

Chapter -II

I stumbled into a carpeted room with colorful walls, spinning around to find that, just like with the Pool Rooms Dungeon, the entrance was nowhere to be found. What’s more, I realized my perspective was off.

“Did I shrink?” I asked Panda.

“I don’t think so. I think everything else is just much bigger.”

As I looked around at my ominously-cheerful surroundings, I saw how nearby plastic chairs, old-and-worn toys, and kindergarten-like furniture were all at least twice as big as they ought to be. The room I was in, a large windowless box with three connecting hallways, was also sixteen feet to the ceiling, if not more.

“Is this how a child would experience the world?” I wondered, not really remembering my childhood well enough to recall what it’d been like.

“Forget children, this is how *I* see the world!” Panda said.

“Speaking of plushies, look,” I said, pointing to a human-sized teddy bear slumped against a rainbow-colored dresser, “It’s one of your kind!”

“First off, I don’t think that’s part of the scenery, and secondly, how dare you. It’s like comparing humans to apes. I’m way more civilized and evolved, thank you!”

I pulled out the Looking Glass and held it up to my right eye as I looked across the room to the teddy bear that was as tall as me.

Level 6	‘Playroom Bear’	Enemy ^x
<p><i>“I’ll hug ‘till you pop.”</i></p> <p><i>With the size of a human, these teddy bears can seem quite imposing, but all they really want is a hug.</i></p> <p><i>Just like constrictor snakes, Playroom Bears have evolved the ability to incapacitate their prey by wrapping their limbs around them and squeezing until the lungs go *pop*! And like snakes, they devour their food whole. Their tummies grow to accommodate the size of their meal, and they are able to fit at least three people in there at once! How impressive, wouldn’t you say?</i></p>		

So, what are you waiting for? Go give it a hug!

When I tapped the pop-up away, the teddy bear began lumbering upright sluggishly, and I cast my eyes around the room for any other threats, before marching towards it. As soon as it was standing on its two feet, its mouth opened wide, the sound of tearing fabric filling the air. Then it lifted its arms and began running at me.

“That’s so much scarier than I thought it would be, based on the description,” Panda commented, as I quickly dodged out of the way of the bear, before it could grab me.

Failing to catch me, the bear stumbled a few steps, before languidly turning to face me and charging again. Instead of attempting to dodge a second time, I ran to meet it, side-stepping at the last second and torpedoing my fist into its stomach. My gauntleted knuckles hit with enough force to leave an exit wound on its back, through which red fluff exploded out of, raining down to the floor slowly, as the Playroom Bear fell face-first onto the floor. I wasn’t entirely sure it was dead, so I pulled my fist back and rammed it down on the back of its head.

On impact, the bear’s overlarge head produced a violent *crunch* and flattened, though the fabric of its head was containing whatever inner mass had been crushed, like a burst watermelon trapped in a plastic bag.

“That was unnecessarily-gruesome,” Panda said.

“At least I know it’s dead.”

As I looked down at the teddy bear and its deflated head, I wondered about something. “Do you think there’s a way to see my *Level Progress* like what it shows when I level up?”

As the words left my mouth, it triggered a pop-up window to appear with the exact information I was looking for:

You are currently Level -4	
Unspent Attribute Points: 1	
Points already invested: 3	
<i>Kills required for Level -5</i>	<i>6/15</i>

“Huh. It seems like maybe there could be more ways to query the System for information *like this*,” Panda speculated.

I thought about it, then said a string of words in a row, testing his theory: “Map! World Map! Dungeon Map! Kill Count! Ability Overview! Teleport! Exit Dungeon! Friendlist!?”

None of them worked.

“Try ‘Unalive’.”

“I’m not gonna try *that*. Knowing them, they’d actually put that in.”

“Ah, probably right. What about ‘Unequip All’?”

“...Why?”

“Just try it!”

I sighed. “*Unequip All*.”

My Punch-Glove, my suit, underwear, socks, and shoes, as well as the Looking Glass I’d hastily put in my pocket; all of it vanished into my inventory in the blink of an eye.

SKILL TRIGGER!

BIRTHDAY_SUIT is now in full effect!

“...Why did *that* work...?”

“Gambit! You pervert! Put your clothes back on!”

I gritted my teeth in annoyance and navigated through my inventory screen to re-equip my suit and glove, and everything else. Two achievements followed in quick succession:

Congratulations! You have unlocked an achievement! ✕
<i>‘Amoral Pervert’</i>
Went fully nude in a school zone.
<i>It may be the literal apocalypse of your world, with all minors of ‘Dirt’ transported to our Children’s Zone until they mature, but we’d like you to know that we here at the GREAT GAME headquarters adhere to a moral code, which you have grossly violated!</i>
<i>From now on, every time you move to a new area, you must inform your neighbors of your criminal history or face the</i>

<p><i>wrath of our Child Protective Services! They’ve got dogs. The scary kind.</i></p>
<p>Reward: <i>You’re on the registry</i></p>

<p>Congratulations! You have unlocked an achievement! ^x</p>
<p><i>‘Brute-Forcing’</i></p> <p>Brute-forced a System Command.</p>
<p><i>You brute-forced a System Command, becoming the first Player to utilize ‘Unequip All’, which, let’s face it, is a nonsensical command that the System refuses to let us throw out. But as with anything nonsensical in the GREAT GAME, it’s all just part of the madness.</i></p> <p><i>As a reward, here are two more commands:</i></p>
<p>Rewards: <i>Inspect & Color-Blind Mode</i></p>

“I’d never have guessed those,” Panda said, after reading the pop-ups. “Also, you’re on the Pervert Registry.”

“Why would they put in a *Color-Blind Mode!*?”

“If it’s a game-centric apocalypse, doesn’t it make things fairer?”

Activating *Color-Blind Mode!*

“Woah, that’s weird,” said the plushie.

“...It’s an actual *Color-Blind Mode!*,” I remarked, impressed. All the colors had shifted, with reds and yellows becoming brownish, blues and purples becoming just gradients of blue, along with the general brightness of all colors softening to something mellower.

Deactivating *Color-Blind Mode!*

“Really makes you reconsider how evil the people running this thing are, doesn’t it?”

“No. What the hell are you talking about??”

Panda continued, ignoring my words. “I wonder if they also helped people with disabilities be able to join the Great Game. Or terminally ill patients.”

“Anyone in a hospital is probably a monster now.”

“Oh... right.”

“*Status*,” I said, then tried to apply my available point to Perception, but received an error:

ERROR!

Unable to invest point in chosen attribute!

Please pick another.

I sighed and clicked on Vitality instead.

Level -4		'Gambit'		<i>System Glitch</i> ^x	
STATS					
Health: Not, Not 'Good'		Stamina: ちょっと		Armor: Plastic Bottle Suit	
Carry Weight: 1000 Pandas		Top Speed: Carriage		Mana: Literally Zero	
ATTRIBUTES					
Strength: 2300 lbs.		Dexterity: Platypus		Intelligence: TBD	
Vitality: Tomahawk		Wisdom: N/A		Defense: Plastic Bottle	
Athleticism: 栗鼠		Perception: 'Yes?'			
ABILITIES			PASSIVES		
'Punch.harder()'			'Glitch' 'Insanity' 'Inanimate Voices' 'Math.multiply(Punch)' 'BIRTHDAY_SUIT'		

“They’re really railroading me here,” I commented.

“Your Vitality now says ‘Tomahawk’? Isn’t that a weapon?”

“There’s such a thing as a tomahawk steak, y’know.”

“Is it good?” he asked. It was clear he was hungry, which brought a lot of uncomfortable questions to mind.

“Yeah, if done right. Though any terrible cook can mess up prime meat.”

“Speaking of food, do you smell *that*?” I asked, sniffing the air.

“Is that the smell of a family-sized pepperoni-and-pineapple pizza!?”

“You can tell the size of it from the smell?”

“Stop talking and find that pizza!”

I followed my nose, as I moved through a spacious hallway that led from my starting room, before arriving in a vast hall with a ball pit, tube slide, swings, seesaws, and many other things you might find at a fast-food chain’s playground. The floor was no longer a carpet, but instead a spongy asphalt-like material, which would definitely scrape the skin off your knees if you slipped on it.

Near to the doorway I entered through was a table too tall for me to reach, as the theme of everything being humongous was still in effect even here. I climbed up onto a plastic chair next to it, which was rather undignifying, and then from there reached up onto the enormous table, where a massive pepperoni-and-pineapple pizza was lain across the malleable plastic cover that draped over the table. Panda immediately leapt off my shoulder and started running across the table.

“Don’t eat it!” I yelled. “You’ll get dirty and I’ll have to wash you!”

Panda skidded to a halt on his stumpy jointless legs. “What about poison?”

“That too, I guess,” I added as I caught up to him.

The plushie waddled forward with some apprehension all of a sudden, and I followed close behind him. I was starving too, after all.

When I reached the edge of the normal-table-sized pizza, I pointed my hand at it and tried the new command I’d learned, “*Inspect*.”

‘Playroom Pizza’

x

If you don’t mind the taste of the plastic cover that has seeped into the crust of this enormous pizza, then you’ll probably be fine eating it.

Just be warned: *if Bungo notices that rats have been in the food for the children he is meant to entertain, he’ll go berserk.*

With a mouthful of pineapple, I asked, “Who’s Bungo?”

No sooner had the words left my mouth than the sound of squeaky clown shoes came down the hallway I’d entered from.