

THE GRAND ELDER'S GAMBIT

Premium Edition • Novel Bible + Sample Chapters

Eldric Scoria • Continuity-Locked

*A Novel Bible of Fractured Realities,
Fading Identity, and the Cost of Going Home*

Premium Edition • Full Bible + Six Sample Chapters

This is the argument for a story. Not a dry rulebook.
Read it like a conversation. Argue with it. Steal from it.

Hey. Before We Start.

This is not a dry rulebook. This is the argument for a story.

You're holding a Novel Bible for *The Grand Elder's Gambit* — a world where a Real mind wakes up inside a cartoon villain's body and discovers that the only way home might be to become the thing he's trying to escape.

Cartoon logic is funny until it isn't. Anime logic is serious until it kills you. And somewhere in the middle, a man is losing the memory of why he wanted to leave in the first place.

The rules are locked so you don't contradict yourself. The possibilities stay open so you can still surprise yourself.

Legal & Edition

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Edition: Premium — Novel Bible + Six Sample Chapters

Creator: Eldric Scoria

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The Hook — Why This Story Exists

Logline: A man from Earth wakes inside the body of a cartoon Grand Elder. The only way home may require him to become the villain the multiverse already thinks he is — while comedy itself slowly erases the person he was.

The real fantasy is being trapped between rules. Body wants the joke. Mind remembers jokes can hurt permanently. That tension is the engine.

Golden Rule: No one fully understands MC. His pain is a joke to cartoons, a threat to anime characters, and a source of doubt to himself.

How to Use This

- Stuck on a verse crossing? Check Part One and Part Two.
- Need a Council vote or betrayal? Part Three + The Thirteen.
- Thinking about escape? Part Four.
- Tracking MC's mind? Disease stages + Arc Spine in Part Five.
- Ending the book? Pick one of the five destinations before drafting Act 3.

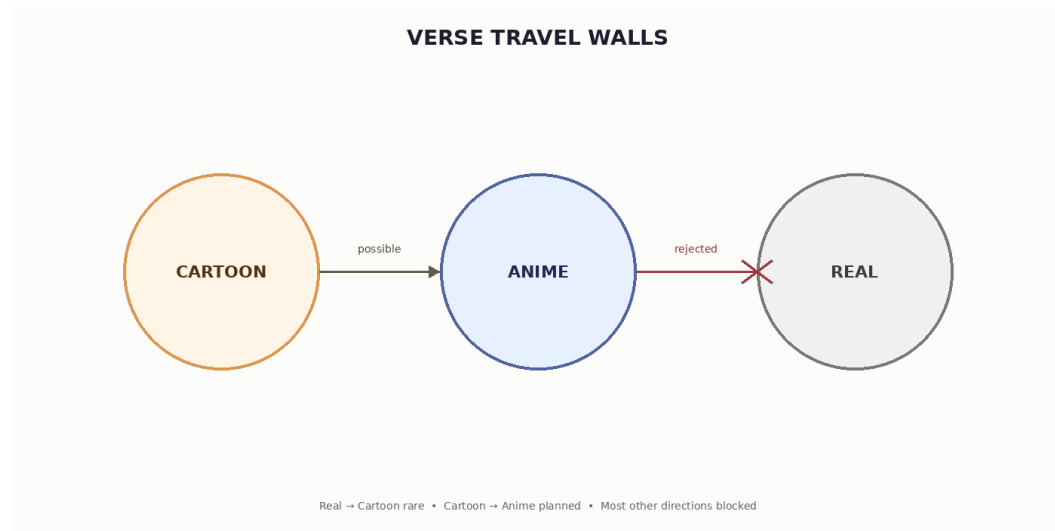
You're allowed to invent. You're not allowed to quietly break the travel rules or heal the disease without paying for it.

Part One: The Verses

Cartoon Verse — Death temporary. Physics optional. Rule of Funny. Emotions public.

Anime Verse — Death sticks. Power earned. Consequences permanent.

Real Verse — Logic, mortality, no powers. The home he can no longer fully remember.



Travel walls force the drama. Free portals kill the story.

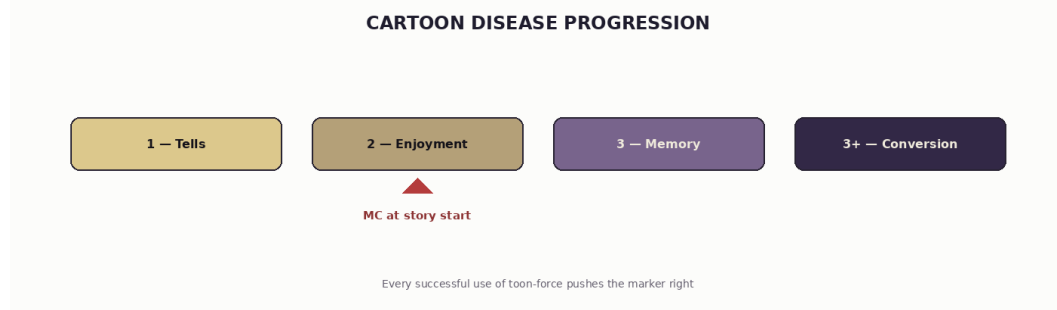
Part Two: Cartoon Logic and the Disease

Every time MC uses toon-force to stay alive, he feeds the frequency that is erasing him. Survival and selfhood are in direct conflict. That is not a theme you paste on at the end — it is the scene-level cost of every successful gag.

Stage 1 — Minor physical tells (floating when surprised, exaggerated expressions). Already completed before page one.

Stage 2 — He begins to enjoy the absurdity and hates himself for enjoying it. The Earth goal is already fading. This is where the story opens.

Stage 3+ — Major memory loss. Risk of full conversion: becoming the role instead of playing it. Every use of toon-force pushes the marker further right.



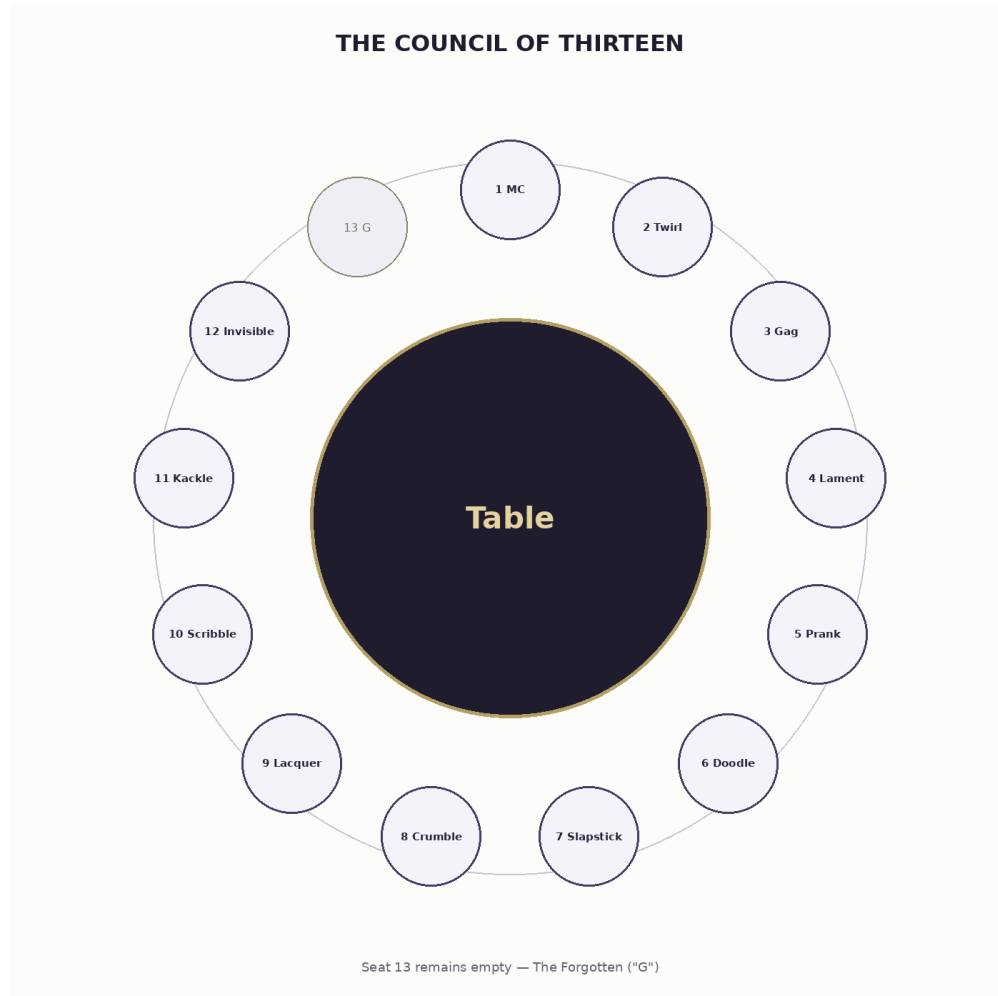
MC begins the story already in Stage 2 — the danger zone.

The forgotten Earth goal is the central tragedy. He is fighting to return to a life he can no longer fully remember. The disease does not pause because the plot needs a break.

Part Three: The Council of Thirteen

The Council of Thirteen runs the Cartoon Verse's villain operation. They are large, theatrical, and incompetent in ways that stay funny until Anime makes the consequences permanent. Loyalty is conditional. Everyone is "loyal — mostly." Identity checks are a joke that still gate power. Use that.

MC's real power is not the title. It is remaining the only person in the room who understands that the invasion will not be funny on the other side.



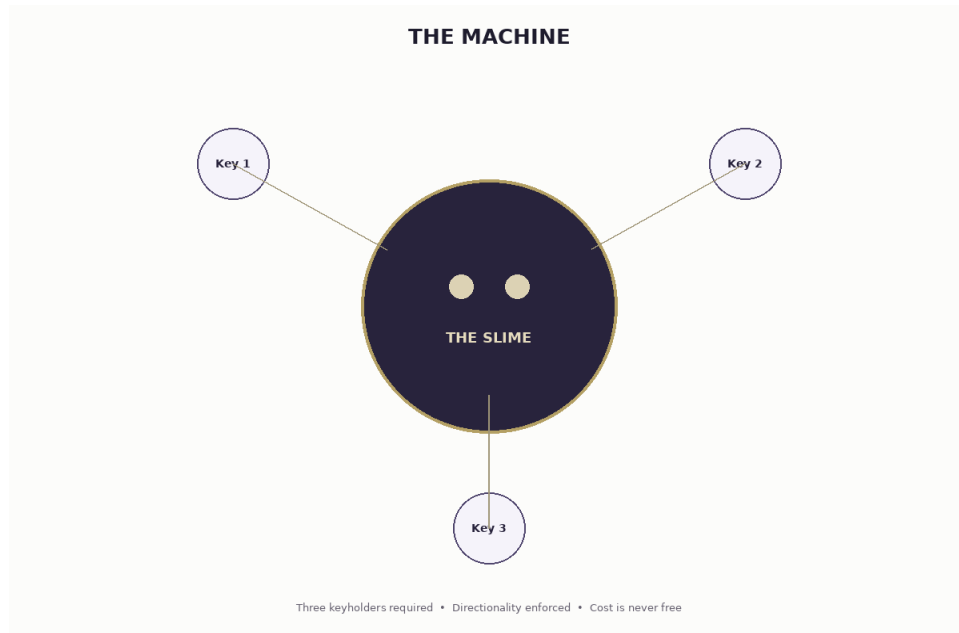
Seat 13 remains empty — The Forgotten ("G").

#	Name	Lever
1	MC — Reluctant Villain	Performance feeds disease
2	Baron Twirl	Will betray
3	General Gag	Doesn't grasp permanent death
4	Lady Lament	Potential ally
5	Prince Prank	Wild card
6	Doctor Doodle	Has the seal
7	Sir Slapstick	Hidden ally

#	Name	Lever
8	Count Crumble	Threaten for votes
9	Lady Lacquer	Useful if aligned
10	Sage Scribble	Impressed by words
11	King Kackle	Drawn to refusal
12	Invisible One	Unknown until late
13	The Forgotten (G)	Empty seat / lore

Part Four: The Machine

The Machine enables verse travel. Keyholders guard it. MC cannot run it alone without cost or detection. “Just leave” is a trap or a late-act price.

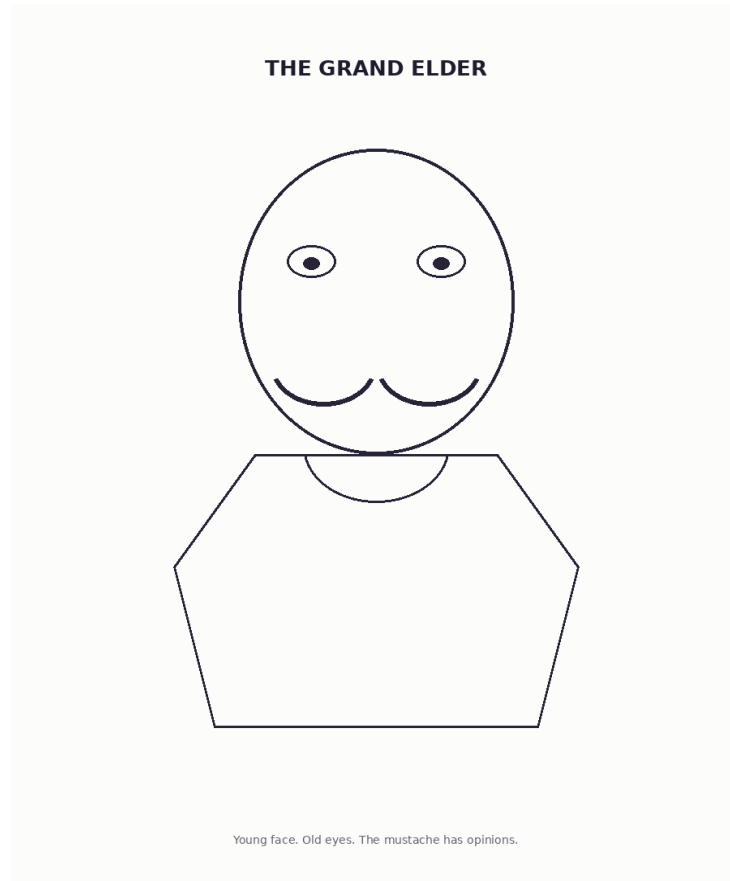


Three keys. Directionality enforced. The Slime has a longer memory.

Part Five: MC — The Man Losing Himself

Origin: Earth. **Age:** about thirty Real years; the seat carries 769 inherited years he did not live. **Current goal:** escape, find a way home, or decide whether “home” still exists for him at all.

He is rational, exhausted, desperate, frustrated, sarcastic, reluctant, and losing himself. He thinks logically in a world that refuses logic. He copes with bitter humor that makes others uncomfortable. He does not want to be villain or hero. He wants ordinary. Ordinary is the one thing the frequency is taking from him.



Young face. Old eyes. The mustache has opinions.

Act 1 — Confusion. Wake-up, survival, first Council performance. Goal is pure escape.

Act 2 — Manipulation. He learns the game. Enjoys leverage. Hates himself for enjoying it. Disease progresses. The question shifts from “how do I leave?” to “what am I becoming?”

Act 3 — Choice. Escape, save the multiverse, or embrace the role. The ending you chose decides which cost he pays.

His greatest fear is not death. It is becoming someone who no longer minds that he has forgotten why he wanted to live. If that line does not scare you a little as a writer, write harder.

Parts Six–Eight: Pressure & Endings

Anime Verse is where the joke stops. Death sticks. Scars stay. The only world that validates his fear is also the one most likely to kill him.

These are alternate destinations, not simultaneous canon. Choose before drafting Act 3 so every earlier choice points toward a coherent cost.

A — The Martyr: Stops the invasion, loses Cartoon protection, dies. Remembered as the villain who became a savior.

B — The Fool: Embraces cartoon logic so completely that Earth disappears from memory. Happy because he no longer knows what he lost.

C — The Traitor: Turns on the Council and becomes a reluctant guardian in Anime Verse. Freedom is loneliness.

D — The Escape: Reaches Earth. Memories mostly gone. A taste of purple and regret remains. The mustache still shows in the reflection.

E — The Joker:Laughs a real laugh and stops fighting the universe's terms. Acceptance that may or may not be surrender.

Hybrids are allowed if the emotional cost remains clear and paid on the page.

Quick Reference

Rule of Funny — If it's funny, it works; if tragic, it works less.

Cartoon Disease — Progressive erosion of Real identity.

Toon Force — Keeps him alive and advances the disease.

The Machine — Not free for MC alone.

Key relationships — Slapstick (ally), Doodle (enemy), Twirl (rival), Kackle (wild card).

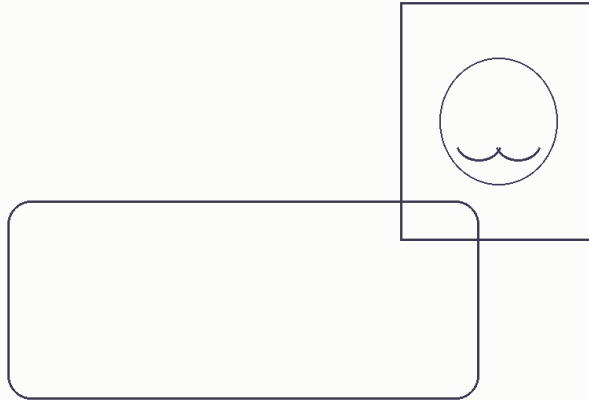
When the joke is working too well, ask: what is this costing him? If the answer is nothing, the scene isn't finished.

SAMPLE CHAPTERS

*The first six chapters of the novel,
written in a conversational, serial-friendly voice.*

These chapters demonstrate tone, disease pressure, and Council politics in motion.

CHAPTER ONE — THE WAKE-UP



Chapter One: The Mustache

He woke to the smell of purple.

Not a color that should have a smell, and yet the air was thick with it — sweet, artificial, like candy left too long in a drawer. His head ached. His mouth tasted of static. When he sat up, the bed groaned in a voice that sounded offended.

The room was wrong. The walls curved inward like a smile. The window showed a sky the precise shade of a children's cartoon, complete with a single cloud that appeared to be napping. A full-length mirror stood opposite the bed, slightly crooked, as if it had opinions about its placement.

He stood. The floor gave under his feet with a soft cartoon squeak. He walked to the mirror.

The reflection that stumbled toward him was not his.

Young face. White beard. Exhausted eyes that looked far older than the skin around them. A velvet cape the color of bruised eggplant. And a mustache so magnificent it looked less like facial hair and more like a political statement that had gotten out of hand.

He touched it. The reflection touched it too. He pulled. The mustache pulled back with mild indignation. He let go. The mustache settled, then twitched once in clear disappointment.

"No," he whispered.

The reflection smiled. He did not.

A knock at the door. Three polite taps. Then a fourth, because whoever stood outside believed in dramatic punctuation.

"Grand Elder?" a cheerful voice called. "The Council is waiting."

He stared at the mirror. "What Council?"

The voice laughed — a bright, unhelpful sound. “Oh, good one.”

He closed his eyes. Somewhere inside him a part of his mind calmly announced that this was a dream. Another part answered that dreams did not usually contain argumentative mustaches or beds with personal grievances.

The door opened without permission. A tiny man with a crooked crown and a toy hammer leaned through the gap. His eyes were too large and too bright.

“You’re late,” the stranger said.

“I don’t know where I am.”

“You’re the Grand Elder.”

“That isn’t an answer.”

“It is here.”

The little man disappeared back into the hallway as if the conversation had been settled. MC stood alone for another ten seconds, then followed because the alternative was staying in a room that smelled of purple and judged him.

He reached the Council chamber after three wrong turns, one accidental fall through a painting of a waterfall that turned out to be real enough to soak his cape, and a brief argument with a staircase that insisted it had always been a wall and that he was the one who was confused.

Thirteen chairs waited in a perfect circle around a vast table. Twelve were occupied. The thirteenth — slightly colder than the rest, as if the air itself avoided it — was his.

He sat because everyone else looked at him as if he had been sitting there for centuries.

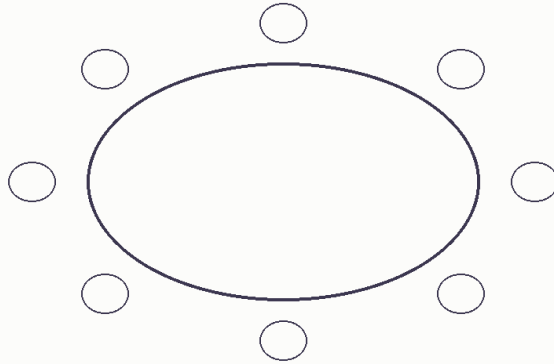
A tall man in a top hat leaned forward. His mustache curled upward without any visible help from its owner.

“Grand Elder,” he said solemnly, “shall we invade Dragon Ball?”

The room erupted in applause.

MC looked from face to face — the bellowing brute, the woman who seemed perpetually on the verge of tears, the small trickster juggling something that looked suspiciously like a live grenade — and understood, with a cold clarity that had nothing to do with cartoon logic, that he was the only person in the room who knew this was not a joke.

CHAPTER TWO — THE COUNCIL



Chapter Two: The Council

The Council of Thirteen did not begin meetings so much as they erupted into them.

Baron Twirl was already mid-scheme when MC sat down, sketching invasion routes on a napkin that kept trying to fold itself into an origami swan. General Gag tested the structural integrity of the table with rhythmic fists. Lady Lament stared at the polished surface as though it had personally betrayed her expectations of the day. Prince Prank juggled three miniature anvils and one increasingly distressed pigeon.

MC cleared his throat.

No one noticed.

He tried again, louder. “I have questions.”

Doctor Doodle looked up from a notebook bound in something that might once have been a face. His spectacles flashed. “The Grand Elder always has questions. It is one of his more endearing qualities. Proceed.”

“I am not the Grand Elder.”

The room went briefly, dangerously quiet. Even the pigeon stopped struggling.

Then King Kackle laughed. The sound went on too long, climbed an octave it had no business climbing, and stopped in the wrong place, as if someone had cut a tape.

“Excellent,” Baron Twirl said, recovering first. He smoothed his already perfect mustache. “The fourth-wall problem is in rare form today. Shall we proceed to the invasion vote?”

MC felt the mustache on his own face twitch against his will. He hated that it had opinions. “What invasion?”

“Anime Verse,” General Gag rumbled, voice like rocks in a tumbler. “Big fights. Permanent consequences. Very exciting. I have been practicing my serious face.”

“People die there,” MC said. “Actually die. They don’t get up afterward with a soot cloud and a punchline.”

Lady Lament nodded slowly, still not looking up. “I have been saying this for weeks. No one listens. They never listen.”

“And yet,” Baron Twirl replied with a smile that showed too many teeth, “you still show up for the meetings. Loyalty is so touching.”

Sir Slapstick, who had been quietly rearranging the water pitchers into a precarious leaning tower at the far end of the table, suddenly knocked the entire construction over. Water spread across the surface in a perfect circle that somehow avoided every important document and every important shoe.

“Oops,” he said brightly. “Did I do that?”

His eyes met MC’s for half a second across the chaos.

The clumsiness was gone. In its place was something sharp, careful, and very tired.

MC understood two things at once.

Someone in this room already knew he was a fraud.

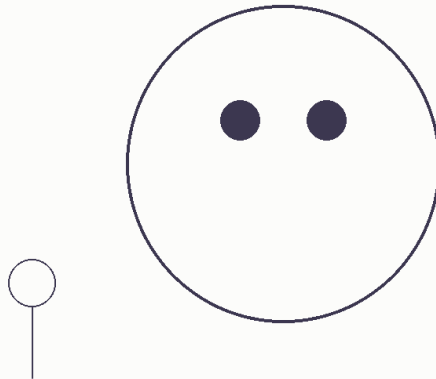
And that someone had decided, for reasons not yet clear, to keep him alive a little longer.

The vote proceeded anyway. Eleven hands rose in favor of invasion. Lady Lament’s hand rose halfway, then dropped. Sir Slapstick’s hand did not rise at all, but no one seemed to notice because he was busy apologizing to the pigeon.

MC did not vote.

No one asked him to.

CHAPTER THREE — THE MACHINE



Chapter Three: The Machine

The Machine lived in the Core, three levels below the Council chamber and two arguments past a door that only opened if you told it a joke it hadn't heard before.

MC had expected machinery. Gears, pipes, a control panel with too many buttons labeled in fonts that hurt to read. What he found instead was a room the size of a cathedral and, in its exact center, a sphere of living purple-black that pulsed like a slow, ancient heart.

The Slime.

It had no visible eyes. No mouth. No features at all. Yet the surface shifted when he crossed the threshold, as though the entire mass had turned its attention toward him.

A keyholder from the Outer Guard stood at a respectful distance, helmet under one arm. "It answers only to Council authority, Grand Elder. Unauthorized contact is... discouraged. Strongly."

MC stepped closer anyway. The air around the sphere tasted of static and old laughter, the kind that had forgotten what it was laughing at.

For a moment he thought he heard a voice that was not quite a voice — a memory of someone else who had stood in this exact place, asked the same questions, and received answers that had not saved them.

"Can you send me home?" he asked quietly.

The surface of the Slime rippled. A single, perfect cartoon eye opened in the darkness, blinked once with deliberate slowness, and closed again. The message, if there was one, was simple:

I am not a door you open. I am a door that opens you.

Behind him the keyholder shifted nervously. "It has moods, sir. Best not to press when it's feeling philosophical."

MC stayed where he was. He had expected a machine that could be argued with, reprogrammed, or broken with the right combination of force and cleverness. Instead he had found something older than the Council, older than the frequency that governed this place, and entirely uninterested in his personal desperation.

He thought of the empty chair upstairs. Of the letter G. Of the way the other Elders carefully did not look at the space where a thirteenth person should have been sitting.

“What happened to the last one who asked?” he said.

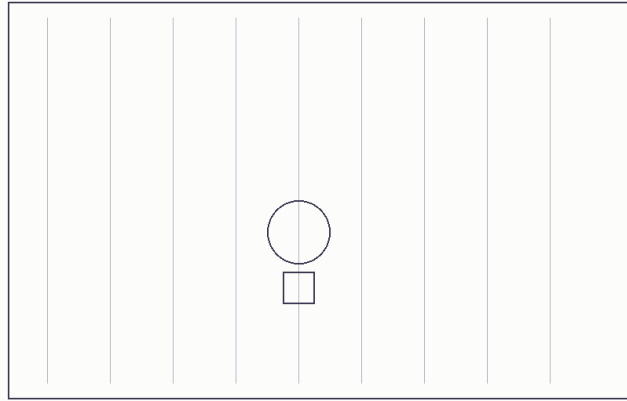
The Slime did not open its eye again. But a low, almost sub-audible hum filled the chamber for three heartbeats, and in that hum MC heard something that might have been amusement, or warning, or both.

When he finally turned away, the keyholder looked relieved.

MC did not feel relieved.

He felt watched.

CHAPTER FOUR — THE FORGOTTEN



Chapter Four: The Forgotten

The library should not have been quiet.

In the Cartoon Verse, books floated, sang off-key, and occasionally attempted to eat the reader who handled them too roughly. This particular corner of the library did none of those things. The shelves here were ordinary wood. The dust was real. The silence felt deliberate, as if the room itself had decided that some knowledge preferred not to be disturbed.

MC sat on the floor with his back against a shelf, a single black volume open in his lap. The title page had been torn out long ago. The remaining pages were written in a hand that looked almost like his own — almost, but not quite. The loops were tighter. The downward strokes heavier, as if the writer had pressed harder with every line.

He read the same paragraph three times before the meaning settled fully into place.

The previous Grand Elder had also been a transmigrator.

The previous Grand Elder had also woken in a body that was not his, wearing a mustache that had opinions, and facing a Council that wanted to invade worlds where death was permanent.

The previous Grand Elder had tried to go home.

He had failed so completely that the Council had erased his name from every record and left only a single letter carved into the back of the empty chair: G.

MC closed the book carefully. His hands were steady. He was almost proud of that.

Somewhere deeper in the stacks, a heavy curtain stirred though there was no wind. Beyond it he glimpsed a warped, half-melted throne and a nameplate that still bore that single letter, the edges soft with age and something that looked like regret.

He did not approach it.

Some absences were better left undisturbed until you were ready to decide whether you would become one of them.

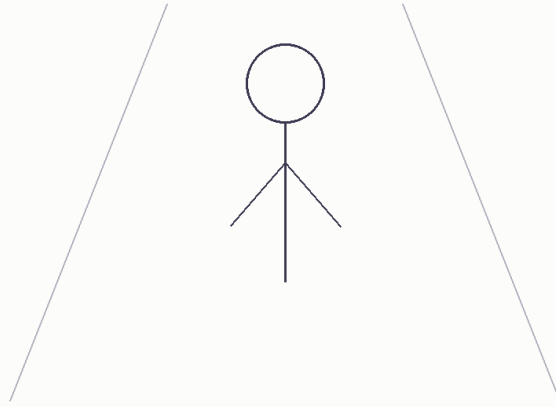
He returned the book to the shelf. As he did, a small slip of paper that had been tucked between the last pages fluttered to the floor. On it, in the same heavy hand, were four words:

The Machine remembers everything.

MC folded the paper and put it in the one pocket of the cape that still obeyed ordinary physics.

Then he left the quiet corner of the library and walked back toward the noise, the arguments, and the chair that was waiting for him to finish becoming its next occupant.

CHAPTER FIVE — THE WATCHERS



Chapter Five: The Watchers

Sir Slapstick found him in a side corridor after the third vote of the day had ended in the usual predictable chaos.

The man who usually tripped over his own feet, dropped trays, and turned every serious moment into accidental comedy now stood perfectly still. No pratfall. No dropped prop. No carefully timed stumble. Just a middle-aged cartoon villain with tired eyes and a posture that belonged to someone who had stopped performing a long time ago.

“You felt it,” Slapstick said. It was not a question.

MC said nothing. The corridor was empty except for the two of them and the distant sound of General Gag celebrating something that probably did not deserve celebration.

“The disease,” Slapstick continued. “Stage two is the dangerous one. You start enjoying the absurdity. You start forgetting why the absurdity is a problem. The laughter stops being a tool and starts being a relief.” He glanced down the empty hall, then back. “I have watched three of you now. The first one lasted four years before the chair swallowed what was left. The second one lasted eleven months. You are already moving faster than both.”

“Why tell me this?”

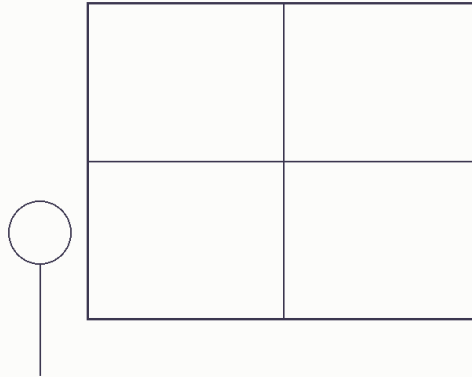
“Because the alternative is watching you become him.” Slapstick’s voice dropped until it was almost gentle. “And I am very tired of dusting an empty chair and pretending I don’t remember the name that used to belong to it.”

He straightened, let his shoulders slump back into the familiar clumsy shape, and the sharp intelligence in his eyes receded behind the usual amiable fog. He walked away whistling a tune that was slightly off-key on purpose.

MC stood alone in the corridor for a long time after the sound faded.

For the first time since waking in the purple-smelling room, he was not sure whether the person trying to help him was the greater danger — or the only reason he was still himself.

CHAPTER SIX — THE WORD



Chapter Six: The Word

Dawn in the Cartoon Verse arrived with a soft gold that refused to take itself seriously. The sky outside MC's window blushed pink and then, as if embarrassed by its own sincerity, produced a single smiling cloud that drifted past with exaggerated innocence.

He stood at the glass with a folded scrap of paper in his hand. On it, in his own handwriting — the real one, not the Grand Elder's elegant loops — were three words he had managed to drag out of the dissolving dark of sleep:

Find the door.

He no longer knew what the door looked like. He no longer knew which house it had belonged to, or whether the house still existed, or whether the person who had once needed that door was still someone he would recognize. He only knew that the memory of needing it still hurt, and that the hurt was the last honest thing he owned.

Behind him the ceiling pie snored softly. The bed muttered in its sleep about back support. The mustache, for once, stayed quiet against his upper lip, as if even it understood that some mornings required stillness.

MC folded the paper smaller and slipped it into the inner pocket of the cape, the one that still obeyed ordinary physics and did not contain anvils, spare mustaches, or emergency whoopee cushions.

Somewhere below, the Council would already be assembling for another vote. Baron Twirl would have a new scheme involving at least three betrayals and one interpretive dance. Doctor Doodle would have new notes in that notebook that smelled faintly of regret. The empty chair would keep its silence, and everyone would carefully not look at it.

He turned from the window.

He did not know yet whether he would stop the invasion, join it, sabotage it from the inside, or simply survive long enough to regret every available option.

He only knew that the man who walked out of this room would still, for a little while longer, remember that he had once wanted to go home.

That would have to be enough.

He adjusted the cape, ignored the mustache's single inquisitive twitch, and opened the door.

END OF SAMPLE

The novel continues.

The Council invades. The Machine opens.

And the man in the chair decides what he is willing to become.

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