

Nonfiction

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Nonfiction

by [Sixteenthdays](#)

Summary

[GRIAN]

-said you wanted to give a *statement*. If that's *not* what you're here to do, you can *leave* instead of destroying my property.

[DOC]

Hmm. Fine. We can talk. But no tape.

Notes

recommend reading [immersive storytelling](#) before this one for sure. events from [the red king's tragedy](#) are also referenced

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

[Click]

[GRIAN]

Uh, hello...?

(Noises of papers shuffling)

[GRIAN]

Don't mess those up, this place is a disaster enough already. What are you-

[Click]

[Click]

(Sound slightly more distant)

[GRIAN]

-said you wanted to give a *statement*. If that's *not* what you're here to do, you can *leave* instead of destroying my property.

[DOC]

Hmm. Fine. We can talk. But no tape.

[GRIAN]

Oh, *can* we? What are you even here for, exactly?

[DOC]

Good question.

(A heavy thud of leather against wood; Grian catches his breath.)

[GRIAN]

Is that-

[DOC]

Have you ever seen a book like this before?

(Slide of leather on wood, whispering with cobwebs.)

[GRIAN]

A lot of strange books come through here, but I think I've actually heard of this particular one.

[DOC]

So he did come in here.

[GRIAN]

Ren did, yeah. You're Doc, then? He said he was worried about you.

[DOC]

Hmph. Yeah. That guy... big heart. I didn't want to worry him, but I couldn't involve him in my investigations any further than I already had.

[GRIAN]

Well, while you were gone he got possessed and almost killed someone in a haunted play.

[DOC]

He what.

[GRIAN]

It's a long story. He's fine, last I heard. But it tends to be harder than you'd think for people to get away from... these things. Or at least that's what I've seen.

[DOC]

'These things.'

(Pause)

What do you know?

[GRIAN]

This is my office. What do *you* know?

[DOC]

...Fine.

(Book cover flips open)

[GRIAN]

Yeah, I thought so. This is-

Wait.

What?

I don't... know that name. Who is that?

[DOC]

Nobody who exists in this world, so far as I can find.

[GRIAN]

...Start from the beginning.

[DOC]

I'm assuming Ren told you about where the book came from? It was locked shut when we first obtained it. We couldn't get it open without risking damaging the pages.

When we had our adventure underground, I found the key tangled in the spiderwebs beneath our feet. I get the feeling someone wanted me to find it. The light caught it in a way it shouldn't have been able to, so far underground.

Paranoid, maybe. But that doesn't make me *wrong*. As I'm sure you'll come to understand.

I decided any future investigations would be done alone.

As soon as I was home that night, I unlocked the book and started reading. The first thing I saw, obviously, was that nameplate. I kept a list of every name mentioned in this book, and none of them belong to real people.

[GRIAN]

So... what, it's a novel?

[DOC]

Nothing so simple. It's a list of transcripts. Eighty or so in all. I believe it is an accounting of events that really happened, *somewhere*. Not here. Not in our world.

[GRIAN]

What, on another planet?

[DOC]

Or another timeline.

(Pause)

[GRIAN]

You're serious.

[DOC]

Oh, extremely.

[GRIAN]

How could you possibly be sure of that?

[DOC]

I'm not. But I don't believe this without reason. You expected to see a different name when I opened the book. Who?

[GRIAN]

...Joe Hills. We keep encountering books with strange effects that have his name stamped inside the front cover just like that. Same style, even.

[DOC]

So let us consider options, then. Why would a book be marked in the exact same style as this Joe Hills, found in similar circumstances, but with the name Jurgen Leitner?

[GRIAN]

Could be a coincidence.

[DOC]

Sure, it could be. But presuming it is less random than that, which we have every reason to believe is true; the first possibility is that either it is someone who knows or knows of this Joe Hills, and the resemblance is intentional-

[GRIAN]

That's not so unlikely. His books end up everywhere. I'm sure thousands of people have seen that stamp.

[DOC]

Let me finish. The second possibility is that this Leitner person occupies the same space as Joe Hills, but in a somehow different reality.

[GRIAN]

...I'm going to call that a *reach*. I hope you've got more evidence than just this.

[DOC]

That's why I'm here.

[GRIAN]

Here?

[DOC]

The story that's laid out here- it's incomplete. There are many details missing. But it's about a very similar institute to this one, or similar in some aspects, at least. And there are certain details in here that no one could possibly know, unless there is a correspondence between this text and our world.

I figured if anything would be able to confirm or disprove my theories, it would be a conversation with the Archivist.

[GRIAN]

Why me, and not someone like Xisuma? He's in charge.

[DOC]

Well, you *are* the main character. And I have reason to believe the head of the institute may be... untrustworthy.

How many assistants do you have down here? Three?

[GRIAN]

Four, actually.

[DOC]

Were they all hired at the same time?

[GRIAN]

They all transferred here at the same time. When I was promoted to this position I got to recruit them from other departments.

Does that match with your story?

[DOC]

It's not an exact correlation- in the story there are only three. How long ago was that? That you were hired?

[GRIAN]

Earlier this year. May, I think.

[DOC]

Because your predecessor disappeared.

[GRIAN]

...Yes.

[DOC]

Were they murdered?

[GRIAN]

So far as I know, he's still alive.

[DOC]

Hm. Have you ever tried to quit your job?

[GRIAN]

No? I love working here.

(Pause)

[DOC]

You look uncertain.

[GRIAN]

No I don't.

[DOC]

Mm. Did you have any supernatural events in your life before you started working here? Particularly anything traumatic?

[GRIAN]

Nope. Never.

[DOC]

You know, I don't believe you are being honest with me.

[GRIAN]

Well, I am.

[DOC]

Have you experienced any personal changes since beginning in this position?

[GRIAN]

What do you mean by *changes*?

[DOC]

Psychological, for instance- have you caught yourself thinking differently at all?

[GRIAN]

Maybe. That's not too unusual with a new job, is it?

[DOC]

Perhaps not. You spend the majority of the time reading these statements back to record them, yes?

[GRIAN]

Yes.

[DOC]

How does that make you feel?

(Long pause)

[DOC]

(Chuckles)

This isn't an interrogation. You don't need to answer if you don't want to. Regardless, you have already confirmed some useful things for me, whether you meant to or not, so thank you.

Would you like to know my complete hypothesis?

[GRIAN]

Sure, why not.

[DOC]

I went back to the place where we found the key, a few weeks ago, levered up the stone that revealed the ladder down to the sewer. It's all gone, now. No tunnels, no spiders, no webs. I think, perhaps, whatever was there was never supposed to be there at all.

I told you I think it wasn't an accident I found this key, and this book. A trail was laid, and I think it was laid to tempt whoever stumbled on it into wondering about the nature of this reality.

[GRIAN]

Enlighten me, then.

[DOC]

None of this is real.

[GRIAN]

None of...?

[DOC]

This. Everything. This timeline. I think between these two parallel narratives, one must have come first, and the other splintered off. And I think we did not come first.

[GRIAN]

(Doubtful) Uh-huh.

[DOC]

You don't believe me. That's fine. I didn't come here for validation. I know what I've seen.

(Standing from chair)

[DOC]

Best of luck, Archivist. I would be mindful of your choices, if I was you.

(Retreating footsteps)

(Long pause, dead air)

(Rustling)

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[Click]

[GRIAN]

I'm glad I caught that on tape- he pitched my first recorder out the *window! Rude*. He wouldn't let me really get a close look at the text of that book of his, but at least I've got this. I'll have to listen back to what he said.

I don't believe him, for the record. His conclusions are absolute nonsense. But I do have to wonder. Some of the things he knew could be public knowledge- I think Etho's disappearance was even in papers. But what he said about the statements-

Well. It's strange, that's all I'll say about it. Spooky.

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[IMPULSE]

Grian! You still want to meet Tango, right?

[GRIAN]

Uh, *yes?*

[IMPULSE]

Zed just dropped in to leave a message from him- apparently there's something really, uh, weird? Going on up north, and he's heading out there to study it.

[GRIAN]

Zedaph was- never mind. We're going. Do you know where exactly? And what do you mean by *weird?*

[IMPULSE]

Yeah, it's a national park, I wrote it down, and I, uh- you know how Zedaph is with useful information. I'm not sure. He said something about a 'developing event,' and then when I asked him why he wasn't going himself he said didn't want to 'contaminate' anything?

[GRIAN]

Did he say anything about when this was happening? Now?

[IMPULSE]

He said he didn't know exactly when it would kick off, but that it'll probably be in the next day or so? He had some sort of measurements but when he tried to explain them to me I just got a headache.

[GRIAN]

Interesting. A developing event that *Tango Tek* wants to be there for? That's something I've *got* to see.

[Click]

End Notes

hahaha get it cause its a fanfiction

we're really in it now boys!! all i'm gonna say is im VERY excited for the next few statements

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