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This adventure is not for everyone. It does contain silliness, more than a normal obsession with the sound a duck makes, inside jokes and an occasional lack of cohesion. At no time were any septapi, platypus, or other semi aquatic poisonous egg laying mammals harmed in the writing of this story. Also, at no time while writing, editing (ha) or pondering what happens next was anyone involved wearing mukluks. So, if you are all good with that this is the story, read at your own risk, believe me it is only semi adjacent to perilous...

“This May very well be the biggest piece of nonsense written since Gertrude and I got our first blender.“ - Dr Matilda Bananapants

“We’ve got wicker, all kinds of wicker, what kind of wicker would you like?” - Wally from Wally’s World of Wicker

## **Not Sally - and the Agents of DUCK**

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Outro

## Chapter One - Awake

Light, except there is no light? Awake, am I awake? If this is a dream, I need better dreams. So let's take inventory of what I think I know:

I think of myself as I, so I must exist. I realize that is a great leap of faith in my existence, but I have to start somewhere or I will end up a jibbering mess and I still will not have inventoried what I know. And, there I go again thinking about I and at least lending evidence to the idea that I truly do exist and am not an unthinking lump of coal. I do apologize to any lumps of coal that may be listening in on my thoughts and take offense.

I am really not getting very far with this self reflection and inventory; so far I have established that I am not a lump of coal and probably do exist. I do not seem to remember having a name, but I believe strongly that all things must have a name or at least I think I do and let's not get into that again. Even a lump of coal has a name. I will call myself the Exalted Ismael Rasputin Maphuti Robinowitz the Third. On second thought, that would be extremely difficult to sign or even tell anyone at the grocery store, so I will call myself The Steve, no wait, let's just go with Steve.

I do not appear to be hurt. I say this because nothing hurts and seem to have all the requisite body parts, two arms, two legs, a torso and three heads. Just kidding, only one head, with the requisite number of eyes, ears, nose and mouth. I am not at all certain my eyes are working, maybe I am blind. Oh wait, I forgot to open my eyes. Blink, blink . . . blink. I can definitely blink and while it is not extraordinarily bright, it is taking some time for my eyes to adjust to the light.

Now that I have opened my eyes, this whole inventory thing should go much faster...

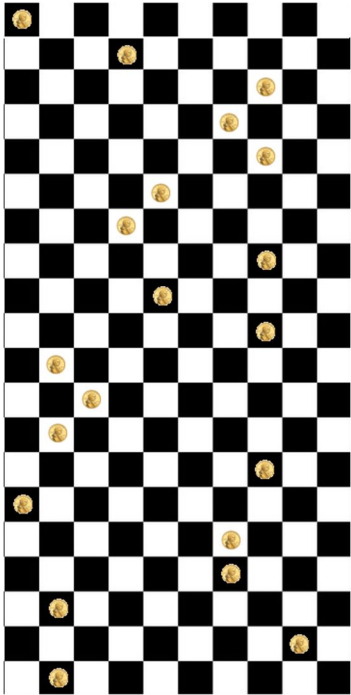
I do find it interesting that while I remember nothing specifically about myself, I still have the mental vocabulary to carry on a conversation with myself and remember the names of everything else. Or, I just think I do and if I climb down that rabbit hole again, I may never get past this and might as well be a lump of coal. Not that being a lump of coal is necessarily a poor existence, but I like to think I have more ambition than that. I just seem to have forgotten. Let's just say I have amnesia and not look too deeply into that.

I also apparently tend to ramble on a bit. Good thing the human mind moves extremely fast, so while it seems like I have spent the last ten minutes contemplating my existence and various states of being a lump of coal, it all happened in less time than it takes to snap my fingers, which for the record I have ten. Ten minutes, ten fingers, ten toes and if I go on for ten more minutes like this I will most likely begin to quack like a duck.

So, before I go on, let's summarize in case anyone is paying attention; I exist, am human, not a lump of coal or any other byproduct of millions of years of heat, pressure and the decay of prehistoric plants and dinosaurs, with appropriate appendages, have amnesia, but am fixated on calling myself Steve and it is not dark.

Continuing to survey my surroundings, I observe that I am laying on a tiled floor that makes a nice chessboard pattern. I should probably get up and look around. I am in a room with a skylight, which is why it is not completely dark. I surmise that it is night as I can see some stars through the skylight, so I also must not be in a big city or the stars would not be visible. The walls are a nondescript grey, or maybe it is the lighting or a sub standard interior decorator, but boring nonetheless. In addition to the skylight I can see a perfectly normal wooden door. I assume it is perfectly normal as there is a small

sign on it that reads “Perfectly Normal Door.” I think whoever put me here had a strange sense of humor. The room is about twenty feet by ten feet from counting the square tiles on the floor. There also are twenty Sacajawea dollars on the floor. I know there are twenty; I counted them each dead center in the middle of a tile. And strangely, they are glued to the floor. Apparently, in addition to all of my digits and appendages, I have a small notebook and mechanical pencil in my pocket and I drew this sketch in case the positions mean something later.



If I have pockets, that must mean I am wearing clothes. Apparently before I lost my memory I decided to dress for the 90s Seattle scene and am wearing jeans, a flannel shirt and some hiking books. In addition to the notebook and mechanical pencil, I also have a pack of gum and a generic Swiss army knife. I don't want to read too much into this, but apparently I am also cheap, hence the generic Swiss army knife. So, using my cheap or maybe frugal knife, I pried all the dollars off the floor. Twenty bucks and if I only had a small bag or sack, I would have a Sack of Jawa. Yes, I know bad pun, but I am pretty sure I make those all the time. Instead I put them in my pocket, hence a pocket of Jawa, thought it just does not have the same ring.

Well my self assessment and inventory of stuff took longer than it should have, but I think I am ready to see about getting out of this room.



## Chapter two - Escape

I really should get out of this room, it is rather boring in here and I have a nagging sense that there is a greater purpose for why I am here than just contemplating my existence and the retrieval of dollar coins meticulously glued to the floor. So, what are my options? That really is a silly question, I haven't even tried the door.

I walk over to the door, turn the knob and open the door. Well that was easy. Good thing I did not try to fashion a grappling hook out of my faux Swiss army knife and a rope woven of the fibers of my flannel shirt and escape out the skylight. That would have been a waste of time.

Looking out the door, I see that it is night outside and that I am not in the city. Not only is there no other building in sight, there are at least two dozen cows sleeping and dreaming of some tasty grass to munch. That is all except one cow who seems to be sleep mooing and I like to think having greater dreams of being the first cow superhero. Not that I have any idea what a cow superhero would do or that cows need superheroes, I just thought maybe one of them had greater aspirations than eating grass and making milk or becoming a hamburger. Cows are tasty after all.

Steve, Steve snap out of it, this is no time to contemplate cow dreams, aspirations and the evolutionary advantage of cows being that they are tasty. We really need to get out of here. Have I really started to refer to myself as we, on second thought, I take one step out the door and fall flat on my face. Apparently I forgot to look down and notice the unconscious person laying in front of the doorway on the ground. At least I hope she is unconscious and not dead.

I check her pulse and observe that she is still breathing. Maybe she just fell asleep in front of the door. Ok, I agree that does seem silly. I give a quick once over and it looks like she also has all of her proper digits and appendages. She does appear to have a bump on her head, hopefully that was not from me tripping over her when I stepped out of the room.

As I ponder how to revive her, I hear a girl's voice say, "Hey, did you just step on me?"

"Uh, what?" I respond hoping to not sound as guilty as I feel and add "Really, you had that bump on your head when I tripped over you."

"So, you did step on me." she said.

"Technically tripping over and stepping on are two completely different things, and can I ask your name so I can stop calling you she and her in my inner monologue or I will have to give you a name like Sally. Do you feel like a Sally?"

"How did you guess my name was Sally, I don't think I look like a Sally, I always thought of myself as more of an Emily. Just kidding, my name is not Sally or Emily."

"So then should I just call you: *Not Sally*?"

"Well, since you are a stranger and I am not supposed to tell strangers my name, you can call me Not Sally until I get to know you."

"Ok, but that will definitely get confusing. By the way, I am Steve or at least that is what I am calling myself since I do not remember my name or anything about myself. Don't tell anyone, but I have amnesia that only applies to who I am and what I am doing here. I have decided to not think too much about it and so far it is working for me."

“Uhm, ok Steve, I’m good. So what am I doing here and if you didn’t give me the bump on my head, who did and why am I in front of this what I can only describe as a shed talking to a guy who calls himself Steve and me Not Sally?”

“Not Sally or NS for short, can I call you NS?”

“Sure.”

“NS, not only do I not remember my name, I don’t know why I am here or even where here is.”

“So, let me get this straight, we are stuck here in the middle of nowhere,” pointing around her, “and, neither of us know where here is or why we are here.”

“Right, though I prefer to think of it being merely adjacent to nowhere as opposed to the middle, though I would concede slightly off center of nowhere.”

“Awesome, so let’s take stock of the situation and figure out what to do next.”

“No, I’m not going down that rabbit hole again. We exist, I am Steve, you are not Sally, I have amnesia and we are lost. I think that sums everything up perfectly; so no reason to bring lumps of coal into it.”

“Steve, I never mentioned lumps of coal, so I am not sure why your bring it up, but now that you do mention it I do have keys to an SUV, which runs on gasoline, which is also a by product of millions of years of heat, pressure and the decay of prehistoric plants and dinosaurs.”

“Exactly, wait, what? You have a SUV?”

“Not mine per se. But yes with a GPS and slushy machine.”

“A slushy machine?”

“Ok you got me just GPS, but a slushy machine would be nice don’t you think?”

“NS, you are right, I could go for a nice blue raspberry slushy right about now. Mmmmm, blue raspberry. Wait, what, so we have an SUV?”

“Yes, I think we covered that, with a GPS.”

“Oh good, let’s take a look around the shed here and see what else we can find out before we head out. Are you sure it is a shed, there is a real nice tile floor inside.”

“Steve, I have not been inside yet and have not seen what may or may not be a nice tile floor. So let’s split up; you look around outside and I will take a look at this tile floor you seem to be so enamored with.”

“Deal.”

NS headed for the tile floor and I start walking around the structure. Looking up in the Sky I can see the North Star which puts the doorway on the North wall. Even being out in the country without lights, it is pretty bright as it looks like a full or nearly full moon tonight. I hope there are no werewolves out tonight. Anyway, the North wall is about ten feet wide with the door in the middle of it and not much else. Moving clockwise around the structure, the East and South sides have nothing of interest, but I do see the SUV NS spoke of on the West side. Looks to be a late model SUV with tires and suspension that could do some offroading. Speaking of roads, I did not really see one, just some ruts with grass growing between them leading

up to the SUV. I will have to ask NS how she got here. I go back to the doorway just as NS was heading back out.

“Steve, looks like you were right. That tile chessboard floor is really nice, but it looks like someone left some nasty glue spots on a bunch of the tiles.”

“Right, the glue. There were a bunch of dollar coins stuck to the floor,. I pried them up, so in addition to the SUV, we have twenty dollars in Sacajawea coins.”

“Did you put them in a bucket? Then you would have a bucket of Jawaea.”

### Chapter three - Not Really a Road

So after NS and I finished debating the merits of keeping your Jawaea in a sack versus a bucket, we headed for the SUV. Being that I did not know who I was beyond my hastily constructed Steve persona, where I was or what I was doing, I thought it prudent to let NS drive. After all, she did have the keys.

As we walked to the SUV, NS said, “Steve, you drive, I don’t even have my learner's permit yet.”

“Well, I guess that settles that, where are we going NS?”

“Being that neither of us know how we got here or where here is, I am thinking we punch in the coordinates for the nearest police station.”

“That sounds good to me.”

Before we get on our way, we looked in the back and found a couple of flats of water and what looked like military surplus peanut butter.

Thinking out loud, “At least we won’t dehydrate or starve, you don’t have a peanut butter allergy do you?”

“Nope, peanut butter is one of my favorite food groups.”

NS hits, well I guess taps the Points of Interest tile on the GPS screen and selects Emergency Services. The Mill Valley Police Department pops up showing coordinates Latitude 037.9051820 and Longitude -122.5440060, but it seems to be confused on the best route to get there. I am thinking this is due to us being on a rutted track in the middle of a field with a bunch of cows.

“NS, I think the GPS does not know the directions to the Police Station because we are on a rutted track in the middle of a field with a bunch of cows. Not that the cows are at fault or anything.”

“I agree, even though cows evolutionary trait that has allowed them to survive is that they are tasty, they really have no bearing on the GPS providing directions to the nearest Police Station. So, how about we head West as that is the way the ruts take us and see if once we hit a real road the GPS gives us directions.”

“My thoughts exactly.”

Bump, bump, bumpity, bump ... bump. “My this is not really a road, but we seem to be bumping along quite well. Good thing this SUV has a off road tires and suspension.”

“Steve, exactly, while we bump along can I take a look at your notebook and the picture your drew of the coins on the tiles?”

“Sure, it is sitting on the console.”

NS flips through my notebook and looks at the page with the coins drawn on it and writes numbers across the top:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

She then Writes the number corresponding to the tile from top to bottom:

03767437471217066181

Below that she writes the GPS coordinates of the Mill Valley Police Department removing the decimal points and the minus sign:

03767437471217066181

03790518201225440060

“Steve, stop a second and take a look at this.”

I stop the SUV and take a look, “I agree that they look very similar, Let’s put the decimals back in both and add in the minus sign for Longitude.”

Latitude 037.6743747 Longitude -121.7066181 ?

Latitude 037.9051820 Longitude -122.5440060 Mill Valley PD

“NS, we should be able to put in these Latitude and Longitude and come up with a place.”

NS puts in the coordinates, touches the search icon and sure enough those are the exact coordinates of the “Sandia National Laboratories.”

“Steve, are you thinking what I am thinking?”

“Maybe, I know you said you were not allergic to peanuts, but since I have amnesia, I don’t remember if I am?”

“Steve, no that is not what I am thinking, I am thinking we should skip the Mill Valley PD and head to the Sandia National Laboratories instead. It looks like it is only about 90 minutes further than Mill Valley.”

“Yeah, I was just kidding about the Peanut stuff, I definitely was thinking we should head to the Sandia National Laboratories, though can we call it SNL? I am wasting brain space thinking the whole name every time and think of the seconds wasted every time we say it.”

“Uhm Steve, sometimes you over think things.”



“Well if I did not have amnesia, I might remember that.”

So after we contemplate the depth of my overthinking, we decide to skip Mill Valley and head straight for SNL. We bump along for another twenty minutes before we run into California Highway 1 and head South. NS only had to yell “Watch out for the cow!” twice before we got to the highway. I only bumped one and it really was more of a tap since the cow didn’t even fall over and only moo’d once before mooving out of our way. I know, another bad pun.

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