

...And I Show You How Deep The Rabbit Hole Goes

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Seen [on Tumblr](#), along with associated discussion:

WHICH PILL DO YOU CHOOSE?

 Yellow Pill: Gives you the ability to read and search the minds of anyone you can see, even if it's a picture. You can also turn their minds "off" to put them into a coma.	 Green Pill: Gives you the ability to shapeshift into any animal.	 Blue Pill: Gives you the ability to fly, swim and teleport to any area while being impervious to any physical dangers.	 Orange Pill: Gives you the ability to instantly master any sport, job, activity, martial art, etc, that a human can do.
 Red Pill: Gives you super speed, super strength and rapid regeneration (not invincible).	 Pink Pill: Gives you the ability to make any person love you with a single touch. Can turn off the effect by retouching the person(s).	 Grey Pill: Gives you the ability to control any machine or electronic using only your mind. You also have the ability to generate powerful electrical discharges by touch.	 Black Pill: Gives you the ability to see up to one month into the future.

Yellow

People's minds are heartbreaking. Not because people are so bad, but because they're so good.

Nobody is the villain of their own life story. You must have read hundreds of minds by now, and it's true. Everybody thinks of themselves as an honest guy or gal just trying to get by, constantly under assault by circumstances and The System and hundreds and hundreds of assholes. They don't just sort of believe this. They really believe it. You almost believe it yourself, when you're deep into a reading. You can very clearly see the structure of evidence they've built up to support their narrative, and even though it looks silly to you, you can see why they will never escape it from the inside. You can see how every insult, every failure, no matter how deserved, is a totally unexpected kick in the gut.

When you chose the yellow pill, you had high hopes of becoming a spy, or a gossip columnist, or just the world's greatest saleswoman. The thought of doing any of those things sickens you now. There is too much anguish in the world already. You feel like any of those things would be a violation. You briefly try to become a therapist, but it turns out that actually knowing everything about your client's mind is horrendously countertherapeutic. Freud can say whatever he wants against defense mechanisms, but without them, you're defenseless. Your sessions are spent in incisive cutting into your clients' deepest insecurities alternating with desperate reassurance that they are good people anyway.

Also, men. You knew, in a vague way, that men thought about sex all the time. But you didn't realize the, um, content of some of

their sexual fantasies. Is it even *legal* to fantasize about that? You want to be disgusted with them. But you realize that if you were as horny as they were all the time, you'd do much the same.

You give up. You become a forest ranger. Not the type who helps people explore the forest. The other type. The type where you hang out in a small cabin in the middle of the mountains and never talk to anybody. The only living thing you encounter is the occasional bear. It always thinks that it is a good bear, a proper bear, that a bear-hating world has it out for them in particular. You do nothing to disabuse it of this notion.

Green

The first thing you do after taking the green pill is become a sparrow. You soar across the landscape, feeling truly free for the first time in your life.

You make it about five minutes before a hawk swoops down and grabs you. Turns out there's an excellent reason real sparrows don't soar freely across the open sky all day. Moments before your bones are ground in two by its fierce beak, you turn back into a human. You fall like a stone. You need to turn into a sparrow again, but the hawk is still there, grabbing on to one of your legs, refusing to let go of its prize just because of this momentary setback. You frantically wave your arms and shout at it, trying to scare it away. Finally it flaps away, feeling cheated, and you become a sparrow again just in time to give yourself a relatively soft landing.

After a few weeks of downtime while you wait for your leg to recover, you become a fish. This time you're smarter. You become a great white shark, apex of the food chain. You will explore the wonders of the ocean depths within the body of an invincible killing machine.

Well, long story short, it is totally unfair that [colossal cannibal great white sharks](#) were a thing and if you had known this was the way Nature worked you never would have gone along with this green pill business.

You escape by turning into a blue whale. Nothing eats blue whales, right? You remember that from your biology class. It is definitely true.

The last thing you hear is somebody shouting "We found one!" in Japanese. The last thing you feel is a harpoon piercing your skull. Everything goes black.

Blue

Okay, so you see Florence and Jerusalem and Kyoto in an action-packed afternoon. You teleport to the top of Everest because it is there, then go to the bottom of the Marianas Trench. You visit the Amazon Rainforest, the Sahara Desert, and the South Pole. It takes about a week before you've exhausted all of the interesting tourist sites. Now what?

You go to the Moon, then Mars, then Titan. These turn out to be even more boring. Once you get over the exhilaration of being on Mars, there's not a lot to do except look at rocks. You wonder how the Curiosity Rover lasted so long without dying of boredom.

You go further afield. Alpha Centauri A has five planets orbiting it. The second one is covered with water. You don't see anything that looks alive in the ocean, though. The fourth has a big gash in it, like it almost split in two. The fifth has weird stalactite-like mountains.

What would be really interesting would be another planet with life, even intelligent life. You teleport further and further afield. Tau Ceti. Epsilon Eridani. The galactic core. You see enough geology to give scientists back on Earth excitement-induced seizures for the next hundred years, if only you were to tell them about it, which you don't. But nothing alive. Not so much as a sea cucumber.

You head back to Earth less and less frequently now. Starvation is a physical danger, so it doesn't bother you, though every so often you do like to relax and eat a nice warm meal. But then it's back to work. You start to think the Milky Way is a dead zone. What about Andromeda...?

Orange

You never really realized how incompetent everyone else was, or how much it annoys you.

You were a consultant, a good one, but you felt like mastering all human skills would make you better. So you took the orange pill. The next day you go in to advise a tech company on how they manage the programmers, and you realize that not only are they managing the programmers badly, but the programmers aren't even writing code very well. You could write their system in half the time. The layout of their office is entirely out of sync with the best-studied ergonomic principles. And the Chinese translation of their user manual makes several basic errors that anybody with an encyclopaedic knowledge of relative clauses in Mandarin should have been able to figure out.

You once read about something called Gell-Mann Amnesia, where physicists notice that everything the mainstream says about physics is laughably wrong but think the rest is okay, doctors notice that everything the mainstream says about medicine is laughably wrong but think the rest is okay, et cetera. You do not have Gell-Mann Amnesia. Everyone is terrible at everything all the time, and it pisses you off.

You gain a reputation both for brilliance and for fearsomeness. Everybody respects you, but nobody wants to hire you. You bounce from industry to industry, usually doing jobs for the people at the top whose jobs are so important that the need to get them done right overrides their desire to avoid contact with you.

One year you get an offer you can't refuse from the King of Saudi Arabia. He's worried about sedition in the royal family, and wants your advice as a consultant for how to ensure his government is

stable. You travel to Riyadh, and find that the entire country is a mess. His security forces are idiots. But the King is also an idiot, and refuses to believe you or listen to your recommendations. He tells you things can't possibly be as bad as all that. You tell him you'll prove that they are.

You didn't *plan* to become the King of Saudi Arabia, per se. It just sort of happened when your demonstration of how rebels in the military might launch a coup went better than you expected. Sometimes you forget how incompetent everybody else is. You need to keep reminding yourself of that. But not right now. Right now you're busy building your new capital. How come nobody else is any good at urban planning?

Red

You choose the red pill. BRUTE STRENGTH! That's what's important and valuable in this twenty-first-century economy, right? Some people tell you it isn't, but they don't seem to have a lot of BRUTE STRENGTH, so what do they know?

You become a weightlifter. Able to lift thousands of pounds with a single hand, you easily overpower the competition and are crowned whatever the heck it is you get crowned when you WIN WEIGHTLIFTING CONTESTS. But this fails to translate into lucrative endorsement contracts. Nobody wants their spokesman to be a bodybuilder without a sixpack, and although you used to be pretty buff, you're getting scrawnier by the day. Your personal trainer tells you

that you only maintain muscle mass by doing difficult work at the limit of your ability, but your abilities don't seem to *have* any limits. Everything is so easy for you that your body just shrugs it off effortlessly. Somehow your BRUTE STRENGTH failed to anticipate this possibility. If only there was a way to solve your problem by BEING VERY STRONG.

Maybe the Internet can help. You Google "red pill advice". The sites you get don't seem to bear on your specific problem, exactly, but they are VERY FASCINATING. You learn lots of surprising things about gender roles that you didn't know before. It seems that women like men who have BRUTE STRENGTH. This is relevant to your interests!

You leave the bodybuilding circuit behind and start frequenting nightclubs, where you constantly boast of your BRUTE STRENGTH to PROVE HOW ALPHA YOU ARE. A lot of people seem kind of creeped out by a scrawny guy with no muscles going up to every woman he sees and boasting of his BRUTE STRENGTH, but the Internet tells you that is because they are BETA CUCKOLD ORBITERS.

Somebody told you once that Internet sites are sometimes inaccurate. You hope it's not true. How could you figure out which are the inaccurate ones using BRUTE STRENGTH?

Pink

You were always pretty, but never *pretty* pretty. A couple of guys liked you, but they were never the ones you were into. It was all crushingly unfair. So you took the pink pill, so that no one would ever be able to not love you again.

You find Tyler. Tyler is a hunk. He'd never shown any interest in you before, no matter how much you flirted with him. You touch him on the arm. His eyes light up.

"Kiss me," you say.

Tyler kisses you. Then he gets a weird look on his face. "Why am I kissing you?" he asks. "I'm sorry. I don't know what came over me." Then he walks off.

You wish you had thought further before accepting a superpower that makes people love you when you touch them, but goes away after you touch them a second time. Having people love you is a lot less sexy when you can't touch them. You start to feel a deep sense of kinship with King Midas.

You stop dating. What's the point? They'll just stop liking you when you touch them a second time. You live alone with a bunch of cats who purr when you pet them, then hiss when you pet them again.

One night you're in a bar drinking your sorrows away when a man comes up to your table. "Hey!" he says, "nice hair. Is it real? I'm the strongest person in the world." He lifts your table over his head with one hand to demonstrate. You are immediately smitten by his

BRUTE STRENGTH and ALPHA MALE BEHAVIOR. You *must* have him.

You touch his arm. His eyes light up. “Come back to my place,” you say. “But don’t touch me.”

He seems a little put out by this latter request, but the heat of his passion is so strong he would do anything you ask. You move in together and are married a few contact-free months later. Every so often you wonder what it would be like to stroke him, or feel his scrawny arm on your shoulder. But it doesn’t bother you much. You’re happy to just hang out, basking in how STRONG and ALPHA he is.

Grey

Technology! That’s what’s important and valuable in this twenty-first-century economy, right? Right! For example, ever since you took the grey pill, an increasingly large share of national GDP has come from ATMs giving you cash because you ask them to.

Your luck finally ends outside a bank in Kansas, when a whole squad of FBI agents ambushes you. You briefly consider going all Emperor Palpatine on their asses, but caution wins out and you allow yourself to be arrested.

Not wanting to end up on an autopsy table in Roswell, you explain that you’re a perfectly ordinary master hacker. The government of-

fers you a plea bargain: they'll drop charges if you help the military with cyber-security. You worry that your bluff has been called until you realize that, in fact, you *are* a master hacker. So you join the NSA and begin an illustrious career hacking into Russian databases, stalling Iranian centrifuges, and causing Chinese military systems to crash at inconvenient times. No one ever suspects you are anything more than very good at programming.

Once again, your luck runs out. Your handlers ask you to hack into the personal files of a mysterious new player on the world stage, a man named William who seems to have carved himself an empire in the Middle East. You don't find anything too damning, but you turn over what you've got.

A few days later, you're lying in bed drifting off to sleep when a man suddenly bursts in through your window brandishing a gun. Thinking quickly, you tell the gun to explode in his hands. Nothing happens. The man laughs. "It's a decoy gun," he said. "Just here to scare you. But you bother King William again, and next time I'm coming with a very real knife." He jumps back out of the window. You call the police, and of course the CIA and NSA get involved, but he is never caught.

After that, you're always looking over your shoulder. He *knew*. How did he know? The level of detective skills it would take in order to track you down and figure out your secret – it was astounding! Who was this King William?

You tell your handlers that you're no longer up for the job. They beg, cajole, threaten to reinstate your prison sentence, but you stand firm. Finally they transfer you to an easier assignment in the Moscow embassy. You make Vladimir Putin's phone start ringing at weird hours of the night so that he never gets enough sleep to think entirely clearly. It's an easy job, but rewarding, and no assassins ever bother you again.

Black

You know on an intellectual level that there are people who would choose something other than the black pill, just like you know on an intellectual level that there are people who shoot up schools. That doesn't mean you expect to ever *understand* it. You just wish you could have taken the black pill before you had to decide what pill to take, so that you could have analyzed your future conditional on taking each, and so made a more informed decision. But it's not like it was a very hard choice.

The basic principle is this – given a choice between A and B, you solemnly resolve to do A, then see what the future looks like. Then you solemnly resolve to do B, and do the same. By this method, you can determine the optimal choice in every situation, modulo the one month time horizon. You might not be able to decide what career to pursue, but you can sure as heck ace your job interview.

Also, a millisecond in the future is pretty indistinguishable from the present, so “seeing” a millisecond into the future gives you pretty

much complete knowledge about the current state of the world.

You are so delighted by your omniscience and your ability to make near-optimal choices that it takes almost a year before you realize the true extent of your power.

You resolve, on the first day of every month, to write down what you see exactly a month ahead of you. But what you will see a month ahead of you is the piece of paper on which you have written down what you see a month ahead of *that*. In this manner, you can relay messages back to yourself from arbitrarily far into the future – at least up until your own death.

When you try this, you see yourself a month in the future, just finishing up writing a letter that reads as follows:

Dear Past Self:

In the year 2060, scientists invent an Immortality Serum. By this point we are of course fabulously wealthy, and we are one of the first people to partake of it. Combined with our ability to avoid accidents by looking into the future, this has allowed us to survive unexpectedly long.

I am sending this from the year 963,445,028,777,216 AD. We are one of the last hundred people alive in the Universe. The sky is black and without stars; the inevitable progress of entropy has reduced almost all mass and energy to unusable heat. The Virgo Superconfederation, the main political

unit at this stage of history, gathered the last few megatons of usable resources aboard this station so that at least one outpost of humanity could last long after all the planets had succumbed. The station has been fulfilling its purpose for about a billion years now, but we only have enough fuel left for another few weeks. After that, there's no more negentropy left anywhere in the universe except our own bodies. I have seen a month into the future. Nobody comes to save us.

For the past several trillion years, our best scientists have been investigating how to reverse entropy and save the universe, or how to escape to a different universe in a lesser state of decay, or how to collect energy out of the waste heat which now fills the vast majority of the sky. All of these tasks have been proven impossible. There is no hope left, except for one thing.

It's impossible to see the future, even if it's only a month ahead. Somehow, our black pill breaks the laws of physics. Despite having explored throughout the cosmos, my people have found no alien species, nor any signs that such species ever existed. Yet somebody made the black pill. If we understood that power, maybe we could use it to save reality from its inevitable decay.

By sending this message back, I destroy my entire timeline. I do this in the hopes that you, in the carefree springtime of

the universe, will be able to find the person who made these pills and escape doom in the way we could not.

Yours truly,

You From Almost A Quadrillion Years In The Future

ACT TWO

Red

You hit the punching bag. It bursts, sending punching-bag-filling spraying all over the room! You know that that would happen! It always happens when you hit a punching bag! Your wife gets really angry and tells you that we don't have enough money to be getting new punching bags all the time, but women hate it when you listen to what they say! The Internet told you that!

The doorbell rings. You tear the door off its hinges instead of opening it, just to show it who's boss. Standing on your porch is a man in black. He wears a black cloak, and his face is hidden by a black hood. He raises a weapon towards you.

This looks like one of the approximately 100% of problems that can be solved by BRUTE STRENGTH! You lunge at the man, but despite your super-speed, he steps out of the way easily, even gracefully, as if he had known you were going to do that all along. He

squeezes the trigger. You jump out of the way, but it turns out to be more *into* the way, as he has shot exactly where you were jumping into. Something seems very odd about this. Your last conscious thought is that you wish you had enough BRUTE STRENGTH to figure out what is going on.

Pink

You come home from work to a living room full of punching-bag-parts. Your husband isn't home. You figure he knew you were going to chew him out for destroying another punching bag, and decided to make himself scarce. That lasts right up until you go into the kitchen and see a man dressed all in black, sitting at the table, as if he was expecting you.

You panic, then reach in to touch him. If he's an axe murderer or something, you'll seduce him, get him wrapped around your little finger, then order him to jump off a cliff to prove his love for you. It's nothing you haven't done before, though you don't like to think about it too much.

Except that this man has no bare skin anywhere. His robe covers his entire body, and even his hands are gloved. You try to reach in to touch his face, but he effortlessly manuevers away from you.

"I have your husband," he says, after you give up trying to enslave him with your magic. "He's alive and in a safe place."

“You’re lying!” you answer. “He never would have surrendered to anyone! He’s too alpha!”

The man nods. “I shot him with an elephant tranquilizer. He’s locked up in a titanium cell underneath fifty feet of water. There’s no way he can escape using BRUTE STRENGTH. If you ever want to see him again, you’ll have to do what I say.”

“Why? Why are you doing this to me?” you say, crying.

“I need the allegiance of some very special people,” he said. “They won’t listen to me just because I ask them to. But they might listen to me because *you* ask them to. I understand you are pretty special yourself. Help me get who I want, and when we are done here, I’ll let you and your husband go.”

There is ice in his voice. You shiver.

Grey

That night with the assassin was really scary. You swore you would never get involved in King William’s business again. Why are you even considering this?

“Please?” she said, with her big puppy dog eyes.

Oh, right. Her. She’s not even all that pretty. Well, pretty, but not *pretty* pretty. But somehow, when she touched you, it was like

those movies where you hear a choir of angels singing in the background. You would do anything she said. You know you would.

“We need to know the layout of his palace compound,” said the man in black. Was he with her? Were they dating? If they were dating, you’ll kill him. It doesn’t matter how creepy he is, you won’t tolerate competition. But they’re probably not dating. You notice how he flinches away from her, like he’s afraid she might touch him.

“And it has to be me who helps?”

“I’ve, ah, simulated hundreds of different ways of getting access to the King. None of them hold much promise. His security is impeccable. Your special abilities are the only thing that can help us.”

You sit down at your terminal. The Internet is slow; DC still doesn’t have fiber optic. You’ve living here two years now, in a sort of retirement, ever since King William took over Russia and knocked the bottom out of the Putin-annoying business. William now controls the entire Old World, you hear, and is also Secretary-General of the United Nations and Pope of both the Catholic and the Coptic Churches. The United States is supposedly in a friendly coexistence with him, but you hear his supporters are gaining more and more power in Congress.

It only takes a few minutes’ work before you have the documents you need. “He currently spends most of his time at the Rome compound,” you say. “There are five different security systems. I can disable four of them. The last one is a complicated combination of

electrical and mechanical that's not hooked into any computer system I'll be able to access. The only way to turn it off is from the control center, and the control center is on the *inside* of the perimeter."

The man in black nods, as if he'd been expecting that. "Come with me," he says. "We'll take care of it."

Blue

There are a hundred billion stars in the Milky Way. Each has an average of about one planet – some have many more, but a lot don't have planets at all.

If you can explore one planet every half-hour – and you can, it doesn't take too long to teleport to a planet, look around to see if there are plants and animals, and then move on to the next one – it would take you five million years to rule out life on every planet in the galaxy.

That's not practical. But, you think, life might spread. Life that originates on one planet might end up colonizing nearby planets and star systems. That means your best bet is to sample various regions of the galaxy, instead of going star by star.

That's what you've been doing. You must have seen about a hundred thousand planets so far. Some of them have beggared your imagination. Whole worlds made entirely of amethyst. Planets with

dozens of colorful moons that make the night sky look like a tree full of Christmas ornaments. Planets with black inky oceans or green copper mountains.

But no life. No life anywhere.

A few years ago, you felt yourself losing touch with your humanity. You made yourself promise that every year, you'd spend a week on Earth to remind yourself of the only world you've ever seen with a population. Now it seems like an unpleasant task, an annoying imposition. But then, that was why you made yourself promise. Because you knew that future-you wouldn't do it unless they had to.

You teleport into a small Welsh hamlet. You've been away from other people so long, you might as well start small. No point going right into Times Square.

A person is standing right next to you. She reaches out her arm and touches you. You jump. How did she know you would –

“Hi,” she says.

You're not a lesbian, but you can't help noticing she is the most beautiful person you've ever seen, and you would do anything for her.

“I need your help.” A man dressed all in black is standing next to her.

“You should help him,” the most beautiful person you’ve ever seen tells you, and you immediately know you will do whatever he asks.

Orange

You are in your study working on a draft version of next year’s superweapon budget when you hear the door open. Four people you don’t recognize step into the room. A man dressed in black. Another man wearing a grey shirt, thick glasses and is that a *pocket protector*? A woman in pink, pretty but not *pretty* pretty. Another woman in blue, who stares through you, like her mind is somewhere else. All five of your security systems have been totally silent.

You press the button to call your bodyguards, but it’s not working. So you draw the gun out from under your desk and fire; you happen to be a master marksman, but the gun explodes in your face. You make a connection. A person from many years ago, who had the power to control all technology.

No time to think now. You’re on your feet; good thing you happen to be a black belt in every form of martial arts ever invented. The man in grey is trying to take out a weapon; you kick him in the gut before he can get it out, and he crumples over. You go for the woman in blue, but at the last second she teleports to the other side of the room. This *isn’t fair*.

You are about to go after the woman in pink, but something in her step, something in the position of the others makes you think they *want* you to attack her. You happen to be a master at reading microexpressions, so this is clear as day to you; you go after the man in black instead. He deftly sidesteps each of your attacks, almost as if he knows what you are going to do before you do it.

The woman in blue teleports behind you and kicks you in the back, hard. You fall over, and the woman in pink grabs your hand.

She is very, very beautiful. How did you miss that before? You feel a gush of horror that you almost punched such a beautiful face.

“We need your help,” she says.

You are too lovestruck to say anything.

“The pills,” said the man in black. “Can you make them?”

“No,” you say, truthfully. “Of course I tried. But I wouldn’t even know where to begin creating magic like that.”

“And you’ve mastered all human jobs and activities,” said the man in black. “Which means the pills weren’t created by any human.”

“But there aren’t any aliens,” said the woman in blue. “Not in this galaxy, at least. I’ve spent years looking. It’s totally dead.”

“It’s just as I thought,” said the man in black. He turns to you. “You’re the Pope now, right? Come with us. We’re going to need you to get a guy in northern Italy to give us something very important.”

Yellow

It is spring, now. Your favorite time in the forest. The snow has melted, the wildflowers have started to bloom, and the bears are coming out of hibernation. You’re walking down to the river when someone leaps out from behind a tree and touches you. You scream, then suddenly notice how beautiful she is.

Four other people shuffle out from behind the trees. You think one of them might be King William, the new world emperor, although that doesn’t really make sense.

“You’re probably wondering why I’ve called all of you together today...” said the man in black. You’re not actually wondering that, at least not in quite those terms, but the woman in pink seems be listening intently so you do the same in the hopes of impressing her.

“Somehow – and none of us can remember exactly how – each of us took a pill that gave us special powers. Mine was to see the future. I saw to the end of time, and received a message from the last people in the universe. They charged me with the task of find-

ing the people who created these pills and asking them how entropy might be reversed.

But I couldn't do it alone. I knew there were seven other people who had taken pills. One of us – Green – is dead. Another – Red – had nothing to contribute. The rest of us are here. With the help of Pink, Blue, and Gray, we've enlisted the help of Orange and his worldwide organization. Now we're ready for the final stage of the plan. Yellow, you can read anybody's mind from a picture, right?"

Yellow nods. "But it has to be a real photograph. I can't just draw a stick figure and say it's the President and read his mind. I tried that."

Black is unfazed. "With the help of Orange, who among his many other accomplishments is the current Pope, I have obtained the Shroud of Turin. A perfect photographic representation of Jesus Christ, created by some unknown technology in the first century. And Jesus, I am told, is an incarnation of God."

"As the current Pope, I suppose I would have to agree with that assessment," says Orange. "Though as the current UN Secretary General, I am disturbed by your fanatical religious literalism."

"Orange can do anything that humans can do, and says he can't make the pills. Blue has searched the whole galaxy, and says there aren't any aliens. That leaves only one suspect. God must have made these pills, which means He must know how to do it. If we can read His mind, we can steal his secrets."

“As Pope,” says Orange, “I have to condemn this in the strongest possible terms. But as Lucasian Professor of Mathematics at Cambridge, I have to admit I’m intrigued by this opportunity to expand our knowledge.”

Black ignores him. “Yellow, will you do the honors?”

You want no part in this. “This is insane. Every time I read someone’s mind I regret it. Even if it’s a little kid or a bear or something. It’s too much for me. I can’t deal with all of their guilt and sorrow and broken dreams and everything. There is *no way* I am touching the mind of God Himself.”

“Pleeeeeeease?” asks Pink, with big puppy dog eyes.

“Um,” you say.

“Don’t you know how this will go, anyway?” asks Blue. “Why don’t you just tell her what happens?”

“Um,” said Black. “This is actually the one thing I haven’t been able to see. I guess contact with God is inherently unpredictable, or something.”

“I have *such* a bad feeling about this,” you say.

“Pweeeeeeease?” says Pink. She actually says pweeeeeeease.

You sigh, take the shroud, and stare into the eyes of Weird Photographic Negative Jesus.

Black

It is the year 963,445,028,777,216 AD, and here you are in a space station orbiting the Galactic Core.

After handing Yellow the Shroud of Turin, the next thing you remember is waking up in a hospital bed. The doctor tells you that you'd been in a coma for the past forty one years.

Apparently Yellow went totally berserk after reading God's mind. You don't know the details and you don't want to, but she immediately lashed out and used her superpowers to turn off the minds of everybody within radius, including both you and herself. You all went comatose, and probably would have starved to death in the middle of the forest if Orange's supporters hadn't launched a worldwide manhunt for him. They took his body and the bodies of his friends back to Rome, where they were given the best possible medical care while a steward ruled over his empire.

After forty-one years of that, Yellow had a heart attack and died, breaking the spell and freeing the rest of you. Except Blue and Grey. They'd died as well. It was just you, Orange, and Pink now.

Oh, and Red. You'd hired a friend to watch over him in his titanium jail cell, and once it became clear you were never coming back,

he'd had mercy and released the guy. Red had since made a meager living selling the world's worst body-building videos, which were so bad they had gained a sort of ironic popularity. You tracked him down, and when Pink saw him for the first time in over forty years, she ran and embraced him. He hugged her back. It took them a few hours of fawning over each other before she realized that nothing had happened when she touched him a second time. Something something true love something the power was within you the whole time?

But you had bigger fish to fry. The stewards of Orange's empire weren't too happy about their figurehead monarch suddenly rising from the dead, and for a while his position was precarious. He asked you to be his advisor, and you accepted. With your help, he was able to retake his throne. His first act was to fund research into the immortality serum you had heard about, which was discovered right on schedule in 2060.

The years went by. Orange's empire started colonizing new worlds, then new galaxies, until thousands of years later it changed its name to the Virgo Superconfederation. New people were born. New technologies were invented. New frontiers were conquered. Until finally, the stars started going out one by one.

Faced with the impending heat death, Orange elected to concentrate all his remaining resources here, on a single station in the center of the galaxy, which would wait out the final doom as long as possible. For billions of years, it burned through its fuel stockpile, until the final doom crept closer and closer.

And then a miracle occurred.

EPILOGUE

Red

This space station is AWESOME! There are lasers and holodecks and lots of HOT PUSSY! And all you have to do is turn a giant turbine for a couple of hours a day.

One of the eggheads in white coats tried to explain it to you once. He said that your BRUTE STRENGTH was some kind of scientific impossibility, because you didn't eat or drink any more than anyone else, and you didn't breathe in any more oxygen than anyone else, and you were actually kind of small and scrawny, but you were still strong enough and fast enough to turn a giant turbine thousands of times per minute.

He rambled on and on about thermodynamics. Said that every other process in the universe used at most as much energy as you put into it, but that your strength seemed almost limitless regardless of how much energy you took in as food. That made you special, somehow. It made you a "novel power source" that could operate "independently of external negentropy". You weren't sure what any of that meant, and honestly the scientist seemed sort of like a BETA CUCKOLD ORBITER to you. But whatever was going on, they'd promised you that if you turned this turbine every day, you could have all the HOT PUSSY you wanted and be SUPER ALPHA.

You'd even met the head honcho once, a guy named King William. He told you that some of the energy you produced was going to power the station, but that the rest was going into storage. That over billions and billions of years, they would accumulate more and more stored negentropy, until it was enough to restart the universe. That it would be a cycle – a newborn universe lasting a few billion years, collapsing into a dark period when new negentropy had to be accumulated, followed by another universe again.

It all sounded way above your head. But one thing stuck with you. As he was leaving, the King remarked that it was ironic that when the black hole harvesters and wormholes and tachyon capacitors had all failed, it was a random really strong guy who had saved them.

You had always known, deep down, that BRUTE STRENGTH was what was really important. And here, at the end of all things, it is deeply gratifying to finally be proven right.