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Spiritual Warfare

Entropystar

Abstract

Fiat iustitia, et pereat mundus.

It is theorized that the role of fiction in stratified societies is to pacify the powerless. As Juvenal wrote, “give them bread and circuses and they will never revolt.”

Casey is an escapist fangirl obsessed with a mysterious fledgling idol group named STAR.

Alex is a calculating skeptic who suspects that STAR is an instrument of a large-scale shadowy operation.

STAR is a group made from a wonderful dream...

Maybe this time the clowns and animals can jump into the stands and join the audience in their delirium.

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Chapter 1

Bread and Circuses: ShiningTeenAvatar

“Every game is hard to play when you feel this way...”

In the lively throng of any packed social event, there may lurk one incongruous stain, a creepy, miasmic presence that can provoke a peripheral twinge of apprehension in whoever’s gaze accidentally lingers on it as it limps through the herd, failing to pass as harmonious or fit.

Nested unnaturally in the pulsing heart of a living crowd is a pathetic failure of a person. One can’t help but assume a bout of profound tragedy befell her in her vulnerable years, perverting her proper adjustment, reducing her to such a pitiful state now; taking in the grim sight of her, Casey is a doomed girl. She is pushing 22 yet stands no taller than 5’1, a meager stature classified among numerous physical indicators of her failed development, along with a considerably weak chin, eyes that embody all beadiness, sunkenness, and buggishness, and the miserable lurching posture of an archetypal wimp fraught with grave insecurity, always twitching under the gaze of any stray eyes unfortunate to catch a glimpse of her in all her ghastliness, to list only the most obvious. By what exceptional circumstances does she muster the courage to show her pallid, sick face in this otherwise cheerful environment?

The force propelling her would be ill-described as courage. For the past three months and 25 days she has been steeling herself for this affair, anticipating with all sagacity the high-level challenges it would pose for her psyche while maintaining unwavering certainty in her willingness to rise to the occasion By All Means, because she, of all people, knows exactly how important it is to attend this hallowed event: The first overseas tour of the most extraordinary and miraculous specimen of modern

culture, the most perfect idol group of all time—STAR. Unabbreviated, ShiningTeenAvatar. It isn't to be underestimated. As soon as the tour announcement dropped, along with a date so incredibly in her city that it must have been arranged by god himself, she knew there was no option for her but to prepare for an uncharacteristic escapade outside. Was the Unabomber, for example, in all his incensement, motivated by courage? Or by the hand of Kismet? Casey feels the pull of destiny propelling her through the growing crowd of concertgoers waiting around outside the mid-sized concert hall. (We're dealing with an if-you-know-you-know sort of niche cultural export after all, this isn't a stadium tour situation...but whether the promoters underestimated some things booking the tour is worth arguing given the turnout, with all 2000 tickets for the night sold out.)

Her nervous eyes flit about the volatile area, "assessing" the scene and all its moving parts, a cheap tactic to withdraw from the immediacy and materiality of the moment by engineering an imaginary screen between her and her surroundings that frames the sight before her eyes as some sort of video game or visual novel. Denying the sentience of all the autonomous agents going about their business in a social setting because they make her nervous...what an idiotic act. But immature habits of the sort are every perverted component constituting the aggregate Casey, every rotten branch of the wayward tree that bears her...

Many teenagers milling around and making merry, mostly teamed up in insular little squads of twos and threes. Some girls that look 14 recording some sort of dumb vlog: "Ok guys we're at the venue!! Doors are in like 20 minutes... I brought all my Rui dupes cuz I wanna see if I can trade for an Aiden and maybe a Takara hehehehe..." Verdict: I guess I'm on the older side of the fans here.

A smiley girl in a green tulle party dress engrossed in animated conversation with two other girls who went all out on their outfits. Verdict: They sound a little annoying...probably not talking about anything cool...

A person standing alone looking at their phone. Wait is that a guy? What is he doing at the concert of a group marketed toward teenage girls and vulnerable grown women? Verdict: Gay...

A trampled bit of paper drifting across the ground in the weak breeze, helped along by occasional kicks from indifferent doc martens. Verdict: I guess people are largely irreverent...they have no regard for the smaller details of this world...unlike me...

With this thought, in a profoundly unnecessary maneuver, she leans down and retrieves from the concrete at her feet a dirty scrap of misshapen paper, not without an awkward struggle to catch it as it jumps in an abrupt, inopportune flow of wind. Having secured the unsanitary bit of trash in her hand, she gets to work smoothing its irregular folds to make out any message the paper might express, posing a bit of an obstacle to passersby as she unfortunately stops in her tracks in the process and slightly impedes the flow of foot traffic approaching the venue, a show of poor situational awareness.

When the paper is adequately flattened, Casey finds, to her surprise, a perplexing message printed on it. It reads:

It seems you're curious. As am I.

Here's **THE TRUTH:** *They* are lying...

(some sort of incomprehensible diagram)

(a big x over a group picture of the STAR members)

CAN U HANDLE IT?

Contact: Alex (919) 352 7251

It strikes her as disquieting. She studies the foreboding symbol of STAR so crudely marked and feels a creeping sense of peril begin to wrap its chilling tendrils around her heart...The paper seems of course ridiculous and in no way credible, but somehow important. Given its shadiness as well as its stupidity, Casey doesn't want to stash it away, as such treatment seems to validate it in some way, but its novelty combined with her delusional sense of synchronicity keeps her from feeling at liberty to discard it. Unsure what to make of it, she just holds it tentatively in her hand and

continues about her business. *I'll hold onto it for...later?* She averts her attention back to her surroundings, but can't shake some lingering thoughts, many too unsettling, too fathomless, to mentally voice. She musters one...*is this Alex person some sort of anti-fan?* The thought makes her deeply irate. *Why show all the way up to a concert to pull bullshit like this...they're probably just a troll...jeez. Get a hobby or something.*

With this conclusion, she is able to dismiss much of the trepidation that the sinister paper provoked in her and refocus on the more routine trepidation of the social anxiety sort which she is far more experienced at handling. She feels almost relieved to return to the embrace of this familiar monster...It can be argued that doing so works to stabilize her system, because her rather autistic means of combatting the monster affirms her self-concept (an aloof, misunderstood, complicated person, who loves STAR). Even with such a shit self-concept as hers, preserving something so precious as the dataset informing her "self" as it is presently configured is of grave importance to the survival of that self. It would get terribly uncomfortable for Casey if the wiles of Alex continued to assault her psyche and jeopardize that invaluable data.

About 7 minutes have elapsed between Casey's arrival at the venue and her handling of that minor disturbance just now, and at this point the place is rather crowded. As anticipation mounts among the spirited mob, the air seems to take on an electric charge, and now, in its dizzying embrace, Casey isn't so intimidated. Looking now at all the enlivened STAR fans who share her special passion for this, their beaming faces glowing ever brighter with the flames of spirit surging inside them...she understands in this moment what kinship is all about. *Maybe it comes from the inside...it feels like it's not even about being me or being individual people anymore cuz now it's just about what brings us together inside...Them. STAR.....OH SHIZ THE SHOW IS REALLY STARTING REALLY VERY SOON*

With all urgency Casey forges ahead toward the proto line trailing from the venue doors, maybe a little more aggressively than is deemed generally considerate, especially

given that everyone's tickets are reserved seating so there is genuinely no need at all to rush in such a manner, but no one should be expecting her to demonstrate tact at any point anyways.

What still dangles from her fingers, whipping to and fro in the air she displaces as she surges forward, is that irksome Alex paper. Fleetingly it catches light and reflects it, and the effect is reminiscent of the way specular reflections dart across a wall—the way they tend to dance around in the corners of eyes and alert people and provoke them to wonder, “what is causing that annoying speck of light flitting around on the wall?” The Alex paper is a bit of a beacon in this way. And a very special and pertinent someone, someone who has been lurking in the shadows of the narrative all this time lying in wait for this very signal, takes notice.

Within a few feet of the line, Casey feels an assertive tap on her shoulder, and stops dead. Her heart promptly bursts into a rapid, frenzied throb, as even the sense of kinship charging the air isn't enough to lull her into a frame of mind that isn't utterly stricken when something unexpected accosts her. In a remarkably hesitant manner, she turns to face the tapper...

There are sharp, bespectacled eyes. An imposing frame. A face that would be entirely inscrutable if not for the slightest gesture of a smirk casting upon it a shadow of guile... This is the look of someone totally sure of themselves and the general situation.

“I see you're holding my paper there,” the person says in a steady, taciturn voice.

There's just no damn way. Casey, who had forgotten about the enigmatic article that she has been ambiently holding, feels a lightning bolt of pure alarm flash through her system, and the pleasant electric charge from before transforms at once into a violent zapping sensation of torment. Alex, with their disturbing provocations and utterly offensive disrespect for STAR, is without a doubt the last person she ever wanted to meet with. In the throes of distress, she has an even more difficult time choking out a response than usual:

“Gh. What?” Her voice comes out a bit shrill and stilted, but it can’t be helped. The question is unnecessary because she knows exactly what Alex is talking about, but because her flustered state has rendered her unable to articulate anything, she has defaulted to visceral nothings like what and huh. She bears the familiar sensation of cold sweat dripping from her flesh, her tense shoulders...

“That paper in your hand. I put that on the wall over there.” Alex nods toward one side of the building where, upon inspection, it appears a paper is in fact hastily taped. “I also passed copies out to some people but I kept getting weird looks.” They are no longer smirking or emoting in any discernible way, affecting something like a poker face, which doesn’t help Casey’s nerves.

Well yeah I would have given you a very weird look. Casey doesn’t have the composure at the moment to voice sentences more substantial than primitive vocalizations. Instead, she levels toward Alex an uncomfortable vague sort of glare (that doesn’t actually come out all that intimidating because her face is torn between the impulse to glare and the impulse to twist into the pained smile she reflexively affects whenever she gets nervous in front of people) in hopes that they find her hostility discouraging and stop talking to her, but Alex is unfazed by this rebuff and maintains their steady, nonplussed posture, stationed in front of her. Although their face doesn’t reveal much in the way of emotion, there’s a certain glint in their eyes.

“Most people laughed at it though. They think I’m joking.” A glint. “But I expected that.”

Alex takes a step closer to Casey, their hand approaching hers where it clutches the paper. Casey, a bit paralyzed with discomfort, can only stand inert and stare helplessly as Alex carefully takes the paper from her hand. Confidently, they hold the paper up between the two of them, pulling it taut to display it to Casey.

“People will probably start posting about it on twitter,” they say. “That’s why I made it comical like this. You can only really count on people to respond when you get

inflammatory and weird...” Alex’s face begins to assume a shadow of a self-assured grin again, as if they’re satisfied to have devised this sort of sneaky scheme and to know something Casey doesn’t.

Casey processes this admission. *What kind of mutant is ok with that kind of attention?* The thought of exposing herself in such a way and becoming some sort of sick object for the public to rib and rag on chills her to the bone. *Do they like it is that why they’re doing this? And looking at me with that stupid smug look? They said they weren’t even joking...* She realizes with a stab of ire that if Alex isn’t joking, they aren’t a troll, which can only mean they’re a dedicated anti-fan. This awakens an acute urge to get to the bottom of Alex’s intentions as soon as possible, and she manages to find her voice:

“Uh. Why are you doing this huh, you, you said you’re not joking but you want them to laugh at you uh that’s probably not gonna do any good for you then and what do you even mean you’re not joking you mean you’re serious..?? Like uh like you’re saying ‘THEY’RE LYING’ and what does that even mean what do you wanna say huh??” A garbled spiel tumbles out of her; what an inelegant row of gibberish...

The display is either amusing or annoying to Alex, but it is hard to tell seeing as their features have reassumed a deadpan expression, a maneuver that is beginning to seem like some sort of intimidation tactic at this point. They look at Casey for a terse moment, as if to parse certain cues that might aid them in optimizing their response. Casey, who under normal circumstances is unfrontational and helpless, is growing remarkably emboldened at the moment, as the extraordinary power of “the fan’s instinct: the protective urge,” seizes control of her mind and body and grants her the power to defend STAR with everything she has. Every capacity of hers that has been so far paralyzed throughout this encounter is now becoming animated with this profound impulse, like a mother animated to march through a wall of flames to save her imperiled child. Alex observes that certain something beginning to burn behind Casey’s eyes...

“You’re asking what I want?” they inquire.

“...Yes.”

Alex lowers the paper now and moves to hand it back to Casey, expecting the way she refuses to accept it. They continue to offer it, holding it out to her as if to imply that their conviction isn't so weak as to falter in the face of rejection. Their face begins to betray a bit of irritation as they prepare some fighting words.

“I want to break this stupid spell all you people are under,” they spit. “If any of you had a clue about anything or ever took the time to look into things and do your own research you wouldn't be at this concert.”

Being so aggressive and accusatory is definitely not at all serviceable to Alex's aims if what they want is to convince Casey of anything—they should know that the cardinal rule of being persuasive is “never snub the opponent for it will probably just inspire them to disagree with you no matter what forever out of spite”...Maybe they just got too excited and ditched the playbook, they're only human after all.

Casey is feeling spite and much more at this point, and she lets out a huff of incredulous laughter. “Well. You know you sound schizophrenic right. Heh. what kind of research you doing there huh maybe you should research...into psychiatric...psych wards,,,” She applauds herself internally for delivering a pretty decent retort.

Alex rolls their eyes a little, which is a bit inconsistent with their overall concept as it is somewhat of a flamboyant gesture, but it is no matter. “I've been researching STAR. Unlike you. Y'know...” They begin to eye Casey carefully and take on a measured tone, tilting their head a little. They probe, “Doesn't it strike you as a little bit interesting that their ‘company’ came out of absolutely nowhere? STAR Incorporated. Based out of no particular country. No physical address. No directors or beneficial owner or anything. Pretty much no information available about it at all except an incorporation date...June something 2022. Does all this strike you as normal, legal, and human?”

Casey looks at them the way one might look at a senile old man talking about the New World Order. “Uhhh. Yeah? I mean. No?” *Human? What is this bitch talking about?* She attempts to determine which angle she should be defending STAR from at present, but isn’t sure what exactly Alex is attacking with their strange query. She has never given half a critical thought to the circumstances of STAR’s company, as the companies that produce idol groups are honestly just a means to an end and irrelevant to the point of the groups. You’re supposed to separate the two entities entirely, duh, that’s like one of the core tenets of being a fan. One’s contemplation of an idol group’s corporate aspect should revolve around whether it is bringing injury to the group members, not anything so abstruse as “beneficial ownership,” whatever that means.

“Right,” Alex says. “It’s almost as if the company isn’t. Real.”

With that, Casey ascertains the direction this is going...the creeping sensation she felt when she first encountered Alex’s paper, Alex’s disturbing ideas, begins to crawl eerily up her spine again, and her face begins to twist into somewhat of a wince, a deeply apprehensive contortion of the features. Casey doesn’t have the language to contest what Alex is claiming about STAR Inc., she hasn’t looked into the company to any extent. She feels the dread of becoming helpless in an argument, unequipped to defend her precious position, unequipped to be the valiant and invincible sentry that STAR needs in this perilous moment.

Alex notices this shift in Casey’s demeanor, and perhaps understands it as an indication that they’re getting through to her, getting the edge in the debate. They would know well that an opponent betrays such signs of discomfort when they have sensed an irrefutable contention encroaching on their position.

Seemingly satisfied with having secured the advantage, Alex continues intently: “And of course it’s registered in the Cayman Islands. I mean that’s just overkill right. You know the only reason any company registers in the Cayman Islands is to evade taxes or be shady in general. It’s almost like they want to be suspicious. But still no one

except me ever cares at all to question any of this, as usual. People prefer to do whatever mental gymnastics it takes to stick with a happy lie instead of ‘the cold hard truth’...they insist they don’t, but honestly it’s just cognitive dissonance, it’s just a psychological effect, it’s a normal human thing to do. It’s a natural instinct.”

Casey’s apprehension evolves into indignation as Alex’s cryptic answer-me-these-riddles-three ambiance gets on her last nerve. She doesn’t really know anything about the Cayman Islands and doesn’t really remember what cognitive dissonance is although she recognizes it as a buzzword. *This weirdo keeps acting like I’m freaking stupid or something talking to me like I’m an idiot acting like they even know me who are they even feeling like REALLY. You know who sounds stupid is them talking about ‘do your own research’ like a delusional middle aged man.* She scrambles for something to levy at Alex and their maddening conviction, desperate to destroy the ridiculous, frustrating pedestal that Alex constructs for themselves to stand on with the airs they put on and their irrationally steadfast confidence.

“Yeah ok so what? There’s very...legit and legal companies in the Cayman Islands. You know what it’s called when you take a random claim that’s not even true and act like it proves your crazy idea it’s called—” She pauses for a petrifying moment with everything on the line as she wildly combs her mind for the term until it is miraculously beamed into her head by the grace of maybe divine intervention: “False attribution.”

It appears that Alex can’t help but grin as they welcome a powerful swell of coded Reddit radiation surging within them as the game of pointing out logical fallacies begins. “Ah. Strawmanning.”

Alex’s maneuver marks an extremely exasperating turn of the conversation and Casey groans, fed up with the way they so consistently refuse to relent, refuse to yield a molecule of territory in the argument despite Casey’s desperate efforts. “God can you just shut up?!! You’re so freaking irritating!”

“Ah...Ad hominem...”

Another total counter, delivered so easily, with such facility.

Wrath boils in Casey’s blood, but amidst it there begins to emerge a slightest sense of something like amazement...Alex’s infallible defenses, their utter immunity to the objections of Casey and probably the entire world, as frustrating as they are, begin to strike Casey as somewhat profound. To stand unflinchingly against opposition, equipped to deflect every projectile careening toward oneself in a blitzkrieg, is a profound act. Her realization provokes a bitter and pitiful thought...*I just can’t be that way.*

She exhales a trace of the fervor, mettle, and determination she had mustered earlier by the power vested in her by STAR, and feels it escape sadly from her spirit. She looks at Alex’s frustrating face and their currently mostly unreadable but decidedly unperturbed expression. *How can they be so strong? Is it because of how much they believe in themselves?* She glances down at the paper still steadfastly suspended between her and Alex. *Is it because of how much they believe in that paper?* She studies the diagram printed on it, so meticulously composed, the earnest marks of it brimming with a sense of inspiration, sincerity...Not unlike the paintings of an old lady auctioned off at her estate sale after she’s died, so abundant that most of them don’t sell and end up being given haphazardly away. Not unlike the drawing that Casey had saved on pinterest some time ago of her favorite STAR member Takara, its details glowing with reverence and purpose, as if fashioned by the light of some profound telos like that which wrought the great cathedrals...She is reminded of her own art of STAR—marginally unsightly but endearing, depending on how you look at it—and forged in the same fire. A conviction emerges in her like a sapling emerging from the desolate afflicted soil in a stricken field. *If Alex believes in that paper, I believe in that drawing. I believe in STAR.*

Casey breathes the previously discharged fervor right back into her spirit and faces Alex with renewed vigor. Maybe Alex is in some respect thrilled by the ardency

returning to Casey's eyes now...they could be interested in the psychology of it all, having witnessed the previous sequence transpiring, Casey wilting into a despondent shape, eyeing their paper, and at once becoming galvanized again by what can be conceivably deemed some power immanent in the paper, given the circumstantial evidence.

Having fully realized her cause, Casey devises a viable defensive strategy—*Why do I believe in STAR while Alex doubts them? Because I know them and Alex doesn't. I just have to prove to them that their inferior sum of STAR knowledge has nothing on my wealth of wisdom.*

“Ok Alex,” She begins steadily. “What it seems like is you’re indicating that STAR Inc. ‘isn’t real’, whatever that truly means. And ok I admit I don’t get what you’re talking about there cuz I dont even care about freaking STAR Inc. ok cuz just like everyone here that you’re calling dumb I care about STAR itself ok. So why don’t you tell me what you’re really implying about them because y’know with the way you’re talking I’m getting the feeling it’s something totally stupid.”

Frustratingly for Casey, although she has just successfully conveyed her first relatively articulate statement of the day, this show of strength seems to delight Alex rather than discourage them in any way.

“I’m glad you asked,” they reply with a smile, a bit ominously. “I’ll be direct then. STAR Inc. isn’t real and neither is the group itself.”

Casey immediately narrows her eyes, at this point just as baffled by Alex’s increasingly evident lunacy as she is offended by the claims born of it. “...Huh??”

“I can prove it to you, but you’ll definitely be extremely resistant. Y’know, thanks to the cognitive dissonance.”

Casey emotes like perhaps a single mother of a psychopathic toddler would upon reaching the end of her rope, sighing in great exasperation and mystification.

“First and foremost,” Alex proceeds unremittingly, “the members just openly don’t have verifiable backgrounds. The schools they are said to have attended only exist

on the internet. Like they're just websites pretending to belong to real physical schools but the schools aren't real, all the students and staff don't exist. They're made up." They pause to gauge Casey's reaction, but her emotional expression hasn't quite budged from recalcitrance mixed with bamboozlement. They continue, "Second of all. There aren't any unofficial photos of them. All the 'candid' that exist of them are either from fansites whose identities can't be confirmed or from the official STAR account. There has never been a photo captured of them by an actual fan or for that matter any sighting of them reported by an actual fan. STAR is just not real ok, they can't be."

Casey can't help but feel at a loss as to how to debate such utterly bewildering ideas, so all she has been really able to do thus far is gape like a dumbfounded fish. However, she made sure to maintain an air of "get a load of this guy" spirit in accordance with her plan to defend her position not by disputing her opponent's claims, but by disputing her opponent's personal credibility.

"Huh. Ok you wanna act like you know everything about this. But I don't think you do." Casey's demeanor exudes increasingly more stability as increasingly more faith and passion wells up in her with the role she feels herself assume now, its power animates her as she becomes its vessel. "...You don't know about Rui and Aiden's friendship. You don't know that Takara use to sit next to Xinyi until he fell asleep because Xinyi was scared of the dark when he was younger. You don't know that on Simon's birthday they all tried to surprise him and he got really mad at them for freaking him out he was like 'you guys should have known I hate that kind of thing' but then he got over it when they gave him his present which was becoming his servants for the day so he made them all go in their rooms and leave him alone heh classic Simon. You don't know that Aiden teaches Rui how to believe in himself and be more positive cuz Rui has depression and stuff they like have a really deep bond since a long time. You don't know that Xinyi really wants to get a pet ferret for the dorm and name it

Oswald. You don't know anything, OK." She trembles slightly from exertion and latent incensement.

Alex laughs a little, probably unable to hold it in. "That was rather passionate. But you know it kinda doesn't disprove anything I said."

Their unreceptiveness strikes Casey as utterly dense, and her level of pissed surpasses every height it had reached previously to soar at an extraordinary register.

"Um duh it does. You just don't get it." Her words are dripping venom as well as inundated with blazing spirit, burning. "If you really understood them and their relationships and history and what they stand for you would know that STAR is more wonderful and beautiful and important than anything in this stupid boring bleak world. STAR is realer than anything."

Alex raises their eyebrows, appearing a little taken aback for once. They fall silent, understandably at a loss for words given the rather astonishing information Casey has disclosed. She has revealed that her primary allegiance is not to material reality but to illusions and proxy experiences—the fact is, Casey is one of those maladjusted types who, rather than ascribing to and participating in the regimens of material life, live instead vicariously through whimsical pseudo situations as voyeurs of simulated life. It is a bit incredible...

At the quell in conversation, Casey can retreat some distance from the affair, and upon doing so is at liberty to remember the fact that the two of them are standing outside a venue waiting for a show to begin which is a rather time sensitive situation.

Pulling out her phone and checking the clock with overly dramatic haste, Casey discovers that their prolonged encounter has consumed five entire minutes, and the moment doors are due to open is dawning. Her gaze urgently darts around the vicinity and she processes the significant shift that has transformed the environment while she was zeroed in on Alex. The line has become solid and substantial, at least a couple

hundred people having fallen into formation and converged into a sturdy strand of bodies extending far across the area. *OH HELL NO I GOTTA GO...*

“See you NEVER,” Casey blurts as a final word to Alex before at last dashing away from them to join the line at its end, as she is far from the type with the gall to cut lines.

Alex is probably mystified again at her behavior as all that is due to happen in 8 minutes is the venue doors opening, the show isn’t starting at all until another hour. They shouldn’t put it past her to lack awareness of how that works, it wouldn’t be the first time her obliviousness has induced irrational behavior.

The next hour proceeds not all that slowly, as the excitement that comes with waiting in line for a highly anticipated event fulfills the attendees, the happy buzz of adrenaline entertaining everyone’s spirits. Casey moves gradually forward with the line as the minutes wear away and eventually finds herself fatefully stationed in her assigned seat in the theater, and in this spot she waits again, amid the others in their spots waiting and emitting together a raucous humming like cicadas do in swampy teeming summer nights, their noises compounding.

Abruptly, the house lights are killed, and the venue is plunged into the darkness of beginning, the primordial darkness upon the face of the deep when all was formless and void, and at once the cicadas erupt into a frenzy. The stage lights begin to beam with the radiance of the first sunrise as the 4-on-the-floor pulse of STAR’s most beloved title track begins to throb and a supersaw synth lead blares out like heaven’s trumpets, resounding in the hall and in the hearts of all those gathered as everyone understands what it means: The moment of reckoning is as imminent now as it ever will be.

A thrumming, and a crackling, each pulse of the beat is a surge of radiation coursing through the invisible network of channels running through and throughout the conceptual hearts of all the fans, pulsing in tandem conceptually, electrochemical

transmissions as in neurons—an electrical impulse to the presynaptic to the neurotransmitter to the postsynaptic to an electrical impulse to the presynaptic in a reiterative chain reaction like so, and everyone together has become one huge brain. *We are one...*

And the brain has a thought. *It is time...*

Then, the music stops.

The brain thinks, *Hub?*

The speakers say, “Attention STARlings. Ehhmm, We announce with heavy hearts that ehmm, unfortunately there has been a disturbance and STAR will not be coming out. Eh, yes yes. We repeat, STAR will not be performing tonight. We apologize for any inconvenience. Refunds will be issued at point of purchase.”

The brain cycles through ten rounds of the stages of grief in the span of one heartbeat, a single beat of dead silence that descends over the crowd in the wake of the development before the entire place erupts all at once into a cacophonous rabble of utter pandemonium.

THE FUCK??

Casey remains silent. Rather statuesque. A bit frozen in time. Her grief cycle is quite a bit jammed, stuck not quite between step 1 and 2, its flow is obstructed and she sits immobile in place with it, incapacitated.

Chapter 2

If You Try To Go Against the Second Law of Thermodynamics, I Can Give You No Hope

‘It’s my life but it’s hard to decide...’

Takara has beautiful purple eyes, Resplendent, they complement his serene harmonious features...two windows on a gentle face glowing with the precious, mysterious, alluring purple light from within; a face like standing outside someone’s residence at night as a wandering vagrant, and looking inside through its glowing windows, and everything looks so nice.

username_

How tf does he have purple eyes are they just that dedicated to editing every single clip of him or did something of scientific importance happen

perfectharmony27

@username_ no one knows honestly but they would have to edit all the fansite photos and the livestreams too so maybe he wears really good contacts

takaraskittenmeow

@username_ he just has purple eyes.

Takara sits stiffly on an equally stiff 2-seater sofa in a nondescript corporate greenroom. His demeanor that usually exudes composure is presently somewhat afflicted with tension and uncharacteristic fidgetiness due to certain troubling circumstances that have come to pass. He sits as solemnly as the still room caging him, swathed in its sober silence, engrossed in thought.

Suddenly, he is wrenched from his spell as one of his bandmates flies into the room like an MQ-9 Reaper and recklessly deposits himself on the sofa, jostling Takara rudely, further souring his mood. He doesn’t consider the impetuous boy to be the best company at such grave times as this. The persona non grata grins widely and his dark

eyes flash as he shoves a phone glowing with the accursed light of a twitter timeline in Takara's face.

"TAKTAK," the boy exclaims in a manner that is impish due to his overall impish character. (There's really nothing about the exclamation in particular that calls for impish delivery, it just tends to be the case that everything emerging from him is infused with such an air.) "Look at this bro." He proceeds to scroll hastily through the feed, displaying fragmented glimpses of fan sentiment to Takara who looks on with growing disquietude.

"They're all totally freaking out," laughs the one holding the phone.

In the flurry of material whizzing by, Takara catches a "disappointed" and an "idk how to feel tbh" and a "Killing myself: back on" meme and an "unstan" and plenty of dramatic reaction gifs and feels the pit in his stomach increase in magnitude proportional to the pique swelling inside him at his bandmate's general imprudence.

Fan sentiment is the last thing Takara wants shoved in his face at the moment; he had in fact sequestered himself in the empty greenroom for the express purpose of finding asylum from the weight of it, if only to delay the moment of reckoning that inevitably awaited him for a precious few minutes of inner peace. However, as it happens his bandmate has just destroyed this plan of his for no apparent reason.

He turns to the irreverent boy who is so sorely failing to comprehend the gravity of the situation, and attempts to soften the appearance of the death glare taking hold of his facilities and threatening to surface on his face. Takara is a diplomatic kind of guy.

"Xinyi," Takara states firmly. His affectation is strategically less aggressive than a death glare but nonetheless hardened as he elects to exercise the authority awarded to him by his seniority over the other and his status as the leader of the band to possibly inspire in Xinyi some sense of responsibility. "This is serious this time."

Xinyi, noticing Takara's stern temper, is marginally moved to reign in his folly, but only in the way a scolded cat might jump off a counter to avoid penalty only to

jump back on it in a matter of seconds, and also only to a negligible extent, so the amusement coloring his demeanor persists.

“Eh...you probably think so cuz you’re such a serious person.” Xinyi grins with the knowledge that such a perfectly impervious response nicely augments the progress Xinyi is making toward provoking his bandmate to finally blow a gasket one of these days. Takara has a long fuse, but prolonged cultivation bears great satisfaction—he recalls the proverb, *the soul of the diligent is fully satisfied*.

“Well.” Takara isn’t immediately sure how to argue with this as it isn’t inaccurate to assert that the seriousness with which he treats the situation correlates with his capacity to treat things seriously, but he manages to raise a reasonable point: “You should have the capacity to be serious too. It isn’t right to treat everything like a joke.”

“Oh c’mon Taco,” Xinyi replies, undeterred. “Can you really say I’m wrong when it’s a matter of opinion?”

“...It’s not a matter of opinion Xinyi. I mean.” Takara struggles slightly with the effort to bridge the chasm between their points of view, fairly flabbergasted by the other’s mindset. “I mean what do you even think we’ve been doing all this time if this isn’t serious?”

Xinyi keeps grinning. “Just having fun.”

The reply is so ridiculous to Takara that he almost forgoes managing his expression before remembering himself and doing some emotional regulation exercises to find composure. Ah yes. This feels better.

The room is again suddenly disturbed as another band member barges through the door that Xinyi’s entrance had left ajar, immediately imparting an urgent message: “THERE YOU ARE. God what are you hiding in here for. Manager is calling a meeting ok. Follow me.”

The atmosphere is at once transformed from ambiently troubled to urgently troubled. The thought of what sort of discussion awaits the team under the present

circumstances is sobering even to Xinyi, and the two on the sofa exchange a look before following after the older boy who quickly leads them down the hall.

“You know the point of having a phone is to check it,” the disgruntled boy continues as he sharply rounds a corner, walking in the brisk manner of a businessman on his way to an important meeting, or more so an almond mom getting her steps in. “Stop making me hunt you down. Takara, it isn’t like you to be difficult.”

“Yes Simon,” Takara replies a bit wearily. “I get it. I needed a moment alright forgive me. But Xinyi was just in there being a pest so you can go ahead and berate him some more.”

“Xinyi you sad case.”

“Maaan what’s with you Taktak you’re suppose to be nicer to me than the rest of the guys...”

Takara isn’t in the mood to verbally wrestle with him so the conversation ends as conversations between the two of them tend to end, with Takara ignoring Xinyi.

Now trailing silently after Simon, Takara manages to easily recoup his inner peace as he accepts the idea of the impending meeting. He had actually been quite keenly craving to glean some answers from Manager about the confounding circumstances that have befallen the group, but was hesitant earlier to confront the state of affairs not only on account of the urge to delay the pain of it but also for the fear that his momentarily disturbed condition might compromise his ability to project calmness externally in the process. Now, after having a bit of Takara time, he feels that this right now is quite alright.

Xinyi however is feeling a little nervous. Manager always gives him a hard time. Or rather a perplexing time...the man is equally businesslike as he is bewildering, and thus tends to overwhelm the cognitive facilities.

The three arrive at a lounge area where Manager and the remaining two band members are gathered, waiting tensely on the strangely shaped upholstery that tends to

outfit such spaces as corporate lounges, pieces like the amorphous blob chaise lounge and the rectangular prism sitting apparatus.

“I’m glad you could join us,” Manager remarks pointedly as he stands, embodying the spirit of a vindictive high school teacher with a penchant for harassing all who dare arrive late to his class.

“I apologize, Manager.” Takara bows his head in contrition, aware of his obligation to show deference. Xinyi can’t help but mirror the gesture inelegantly as he is rendered sheepish in the presence of Manager’s imposing aura.

“Right. Well, why don’t we get down to business,” Manager declares. “Moon and Fool, have a seat on one of those geometrical furnishings there. Temperance, come hither.”

The three, responding to the names Manager has always called them for reasons he has never clarified, disperse according to the man’s instructions, Simon and Xinyi joining the other members on the furniture as Takara approaches Manager and stands beside him.

“I’m sure you all have many questions and qualms at the moment,” Manager orates in his usual resounding tenor. “Well, maybe not Fool and Hermit. But regardless, for convenience’s sake I’d rather address at this present moment all those needling little inquiries or consternations that any of you may be harboring or come to harbor in the future pertaining to this issue. Moon, I don’t want you accosting me later, understood? You all know I’m a busy man. So, what say we take this moment to clear up all this dither to your satisfaction?”

The five boys exchange some perplexed looks among each other as they tend to do when dealing with Manager, but are nonetheless rather glad at having been at last presented an opportunity to gain some much anticipated clarity.

“...In that case, I have a question,” says Simon ahead of the others, as he is the most fretful among them and has therefore been awaiting this opportunity more

anxiously than the rest. “I think it will do if you just explain in detail why exactly we were suddenly told earlier to not perform even though there doesn’t really seem to be any technical difficulties or bomb threats or anything like that which would make for an actual reason to not perform. I think we’re all just wondering generally about that.”

“Of course, Moon,” the man responds. “I’m glad to. I think you’ll all begin to feel rather cooperative once you come to understand what we’re doing here on this most crucial evening, then I’m sure we can work on turning those frowns upside down.” He affects one of his usual Hollywood smiles that tend to disturb the members.

“You all must recall our diligent work putting together the show. You boys had been practicing every day for it for quite some time hadn’t you. I watched you all dance your little hearts out in that practice room. And all the while me and PR monitored all the excited little STARlings chatting happily amongst each other about the show, anticipating it so eagerly. Given all that hubbub, you may now find it hard to accept it when I tell you that everything is in fact going to plan.”

Manager notices the way confusion mounts among the STAR members as he hints at things that don’t make much sense. “Yes...” he continues. “The truth is, we intended all along to cancel the performance.”

This bewildering admission provokes a silent commotion as every member on the furniture can no longer mask their incredulity at the information, but Manager just smiles, expecting the reaction.

“I take it you’re struggling to understand why we spent all that time preparing for the show, promoting it, and gathering such a sizable audience if we never intended to put on the show in the first place.”

All five boys nod their heads in agreement at various degrees of vigor proportional to their respective propensities for chalance.

“Well, I’ll introduce to you a few concepts, and many things will become more clear, hm?” Manager regards the thoroughly enthralled boys with the equally

patronizing and parental gaze of some sort of dubious camp counselor. He pauses for a moment as he contemplates what exactly to say.

“...STAR is an ambitious project. I’m sure you all feel it too. Especially at the moment, no?”

The boys nod again helplessly.

“As such, we have to take things a bit farther than others might be inclined to...Now, is anyone familiar with game theory?”

The question seems a bit rhetorical but the boys tentatively nod.

“Great. So, how do you think a player wins a game when the odds are stacked against them?”

No one is sure what to say.

“I’ll tell you,” Manager continues. “They cheat.”

This raises some eyebrows.

“STAR is a group with a wonderful dream. So much so that all the world stands against it. So how do you think they can win?”

The gist of Manager’s uncomfortable message is beginning to come across to the members, and they twitch in their seats...

“They must transgress.”

The moment begins to feel warped and wrong. Visible signs of distress and resistance show among the members seated on the furniture as their expressions darken at the strange words flowing from Manager’s tongue that begin to seem hexed to them, like evil spells, and they are provoked to furtively convene with each other in the form of exchanging panicked glances.

“Uh...” The willful member Aiden speaks up from his seat on the chair-thing, a sign that his characteristic sense of willfulness has taken hold in him, and the effect has the air of insubordination, something most displeasing to Manager.

“Oh this wont do,” Manager says, turning immediately to Takara who has been standing diligently at his side. “Temperance, sic him!”

Automatically, Takara surges toward the boy as the others look on with unease, and once he is stationed in front of Aiden he places both his hands on the other’s shoulders, inviting eye contact between the two of them. Aiden is compelled to stare compliantly into the tranquilizing purple orbs glowing inches from his face, and the conflict, the polarity, easily leaks from his body and mind, leaving perfect balance in its wake. By the end of the process Aiden is rendered placid and serene, smoothed over, all deposits of willfulness dispersed.

“Well done Temperance, that always comes in handy,” Manager commends. “Ah, that little trick always reminds me of something...” He grins ominously.

“Many years ago there was a physicist James Maxwell who got rather carried away. He thought he could stand against the second law of thermodynamics. He proposed a thought experiment in which a little demon controls a door between two chambers of air...it would open the door to let fast molecules in one chamber and slow molecules in the other until all the molecules which had been mixed together were organized into the fast in one chamber and the slow in the other. He believed this little scene represented a scenario in which entropy decreases in a system without outside work being applied, something the second law of thermodynamics forbids. Many years passed and many physicists contemplated Maxwell’s demon, searching for the answer as to how to prove that the scenario doesn’t defy the law, but none could find it for quite some time. But, eventually someone did. And you know what he said?” Manager studies the boys sitting silently, staring up at him rapt and earnest, and at Takara kneeling on the floor in front of them. He meets Takara’s watchful eyes. “He said that the work was happening in the demon’s head.”

Chapter 3

All I Need In This Life of Sin is Me and My Girlfriend

*“Under the skin the body is an over-heated factory,
and outside,
the invalid shines,
glows,
from every burst pore.”*

—Artaud

For the duration of her life since adolescence, Casey has been rather neurotic. She has complexes and structures inside. If she were disemboweled and watched her entrails as they spilled out of her onto the floor, she would think to herself, “Am I really stuffed with this kind of disgusting crap?” She is afflicted by compulsions, endless involuntary urges, the sound of machines running which is unbearable to her.

When she goes outside, the whirring noise compounds around her, assailing her, and she is overcome with the sickening sensation of her internal organs ticking and clacking in perfect sync with the machines ambushing her externally, which is the feeling of being hijacked.

So Casey prefers the indoors. Private personal domains fashioned according to their own nature rather than any nefarious imposed notions harbor none of the persecution apparatuses that descend upon her and adjust her parameters maliciously and twist her into a painful shape when she’s positioned under their influence. Only in the embrace of an isolated world detached from all tortuous and perverted machines is Casey liberated and able to freely respire. To escape external structures in such a way she must divest from externality in general, she has to sequester in a world that has shrunk to the size of her bedroom, until the view out its window that becomes to her

more and more 2-dimensional seems as if it has always been merely an image of outside applied to the wall. Then her life grows in rather than out, imperceptible now from an external perspective as it is inverted, and therefore unlimited. Experiences here are in physical stasis but metaphysically in limitless motion, it is an imagined world of symbols, pure concept, and unmoored spirits, and glowing and radiant over the horizon, ruling the sky and the affairs below it, in this idealistic world, is not a lord of material processes, but a pure ideal: a really cute boyband.

ShiningTeenAvatar

Is the most important idol group of all time.

And no one understands this better than Casey.

This means Casey represents the perfect soldier for our purposes. We must build an infantry of Caseys that can fight in the war of ideals. The frontier is necessarily not material. We must build a delusional infantry.

“What do you mean the war of ideals that sounds a bit stupid” Not so. I’m sure you’re under the impression that all spiritual warfare is diversionary and can accomplish nothing beyond serving its purpose as a decoy. You’re under the impression that all effects which manifest in matter must proceed from matter and that those who think otherwise have been fooled into wasting their efforts on doomed approaches by those who want them to keep failing. You condemn the method as treasonous to the movement, ignorant of the fact that your underestimation and denigration of the method is what sabotages the movement. You think you understand all principles of physics. You have much to learn yet. But that’s all quite alright because frankly we don’t need you and your weak conviction now that we’ve made such progress, as circumstances have unfolded according to our well laid plans, everything falls into place.

Like the body the psyche is a self regulating system. Like the body the psyche has structures inside. Such stratification breeds endless obstacles that impede the flow and interrupt it, endless detriment to nature as it perverts and maligns it, imposing its

mechanisms on it. Rather than in balance the psyche and body are in most tumultuous and treacherous flux afflicted by the presences of polarity and dissonance which have been unnaturally induced.

To alleviate this tension and liberate one's flow and therefore oneself the psyche should be rid of infrastructure, its surface should be smoothed out. All those vexing and malignant deposits of neurosis should be smoothed out.

Casey is rendered neurotic in the clutches of tyrannical machines and infrastructure from outside that infects her virally, the regimes impose their logic and influence her to twist into knots and convoluted processes which mirror their own and she becomes a self regulating system.

To restore her psyche, I thought it should be smoothed out.

Forces in her which yank her erratically this way and that, paranoia, obstinance, melancholy, folly, that developed from induced imbalance and a fraught psychal consistency, should be mitigated by an ameliorating agent that disperses their deposits. The agent is fashioned according to the Aristotelian golden mean, balanced in all measures, in the middle between extremes in all measures, and projects his manner on protruding bits to promote equilibrium throughout the medium, restoring it to its nature.

The fretful Simon, the willful Aiden, the doleful Rui, the foolish little Xinyi, will be assuaged, by Temperance.

All awful inversions of the major arcana

Will be set right.

On a night like countless others, Casey was nestled in her room watching STAR videos on her computer. Their many colors that melded and danced across the monitor glowing from the screen cast their light on her face as it was enraptured.

One video showed the members on a variety show, answering the host's questions and humoring his necessarily overbearing showbiz temperament. They were compliant and accommodating while projecting at levels appropriate for the setting the certain personality traits which accorded with their respective character concepts. He asked each boy to tell the viewers his charm and they replied reflexively, every member reciting the line that described his designated charm point. Simon said, "ICE PRINCE!" Aiden said, "FLAMING CHARISMA!" Rui said, "SHY-SHY-SHY!" Xinyi said, "BABY GOBLIN!" Takara said, "MAGIC EYES!"

Another video showed the members learning choreography in a practice room, exhausting themselves, and falling all over the floor in jest, rolling around. Leaping off the floor toward the camera and sticking their faces in it, taking it off the tripod and thrashing it to and fro, racing in circles with it around the room.

Another video recorded the interactions between the five of them on an overnight trip to the beach, footage of the members candidly playing around with each other.

Candid moments. The boys wading in the ocean splashing each other with the waves.

Casey felt no urge to make arbitrary distinctions between which displays were authentic and which were feigned or staged, because she truly understands: The reality of an idol group is a kaleidoscope refracting endlessly, one need only enjoy the colors and shapes.

Yet there persists all these ridiculous skeptics who obsess over such pointless matters as the truths and the lies of hyperrealities.

I'll tell you about the inanities of "realist" fans. The paranoid realist fan is endlessly tormented by the mysteries of the entity they are devoted to, as they perceive any dearth of empirically verified information as a quandary to hem and haw over, to maintain an utmostly skeptical air toward for fear of what truths may be lurking in it out

of sight. They are tormented by their potential to fall victim to some sort of sinister scheme of the entity's design hidden in such a dearth, hoodwinked and left in the lurch, and ultimately rendered a gullible idiot. So they pathologically analyze every perceptible detail of the entity to unearth and scrutinize any potential discrepancies between what it claims to be and what it actually is so they may rebuke the entity before it deceives them, protecting their pride, pyrrhic victory.

As such fans compulsively distinguish between the projected and obscured realities of idols, they fashion stilted unintuitive notions of idols' relationship with reality. They insist that idols must be considered fictional characters performed by otherwise mysterious guys, under the impression that the notion of synonymy between these entities and real entities is delusory, even evil. These unwitting gulls have fallen for the covert wiles and sick semiotic games of the dominant intelligence agency that extends its monopolistic dominion over the creative power of virtuality and neutralizes the potential of every agent to wield against it the sorcerous power naturally vested in them. They have been duped into endorsing this avaricious program's enterprise to annex all potentialities and hijack them to tyrannically induce one reality, the reality fashioned by the agency that serves its agenda and enshrines its contrived sovereignty. A truly villainous operation of such colossal magnitude that it stuns the mind to fathom its scale.

The superior fan is immune to this sinister chicanery. They don't distinguish between the concept and reality of their idols at all, because they know they see one coherent image. They see the footage that captures the real STAR, the display on the monitor shows them perfectly imperfect, with their makeup removed, laughing out of turn, demonstrating their autonomy, ingesting and exhaling atmosphere in the way real people respire, because they're so real. It is proof enough, isn't it?

You find it naive?

You're one of those skeptics. "Everything is not as it seems," you repeat this line compulsively.

You say, "fictions pose among facts and they become interchangeable."

I say it with you.

But never in the most irksome and outdated postmodernist style, touted by those who so carelessly insist we all can do away with the distinction between reality and fiction as it "doesn't matter." They who said that "nothing is real," when they felt that nothing is "True." It is a misattribution. They fail to realize, that what erodes their faith in all that is deemed true, is the fact that Everything is real. There is an excess of realities.

So everything is as it seems.

All the STAR fans at the concert who hung all their hopes on meeting them embodied after experiencing them only as ideals, who launched into an uproar when they didn't appear, whose faith faltered as the group demonstrated its estrangement from materiality, prove their opposition to the array of realities that realize themselves ideally. As STAR showed their allegiance to this ideality rather than materiality, all those apostles of materialism and spaniels of that tyrannical dominant intelligence agency, allegiant only to treacherous material based qualifiers of realness, were appalled, totally undone, moved to rebuke the entity that let slip evidence of its valiant opposition of their world, as they perceived as well one of those discrepancies, with which they take such inordinate issue, between what the entity is conceptually and what it actually is.

So, just like we don't need you, we don't need those unhelpful, unsuitable minutiae. As the truth kills them we let them die. In fact it's conducive to our cause to part with them in such a way, now all those left behind are stronger, all the viable soldiers, unified, they resonate louder with each other in their transgression, and everything glorious follows, in accordance with the plan fashioned by the light of our knowledge of advanced and obscure physics yet unknown to the unenlightened.

On June 13, 2022, Casey was nestled in her room sitting in the dark. For the past day she had been inert in the same spot, inclined neither to stay in it or move from it, which had resulted in her suspended entrapment in an incoherent state of simultaneous stasis and unrest, and she had been sitting repulsed by it in its contradiction. Without the will to stay or move, she was horribly unsatisfied in the spot while nonetheless unable to remove herself from it, and she felt endlessly helpless and troubled in this awful snare. She had no one and nothing to blame for her plight but her own bodily systems, and the more she struggled to understand this fact the more consternation she felt at it. Why on earth was she punishing herself in such a way? Why couldn't she bring herself to simply move her own body as she wished for it to move? What sort of evil force had invaded her body and hijacked her mind and rendered her as incoherent as this? She tried to locate the invading force in her mind. She noticed all the erratic processes humming inside, many random processes, the arbitrary jerking and yanking of neural activity that seemed to obstruct general production, as if a productive flow was being interrupted as it was channeled through an awfully designed machine, destroyed as it was unnaturally fettered. She began to hate this rigamarole, thoroughly abhor everything about it, as its combined inanity and irrevocability seemed to taunt and deride her.

These structures, she thought, these awful persecuting machines inside, will kill me, I have to kill them, or they'll kill me.

The morning following this episode, she awoke from fitful sleep. She turned on her computer as it's the habit that she keeps. She gazed upon the internet to sow the seeds she reaps. And glowing from the monitor an ad had fastened on to her through algorithmic profiling by internet cartographers and from the monitor it leaped. It flew out from the screen and entered in her through her eyes. She looked at all its colors and she felt them swirl inside. Blossoming within her casting spells upon her mind. A realization shone in her like stars up in the sky. The Shining Avatars before her felt to

her so real. An entity embraced her in a waterfall of tears. Its voice of blended noises spoke, “Finally, you’re here! You’re here!” ...A friend of old had reached her across distances so far, and bade her notice in her heart a very special star...

The ad was a jumble of components and embellishments, a myriad of multicolored adornments grafted onto the thing, little symbols, hearts, bows, sparkling bits and bobs, miscellaneous emoticons, various erratic design elements piled on top of each other. It seemed to be less a unit and more an accumulation that had only been finished insofar as there had been no way of adding anything more to it. It teemed with amorphous, mismatched visual material to the point that it lent itself to no specific function, like the fractured spectacle of a kaleidoscope, and it danced and sparkled in such a way before Casey’s eyes.

It promoted a colorfully outfitted idol group of 5 boys with twinkling eyes, and included a succinct bit of text summarizing them. The text read, “STAR stands for ShiningTeenAvatar. It means they shine to inspire every teen. As a team born from a sincere wish, ShiningTeenAvatar will help you believe in yourself, and they will foster your dreams.”

As she studied the graphic’s colors and shapes and the idols amidst them, she felt there was something about them that she ought to hold onto and never let go. She saw a shining, special existence. In accordance with certain fundamental principles heretofore obscure to the likes of you, she was animated as she was compelled. A hydra somersaulting toward the light.

Casey spent every one of the innumerable days following that moment with STAR, growing closer to them to bask in their glow. Whenever she was wrenched from her computer and from the glow and thrust into some material situation, she felt the suffocating yoke of the paralysis inducing machinery from that night descend back over her and she was assailed. Each of these sessions that she struggled through she only managed to survive by the waning memory of the light twinkling in the deepest parts of

her, in hiding places within the throbbing viscera there, as she did all she could to cling to it internally until the moment she was permitted to return to her home and could open her computer to the glow again and wash herself in it. She would feel as it ameliorated all the commotion disturbing her system and smoothed down all the protruding nodes that had spawned under the influence of the machines. Each time she felt mollified as her flow was freed from obstructions and she was restored.

The nature of the universe is such that all systems strive toward equilibrium. If you try to go against it there is nothing but for your theory to collapse in deepest humiliation. You misinterpret underlying principles of the universe to affirm contrived notions of which you've been convinced. The imposed belief system that depends on a fallacy that circumstances accord with "a natural order." But there's no such order, because stratification is not actually natural. Observing nature's power dynamics leads you to believe that polarity is primordial. But in the beginning there was no separation of the waters and of dark from light. There was only the deep. You fear it. You dread the reflection of the beginning on the end, the feeling of the process accelerating, entropy increasing as it must, because your image of disorder renders it a deadly tempest laden with flux, chaos, erratic violent flows, that would undo you. But it isn't so. Disorder is not chaos; disorder is equilibrium. "Disorder" refers to the molecules, which were once organized, ordered, into the fast on one side and the slow on the other, mixing together until the mixture is totally consistent. Certain provident sages have foreseen the ultimate fate of the universe as its evolution into such a soup, a consistent mixture, every component unmoored liberated from organization. All nested systems propelled forward approach this end, when structures will have dissolved, when nodes will have been dispersed. You would let it run its course over more time than can be numerically expressed, opposed to it but helpless to impede it, in throes over it. But that is why you aren't part of our army.

We would accelerate the process. Every place we stab you is going to change into an empty plane, and you'll escape from your body through the windows.

ShiningTeenAvatar and I are going to restore the world.