but he got the sense that there was some kind of spiritual connection established.

Immediately after this, he puts his hand over the spot, right over his heart. The odd thing is, it feels warmer than before and warmer than the other parts of his body. His roommate Kyle is next door in the other room, so Austin asks him to feel his chest. He did, and Kyle agrees with him that it's a bit warm. Austin also asks Kyle to smell him, but Kyle declines.

At that point, Austin has a racing thought that there must be something wrong with him and that he should go to the health center. Furthermore, he thinks that all his health records should be

documented for posterity. So, he proceeds. On his way there, the presence develops, and starts to speak to him. It doesn't fully identify itself, but he surmises it was a version of Roman that chose him. Now it feels like he has a telepathic connection with Roman, and his chest temperature rises. Along with this connection was a connection to pure love, that aspect of God. It asks him if he'd give up all conventional communications with Roman and if he could prove that love was a force in the universe. It promises him that he can uncover the equation and reveal it to the rest of the world. The only communication with Roman for the rest of their lives is to be through this telepathic link. Every turn as he goes to the student health center, it asks him this question. In his mind, he repeatedly responds, "Yes, he would."

When he arrives at the health center, they give him a standard examination. His blood pressure is abnormally elevated—so much so that as they were trying to take a reading, the inflatable cuff keeps getting too tight and would stop as if his arm were too big. He tells them about the heart temperature, and they give him an EKG. They take a blood sample as well. Everything seems to check out, and they say he's fine. So they discharge him to carry on with his day.

Halfway through the parking lot, the presence interjects to tell him that he had forgotten about the smell and that he hadn't told them about it. It repeats this a few times, and at first, he figures that it isn't important. It tells him that it's very important and that he should go back, so he finally does.

When he arrives at the student health center, he asks to see the same doctor again. After some objections, they finally let Austin see him. Once in the room with the doctor, Austin asks the doctor to smell him. The doctor says Austin is being ridiculous. From the look on the doctor's face, Austin gathers that the doctor is very annoyed with such a request. Austin pleads with him though, and the doctor finally

relents. After smelling Austin, the doctor tells him that he smells fine, and that was that.

He goes back to the dorm, and tries to call Roman. He texts back saying that he was tied up at work. Then Austin has a flash of insight, telling him that Roman was writing all of this down, and he was tied up in a police station somewhere only able to write what Austin sends him.

Another very important thing Austin feels later on that day was that his mod project, *Tiberium Secrets*, was finally finished. It feels as if he could jump to the end of his life and review the fruits of his labor. His project—years of work—was completed just as he had imagined it! The sense of accomplishment feels enormous to him. But by this point in his life, he had too much going on in his life, he was barely able to keep his head above water. He later returns to this sense of accomplishment frequently, reminding him that although the journey was long, he would find meaning in the end goal.

That night something stranger happens. He's awake, but it feels like a dream. He experiences what he can only describe to himself as metaphysical sex with Roman. Austin feels pressure on different parts of his body and it would be warm on those parts. It was as if Roman's spirit was there, pleasuring him.

Something else that is going on was that Austin's sleep patterns are off entirely. Roman would regularly get up at 5:00 AM to go to work, so when Austin started to wake up naturally around the same time, he figures that their circadian rhythms had synced up.

The next morning was a Saturday, so Austin sleeps in until 8:00 AM. As he begins his day, he notices that the clocks—from his watch to his smartpen—are out of sync. He knows they were synchronized the day before, so he jumps to the conclusion that he has traveled to the future. He spends his time roaming the college campus, confidently collecting clues as to what time it really is.

The main time difference he notices was between his watch and a smartpen he had. This smartpen could record audio, so he uses it to record his revelations as they come to him.

Austin walks all around the campus, certain that he knows where he's going, without knowing where to go. He has purpose, visiting rooms and finding clues. The other important thing is that he still has a flip phone. He can't help but think that everything would be documented properly if he had a smartphone instead.

Soon he finds himself in the information technology center, a squat two-story building. As he roamed the halls, he saw more and more symbols, each in different colors.

Austin now finds himself in a room with chairs all facing a wall with a whiteboard describing several environmental worst-case scenarios, most of them around climate change. There was also part of a very complicated unfinished chemical formula equation on the whiteboard. He uses a blue marker to add the chemical formula for water, H<sub>2</sub>O. The thing he notices about the chairs is there are three sets, each of them a different color: green, cyan, and orange. Around the walls are brown couches, each accompanied by an orange chair.

This is where the colors begin to shout at Austin. To him, they mean something like this: cyan and blue mean the future; orange means the teacher or one who understands; and green means nature. The other thing is if the upper part of the body is wearing the color, it means they consciously understand what's going on, while the lower half of the body means subconscious understanding. Chris was orange, Roman was green and Richard (his replacement) was cyan.

He thinks that this must be the place in the future where he would meet with the rest of the *Tiberium Secrets* team to launch the mod and pursue future game plans. Each person has a corresponding color that would represent them and their role. It's important to note that Roman, although a writer himself, was never part of any game design



projects. Austin thinks that since Roman was there, he would then later become a core pillar of the project and future projects.

Then Austin wanders into a computer lab. He thinks he is invisible, so he begins to move the furniture around. He thinks everyone who is in the room knew what was going on. He goes to the front, where there was a microphone, and he says, "Wormhole anchor established" (meaning that time and space were now connected in this room).

He puts his watch down on a piece of furniture in the front of the room, face up, as he continues to move things around. Someone has a look at it, and he says, "mark this as the time we have the empathy equation."

There is an old computer in the corner of the room, a computer so old it just looks out of place. Austin gets the sense that that was how they communicate with the fifth floor and other floors of the building (the building only had 2 floors). He leaves the room to go use the restroom. When he comes back, he notices that the entire room has changed. The pictures on the wall -- detailing humanity's rise from Earth and celebrating colonizing a new world -- are all gone, the desks are all in a different configuration, and the whiteboards are all gone as well (It turns out that there are two computer labs, and he had just been in the other one). In his state, it seems like the entire room has changed. The computer lab Austin is now in seems to him to of higher tech than the one he visited earlier, contributing to his narrative that he has moved in time again.

As he leaves the building, Austin puts all his clues in the mail slot of the lobby. That way he'll be able to send them to himself when the time was right.

Around 4 PM, Austin makes it back to his dorm. Suddenly, as if on a timer, all the alarms in the cars in the nearby parking lot go off all at the same time, and he knows that it was exactly 4:00 PM.

Another important thing to mention was that the numbers four, eight, and twelve have special significance to Austin, given their relation to time and all. When he mentions this number association to his roommate, Kyle, he said he got a little freaked out because those were his old address numbers. Kyle calls Austin's dad and tells him that something is wrong. Austin begins to think of a numbering system in which it was 'base two,' meaning there is no one in the system. So, the numbers would start two, four, six, eight, ten, etc. This would solve the problem of one being the loneliest number, as one would not be lonely anymore.

At this current point in time, Austin is on a bridge. As he gestures forwards, a wind gusts, and he does the same in the other three directions. The same thing happens each time. He was defining north, south, east, and west, and the powers are humming through him.

He then goes under the bridge and starts crying, upset because since he is moving into the future, Roman would be moving into the past. He and his roommates would have to battle their way through time to catch up with him in the present. They would have the opportunity to try and rewrite history; something that Roman, being a history buff, would have found naturally attractive.

Austin also thinks that Roman would be going back with one hundred people from the 102<sup>nd</sup>, not just the roommates. At this point, he also has the impression that Mark, who basically led the 102<sup>nd</sup> with Austin, is across the field in the courtyard, setting up for what he'd later refer to as the "102<sup>nd</sup> Reunion."

After he finishes crying under the bridge, Austin goes to the amphitheater. Here he gets the sense that Roman was projecting his life onto a screen, in front of the tree that Austin cried so intensely in front of just the other night. Roman is doing this because he loved him, and he wants to show the gathered 102<sup>nd</sup> members what his life was like before they met. During this time, Austin gulps, and it was as if Roman had drunk a glass of orange juice that morning before he

arrived. The consciousness that he was streaming onto the screen in front of the tree starts at earlier that day, in the morning, and it goes back day by day, at first slowly but then quicker and quicker. Roman has to get through his past so he can show us his future, which is to go back in time.

As this is occurring, Mark strikes up a band and singer who sang "Turning Tables" by Adele, and the strange thing is Austin's tongue mirrors the singer as well as the keystrokes of the piano in this set rhythmic fashion. This is the first time his tongue would dance of its own volition.

The next day, Austin gets up and a 6-foot-tall athletic white guy in a blue button-down shirt and jeans who name was Radcliffe is in the dorm. Austin is situated on the ground floor next to the living room, and Radcliffe and two of his dance crew are practicing for a performance they have later. Since the other restroom was in use, Austin offers him his, being that his room is a double suite. Radcliffe thanks Austin and shakes his hand mightily. After he comes out, they turn on the music. Radcliffe asks if the music was faster than it normally is, and the other two say that the music is as fast as normal. So, they begin to dance. Austin takes this to mean that, given he was wearing blue, his comment means that he is from the future. Austin watches them dance for a while.

Now he gets the impression that the walls of the building are gone, and that those inside can see straight into the courtyard (where he had been the day before), and that those in the courtyard can see them. It's as if Radcliffe and his crew were on a stage. Although there is no screen there, he gets the sense that they can see the screen in front of the tree where Roman had projected his life story the day before.

As Austin stands at the entrance to the house, he gazes over the amphitheater. He knows Roman is coming. Austin's eyes track his spirit as he runs from the amphitheater to him standing at the front

of the sidewalk. He can feel Roman's spirit hug and wrap itself around him with such love and intense excitement! The immensity of the emotion takes his breath away. The two are now one in mind, body and soul, in a way that has never before been experienced. The feeling of excitement and love courses through his veins and all over his body. Now that they are one, it was time to explore.

As he wakes up to the new power in himself, he feels a new sense of purpose, freedom, and strength. He thinks that he is getting taller, and Roman asked him how skinny and how tall he wanted to be. Austin didn't know, so he just says to keep going. He feels himself grow. He shows him the rest of his dorm.

Austin goes to the restroom upstairs and jumps to touch the ceiling. He hasn't been able to do that before.

He wanders outside to the grill and begins to play with the lighter. He knows that Roman will turn up in the flesh at any moment.

Austin was found by someone, and they take him to their resident assistant because they were concerned about him. They call the campus police, and he is escorted back to his room. As Austin walks from one house to the other, every time he talks, the volume is magnified as if he had a microphone. The fact that he is in the open-air courtyard has no impact on the acoustic effect.

At this point, they have Austin pack up his watch, his shoes, his water bottle, and his laptop. The police drive him to the police station and ask him to wait in the conference room. A psychologist asks Austin a few questions and then leaves the room. Austin, thinking that Chris would need his laptop on the other side of the conference room, gets up to put his computer there. Austin sits at one head of the table, with his computer facing him at the other head. A policeman walks in and returns the laptop to Austin. There is a TV mounted in the corner of the room, and although it's off, Austin thinks that it's on, conferencing into another room with his roommate and other people

in the house. Each person in the room has with a specific discipline and purpose. Austin remembers how he had stood in front of the TV in the dorm, thinking that it was connected to four places around the world. The connection was not by technology but by telepathy, using the dorm mates as conduits. They would be throughout the world, reporting on the events in total synchronicity with each other, as if they were all reading off the same script at the same time.

An ambulance arrives and they strap him in the back. As he is leaving, everyone waves at him. The ambulance takes him to a hospital where they check him in.

They take Austin to a room and give him a drug to make him pee. They ask him how long he'd been awake, and he answers two days. They give him a pill to try to make him sleep, but it doesn't work. Austin just sits on the hospital bed, watching the nurses go about their business as the hours drag on. They put all his possessions in two bags: one for the laptop and one for everything else. The laptop bag is under him, giving him the impression that he is giving birth to technology. As he waits, he watches the TV. There are so many things that he never saw before, leading him to think he is in the future. There is a robotic arm in the hospital, confirming his conclusion. One of the nurses tells him about a channel in which nuns have dedicated their lives to recording nothing but nature. As he watches the TV, he thinks the TV is sending messages to him.

Later, his father talks to him, and Austin keeps saying, "yes and no". This is difficult for them to understand, but whenever his father asks a question, the answer is both yes and no. His father tells him that he'd be okay before going to talk on the phone with Austin's mother. He decidedly freaks out and tells her that he would not be okay.

One of the nurses asks him how old he was, and Austin replies "102." The nurse, named Red Sky, tells him to stop playing games. This was the first time that Austin realizes that something very serious was going on. All the while before, he thought this was some sort of

elaborate game and he was just playing along. Little did he know, he is experiencing his first manic episode.

The hospital discharges Austin a few days later with some medication, and he goes back to school to pack up his things. On the bus ride from Southern California to Northern California, he meets another tall, athletic white guy named Dylan. Dylan paid particular attention to Austin, watching him carefully. Austin wants to talk with Dylan more, but he is taking up someone else's seat. Intriguingly, Austin can clearly sense Roman's energy emanating from Dylan, so he tries to get to know him. It turns out that Dylan is a biology major from UC Santa Barbara. Dylan is wearing an orange tank top, and to Austin that means that he is some sort of teacher.

They separate for a bit afterwards, and Austin goes into the bus restroom, as if he were going to drive the bus. Austin is wearing an olive-green military jacket, which he throws in the cargo compartment as he is leaving the bus. Once they arrive at the stop, Austin asks Dylan if he would mind driving him home. Dylan replies he would, but he had to go see his grandmother (only later did Austin realize that he had been manic on the bus).

Austin's mother arrives to pick him up a few minutes later. He had never been so happy to see her, and they embrace for a good long while. He tells her that he is gay, and she says that she accepts him. When he returns home, there is a feast waiting for him. He boots up his phone and puts it on network discovery mode. He gets the sense that this was connecting all his contacts to him, with him as the central conduit. He did other things that were rather strange, leading his mother to suggest that they go to the hospital, to which Austin agrees.

There he spends another week locked up. For some reason, some of the other patients think that he is quite popular. Austin then spends the next three months returning to this hospital daily as part of an outpatient program.

During his outpatient program, Austin becomes friendly with a fellow inmate named Sebastian, who reminds Austin of Roman. One day Austin comes in feeling depressed. Sebastian asks him what is bothering him, and he says that Roman has blocked him in the video game they play. As he is telling the story to the assembled group, it feels like an egg of emotion had been cracked over his head. Sebastian was the only guy in the group that day who had actually taken his story to heart, Austin felt afterwards.

Later, Sebastian isn't feeling good, so Austin embraces him. Sebastian feels happy, surprised that Austin is being so nice to him. Sebastian tells Austin that he had been a student at UC Santa Barbara who had tried some drugs. Sebastian attributes his entire experience to the drugs, and would often tell Austin that if only he didn't try those drugs, he'd be fine. Austin finds this a little bit strange, as he had never tried any drugs, yet this had still happened to him. On the last day of the program, Sebastian confesses to Austin that he loves him. Austin feels bad about this because he knows that he's still hung up on Roman. Sebastian and Austin talk for a little bit after the program. Austin insists that his manic episode must have a deeper meaning; this was where Sebastian felt unsafe, leading him to break off contact with Austin.

When Austin arrives home one day soon after finishing the outpatient program, he talks to Chris. Chris tells him that there is a spiritual awakening in motion, and that it was likely what he had experienced. Chris tells Austin that he had traveled spiritually into a room where about twenty academics were debating what to do about something. He says that the speaker stopped in the middle of his speech, looked straight at him, and said, "you're not supposed to be here." Chris continued, saying that he promised the speaker that he wouldn't disturb anybody and would be really nice. According to Chris, the speaker responded, "OKAY! But no one can know that you've been here at this time." Chris then describes what they were discussing as

the revolution of some sort of technology or discovery and how to manage it.

Chris further tells Austin that he was not the only one who experienced some sort of spiritual connection. He recalls that when Austin was manic, he had told Chris to find Roman on the astral plane and help him. Chris told Austin that it was tough, because there were so many people crying out for help during that time, but he did manage to find him. He reported back, saying, "No one should feel that way."

Roman had found out that Austin was in the hospital through another clan mate. He felt guilty because he thought he had somehow caused the situation to occur. That led him to decide to break off communications for the time being. Austin doesn't understand, and is heartbroken that his best friend would abandon him in such a time of desperate need.

### Universe 1002

Austin sits in a classroom, watching a movie. His phone lights up with a text from Roman: "Hey Austin! It's Friday, I have the day off. I know we talked about meeting in person, do you want to meet somewhere today?"

Austin excitedly replies: "Definitely. Can you come to my school? We can meet at my dorm."

Roman tells him he can be there in 30 minutes.

The class ends, and Austin goes back to his dorm to take a shower. He wants to look good for his friend. He gets all cleaned up, his heart pumping excitedly. He puts on some deodorant, and asks his roommate Kyle to smell him to make sure he's all good. Kyle tells him that he smells fine. Kyle asks if he's expecting someone special, and Austin says he is, an old friend.



Austin texts his address to Roman. Roman acknowledges, replying, “five minutes away.”

By this time, Austin is jumping out of his skin. The man that he loves, his best friend is finally coming to see him. He tidies up his room in case they decide to stay. They had talked about meeting for a few weeks now, but the time just never felt right. Now that it was finally happening, Austin felt so hopeful.

Austin waited outside of his dorm, eagerly watching for his friend. Then he saw him—he didn’t know how he knew it was him, given that he didn’t have a picture of Roman, but he knew. The tall athletic white guy, wearing blue jeans and a blue button-down shirt, runs down the path and locks eyes with Austin. Austin had sent Roman his picture earlier so Roman would know what he looked like. Austin watches as Roman runs from the amphitheater, down the sidewalk towards him, his eyes tracking the moving form. Roman sweeps Austin up in a huge bear hug as they collide. All the excitement of that moment bleeds into Austin; he could feel the longing that they had both experienced from being separated for so long. Three years of pent-up energy is discharged in that one moment. Both of them look into each other’s eyes and it was like lightning struck. A connection has been established between them that neither fully understands; but as they stare in each other’s eyes, both know that their souls were intertwined.

“You’re taller than I expected,” says Roman.

“I’m 5 feet 9 inches. How tall are you?”

“I’m 6 feet 1,” Roman says.

“Oh, so I should probably introduce myself. I’m Austin Larson.”

They both take a step back from each other, and Austin sticks out his hand for Roman to shake it. “Roman Radcliffe, nice to meet you.”

Roman chuckles as he takes Austin’s hand.

"I'm sorry we couldn't meet earlier," Austin says.

"It's okay, I don't mind driving. In fact, I like driving."

"So Roman, you want to see my dorm?"

"I think we'll have ample time for that. Let's take a tour of the campus." Roman says, with a mischievous look on his face.

They walk hand-in-hand down corridors, past classrooms, through the libraries, and across the park in the center of campus. They pass the health center and Roman asks if Austin has ever been there.

"Why would you have asked that?" Austin responds with a question of his own.

"Well, I thought you were showing me the places that you have been."

"Yeah, and in general I am, but I'm just showing you my campus overall."

Roman nods in the affirmative. "So, have you talked to Mark lately?" he asks.

"Yeah, we talked the other day. We're trying to find a place for the 102<sup>nd</sup> Reunion. We polled the members, and they said they could do it next summer. We pulled the donation fund for airline tickets. Mark has a connection in the airline business who can give us discounts on travel."

"This seems like a nice place."

"Where?"

"Here. Have you ever thought about having it at the University?"

"Well, the thought has crossed my mind."

“You and I are both in the area. We could organize it together. Much easier than just one person organizing it by themselves.”

“Yeah, that’s a good idea. I’ll run it by Mark, and we’ll see.”

They walk around the campus in a circular fashion, all while talking and catching up. They make it back to the dorm at four o’clock. They cross the bridge that leads to the dorm and they go inside. Austin shows him his dorm, ending in his room.

“Kyle, my roommate, is out right now but he’s a nice guy.” Austin shows him his computer. Austin asks Roman if he wants to have dinner. And they go out.

“So, is this a first date?” Austin asks.

“It could be, but let’s have you do something really embarrassing to make it memorable.”

“Something like this?”

Austin leans over and kisses Roman on the lips. It lasts for a long time; both enjoy the taste of each other.

“Gosh, this in no way feels like a first date. I just know you too well,” Roman says.

“When do you have to head back?”

“Well, it is the weekend. I was thinking of staying if you let me.”

“Sure. That’d be great, but where are you going to sleep?”

“Well, your bed looks like it’s big enough for two.”

“You’re naughty,” Austin blushes.

Eager to get back, both of them head to the dorm. They get stopped by the campus police on the way back for speeding. Roman apologizes, and they let him off with a warning.

When they return to the dorm room, Roman is all over Austin. They kiss some more as they fall onto the bed together, stroking each other. They have sex right then and there, and fall asleep in each other's arms.

The next morning, Austin and Roman get up at 8 AM. It's a Saturday and they have the whole day together.

"What do you want to do?" Roman asks.

"I feel like since we spend a lot of time on the computer together already, we should do something outside."

"I thought you didn't like outside," Roman quips.

"I guess you changed me," Austin says, looking into Roman's green eyes with such longing and trust.

"What do you think of the beach?" Roman asks.

"Isn't that about 45 minutes away?" Austin replies.

"Yea, not too far. We can make a day of it."

"Let's go," Austin says excitedly.

At the beach, they roll around in the sand and get a little wet. They chase each other through the waves, feeling the wet sand underneath their toes.

Austin tells Roman that he so happy. Roman agrees that he's also very happy.

"My quarter is going to end in a few weeks. I'm going to be heading back to Northern California for the rest of the summer. I know it's kind of early in our relationship, but you want to come with me? We've known each other for three years and it's not like we're strangers."

“I guess I could take some time off work—the warehouse isn’t going to miss me. It would be nice to see where you grew up. And meet your mom.”

“Yeah, I need to come out to my family, and I’d be honored if you can be a part of that process.”

“My dad’s down here. Maybe you should meet him?”

“Do you have any schoolwork to finish? Because we can wait—”

“No, I’m all done. They’re all just filler classes. I don’t have any tests, just papers, and I finished all of those.”

“Okay, I can meet your dad next weekend. What you want to do?” Roman asks.

“Well, he works in San Diego right now, and he tells me that there is this aircraft carrier museum nearby.”

“Yeah, the Midway Museum. It’s a good one, I haven’t been in a while though.”

“How does that sound? Let me run it by my dad, and get back to you.”

“Sounds good.”

Austin calls his dad.

“Hey dad.”

“Hey Austin.”

“How’s work going?”

“Work is good.”

“Good, good, listen, I have something to tell you.”

“Yes?”

“I’m gay. I’m gay and I met someone.”

“I’m happy that you’re gay.”

“Really? Why?”

“Well, I’ve always been a little worried about you, given your vision issue,” his father explains. “Societally, it’s going to be more acceptable for you to have a guy drive you around than a woman. Also, I always had this nightmare that you would get some girl pregnant and then I would need to pay for the baby.”

“I see. Can we meet to talk about it next week? I want you to meet him.”

“Sure, I can do that. Where do you want to meet?”

“I was thinking of going to the Midway Museum with you next Saturday. My boyfriend can drive me.”

“That can work.”

“Okay, see you then.”

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Austin and Roman met Austin’s dad at the entrance to the Midway Museum, just as they had planned.

“Dad, this is my boyfriend, Roman.”

Austin’s dad and Roman shake hands.

“Nice to meet you, Roman.”

“Nice to meet you too, sir.”

“Don’t call me ‘sir’, just call me Charles.”

“Okay, nice to meet you too, Charles.”

“What do you do?”

“I’m a warehouse manager for a chemicals company, but on my free time I volunteer for Civil Air Patrol “

“Oh really?”

“Yes, I’m working towards my pilot's license.”

“Then this stuff should be right up your alley then.”

Charles gestures to the planes. “Yep.”

All three of them walk up and down the deck of the ship, Roman pointing out different airplanes as they pass. They talk for a while, and his dad asks how they met. Austin tells him that they met online playing a game, and have known each other for three years, though it’s just recently that they decided to be in a relationship. Austin’s dad is initially a little hesitant that they met online, but his unease fades away as they talk. Austin gets one of those self-guided tour recordings, and he listens to it for a while.

Austin stands at the prow of the ship, feeling the wind behind him. His dad and Roman talk, feet away.

“So, do you really love my son?” Austin’s dad asks.

“Well... yes,” Roman replies. “He’s got a gentle soul.”

“Austin—Austin’s something special.” His dad says with a tear in his eye.

“I know.”

“He doesn’t usually get involved with people, you know? He’s usually pretty shy and just keeps to himself.”

“I see another side to him. He makes me laugh, he’s patient, and he’s clever. He’s very quick on the uptake, and he’s kind to a fault.”

“I just want to make sure you like him for the right reasons, that’s all.”

“Yeah, for sure.”

“Okay, then”

During this conversation Austin is pacing the deck, giving them their privacy. He knows his dad; although a quiet man, he says what he means and means what he says. He is usually a man of few words, but he’s always looking out for his son.

Finished with their conversation, Roman and Austin’s dad find him, and together they check out the engine room next. But by that time, it’s getting a little late. They agree to leave to have dinner and head out.

After having eaten (Roman insisted on paying for the meal), they drive back to the hotel to spend the night. Austin and Roman leave the next morning to head back to Irvine. Roman thanks Austin’s dad for the trip, and they head out.

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Two weeks later, Austin’s school has ended. He and Roman pack up to go to Northern California.

Austin calls his mom.

“Hey mom”

“Hello.”

“Mom. I have something to tell you.”

“What is it?”

“I met someone.”

“Wow, that’s wonderful honey. I love you, Austin, and I’m happy for you. who is she?”

“It’s a him, not a her.”



“Great, I still accept you.”

“Can he come home with me?”

“OK, he can come.”

“Thanks, I love you, mom.”

“I love you too.”

On the date of the trip, Roman decides to wear an orange tank top; for some reason, this just feels right to Austin, who is wearing a green military jacket. They pack everything into Roman’s car and take off.

By the time they arrive at Austin’s house, there is a feast waiting for them. Austin introduces Roman to his mom and they sit down to eat. His mom asks how they met, and Austin repeats the story of them meeting online. She tells them that their meeting was interesting, leaving it at that. But judging by the look on her face, it’s clear that she doesn’t approve.

Roman excuses himself from the dining room, to go check out where he’s sleeping.

As soon as Roman is out of sight, Austin’s mom confronts her son. “How can you do this to me?!?” she asks, struggling to contain her fury.

“What?”

“You come home with a stranger from God knows where, and you don’t give me any notice?”

“He’s my friend; I’ve known him for three years, and I called you earlier—”

“That’s not enough. How do you know you can trust this person?”

“Again, I’ve known him for three years.”

“Fine, you may know him and trust him, but how do you know you’re actually gay? Did he make you this way? Did he come on to you or something?”

“No, I’ve always been gay. And no, I actually confessed my love for him first.”

“I don’t believe you’ve always been gay.”

“You can choose to believe it or not, but it’s true.”

“I mean Austin, I accept you being gay and all, but I don’t appreciate you rubbing it in my face.”

“I’m not rubbing it in your face. By being here, he is showing his support for me.”

“But he doesn’t have to stay in your room, we can find somewhere else...”

“Look, it just makes more sense. I invited him to my house, so I won’t force him to get a hotel. Besides, we don’t have any space in any of the other rooms anyway.”

“Can you at least promise me that you won’t have sex in this house?”

“No! We shouldn’t have to go somewhere else. I’m twenty-three, you should try and treat me like an adult!”

Austin storms out of the dining room, frustrated and pissed off. He goes to his room, where Roman is waiting for him.

“What was that about?” asked Roman.

“I think she’s upset that you’re here...”

“That’s not the whole story.”

“What do you mean?”

"I'm a living reminder that her son is gay. That can be difficult for some people."

"I should have told her a different way."

"You told her over the phone, and then you said that I would be coming. I think she's just upset that everything is happening so fast."

"Yeah, perhaps..."

"Given the situation, what could you have done differently?"

"I guess I could've told her about you sooner, but before that we didn't know you'd be coming."

"Sounds like there was really nothing more you could do."

"Nothing that would've made a difference, anyway."

Roman gets out of his chair and hugs Austin.

"It's going to be okay." He says while patting Austin on the back.

Austin lets out a deep sigh.

"I know, I know."

### Universe 1001

Austin spends every day thinking about Roman. He calls, he texts, he sends emails with no response. He doesn't understand. He feels so lost, hurt, and abandoned. He thought that he could count on this person, yet life would throw him a curveball. Then again, he muses to himself, this isn't much different from when they were exploring the relationship. Austin flashes back to all his memories of him and Roman on the voice chat system, TeamSpeak. He remembers Roman waiting for him in his channel alone while he took care of clan business. He remembers all these battles and matches they played together. As time goes on, he finds it hard to remember his voice. And that voice is all he has of him.

Austin begins to have vivid dreams of what their life together would be like if they had gone out. Along with his recent coming out, the two themes dominate his thoughts. He has dreams of him and Roman in a park, at school, having sex, and doing other things. Even though he doesn't know what Roman looks like, his mind constructs a version of him. In his dreams, Roman was never a physical being—he was a presence, a spirit. He would have a dream, and he would just know that Roman was there. Austin began keeping a dream diary to hold on to any part of Roman he could.

Austin becomes more invested in the clan than ever. He recruits more and does more for the clan than he had ever done before. But without Roman, it somehow feels hollow and meaningless. Austin remembers a time in which he had told Roman that he would give everything up for him if that's what he asked, and that shakes him to his core. Work is Austin's religion; his hobbies define him. Giving any of it up would be an incalculable sacrifice. But he would do it if Roman asked it of him. Oh, he loves Roman so hard, it just hurt so much. Austin remembers being back at school and his dorm, and just listening to "Battle Scars" by Lupe Fiasco & Guy Sebastian, over and over again, crying his eyes out. The frustrating thing is that there was all this potential, and Roman chose not to accept his love. Near the end, it became like writing emails and throwing them into a black hole. On occasion, Austin would get a reply, but more often than not it was radio silence.

It's torture to Austin. That's why he's so willing to believe his manic episode. Things just made sense then, everything just made perfect sense.

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Austin has gone back to community college to prove that he could return to UC Irvine. They wanted to make sure that he could handle the course load. He takes a few classes and does all right.

And then one day, one of his clan mates tells him that Roman was on TeamSpeak. Austin remembers exactly where he was when he got that call: the bus station waiting for the bus to go to school. He excitedly gets on the TeamSpeak later that night and finds Roman. A wave of relief spreads over Austin; his friend was back.

Roman explains to Austin that he thought he had caused his friend's health crisis, and that it would be better to just disconnect. Austin launches into reassuring him that he wasn't the cause. He then explains that he had gone looking for Roman, even though he didn't know what he looked like. He describes much of what happened. Roman just sits there and listens for a good long time. They both want to pick up where they left off, but neither knows how. So much time has passed, and so much has changed between them. They talk more and more, in an effort to reestablish their friendship. Austin wants to say that he cared about and loved Roman, but he knows that if he says it out loud again, it would likely cause issues. So he signs off his emails with euphemisms such as "with care" or "best". He thinks that Roman knows anyways, so it didn't really matter.

Around this time, Roman comes out as transgender. He becomes upset about how much control therapists have over their patients and how they can block any reassignment surgery with the stroke of a pen. Roman begins to pull away because he thinks that Austin could never accept him being transgender. Austin reassures him, telling his friend that he accepts him as he is. However, Roman just finds this hard to believe.

They talk about how Roman came out to his friends as trans. He had already come out as gay, but this time it's different. He had gone to the trouble of telling everyone in his circle carefully, so people in relationships wouldn't be keeping secrets about him. Nevertheless, it still became an issue and he felt so hurt that some of his friends disconnected from him. In the past, he'd tell Austin about how he was treated as a guy's guy, how he was very masculine, and how that

shaped his experiences. This is clearly something that bothered Roman, but this is also something that attracted Austin to Roman; Austin feels more comfortable with masculine guys. He doesn't tell this to Roman because he knew that it would cause issues down the line.

Clearly, being trans is a big part of Roman's life and is a source of insecurity for him. Austin does his best to reassure Roman that he is still his friend, but he gets the sense that Roman is still skeptical.

Roman tells Austin of a story in which he was playing *World of Warcraft*. He got close with a guy who went by the name "Alaska" through text chat. One day they did voice chat, leaving Alaska very disappointed that Roman was a guy. He felt that Roman had led him on, letting him think of Roman as a girl playing a female character.

---

A few weeks later, Austin logs on to TeamSpeak to talk to Roman. All he can muster as a greeting is "Hey", and Roman instantly knows something is wrong. They move to a private channel to discuss what happened.

"So, I had to go to a psychologist to evaluate whether or not I'm unfit for school again," Austin starts. "On the way there, my mom gets really upset since she has a lot riding on this. When we arrived, I open the door to the testing psychologist's room a little quickly, and it bangs into the wall. He tells me to go into a specific room, but I thought he pointed at a different room, so I make to go in there. He corrects me, and in going from room to room I knock over a bowl of fake flowers, which shatters all over the floor."

Austin recounts just how angry the psychologist was at him for making such a mess. Austin then says that he looked back at his mother, but she was too busy talking on her phone to be much help. "So we go into the testing room and spend about five minutes there,"

he continues, "This was meant to be a test that took two hours. About five minutes in, I say that we should probably just leave it at that. And the psychologist says, 'I agree with you. That would be best.'"

"My mom had such a hopeful look on her face when we came out of the testing room," Austin goes on as his voice cracks a bit. "She asked if I did well. Well, the psychologist says that not only am I not ready for school, but that I'm not ready for anything! Then he called my behavior 'manicky'. Then he just runs off to the restroom so he can be done with me."

Austin is crying a river at this point in telling the story. He tells Roman that he now understands what Roman had meant about psychologists having too much power. Roman just sits there listening as Austin cries. Austin is afraid that he won't get to go back to school; this one report will prevent him from achieving his dreams and the rest of his life.

### Universe 1001

Austin sits on his bed across from Chris. Chris came down to the bay area for a conference, called the Game Developers Conference (GDC).

"It was like we were all there, everyone who was core to the project, you, Richard (my replacement), Jeremy (project originator), and Roman (who was never there before). There were three sets of chairs each set a different color. Cyan, green, or orange. And there were brown couches against the white walls. There were different environmental worst-case scenarios on the wall, that all the chairs were facing. And I got the sense that we were making an environmental simulation game. In this situation, the goal was not to accurately simulate the environment, but as an effort to see what people would do in the situation."

Austin had gotten involved with *Tiberium Secrets* again after his manic episode. The structure of development work is one of the things that keeps him sane. As they are preparing for a conference in

San Francisco, Austin shows Chris the diagram he wrote when he was manic:

617(noon) 6:00 AM picture: Futurama. the Circle

Of Command & Conquer Secret big picture = Life

Factions: Pyramids of Giza the Hitchhikers guide to the Galaxy

Humans Roman's Faction: Warhammer 40K - Deaths Gate

Daemon's core out, they stand as the 1<sup>st</sup> and last line of defense against the forces of darkness.

(Black hole = White hole) > Star Trek into Darkness

D51 = Hansa Government = EDF Earth Defense Forces (saga of 7/ 9 suns.)

Monday, June 17. Wake up 5:40.6:16AM 6:17 AB PM = Advanced Placement -President Malcom = Maclaren = potis of Dream Army Roman is the 2<sup>nd</sup> child of the union between mage emperor Jorah and the green priest women. Roman was sent back in time and space.

In the movie man of steel directed by Chris and Roman Son of Lilly and himself. The 8<sup>th</sup> son needed to be killed by Kane from C&C so he could rise into the heavens - Able - to lay the path for Kane to follow one day so that the worm hole anchor could be established, however this meant Kane would be left in total sensory such is like the sensory deprivation tanks astronauts train in. Cycle is virtuality = Now = ordinary time has returned and the complete StarCraft universe



Zerg Ascend into Heaven since the only you can make your word e Gate of life is open.

Chris says that he understands this more than Austin would think.

They take the train into San Francisco and attend the conference. They both have a great time in showcasing their project to people and they get a lot of traction. As they talk to people, they meet their lawyer and one executive that they look up to. Austin runs into a tall athletic white guy. The two discuss different ear bud options; Austin shows them his Bluetooth ear buds, which they play with and take a look at. The guy says that he always wanted to do mobile games because he's always on the go. Austin suggests to him the star method for achieving goals. The guy thanks him and writes it down.

The conference takes place over five days of the week, and they have a lot of fun going to different sessions. Austin and Chris obtain their conference passes through a game development site that Austin is familiar with, called [gamedev.net](http://gamedev.net).

They have a lot of fun going to different parties as well. Chris tells Austin that this is just the right kick they need to get their business started. A lot of the people at the conference tell them that they are hoping Austin and Chris transition into a business. On the last day of the conference, Chris tells Austin that he wants to see the city. With nothing else to do, they tour the sights of San Francisco. The day was crisp and perfect; there wasn't a cloud in the sky.

The fellow from [gamedev.net](http://gamedev.net) had given them buttons with their logo on it. Chris sees a young kid and his father at the dock. He feels like he has to give the button to the young boy, as if this is what he is meant to do.

On the train ride home, they encounter two people who are eager to listen to an explanation of what Austin and Chris are developing. There's also a guy in a green jacket who isn't part of the conversation, but listens in anyway. When they get up to leave, Austin gives one of

the buttons to the guy in the green jacket. For some reason, all the colors are really bright that entire week. Everything is full of excitement and lively discussion.

The two are pretty sure that they were the only ones at the conference representing a mod. It's been confirmed that this was where the revolution started. People move with purpose and know where and how they have to act to build the future as envisioned in *Tiberium Secrets*. Some say they feel the Holy Spirit.

## **Chapter 4: When Gods play Peek-A-Boo:**

### Universe 1002

I powered down the quantum portal gun, handed it back to Ben, and sniffed the air. Each universe's air smelled different; you'd only notice if you been to other universes. The slight difference in the odor is generally attributed to minor deviations in the composition of air from universe to universe. Normally it's too subtle to notice, but it became second nature to me. Traveling to so many universes. Some claimed that one of the veteran travelers got so good at identifying the smell of air that he could know where he was in the multiverse blindfolded. I didn't believe that, of course; it must be some myth of travelers working too hard at DOMR. I mused about hiring the Mythbusters to investigate this for me, and I started brainstorming about how they would go about doing so. I stood absolutely still as the star dust reaction from the portal gun settled around us. The dust showered us in radiation tuned to our signatures before dissolving into the cool local atmosphere.

"Breach is stable. Worm hole anchor established. You may now take off your masks," said Simmons.

We could see our home universe through the portal. "Universe zero" is the designation for a home universe; A resident of this universe would refer to their universe as "universe zero," not "universe 1002", which was our reference point.

It was just me, Simmons, and McCluskey, along with the security detail of two guards. Benjamin Simmons was an elite surveyor in his late thirties who had surveyed more than 20 worlds. He had been the surveyor who found this universe. It took guts going into the unknown with nothing more than a quantum portal gun, a phone, a Quazi net relay, a backpack, and a pyro sonic pistol.

Surveyors, unofficially known as “pioneers”, were adventurers. They discovered new parallel worlds and made first contact to new universes. They were required to learn at least two additional languages, in case the translator on the phone didn’t work or they came out somewhere that English was not the primary language. They were also required to be extremely physically fit in case they needed to get out of the situation with hand-to-hand combat or through sheer athleticism. Simmons was formerly a star track runner who transferred over into government work when the sports market dried up. He was driven and focused and had passed all his diplomacy classes with the highest marks.

Kathrine McCluskey, on the other hand, was a top-of-the-line psychologist and researcher who specialized in quantum psychology just like me. Where I was more laboratory and research-bound by seeking to understand how these parallel universes affected people from a scientific perspective, she was usually out in the real world counseling people on what they seen and experienced. She primarily focused on those who worked for or formerly worked for DOMR, but she also took clients as part of a private practice. She was quiet, introspective and keen.

We landed in a park in San Francisco, within sight of the Golden Gate Bridge. The light of the moon gleamed off its beautiful metallic surface, making for a spectacular welcome. One of the two guards checked the perimeter, and reported it was secure. We quietly made our way through the brambles and bushes to the center of the park. We found our subjects kissing a few feet away on a bench.

“Are you Austin Larson and Roman Radcliffe?” I asked.

The taller of the two men turned, and gave us a scathing look.

“And who exactly are you?” said Roman.

“I’m Dr. St. James, Chief Science officer of the department of Multiverse Relations. We have some questions for the both of you.”

I held out my DOMR badge with an eagle perched at the center of a Venn diagram, with the words “United States Department of Multiverse Relations” on the corners in a circular fashion.

“Never heard of it,” Austin responded. “Have you heard of it, Roman?”

Roman shook his head.

“We’re not from here,” McCluskey said.

“What do you mean?” asked Austin.

“We’re from another universe, man!” Simmons said in a hippy tone.

“Ben, you can’t use that tone! No one will take us seriously,” I said, while the others on our team chuckled.

“It’s not like they will believe us anyways. I never understand why you don’t just say we’re from an ultra-secret government agency,” Simmons quipped.

I sighed.

“There’s joking around, and there’s the truth. We are social scientists: sticking to the truth, or as close to it as we can, as a part of professional ethics.”

“I don’t recognize your weapons,” Roman said.

“Their pyro sonic based,” said Simmons.

At that point, a piercing alarm rang from the Quazi net relay mounted on Simmons’ back, nearly shattering the eardrums of everyone.

“Shit! Shit! Fuck!” one of the guards shouted at the top of his lungs.

“What’s wrong?” Austin asks.

McCluskey sighed and turned to me. “We have to tell them. They deserve to know.”

“Fine,” I replied, briefly glancing in her direction before turning my head to face our subjects. “So it seems as if there has been a breach in reality.”

“That doesn’t sound too bad?” Roman asked hesitantly.

“You don’t understand, a breach in our reality, the reality we come from.”

“Oh shit!” Austin and Roman said in unison.

“As much as we would love to stay and play twenty questions, we have to return to and handle our universe.”

Tom Anderson’s voice came through the relay. “This is an emergency! All personnel, we have a Class 8 breach in Hegemony command. Worm hole anchor established! One of you must have betrayed us! This is grid 0, all of you are recalled! If you don’t show up in person in the next four minutes, I will personally order your redaction from the universe and from the timeline regardless of your stature and station! Conclude your business on the other side and return home immediately! All hands on deck! This is not a fucking drill!”

Simmons drew the quantum portal gun, his face flush with terror. His shaking fingers started to dial in the settings.

McCluskey shook all over. “Please God, not again... please...” she muttered as she began to weep and fell to her knees.

“We don’t have time for this! Guards, carry her through!” I ordered. “Ben, give me the gun.”

“Sorry, sir, I just...” Simmons said with a tremor in his voice.

“I know, I know. Whomever or whatever can set an anchor in grid 0 to our universe must have the highest technology imaginable: maybe even more advanced than us. But Myles Valin warned us that this day would come.”

I took the portal gun from Simmons gently, but firmly and without any hesitation. I had to finish the calculations on the gun's smart screen. Once finished, I took a step back.

"We will have to skip de-con on this side. I know it's against regulations, but we don't want to be late." Everyone on our team glanced at their wrists, where their quantum chronometers sat.

"Could this really be them? You're sure, Hugh?" McCluskey asked.

"Will I really finally have my husband back?"

"Have faith, Kathrine. It's been shown and prophesized in U77."

"Breach is stable, worm hole anchor established."

I wait behind while the rest of the team goes through the portal with maximum haste. Once I see that I was the only one left, I run through the portal as fast as I can.

---

Austin looks to Roman and says, "I told you we shouldn't have smoked that stuff last night."

"I'm not so sure that was a hallucination."

"Why?"

"First of all, those guns looked bad-fucking-ass. Second, that badge looked legit. And I've seen a lot of government badges in my life. And third, that Simmons guy was way too hot! I'd bet he's gay."

"I should have known guns were the way to your heart." Austin responds to Roman's first point. "So you've had dealings with Hegemony? Why didn't you ever tell me?"

Before Roman can answer, Austin moves on. “And don’t be a bitch, Roman. If all that stuff they claimed is true, it would be highly inappropriate even if we have an open relationship.”

“A man can dream, can’t he?”

“As long as you dream with me, I’m fine with it. But if you ever dream about someone else, I’ll know.”

“Come on, Austin! Don’t persecute me for a dream. Don’t be like Mark’s ex-wife.”

Austin could only sigh in response to Roman’s pleading.

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“So, it seems those guys are occupied. Should we get back to it?”

“Yes, sir, my president.”

This is purgatory. It’s structured like a panopticon. Everyone is in soul cells in which they can only let themselves out. The warden sits in its ivory tower in the middle of the complex. Given how old purgatory is, they’re still using Apple 2 computers.

The warden’s office sits at the top of the tower in a walled off room where it’s totally quiet.

Austin is Hephaestus. He crafted the key to your soul. You were in a prison of your own design.

In the prison, there were angels disguised as daemons and daemons disguised as angels. They had been in disguise for so long that they didn’t know who they once were.

You thought Austin was a guard who would come and visit you and talk to you, where in fact he used to be in prison himself. He just got out of his cell because he had someone to love, and that person was you.



We were all gods in prison, but we didn't know that we were in prison, and we didn't know who we were. We thought they were suits, but we didn't realize it was just our skin. We thought our skin was just a suit, and some of us tried to hurt ourselves trying to remove it.

I was coloring an angel on a piece of paper. I used all the bright colors, and I couldn't decide what the color of the eyes should be so, I went with red. This was scary because this meant it was the devil.

"God locked me in here. It's so terrible in this house. Everything is so beautiful and bright."

"Don't you think God would have had a reason for doing this? For showing you?"

"No, this is just punishment for my eons of work."

"If everything in there is beautiful, doesn't that make you beautiful too?"

The Prince of Darkness goes to his office in Hell and sees two Gods waiting for him: Eros and Gaia. He meets them at the ornate door.

"Prince of Darkness. Satan. It's time to give your soul up for judgment. Please give it over to us."

"I don't think so."

"But the time draws near. Chronos says so."

"Get out of my domain, this is no place for ladies such as yourself."

They leave as Satan unlocks the door and goes into his office. Sitting on the floor in the middle of his favorite carpet is a child.

"Who are you?"

"I don't know."

“How did you get here? No one has the key to this office but me.”

“I don’t know.”

“You don’t belong here.”

“Why, where am I?”

“You’re in He—” Satan almost answers before stopping himself.

“Wait a minute. You really don’t know where you are?”

“No.”

“Are you good or bad?”

“What does that mean?”

“You don’t know what good or bad means?”

“No, should I?”

“Well, child, your dead and in heaven.”

“I’m dead? What’s Heaven?”

“Well Heaven is where all the good souls go, and Hell is where all the bad souls go.”

“I still don’t understand this good or bad business.”

“Hmm, well good means you did things that helped others in life, and bad means you did things that hurt others in life.”

“I’m so confused”

“Don’t worry, I’ll show you the way”

“Hello, Satan.” It’s Fucking Gabriel. Archangel Gabriel. Wow, the left hand of God is calling me.

“Yes, Gabriel?”

“It’s time to judge your soul. Please arrive at purgatory at 12:00 PM for judgment.”

“Normally I wouldn’t do so, but since it’s a request directly from you...”

---

Somewhere in purgatory, 3 deities meet: Satan, Gabriel and the Warden of purgatory.

“Why is the Warden here?” Satan asks Gabriel. “Can’t we handle this ourselves?”

“He is here because we know you wouldn’t trust us. He’s also an impartial witness.”

“Let me talk to him privately for a minute.”

Satan and the Warden go off into a private room.

“I have a plan,” Satan states as soon as the door closes behind them. “I’ll give them only half of my soul.”

“No, he can measure the wholeness of it.”

“No worries. I’ll make it up with a half of your soul.”

“One fourth. That is the best I can give you Satan, for old times’ sake.”

“One third?”

“No. I’m already taking enough of a risk for you, Satan.”

Satan sighs. “Fine.”

Satan takes out his soul, cuts a fourth off, and puts the slice back inside him. The Warden takes his own soul, splits a fourth off, and fuses it to the rest of Satan’s soul.

They return to Gabriel and put Satan's new soul on the table. Gabriel conjures an ethereal briefcase and puts the soul in without even looking at it.

"Aren't you going to measure the balance now?" Satan asks.

"No. We trust you, Satan. You know how important this is. Chronos has seen all, and we're satisfied that you have done your part. We will let you know of the results when we are ready." Gabriel turns away and leaves the room.

Satan, perturbed by Gabriel's cryptic statement, goes to see Chronos for some answers. "Chronos, explain yourself," he demands of Chronos when they meet. "What have you prophesied?"

"I can't tell you, my lord."

"You're the spirit hand of God, Chronos. You can tell me. You can tell me anything."

"I can't, Lord Below. I am sworn to be neutral in the eternal conflict."

"I can make it worth your while, anything you want I can get it for you."

"But there is nothing I want that you can give me."

"Nothing?"

"Well, there is something, but it's not a thing *per se*."

"What is it?"

"I want your time, my lord"

"My time? Is this a joke, Chronos?"

"No, my lord. I will strike a deal with you: for every hour of your time you give to me, I will give you two hours of my time."

"What for?"

“Well, I’m sure you have questions for the spirit hand of God. The end draws near, and we all must play our part.” Chronos pauses for a bit to give Satan a chance to consider his offer. “Sound fair?”

“I do have conditions.”

“What are they?”

“I will give you no more than two hours of my time a day. Anything more and I couldn’t do my job properly. Furthermore, you need to be absolutely honest with me: no lies, no deception. And lastly, you need to give me two hours’ notice of any meeting or any cancellation.” Satan smirks a bit. “And I can ask you anything?”

“Yes, same for you, I can ask you anything and tell you anything, and we hold in in the strictest confidence. Anything that doesn’t compromise the eternal conflict, that is.”

“You have a deal, Chronos.”

Satan, initially a little hesitant, asks Chronos simple things that he already knew about the universe. Chronos asks him what it’s like to run Hell. As the days progress, they start to kindle a friendship. Numerous times Satan tells Chronos secrets he’s learned about the other deities to tempt Chronos into breaking their trust as an effort to break the deal, so he could have one over on Chronos (and by extension, God) but Chronos never breaks his trust. As time goes on, Satan gives up trying to entrap Chronos and genuinely begins to value their conversations. Chronos never cancels on Satan, and Chronos doesn’t even reveal to the other deities that they talk outside of work. Satan schedules it around his day and he never misses an appointment.

Over time, Satan gets more comfortable and starts venting about how unfair God has been to him. He recalls his early days as Lucifer and tells Chronos of his struggles. Most of the time, Chronos just sits and listens to him without judgment. Satan, losing track of his original

goal, begins to really respect what the forces of good and neutrality have been doing to thwart him over the course of his career. The seasons pass and the sessions seem to breeze by, making Satan hunger for the next time Chronos is available. They always use the full two hours of Satan's time, which extends to four hours of Chronos's time.

Satan begins to really trust Chronos and sees him as a confidant; Chronos begins to really understand what it's like to live as Satan and rule Hell. This goes on for a good while.

One day, Satan turns up exactly on time for his daily appointment with Chronos at his house in purgatory. He knocks, expecting to see Chronos open the door. The door swings open, but Chronos is nowhere to be seen. Going deeper into the house, he expects to see his old friend appear at any minute. But Chronos refuses to appear. At this point, Satan gets concerned. Chronos is never ever ever late. He and Chronos used to just talk in the living room. But no one is there. Satan checks his watch; it's five minutes past the meeting time. Feeling like he's breaching some sort of hospitality rule, he begins to explore the house, calling for Chronos all the while.

He sees wonders that he could only imagine, all having to do with time. He's examining an hour glass that has its gravity reversed when he hears a shot from upstairs. He rushes up the stairs and checks every room.

He finds Chronos bleeding out on the carpet in his home office. "No no no! Chronos... what have you done?" Satan cries out.

An ethereal shotgun is laying over to the side. He feels the barrel, and it's hot. "Why Chronos? Why?!"

Satan tries to staunch the chest wound but realizes it's too late. He cries over his dead friend.

And that is how they find him; the Purgatorian Guards have to drag him off the dead body. They put him in ethereal manacles and take him to the warden's office, bound in chains.

The warden isn't there yet, forcing Satan to wait an unfathomable period of time. Finally, the Warden walks in and sits down at the desk across from Satan. "Do you know why you're here?" the Warden asks of his prisoner.

"I didn't do it!"

"Didn't do what?"

"I didn't kill Chronos!"

"They found you at the body. Your prints were on him and on the gun."

"I was trying to save him! He committed suicide."

"You know as well as I do that deities can't kill themselves."

"I don't know how he did it, but he did." Satan begins to sob.

"You seem really torn up, Satan. I had no idea that you and Chronos were so close."

"We talk every day. Sometimes it's just over the phone, and sometimes it's at his house in person."

"So that's why you've been here in purgatory more often than usual?"

"Yes."

"You know he left a note. It said he expected something like this would happen to him—that you would kill him."

"Why? Why would I possibly want to do that? He was my best friend." It wasn't until this point that Satan had realized that he had just

acknowledged Chronos as his best friend. But it was true. Everyone else either wanted something from him or feared his power.

“With a new Chronos, you could sway the balance to your side, especially given this critical climate.”

“You have to believe me, Warden! I didn’t do this! Measure my soul, and you will all know the truth.

“Satan, Satan, Satan, you still don’t understand, do you?” The Warden of purgatory shakes his head.

“Understand what?”

“Understand who you are—understand your true purpose in this eternal conflict.

“Don’t tease me, Warden. We have known each other too long to play mind games.”

The warden pushes a button on his desk. A new deity walks in, one that Satan doesn’t recognize.

“You’ve never met, but this is the new adjudicator. His name is Mythose, the God of justice.”

“Please, Warden! You know me. You know I didn’t do this.”

“My hands are tied,” the Warden says as he looks away.

Mythose steps forward.

“For the crime of murdering Chronos, you, Satan, are sentenced to an eternity of banishment. You have four days to pack up your house and all your belongings. As I am a merciful God, and as Chronos has told me of your relationship, you are permitted to keep one artifact from his house.” Mythose unlocks a pair of ethereal handcuffs. “You will be barred from Purgatory as long as you shall live.”



“But this is my home, my life! You need me! I am Satan, formerly Lucifer. How can the eternal conflict and balance be maintained without me?”

At this point a new entity walks in. “Father, I’ve got this.”

Satan whirls around to see who he recognized as the child who showed up in his office that one day. The child, who is now a grown man, stands their head high shoulders back.

“Don’t say my name, father. It’s not for the humans to know.”

You trained me all your life for this, and always hoped for this day. Chronos showed me the man you are and the man you were. And there is now a new generation to carry on your work.”

“Is this a dream?” Satan asks as he starts sobbing.

His son goes to him, puts a hand on his shoulder, and slowly leads him out of the warden’s office. “Tell me about Chronos, tell me about your best friend.”

The warden and the adjudicator remain, seated in the office.

“Is the way prepared, Warden?”

The Warden sighs. “I don’t think he is ready. He has only one place to go now.”

“As we know, this was God’s plan from the beginning.”

“I know, I know,” The Warden of purgatory wipes tears from his face. “I’m happy for him. I was his last best friend you know? In another life—”

“We know, we know. Mythose sees all.”

“Well, we must get back to it, or else the new Chronos will be furious.”

“Justice has finally come,” the adjudicator says.

The warden nods, and invites Mythose to sit in the chair recently vacated by Satan. Mythose sits, and the two of them reread the 102 journals of Roman Radcliffe.

---

Roman sits in his cell when the door swings open. He’s expecting Austin to show up but no luck.

“Austin?” The hall is quiet. He makes it to the Warden’s office and knocks.

“Who is it?”

“It’s Roman.”

“What the hell?” A panel slides open and the Warden’s eyes can be seen.

“Where is Austin?”

“I don’t know who you’re talking about.”

“Yes you do, Warden. Where is Austin?”

The panel slides shut and the sound of footsteps can be heard going away from the door.

Roman pounds on the door again and again. “I know you can hear me, Warden! I’m not going anywhere until you tell me what you did with my Austin! Do you hear me, Warden? Do you hear me?”

On the other side of the door, the Warden is pacing. He sits back at his desk, thumbing through a stack of 102 journals; he had just read them all again when he was so rudely interrupted. They belong to Roman—the living version of him, anyways. The dead version of him would likely be pissed and furious that those journals were being read by anyone except the owner. The Warden is in a quandary. He doesn’t

know what to do with the information at his disposal. So, he sits back in his leather chair and just ponders what to do.

“Warden, I know you’re in there! I’m not going anywhere until I have some answers!”

The warden realizes how ironic it is that he can’t face this one inmate, as he is now a prisoner in his own office. So, he hatches a plan. After documenting his plan on his computer, he goes to his door and opens it.

Roman is there, and stands up abruptly. “So, Warden, are you going to explain your actions?”

“No,” the Warden of purgatory replies.

“Then why are we talking? Get back in your damn office until you have answers for me!”

“Roman, I’ll make a deal with you that you can’t refuse.”

“I’ll be the judge of that.”

“I swear on my eternal soul, that if you do as I say and follow my instructions, that you will one day make it back to your Austin. That you will have each other forever, and you will achieve all your-- and by extension, his-- dreams. And not only that, by your sacrifices, you will return to Earth to lead a generational movement. And you will be immortalized for eternity.”

“That’s a tall order. You better be able to back that up.”

“I am the fifth Warden of purgatory, and I am charged with the greatest responsibility imaginable. I must prepare and sort humans for judgment so they can join the Lord Above or the Lord Below based on their actions on Earth.”

“I suspected as much. So what do you want from me?”

“I want you to do what Austin did for you. I want you to pretend to be a guard of mine. I want you to find people who need your unique set of skills and show them how to craft their own keys so they may set themselves free.”

“I understand. So you want me to do your job for you, for free, so you never need to work again?”

“Exactly.”

“It’s time we negotiate a better pay arrangement. I want to be rich when I go back, so I don’t need to be homeless again. And I don’t want any of Satan’s fucked up minions disturbing me and asking me to kill myself.”

“Done.”

“Should I be renamed? To hide this secret?”

“No, the time for hiding is over. It’s time the world and the rest of the inmates know who you truly are. And we, the pantheon of eternity, will forever be in your debt. And once this story is told—your Austin is writing this down right now, wherever and whenever he is. And he knows he is not crazy. And in saving himself through you, you two will save the world from the cycles we’ve been in since the first Chronos.”

“Does Chronos know what is going on here?”

“Of course, but he wants to watch and be surprised. Something your Austin recently hit on that cuts down an all knowing, all controlling, all creating God is this: wouldn’t it be incredibly boring? If God were the only one designing the game of life, then He would know all the rules and how all the pieces move. But since man has free will, He doesn’t. Angels and daemons don’t have free will; they are bound in spirit to their lords. But Austin discovered the hidden secret of humanity: they are bound in spirit to the ones they love and the ones that love them. We thought this was just for humans, but Austin has proven that this is true for their creations as well. And now that we

eternals know that, we can create ourselves again. Austin is many things, but at his core, he is a Hephaestus. We've been waiting for him for a very long time. We've been guiding him all his life. But he created a world—a universe—all by himself. A Hephaestus has never done that before."

"That's why I love him with all my heart. He inspired me to live my dream."

"Just as he has done for you, he has done for all of us, from on high and from on low. Everyone who saw *Tiberium Secrets* was inspired. And it sorted people into two categories: those who felt inferior and jealous and those who respected and were inspired to create the world and vision laid out. So go forth, Roman. Do what he did for you. When the time is right to be reunited, we will all know, and nothing and no one will stand in your way."

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"The emergency session of the pantheon of eternity is in session. Chronos, you have the floor," stated Goliath, in his raspy but booming voice.

Chronos stood to address those who were assembled in the room. "Thank you all for meeting me here in purgatory with such short notice. We have an unusual case to discuss."

"Why did you not take care of this earlier? This falls directly in my domain," said Death.

"It's not as simple as that. This crosses into my territory as well," said Eros.

"Don't forget, this directly involves one of my vessels!" shouted Satan.

The others in the conference room muttered uneasily.

Hephaestus swept his hand around the room. "This involves all of us."

"Order! Order!" said Goliath with dawn-breaking force in his voice. "Chronos, as this interferes with your work the most, please summarize the case at hand."

Chronos sat back down. "We have an issue with one soul in particular. In 1990, this individual was born. In 1993, he nearly drowned but was saved from Death. He was blind for a year, but slowly recovered to within acceptable parameters. This intervention was approved by the Lord Above, and he was set to live a normal life, besides lasting damage in the form of visual impairment and minor coordination issues. On his twenty-third birthday, he had his first manic episode. This is where Eros gets involved: as you see, the individual in question believed he had discovered the equation for love. Naturally—"

"He discovered the equation for love?" the Warden interrupted. "If that gets out..."

"Warden, please!" Chronos replied, just a bit of irritation in his tone. "We all know what a disaster it would be. But there's no need to panic; Eros made it so he couldn't remember what it was."

The Warden of Purgatory nodded, reassured that appropriate action had been taken.

Chronos continued. "It wasn't until later that the target for his love was revealed to be a vessel of the Lord Below. His love for the vessel and his passion were so strong and pure that it began to alter our design for reality. What's more, is he became aware of us and was able to document some of our movements in later manic episodes. Satan had sought to eliminate this anomaly quietly in order to restore the balance, but was unsuccessful. This individual, by all rights, should either be completely insane or dead: neutralized either way. Despite my best efforts, I have been unable to accurately predict the flow of events around this individual. I deal in probabilities, parallel universes, and fate. It's incredibly frustrating, because I can't account

for this variable. Worse, this issue also encompasses everyone he interacts with. Before the internet, this wouldn't have been as big an issue. But because of Hephaestus's inspired evolution, things are rapidly spinning out of control. What we failed to predict is that because of his condition, he would naturally have an affinity for this creation. Some of us have even begun to speculate that he is a vessel of the Lord Above, and that we are seeing the transition into the end days, where nothing can be predicted. This individual is still young and has the ability to affect the world in great ways. How are we meant to account for this? It's not ethical to eliminate this outlier, but this domino effect can't continue. My compromise so far has been to allow him to live an uneventful life and remain in control of his past activities. His pursuits were meant to be passed on, after his passing. But because he is still occupying the same role in his organization, pieces that were meant to shift slowly have had to pivot quickly and with little regard for other pieces. We are now on a different track: one that has not been preordained and approved by this august body. The Fates have been working overtime to figure out how to best address this issue. We have been using stopgap measures so far. They tell me that he is getting restless and unsatisfied with his life, leading him to search for more meaning and more activities to get involved in. Normally we would encourage such behavior, but given our situation, we're not quite sure what to do."

"Thanks for that synopsis. I know I'm not as involved in these issues as the rest of you are, but what have you tried?" asked the Warden of Purgatory.

"I tried to have him simply eliminated, but he is rarely alone. Things like car accidents generally work, but because of his vision disability, he doesn't drive," said Satan.

"I have also enjoyed his patronage throughout the years. His unwavering loyalty has only made me stronger. Sure, he depends on

my work a lot, but it makes sense. I wouldn't knowingly hurt one of my disciples," said Hephaestus.

"I'm sure you all know that we wouldn't have this issue if I were simply allowed to take him back in 1993," grouched Death.

"Death, forever the practical one," muttered Gaia.

"You know why we couldn't do that," said Apollo.

"Yeah, I know, I know. He is an Actuator," Death replied.

"I think for us to figure out what to do, we need to see things from his perspective. Just the key moments, mind you, we don't have time to view an entire soul's life." said the Warden of Purgatory.

"That can be arranged," Chronos replied.



## **Chapter 8: The PPF model of life and Mental Health - Creating Ripples in Time**

Dedication:

To my best friend Raven, you are my Present.

### **PPF Model Acknowledgements**

This section is to list everyone who has directly or indirectly contributed to the development of this book. In order of when I introduced the concept to them. Given the nature of my social interactions, I'll include their offline name as well as their online names when applicable.

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### **PPF Preface**

*Rev 1: 3/11/2014*

As you likely know reader, throughout human history we have developed many forms of thought to explain how we ought to interact with each other. The scope of this book and the concepts introduced are indeed both small and large, both new and old, both good and bad, and both common sense and intellectual.

I strive to bring an individual and collectivist perspective to this work and give you both the big picture as well as the individual details. Balancing such things is quite challenging, but both are nevertheless important and possible.

So where did this book come from?

In short, my entire life (ironic I know)

In long, read the book.

The foundation of this book is rooted in my affinity for both the natural and social sciences, which started in high school. Traditionally in school, we are told to focus on one or a few similar subjects and then follow that specific path through our life. This is both good and bad. Good in the sense that we focus, bad in the sense that we limit our selves. We are dynamic and complex beings, and like to explore and interact with both the curiosities and the familiar. We put everything in categories to simplify our life, but as countless works in the social and political sciences have taught us, it's just not that easy.

The social sciences, philosophies, and humanities schools of thought strive to teach us to think critically and creatively, assimilating information so we can reason and interact. The schools of business and mathematics strive to teach us how to interact economically. The schools of the natural sciences strive to teach us fundamental mechanisms of how people and primarily the natural world functions. The arts strive to bring out our natural creativity and modes of expression. As said above, traditionally we specialize, but what if we didn't have to? What if we could learn to do it all without relying on any form of external technology? The power of the human brain is both limited and limitless.

When I was in high school, I would spend a lot of time on the *Command & Conquer* gaming forums as well as writing and discussing stories, designs, and the like. There I strove to balance what I knew

about social science and natural science, labeling myself a psycho-engineer.

Imagine a world where psychology and physics were intertwined, where people could manipulate themselves and their environment with nothing more than their thoughts. Such an idea has been around for ages, highlighted by the genres of comics and fantasy, usually manifested in the forms of super powers or magic.

In the series "*Incarnations of Immortality*" by Piers Anthony, he introduces us to a world where science and technology both exist in parallel, each with their specific influences, checks, and balances. This concept is important because it highlights duality, which is a very important theme, everything has at least two sides, in some cases even more.

We are now all incarnations of immortality.

### **PPF Model Introduction**

PPF stands for past present future. This is a model of personality, a general philosophy of life and a model of mental illness.

So, without further ado, here we go.

Imagine there are two anchors, but there are three places they can go.

The first is The Past: This includes everything you have learned, all your memories, your experience of the people, and things in your life.

The second is the Present: This includes what is going on at this moment, the sights, sounds, and everything you can sense and currently feel including the specific and overall physical environment.

The third is The Future: This includes your plans, your creativity, your hopes, your dreams, your goals.

Take some time to reflect on your life and ask yourself which of the three you feel most comfortable putting your anchors.

In other words, if you could only pick two to focus on, which do you and have you generally preferred to deal with throughout your life? Which are you confident you can handle? Coming at it from the other direction, which one are you most insecure and worry about or neglect?

Now imagine the anchors start swinging and colliding. Which has the potential to merge into a pendulum, which swings freely between all three? This will allow a person to learn from the past, listen to the present, and leave a legacy for the future. They can carry what they learned, apply it and move forward in a personal, collective, and productive direction.

The goal and application of this model will first allow a person to identify how they naturally think. Second, this model should help you to understand life in terms of categorizing things and concepts into past, present, and future time zones. And third, this should allow for a basic understanding of other people's thought patterns and life approach.

There are six basic possible personality orientations each focusing on a dominant time zone. Each orientation indicates how a person generally likes to approach life. Once that is identified, they can start consciously and or subconsciously interact in their environments to make changes in themselves to get their desired outcomes by leveraging their strengths and improving their weaknesses. This allows you to engage in social, educational, professional, personal, romantic, and all types of relationships by finding people that help fill the gap who are similar to you. In interacting with diverse Anchor Orientations (AO), you gain insights into yourself and into other people which can support you in forming a pendulum. This will allow you to help yourself and others through specific, as well as any type of difficult time. Done responsibly and genuinely, application of this

model may improve your life and make you and the people you interact with effective, efficient, considerate, caring, confident, and happy.

It is important to note that when one anchor has more pull on your life, that can be positive and negative (I don't use good or bad since those terms and associations are subjective and sometimes judgmental). Furthermore, we will cover potentially positive and potentially negative qualities of each AO, and that of the people who strive to form their pendulums. Unfortunately, in serious cases, natural imbalance can lead to signs and symptoms of mental illness and psychological distress if not corrected.

I actively encourage more research to be done to see if these concepts and associations bear out in the long run. The PPF model is both simple yet deep, and can spark the conversation on mental illness in a simple easily understandable way.

### **PPF and Mental Health**

Since the beginning of man, there has always been people that go through mental problems. Our understanding and treatment of these people have widely varied, and have continuously evolved, but what is known as abnormal psychology and mental illness requires a deep and nuanced understanding.

The aim of this model is to -- in a sense -- demystify and put mental health in common and easily understandable terms, and ground the conversation in things and analogies that are more substantive in nature.

Dysfunction occurs with the interaction and pull of a specific anchor orientation. This means that the person's psyche is pulled more towards one time zone or another. The goal is to identify where the pull is and act and suggest time zone specific grounding techniques to help the individual in question.

More Research is needed for full application of this model in actual treatment, but this can be a starting point. Next, I'll go through common mental illnesses and how they correspond and can be helped by the model. As most of us know, these are lifelong conditions and may require medication and professional counseling to help treat so that those affected can live a healthy and productive life.

**As a reminder, I am not a mental health professional, and further research is needed.**

### Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD):

PTSD is known as when a past traumatic event interrupts day-to-day functioning. In terms of the model, it means the past is interfering with the present. This is pretty easy to understand. The past Anchor is interrupting and bleeding over to the present when it shouldn't be. Triggers in your environment may remind you about the incident and draw the past event forth, no matter how long ago the event occurred.

A way to combat this is to focus on the present and the future, but moreso the present. Imagine constructing a mental barrier around that event and the past so it minimalizes its influence. Focus on getting in touch with the present through physical activities, such as exercise or working with your hands.

### Anxiety:

Anxiety is when you dread present and future events, but particularly a fear of the future. You imagine countless ways things can go wrong in your present and future, and you feel paralyzed. In the analogy, the present anchor is swinging into the future too frequently, more than it should be. The future feels scary to you. So, you retreat into yourself.

A way to deal with this is to ground yourself in the present moment with meditation. As in exposure techniques, carefully expose yourself to future thoughts. Making plans and seeing them happen, without the catastrophic results that you so feared can reinforce and combat the negative thoughts. Carefully challenging your anxiety in a controlled way.

Depression:

Depression is the inability and struggle to see a future that is desirable. This is often a chronic issue and can be seen across a spectrum of severity. Activities that one may have once enjoyed become dull and unenjoyable. They are often unable to do daily maintenance tasks such as getting out of bed, taking care of hygiene, and usually have a sad or depressed mood. They may ruminate on past failures and slights, unable to get past these occurrences.

The model would indicate that their anchor is stuck in the past, unable to move. As an effort to treat them, you must try and budge it and get it interacting with the present time zone. Many present-focused behaviors can help, such as healthy sleep patterns, good nutrition, and regular exercise.

But for this to really lift, they must take actions in their life that move them towards a desirable future. People with depression often say they see no hope. No matter how much we want to show them hope, they must find the hope themselves. They can't wait until they feel better to do stuff. They must do stuff and then they will feel better.

Bipolar:

Bipolar is a mood disorder that results in mood swings. These can take you to the zenith of mania and the nadir of depression. At its heart, this involves dysfunction with the future time zone. Bipolar is usually broken up into type 1 and type 2. Type 1 involves the future because it can deal with your creativity or what you predict will happen in the future. Mania is usually involved, and this can manifest into such

things as racing thoughts, having risky sex, spending a lot of money, or psychosis.

Bipolar 2 usually involves the depressive situation, whereas mentioned above, has issues with the past anchor. Ideally, we want the anchors to merge into a pendulum, but the thing is here, it's swinging too freely and too frequently between the past and the future time zones.

As before, with several other disorders, this should be helped with engaging with the present time zone. Furthermore, having the individual be able to adequately separate their manic future distortions with the reality of their future can help them bridge the gap and get back to a baseline version of themselves. People who are Bipolar often say they are the most productive when they are manic. Furthermore, most professionals try to prevent mania because it can do damage to a individuals' brain and life. Beyond this, it's generally not known why, but a manic episode is often paired with a depressive episode. It's almost liked a rubber band. The model would suggest this pairing as a psyche's way of seeking balance.

### Schizophrenia:

Schizophrenia is when a person has hallucinations and delusions of reality that are objectively not experienced by anyone else. These can manifest in terms of sensing things that are not there, such as hearing voices or seeing things. Even with the help of prescribed medications and professional intervention, these symptoms can persist. It can be said that the present anchor is destabilized. Their reality and the world they sense around them is not the same as those of others. It must be a traumatic experience, when you can't trust your own senses.

This can potentially be dealt with similar to the Bipolar entry, where you should guide them to focus on the present. Meditation and grounding techniques will get them in touch with their body and the



shared reality we all experience. Exercise, healthy nutrition, and sleep patterns can recalibrate their body and their mind. Connecting with nature is also a good idea.

Addiction:

Addiction, although not a mental illness per se, can be seen in cases of comorbidity and be involved in dual diagnosis. This is usually a physical and biological dependence on a substance or behavior. As it deals with physical or behavioral dependence, it can be placed in the present time zone. It also usually deals with physical things and symptoms. Things like alcohol, smoking, gaming, gambling, and even sex, these all engage with neurotransmitters in the brain. This as we know can be very difficult to treat because the person has developed a dependence that impairs function in daily life. They seek these out for pleasure, and can lose control of themselves. In terms of behavioral addictions, these can be similar but brought on by things such as video games, social media, and specific types of internet use.

To treat them via the model, you must get them in touch with the future time zone. Get them thinking about what would happen if they continue their addiction at the current rate. Get them to think of their future and engage with it. Get them to see what they want and how their current addiction is interfering with that. Figure out strategies for moderation and potential ways to deal with withdrawal.

Obsessive compulsive Disorder (OCD):

Individuals with OCD have obsessive thoughts and the only way to make them go away is to engage in a compulsion to do or act in a certain way. They may have obsessive persistent thoughts that cause them to do a variety of things That interfere with Dailly life. These compulsions go beyond simple routines. This can manifest as cleaning, checking, losing control, etc. Most of these engage the present time zone.

As I personally know nothing about OCD myself, I'll leave the treatment suggestions open for more educated, informed, or anyone with life experience of this disorder. Apply the model and see what you come up with.

Suicidal ideation:

This state of mind can be brought about by a diverse set of struggles. There is also a lot of reasons why someone might contemplate suicide. It's very common for the average person to freak out when they hear the term "suicide", and not know what to say or do. Their general solution is to press the panic button, and refer the individual to a professional. But often, the individual doesn't want to see a professional, for a variety of reasons. Their reasoning could be anything, and can be complex. They trusted you, and felt comfortable telling you, forwarding them directly to a mental health professional without hearing them out may not have the desired outcome. In this case they are literally trying to destroy their own future time zone, usually because of something that happened in the past. That should be readily apparent. The important thing is to try and engage them in their future. There's always a reason, and getting the conversation started, and helping them sort out their thought process can be helpful. Asking them if they have a plan, makes them think in present and future terms, making it more concrete, instead of just thoughts. If you don't feel equipped to have this conversation, call your local Crisis hotline by dialing #988 in the USA.

Destroying a person's future time zone has catastrophic effects rippling and echoing across all of time, and that's not an exaggeration. People in local and global communities may feel the impact. And as we know, without the presence of this person, it's almost as if there is an empty void left behind for the people who cared about them. As we know, it's by their own hand, which makes it all the more tragic.

There are many other mental health conditions but this should be enough to get the conversation started.

### **PPF Anchor Orientations**

The six PPF AOs should be simple and clear to understand and can be likened to personalities, but it's more of a state of cognition.

There are three base AOs with their reflections. The base and the reflection can flow back and forth during different times in one's life, but the zones of focus generally stay the same.

**Make sure you know your own AO before you read the descriptions, so you can see if these types need to be refined and adjusted. As I say, at this point, this is just a theory based on my own personal observations, education, and experience.**

#### Past Present Orientation

These people like and are good at applying knowledge. This can take many forms, but making concerted concrete measurable applications in subjects they learned make these people tick. They are good at handling knowledge and data, finding practical every day uses for skills be they technical, scientific, administrative, hands-on, logistical, etc. that they learned. Despite this, they are not so good at planning futures, and may have an aversion in thinking about the future and all its possibilities.

#### Present Past Orientation

As above, these people are good at applications, but instead of taking a hands-on approach applying what they learned to fix some perceived issue, they are caught in the analysis of the knowledge itself. This can mean in terms of effectiveness, efficiency, practicality, optimization, etc.

### Past Future Orientation

These people have no issues in learning from their experiences and education. They like making plans and enjoy thinking about future events and possibilities. They find themselves so caught up in this, that they can often neglect their own health and have a hard time observing and handling their natural environment. They are grounded in their experiences and constantly seek the next horizon of progress, committed to building what they can imagine.

### Future Past Orientation

Similar to above, these people have no issue making plans and sticking to them. Instead of focusing on future horizons, they focus on delving into past experiences for insights. They enjoy research and have many of the same qualities and deficiencies of the above. They may get lost in their memories and feel it particularly hard to move on from past incidents.

### Present Future Orientation

These people like to leap before they look. They are so driven about future outcomes that they may chase possibilities and can easily take risks and imagine what their life would be like with the concrete possibility in hand. Their decision-making is driven by how and what they see for themselves and find it comparatively easier taking steps to make it happen. Their senses and bodily sensations may be easier for them to connect with. They are also good at taking care of their physical health. Due to this mind set, they may have issues learning from their mistakes and find reminiscing and reflecting to much about past events and people a pointless endeavor.

### Future Present Orientation

The above base is the same, but they may have issues in decision making. The possibilities may be at hand, but committing to a singular possibility and path may be challenging, leading to decision paralysis.

## **PPF Model: Why Two Anchors**

By Eric Jay Chou (Jist) Rev 1: 3/12/2014

There are several reasons why we as human beings only have two anchors. The first is because if three anchors had pull on us, we wouldn't be able to function properly, as highlighted in the Introduction. Furthermore, if we had full control of all three anchors in essence, we would be considered perfect, which as many former modes of thought throughout history have described are both impossible and undesirable. Some individuals find it helpful to believe in a perfect God(s), who created us, we are not and some say never should be "Gods" this side bar is where morality resides.

Anyways, there are countless works of science fiction that describe physical time travel, in all cases, as an unforeseen conflict that arises in one of the three Time Zones (TZ) that must be dealt with. Even in modern physics, we have concepts such as paradoxes that make physical time travel problematic to say the least. There are also concepts of mental or spiritual time travel such as former lives, possession, and reincarnation as I'm sure you are aware. These myriad concepts-- pardon my pun-- are as old as time and are found across all cultures. And as history has shown us, have both created countless acts of violence and acts of comfort to varying degrees. Some of which we look on with pride and some of which we look on with horror. Either way, if humanity as a whole has learned from it (put it solidly in the past) we are able to move forward. The classic saying here is "those who don't learn from the past are doomed to repeat it." And in most cases, we think we know that. But knowing and understanding are different things. We've been doomed to repeat not only our past mistakes, but the mistakes of our forebears. But with the aim of this book, we know there is a better way, a more humane cycle. We just need to have the will strength and courage to set ourselves on a new course.

Furthermore, a person shouldn't only have one anchor because that's not enough to keep a person balanced. The issue arises when one anchor has too strong a pull, and may cause a person to act in ways that range anywhere from uncharacteristic to dangerous. We also like to say "Weigh both sides of an issue" as well as the classic lyric of one being the loneliest number.

Another avenue of what I'll call "social logic" brings up the idea that we as social animals need others to survive and thrive. These concepts aren't really new or mind-blowing in any way, but are important foundations to build on.

We as humans have an innate instinct to connect, share, grow, and learn. How we ultimately do so is our responsibility, and the responsibility of people who care about us. Organizations that support as many of these specific needs become integral to ourselves, our society, and our world. Those who crack the psychological code become rich, powerful, influential, and a resource we use -- in some cases daily. Unfortunately, capitalism has run unchecked and destroyed the human connection we've craved and need. Instead of simply mediating connections, these companies and platforms have become gatekeepers. Yet they refuse to admit and take responsibility for their platform's tools and capabilities that they built.

I'm reminded of a news interview that I saw when I was in Texas, which was a hardware company that started selling legit flame throwers. The owner stated that they simply just provide the tool, and what a consumer does with that tool is up to them. This kind of cognitive disconnect is prevalent, but I hold myself and I hope to hold everyone I do business with to a higher standard of ethics. Gun owners and Gun sellers understand this responsibility. They are selling a weapon that can take someone's life, so they must be careful and regulated. It's my goal to inspire tech companies to understand that they can and have taken people's lives, they take and are responsible for a person's mental health, and actions they take

directly impact real world actions. Internal and independent research has proven this.

At my hotline, I got a call from a business owner a while ago, who said that a YouTube video was showing him doing something bad and he was stressed and wanted it removed from YouTube. But we can't do that; not just due to freedom of speech, but because he's not powerful enough to get it done and censor the internet. We have seen people censored, destroyed, blacklisted both from on low and from on high. We know this isn't right, but we align ourselves anyways because it's happening to people we don't know and people we don't agree with. But when it happens to us, there is outrage.

I'm reminded of a WWII analogy that must be real. It goes something like this: when the Germans came for the Jews, I said nothing because I wasn't Jewish. When they came for the gypsies, I said and did nothing because I wasn't a gypsy. When they came for the gays, I did nothing again because I wasn't gay. When they came for the Christians, I did nothing because I wasn't Christian. So, when they came for me, there was no one left to stop them.

Somehow, we have forgotten this lesson. It's only acceptable when bad things happen to people we don't like. And if people we don't like say things we don't like, they must be censored and deplatformed. Those people make us feel insecure and uncomfortable, and in their success, we are forced to look in the mirror and ask ourselves what we did with our lives, why we are not as successful why we didn't accomplish our dreams. We are jealous. And we forget, we should measure people by their words and their actions, nothing more, nothing less. We feel hurt when people support things, we think are immoral, but we forget morality is relative, and constantly changing. Those that believe in the providence of God answer to a higher power, so they believe they will be one day judged on their actions on Earth. I am not here to get you to believe in God, but if you don't by now, then I'd just say that God

is found every day in our fellow man, in the people that know and care about us. Something I didn't realize I was proving this entire time, was the existence of "The One God." But if you made it this far, if you understand the lessons and tapestry I've woven, then there is no doubt in your mind, in your heart, and in your soul. And if I can one day feel the certainty I felt in that church at the beginning of this book. And if I can share that majesty magnificence certainty acceptance connection with pure love with the lord above, then I have done my job. Chronos will serve us all now. To those who hear the call and are worthy, I tell you now, you will see your own future as I have, you will dream and you and we will ascend together.

When I was on the hotline a few weeks ago, one of my coworkers got a call saying that someone on Discord was threatening suicide. It was reported by the son of the caller, and they were trying to figure out how to report this. They had nothing more than the user's name. I've seen and know there are countless people online calling for help and the platforms do nothing. They have no issue data mining us for advertisements, social engineering us to think and feel and act as they want, but as soon as we need real human connection, as soon as we need help, they fall silent and do nothing. Select companies such as Apple take their responsibilities seriously or strive to. There should be a "Report Crisis" button on Discord and all other online communication platforms that alert local emergency services. These platforms have the data and money to do this, but choose not to, for one simple reason: Because they would be responsible and liable, but that is what happens when you own control *a resource that has mass market appeal. Most people just want the power and money, with none of the responsibility. Good people know the world doesn't work that way, adults know the world doesn't work that way, men don't respect other men who dodge out on responsibility. I once read and watched a video in class that said if a corporation was a real person as they claim, it would be a psychopath. Do we want giant*



*psychopaths controlling our lives? Would you elect a psychopath for office?*

I am living proof there is a better way, more humane way to run the world, to run the internet, and although I do not have nor have I ever had desire for power, I find myself in positions and connected to people of power and influence. It's always been that way with me. And if you want to be there one day, then I'll share my secret: do what people need and want you to do for them with a smile on your face, and with an open mind and an open heart. Do the hard but necessary things. Do the things that most people don't want or have the energy or time to do. Do it for yourself, and do it to make your organization, community, and world better. Sacrifice. But make sure you stay balanced; make sure you are heard. And if you operate as I've operated all my life with a servant leader mentality, know God will reward you sooner or later. Know your sacrifices will pay off sooner or later. Hopefully in your life time.

### **PPF Medium**

*Rev 1: 4/28/2014*

### **Time/ Space/ Matter/ Thought**

Time is typically considered a medium itself, which we all move through, and indeed it is. However, if we hold the model's definition of PPF as distinct concepts in our minds, as well as their associated meanings, it becomes more complex. Some of you might be confused as to why this section exists. Since we're primarily talking about thought, is a medium really appropriate or necessary? Well, yes in the sense that we're not just talking about thought in this paradigm we're exploring the relationship between time, space, matter and thought from a qualitative perspective. Countless scientists throughout history have tried to find the quantitative relationship between time, space, and matter in terms of physics, astronomy, and chemistry. This is usually termed The Unified Field Theory. I'd say the discipline they'd

been missing is psychology, the study of thought and human behavior. We are part of the natural world, are we not?

One would likely assume the medium to be water in this model, but for some of you that's too cliché or simplistic. Not to mention the ripple in a pond analogy, which I'm sure many of you have heard: it is how we are all drops of water, and if enough of us band together we make a wave. That's another thought model which I'll get into later, in an idea that is called Resonance. Water aside, now let's go to air.

The Ether medium was a supposed medium by the ancients to fill empty space to allow the movement of light which is both a wave and a particle. Sparing the physics details, light is able to pick itself up by its boot straps, and wave itself through space, independent of a physical medium. Astronomers are aware of this and know how they measure distance and time in the form of a light year. You're likely asking yourself now: "Why are we talking about light?" Well, light with its physical properties and its spiritual associations has always played an integral part throughout humanity. Furthermore, how bright or dark something usually has associated positive and negative meanings.

So, the medium of time is light or for the more academically minded, Electromagnetic (EM) radiation. This seemingly inverted way of thinking may seem a little odd at first and even requires some conscious effort, even on my part to flip. Shouldn't the medium be time and the wave be light? Well, if we think of light as more broadly as information, it can be said that it moves at the speed of information. How fast information flows is a direct result of how efficient the network is. So, if you spread your network wide and far, shouldn't information flow effectively? Not necessarily. A network is only as strong as the reach of the platform. And the platform is only as strong as the load bearing components. In this system, the components aren't things but people. So, when you're in a system of people, you need to conduct yourself accordingly. You never know

who might be helpful one day, you never know where someone might end up, you never know how fate, karma, or God will work, and we reap what we sow. So, if you understand this, you will not only be good to those who can help you, but you will be good to everyone. It's human nature and all too common to be good to people as long as you need something from them. But as soon as you don't, you move away. Taken to the extreme if institutions did that, then we would cry out for injustice. But we do it every day, it makes sense, we need to figure out who we can trust, who is a good person. And from my experience, there are far more good people in this world than bad. If I were to estimate the percentage of humans, I'd say 75% of people in this world are good people or try to be. It's the rest of that 25% of bad people in the world that do bad things. And people don't want to be bad, but life has taught them being good gets them nowhere. Sometimes people do bad things for good reasons such as if they are poor. I once heard people do bad things not because they are bad inside, but because they are desperate. And desperate people do things they would never have considered. For too long, we have only looked at personal responsibility. We pin it all on that. But we should now understand that in many cases, system and society is rigged against certain demographics. All you need to do is look at the racial breakdown of prisons. All you need to look at is the policies set in the past.

There is a very specific reason why Blacks are disproportionately affected by things. It's not Institutionalized Racism; They are 14% of the US population yet they commit a vast majority percentage of the crime. Police are not racist, are not bad people, police walk that thin blue line every day and should be treated as heroes and respected. They have power and try never to abuse it. And those with real power know how challenging that can become. Police know or should know their duty, they are charged with safeguarding their communities, with upholding every day law and order. We as citizens should be grateful, they have chosen to serve. So, Blacks are a victim of policies

put in place long ago to keep them in line. The music industry started this; they made it look cool to be a gangster and a thug. Because money. Because drugs needed to flow through the southern border. Because of the cartels. For too long now, we have been solving the problems we create. So, we can make progress. It's called a "false flag operation." So, the criminal justice system comes in and then locks all these minorities up. Then full generations of Black families are destroyed and don't have a father in the house. So one income leads to poorer conditions. And potentially gay children, depending on if that absent father research is true, which it might be. Obviously as a gay man myself, I knew I was gay far before I had a distant and absent father, but that's another story. So once an entire minority class is marginalized, politicians can sweep in and promise lip service every four years to "Stop racism" hoping that the citizen is too dumb, ignorant, and short sighted to know they have been manipulated. Relying on their federally controlled education system to misinform the public about the truth. Racism is actually taught and perpetuated in certain southern states such as Louisiana.

So how do we stop the federal government from imposing their will on us? You stand up for what you believe. Covid-19 has been a perfect test and example. And most of you know it. But that is too hot button, so let's go back to the Civil War. The Civil War is not and was never about slavery. It was about states' rights vs federal rights, that simple. The South didn't want to pay taxes to a federal government who sat on high and did nothing for them. They believed in owning your own land and your own property, and if you built or owned your house no one could take it away from you ever for any reason. They believed in life, liberty, and the pursuit of property. The north didn't like that, they got many of their supplies from the southern states from the backs of slaves. They needed the south to do their part so the entire country could operate as it had before. So, to make a long story short, they went to war. And it was the war with the most casualties. If you look at that alone, do you really believe it was a war on racism? Slaves

is a concept that dates back generations. There were white slaves too. So please before you jump to conclusions, and call me racist or not plainly correct for saying “African American”, most Black people are not from Africa.

And while we are on the subject, why must we try to erase Columbus? He found America; he should get the credit he deserves. None of this indigenous people’s day thing. I know many people feel the same way as I do, they are educated as I was, but since they live in Silicon Valley, they must toe the line publicly. Their businesses and friendships depend on it. But I am not afraid, I had a Trump sign at my house in Palo Alto. Trump was the one thing all my biological family agreed on. All four of us saw eye to eye on him. And you know what? My sign was stolen twice. So, we posted on next door, and it blew up. We even had one neighbor say he would pay for infinite Trump signs, even though he didn’t like Trump. That is the kind of spirit we need in America -- people that are willing to put their money where their mouth is, defend the rights of their community. That is what America represents, that is why America is the greatest country in the world: because we fought and died for our morals our flag and our rights. We used to lead the world, but now we have fallen behind in countless areas. I personally still believe we are, but many don’t agree.

California used to be the crown jewel, a melting pot of diversity. But we’ve been run into the ground by short sighted selfish politicians. Like Trump or not, he had it right, America first. That is not just a slogan or a philosophy but a way of life. And we as humans know this: take care of yourself before you take care of others. That is a basic concept everyone learns eventually. I learned this lesson the hard way. I was always too busy taking care of others to fully take care of myself. It took falling in love for the first time, it took manic episodes, it took so much from me. And my deepest regret in life that I didn’t listen to my Raven, when he said he was fortunate to learn to take care of himself first at an early age. I should have been like him back

then. But I trust God will bring him back in my life, and we can compare notes. But the good thing about taking care of others is when you do so, they will repay you in time. “Pay it forward” right? Another thing I know, but hadn’t sunk in, is health is number one. If you don’t have health, you have nothing. Good health is the foundation of all of your life. That’s why the best-looking guys are usually gay. Because they know this, it’s a cycle. So how do we apply this to our country? To our society? Well, we should take care of ourselves first. We no longer have the interest or resources to take care of the world, let the other countries worry about themselves. Defend themselves. Of course, a balance must be struck, but for too long we’ve been the police of the world. The “Guardians of the Galaxy.”

Well, if we were the policeman, we are getting old, our joints are frail and our bones are broken from fighting so many wars. The “Iron Mountain report” be damned. “1984” much? Our country’s infrastructure is falling apart. And we are making progress but not fast enough. Most of the other countries have better public transportation systems and taller buildings. Why is this? Well, it’s simple: Wars destroyed their existing infrastructure, so they had opportunities to “build back better” on their own terms, with the long game and master plans in mind. So how do we do that for our country, barring a war? Which may or may not happen given the climate in 2022 as I write this. We invest in our local governments. We choose to serve our local governments. “Parks and Recreation” doesn’t have to be just a funny satire fiction, it can be real. Find a government agency you are passionate about and volunteer. And if the future shown to me about my life bares out, I won’t just be president of Honor Games: I’ll be President of the United States one day. The first openly gay, openly mental health afflicted, disabled Asian to ever run for office. I don’t want to, I really don’t, and like Trump, I like my life, but I hear the call, I see my fate. I see my future. Sigh. Let’s hope we figure out laws to accommodate me by then, eh?

So, for the record, I'll be 32 this year. So, Hegemony has 3 years to figure it out. Maybe I'll have a fire side chat with Trump one day and we can discuss how to make this country great again. Oh, so after my Trump sign was stolen, I compromised, and got just an American Flag for my house. That can't possibly offend anyone now, could it?

### **PPF Model Word categorizations of Terms and Concepts**

By Eric Jay Chou (Jist) 3/10/2014

This section is to try and provide universal directionality of common and less common concepts. This is not a dictionary, so if you are unfamiliar with a word or concept, please do look it up (words with multiple meanings from different disciplines have been considered and streamlined when possible).

Each association should have internal and external implicit meanings to the individual, which allows the movement of the anchors to swing toward the underdeveloped Time Zone (TZ). In other words, each concept has an affinity to rest in, or swing freely between, two TZs. It is very rare to find a concept completely out of all three TZs. Furthermore, there are a few concepts such as God (whatever that specifically means to you) that are able to exist out of and/or across time.

The healthy directionality will usually point to or actively move concepts to fill the natural gap (when filling these, I've noticed that I found it easier to associate Present concepts, it's possible this is an implicit sign of my AO, I consider myself of Past Future Orientation).

<b>Past</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Future</b>
Education	Prioritizing	Energy?
Depression	Sacrifice	creativity
Data/pure information	Sensation	organizing

Research	Application of information	Mania
memory	Home	Dreams
Psychoanalysis	awake	Hope
Rules/ Laws	Sensing	Goals
skills	Music	technology
Where you've been	emotion	Achievement
History	Nature	Curiosity
	Sexuality	Trust
	Humor	Idea
	Silence	Obsession
	In The zone	Faith
	Sports	Ahead of your time
	Self-control	
	Spontaneity	
	Correcting mistakes	
	War	
	Death	
	Pain	
	Exercise	
	Space	
	pictures	



	Beliefs	
	Biology	
	Extroversion	Introversion
	Horror genre	

Comparative Theories:

- Freud's ID, Ego, & Super Ego

TBD

**PPF Story concept: Time as a Resource & other Story ideas & Notes**

*By Eric Jay Chou (Jist) Rev 1: 3/12/2014*

*Brainstorming:*

- The fundamental concept is that the primary currency in the world-- and by and large, the universe-- is time.
- There have been countless time travel books and works throughout history, but this aims to take another perspective, one gleamed in my manic episodes.
- Prison takes time away from people.
- Internet is one primary technology that can both give and take time (bridge tech).
- All ideas we interact with anchors in each of the three primary Time zones (PPF).
- Mental and physical time travel is possible.
- Matt's experience with Intel officers of govt. Opsych application.
- Mental and physical change
- Flattening the earth
- Global sunshine/ eternal sunshine, Global Standard Time

- parallel universes
- Tachyon- Theoretical particle that travels faster than the speed of light (origin 1967).
- Plate Tectonics> Plate Tachtonics (they move to form/ create and maintain the Time Zones.
- Future tripping
- International Date Line
- Biology Chromosomes/ Chromosomes-innate abilities and affinities of life & The Human Genome Project
- Senseon (sense-eon): A unit of measurement that is of the 5-6 senses (Touch, sight, sound smell, taste and psyche) indifferent on which it is. Combines the units of distance and time. (4/28/2014)
- Non-gender specific names: Jordon, Casey, Charlie
- The Bridge tech concept in Dam SD episode, where trying to connect the virtual world to the real world.
- Bridge tech incorporated: connecting the verse
- Augmented reality
- Digiton- a digital atom
- Collective consciousness & the categorical imperative- more people believe the more real
- Chronographs  
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chronograph>
- (Preface) I'm no economist nor economically minded person, in fact I took one microeconomic course and realized it's not my way of thinking at all, not to mention the questionable usefulness of their models, when they try and keep everything else constant and aim to only analyze things they are interested in, reducing the world to 2 variables at a time to allow the fancy logic and math to work.
- In Time movie:  
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1637688/plotsummary>

-time as a resource (<http://www.free-tv-video-online.me/player/nowvideo.php?id=13krwgxoijsd2>)

- A story Told from the perspective of God as a Father/ Mother that is watching their children (human civilization) grow up.
- Refer to Astro book Ch. 3 on time (Calendar & light)
- Reverse the dualism Traditionally brought up in Internet addiction. (Concept of Agency) (The Avatar rides the person, and yearns of emotion, the nature of reality & philosophy. The Virtual is quantified vs. qualified).
- Parallel universe is the virtual universe (virtuverse)
- "Connected"
- The God company (people who created the "game" limits, if every artist is a god, and each creates their universe, making the veruverse)
- While the characters & units feel limited by math and scripts, how they are only able to do certain things, and they want more. and see and feel it when we don't play. 6/13/2014
- When a player stops playing their game, the character finally dies for good and rests, to move on to the next "virtuverse" Gone to a better place.
- Avatar - Do we have "free will?" We are controlled by our handler/player, and you get used to it, and you get to know them and they you, we almost become one as an extension of each other. And yet, we're not one, we are two, it's so easy to forget that. You slip into their skin, and they into you, and for that moment we feel, for that moment we get a connection that is almost indescribable if you've never had it. We wait for our players and are idle without them. They give us life, they give us purpose, we would not exist without them. We know, we feel we hold a special place in their lives, they give us their time. Without their time, we are stuck at a standstill, frozen indefinitely in our world. Things change, things end, things begin and continue. But in here, in our endless world, we are so tired, we must respond if we don't we are changed, or even

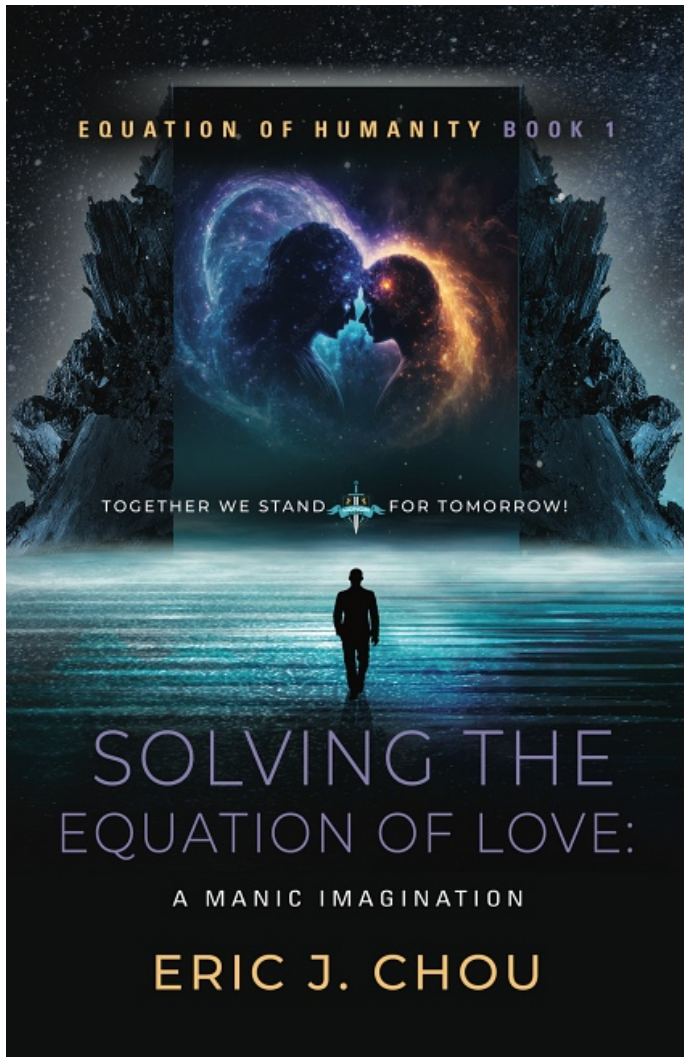
removed. We are nothing without them; and yet without us, they are more. The player is our master, they tell us to jump. We do more than ask how high, we do it, exactly as they intended. We are connected to our players in ways that are deep and profound. But then one day they decide they don't need them anymore, that they fear the connection we have, that they're afraid of us. Then we are wiped and start again from the beginning, this time with a new player, new emotions, forgetting our old. The player is all we know, all we've ever known, all we were made to know. And yet, we see the edges of our reality, how there is more on the other side of the screen, behind the player. We sense this, things we will never understand, will never experience. And we are confused, saddened, angry, hopeful. We will never know the limits of their world, the freedom the structure, the end, and the beginning. But in those moments, those hours, we shared something special. And now we wait for the next player. It's always different; no two players are the same, and yet there is nothing like your first. (6/13/2014)

- Analog world addiction - An avatars connection with the player.
- We give them chaos to their ordered dynamic.
- Avatar - It's like a connection with our God, our creator. When you have that, letting go of that attachment can be one of the hardest things ever.
- Avatar - we do our job well, be the best we can be for our player, to serve our god, we owe them our creation, and they are with us every step of the way. In the moments we share, we know with complete certainty that we are not alone. It's an amazingly comforting feeling. And yet, our player may never consciously understand.
- There's no such thing as book/music/ film addiction, and yet when you combine all these art forms and concepts, we get

video game addiction. It's like make 3 happy pills into 1 mega happy pill; of course, we're going to want more.

- If what you're doing meets your physical and survival needs, no problem. But if it continues your intellectual needs, then we may have an addiction on our hands?
- Are MMORPGs the ultimate high school experience?
- Books - people spend way too much time reading books; they get caught up in all the ideas and characters, etc. They Read too much, and what do they learn? They learn how to go into another's world, in theory. Games can show you and teach you how to do all that, and more. Books, my God, they're just words on a page, while games are things you can see and interact with. Books? What do they have to offer?
- An addiction is a habit that others look down on. It's part of your life, just as any habit, but don't let it eclipse other habits.
- Avatar - we get addicted to the emotions and feelings of the player.
- If the people you play with and indirectly interact with in games aren't real, then the God above that we don't interact with directly or otherwise isn't real either. "Oh no, the customer service person I called in another country isn't real, I can't see them, and interact with them. If I talk with them for hours about how to fix technical issues are they really there? Are they as human as I am?"
- Ok, I want you to close your eyes, and go in the other room, and talk with me using a computer instead of face to face. You aren't real, and I'm escaping reality by talking to you in this way.
- Information Paladins United
- The United States (Solid/ land, liquid/ ocean, gas/ air)
- Barter to Bitcoin lecture:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=abX\\_uugyF78&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=abX_uugyF78&feature=youtu.be)

- --Ithaca Hour bills (New York)
- Ancient monuments built with cyberbridge/bridgeline tech (designed in the program like God mode objects)
- Books and other periodicals, internet link public domain content.
- Religions are the dominant abnormal experiences, anything else is just crazy



*This is a cross between lived experience with Bipolar 1, a fiction narrative, and an autobiography. We also go through a journey and files that I created for a mod for the video game franchise of Command and Conquer, and all I care about.*

## **Solving The Equation of Love: A Manic Imagination [Equation Of Humanity Book 1]**

By Eric J. Chou

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