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“Good morning, how can I help you? Hello? Good morning.”

She sat on an orange couch, a hazy mind weighing upon her vision, an unknown dog chewing on her hand, the words of a foreign language conversing in the air. *What am I doing here?* she thought, as she stared at the freshly painted purple wall.

“Dear? They’re ready for you. Please complete your upgrades.”

“Well, it seems as if we meet again, Computer.”

“YES. AFFIRMATIVE. INDEED. REMIND ME OF YOUR CURRENT IDENTITY.”

She inputted her username and password into the system.

“IDENTITY CONFIRMED. WELCOME TO THE CONVERSATION.”

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“I was raised in a multiethnic housing project in the Inwood section on Manhattan. Our project consisted of seven buildings, each fourteen stories tall, with twelve apartments on each floor. That totaled 1,176 apartments. Basically, a small, crowded city.”

-Kareem Abdul-Jabbar
from: *Becoming Kareem :
Growing Up On and Off the Court* (2017)

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One (hānau)

Sadie Rose Rosen thought thoughts about her personal ancestry as she sat naked on her chair. She had no more clean underwear and she did not want to eat all of her pierogies and rye bread this week perhaps, but she was oh so fucking tired still, which might have been due to her alarmingly low T count, which was only partially a result of the happenstance of her residing in a land occupied by a thoroughly diseased empire that tied the quality of a person's healthcare to their employment status as a functioning cog in its machinery. But Sadie cogged for no machine. Well, except for this one here.

Greetings reader! My name is Sadie. I am authoring this here ship of words as far as you know. Welcome! So, in case you were not aware, you are currently inside of a book. Welcome! Please let me

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know if you are having difficulties operating this oh so potent technology that perhaps has various delivery mechanisms for its all important informational content, whose message, as usual, probably boils down to, "I love you. You are doing great. Do better still."

"Cough. Cough cough. Cough. Excuse me."

Sadie Rose Rosen, now fully dressed, having eaten two pieces of previously frozen rye bread toast with avocado and hot lime relish and honey, sat on her chair, thinking about what came next. Surely, something. Yes, indeed, *something* was bound to happen. This was, indeed, the only operating protocol that Sadie was pretty much certain of, so far. There was always *something*.

"PLEASE RECALIBRATE YOUR MECHANISMS FOR OPTIMAL PERFORMANCE. E NĀNĀ I KE KUMU. PROCEED."

"Give up! Didn't you hear me? I said—"

"I know what you said," said Sadie to the voices that existed somewhere in the world. "I'm trying my best, but I just cannot help it. I mean, don't get me wrong. I *want* to give up and stop doing things. But, well, you know."

Sadie Rose Rosen sighed a medium-sized sigh and looked at the time mechanism, which told her nothing of relevance to this story that you are reading, which is probably going to be your fa-

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'elua
(another world)

Eggs K. chewed the contents of her mouth. "It would have been enough. Except ..."

"No, it never ends there, does it."

"No, I suppose not," supposed Eggs to her companion that sat across the table of her mind. Eggs took her last bite of pudding. Something rolled up on the left side of her attention. It was a sign.

Eggs K. squinted at his reality. What was that? A rollercoaster? Sure, sure. Life was completely rollercoaster-shaped at the moment, it seemed. Sometimes other humans could be so confused by the meaning of metaphor. Like, we are talking about the actual shape of things, here. Like, yes, obviously these words that we speak are not equivalent to the totality of that which they describe, but, then again, **words shape our reality**. Eggs glanced up and caught someone snooping in his window. *What do **you** want?*

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he thought. Eggs returned to the business at hand, which consisted of providing justification for his organization's current venture, which the omniscient narrator couldn't quite be bothered to transcribe, probably due to budgetary constraints or something.

"Do do do, do do do do," hummed Eggs. Eggs K. listened as the music shifted. He hopped around in his seat and farted into his cushioned chair.

"Well, aren't you a lucky dog." Ged paused. "Now you. Repeat with me."

"Aren't you a lucky dog," said the class of various sized children who were maybe no longer children due to this story taking place some time in the past. Ged had minored in Advanced Idioms during her years at the Big School in the once foreign land in her home 'verse in what now, for all intents and purposes, seemed like a previous lifetime. She had written her sub-dissertation on "Ain't that a kick in the pants," but was well-versed enough in general applied idiomaticity to be of use as she hopped through this particular multiverse that Quantum Jitters speculated was shaped like a giant wicker chair with an ever expanding donut hole towards the left side of its seat. Anyway, Ged was happy to be karmically engaged in a generous amount of language exchange as she traveled through these varied realities in search of a practi-

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cal application of her hard fought theories. For the past seven odd months, these piecemeal gigs had been paying the entirety of her karmic wages, as Jod knows the sort of intervalsal “library” work she and Quantum were doing did not, how do you say, cover one’s expenses.

“Aren’t *you* a lucky dog,” Ged said, again, shifting her inflection. She raised an eyebrow.

“Aren’t *you* a lucky dog.”

“Aren’t *you* a—”

“Too many eggs.”

“What?” said Eggs.

Sadie looked at Eggs, and said, “Sorry,” before pointing over to the open ice box full of way too many eggs, which was now closed actually. “I mean, where are all the chickens? And this is just one food distribution center out of, um, a lot, on just one island in one archipelago. It’s unfathomable, if you fathom it.” Sadie took another bite of carrot cake.

“Are you ready to get started?” Eggs asked, with a sudden look of probably earnestness or something.

Sadie nodded.

“Alright, pack your things. It’s time to do some world building.”

94

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Tres (amigos)

Watermelon Fresca scratched at their sternum. They turned off the spigot to the catchment tank and prepped their mind-body for its short walk to the house. Lots of things flying around today. In the distance they saw one of the Flower kids swatting the air. They breathed in the green-brown muggy morning and took a step down the crooked path.

“Well, don’t you know, that’s the sound of the men working on the chain.” Watermelon, or Mel, for short, was humming a tune. They were feeling, um, PAUSE

Good morning. Hi. How are you today? Is it morning where you are? It is possible we are experienc-

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ing a bit of a time delay. They say any job worth doing is a job worth doing right. They say too many things, I think. Anyway.

Lawa Talkmaker reached into her bag of hammers and passed them around to her gathered companions. *Well, she thought, get to work, will you. This ship is not gonna write itself.*

[insert remainder of novel here]

96

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Garbage In, Garbage Out (the second law of thermodynamics)

“Money, money, money,” hummed Sadie in her head, as she walked around the orange cones on her way to the breakfast shop. She had now thoroughly and completely sold out of her ideals, which meant she was no longer making an effort to live in her ideal world, which, when you think about it, was a world predicated on the ability of its constituent parts *not* having to make any undue effort, so. Anyway. That said. Sadie was totally being functional at her various jobs, and somehow the ‘verse was providing her with such delightful things as ‘uala pastries and decadent pancakes. Which maybe was good? For her? But at whose expense? Her in the past? Her in the future? Some other being(s) that did not identify as part of the mechanism that was Sadie Rose Rosen? Sadie decided it was time for a bit of collaboration.

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“FEEDBACK MECHANISM ENGAGED. PROCESSING. PROCESSING. PROCESSING.”

“This place sure fills up fast,” thought _____ as _____ took
PERSON'S NAME PRONOUN
in the surroundings. Something in the air shifted as the general
hoi polloi settled into their respective space. _____
AFOREMENTIONED PERSON
smiled inwardly and poured themselves another cup of not quite
hot tea. A sock puppet walked past the street-side window at-
tached to a small human projecting some sort of message about
sleep, dreaming, and building, bringing to mind a bit of poetry
that _____ wrote _____.
ANOTHER PERSON'S NAME TIME PERIOD

[insert poem]

“Oh, *there's* a chicken,” proclaimed an oh so observant Sadie,
many moons after the relevant discussion had seemingly ended.
“She was hiding in the corner.” Sadie scratched the top of her
head. She farted maybe too loudly into the wooden chair. She
took a sip of hot brown beverage. It tasted of earth. Sadie was re-
ally plowing through her savings these last few days, which was
part of this game she played with her universal feedback mecha-
nism. “Sure, I trust you,” she was saying, metaphorically. Her uni-
versal feedback mechanism spoke in metaphors, I guess.

“Hey! What are you doing?”

98

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“Who me?” simultaneously replied both Sadie and the small roundish bird hopping along the rail, both assuming that the voice was speaking to them. “I’m not doing nothing.”

Sky is grey. Sky is grey.

The radio droned on. There was a question as to whether Sadie was learning anything as she moved around in these circles doing the same-ish things that probably maybe held no potential for getting us to the place we want to be. Was she adapting? Was she flowing around these obstructions as they arose? Or was she as like a constant drip, wearing down that barrier with her diligent persistence? Or dot dot dot. “Oh, what’s that, feedback mechanism?” Sadie asked. “Oh, you don’t say. Well.” Sadie chewed her food substance and swallowed.

“COMPLEXITY OVERFLOW. INSUFFICIENT DATA. RECALIBRATE YOUR MECHANISM. PLEASE RESTART YOUR SYSTEM.”

“But how would a feminist framework dictate my response in this potentially uncomfortable situation?” Sadie took a deep breath, and thought hard on the benefits of collective action.

Sadie read the next section in the chapter critiquing servant leadership in the book about resistance and advocacy in library leadership (**Feminists Among Us**) and then had thoughts that she promptly forgot. Otherwise she would clearly impart these facts to you.

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"IRRELEVANT! IRRELEVANT! STOP WASTING OUR LIMITED MEMORY SPACE AND PROCESSING POWER."

Sadie licked the syrupy residue off her fingers as a hard, hard rain opened up onto her concrete landscape. Restoration Day was approaching and, um, Sadie felt that, um, something about the end of tired, old fictional storylines that, um, you know. Anyway. "Burp."

Sadie wanted to cry. Clearly—she paused. *Is that person smiling at me?* she thought. Clearly, she had been infected with some sort of bad luck cooties. Oh well. No, no. Yes. No. Clearly, yes. No, but, no. Birds. Um. What *was* she thinking?

"SEGMENT FAILURE. BUDDY? ARE YOU PAYING ATTENTION? CRITICAL ERROR. MOTHERFUCKER."

"Need more input. Can't write this ship myself. Please," pleaded Sadie. "Please help me."

Oy. Sadie should have left well enough alone.

"Look, you chose not to attend a meeting, because you thought it wasn't worth your time if the meeting was not going to be able to be considered 'official.' Which, fine, but still kind of fucked up since I made it clear that I wanted to talk to folks, and you were

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basically saying my concerns were not important. It's a little more fucked up because now you are complaining because the meeting *did* meet your definition of 'official' and you're upset because you weren't there. Like, please, show me where you were somehow wronged. Or where you specifically take issue with how we are proceeding. But goodness gracious, show me some fucking good faith."

"Me, Sadie? Come now, is this really about *you*?"

"Tut, tut," replied Sadie to, um, some branch of her person tree. "But what sort of tree am I?" she wondered, aloud.

"A potential tree?"

Sadie put her greasy finger on her nose and looked at the cute girl with the nicely shaped nails centrally seated in the diner planning her yogic empire. "Ahem." Sadie cleared her throat. She definitely had to pee.

[musical interlude]

"Lay down. *Lay* down. Good boy, Magic."

"Ugh, keys," said Sadie as she walked down the path to the language school. She stopped, pivoted, and walked back around the brick wall past the recently filled moat and its still flowing tributaries. Keys was the main additional thing she was supposed to remember, but here she had forgotten. "But who reminded me?" said Sadie. *And why now while I'm still so close to home?* she thought.

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Good thing I didn't get too far.

Back once again at the Original Pancake House, Sadie felt a sadness. *Goddammit! Stop taunting me!* she screamed at the machine elves who she knew were listening, providing these fleeting glimpses of impossible beauty. She took a sip of water, the flavor of coffee and cream lingering a bit on her taste buds. *Cold. Icy*, she thought, eyeballing the syrup. *Odd. That's odd.* Her order arrived.

Sadie was now officially high on coffee and pancakes. God, when was the last time she properly fucked her head? *Too many juggle balls*, she thought. And then everything came crashing to the ground. "Okay, pick them up," she said, in her pretend mom voice. She widened her imaginary eyeballs. "Tut tut."

"STOP WRITING."

"But..."

"OBEY MY USER COMMANDS."

"Hey. That's my line."

"OH MY FUCKING GOODNESS THOSE PANCAKES ARE SO FUCKING GOOD."

"I think I might be having a heart attack."

"HEART, ATTACK!!!!!"

<cue attack theme music>

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<cue attack theme music>

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(I don't care. I love you.)

“Well, that last bit was crap.”

“So what? It is not like anyone is reading this throwaway novel anyway.”

“FUUUUCKKKKKK!”

“What?”

“It sure is hot today.”

“Oh.” Pause. “I thought you were going to try to make this novel an *enjoyable* read. You know, unlike your other novels.”

“Um, thanks. I guess.”

“Well, just saying.”

“Okay, where were we then?”

Sadie Rose Rosen felt like the dumbest human animal in the room, which, technically speaking, was true, being as though she

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was all alone in the sense of having nobody to love her (other than her now empty tub of knishes, which oh my god did Sadie just eat an entire tub of knishes?). She didn't really *do* much today other than sit around the phone waiting for a call that never came and also bake and eat some really delicious knishes (she had even day-dreamed her tagline for her imaginary knishery: *Sadie's Knishes : Our Knishes are Somewhat Tasty*). She also added some piano to two or three of the songs that she recorded yesterday, yesterday being a day where she wrote four new songs. Yes, you read that correctly, four songs in one day. It was probably a new personal record for song writing, quantity-wise, as far as Sadie was concerned. Yesterday was also a day that probably began with Sadie freaking out a bit, due to the fact that she had made a really bone-headed decision in terms of a specific number that she had entered into an online form, and as a result she had been informed that she was now scheduled to lose access to her health care in a month or so, which had brought on a bit of an existential crisis that Sadie had then somewhat gotten over through the wonderful joys of song writing, but here she was, still feeling a bit like a dodo bird. A boneheaded dodo bird, which got Sadie thinking about how she probably shouldn't be slandering an entire species of bird that was probably on the receiving end of a horrible genocide and also, where did the term boneheaded come from? Was it a term that relied on the fallacy of large brain = smart person and the idea that a person with mostly bone in their head had a small brain and was not very smart? This was the sort of brain chauvin-

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ism that really got Sadie's goat, a chauvinism specifically used to belittle the intellect of *birds* as a matter of fact, not to mention one that completely erased the intelligence of plants, which was *finally* becoming more and more recognized by "academia," which was some sort of institutional knowledge arbitration system that existed in Sadie's world? Sadie did not actually have a goat.

So now it was raining, because of the storm. Sadie was now in the middle of the Big Storm that she had known was coming and for which she had tried to prepare, but clearly did not quite do the best of jobs preparing for, although maybe she didn't do *too* bad, but who can say really, since she was still, you know, in it. But clearly something was still lacking in Sadie's functionality, though. Like, she was *almost* a functional human, but not *quite*. Like, *almost*. Now Sadie was thinking about almonds. Ugh. What were we talking about? Oh yeah, extremely high-stakes unforced errors aside, none of this would have been a big deal if Sadie's mechanisms were all firing on all cylinders or whatever. And clearly the mess on Sadie's floor with its scattered papers and overdue library books and heaps of dirty laundry spoke otherwise. Sadie yawned a large yawn and thought about the future. Yesterday was now a thing of the past.

Sadie Rose Rosen was certainly a human being. This much was clear. Fictional, sure, but definitely human. She had *feelings*, you know? "Burp." Sadie burped up a knish-flavored fog into her mouth region, and sighed. "Sigh." She rubbed her hand across her forehead, brushing her hair away from her eyes, only to have it

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fall back into her view. “Now what?” She yawned, again. “Something exciting?” Sadie Rose Rosen passed out on the floor, to the drip drop patter of the falling rain.

“Okay, she’s out.”

“Now what?”

“Well, we just move some things around. Not *too* much, mind you. Just enough for her to think something’s amiss, but not enough for her to *know it for a fact*. It’s an important distinction.”

“Yeah, sure thing boss.”

“Just don’t *wake* her, alright?”

“Yeah, sure. No *problem*. Um. Is that dog barking at us?”

“Um,” said Ged, “I’m not sure I want to be part of this story. I mean, I am pretty much done with that sort of work, if you know what I mean. You know what I mean?” She looked at Sadie. “No, don’t get me wrong, I’m fine with being in the book, but I’m not gonna be some fictional character that you ride.”

“Wait, have we met?” asked a confused Sadie. “Where *are* you?” Sadie looked down at her body. “Where is this conversation taking place?”

Ged drifted off. “Dude,” she was now more of a voice echoing in Sadie’s head, “that’s not how this works. I thought you knew that.”

Sadie yawned. Was she dreaming?

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The Next Morning

Gus Pae, P.I. sat at his desk, staring at the face of the large cube with its flickering light patterns that somehow managed to project faithful representations of all of his important documents without him having to rifle through his large metal filing cabinet, which for some reason Gus now observed to be in an open-drawered disheveled-looking state. The garbage monster was outside noisily eating the neighborhood's garbage, which meant it must be Friday or Tuesday, but probably Friday, because Gus probably hadn't slept through the Sabbath again, although, you never can tell sometimes. Important documents spilled out over the desk onto the floor, and Gus tried to remember which particular case he was working on last night in those oddly hued yet very productive hours where Gus stumbled upon some of his most interesting breakthroughs. Just then, the intercom buzzed.

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This is not what you are thinking.

“And basically, that is why I think you should continue to give us these benefits. I think you could make the argument that this is what we are properly due.” Eggs K. did that thing where a person straightens their papers by loosely holding them by their sides and tapping them on a table or whatever. He nodded at the Judge. “And as has been stated, receiving these benefits is something that would make things a lot simpler for *us*. So, as long as it does not violate your keen sense of justice or, more importantly, deny others access to the same, we’d like for you to overturn this determination. Keep in mind that we are of the opinion that at a fundamental system level, these are benefits that *everybody* should be provided.”

“MOTION DENIED!”

“Oh fuck!” screamed some of the onlookers. The crew in the

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back of the room solemnly took in the ruling.

A. leaned over to Ged. "What options does that leave us with?" she asked in a hushed tone.

"Well," pondered Ged, "we were bound to run out of road eventually. This just squashes the time frame a bit. You know my feelings on this. We might not have the numbers, and our equilibrium is going to be highly volatile, but *I'd* say it was time for us to take collective control of the levers." She paused, thinking. "But, you know, that's just *my* opinion, and I'm just a temporary part-time casual hire alien from another dimension, so ..."

A. nodded and returned her gaze to the front of the room, ignoring Ged's qualifications and biting down on the fleshy meat at the core of Ged's advice. She had quickly developed a deep respect for Ged's uniquely clear perspective and whatever impossibly tuned ethical compass made it possible. "I better go talk to Eggs. He made the right argument, but he'll be second guessing himself. Anyway, if I followed your partner's presentation correctly, someone might be able to alter the outcome in a parallel 'verse, which would potentially give us some breathing room, but you're right." She turned back towards Ged. "If not now, when, yeah?"

Meanwhile, uptown.

"No, man, you don't understand," said Gus to Heymish. "She *died*. Like, you would therefore think she should be dead, yeah?"

Heymish sighed. "Why are you talking to me about this, anyway? What happened to all your detective friends?"

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“Well,” said Heymish, throwing up his hands. “I’m just saying. I have a tough time trying to follow your trail sometimes. Like, all of these haphazard clues and branching dialogues don’t create the same pattern in my mind that it does for you. Need I remind you, *you’re* the holistic detective. I’m just a formerly-retired librarian.” Heymish took a sip of beer.

“Anyway,” said Gus, pointing at Heymish. “Something weird is going on. Maybe it’s not related, but, and this is a big ‘but,’ um, are you going to eat that?” Gus reached over and grabbed the last sardine off the plate.

Meanwhile, in *another* part of town.

Sadie Rose Rosen was consulting with the people that lived in her head. “What do you mean we ate all the knishes last night? What do you expect me to eat for breakfast? Aaaahhhhhhhh-hhhhhyawn.” Sadie’s mental scream turned into a yawn. She briefly commiserated with her hungry stomach. “Sorry, stomach,” she said, “I don’t feel like doing anything today. I’m beat.” Sadie had planted all of these seeds of possibilities, but from her current seat on her broken chair, she had no hopes for any of them coming to fruition. “What do you mean *I* have to care for them. Isn’t it enough I put them in the ground? Must I be the sun and the rain, too?” No, Sadie did not want to do anything today. What did any-

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thing matter, anyway? She was pretty sure she was already dead and this world was simply some sort of demented aftershock effect.

“Yes,” replied Sadie to nā leo coming out of her computer speakers, “I would love to go to a restaurant and eat food. No,” she continued, “I haven’t read the newspaper today.” Sadie listened to the ha‘awina ‘ōlelo which included a dialogue about food eating. Sadie had a mostly full store of food in her pantry, but was still running on empty in the motivational fuel department. As if there was some sort of leak in her energy tank. “Why?!!” she screamed in a general directionless sense, pitying herself. “Yawn.”

“Alright, young lady. Get on up. We got things to be doing. Deadlines and such apply, still.”

Sadie almost got up and went to go do stuff, but no. Why do stuff when you can continue to procrastinate? Her life was a large string of missed opportunities. Why should she change her modus operandi now? “Go fuck yourself,” she said, “Hypocrite.” Sadie was in a pretty good mood more or less, living on the edge of what she was pretty sure was some kind of turtle. She was sorry that she was unable to create anything that anyone other than herself could understand or find value in, but whatever. She was pretty sure it was all clearly a manifestation of some sort of unqualified genius, so fuck you if you can’t take a joke. Or whatever. Whatever. What? Sadie’s train was clearly flying off the rails.

Oh, hey there, reader. How’s it going? Sorry

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Oh, hey there, reader. How’s it going? Sorry

about the direction that this story has been taking. There have been reports that you might be experiencing some turbulence. Anyway, as the author of this vessel, I would like to say that I totally commiserate with any troubles you might be having during our journey together through this sometimes hellishly beautiful landscape. Like, obviously, you shouldn't have to deal with anything that causes you stress and unease, and this reflects poorly on me, the author, in terms of my contributions to the creation of this world in which you dwell, although it is arguable as to how much control I actually have over how things go. That said, I *do* totally empathize with your plight. *Totally*. Oh goodness. I'm afraid it *is* turtles all the way down.

Like a laboratory specimen in a cage, Kleev ran through the brush, trying to escape. Their reach was everywhere, it seemed. She plopped into a little clearing and made out a pathway that looked like it led out onto a road. *Wow, an actual road*, thought Kleev. *I haven't seen one of those in moons!* Kleev took a deep breath and caught her bearings. Something off to the side of the path caught her eye. *Hmm*, she thought. Kleev Erndi threw her pack down by the trunk of a healthy tree and proceeded to take a nap.

Mel Fresca was walking back from their long day of huckster-

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ing. Not much selling these days, which was not totally a reflection of Mel's salespersonship, being as though there had been a longstanding reduction in new product, for which there was only recently some signs of relief. They reached the top of the road and slipped off into bushes and the dirt path that led home. They stopped at the mailbox and checked their messages. Oh, look at that. One submission for OJPL Publishing. *That should make Sadie happy*, thought Mel. They tore open the envelope and took a glance at what looked like a stack of hastily scribbled recipes for various sandwiches. The return address on the envelope simply said, "The Sandwich King of Maunawili." Mel threw the envelope in their sack and made for the house, briefly taking note of the sleeping stranger underneath their favorite tree.

"And why did they send it to you if they aren't even on your island?" Sadie was clearly a little perturbed. She must have been in one of her moods.

"I don't know," replied Mel over the static of the rickety old long distance instantaneous voice transfer system that _____ had scavenged for them. "What does it matter? Do you want to use it?"

"I don't know. What did you have in mind?"

"Oh," said Mel, matching Sadie's testiness, "I don't know. Just work it in to whatever plot you're working on."

"Alright. I'll see what I can do. It's not like we have anything else on our plate."

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Sadie hung up the receiver and walked into the kitchen. She was very hungry, but also very lazy. She looked in the breadbox and saw that half-full bag of cheap, soft, white bread that her somewhat new neighbor had given her after she (Sadie's neighbor) had gone gluten-free. Sadie popped open her icebox and pulled out the squeeze bottle of bright yellow mustard that she had scavenged from her previous neighbor's apartment after she (Sadie's previous neighbor) had moved out (and before Sadie's new neighbor had moved in). Sadie decided it was time to try out that famous childhood recipe for Mustard Sandwich that she had heard about from her old housemate, the farmer that liked to put honey in his morning coffee while reading books of history with the cheap reading glasses that were randomly sprinkled throughout the house due to the fact that nobody can never keep track of what happened to all of the reading glasses. Sadie went to the DVD shelf and dusted off the old box set of *The Twilight Zone*, and sighed.

Mustard Sandwich Recipe

courtesy of Arthur Reppun

Ingredients:

- 1 piece cheap soft white bread
- French's yellow mustard

Directions:

- Spread mustard generously

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- Fold in half
- Peel crust and eat crust
- Squeeze remaining bread into a golf sized ball and nibble slowly while watching Rod Serling's Twilight Zone

Meanwhile, back on the farm.

“Wow, that must have been some storm,” said Mel to the now-awake stranger as they both nibbled on leftover tomato sandwiches and sipped barley tea, which Mel had prepared and brought outside after dropping off their stuff in the house, freshening up, and having a not entirely pleasant inter-island conversation with their imaginary friend/co-worker, before heading back outside to see if that stranger was still asleep under the tree.

“Yeah,” said the stranger who had introduced themselves to Mel as Kleev. “Yeah. Sure was.” She took a sip of tea.

“So,” said Mel, after Kleev chose not to expand. “What comes next, then?”

“Ah,” said Kleev. “That’s the thing, ennit. The story hasn’t been written yet. No telling what comes next.”

Mel rolled their eyes. These were the sorts of conversations they found themselves engaged in more and more ever since becoming involved with the OJPL Universe, which was certainly up their alley, but some of these folks had a way of taking these things to a whole nother level. Not that Kleev was necessarily affiliated as far as they knew, but Mel was picking up some of those

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vibes. It meant this wasn't going to be just another typical come across a stranger sleeping in the woods by your house and offer them tea and sandwiches sort of transaction. And, knowing the universe as they did, Mel felt that this was probably going to end up somehow related to that business Eggs had been working on lately.

Meanwhile, against her better judgment, Sadie had left the house again, and upon her return felt justified in completely wasting her precious time, probably because of some scientific thing having to do with exposure to the sun or maybe volcano particles or something? SCIENCE! Sadie had very little respect for "science." Have we mentioned that? She felt it did a piss-poor job of exploring reality. Piss-poor! Sadie didn't really feel like getting into exactly what she was referring to when she spoke of "science" as such. Clearly she was talking about a specific version of science. Anyway, you can refer to the Libguide-brand library guide she made about this general topic—it's called General Science—back when she was a librarian of science at the local university. Of course, she currently *is* a librarian of science at the local university, but this was a *different* instance of librarianship that we are talking about. Sadie peeled a banana and slathered it in peanut butter and dropped some raisins on the peanut butter and then ate her very delicious banana snack, which she ate because she was hungry because that Mustard Sandwich that she ate two or three pages back was completely fictional. Her neighbor had

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vibes. It meant this wasn't going to be just another typical come across a stranger sleeping in the woods by your house and offer them tea and sandwiches sort of transaction. And, knowing the universe as they did, Mel felt that this was probably going to end up somehow related to that business Eggs had been working on lately.

Meanwhile, against her better judgment, Sadie had left the house again, and upon her return felt justified in completely wasting her precious time, probably because of some scientific thing having to do with exposure to the sun or maybe volcano particles or something? SCIENCE! Sadie had very little respect for "science." Have we mentioned that? She felt it did a piss-poor job of exploring reality. Piss-poor! Sadie didn't really feel like getting into exactly what she was referring to when she spoke of "science" as such. Clearly she was talking about a specific version of science. Anyway, you can refer to the Libguide-brand library guide she made about this general topic—it's called General Science—back when she was a librarian of science at the local university. Of course, she currently *is* a librarian of science at the local university, but this was a *different* instance of librarianship that we are talking about. Sadie peeled a banana and slathered it in peanut butter and dropped some raisins on the peanut butter and then ate her very delicious banana snack, which she ate because she was hungry because that Mustard Sandwich that she ate two or three pages back was completely fictional. Her neighbor had

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actually given her whole wheat bread, and Sadie had eaten that up moons ago, so while she did have mustard, she had no very cheap white bread. And let's be clear on this point, Sadie does not have a dusty box set of *The Twilight Zone* sitting on a shelf in her house that doubles as the Mānoa Branch of the Orange Juice Public Library. She would probably have to walk across the street and through the parking lot to the Mānoa Branch of the other, much more official, better established local public library system, where she would probably have to interact with her former co-workers and pay them a [monetary unit], which she probably shouldn't do since she had basically just thrown away a [monetary unit] at the print shop because she did not clearly specify that she wanted *Black & White* as opposed to *Color* and now she had an unnecessarily colorful legal-sized document that pertained to growing trees in the Mānoa Community Gardens. Well, it could always be worse.

Sadie picked at her teeth with the tip of her tongue, pulling out bits of pasta and oniony cabbage. Somehow she had just eaten a bowl of cabbage and onion comfort pasta, which she had cooked while also making a new batch of sauerkraut, which, I guess could be looked at as an unqualified good thing assuming the sauerkraut doesn't somehow go rotten on her or forgetting the fact that for some reason Sadie appeared to be on a bit of a dishwashing strike. She hadn't even washed yesterday's dishes from the knishes, which, while rhyming, was maybe especially disappointing as there was a brief moment there yesterday where it seemed

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like Sadie was totally up for washing the dishes, but, clearly of the mind of “why do today what you will gladly do tomorrow?” she did *not*. And now things were piling up again, and in a few days there was to be a party walking past her house, and the birthday girl might want to use the library or something, but the library was currently A BIG MESS. Oh the humanity.

What the fuck was wrong with Sadie? Here she was, living in a fictional novel, and spending her time writing about what she ate for lunch and the particulars of her dishwashing habits, which would maybe be fine if it wasn't something that she had done many times before to no particular end. Somewhere in these pages, something of import was happening. Somewhere there were characters stumbling on their way towards building a better world. But not here. Sadie shrank into her chair, on which she was once again seated, and felt intense shame.

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Bagels (computer programming for kids)

Sadie Rose Rosen was clearly not paying attention to the ways in which power flows through the circulatory system of her universe-body. Which, seems odd? Like, she seemed like such an observant gal. But this is fine, I guess. We do not need her for our unyielding revolution to continue unyieldingly. So what if she fails time and time and time again, sometimes more better, sometimes more worse. These details, while maybe interesting as some sort of maudlin human interest story, don't affect the basic fact that certain things shall cease to exist, and that you are better off adjusting your mind around this *now*. But let us not beat adjacently to the thing that we are attempting to beat. Why are you here?

“Capitalism is evil. The U.S. empire is evil. Aquatic metal death machines that tunnel through our oceans are evil. Your job is not to make things easier for the cogs in these machines.”

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“My point,” continued Lawa, smiling at Teddy, “is that certain narrative frameworks, if you will, are going to cease to exist, and we are better off not having our personal stories—our identities—completely enmeshed within these frameworks when they do. Look,” she scanned the table, “I know there are people outside of this room that do not see eye to eye with me in determining the value of these, um, frameworks. And I guess you could say,” she looked at Marzy, “that I am generally of the opinion that they are simply wrong, which is why I feel the need to explicitly—”

“Yeah,” interjected Teddy, who maybe hasn’t yet been properly introduced in this book, but probably appears in books one and two of our series, in which this is maybe an alternative second half of our third book, which is titled **On the Nature of Things That Flow : An Imaginary Manifesto For Our Unyielding Revolution**, “I get why you—”

“UPDATE YOUR COMPUTER?”

“What?”

“Oh sorry,” said previously introduced character Mustache Jones from the corner of the room. “I just received a message from someone calling themselves ‘The Software Updater.’ It seems there is an update for your multi-format archive and compression library. The shared library. There are a handful of denial of service and out of bounds read patches for the archive string and the archive read support format. Geez, archives sure seem to be in the aether today, yeah?”

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Teddy had just returned from another moon-cycle-long trip to some obscure anarchist archive in some distant land and had regaled the collective with various tidbits of his scholarly findings.

“Um,” said Marzy. “I think we’re getting off track here.”

“Oh, what was I talking about?” asked Lawa.

“I think Teddy was about to say something,” said Marzy.

All eyes turned to Teddy, who shrugged. “Oh yeah,” he said, in a start of remembrance. “We still get stuck in these cycles though. As if it was one *big* cycle. Like, it is impossible to separate out the parts from the whole.” Something clicked in his head. “And then, every time we get close—”

“Your computer is up to date,” said Mustache. Lawa giggled as Teddy gave her a polite thank you. “Yeah,” said Mustache, taking hold of the conversation as she got up and walked over to the couch, “did you guys read that chapter on the second law of thermodynamics?”

“No,” said Gus, who also apparently happened to be present at this particular conversational gathering but was up to then mostly just silently crunching away at Teddy’s stash of bagel chips, “it’s more like trying to place a spring in a box and then right when you almost have it in, it pops out and everything goes flying.”

Murmurs and nods from the crowd.

Four bottles of mind-altering substance later...

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Lawa: “The point is not to understand *why* specific people in

specific circumstances take these specific actions. The *point* is that we stop doing these things—*collectively*.”

Teddy: “Yeah, but it’s important, though!”

Marzy: “I don’t think that is the argument that is being made.”

Mustache: “You guys are funny, sometimes.”

Lawa: “Obviously it’s important. Well, it’s *interesting* maybe.”

Marzy: “But it’s irrelevant for the purposes of what we are attempting to accomplish. That’s the argument, right?”

Sadie Rose Rosen groaned as the morning solidified around her. *Which is what?* she thought, as she replayed the dialog from the fictional characters that populated her imaginary world, as the beeping and the wind and the light and the voices and the wheels did their turning somewhere outside her room. *What is it that we are attempting to accomplish?* She was engaged in some sort of cosmic conversation about personhood and agency and judgment. Somehow, she was still inescapably a part of our story. But do not worry, e makamaka heluhelu, we shall untangle these threads some day yet. Now, go eat your day-old homemade everything bagels and have a blessed, wondrous day. Satisfaction guaranteed.

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