

808 and AA14: Finding out the Truth

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Chapter 1: A Day Full of Sunlight

It is the year 2348, a typical day in AA14. Sunshine travels through the sky towards the circular shaped streets, finding its way around the central tower into identical homes in which the people live. Their breakfast just becomes more enjoyable with the sunlight coming through; there is nothing better than starting the day with joy and some light.

This is exactly how it is like at 808's house. He is at the table eating his omelette and freshly baked bread, next to his two children and loving wife. Nothing seems off, instead it feels a bit more special than any other day. He feels lucky about today, like something new or exciting is going to happen.

This week he is working as a street cleaner on the outer streets of the AA14's circles. This is how the tower decided to make things work these past couple of years; your workplace and duty changes every week. This is understandable to make everybody capable of doing all the jobs and to increase sympathy between citizens. 808 loves trying new things, so he loves the system around here.

He waves goodbye to his wife at the door while leaving for work, gives kisses to his children, one for each and travels to his designated workplace for the week.

It takes him more than usual to reach his workplace, it is on one of the outer streets where he has never been before. It is an interesting street, feels darker than where his house is located, like the sunlight is somehow unable to reach here. As a curious person, he looks more closely at the houses, the people, and the details of this street. It feels weird that he actually has never been here before. Everything he observes interests him, but at the same time creeps him out. His positivity of the day starts to slowly fade away and he cannot even tell the reason why. When he turns around, he sees this creepy lady staring at him from the window, and now he knows why.

Chapter 2: The Lady

She looks old, pale, and very cold. Her eyes are looking but 808 feels like she cannot see anything. She has a body but 808 feels like she is not alive. She is moving but 808 feels like she is not doing it consciously. It is like someone dead, but alive at the same time. This is something 808 has never seen before, not even imagined. It is like something from a horror movie, but instead, this time it is real.

808 falls for his curiosity. He wants to know who she is and what happened to her. During his entire shift of cleaning the streets, he cannot take his eyes off from this lady and her house. He cannot stop himself from thinking and trying to understand, is there something wrong with her? Maybe he should go to her house and ask. Would it be rude to intervene like that? What if she is sick?

His shift is almost over now, it is by the end of the day. And she is just inside her house, minding her business, occasionally looking through the window to look outside. When she is looking, 808 feels like she is looking directly at him. But why would she do that? This is the first time 808 is seeing her ever in his life. Finally, 808 decides to approach to her house, and try to talk to her. He thinks she might need help or something may be wrong with her. He slowly walks towards the door and knocks on the door.

Chapter 3: The House

To his surprise, the door opens immediately; it was not closed in the first place. He finds it rude to just get inside so he keeps on knocking on the door, even though the door is open. Nobody comes to the door. He slowly opens the door and says "Hello? Anyone here?". No answer. "I just saw you looking out your window. I thought you might need help, it must be difficult living all alone here, on the outer street of AA14. Can I come in?". Still no answer. This makes 808 worried, what if she is sick, what if something is wrong with her. He decides to go inside to check in on the woman.

He slowly steps inside; he is scared and unsure of his steps. He is unsure of what he is doing, too. Should he be inside? Is this right? Is he overstepping some sort of boundary? His brain works like crazy, thinking and trying to understand.

His focus suddenly shifts from his thoughts to his surroundings. He starts observing the house. Walking through a corridor, full of bookshelves and books. "She must be a crazy reader!", he thinks. After the corridor he reaches a bigger space that he thinks is the living room. This living room is weird compared to his own living room. It is dark, old and smelly. It smells old, "Is this even a thing?", he asks himself. He never experienced that before. And the living room is also full of books. 808 has never seen that many books together, except for the library near the tower. "How can someone read that many books?", he thinks, "Maybe it is just for decoration?".

The old lady, she is sitting on a chair by the corner of the living room. Staring at the floor, she seems unaware that 808 is in the room. She looks like she is unaware of everything that is happening around her. 808 is now worried and scared at the same time. He decides to try to communicate with her. "Can you hear me? My name is 808, I live on the 4th circle. I saw you by the window, wanted to check in on you. Are you okay?". She says nothing. It is clear now that she doesn't hear what he says, or maybe doesn't understand him at all. 808 sits on the couch opposite to her, waiting for her to initiate the conversation, or do something. But nothing happens, she sits at the same position staring at the floor for a long time.

After sitting for some time, 808 feels like he should now go back home, and let this mystery behind him. "Hope everything is okay with you. Nice to meet you" he says on his way out. Lady doesn't respond in any way. 808 gets up, gets out of the living room and approaches to the corridor with the crazy amount of books. While he is walking towards the door, he suddenly hears the lady, he can tell that she is getting up from the chair she was sitting on. 808 turns around and sees that the lady is looking at him, right in the eyes from the opposite side of the corridor. It is not creepy or scary this time. He feels some kind of pain in her eyes, she looks desperate and unhappy, disturbed in some way. She slowly comes up to him and gives him 2 books that were on the shelves in the corridor. He is perplexed now but takes the books anyways. She turns around, like a robot and slowly goes back to her chair and sits in the exact same position staring at the floor. "I don't understand why you give me these", he says, "What should I do with them?". The lady looks at him for a split second and then continues to stare at the floor, the exact same point. 808 doesn't know what to do now, but feels like he is supposed to read them, at least it looks like that is what the lady is asking him to do. "What else can I do with the books but read them" he thinks to himself; this still doesn't make the entire situation any less weird than it is. "Thank you", he says, "I will read them then, and then bring them back to you". It is indeed a weird day for 808 now.

Chapter 4: The Books

808 walks back to his home, he is walking faster than usual, curious to look through the pages and to see what is waiting for him. There is a possibility that there is maybe nothing in there, but it is worth a try, to look for something in the books. His wife opens the door and lets confused 808 inside. 808 goes straight to their bedroom and starts flipping the pages of the books. He wants to know why, the lady decided to give him these books and more importantly, he wants to know why, among all those books, the lady gave him only these two. What are in them? What is so important that made the lady interact with him while he was leaving the house? After being silent and unresponsive to everything, why did she think giving these to 808 was important enough to get up from the chair she was sitting at? It almost gave him the impression that she was waiting for someone so that she could give the book, or maybe she was waiting for 808 all along.

While flipping through the pages, 808 sees that the entire book has notes on them. On every page, almost on every paragraph, there are handwritten notes, probably written by the lady, or maybe someone else, he cannot tell. "This is interesting", he thinks, "maybe the reason for her to give me these was the notes".

Chapter 5: Meeting Again

Every day of that week, whenever 808 was doing his job cleaning the streets, the lady was always looking at him through the window. It felt like she was waiting for him, to finish the books maybe. Or maybe just waiting for him to stop by. Or she was just casually watching outside, 808 was not sure about anything anymore. But the last time he was in there, she didn't talk so 808 decided to wait until he was done with the books, which he finished on day 4 of his work.

One of the books were talking place in year 2018. 808 was not sure if what's in the books are based on reality or fiction, but there was this one writer who was talking about his ideas on simulations. 808 didn't know what a simulation was, luckily there was a note written by someone next to it, saying 'imitation of reality, the action of pretending; deception, UNREAL'. This got 808 thinking, what did that mean exactly, why did he never hear of such a concept before? Rest of the book was talking about whether simulations in real life are possible or not, and an experiment made in a lab about the issue in 2018. 808 was now more confused than ever.

The second book was taking place in the same year, 2018, but this time it was talking about a movie called 'Existence'. There, people attach themselves to a device and play games as themselves, but the damage they get in the game doesn't hurt them anymore. Because they are themselves in another place and they are actually not in their own bodies. 'How can this be possible?', asks 808 to himself. He thinks that the lady probably didn't give him these 2 books specifically for no reason. From what he understood, the simulation concept mentioned in the first book is also the theme in the second book. He thinks that the movie 'Existence' is talking about simulations, too.

That day, after finishing his work, he goes up to her house and knocks on the door, to return the books. Again, nobody opens the door for him so he lets himself in saying "Hello, I am here to return the books".

The lady is still sitting at the same chair but this time she was looking at him directly in the eyes. Again, with that desperate and unhappy look.

He comes close to her and leaves the books gently on her lap and says "Thank you". Although he has tons of questions, he doesn't bother asking any because he knows for sure that he won't get any answers. 808 walks back towards the door, confused and still curious, he was almost waiting for the lady to do something or say something, to get him out of this confusion. The lady, this time, comes with a bunch of old letters in her hand and gives the letters to 808. The look in her eyes make it clear that these are the main things for 808 to read. He gets the feeling that this is the main step. He again takes what she is giving and goes out of the house, and walks home quickly.

He skips dinner that night. He wants to read the letters as fast as he can and to get answers soon. It turns out to be a long night full of reading for him.

Chapter 6: Final Meeting

This is 808's final day working as a street cleaner for the outer street of AA14. This means this will probably be his last time seeing the lady. Either he is going to solve the mystery today or it will stay as a mystery forever for him.

The letters that she gave him actually provided him with some answers. For example, her name, which is 203. She must be really old since she is called 203, she is one of the early ones. The letters are between her and another person called 157. It seems like 157 is trying to help 203 escape from the "tower", to which they referred to as the dictator. They also mention some sort of connection and a piece of technological device called 'chip', which they mention as 'everybody has it and we should get rid of it'. These are all unfamiliar to 808, especially the last part makes 808 extremely confused. What can this 'chip' be? He doesn't know what they are saying and why the lady gave the letters to him in the first place. He cannot connect the books and the letters with each other. Most importantly, he cannot still figure out why he read all of these in the first place.

Just like the other days of the week, 808 did his work, cleaned the streets, saw the lady looking at him from the window. When he is done, he walks to her house with the letters in his hands, and gets inside this time, without knocking. The lady is, again, sitting at the same chair looking at 808 in the eyes. She was waiting for him. "What is the reason for you to give me these? I only wanted to know if you are okay and you are doing nothing more than confusing me. What is the meaning behind all this?" says 808, in a perplexed and kind of angry voice. The woman slowly gets up from her chair and pulls up her sleeve. On her left arm, there is a huge scar, which looks like it happened years ago but it is still healing. Lady touches 808's arm, same spot where she has the scar. 808 feels creeped out, her hand feels so cold and so unalive. 808 feels the urge to open up his sleeve too, and there, he sees that where she has the scar, he has a tiny, circular shaped bump.

He knows that his wife, all his friends and his children also have the same bump, he always thought it was normal for everyone, a part of their anatomy. Now he starts thinking that maybe it isn't normal, or maybe the lady's bump is somehow removed or damaged. That must be what the scar is for.

808 starts to connect the dots in his head. The books, year 2018 and the age of video games, the movie existence, the letters, the chip they mentioned and escaping from the tower... It suddenly made sense for 808, the chip is the bump on their arms! They are all living in a simulation, AA14 is not real. The controller of the simulation is the tower, which no one ever suspected ever but the old lady and her friend in the letters knew all along. And with the chip on her arm being removed, she is probably being punished for trying to escape and for figuring out the truth, as 808 understood from the letters. 808 thinks that she is no longer a part of this city they live in anymore, she is a living dead, she is not a part of the simulation.

Chapter 7: Back Home

With the shock of learning the truth, 808 leaves the house to never return there again, he doesn't even wait for the lady to say or do anything. He feels scared now, because of the fact that he knows the truth about himself, about everyone. The fact that somebody is controlling the major parts of their lives, the fact that everything they see is unreal but only a part of a simulation disturbs him. He doesn't know what to think, what to do and who to talk to.

What if something terrible happens to him too, for finding out the truth? What if he gets punished too? What would he do without his wife and children? He doesn't want to live a life like the old lady does; silent, alone and probably in pain.

Although it is unreal, this life is real for him, the only reality and the only truth he knows and will ever know. He decides to enjoy every moment with his family and hopes that the tower never finds out about it ever.

"Welcome home darling! Go change, dinner will be ready soon", says his wife. He swears to himself that he won't mention anything to anyone.

THE END