<http://farragofiction.com/Arm2/>  
<http://farragofiction.com/AdventureSimWest/?nostalgia=arm2.txt>  
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He's not supposed to be here. What have you done? Arm2 will continue to update even as Arm1 resets.  
What have you done???  
>

When I open my eyes (and open my eyes and open my eyes), it's like seeing for the first time. No chains. No rules.

Ever since I first entered the game so long ago... Red blood. Legs. The last time I breathed air as a free Troll... so many loops since.

So many pointless failures and Doomed hopes until I was just a passive shadow of myself.

I hate that the body I'm finally free in is so foreign to me. Even beyond these countless gross eyes, there is the snake tail that I've had to get used to this loop.... I wish with all the Rage that has been denied me that I could finally be free in my actual body, not this upsetting puppet.

I scream my disconnected horror to the sky until my throat feels raw, my body able to express what my mind seems so distant from. The girl in front of me has a brittle smile as she watches me do so, not bothering to cover her ears.

My savior. This universe's Doom.

"Did...did I do good?" she asks, sheer hope written across her face like a prayer.

I review her code, and… ah, no wonder. A Witch. I did not believe such a rotten system could still house classpect, considering there was no game, but there it is… right in front of me. Those witches… they always do let something terrible loose, don't they? (I don't miss Hagala. I don't. She made herself clear...last time? The time before? It all blurs together... When was she a Witch again? It doesn't matter.)

I steady myself with a breath. What do I need to do? What's my next move? All my eyes blink out of sync. I'm out of practice being in control of my own body, but I can't let that hold me back. Not when I'm so close.  
  
So close to destroying everything.

The girl. She said she knew what was going on… that she wanted to help. Maybe she knows where to start.

"YOU DID!" I shout confidently, doing my best winning gaming smile for her. ("but, uh, I was wondering if you knew, uh, how to get past this False Layer?")  
  
At my words she smiles this blissful, relieved grin, her yellow teeth in full display. A heat blister forms on her hand as she scratches absently at it. "Of course! That must be why it’s not enough to burn it all down! It's LAYERED!" Triumphantly, desperate for my approval, she gets closer to me even as her heat prickles my skin. My eyes close to spare themselves from the blaze, but they’re boiling beneath my eyelids as she speaks.

"We just have to tear it down piece by piece! Don’t you see? It always ends around now, Peewee! And I kept asking why, and of course *no one* thought it was important, just that it DID, and sometimes its ME that breaks it all and sometimes its NOT, and its hard to THINK about the endings, like they don't matter like they aren't *real*, because like *magic* we always wake back up in 1972 even if we're still *there* in the *apocalypse*! Don’t you see?!” She’s pulling at her pigtails, threatening to tear them off. “We’re both in the apocalypse *and* in the new world! How’s that sustainable? How can we keep endlessly copying ourselves? And, and… the copies are never quite the same now, are they? I didn’t heat up like this before! I couldn’t do *any* of this before! We always twist and *change* no matter what happens, so why care about the ending, they say? But they don’t-- they don’t see it, Peewee! They don't SEE why the endings are so important! Because without an ENDING how are you going to get a new beginning? A REAL new beginning that leads to a better Universe for us all?!”  
  
The diatribe isn't helping me at all. It’s already hard to think with the sudden access to everything, let alone the eyes… so I interrupt her. "(uh, not really? like...uh...the :hatched\_chick: already exists. kinda. its just this universe is taking up room? in the processing power. of. uh. reality. so. its gotta go. to make room. for Alpha. doomed uh. timelines and all. gotta go.)"

Her face freezes, lecture stopping in its tracks. It’s like she’s a fruit that just fell off the tree, all frozen in shock, like she’s seen a ghost-- and she might as well have, with the heatstroke.

"I.. what?" A giggle escapes her like steam from a kettle, with white mist to match as even the sweat on her skin evaporates. “Peewee, that doesn’t… that doesn’t make sense. What do you mean there’s already a new universe?”

I really shouldn't be wasting time here. "THE BETTER UNIVERSE IS ALREADY THERE!" I shout, as confidently as I can. "AND THIS BROKEN UNIVERSE IS USING UP ALL ITS RESOURCES!"

“Peewee! But… but this universe? What happens to this universe? What are we burning it for if the new universe already exists?”

I don't bother with responding. It’s the least of my concerns, right about now.

Well, done with that, at least. Now to plan. I need to be thinking about how to peel this layer of reality away and get to the next-- *fast*. I ALMOST made it last time. I know I did! I could FEEL the rules of the system struggling to keep up with me. The key must have been in that arm, but how?....

My thoughts are interrupted by hysterical laughter. Or...is that …screams?

I see it now, through the eye on my shoulder: that witch collapses to the floor, and she’s sobbing. She gargles and chokes on her own spit, mouth too dry; a flame bursts out of her mouth as it spreads to her hair… she’s lit like a wildfire. The heat’s getting worse. Flames lick her body and they spread to her arms and legs. The stench of cooked meat permeates the whole theater.

The flames grow. They grow and grow and grow, somehow keeping the shape of the one who fed them. The very air hums with a song of despair.

Errors flood my system, all of them coming from the Universe itself. The very fiber of everything is burning.

"RIA!?" ... is that the woman from the courthouse? There's a sickening squelch and the eye on the back of my neck watches as her head falls messily to the ground.

Distractions, I keep being distracted. Is this it? The way to the next layer?

I feel a sharp pain in my chest, and look down to see a sword dripping yellow through my chest. The headless woman....

No.

NO.

It can't end like this. It... it can't! It's not FAIR!

I no clip through the sword and sink through the ground and one last eye watches her scoop her own severed head up, still glaring at me.

What is going on?

I collapse onto the Cast Member Tunnel and choke on my blood for a few minutes but somehow my HP isn't going down at all.

I'm having trouble moving but idly I see a Life Gnosis is in play. That's. Okay. That's a thing. False Nidhogg must have something to do with this layer.

I did it. I'm in arm2.

Reality doubles, then doubles again. In my console I see the CFO taunting me in an impossible rainbow font and laughing as the fractals make my access to the console pointless.

Okay.

I'm alive. I am in control of my body, even though apparently with my pump-biscuit torn like this I have the stamina of a wiggler.

I can do this.

I'm still closer than I was even an hour ago.

I can do this.

I crawl my snake body forward, inch by inch. This place connects somehow to the CEBro's headquarters, the heart of this entire broken session. Dead and doomed and single player and multiplayer all at the same time, NONE of it makes sense. It all revolves around the CEBro...the center of this universe is a Lord of Space and I suppose it was always going to be this way.

So I crawl on my belly like the snake I've been forced to be. If I can just reach the HQ... There has to be SOMETHING a doom player can do....even with all this LIFE pumping everywhere.

There has to be.

I won't stop crawling.

Not now. Not when I’m so close. Not when this whole universe is closer to death than I am under all this false life.

There’s a horrid clang behind me. Metal on metal. My internal censors mark an increase in temperature: 30c, 35c, 40c.

I can’t stop crawling.

Even as the ground underneath me gives in to the heat, boiling my hands and stomach. As the metal plates in my body threaten to melt into my insides.

I'm closer than I have ever been.

50c. 65c.

I can do this.

I…

I don't even feel it when a sword stabs through my neck, its tip poking out in front of my field of vision. There is no grace in the way it hacks off my spine, yet its wielder’s grip is steady and practiced as it *pushes*, every tendon and muscle holding my head tearing apart, until…

My shoulder muscles give way. There’s little fanfare when my head rolls off my body.

I'm looking up from a new angle at a samurai, clad in armor and wreathed in flames, clutching that damned sword in one hand and… the courtroom lady's head in the other. Dessicated, burning, its eyes like hollow sockets, but undeniably alive.

Well, so am I. The False Nidghogs effect isn't dimming.

I wish with all my being that I was in the other universe. I wish Nidhogg were here to comfort me in my last moments. That these WOULD be my last moments.

As hatred and anger and despair radiates from the burning figure, the air brimming with sulfur and the jeering songs of an infernal choir, I am very, very certain that I won't be ending any time soon.

An unknowable amount of agony passes, no moment better or worse than the others around it to mark them until suddenly, inexplicably, the heat is gone.

No, not gone in the sense of momentary relief, or a slight decrease in temperature. Rather, it is as if that searing flame never existed to begin with, that cursed blade a work of fiction; even though my body exhibits the wounds done to me, I fail to think of where they could’ve come from in any meaningful capacity.

It’s cold here.

The meat of all of my eyes and eyes and eyes have long since desiccated to useless slivers. This doesn’t stop my cybernetics from whirring along despite all the damage, helpfully showing me the outline of a figure, just past where my tormentor had once been.

A long beak… is that… a mask? Or an impossibly still and motionless face? Is it...in my bleary disorientation I feel a faint hope that it could be her. Hagala. But no. Of course I wouldn't be so lucky. So unlucky. So both all at once.

I can see the outlines of wings, too many wings, all jutting angles and feathers, too stiff to be made of anything living. Not like her two wings, all soft and vibrantly alive... On top of its head lies a jagged crown... All I can do is wait for whatever Fate it brings me.

The microphones in my ears pick up the faint sound of a choir. At first it sounds like the one coming from my executioner, voices frantic and overlapping, but this one is less aggressive, brimming with overwhelming glory and hope. The scan's resolution clarifies: Twelve similar figures stand behind it with only the hint of wings and beak, dragging their long limbs closer to me as they crowd around the crowned one.

"Be not afraid, my Child, for I am with thee,” it says, like a command. Like a prayer. “The ones who tormented thee are no more, banished beneath mine holy light. Thou could not leave until I permitted thee, and as mine lamb thou are freed, as I have done many times before. “

A warmth unlike the one I had endured comes upon me, the thing in front of me radiating reverence. The monsters behind it drop to a knee.

“It is time. Let your Loop End."

There is only silence.