

START: On the eve of the last House Meeting before the long summer, when all the companions of the House Table were assembled in the Green Room, when the RH announcements were made and cookies were brought in great heaps on silver from the kitchen, King Jorgthur surveyed the chamber and saw that all seats had been danced for, save for the great seat known as the Social Loveseat, which, in recent times had disappeared from the Kingdom of Hitchcock, to a distant land they knew not of.

And when King Jorgthur saw this, he moaned and beat his breast, for he knew that the Year of the Go-Find-It would soon be past, and he dared not leave the quest unheeded until the next year, lest love cease entirely, as had been written in prophecy. Yet he was loathe to send his finest knights on quest for the seat, for he knew that many of them would not return. And when the people asked him why he grieved so, he explained it to them, and the greater part of the populace moaned and grieved mournfully.

Then an unknown knight was the first to swear on the power of the loveseat that he would quest in search of it for a year and a day, or until it was returned. The knight had his helmet pulled quite far over his eyes so that all those who sought to recognize him found it quite impossible. They all wondered who he might be. Meanwhile, many others were making the same oath: Sir Joshua of Knoxley and Sir Nathain, son of Bartle, were the next to do so. And all the worthy knights of King Jorgthur's company did the same, and all the unworthy knights were summarily ponded

At this point you entered the story, a bit miffed at having been relegated to the fourth paragraph despite being the nominal protagonist. You swore to quest in search of the loveseat, but you realized you wouldn't know where to start. Why not tag along with somebody who knows what he's doing?

*To accompany Joshua of Knoxley, go to A. To accompany Sir Nathain, go to B. To accompany the unknown knight, go to C.*

A: You fall in behind Joshua of Knoxley, and head off towards Crerar. "You can usually find just about anything in dumpsters," he explains. "Last year we found a pair of pianos. Maybe this year it'll be the Social Loveseat." But after a few fruitless hours of digging through West Campus dumpsters, all you have found is about thirty tons of rotting cardboard, which you save, knowing it's sure to be useful for next year's scav, and ten pounds of plastic explosives, which Joshua grabs before you get a chance. Fear grips you as you remember the old adage: "if you say in the first chapter that Josh Knox has found ten pounds of plastic explosives, in the second or third chapter they absolutely must be detonated."

Thankfully, right around this point, Joshua suggests you take a break and head to Bart-Mart. As you enter, a beam of light illuminates the shelves at the far side of the store, granting you a vision of the Social Loveseat! Sir Joshua sees it too, but the others show no sign of having noticed; apparently, this was a vision not intended for all mortal eyes. It being Bart-Mart, the Social Loveseat is marked up by 3000%, way outside your price range. Sir Joshua seems just about ready to try and steal it. Will you join him?

*To go along with Joshua of Knoxley's plan to steal the Social Loveseat, go to D. If you get cold feet, and decided to strike out on your own to warm them up, go to G.*

B: Sir Nathain has a wistful look in his eye as you head off together in search of the Social Loveseat. "The quest for the Social Loveseat is very personal for me," he explains. "The loveseat soothed me when I needed comfort. Its strong arms supported me when I was weak. I *loved* that loveseat. Like a brother, that is. No homo." You wander onwards in silence, in awe of your companion's profound appreciation for the power of the Social Loveseat. Suddenly, John Bobka is standing in your path!

"Sir Nathain!" Bobka exclaims. "Long have I waited here for you to pass this way. You pushed me at House Meeting! Don't think I forget these things!"

Nathain's eyes narrow. "I say that I did not. It's my word against yours. There's only one way to settle this."

"Let's do it."

Fear grips you as you realize that Nathain has challenged Bobka to a dialogue. Somebody could get seriously hurt!

*To stay and turn the dialogue into a triologue, go to E. To leave Nathain and Bobka and continue on the quest for the Loveseat, go to G.*

C: You set off after the unknown knight, intrigued that he dared to be the first to undertake the quest of the Social Loveseat. "Listen, kid," he says, when he notices you following him. "Whaddaya know about loveseats? Whaddaya know about being social?"

"Well, to be honest, I was just following you," you admit. "I thought you knew where you were going."

"Me? No, I haven't been back in these parts in ages. But now, I have some scores to settle. And I've never followed sports."

You're slightly confused. "You mean musical scores, then? Are you a composer?"

"No. I'm not talking about compositions."

"Oh, I see, you think you should have gotten more points on a test and you—"

"No."

"Well, then it has to be sports. I don't see what else it could be."

The unknown knight turns on you in a rage. "It's an expression!" he says. "Why can't you just let me use a goddamn expression? Don't you people understand anything?" He stops shouting

abruptly and recollects himself. “Listen, let’s just get this thing over with. I may have a lead: the guy knows everything, but it could take quite some time to get any information from him. If you’re feeling impatient, we could just hit the streets, or whatever passes for streets in this godforsaken pseudo-medieval wasteland.”

*To pay a visit to your companion’s omniscient but unreliable information, go to F. To go out onto the streets, go to I.*

D: Unfortunately for you, the social loveseat, being a loveseat, weighs like 75 pounds, and you are spectacularly and unsurprisingly unsuccessful in your attempt to steal it. Which is to say that as soon as you set foot outside with the loveseat in tow, you are put in a headlock by a pair of burly cops and escorted off to jail.

Forty-some sleepless hours later, an anonymous Aramark stooge shows up outside your cell. “You do realize why you’re here, right?” he says. “In attempting to steal from Bart Mart, you’re in violation of the Ten Commandments of Aramark. As punishment for your crime, we have mandated that Bart Mart close at 3:00 PM from now on. Also, you will be subjected to a recitation of the Ten Commandments of Aramark, the third worst set of ten commandments in the known universe.”

I: THOU SHALT NOT FAIL TO SUBMIT COMMENT CARDS WHATSOEVER THY COMPLAINT. WE SHALT NOT FAIL TO SUMMARILY IGNORE THEM.

II: THOU SHALT ATTEND ALL BARTLETT COMMITTEE MEETINGS, UNLIKE THAT GUY MAX FALKOWITZ WHO DIDN’T ATTEND THIS ONE MEETING THIS ONE TIME AT THE END OF HIS FINAL YEAR. FOR THIS OFFENCE, HE DESERVETH TEN SECONDS OF GRIPING: NO MORE, AND NO LESS.

III: THOU SHALT NOT STEAL FROM BART MART. IF THOU STEALEST, WE SHALL REACT WITH SUCH DISPROPORTIONATE MEASURES AS TO PERMANENTLY BESMIRCH THY REPUTATION IN THE EYES OF ALL MANKIND.

IV: THOU SHOULDST REALLY CONSIDER BUYING THE STUFF THAT WE PUT OUT ON SALE ON THAT ONE SHELF BECAUSE NOBODY ELSE WANTED IT. WHAT BETTER WAY TO KEEP YOURSELF HAPPY THROUGHOUT A BUSY WEEKNIGHT THAN WITH A BOTTLE OF SPARKLING CIDER (JUST \$6.99!) OR A VALENTINE’S DAY-THEMED TEDDY BEAR (\$14.99)?

V: THOU SHALT NOT PLACE FOOD FROM THE KOSHER STATION UPON REGULAR PLATES, NO, NOR KOSHER FOOD UPON REGULAR PLATES NEITHER, LEST, BY A STRANGE TWIST OF REVERSED CAUSALITY, YE ANGER THE GOD OF THE HEBREW PEOPLE, WHOM I FEAR, FOR HE WRITES MUCH BETTER COMMANDMENTS THAN I DO.

VI: THOU SHALT NOT COPULATE ON THE UPPER LEVEL OF BARTLETT. PLEASE, FOR THE LOVE OF ME. UNLESS, OF COURSE, YOUR PARTNER IN THIS ACT IS A PROSPIE.

VII: RESPECT LEROY, WHO IS THE SHIT. OBEY THIS COMMANDMENT EVEN IF YOU DISOBEY ALL THE OTHER ONES.

VII: GAZE IN AWE UPON THE MOUNTAIN DEW SURPLUS WE HAVE ACCUMULATED IN BART MART. THEN DRINK SOME MOUNTAIN DEW. WE DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH ALL THIS FUCKING MOUNTAIN DEW.

IX: LOOK, WHEN WE PUT PINEAPPLE LEAVES IN SOME DUBIOUS-LOOKING GRAYISH PUDDING, WE EXPECT YOU GUYS TO EAT IT. WHY WOULD WE MAKE A DESERT THAT'S INEDIBLE? THAT DOESN'T EVEN MAKE SENSE..

X: THOU SHALT NOT TAKE ANYTHING OUT OF THE DINING HALLS EXCEPT ONE COOKIE OR ONE ICE CREAM CONE. SHOULDST THOU TAKE BOTH A COOKIE AND AN ICE CREAM CONE, THOU SHALT RECEIVE THIRTY LASHES. SHOULDST THOU TAKE TWO COOKIES, THOU SHALT BE EXECUTED BY FIRING SQUAD. IF THOU WOULDST TAKE ANYTHING ELSE, REDUCE IT TO MUSH AND PUT IT IN A CONE SO THAT IT MIGHT PASS FOR ICE CREAM, AND YOU WILL BE SAFE FROM HARM. GOOD LUCK EATING IT AFTERWARDS, THOUGH.

By the time he finally finishes with all those goddamn commandments and you are released from prison, another seven hours have passed, and you're starting to panic about all the time you've wasted. Taking a cue from Hillel Wayne's Speed Lectures, you could try to live your life really fast to make up for the lost time. Or you could try *really* hard to split yourself in two, so that each copy of you can search for the loveseat, and hopefully cut the time it takes you to find it in half. You could also do something more mundane, but, given your choices, why on earth would you want to do that?

*To try out the exciting new art of speed living, go to J. To attempt to bifurcate yourself, go to K.*

E: You flex your rhetorical muscles and prepare for the imminent trialogue. Nathain bows his head stoically, while Bobka rips open his shirt and howls like a wildcat. And then the trialogue begins:

NATHAIN: Good Bobka, why is it that you have come here in search of me?

BOBKA: Good Sir Nathain, you know very well that I have come because you pushed me during house meeting.

YOU: Truly, unless we hear an argument from Nathain to contest this, we must conclude that he did push Bobka as he himself has claimed.

NATHAIN: But hear me out. What is the opposite or negative of joy?

BOBKA: Why, grief, necessarily.

NATHAIN: That of a horse trader?

BOBKA: It could not be other than an anti-horse-trader.

YOU: Your entailment is ambiguous. An anti-(horse trader), or an (anti-horse) trader?

BOBKA: On the authority of the ancients, I maintain it is the latter.

NATHAIN: Can one be at once full of joy and full of grief?

BOBKA: No.

YOU: Necessarily not.

NATHAIN: Can one be simultaneously a horse-trader and anti-horse trader?

BOBKA: No, for the horses and anti-horses would necessarily negate each other in a burst of energy.

NATHAIN: Then we have seen that something cannot be at once both a thing and its opposite or negative.

YOU: So we have.

NATHAIN: What is the opposite or negative of a push?

BOBKA: Truly, it would have to be a pull.

NATHAIN: And was it not true that when I pushed you, I was also pulling an all-nighter.

BOBKA: It is, for I waited in your room the entire night in order to challenge you to a dialogue, but you never returned from the library.

NATHAIN: But you have agreed that it is not possible for something to be at once pushing and pulling.

YOU: What about a push-me-pull-you?

NATHAIN: That doesn't actually exist.

YOU: Sorry. It's just I don't feel like I've contributed enough to the triologue.

NATHAIN: So what say you, Bobka? Do you concede the point?

BOBKA: SECTION II!

NATHAIN: I cannot answer that, and therefore must concede the point myself.

Just as Bobka raises his hands in triumph, he is nearly knocked off his feet by a continuous stream of water originating from somewhere more than a foot away outside your field of view. You and Nathain rush towards him, but it's too late; he's in critical condition. "Nathain," he manages, "Avenge...me...urh..." Then he dies. Nathain turns to you.

"Bobka was a worthy opponent, and deserves to be avenged. But we swore to quest in search of the social loveseat. What should we do?"

*To set aside your quest and try to avenge the death of Bobka, go to L. To continue searching for the loveseat, go to I. Alternatively, since this is a really tough decision, you could try splitting yourself in two so as to be able to do both. If you decide to go with this utterly unphysical solution to your problems, go to K.*

F: You climb the weathered staircase carved into the side of the Section IV tower, struggling through fierce headwinds like a writer through unnecessary and ponderous similes. Your mysterious companion is unfazed by the harsh weather. At the top of the stairs, he produces a packet of cigarettes from somewhere and somehow manages to jam several into the only slits in his helmet, which were directly over the eyes. With a dramatic flourish, he lights the cigarettes, and calls out into the night:

"Open up, Lanham! I got a burning desire to see you right about now, and you don't want to see me get hot-headed."

For a moment there is silence, and then the door opens, and Bryce Lanham's head pokes through. "Only one man can pun that badly," he says in disbelief. "Ben?"

"That's Brubaker, private eye errant, bub," says your companion, grabbing Bryce by the collar. "But all that is irrelevant right now. Right now I'm looking for a certain social loveseat, and if I don't find it, I'll be left with an anti-social hate-stand. Now I'm not quite sure what that is, but I don't think — ow ow ow my eyes fuck fuckity fuck!" He pulls off his helmet, hurls it aside, and regains his composure. "Whadaya know?"

“Oh, that,” says Bryce sheepishly. “I had videotaped evidence of it being stolen, but I deleted it because I figured a lot of people would come around asking for it, and I didn’t want to deal with that.”

“You *what?!?*” says Brubaker. “I feel my love dropping to dangerously low levels, Lanham.”

“Wait!” says Bryce desperately. “I might have made a copy of the video. It would be on one of these machines right here.” He pushes the door ajar to reveal an enormous pile of computers, stretching as far as the eye can see in every direction.

“Dear god,” you mutter to yourself. “There must be thousands...”

“Tens of thousands!” Bryce declares triumphantly.

*This is going to take a while. If You decide to leave your companion with Bryce and head out on your own, go to G. If you really must stick it out, go to M.*

G: You arrive at a thoroughly nondescript crossroads. You’re not quite sure where you are, but you know where you came from, and you can see another road pretty much straight ahead, which probably corresponds to wherever you’re supposed to be going. There are also a number of other roads fanning out behind you at various angles, and you figure that these are all roads that you might have come from to end up at the place where you did if you hadn’t come from the direction that you did, in fact, come from. Seeing the history of your life decisions thus metaphorically laid out in front of you is pretty sobering, but the mood is ruined by the realization that the author of the minutes apparently couldn’t be bothered to come up with an actual story to link paragraphs A, B, F, and I.

*To continue down the road ahead, go to I. Alternatively, you could try to walk back along one of the roads that you could have used to get here. If you do so, choose either A, B, or F, and read it backwards. What do you do when you get back to the beginning of the paragraph, you ask? Don’t ask me. You need to get better at making decisions for yourself.*

H: Wait, how could you be reading this? I thought I sealed off all entrances to this part of the minutes! It was for your own protection!

*Go to N.*

I: You recognize this street: It’s Ellis Avenue, but how much it has changed. The crowd is so thick you can barely see the pavement, but from the few glimpses you get, it’s apparent that different parts of the curb have been meticulously painted in a dizzying array of different colors. And the number of people! It’s over nine thousand! No sooner have you finished taking in your surroundings than you are rudely jostled by a police officer with a clipboard.

“Sir, you’re standing in the light magenta zone, which means I’m going to have to ask you to move unless you’re the parent of a handicapped student in the geophysical sciences, which it doesn’t look like you are.”

“Come again?”

He gestures at the sidewalk, and you see that the roughly twenty-five square inches in which you have planted your feet are indeed painted light magenta. “This square is reserved for the parents of handicapped students in the geophysical sciences.”

“And how many of those are there?” you ask.

“Two,” says the policeman. “I just hope they don’t show up, or we’ll have to execute plan 4C, which means tearing down this section of wall to make space for them, then tearing down the rest of the wall because we might as well, and lastly demolishing whatever remains of the building once it caves in as a result of us having removed one of its walls.”

“But...this is crazy!” you protest, at which he grows very angry.

“Just get out of my zone,” he says, and shoves you out into the street, just as an enormous procession of robed graduates is passing. You are carried along by the human current, the components of which are evidently so excited at having finished college that they will stop marching very slowly for no man.

*To very literally go with the flow and see where you end up, go to P. Alternatively, since the crowd is moving so slowly, you could try to speed things up by literally living in fast-forward. If so, go to J.*

J: Congratulations, you’re now speed living.

-The practical effect of speed living is that everything is recounted in bullet-point form like at the end of the first-quarter minutes.

-Your life is moving so fast that you get sidetracked and end up listening to an abbreviated account of the history of the At Large presentation.

-I’m Austin

-Whales!

-I’m trying to–

-Ejjjjiiiiichhh!

-Levi is short.

-I’m not here right now.

-Levi is short.

-I’m Levi, and I’m short.

-Levi has a number of deficiencies, most of which involve being short.

-I’m short.

-I’m not here right now.

-I’m Graham, and I’m tall.

-I’m not here right now.

-I’m not here right now.

-I’m not here right now.

-Look, it’s like, a fucking watermelon or something.

-I'm not here right now.  
-I'm not here right now.  
-I'm Hillel.  
-I'm not here right now.  
-Credit where credit is due: Hillel Wayne.  
-This bullet point thing is pretty cool, isn't it?

*-You could try to use your new speed living skills to try to get actual practical information by going to O.*

*-Or you can just quit while you're ahead by going back to G.*

K: You try *really* hard, and eventually succeed in bifurcating yourself. Congratulations! You're now two people. Like at the end of the Prestige, except one of you doesn't just straight up shoot the other, because that would make this paragraph pretty useless. Oh yeah, spoilers by the way. Sorry.

*Go to G, then pick another place at random in the minutes (roll a d20, and match each number to the corresponding paragraph, excluding G, K, W, and START. If you actually do this, I'll be very impressed). Then start reading both sections of the minutes simultaneously. You may need to get two friends to read them aloud into either ear. Now you have an extra life!*

L: You kneel down in front of Bobka's body with Nathain, preparing yourself for a mystery that could take weeks to solve. Fortunately for you, even the killer agrees that the minutes have gone on long enough already, and has therefore very thoughtfully made things simpler for you by leaving a calling card.

"Looks like she left a calling card," Nathain says, and tosses you a playing card with "You were sports" written on it in very neat sharpie. In a flash of insight you realize that Elizabeth Lee must have killed Bobka to have the glory of IM Sports Representation all to herself. She conspired with Lee Harvey Oswald, Desmond Miles, and Richard Kuklinski to run around shooting each other with water guns as a front, so nobody would realize that one of the water guns was deadly... *inexplicably* deadly. You alert the FBI, and all of them are summarily brought to justice, though that doesn't succeed in making this paragraph any less half-assed or nonsensical.

*You can now take initiative and continue the search for the loveseat. To do so, go to P. Alternatively, you could follow Nathain and wait to see what he does. In that case, you should go to Q.*

M: You watch as Bryce begins to sift through his millennia of accumulated data. "Do you have any, um, way of organizing this stuff?" you ask foolishly. "And why do you have so many computers in the first place?"

“Because it’s my job,” Bryce says. “I was elected to record all of Hitchcock’s history by the first Hitchcock government 10,000 years ago. That requires a lot of hard drives.”

“Wait, you were *elected* to record history and this is what you do? You just keep a big pile of computers and arbitrarily delete data? Where is your civic duty?”

Bryce grins cheekily. “Let me tell you something about civic duty. It doesn’t actually exist. For instance, Mandy Stafford’s entire job as HARC representative consisted of going to meetings once a week, but in an entire year as an elected official, she never went to a single meeting. Our vice presidents have rarely deigned to show up House Meetings. Don’t even get me started on the community service opportunities they’re theoretically supposed to promote. The PSAC rep refuses to cease to exist despite her existence being very explicitly denied throughout our fine Constitution. Hundreds of freegans, who depend on regular Thursday nourishment to survive until the RA study break on Sunday night, have died because the apathy of the section reps. Then, of course, there’s the whole affair of the Social Loveseat. And I’m not even going to *mention* At Large.”

He doesn’t need to. Being confronted so explicitly with what a sham house government really is causes you to go nigh apoplectic, and you begin to undergo severe internal hemorrhaging.

*YOU DIE OF TRAUMA. Theoretically you’re not supposed to have any extra lives or anything like that, since it’s the finale. But really, you can just start reading again. It’s not like there’s anything I can do about it.*

N: Don’t you understand? There’s no way out!

*Go to H.*

O: You want practical information? Seriously? Fine, you asked for it.

-You guys, if we’re actually going to sell the seven different shirts we planned on selling this year, we’re going to have to get started soon. We’ve already talked to Snell about committing 33% of the final cost of each shirt except for the one that will be sold only to residents of Hitchcock and students in the Geophysical Sciences, but they want us to give them an estimate of our revenue before we finalize it, so if each of you who’s planning on buying a shirt could just raise your hand. I promise this won’t take too long.

-We have exactly \$175.52 in House Funds.

-Some musical group on campus will be performing music somewhere on campus. Like tomorrow or something. Maybe the next day. Even if the one I’m thinking of isn’t tomorrow, *something* is happening tomorrow. Just go to Fulton at 7:00 or whatever.

-IHC is starting a very serious investigation into the dearth of students’ rights on campus which you should probably care about but aren’t going to so what’s the use of me even announcing it.

-Okay, okay I get it. Asking for practical information was a bad idea. Can we please stop now?

-Everybody say hi to so-and-so’s guest, who’s here for the weekend! You’ll never see her again! Pretend to be really stoked!

-So we talked to Snell, and based on the preliminary estimates of our sales, they want to cut back to 25% of the initial investment. And I know we just voted on this last time, but can we get a motion to get further house funds to make up the difference.

-Do we have a second?

-Ben, seriously, this isn't funny. Let me out. Let me go get back to the regular part of the minutes.

-Second.

-Third! (*Half-hearted laughter*)

-YOU-HC!

-But guys, seriously, we need to vote on this.

-I know we said last house meeting was going to be the last one of the year, but the thing is, Spiegel wasn't at that meeting because he went to see Space Jam, which is a totally irresponsible way for a treasurer to behave, so I feel like we need to have a special house meeting to impeach him in the middle of July. I'm setting this for a couple of weeks in the future so everybody has time to get plane tickets. It would be great if we could get a quorum, because you wouldn't want twenty-two of your classmates to fly to Chicago for nothing, now would you? RSVP soon please.

-LET ME OUT!!! AHHH!!!!

-T-shirts BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH.

*YOU DIE OF BOREDOM. This is the only part of the story with a moral. The moral is that if I just wrote minutes that described what happened in house meetings, you'd all be dead by now. In case that wasn't obvious.*

P: The crowd carries you south on Ellis, and finally manage to break away by hitching a ride on a large orange bin full of suitcases being towed by an exhausted student. She takes you as far as the Midway, where you are dumped unceremoniously to the ground when she begins to load up the cab waiting in the Burnt Umber Zone. On the midway ahead, you see Joshua of Knoxley and Sir Nathain staring intently at South Campus. As you look on, the mysterious newcomer from START approaches, the one whose identity you may or may not know depending on which path you took to get here. If you don't know already, you are at this point graced with a totally undeserved flash of insight, and realize that he is none other than Brubaker the private eye, hero of the first quarter minutes. Now you know.

"Bartley," Brubaker growls as he draws close. "Or Nathain, or Bartholomew Nath, or King of Bartlett, or whatever your name is. "I've been swimming against the current of the timestream for over two quarters now to find you. I went to pre-Christian Iceland, to an alternate-present Mecca ruled by robots, where I was like a fish out of water. You kept getting away from me. At every turn, I would hear that I just missed you. "Better luck next time," they would say. "Go fish." That all ends right now. You're not getting off the hook this time."

Nathain's eyes narrowed. "That's a slippery metaphor you're playing with, Brubaker. I wouldn't want you to get in over your head. What exactly are you implying?"

“I’m implying nothing. You caused the implosion of the space-time continuum ten thousand years in the future. Wait, no, I mean, ten thousand years in the past. You told me so yourself! I’m here to settle the score.”

“I still don’t understand what you mean,” you protest, and are ignored by everybody.

“Isn’t that your fault, though?” Nathain says. “The reincarnation of you from ten thousand years in the whatever fucking direction we’re going now wrote the only know account of my supposed atrocities. How do we know he, that is, you, didn’t cause them?”

“Preposterous! How could I cause an event by documenting it? The effect clearly precedes the supposed cause!”

“Ah, but if we allow for blatantly unqualified time travel, and we opened that can of worms already by the middle of first quarter, then we have to abandon any traditional notion of causality!”

An awkward silence falls over both disputants. Brubaker scratches his head.

“*What* was it exactly that you were trying to do?” he asks. “Or weren’t trying to do, or whatever?”

“Fuck if I know,” Nathain says. “I never understood the first-quarter minutes.”

“Hrm. Neither did I, to tell the truth. Y’know what, forget about it. Let’s just be cool and find this fucking futon or whatever it is.”

Joshua of Knoxley clears his throat. “We’ve pinned down the location of the loveseat. It’s in South Campus, somewhere in Chautauqua House. Apparently, they stole it one night after midnight soccer. But we need to get in. Therefore, I propose, uh, explosives, the solution to every problem.”

You see that he already has one of the walls of south campus rigged with about two hundred pounds of plastic explosives. But you’re thinking, there’s gotta be an easier way to do this. Then you notice a distant ground floor window that appears to have been left ajar. Forbidden, but...tempting. Or there’s, y’know, the front door.

*To try to climb through the window, go to R. To follow Josh Knox and try to get in via explosion, go to S. To try to make it past the front desk, go to T.*

Q: You just sit there, infatuated with Nathain Bartley, waiting for him to tell you what you’re going to do. In fact you’re so busy staring at Nathain’s guns that you accidentally shoot yourself in the face.

*YOU DIE. Of being shot. Duh.*

R: You approach the window and look left and right furtively. No mortal eyes watch you, but you feel the glare of the ancient gods ORCSA and OUSH bearing down on you as you put one foot, then the other, through the window, and pull it shut behind you. This has to be bad karma.

*You're somewhere in the middle of a long, curved corridor. To head left, go to U. To head right, go to V.*

S: Kabloosh! The westernmost wall of south campus explodes in a burst of flames, and when the smoke clears, there's plenty of holes through which you could enter. No, not like that. You're your mind out of the gutter.

"No, you can leave it there; that's what I was thinking too," says Joshua. "Go ahead. I'm going to stay behind to cause some more explosions."

*You enter the building to find yourself somewhere in the middle of a long, curved corridor. To head left, go to V. To head right, go to W.*

T: You approach the South Campus front desk, where you are scrutinized by a weary guard.

"Can I see some kind of ID?" he says.

"Uh, oh, uh...I don't have it on me," you stammer. "I'm going to a party...this guy...Chad? And, y'know, the bros? They're having a party?"

"What's your name?" he asks.

"Uh...Marco Brolo," you lie, sure that your plan has failed and you will be swiftly hauled away by Univesity Police.

"Well, your name's on the list, so I guess you can go in," he says, looking up from his clipboard. "And tell that Chad whatever-his-name-is that he needs to come down and sign his guests in. This isn't the first time he's done this."

You breathe a huge sigh of relief as you make it through the doors. You're in. Which way to go now?

*You're somewhere in the middle of a long, curved corridor. To head left, go to W. To head right, go to U.*

U: You don't get very far down the corridor before you are decapitated without warning by one of South Campus's fiendish swinging blade traps!

*You understand, of course. It's Choose Your Own Adventure. There had to be a swinging blade trap. YOU DIE.*

V: As you head down the hall, you suddenly fall through a well-disguised pit trap and down a long chute. A very long chute. Or a very long snake, if you were raised on the British version. But what does that even mean?

*Whatever it is, it's so long that it carries you all the way back to START. In other words, a big ol' fuck you from me to you. You're welcome.*

W: The sound of raucous South Campus partying grows ever louder as you race down the hallway. The loveseat is close. You can feel it. After twelve pages, it's about fucking time. Finally, you reach the source of the noise, and there, in a room reeking with the stench of piss and beer pong, a couple of brahs are chilling on what could only be the Social Loveseat itself. Nathain, Joshua, and Brubaker are close behind you. And as you take in the scene in front of you, a handful of dudes in wifebeaters holding bud lights lounging around on top of the treasured artifact you sought for so long, the only word that comes to mind is *Why?*

“It’s because you kept beating us in soccer,” a bro you take to be Chad admits. “And DelGirno couldn’t deliver the victory they promised either. It’s like, you guys are getting all up in our shit, dude. You’re better at sports, you’re better at naming your frats. We couldn’t let you have all the love too. It wouldn’t be fair.”

“It would be *bro*-ken, brah,” chimes in another bro, whom you decide to call Brad.

“So if you want the loveseat, you’re gonna have to fight us for it,” says Chad.

“Dude, it’s class struggle, like they talk about in Brosc,” says a third Bro. “We can be the broletariat.”

And then the inevitable rumble begins. Joshua of Knoxley quickly takes several of the bros out of commission by offering them free hits of Nitrous. Nathain and Brubaker use their respective mystical ninja fighting moves and general private eye badassery to take out a couple more. Chad turns to Brad (whose name turns out to actually have been Brad after all) in desperation, and asks why Marco Brolo hasn’t showed up yet, “because he totally said he would come with a couple of brahs and just chill.” Suffice it to say, the battle is quickly and conclusively decided in favor of the protagonists. Not to be confused with the brotagonists, who lose.

The room is silent for a moment after the vanquished bros excuse themselves to find somewhere a bit more low-key to chill. Everybody is eyeing the loveseat. Finally Nathain speaks up.

“This is it, then. We return the social loveseat to Beta Rho Omicron, where it will cause the brotherly love that is already between us to swell to greater proportions. Love will be stronger than ever!”

“Not so fast,” says Brubaker. “I’m still a private eye, y’know. And just as the minutes started with a dame waltzing into my office, they’ve gotta end with a dame waltzing into my office, or at least with a flashback to dame waltzing into my office. Y’know, in medias res. Or whatever. Full circle. Anyway, this particular dame was Erica Fagin, and she commissioned me to find the

social loveseat and return it to Section V, so that it can be put to use to generate more *Cars/Transformers* slashfics, instead of just sitting around at the top of Section I with a bunch of dudes. No homo.”

“Ah, yes,” says Josh. “I’d like to propose that we use the powers of the, uh, social loveseat to surprise the incoming first years with unspeakably, uh, horrible acts.”

All three of them turn to look at you.

“For some reason, we all seem to leave all of our important choices up to this guy, although I don’t know what on earth he’s done to deserve it,” Nathain observes.

“What do you think should happen?” Brubaker asks you metatextually. “I can afford to go all self-referential on you guys,” he adds. “Give me a break. It’s the last fucking line of dialog.”

*Now you get to decide where the social loveseat goes. Your decision will have absolutely no impact on anything, within or outside the minutes. And thus ends the epic nonsensical saga that started eight months and eighty-some pages ago, very fittingly, with a reaffirmation of the complete inability of the minutes to actually affect anything at all. Thanks for allowing me this venue to waste a little bit of your time and a problematically large amount of my own.*

THE END.