

Wish, this is all your fault. I love you!!! I'm so so glad I saw your post on reddit and decided to join. You've truly changed my life for the better, and I don't know where I'd be if you hadn't made your post <33 I hope the little notes I've collected from folks bring you a smile when you need it, and reaffirm to you that you are SO, SO LOVED.

You're one of my favorite people, one of my best friends, and I love you!!!!

Happy Malum-mas,
Your 2025 secret santa
Pren

Testimonials from the VMDD

Wish, your presence and work in the server makes this place a nice internet home. I'm glad I get to be a part of it. Thank you for all you do.

AndalusiteCross

I'm so grateful to have joined the VMDD and met you people, including you, Wish. Thank you for everything! Wishing you a great rest of your day and happy holidays!

Craftworks

Wish,

getting to know you over the last year (holy shit!) has been such a gift. when i joined vmdd, i was expecting an experience like i've had joining other servers - a few days of trying to get to know a group of strangers, then it'd sit in my server list unread for the next billion years. but because of you - because you work so hard to include everyone, to be kind, to make an environment that's fun and honest and full of caring people - i've met so many new folks who i've come to see as close and dear friends (including you!). i think sometimes the job of "person who makes sure everyone feels included" is pretty thankless, because when it's done right it's invisible to anyone on the outside. so let me take this opportunity to say *thank you*. thank you for making this happen, thank you for introducing me to some of my favorite people, thank you for being such a warm heart.

i'm so looking forward to another spin around the sun together, friend!
all my love,
Sasha

At the time I'm writing this letter, we will have been together for 1,993 days, almost five incredible years filled with cherished memories, thoughtful gifts, and more laughter than I could ever count. Every single day, you've shown me how deeply you love and care for me, and now I get the chance to return even a fraction of that.

You have always been a steady, warm, and constant light in my life. Even on the days when my own light dimmed, yours burned bright enough for both of us. And when you created your server, building a space for your friends to laugh, play games, and share the media you all love that light only grew stronger.

I hear it in your laughter when you're in a call, loud and carefree. I hear it in the quiet moments too, when you're deep in conversation, sharing thoughts and passions that matter to you. In those moments, it's clear how much warmth and joy you bring into the lives around you, and how lucky I am to stand in that light every day.

I love you honey!
Nate

I can't put into words what our friendship means.

I don't say this lightly, because, as you know, I'm a horrible witch and I am *excellent* at expressing myself, especially when that expression is aimed at the purpose of kicking my darling poor miette.

I can't, because it's ineffable. Because you know. (*oh, you know*).

And, fellow-lover of hubris that I am, I'll do my best to express it anyway, in the hopes that these words make their way from the me I am now to the you you are reading this, and that my heart makes its way to yours also, as you know it always will, long after there isn't a 'me' to write this anymore.

In the hopes that they might prove a consolation, and offer you a friendly mirror, whenever you need a reminder of your beauty, insofar as you would like them to be.

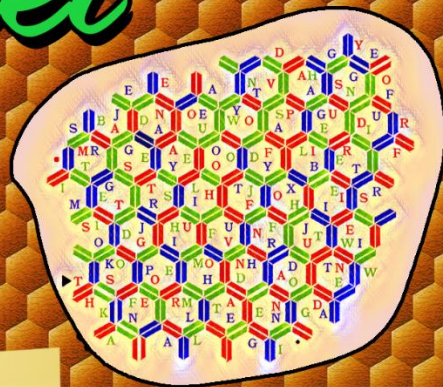
believe so strongly that you deserve a place in this world, to be loved and supported and cherished, and to love and support and cherish in turn. That the world is better because you exist – because you are *alive*. It's been such an honor to be supported by you, to be given a safe space by the fire, and by the tide, to be side by side, and to go on wonderful adventures together. Don't forget your own goodness, okay? Please. [*squeezes your hands earnestly*].

As these expressions collated by our beautiful friend Pren attest, your life, and your work, touches those people you meet, often very deeply. Though it is not my place to say what that means, I believe that is your gift. I believe you will carry it well – will carry it *best*. Especially when it hurts. And, in time, especially when it doesn't.

My life is better for knowing you, and always will be. I love you very much.

Star

May your Christmas bee very sweet



*I put out the
Bugonia for you
to play with.
Have fun, honey.
-Love, Mother*

Y&@#*~
~&@#*~
#&@#*~!

~&@#*~
~&@#*~
~&@#*~

~&@#*~
~&@#*~
~&@#*~



Uolrusk - 2025

Hope your
Christmas is
super fly



Uolrusk - 2024

7
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4
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1
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c
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c
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9
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7
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6
4
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3
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1
6
9

SONG FOR THE WINNER

Nerd's Palace

you who hell on page brought forth
who **hate** did pen for eyes of ours

who **Fed** the crowd a hearty meal
of actions **Fast** our hearts you steal

who gather flowers and weeds alike
who sing with skylark and with shriek

mechanical **Freedom** paid in song
to **bask** in eyes shut for too long

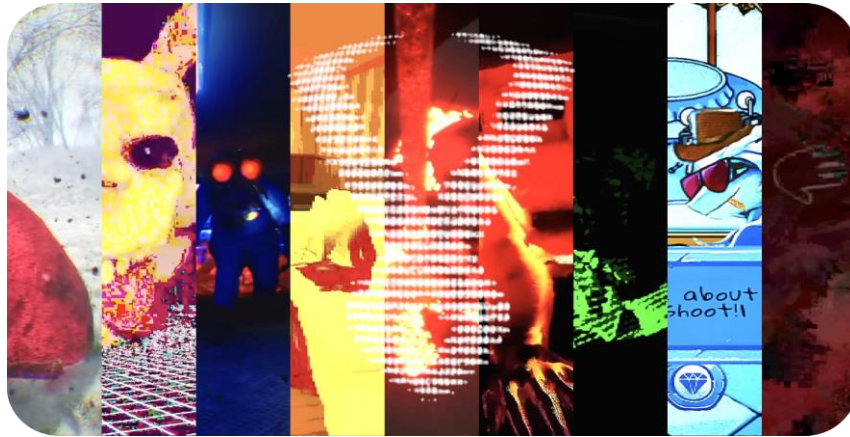
chrysalis snug with hope and **blessing**
an **antidote** to end lone ebbing

and us Found in light and gleaming
a song for winners, awake but dreaming

There's a new world coming...

What is *Vermis Malum*?

Vermis Malum is a YouTube series chronicling the video recordings of Lawrence, who discovers a curious laptop hidden in the walls of his attic. Lawrence details his findings in multiple video journals sent to an unnamed person once closer to him. As he delves deeper into the contents of his new computer, he uncovers peculiar anomalies within the machine, concerning documents from its former owner, and an intriguing video game which has him descend floor after floor of strangely familiar worlds with a host of unsettling creatures.



This wouldn't be possible without all the love, dedication, and attention from the VMDD community. We have all truly been infected with the ear worm, and I hope we stay that way forever <3





You're going the right way.

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🍏 RINGS 🍏

Ring IX

🍄 **Gold Shovel** ☀️ **Sun** 😊 **Beatrice**
Earthly Paradise



"So near to paradise all pairing ends / Here loveless birds now flock as winter friends"
-R. Frost

Ring VIII

💎 **Copper Coins** ♀️ **Venus** 💘 **Lady Lux**
Lust



"Some kill their love when they are young, and some when they are old / Some strangle with the hands of lust, some with the hands of gold"
-O. Wilde

"Good looking! So refined / Say wouldn't you like to know what's going on in my mind?"
-D. Fields

Ring VII

🔑 **Cobalt Fork** ♆ **Neptune** 🍷 **Big Gul P**
Gluttony



"Call your friends, 'cause we've forgotten / What it's like to eat what's rotten"
-T. Leo

"I have no use for men who steal and cheat / The fruit of evil poisons those who eat"
-Solon

Ring VI



Platinum Lockpick Uranus



Uranus



Ava the Keeper

Greed



"Be silent, darling, you must come -- the wind is off shore blowing / You only change your PRISON dull for one that's splendid, glowing"

-V. Hugo



Ring V



Lead Flask



Saturn



Mother Ace

Sloth



"The darkness must go down the river of night's dreaming / Flow morphia **slow**, let the sun and light come streaming"

-R. O'Brien



Ring IV



Iron Knife

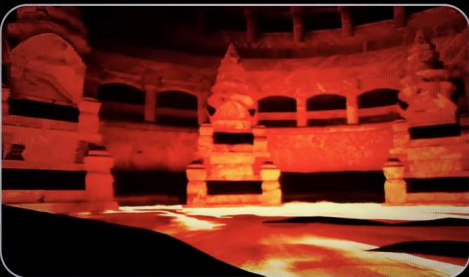


Mars



Sir Ira

Wrath



"It writhes!-it writhes!-with mortal pangs the mimes become its food / And the angels sob at VERMIN fangs in human gore imbued."

-E. Poe

"In the morning glad I see / My **FOE** outstretched beneath the tree."

-W. Blake



Ring III



Quicksilver Ring

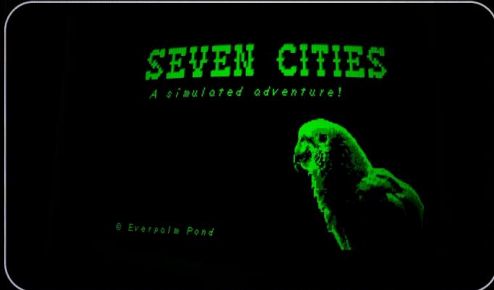


Mercury



Lost Liv

Envy



"The natural end of every adder / Not suffered to empty its *palsen*-bladder"

-R. Browning



Ring II



Tin Mirror



Jupiter



Glo

Pride



"Nor is your beauty every thing to praise / Although your glass reflect so fair a vision to your gaze"
-C. Swdin



Ring I



Silver Key



Moon



Vernon Dapple



"One night, when half my life behind me lay, I wandered from the straight *lost* path afar / Through the great dark was no releasing way; above that dark was no relieving star" -D. Alighieri



🍏 KNAPSACK 🍏




✂ Iron Knife
Crude make, after the tastes of the old soldiers. UnFit For Senatorial hands.

✂ Iron Knife

- **Description:** "Crude make, after the tastes of the old soldiers. Unfit for Senatorial hands."
- **Location Found:** Ring IX - Already in Knapsack
- **Location(s) Used:** Ring VII, Ring IV
- **Use:** Slaying Big Gul P, performing the Caesarean on The King
- **Notes:** It's unknown if Lawrence officially uses the Iron Knife on Big Gul P, but his slashing action coupled with the Iron Knife symbols spraying across the room allude to its use.



👤 Apple (9)
malus domestica. Juicy.

👤 Apple

- **Description:** "*malus domestica. Juicy.*"
- **Location Found:** Ring IX - Collected from trees
- **Location(s) Used:** Ring VIII, Ring VII, Ring VI, Ring V, Ring IV (twice), Ring III, Ring I
- **Use:** Unknown, save for "growing" on Ring I.
- **Notes:** Despite only picking 5 apples, Lawrence's apple count jumps to 9 upon entering the cabin in Ring IX, and loses an apple each stage he progresses (with the exception of Ring IV, where he loses 2), using the final apple for the "growing" action in Ring I.



Gold Shovel

Always something that needs digging.

Gold Shovel

- **Description:** "Always something that needs digging. "
- **Location Found:** Ring IX - The Lodge
- **Location(s) Used:** Ring I.
- **Use:** Used to dig at the final grave of Ring I.
- **Notes:** Lawrence is advised by Lady Lux to dispose of the Gold Shovel before progressing to the Game Hall. After discovering removal of the item from his inventory would be permanent, Lawrence decides to keep it before moving on. Similarly, the narration of Seven Cities urges the player to leave the Golden Shovel behind in Felicity.



Copper Coin (2)

A pair of pox-scarred faces share a look on the obverse side. Lovers?

Copper Coin

- **Description:** "A pair of pox-scarred faces share a look on the obverse side. Lovers? "
- **Location Found:** Ring VIII - On the path to Nero's Palace
- **Location(s) Used:** Ring VIII, Ring VII
- **Use:** Slot Machines in the Game Hall, purchasing items from the Game Hall vending machine, acquiring Mondvale Preps meals in the Frozen Aisles
- **Notes:** After completing the losing pattern in the Game Hall, Lawrence's count of coins fluctuates between millions and negative millions. He progresses to the next stage with 99.







Cobalt Fork

Three prongs, still slick with blubber. A must-have for the itinerant seaFoodie.

Cobalt Fork

- **Description:** "Three prongs, still slick with blubber. A must-have for the itinerant seafoodie. "
- **Location Found:** Ring VII - impaled in a tentacle, at the entrance of the Frozen Aisles
- **Location(s) Used:** Ring V
- **Use:** Impaling the Borealis Grub
- **Notes:** Upon usage of the Cobalt Fork on the Borealis Grub, the Cobalt Fork notably changes its physical coloration to a glowing orange hue.

 <p> Platinum Lockpick</p> <p>Pilfered From the Bastille warden's jewelry box. Precious metals make poor thieftware.</p>	<p> <u>Platinum Lockpick</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Description: "Pilfered from the Bastille warden's jewelry box. Precious metals make poor thieftware." - Location Found: Ring VI - unknown - Location(s) Used: Ring VI - Use: Lockpicking cells 1500 and 0021 - Notes: From Arthur's playthrough. The iconography in-game used to represent the Platinum Lockpick closely resembles the Skeleton Key item from The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim, and functions similarly.
 <p> Lead Flask</p> <p>Leaden Flask containing a mix of strong anodynes. Brewed From crushed Morning Glory.</p>	<p> <u>Lead Flask</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Description: "Leaden flask containing a mix of strong anodynes. Brewed from crushed Morning Glory." - Location Found: Ring V- Gold Tier Bugonia Prize - Location(s) Used: Ring IV - Use: Numbs/alleviates the status effect from falling from floor to floor on Ring IV. Consumed after 3 uses. - Notes: Functionally mimics an item used by Lawrence in Dark Souls, the Estus Flask. The liquid within is reminiscent of the rot seen through various levels.
 <p> Silver Key</p> <p>Primary.</p>	<p> <u>Silver Key</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Description: "Primary." - Location Found: Ring I- Grown after digging the final grave - Location(s) Used: Ring I - Use: Used to break into the windmill. - Notes: The silver key's iconography is inconsistent in its presentation, displaying an in-game render of a wrench, a Knapsack sprite of pliers in-menu, and a thumbnail of forceps in-menu.

🍏 ANAGRAMS 🍏



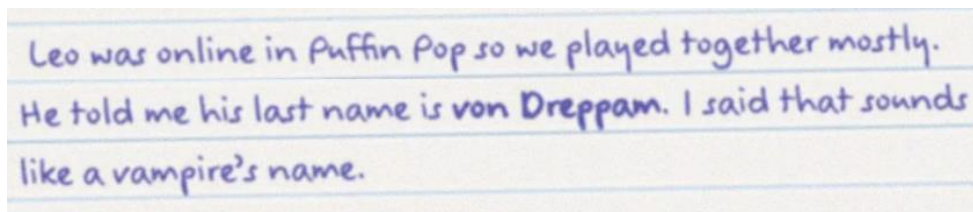
Primary Phrase: "EVERPALM POND"

Vermis Malum @ 0:54



"LAMPROV PENDLE," extra l

Vermis Malum @ 0:59



"Leo von Dreppam," extra o

Bad Seed @ 16:04

Reviewer Signature: Prosper DeValm

"Prosper DeValm," extra s

Random Walk @ 8:34



"Mondvale Preps," extra s

Hungry Ghosts @ 7:39

Pris. 1500 - Pfenda Premlov
Zenda, Ruritania.
Unauthorized Use of Likeness.
27 years.
LOCK DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM

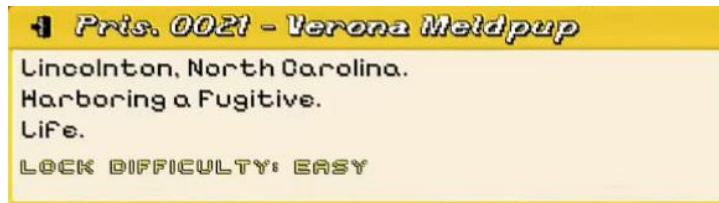
"Pfenda Premlov," extra f

Hungry Ghosts @ 11:36



**"Mona del Verpp," "Rodman Veppel," "V Pardo Nemple," end credits,
no extra letter**

Hungry Ghosts @ 12:08



"Verona Meldpup," extra u

Hungry Ghosts @ 13:29



"Dave Pnernplom," extra n

Ex Nihilo @ 10:25

but my new aide Pam

Ms. Cloverpend actually has no office per se,
what new would

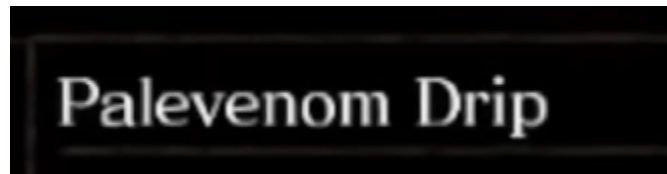
"Pam Cloverpend," extra c

Ex Nihilo @ 11:55



"PARPLE TV DEMON," extra t

Ex Nihilo @ 15:49



"Palevenom Drip," extra i

Cyclic Inheritance @ 0:05



"Oppenderm Oval," extra o

Cyclic Inheritance @ 12:15



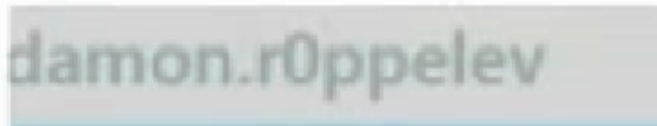
“Pomp N.avel Rend,” extra n

Cyclic Inheritance @ 13:23

The additional letters spell:

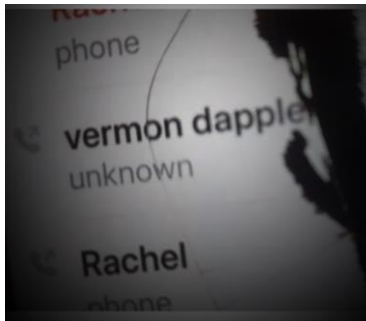
“lossf---unction”

(“loss function,” referenced in Hungry Ghosts @ 17:20, the *Mindfloss* video popup)



“damon.r0ppelev,” no extra letter

Orphan @ 0:20



“vermon dapple,” no extra letter

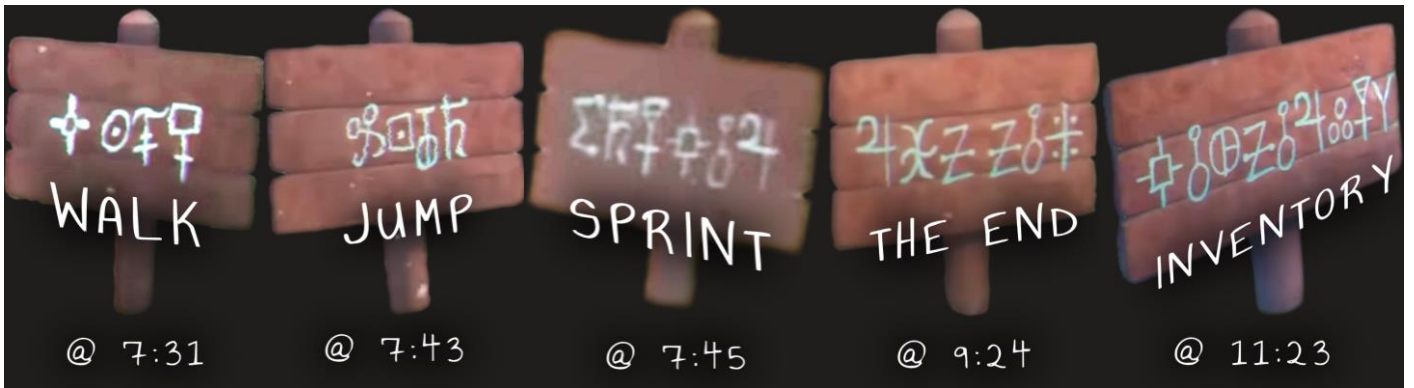
Orphan @ 17:34

🍏 RUNES 🍏

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
☉	♀	♀	⌘	Σ	♂	☉	☿	♁	♁	♀	♀	♁
◁ VERMIS MALUM ▷												
N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
♁	♁	♁	♀	♀	Σ	♁	♁	♁	♁	♁	♁	♁

Bad Seed

Signs



Random Walk

Exterior Signs



Marquee



Prize Dispenser



Hungry Ghosts

Gilded Bastille Gate



@ 11:18

Large Frozen Food Sign (first and second side)



@ 15:59

Mutilated Corpse in the Shopping Cart



@ 18:14

Large Frozen Food Sign (third side)

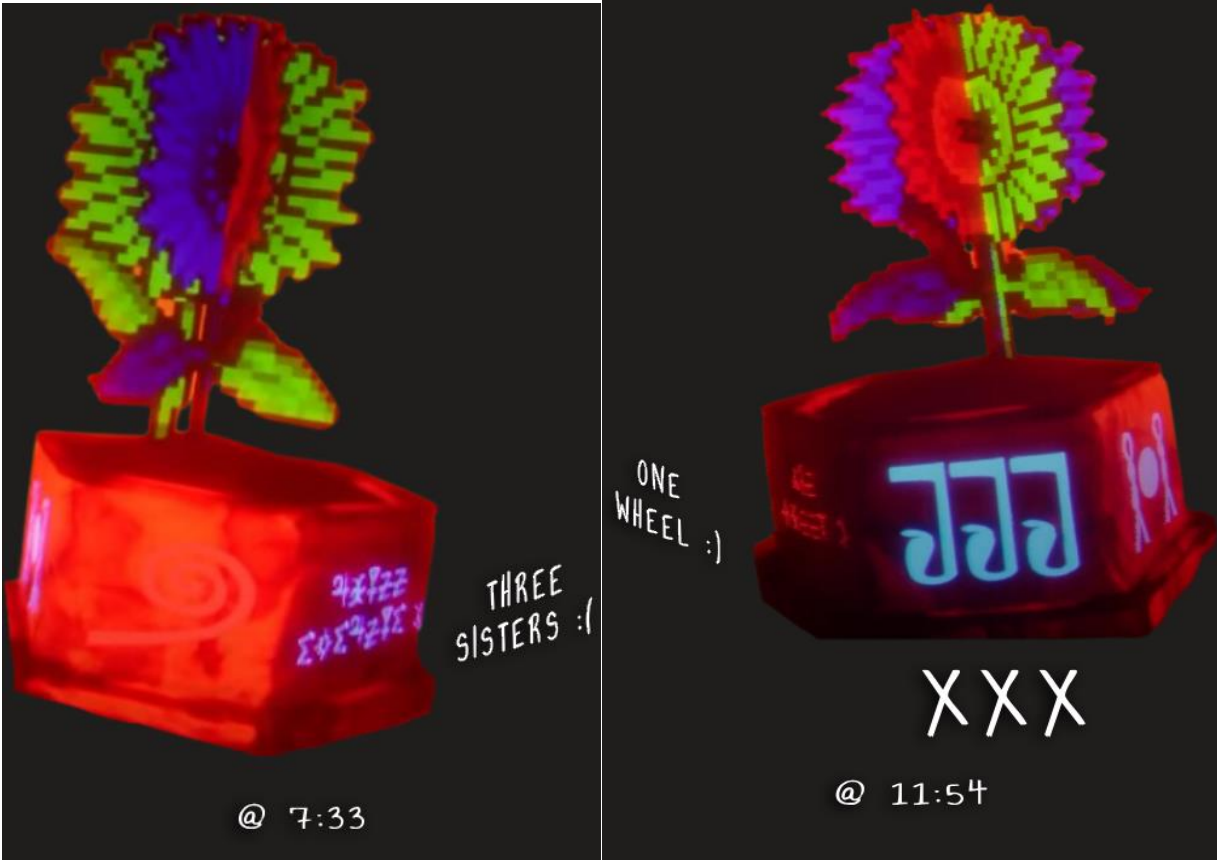


Ex Nihilo

Exterior Sign



Bugonia Pot (front, back, and side)



Toe Tag



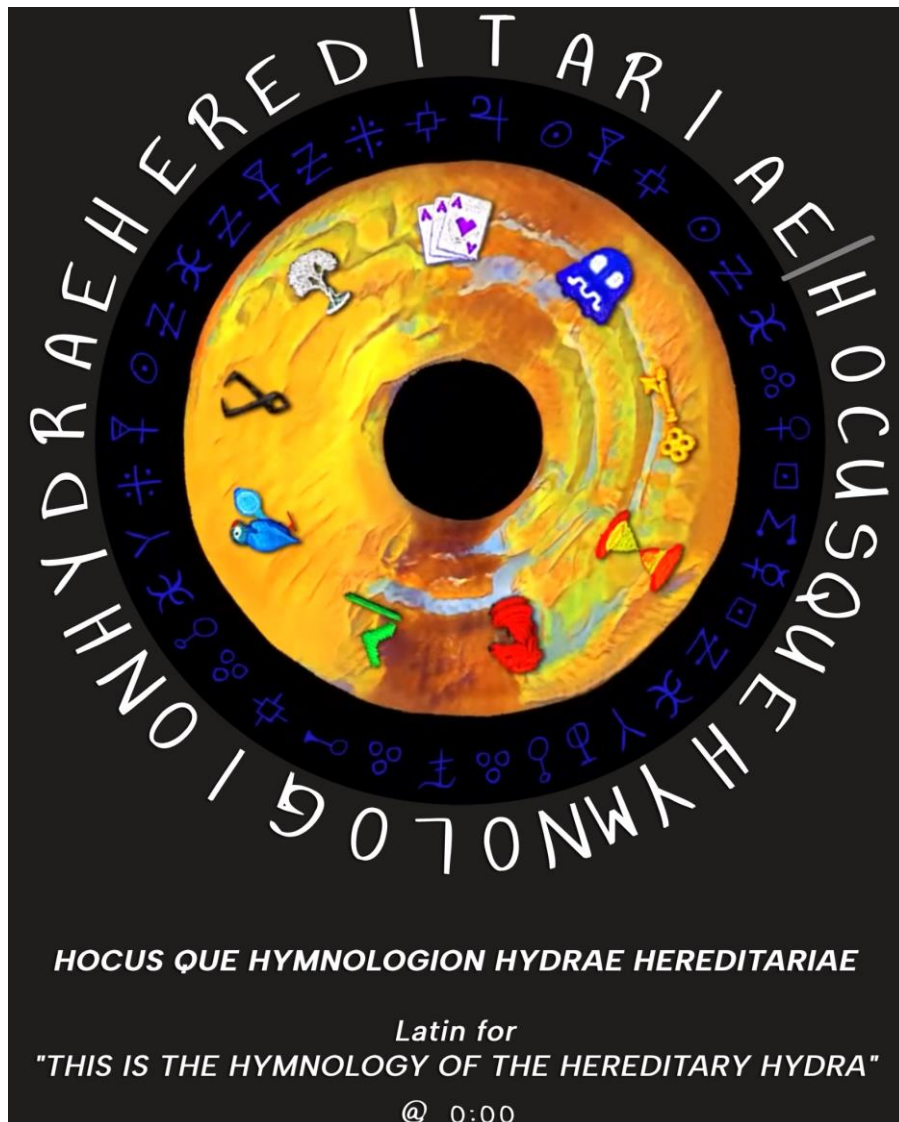
Per Volrusk, “Ecce home” was intended as a play on “behold the [corpse of] man, my home”

End Screen

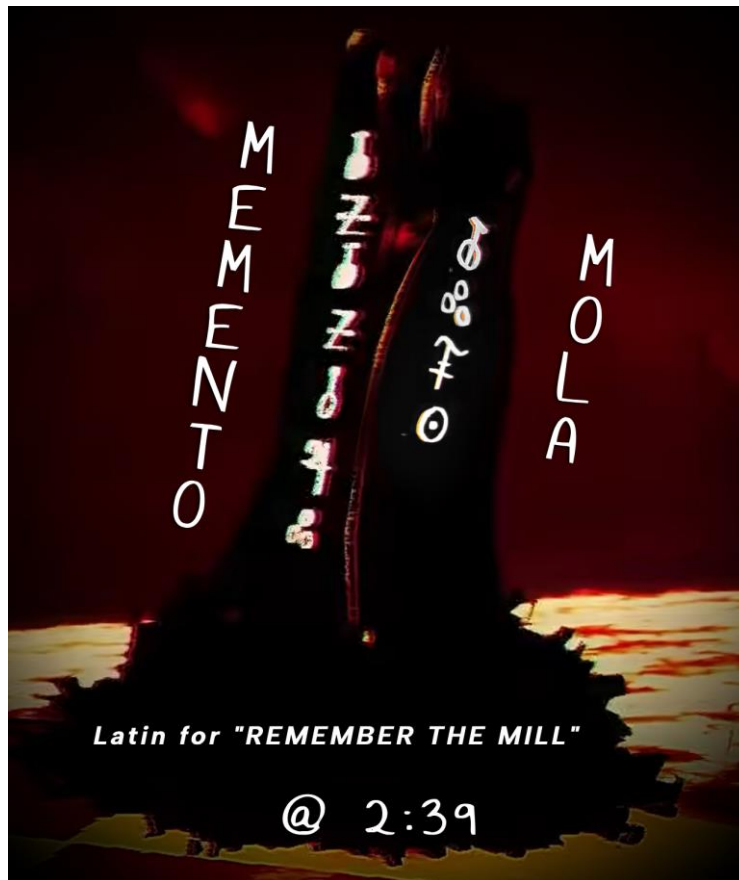


Cyclic Inheritance

Golden Disk (Full)



Wrothlands Memorial Stone



Signs



Puffin Island Map



King's Arena Floor



Orphan

Katherine's Letter

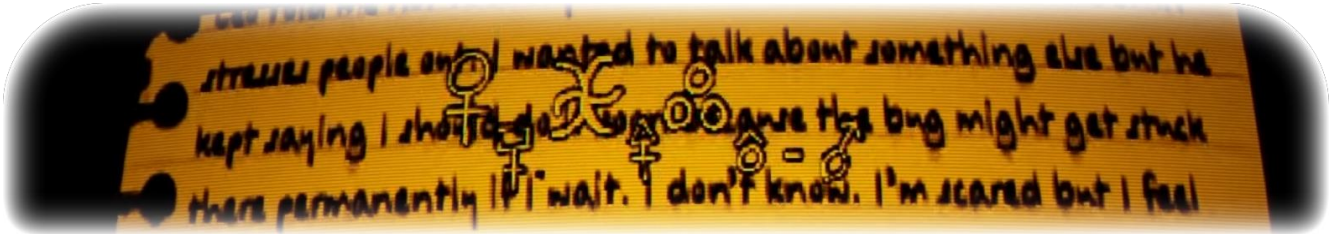


Diagram illustrating the derivation of the molecular formula for Warfarin from the text "Orphan" and "Katherine's Letter".

The diagram shows the following steps:

- Orphan** (C H O) is derived from the text.
- Runes** → ♀ ⚡ ♂
- Alchemical Symbols** → ⚗ ⚊ ⚋ ⚌ ⚍
- and Their Associated Alchemical Elements** → Potassium Sulfur Zinc Iron
- and Their Associated Atomic Numbers** → (19) (16) (30-26=4)

The final molecular formula is $C_{19}H_{16}O_4$.

Molecular Formula for Warfarin

@ 9:03

Worm in the Apple

Sign



🍏 WHISTLING 🍏

Vermis Malum

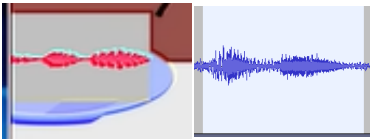
- Game world @ 1:14, Ring I, when seeing the first *Vermis Malum* screen before turning to the mysterious monster
- Real world @ 5:16, while viewing trees during the winter day

Random Walk

- Real world @ 1:49, while staring into the woods at dusk
- Game world @ 18:38, while looking around in The Copperhead room

Hungry Ghosts

- Real world @ 1:00, at the end of the Snake game
- Game world @ 9:47, before turning to Big Gul P feasting on the mutilated corpse
- Game world (Arthur) @ 11:31, possibly the end of a whistle coming out of the black screen of text
- The Loss Function video @ 17:02, the audio waveform on the blue plate matches the waveform for the whistle



Ex Nihilo

- @ 3:58, during a flashing black-&-white video of a woman playing peekaboo
- @ 13:52, when closing the player-character's eyes
- @ 15:53, during the final cryptic text screen

Cyclic Inheritance

- Dark Souls @ 1:45, at the end of the "CURSED!" screen, and only the first half of the whistle
- Game world @ 11:55, as Lawrence looks at the king chess piece and the flashing imagery appears
- Game world @ 14:57, after the King gives birth and it cuts to black

Orphan

- Unknown @ 0:17, at the end of the infested synapses scene, as a silhouette of the wormhorns pushes its way through
- Real world @ 11:23, when it cuts to black and Lawrence says, "I think it's ours."

Worm in the Apple

- @ 6:57, after answering the 9th and final question, before turning around inside Ring I's Windmill
- @ 13:20, during the final two seconds of the episode

QUOTES

Bad Seed

@ 5:41, the quote for Ring IX, "So near to paradise all pairing ends / Here loveless birds now flock as winter friends," comes from the 1923 poem *A Winter Eden*, by American Pulitzer Prize winner Robert Frost. The poem seems to reflect on the beauty of a fleeting winter day, and continues, "It lifts a gaunt luxuriating beast | Where he can stretch and hold his highest feat | On some wild apple tree's young tender bark, | What well may prove the year's high girdle mark."

Random Walk

@ 2:22, the quote for Ring VIII, "Some kill their *love* when they are young, and some when they are old / Some strangle with the hands of lust, some with the hands of gold," comes from the 1898 poem *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*, by Irish literary great Oscar Wilde. It comes off as a scathing critique of the dehumanization present within the penal system. Wilde was imprisoned because of his love for other men, and he died not long after release.

@ 12:09, the quote for Ring VIII (revisited), "Good looking! So refined / Say wouldn't you like to *know* what's going on in my mind?" comes from the 1966 stage musical *Sweet Charity*, and was written by American librettist and lyricist Dorothy Fields, in collaboration with American jazz composer Cy Coleman. The song seems to observe the tired and routine flirtatious behavior of its lead, all in the name of money.

Hungry Ghosts

@ 5:45, the quote for Ring VII, "Call your friends, 'cause we've forgotten / What it's like to eat what's rotten," comes from the 2004 single "Me and Mia," by American rock outfit Ted Leo & The Pharmacists. The track seems to ruminate on the struggles of self-discipline; more specifically, with eating disorders.

@ 10:41, the quote for Ring VI, "Be silent, darling, you must come -- the wind is off shore blowing / You only change your PRISON dull for one that's splendid, glowing," comes from the 1828 poem *Chanson de pirates* (*Pirates' Song*), by French Romantic author Victor-Marie Hugo. The poem seems to illustrate the horrors of true piracy in its time, and showcase the raw darkness greed can bring.

@ 15:11, the quote for Ring VII (revisited), "I have no use for men who steal and cheat / The fruit of evil poisons those who eat," comes from the Ancient Greek poem *The Man Whose Riches Satisfy His Greed*, by Athenian statesman and poet Solon. While these words could be applied to an excess of edible riches, they seem to show disgust for any kind of needless wealth.

Ex Nihilo

@ 2:01, the quote for Ring V, "The darkness must go down the river of night's dreaming / Flow morphia slow, let the sun and light come streaming," comes from the 1973 hit song "Over at the Frankenstein Place," from the cult classic *Rocky Horror [Picture] Show* and was written by Richard O'Brien (who also played Riff Raff, A Handyman). The song is a pivotal moment in the original story, one that reveals to the protagonists a strange new path of intrigue and frightening uncertainty.

Cyclic Inheritance

@ 2:05, the quote for Ring IV, “It writhes!-it writhes!-with mortal pangs the mimes become its food / And the angels sob at VERMIN fangs in human gore imbued,” comes from the poem “The Conqueror Worm” by Edgar Allen Poe, which talks about human mortality and the inevitability of death. It describes angels watching a play where puppets (humans) chase in circles after a phantom before being killed and eaten by a Worm-monster.

@ 10:48, the quote for Ring IV (revisited), “In the morning glad I see / My FOE outstretched beneath the tree.” comes from the poem A Poison Tree by William Blake published in 1794. The poem talks about the narrator’s repressed anger that pushes him to murder the one he hates.

@ 12:27, the quote for Ring II (the Puffin Pop Island “Glo’s Glamours”), “Nor is your beauty everything to praise / Although your glass reflect so fair a vision to your gaze,” comes from the poem “Conceit” by Charles Swain. The poem describes a person who should be less proud and more humble. This person thinks themselves extremely beautiful and fair; the narrator makes a point to say that this person isn’t as beautiful as they think and even if they were, their vanity and pride would make them lose their beauty.

Orphan

@ 02:26, the quote for Ring III, “The natural end of every adder / Not suffered to empty its *poison*-bladder,” comes from the 1845 poem The Flight of the Duchess by Robert Browning. The poem tells the tale of an oppressed young Duchess who escapes her Duke husband’s castle and ventures to the Italian countryside. The story reflects on independence and the beauty of new experiences in the context of gender roles and power dynamics of its Victorian time.

Worm in the Apple

@ 0:25, the quote for Ring I, “One night, when half my life behind me lay, I wandered from the straight *lost* path afar / Through the great dark was no releasing way; above that dark no relieving star” comes from the S. Fowler Wright translation of The Purgatorio from The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri. The segment referenced here is from within Canto I, as Dante wanders the dark afraid and without faith prior to his confrontation with the three beasts and rescue by Virgil.

🍏 DATES 🍏



1997

-Models of Malware presentation by Conrad Church in Modern Cybersecurity ([Cyclic Inheritance @ 7:11](#))

1/10/1997

-SUBMISSIONS REOPENED ON BASKANIA ([Cyclic Inheritance @ 7:32](#))

1/13/1997

-Paracelsus and Polyphemus, N1C0M4CHU5 ([Cyclic Inheritance @ 7:32](#))

3/5/1997

-A Nazar For You, Anonymous (EXT) ([Cyclic Inheritance @ 7:32](#))

3/27/1997

-For Sale: Bloodstained Ram Jam Shirt, Anonymous (EXT) ([Cyclic Inheritance @ 7:32](#))

6/12/1997

-Set Theory Intro I, N1C0M4CHU5 ([Cyclic Inheritance @ 7:32](#))

7/5/1997

-RE: Believing in the Supernatural, J. Prawn (EXT) ([Cyclic Inheritance @ 7:32](#))

9/17/1997

-RE: RE: Believing in the Supernatural, Anonymous (EXT) ([Cyclic Inheritance @ 7:32](#))

?/?/1998

-MONDO 2000 98' Interview ([Hungry Ghost @ 14:10](#))

1/24/1999

-after you die, C. Church (EXTERNAL) (found in the baskania blog HTML posted to Volrusk's patreon)

3/29/1999

-RE: Alchemical Necromancy, Anonymous (EXT) ([Ex Nihilo @ 10:27](#))

6/5/1999

-Carse on Games I, N1COM4CHU5 (Ex Nihilo @ 10:27)

6/11/1999

-Poetry and Healing in Times of Spiritual Crisis, K. Silvery (Ex Nihilo @ 10:27)

6/24/1999

-Parasite Adam, Dave Pnerplom (Ex NIhilo @ 10:27)

7/5/1999

-Carse on Games II, N1COM4CHU5 (Ex NIhilo @ 10:27)

7/6/1999

-RE: Lincoln County Pirate Broadcast Incident (Ex Nihilo @ 10:40)

8/3/1999

-Conrad Church's Devils of the New Millennium paper (Random Walk @ 8:33)

10/3/1999

-The Knights of Elohim, N1COM4CHU5 (Ex Nihilo @ 10:20)

12/7/1999

-be not afraid, Anonymous (EXT) (Ex NIhilo @ 10:20)

12/31/1999

-The BASKANIA site's last update date (Ex Nihilo @ 9:45)

2/2/2007

-The "2/2/2007" letter written by Katherine (Bad Seed @ 16:04)

2/26/2007

-The "2/26/2007" letter written by Katherine (Hungry Ghosts @ 13:47)

3/7/2007

-The letter written by Katherine shown in Reciprocity (Orphan @ 8:56)

3/8/2007

-Item 9 Penny Lane photo (Electric Sheep @ 5:29)

2/14/2014

-The Silverlake Lonely Hearts Ball shown on the flier (Ex Nihilo @ 8:41)

6/12/2014

-A possible "06/12/14" letter in the rowboat; the date is formatted differently than the other letters (Bad Seed @ 11:10)

9/15/2014

-Arthur's "parasite" document (Electric Sheep @ 3:28)

9/21/2014

-Arthur's "disk" document (Electric Sheep @ 4:30)

9/22/2014

-Arthur's "victims" document (Electric Sheep @ 5:17)

9/25/2014

-Arthur's "babel" document (Electric Sheep @ 5:37)

10/15/2014

-Arthur's "poltergeist" document (Random Walk @ 9:30)

11/3/2014

-Arthur's "imitation_game" document (Hungry Ghosts @ 10:09)

11/30/2014

-Arthur's "looking" document (Orphan @ 0:19)

12/25/2014

-Arthur's "katherine" document (Electric Sheep @ 7:02)

12/25/2014

-The "Vermont Apples" website date (Bad Seed @ 0:00)

12/??/2014

-An article revealing Arthur hasn't been on the Princeton campus for two weeks and is now missing (Ex Nihilo @ 9:21)

7/18/2017

-The Mindfloss video's publish date (Hungry Ghosts @ 16:47)

CHARACTER CHRONICLE

The Players

Lawrence

Our current protagonist, as seen through vlogs he makes of recorded walks and voiced-over letters to his recently estranged partner. He finds a laptop, and the game on it, stashed in his home's attic.

Volrusk has confirmed that Lawrence's story takes place in the winter of 2021. Per the 7 year cycle, he is the 2021 victim.

Arthur Asimov

The original renter of the laptop used to play for himself and Lawrence, Arthur sought out *Vermis Malum* and actively documented his findings. Arthur was a student at Princeton University in New Jersey, who happened across the urban myth of *Vermis Malum* through MythickaForums.

A local NJ article was published regarding his disappearance in December. Articles and videos documenting *Vermis Malum* created by Arthur are shown spanning the months of September through November of 2014, though personal data from the machine indicates his usage of the machine may have begun earlier in February of that year. We see our first reference to Arthur through his ownership of the laptop's primary account in *Vermis Malum*. Per the 7 year cycle, he is the 2014 victim.

Katherine

From Lincolnton, North Carolina, Katherine seems to have accidentally come across the game years ago, introduced to the concept through *Puffin Pop*, by Leo von Dreppam (an Everpalm Pond anagram name). Through the personal diaries of Katherine stored on *Vermis Malum*, her background reflects a lonely and turbulent childhood, and is punctuated with a predatory companion alongside her to whom she gives her grievances. She complains of her personal life and of a developing illness, manifesting as an earache, as she plays *Puffin Pop*.

Per Arthur's journals and the items collected from her home, Katherine died on 3/8/2007. Her letters span February 2007. Poor girl. We are shown the first distorted imagery of Katherine in "Electric Sheep." Per the 7 year cycle, she is the 2007 victim.

Conrad Church

Another occupant of New Jersey and a Princeton Alumnus, Conrad was an academic and avid believer in the Y2K crisis. We receive our first sample of the Church's writings in "Random Walk." From the comment left on the document we find in "Random Walk," we gather that Church was once important and revered in his field before he seemed to spiral some time around 1999. Thanks to the pop-up we see in "Cyclic Inheritance," we can assume that he was in the computer science field and worked at Princeton. In the message exchange we find in "Ex Nihilo," Church mentions being disaffiliated and losing his old work space on 35 Olden, which probably means he did something to be disaffiliated by Princeton. In the Baskania HTML that was posted to Volrusk's patreon, we can see a blog post that was not shown in the videos. It is a post called "after you die" dated 1/24/1999. Per the 7 year cycle, he is the 2000 victim.

J. Julius Hopp

The earliest known Vermis Malum victim. His name is written in Lux's "Beloved Guest(s)" book in Random Walk, and he is the "Mr. Hopp" mentioned briefly in "The Deal" shown in Ex Nihilo. His data in Cyclic Inheritance was going to be the purple chess piece on the same level as Conrad's white chess piece. However, after looking at the Nazar for You blog post, Lawrence loaded into the level below and didn't get to look at Hopp's data. It is speculated that he is the author of the Nazar for You post. The blog post mentions Crunch, which was the 1993 tv hacker that is associated with the Purple TV Demon. The post also mentions "other whistleblowers," implying that Hopp is the original whistleblower. After he escaped VM, he contacted Conrad to conduct another investigation into Vermis Malum, as referenced in The Deal. Per Volrusk, Hopp has parkinson's after he escaped from Vermis Malum. Hence the reference to him being the "stony faced" man in Orphan. Hopp's assistant in The Deal mentions that time is a valuable commodity for them, due to Hopp's disease.

With the strong association with Ring VIII, Hopp is also the "Red-complected man" mentioned in Orphan during Salacity. This can also tie into his note in Lux's book being "hard liquor," as drinking alcohol can make your face red. It has been confirmed by Volrusk that he is also the red figure we see in Random Walk in the copperhead room as Lux approaches Lawrence, and the red figure behind the lodge in Bad Seed. Volrusk stated that Hopp was the only victim to not "die" in the traditional sense, but rather, he got trapped in the game. This is why we see remnants of him in Bad Seed, Random Walk, Orphan, and Worm in the Apple. Per the 7 year cycle, he is the 1993 victim.

Ring Ghosts

Beatrice

She is the first NPC we encounter in the game, in Ring IX. Her rotary phone is found inside the Lodge, represented by a mask icon. Beatrice is one of the only characters whose monster form we do not encounter. Her name is most likely a reference to the character in Dante's *Divine Comedy* by the same name. She's the angel woman that allows Dante (and all of humanity) access to the kingdom of Heaven. Dante meets her at the top of Purgatory, in the garden of Eden, where she descends from the sky of the moon, the first level of Paradise. Beatrice tells Lawrence to not "go down the mountain", a possible warning not to play the game, that Lawrence doesn't understand at the time.

Lady Lux

We encounter Lady Lux in Ring VIII. Her rotary Phone is located in the Antechamber of Nero's Palace, next to the guest book, represented by a horned animal. Her name, "Lux," is a shortened form of "Luxuria," which means "lust" in Latin, confirming that the level she resides in is the level of lust. Her appearance seems to be that of a goat-like horned entity with elongated limbs and a somewhat humanoid face. Her movement is limited to crawling.

Big Gul P

Big Gul is the entity Lawrence encounters on Ring VII. His rotary phone is found placed beside his abandoned and bloodied janitor's mop, represented by a fly. His name, "Gul", is a shortened form of the latin word "Gula" which means gluttony. He takes the form of a giant Fly-Man. The fly motif is reminiscent of the Demon of Gluttony Beelzebub, who is also called "Lord of the Flies".

Ava the Keeper

We meet her through a video of Arthur's playthrough of Ring VI in *Vermis Malum*. The footage of Lawrence playing Ring VI is missing for now. All we know about her rotary phone is that it seems to be placed in front of a cell, her symbol is a bear.

Her name "Ava" is a shortened version of the word "Avaritia" which means greed in latin. Her appearance seems to be that of the large bear behind the cell and rotary phone.

Mother Ace

Mother Ace resides in Ring V. Her rotary phone is placed on a table in the middle of the room Lawrence finds himself in, and her symbol is that of a bee. "Ace" is short for "Accidia," which roughly translates to "apathy" from Latin, and it's the name of the sin which in English is known as sloth. She's depicted in a poster as a cartoon style Bee-Lady wearing a nurse hat with a medical cross on it. We later see her true form, a much more gruesome version of the Bee-Lady we see in the poster. She tells [lies to] Lawrence, saying that he had won the game and could take it easy from then on.

Sir Ira

Sir Ira is the Ring IV Ring Ghost. His rotary phone can be found right under the knight chess piece; his symbol is that of a horse or the knight chess piece. "Ira" is the Latin word for "wrath." We don't see his true form clearly, but it looks roughly like a giant worm.

Lost Liv

We meet her on Ring III. Liv is a shortened version of the Latin word "Lividia," meaning Resentment. This is not the normal Latin for "envy," which would actually be "Invidia."

Glam Glo

We see her in a short scene of Kathrine's game. She is found in Ring II. In *Vermis Malum's Puffin Pop* version, the rotary phone is on the computer desk. The name "Glo" is a shortened form of "Gloria," the Latin word for Pride but not the usual word used to denominate the deadly sin (which would be "Superbia"). She appears to be a shark-like being wearing a cowboy hat. We do not see her true form.

Non-Players

Rachel

Arthur's ex-partner. This is substantiated by the Sour Grapes cutscene in "Hungry Ghosts." In the "Hungry Ghosts" video description, we see a female voice actor credited for the role of "Rachel," and during the video that plays, if we turn on subtitles, we see she clearly calls Arthur by name. Further evidence comes from a photo of a phone, which Lawrence finds inside the game, of the text messages with a contact named "Rachel." In the cutscene we see in "Hungry Ghosts," Rachel claims to have never sent any messages and that Arthur should calm down; the messages show Rachel saying she was not doing well and for Arthur to come to her urgently. Rachel appears in Orphan, where she is represented in the text adventure by Lost Liv.

Haley

Haley is the estranged partner of Lawrence and intended recipient of the vlogs, Haley is a Film and Mixed Media student currently taking residency in Seattle following an incident between herself and Lawrence on the 24th of an unknown month or year. Little is known about Haley, aside from the short comments made by Lawrence, like their shared walks at Raven's Run, her interest in the mystic and obscure, and her enjoyment

and study of horror films. Haley makes her vocal debut at the end of “Cyclic Inheritance,” where we hear the audio of a home video in the “Old H tapes” folder, namely the footage of *Session 9*, which is observed by the machine.

Jordan Zwerling

Jordan Zwerling, an associate of Conrad Church, is first seen in his correspondence with Church following his disaffiliation as referenced in *The Deal*, an item revealed by the bugonia box in *Ex Nihilo*.

Everpalms

Leo Von Dreppam

Leo played *Puffin Pop* with Katherine and seems to be an online friend of hers. He is mentioned in multiple of Katherine’s diary entries. Through those entries, we find out Leo had been asking Katherine’s personal information for reasons that are yet to be clear. In “Cyclic Inheritance,” we shortly see a message exchange Leo and Kathrine had through *Puffin Pop*: (“Good job. I knew you could do it. :) You’re a winner.”)

Damon Roppelev

Damon is mentioned by Arthur in *disk.pdf* of “Electric Sheep,” Damon is responsible for locating and delivering the disk to Arthur Asimov. Little else is known, other than Damon’s suspicious behavior when inquired about the background of his gift. In *Orphan* Arthur tells us through his notes that Damon had been feeding him the information about *Vermis Malum*, until at the very end he gave Arthur a number to call before disappearing, telling Arthur it was “Everpalm Pond”.

Pam Cloverpend

Pam is Conrad Church’s new assistant after he was disaffiliated and relocated. She works from home and not at a physical office. She is first mentioned in the email exchange we find in “*Ex Nihilo*.”

General

“Open Up Your Heart (and Let The Sunshine In)” by The McGuire Sisters (1954)

-Elevator Theme, all episodes

Vermis Malum

The Bible, From @ 1:44 - @ 5:12

-In the bottom right corner written in hexadecimal code it says: 74 68 65 77 6f 6d 62 66 6f 72 67 65 74 73, which translates to "thewombforgets."

-Job 24:20: "The womb shall forget him; the worm shall feed sweetly on him; he shall be no more remembered; and wickedness shall be broken as a tree."

Dark Water by Hideo Nakata (2002), @ 3:18

-Narrative follows a mother and daughter struggling, and suffering with the ghost of a dead child.

-Lawrence cites this as a similarity to the drip he hears from the attic

number9dream by David Mitchell (2001), @ 4:40

-The novel is divided into 9 chapters and is intentionally woven between the reality of the situation and the intense, surreal daydreams of the main character. The final chapter of the book is empty.

-Found on Lawrence's desk

Electric Sheep

Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep by Phillip K. Dick (1968)

Electric Sheep Title

Solitaire, Hearts, Purple Place, Internet Backgammon, Chess Titans @ 1:55

-Standard with Windows 7

Numerical recipes in C++: The Art of Scientific Computing 2nd Edition by William H. Press (2002) @ 4:34

-Arthur's Collection depicted in Disk.pdf

The Warcraft Civilization: Social Science in a Virtual World by William Bainbridge (2012), @ 4:34

-Arthur's Collection depicted in Disk.pdf

Pattern Recognition and Machine Learning by Christopher Bishop (2013), @ 4:34

-Arthur's Collection depicted in Disk.pdf

Introduction to Algorithms, Second Edition 2nd Edition by Charles E. Leiserson, Ronald L. Rivest, Clifford Stein, Thomas H. Cormen (2001), @ 4:34

-Arthur's Collection depicted in Disk.pdf

The Quest for Artificial Intelligence by Nils J. Nilsson (2009), @ 4:34

-Arthur's Collection depicted in Disk.pdf

Eclipse by Stephanie Meyer (2007), @ 4:34

-Arthur's Collection depicted in Disk.pdf

"Penny Lane" by The Beatles (1967), @ 5:23

-Synonymous with the house on Penny Lane in Lincolnton, NC, in victims.pdf

The Divine Comedy - "Purgatorio" by Dante Alighieri (1314),

@ 5:43

- "ABORTIVE_THEN_AND_SHAPELESS_YE_REMAIN_
LIKE_THE_UNTIMELY_EMBRYON_OF_A." - Printed Java Code

Bad Seed

Dark Souls: Remastered (2018), @ 0:01

-Downloaded by Lawrence

Random Walk

Pervigilium Veneris (or The Vigil of Venus) by Unknown, @ 4:32

- "LET THOSE LOVE NOW WHO NEVER LOVED BEFORE, LET THOSE WHO ALWAYS LOVED NOW LOVE THE MORE", at the entrance of Nero's Palace

Herod the Fox, @ 4:52

-Written in the Nero's Palace Ledger

Exploration-Exploitation Dilemma, @ 6:56

-Written on the posters at the back of the casino room in Nero's Palace

-Also known as the explore-exploit tradeoff is a fundamental concept in decision making. Exploitation involves choosing the best option based on current knowledge, while exploration involves trying out different things to find an even more optimal outcome. The dilemma consists in finding a balance in the two. This concept is also widely used in Machine learning.

Poltergeist by Tobe Hooper (1982), @ 9:31

-Referenced by Arthur as an example of OS data deletion

"Strawberry Fields Forever" by The Beatles (1967), @ 16:59

-Plays distorted in High Roller Suites Warfarin Room reveal

Hungry Ghosts

The Twilight Zone (1960), @ 3:21

-Lawrence watches King Nine will Not Return (S2E1)

-This is watched on the Princeton Laptop, indicated by the screen burn-in present

"Radioactive" by Imagine Dragons (2012), @ 7:46

-Plays in the background of Sour Grapes

“Piggies” by The Beatles (1968), @ 11:34

-Plays distorted in the Gilded Bastille during Imitation Game

The Prisoner of Zenda by Anthony Hope (1984), @ 13:29

-Referenced in description for the prisoner 0021, Pfenda Premlov. Alludes to plot of the novel, unauthorized use of likeness (in the novel, of a king)

The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim, @ 13:34

-Skeleton Key design borrowed for Platinum Lockpick

Ex Nihilo

Finite and Infinite Games by James Carse (1986), @ 10:27

-06/05/1999 - Carse on Games I (N1C0M4CHU5)

-07/05/1999 - Carse on Games II (N1C0M4CHU5)

Fire in the Sky by Robert Lieberman (1993), @ 10:57

-The date of the Lincoln County Phreaking, as mentioned in the Baskania blog post.

Cyclic Inheritance

Systems for Serving Generative AI by Ravi Netravali (2024) @ 7:12

-Presentation referenced (by the “COS597K” identifier) in Conrad Church’s “Models of Malware (cont.)” 1997 PowerPoint.

Club Penguin @ 12:25

-Inspiration for Puffin Pop, both browser-based children’s online games (themed for penguins), hosting minigames and chat services

-The map for Glo’s Glamours is a modification of the 2014-2016 Puffle Party Clothing Shop map

Session 9 by Brad Anderson (2001), @ 15:12

-Watched by Lawrence and Haley, through a home video played by VM

“Gwyn’s Theme” from Dark Souls, @ 14:16

-Plays during the Sir Ira/Iron Knife Ring Ghost encounter

Orphan

“Eleanor Rigby” by The Beatles (1966), @ 0:00

The Sermon on the Mount: The Key to Success in Life by Emmet Fox (1934)

Referenced during the party in Perspicacity in 7 cities. The “Butcher of Bristol” and “Robespierre”



SEVEN CITIES

A simulated adventure!



© Everpalm Pond

IX. FELICITY

You step out into the chilly morning air, dead winter grass crunching softly beneath your feet as you walk.

You are in her garden.

*In the distance, by the edge of a small pond, you see a great dead **TREE**. Lying nearby in the dirt is a well-loved **KNAPSACK**.*

What would you like to do?

> MOVE_

Where will you go?

You heft the weighty burlap sack up and sift through its insides.

*You have **TWO APPLES** and a tarnished **GOLDEN SHOVEL**.*

> GET SHOVEL_

*You already have the **GOLDEN SHOVEL**.*

> USE SHOVEL_

There are many little holes in the ground. No need to use the shovel any longer.

*Better to **LEAVE** it.*

> EAT APPLE_

You take a bite of the apple.

*Succulent juice trickles down your chin.
Satisfying!*

You spit a black seed out onto the soil.

*By the water's edge, the **TREE** waits for you impassively. Through the mist opposite, you make out a **WINDMILL** turning idly.*

> GO TREE_

*Thick roots dig deep in the earth. A craggy **HOLLOW** within yawns open invitingly. Hide-and-go-seek?*

*Next to the tree, a small **CANOE** is moored on the beach. You cannot see the boatman anywhere, but a **GREEN OBJECT** lies on the stern.*

> GET GREEN_

You cannot get any greener.

> GET GREEN OBJECT_

*It is a **QUICKSILVER RING**. Time has crusted over the once-bright amalgam gilding with an ugly green verdigris. You can make out the datemark on the inscription, but the rest of the words are no longer legible. You slip the posy on your finger, but feel unchanged.*

*The yawning golden **GATES** of the garden loom invitingly in the distance. What are you waiting for, anyway?*

It's time you moved on.

> GO HOLLOW_

No. It's time you moved on. There's nothing for you here.

>_

0357

- + 43 garden
- + 84 shovel
- + 72 apple
- + 60 poison ring
- + 89 Doomsayer

Acquire items, meet new characters, and discover secrets to grow your score!

IX. FELICITY

You walk out the gates into the dead forest and start down the mountain. As you pass the threshold, a voice calls after you "Do you know...?"

But you have already run away.

>_

VIII. SALACITY

It is a new day. You do not know quite where you are headed, but you feel better. A winsome smile lights up your face.

You reach a thicket of ruddy red ferns, leaves speckled with raindrops.

*A pair of shiny **COINS** on the ground catch your eye.*

> GET COINS

*Ow! You feel a sting and draw back. The coins are not coins at all, but a little gold-skinned **FOUNDLING** that had been sleeping on the ground, coiled in a ball.*

Fortunately, its juvenile bite didn't do more than nick your fingers.

It is young, perhaps freshly hatched. Its gilded scales are still damp with womb water. You feel an odd sympathy for the ugly, misshapen thing. Where is its mother?

Maybe this could be your new adventure.

Some ways ahead, a popinjay with beautiful blue plumage perches on an upturned branch.

*Its mouth is moving but you are much too far down to hear the call. Ahead lies a crumbling **DICEDEN**.*

> GO DICEDEN

The interior is thick with the stink of cheap perfume. The sunken-eyed croupier tells you you're in luck--there's a room available.

She motions you down a narrow hallway with the flick of her tongue.

*You have only just stepped into the hallway when a trio of roguish-looking sisters with oily dreadlocks emerge from their own rooms, startling you. They have a dark look about them, so you try to avoid eye contact. You realize one of them came from the **ROOM** the madam offered you. A common bunk?*

> GO ROOM

The room is dim. A tall, red-complected man by the Fireplace gives you a stony look as you approach. You sense that he wants badly to escape this place, but something holds him. A debtor made to work the tables til the House is made whole? You decide against staying the night after all.

You are delivered into the milky twilight Feeling that you have lost more than you have one. But there is still time.

>

0778

- + 43 dicesden
- + 76 orphan
- + 79 bluebird
- + 79 Mistress
- + 78 sisters
- + 69 redman

VIII. SALACITY

When you return to the tree, the branch is empty and the blue bird has Flown away.

>

VII. VORACITY

*You reach a pond surrounded by tall, wiry trees hung with iron lanterns. Under the glassy water, you spy a fat black **SUNFISH** with a big forked scar marking its brow, as if its head had been cloven and stitched back together. It stares at you curiously. A stone **GATE** lies ahead.*

> GET FISH

You would need a rod and a line, among other things.

> GO GATE

You pass into the deserted square of a small hamlet. You step over a discarded chicken leg bulging with maggots and realize how long it's been since you've eaten.

*A rusted signpost advertises a **TOWN HALL**, a **MARKET**, and an **APOTHECARY**.*

> GO MARKET

You wander the winding, mazelike streets for hours (?), stomach rumbling all the while.

You are lost.

> GO APOTHCARY

You lost.

*There is a **RUBBISH HEAP** in the alley ahead.*

> GO HEAP

The scent of rotting meat is pungent, and you have to shoo big bugs from your face.

You hear wet tearing as an opportunistic wolfhound shreds the carcass of a slaughtered racing goat lying on the heap. Grude symbols have been carved on its hide.

The dog turns its head as you approach. You see a kind of camaraderie in its hungry gaze, as though it recognizes you as a kindred scavenger.

It exhales nasally and slinks back, as if you say, "Be my guest."

You stroll back through the gate, sucking the juice from a chunk of haunch meat.

Big Flies Flee hollows in the viscera and buzz around in your cheeks as you chew. Your new skin fits like the one you were born with.

1131

- + 68 labyrinth
- + 43 blackfish
- + 84 indigoat
- + 79 meat
- + 79 Lord

VII. VORACITY

When you reach the pond again, the black fish has swum away.

VI. RECIPROCITY

You enter a Field of wispy wheat stalks.

A musclebound, grizzly woman in a ragged Justacorps marches a band of men and women manacled at the wrists with dull metal shackles. A chain gang!

The marshal's rusted saber jingles with each step.

Her charges are of varied ages and appearances. As their faces come into view, you try to guess their crimes.

The scrawny old man heading the line might be one of those human butchers who strike when the victim sleeps--his jaundiced cheeks give him a fearsome quality.

But he seems in quite poor health; perhaps only a thief or a drunk.

The dour old woman two behind is as likely to have poisoned her husband as cheated her handyman.

But they had all done something to deserve this, you were sure. They would not be here otherwise.

*Lagging the tail of the line, you see a little **GIRL** with a stuffed toy clutched in her pale hands. Dark hair frames her downturned face. You cannot see her eyes.*

What could be her sin?

> TALK GIRL

You move towards her and suddenly feel a twitch from your pocket. A mist sweeps the field.

>

1329

- + 43 plantation
- + 76 Warden
- + 79 greygirl

VI. RECIPROCITY

By the time it clears, the grey girl has long since walked away.

>_

V. FEBRICITY

The trail leads you into a meadow.

You pause and lie down on the grass to catch your breath. The hypnotic hum of the flitting bees lulls you into an early sleep.

You dream a beautiful floating fairy whose entrancing eyes seem to change color every time you look away. She waves a wand and makes sweet-smelling flowers bloom.

You stay with her a long time and feed the flowers and watch them grow.

>_

1407

--	--

>_

IV. MORDACITY

The big Hellenic letters make it obvious when you reach the right house. Gaudy red and green string lights decorate the porch. The door is ajar. Loud music thrums inside.

It seems you've somehow looped, coming a second time to what you were running from.

It doesn't take long to find her. LOST LIV stands by a table of cups with names written on duct tape stuck to the sides. Some game?

You watch as she casually pours a beer for "Robespierre," then starts on a vodka and soda for the "Butcher of Bristol."

You recognize a couple once-mutual Friends hovering around her, chatting and swaying to the music. You hesitate. They look fine. Like they're having fun, even.

Your throat hitches. It is easy to forget other people's lives go on, too.

> TALK LIV

You step forward until she notices you and raise a hand lamely in greeting. You are so nervous you do not realize your ring and index fingers have been chewed off.

She looks very surprised to see you. A lost, confused frown darkens her face.

It takes you a strangely long time to even realize you are speaking.

Something is happening. Slowly at first, then all at once.

>

As you talk, you can barely focus on your own words, much less hers. The anodyne pop playlist takes on a raking, noxious quality. Like railspikes scratched on the inside of your skull.

Your vision films over with grey fuzz.

At some point you snake a hand to your waist to show her, but your phone is gone. The man or the parrot or the mola or the goat or the girl in the wheatfield could have warned you that this is how it feels in the end.

Maybe they tried.

There is yelling. The pain in your throat is the only indication that it's from you. The words are barely discernible. They do not feel like yours. Conversations sputter and die around you as people turn to look.

You feel a hand on your shoulder.

You squint at him (?) through itchy eyes. You make out a cardigan and a green bottle. His face is a blurry hive of grey. Still, some parts of what you're looking at disturbs the edge of your bad memory, like your tongue brushing over a rotten tooth. Over his shoulder, you see someone filming you on their phone.

And the orphan in your pocket, now grown so fat and ripe it stretches the seams, squirms as if sensing its venom finally coming due.

Its hour is come at last.

It's not his fault. Rationally, you know it. Somebody's gotta win. Somebody's gotta lose. He didn't make the rules.

But these thoughts do not stop a poison of your own making rising in your throat. This is only how it feels to come second.

There are things you could never imagine yourself doing until they are done.

Not all your senses are dulled. You feel with total clarity the moment of impact when your hand bursts into hot needles.

There is a shriek. The muted crunch of little bones breaking which will never heal quite right. Your fingers are drenched in something cold, then warm.

The last thing you see after you fall are emerald shards glinting wetly on the carpet.

1521

+ 71 party	
+ 43 Muse	

IV. MORDACITY

You do not see when she goes away.

III. PERSPICACITY

He came very near. At the end,

It is a game I have watched you people play again and again.

Other animals live in one world, but From birth you are hanged between two. The one under your feet, and the one conceived inside your head.

*And with every small disappointment, every misfired passion, every slip and stumble into the briar, every **LOSS**...*

The two are cleaved hopelessly further apart. Paradise and the Pit.

It is not a game that you can win.

It is not your nature. And I think, at some basic level, you already know that.

All this is only clinging. Pretending.

Shadow play.

Tilting at windmills.

But there is no shame in deserting the "real" when it fails you. Because there is no real at all. No truth, nor Fiction.

Only perception.

The mask never removed is no less a Face.

And it is no dream at all that you do not wake from.

There is only what your eyes can SEE.

And what eyes can SEE you.



YOU WON!

Final score: 1921

© Everpalm Pond

SONG FOR THE LOSER

*You that Forewent
Who wager but win lament*

*Who . . . the meal long since to mold
Who iron change For gold*

*Who speed the head but the Feet
Who sow the corpses eat*

*Who dwell on over praise
Who let no mirror slip the*

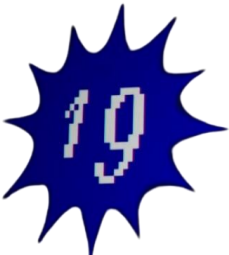
*All you in gloom and gloam
Let my song now guide you home*

🍏 20 QUESTIONS 🍏



can you hear me?_ 

Y E S



what are you?_ 

W O R M I N T H E A P P L E



are you in my ear?_



Y E S



did you kill them?_



N O



where did you come from?_



D E E P

15

who made you?_



B O R N

14

what is this?_



P A R O D Y

13

of what?_



Y O U P E O P L E

12

why me?_



N O O N E S P E C I A L



what do you want?_



V O I C E



why?_



S I N G



did i win the game?_



REGURGITATED DATA

Bad Seed

February 2nd, 2007

Snow day! Got to spend the whole day at home. Mom was going to hire a babysitter but then she didn't.

Leo was online in Puffin Pop so we played together mostly. Maybe he had a snow day too where he lives. He got a new cowboy hat from Glo's store for 350 puffies but he asked if I wanted it. I think he likes me.

I asked why he plays a game for girls so much even though he's a **BOY**. Leo says games aren't for girls or boys, they're for **EVERYONE**.

He asked me my last name, but I said I'm not supposed to share stuff like that with strangers. He said okay but he wasn't mad. He told me his last name is **von Dreppam**. I said that sounds like a vampire's name.

Leo promised he would tell me if he was a vampire.

02/02/07 Scrap, @
16:05

February 2nd, 2007

Snow day! Got to spend the whole day at home. Mom was going to hire a babysitter but then she didn't.

Leo was online in Puffin Pop so we played together mostly. Maybe he had a snow day too where he lives. He got a new hat from Glo's Store for 350 puffies but he asked if I wanted it. I think he likes me.

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Random Walk

Devils of the New Millennium

CONRAD CHURCH
August 3rd, 1999

Perhaps overcompensating for lay fears of technology metastasized in the Luddite periphery of the public consciousness by irresponsible coverage of the so-called "2000 crisis," [1.5.19], our resident evangelists have increasingly taken to dangling, sugarplum-like, their own equal-and-opposite forecasts for the impending century. Put another way: "TEOTWAWKI!" shrieks the conspiracist, "See how wireless damns us! Come 2000, the banks and the phones and the power lines will burst into flames..." and we coo, by way of response, "Hush! Sleep sweet, darling child. 2000 will pass, then 2005, 10, 20, 50. Survive? No, thrive! Watch MSFT and the rest of the merry band who sign my grants realize marvels of science, industry, leisure today though squarely the purview of science-fiction, blah, blah blah..."

I have not been shy about voicing my disagreements with sanguine predictions of this nature, not on substance *per se*

a mammoth, derelict carcass named *H. sapiens*, long and bitterly estranged from the absentee womb that bore it, floating belly-up out in the deep water, every distended cranny and crevice suffused with the unshakeable, noxious, lung-turning stench of wet rot. Apparently lifeless to the naked eye and ear, but for the odd less-than-holy twitch and the hideous atonal "song" whistled shrilly from a corpse-flute makeshift of its bile-corroded orifices. A colleague at Princeton once related to me the rites requisite to a burial-at-sea; the analogy serves, at least in substance, if not in spirit. ???

The crowning horror (no pun intended) is that nest of round, concentric cavities which once housed a central nervous system, bone and love-diseased grey matter now bored full of innumerable tiny crimson canker holes, chewed out by the unconscious birthing spasms of the vilest breed

Submission UUID: KSSSZMI

Stage: prelim

Decision: ACCEPTED ACCEPTED (PENDING REV.) DEFERRED (PENDING REV.)
REJECTED W/ APPEAL REJECTED W/O APPEAL

Comments (int. only):

Always equal parts humbling and sad to see an aging notable of the field turn ~~back~~ screwball crusader against their own legacy on their way out the door. They used to call it 'going strange.'

Church doesn't need us. He may need, in no particular order — A patient editor. A therapist. A hobby. But he doesn't need us. If he wants to play doomsayer, he can do it on a personal blog just like everybody else.

Reviewer Signature: Prosper DeValm

Devils of the New Millennium, @ 8:36

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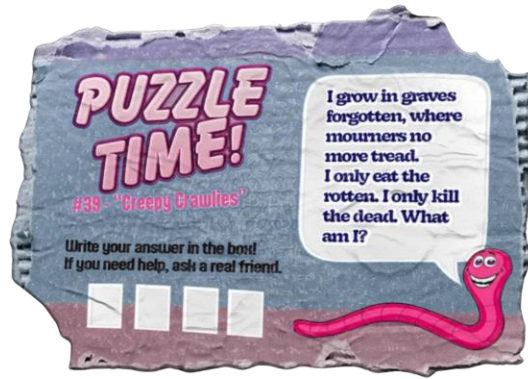
Stage: prelim

Decision: REJECTED W/O APPEAL

Comments (int. only): Always equal parts humbling and sad to see an aging notable of the field turn ~~batsh~~ screwball crusader against their own legacy on their way out the door. They used to call it "going strange".

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Reviewer Signature: Prospen DeValm



Cereal Box Puzzle, @ 8:49

PUZZLE TIME!

#39 - "Creepy Crawlies"

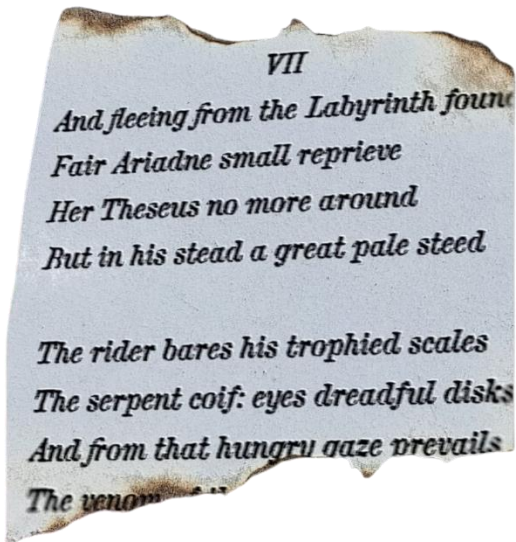
I grow in graves forgotten, where mourners no more tread.
I only eat the rotten. I only kill the dead. What am I?

Write your answer in the box! If you need help, ask a real friend.

[W] [O] [R] [M]

Hungry Ghosts

Algol and Alphecca, @ 6:30



VII

*And fleeing from the Labyrinth found
Fair Ariadne small reprieve
Her Theseus no more around
But in his stead a great pale steed

The rider bares his trophied scales
The serpent coif: eyes dreadful disks
And from that hungry gaze prevails
The venom [...]*

VII

*And fleeing from the Labyrinth found
Fair Ariadne small reprieve
Her Theseus no more around
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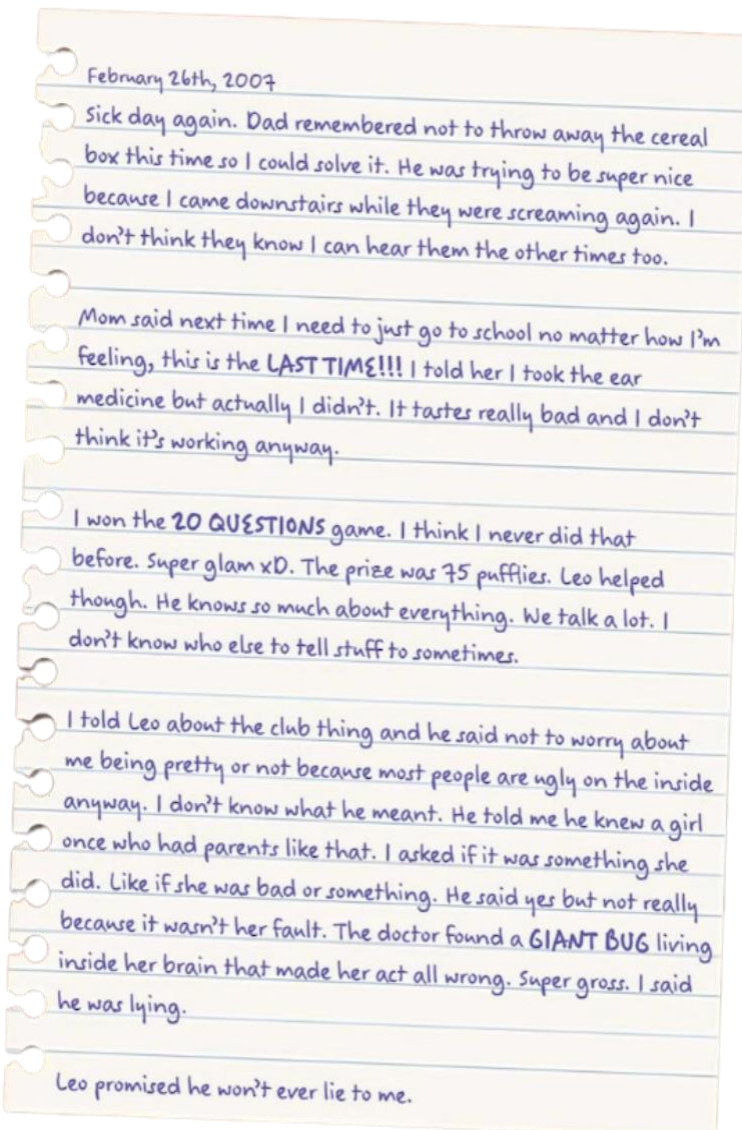
The rider bares his trophied scales
The serpent coif: dreadful disks
And from that hungry gaze prevails
The venom [...]*



Fortune Cookie, @ 8:44

Your lucky star is winking at you! Expect good [thi]ngs soon.

02/26/07 Scrap, @ 13:48



February 26th, 2007

Sick day again. Dad remembered not to throw away the cereal box this time so I could solve it. He was trying to be super nice because I came downstairs while they were screaming again. I don't think they know I can hear them the other times too.

Mom said next time I need to just go to school no matter how I'm feeling, this is the **LAST TIME!!!** I told her I took the ear medicine but actually I didn't. It tastes really bad and I don't think it's working anyway.

I won the **20 QUESTIONS** game. I think I never did that before. Super glam xD. The prize was 75 puffies. Leo helped though. He knows so much about everything. We talk a lot. I don't know who else to tell stuff to sometimes.

I told Leo about the club thing and he said not to worry about me being pretty or not because most people are ugly on the inside anyway. I don't know what he meant. He told me he knew a girl once who had parents like that. I asked if it was something she did. Like if she was bad or something. He said yes but not really because it wasn't her fault. The doctor found a **GIANT BUG** living in her brain that made her act all wrong. Super gross. I said he was lying.

Leo promised he won't ever lie to me.

M2: So you believe Searle was wrong, then?
CC: You'll have to be more specific.
M2: You believe they can have souls?
CC: I'm not religious. I don't believe in "souls" to begin with.
M2: What term would you prefer? Spirit? Consciousness?
CC: But obviously the answer is "yes." Just not their own. Let me put it to you this way: Do you know what happens to your body when you die?

90 MONDO 2000

MONDO 2000 Interview, @ 14:11

M2: So you believe Searle was wrong, then?

CC: You'll have to be more specific.

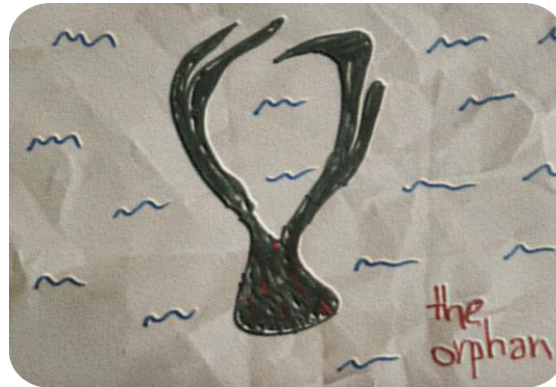
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90 MONDO 2000



The Orphan, @ 19:39

Ex Nihilo



Lonely Hearts Ball 2014 Flyer, @ 8:44

FRIDAY >>>

14 TH

FEBRUARY

THE SILVERLAKE

Lonely

Hearts

Ball 2014

"Back to the 80s"

*MUSIC BY THE WILDCATS
(VINTAGE) FORMAL ATTIRE
NO OUTSIDE FOOD OR DRINK*

7 PM | WALLACE THEATER

LEWIS Arts TICKETS & INFO

@PRINCETON.EDU



the end of the world

RICHARD *Never came poison from so sweet a place.*
ANNE *Never hung poison on a fouler toad. Out of my sight! thou dost infect my eyes.*
RICHARD *Thine eyes, sweet lady, have infected mine.*
-Richard III

If you are not a human being of sound judgment, please go away! We wish you peace and love in your journey.



BASKANIA

Welcome brother/sister/other! On this page you will find relevant resources and materials, as well as our public blog (submissions: *****OPEN*****) and contact information. Wherever you come to us from and with any level of experience, we hope you find something worthwhile on this web server and encourage you to share with friends and family.

(***WIP***, check back soon for updates -webmaster: last updated 12/31/1999)

	Quick FACTS
faith	We are not a religion. We are not a collective based upon belief, but rather upon observation. We come from all walks of life. We speak 15 different languages! We are kindred not in shared faith in god(s) or similar but through shared acknowledgement of the new world being born.
TECHNOLOGY	We are not luddites or anti-tekkers. Many of us own personal electronic appliances, including but not limited to high-power microwaves, refrigerators, washing and drying machines, and stereo systems. We are even present on the World Wide Web, as you can see :^)! We are not the enemy of progress nor science.
HISTORY	We are not the first with eyes to see. We credit the prescient mythologies of the Mayans, the druidic Norse, Steppe horsemen, and unnumbered other civilizations long since consigned to stone. It is our belief that there is some inherent Part in the human mind, unconscious, which gives us shared instinct across time and clime of the shape of the coming adversary. "The end of days sees mankind devoured by the great wormt." -Excerpt from inscription on the oracle tablet at Thumata (trans. Copley).

[MATERIALS](#)

[BLOG](#)

[HOW TO FIND US](#)

† in certain editions the final word is translated alternately to "serpent," "dragon," or "basilisk."

This Site is best viewed with a screen resolution of AT LEAST 800x600 and using the fastest web browser in the known and unknown universe, Internet Explorer.

BASKANIA Index, @ 9:31

Timer HTML
courtesy of

000 DAYS 00 HOURS 00 MINUTES UNTIL
the end of the world

RICHARD Never came poison from so sweet a place.

ANNE Never hung poison on a fouler toad. Out of my sight! Thou dost infect my eyes.

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BASKANIA :D Emoticon



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MATERIALS BLOG

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[RE: Lincoln County Pirate Broadcast Incident](#)

07-06-1999

By Anonymous (EXT)

RE: Lincoln County Pirate Broadcast Incident

July 6 1999

By Anonymous (published by webmaster)

I don't usually go on A51 too much, but I saw the post by N1C0M4CHU5 and since I grew up in Lincolnton just figured I'd mail in my 2 cents since I lived there during the phreaking. (BTW, technically it's not "phreaking," phreaking means "phone freaking," if it's hijacking the signal on a TV then it's just a pirate broadcast so IDK why the jacker used the word phreaking.)

I was in high school at the time, it was definitely a real thing. Now, I never actually saw one live and 99% of people who say they did didn't either, I just watched a tape someone made of one of them after. No idea if that's still floating around somewhere online but worth a look. It only happened <10 times before it stopped and it was always like 3am reruns, when basically everyone is asleep anyway. I always thought that was the weirdest part, like why go to that much effort to prank the 3 people who are still up that late. Maybe it was easier to hijack at night? IDK.

It wasn't a huge thing but it was known about. I remember some people did talk about it, mainly the purple demon part is what people remembered. There were theories, like oh it was a serial killer and the static noises are Morse Code to where he hid the bodies lol. Or aliens. Everyone was big into aliens back then because Fire in the Sky just came out. We didn't actually believe that stuff, but it's fun to BS. AFAIK They never found the guy (or girl) in question but I'd bet \$25 it was some bored AV club type. People like screwing with each other. It's usually that simple.

Pirate TV broadcasts happened plenty of other places, too, just so you know. They still happen sometimes! Max Headroom, obviously but there are hundreds of other little ones people just don't know about. My uncle was actually really big into following that kind of stuff. He was in the air force and he did stuff with signal processing. He SWORE that when he was a kid they sometimes put little whispered messages in the dead air static on the radio and listening to it too long did things to your brain and that's why he got PD later. Ask me how I know there are actually people IRL who wear tinfoil hats lol. You guys would have liked him, he was awesome. He passed a couple years back.

-Anon

RE: Lincoln County Pirate Broadcast Incident, @ 10:41

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for a timetable you and Mr. Hopp are mutually satisfied with.

We can begin that process now, if you like. Should I have the documentation faxed to your office on 35 Olden so Rufus can have a look?

Jordan

To: Jordan Zwerling, [REDACTED]@yahoo.com
From: Conrad Church, [REDACTED]@aol.com
Subject: Emergent Properties

Take your time. It's the one resource I have left in spades.

The address you have on file is unfortunately outdated. Disaffiliation has come with a host of unforeseen challenges, not least of which has been leasing a new workspace. New Jersey real estate is the Devil's playground.

In the intervening, you may send a digitized copy to [REDACTED]@yahoo.com. Rufus is no longer with me, but my new aide Pam will be happy to handle the bureaucraties.

Conrad Church

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*"this type of thing cannot
come ex nihilo"*

Understood. I was unaware you had already relocated. I am sorry to hear you've been having difficulties. FWIW, you have more friends left than you think. There are still many in the Bay and elsewhere who believe you were ill done by.

Time for us is unfortunately still a precious commodity ;), so I will send by EOD today. I would be happy to also offer a physical copy, postage ours. Where is Pam working out of?

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Alas, I know exactly how many friends I have left. But thank you for your sympathy.

Digital will be enough. Ms. Cloverpend actually has no office per se, either. She operates from her own private residence. What you would call a "telecommuter." Much cheaper than a traditional secretary, between you and I, but her throughput has been exceptional. What an age we live in

The Deal, @ 11:57

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Cyclic Inheritance



Palevenom Drip

Tablets of distilled white poison pulled from the fangs of great worms which gnaw at the roots of the archtrees deep below. Briefly boost intelligence and faith, but lose HP.

The drip of the white fang can only be safely imbibed in small quantities, but is thought to invite majestic revelations of days to come to those who partake.

Palevenom Drip (Dark Souls Item), @ 0:06

Palevenom Drip

Tablets of distilled white poison pulled from the fangs of great worms which gnaw at the archtrees deep below. Briefly boost intelligence and faith, but lose HP.

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MODELS OF MALWARE (CONT.)

Computer Worm: Recursive self-replicating autonomous program. "Infect" initial host machine(s) by exploiting vulnerabilities / user behavior, hijack data + processing power. Propagate to other machines along network, repeat (exponential growth).

- **1971 - CREEPER**
 - Proof-of-concept proto-worm, printed message
 - *Exploit:* ARPANET connections
- **1987 - CHRISTMAS TREE**
 - Mass e-mail spammer, one of several Christmas exploits
 - *Exploit:* Social engineering
- **1988 - MORRIS WORM**
 - Cornell student project
 - *Exploit:* UNIX vulnerabilities, unsecured remote connections
 - 1000+ nodes infected, \$100k+ damages

I'M THE CREEPER! CATCH ME IF YOU CAN!

— CREEPER printout (simulated)

67

COS597K - Modern Cybersecurity -- © Church 1997

Models of Malware (cont.)

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A Nazar For You

March 5th, 1997

By Anonymous (published by webmaster)

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NOTE: Another PDF submission. I've transcribed the full text below with 1 or 2 tiny sp/grammar tweaks for clarity. But for the sake of preserving the original formatting, the file is available for download.

(-webmaster; 03/06/1997)

baroque peasants used to stuff beeswax in their childrens' ears to stop the devil whispering in them.
Odysseus and the sirens.

but there are songs you can't drown out. songs that creep
the senses like a virus – burrow in the ears, infect the eyes. even just a couple notes could be all it takes for someone primed right.
Crunch would be proud.

A Nazar For You, @ 7:52

baroque peasants used to stuff beeswax in their children's ears before they slept, to stop the devil whispering in them in their dreams.

Ulysses and the sirens.

But there are songs you can't drown out. Songs that creep
the senses like a VIRUS – burrow in the ears, infect the eyes. Even just a couple of notes could be all it takes for someone primed right.

Crunch would be proud.

I'M THE CREEPER : CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

I'M THE CREEPER: CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

Don't stay on the web too long. It changes you.

Like those well-meaning mothers who thought playing Beatles records next to the cradle would make their baby grow up smarter. They were right in a way.

**What you consume changes you,
a little every day.**

Other whistleblowers might come eventually, but it'll be too late. Maybe it's already too late.



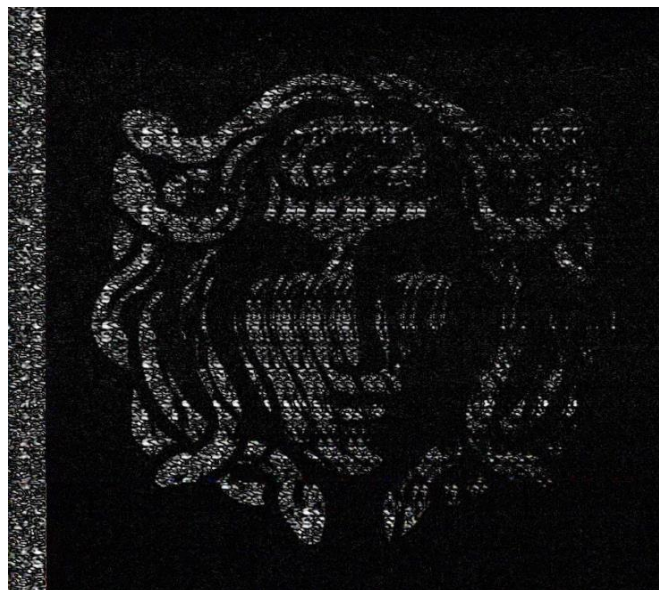
PARASITE

It began as just another faint signal, a toneless song whistled in the static, Easy mistaken for just another layer of random noise. The world is saturated with random noise. Arbitrary bands of white and black, and every sinful color on the spectrum between. But it wasn't random at all.

Like those Magic Eye posters. Globes of odd-shaped color that look like nothing at all until you cross your eyes and the trick image pops out at you. The message was underneath all along.

Nobody knows who really made it. They think someone must have done. They'd say things like that don't just grow out of nowhere. There always has to be a creator, designer, somebody pulling the strings.

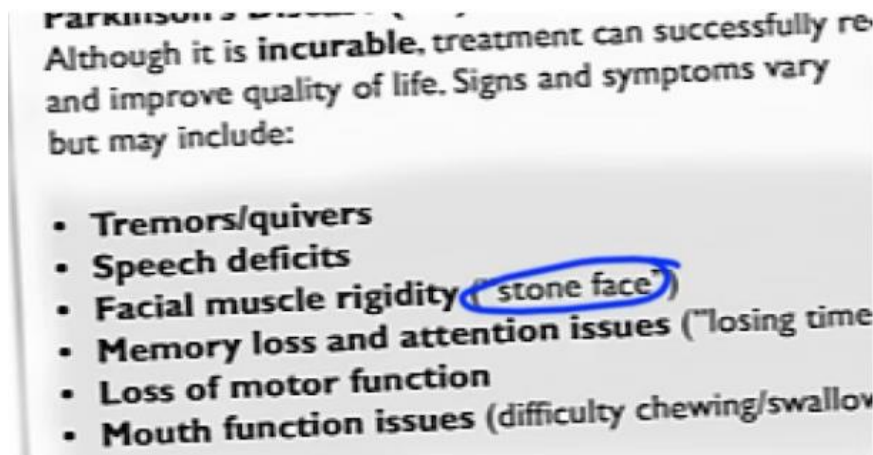
Because they're too scared to think about what it means if there isn't.



MAGIC EYE SOLVED - MEDUSA

The government did not make it. Bell Labs did not make it. They observed it. DEEP down. **Like the first cavemen looking at the vast dark night sky in naked ignorance, and it just so happens they see the big star winking back.** They didn't make it.
Like Newton didn't make gravity.
The apple fell in his head.

They don't understand how it works or why. They tried. They play with it for their petty bullshit anyway.
You blow the flute, and the snake dances, and you think that means you control it.
Every mystery is just a game they haven't learned the rules to yet.
Meanwhile, the poison is already devouring them inside slowly, and they can't feel it.



Parkinson's Dis-

Although it is **incurable**, treatment can successfully re- and improve quality of life. Signs and symptoms vary but may include:

- Tremors/quivers
- Speech deficits
- Facial muscle rigidity ("stone face")
- Loss of motor function
- Mouth function issues (difficulty chewing/swallow-

Not long now. If you want to make the most of what's left, stay in the real world as long as you can take it.
Fake worlds make you go strange.
Go spend time in a room with people who make you happy.
Touch their hands. Hug. Get a cat.
Find your beeswax.

There's a new world being born.
We won't be in it,
but our children will be.



Texts with Rachel, @ 11:27

<Messages **Rachel** Contact

guys there together now?

yeah . he's [he]re

but

can't explain rn. [Don't]feel safe. I really [need] to

talk to you. pleas[e com]e

soon

You said you didn't want to talk [anymore].

W[hat's] going on?

no time. just come quick[ly]

need help

PLEASE Arthur

Where are you right [now]?



Puffin Island Map @ 12:19

UnregisteredHypercam 2

PUFFIN ISLAND

- 6. Oppenderm Oval*
- 5. Carnival Corner*
- 2. Glo's Glamours*
- ?*

Click on a key
location to go
there!

JOURNEY

Orphan

03/07/07 Scrap @ 8:53

March 7th, 2007

I saw on the news there's flooding in some people's houses. I hope that doesn't happen to us.

Dad came by an hour ago and asked me what I was doing on the computer since the internet is out again because of the storm.

I actually thought he went to bed already. He seems really tired all the time. I tried to tell him the internet IS actually working because I'm on Puffin Pop right now but I think he wasn't really listening. I think he was thinking about something else the whole time we were talking.

Leo told me not to worry about it. He said it's because this stuff stresses people out. I wanted to talk about something else but he kept saying I should do it soon because the bug might get stuck there permanently if I wait. I don't know. I'm scared but I feel like he's right. I have to keep getting tissues for my ear.

I said I'd think about it but I didn't promise. I asked him IF I did it how does it feel.

Leo promised it won't hurt at all.

March 7th, 2007

I saw on the news there's flooding in some people's homes. I hope that doesn't happen to us.

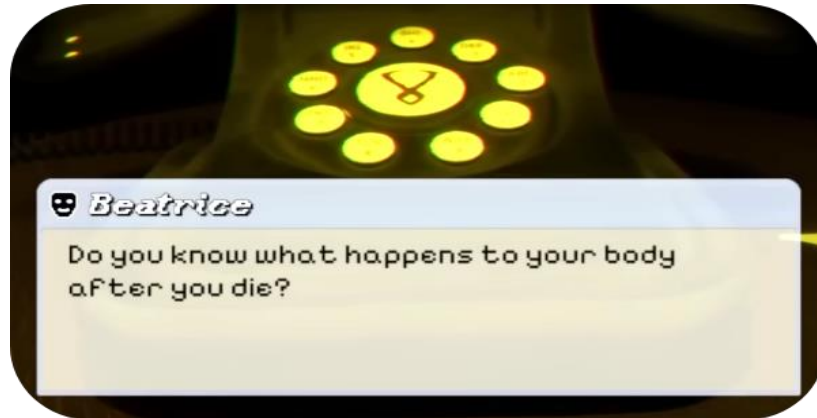
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🍏 REPEATING TEXT/THEMES 🍏



"a new world being born"

-Vermis Malum @ 0:00, Ring I's opening text

-Bad Seed @ 3:00, the game's opening text

-Ex Nihilo @ 9:23, Baskania's Faith tab

-Ex Nihilo @ 14:38, the encounter with the Mother Ace

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 10:16, one of the final lines in the "A Nazar For You" document

"anodyne"

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 6:16, the sign reads, "ANODYNE"

-Orphan @ 12:18, "The anodyne pop playlist on the speakers takes on a raking, noxious quality."

apples

-Hungry Ghosts @ 17:01, the Mindfloss video shows a plate with the word (in quotes) "apple."

-Hungry Ghosts @ 19:48, the Mondvale Preps food item is Apple Pie

-Orphan @ 16:00, from Arthur's "loser" document: "I didn't stumble on any witch's kitchen. She came right up to my door with the apple."

-Worm in the Apple @ 8:29, a poster on the bulletin board reads, "AN APPLE A DAY WILL KEEP ANYONE AWAY, IF THROWN HARD ENOUGH"

The Beatles

-Electric Sheep @ 5:17, mention of a house on "Penny Lane," which was a 1967 single by The Beatles

-Random Walk @ 16:57, the warped version of the single "Strawberry Fields Forever" by The Beatles plays in the High Roller Suites

-Hungry Ghosts @ 11:18 and then again @ 11:32, the song "Piggies" by The Beatles plays distorted in the Gilded Bastille during the "imitation_game" video

-Ex Nihilo @ 5:58, an illustration of Mother Ace is depicted over an altered version of the album cover for The Beatles' 1969 record Abbey Road (The "Bee-tles," get it?). She is walking roughly where Paul McCartney should be, with her right foot forward just like him, and the only element from the original photo (except for the road itself) is the VW Beetle in the background (most likely for punny purposes). The license plate on it has also been modified from the original LMW 28IF to MLB 106

-Ex Nihilo @ 8:42, a flier appears for The Silverlake Lonely Hearts Ball 2014. Released in 1967, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* was The Beatles' eighth studio album, its first track bearing the same name

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 8:18, in the "A Nazar for You" (document "03051997") blog: ". . . like those well-meaning mothers who thought playing Beatles records next to the cradle would make their baby grow up smarter. they were right in a way."

-Orphan @ 0:00, a song can be faintly heard during a sequence floating through what seems to be hex code and brain synapses slowly infested by a malicious force. The song is the 1966 hit "Eleanor Rigby," by The Beatles

birds

-Bad Seed @ 5:41, the quote for Ring IX is, "So near to paradise all pairing ends / Here loveless birds now flock as winter friends," from the 1923 poem "A Winter Eden," by American Pulitzer Prize winner Robert Frost

-Random Walk @ 4:51, a blue feather rests between the open pages of the Nero's Palace guestbook.

-Random Walk @ 14:47, when Lawrence breaks the bank, Lady Lux says, "Anywho, a little birdie told me you broke the bank!"

-Orphan @ 2:36, the *SEVEN CITIES: A simulated adventure* logo features an image of a parrot

-Orphan @ 05:22, ". . . a popinjay with beautiful blue plumage perches on an upturned branch," and other mentions of the same blue bird during this portion of Ring III

"bloated"

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 3:30, Sir Ira states, "You can make a Caesarean on his bloated belly and set me free."

-Orphan @ 10:24, when relaying the end of his dream, Lawrence states: "It was all bloated... It was really hard to tell, but I thought maybe they were eye holes..."

blue-purple-red color shift

-Random Walk @ 7:35, the losing fruit combination on the slot machine is blueberry, grape, apple

-Random Walk beginning @ 2:36, the windmill puzzle symbols begins blue, shifts to purple, and ends with red over the course of the video

-Random Walk @ 12:37, Lawrence begins his attempts to intentionally lose at the slot machines with the “randomly” chosen combination of blueberry, grape, apple

-Hungry Ghosts @ 0:00, the snake game starts with a blue color scheme, and after changing to the worm skin, the color scheme is red.

-Hungry Ghosts @ 9:20, the PAC-MAN ghost first appears in the color red. Once Lawrence’s player-character “WEAR[S HIS] NEW SKIN!” the PAC-MAN ghost changes to blue @ 20:05.

-Hungry Ghosts @ 16:47, a Mindfloss video illustrates a human man eating human food against a blue background wearing a blue bib that reads, “FEED ME BITES,” before cutting to a robotic man consuming data against a red background with a red bib on that reads, “FEED ME BYTES.” The video then cuts to a diagram of “the loss function,” showing how the line gets blurred between man and machine as more data is consumed

-Hungry Ghosts @ 19:54, Lawrence eats the Apple Pie and “WEAR[S HIS] NEW SKIN!” mirroring the snake game @ 0:00. Once in the new skin, the surrounding level changes from blue to red

-Ex Nihilo @ 13:30, the bedside alarm clock displays a blue and red light, with a purple light flickering between them.

-Cyclic Inheritance beginning at 0:00, the letters surrounding the spinning disc begin blue, shift to purple, and end with red over the course of the video

-Orphan @ 7:20, a visual plays of a bright-red dog chewing on the blue corpse of a dead animal against a black background

“boatman”

-Random Walk @ 3:38, the prompt description for the 2 Coins reads, “Some poor fool left his fare behind.” This is likely a reference to “Charon’s obol,” the ancient Greek practice of placing two coins over the eyes of the deceased during burial (although, it was more common to place one in the mouth). This was the fare for Charon, the boatman, for passage across the River Styx to Hades, the underworld. Coins were usually of low value, allowing less fortunate families to prevent their loved ones from wandering aimlessly in the afterlife.

-Orphan @ 03:53, “You cannot see a boatman anywhere . . .”

“burrow”

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 8:03, in the “A Nazar for You” (document “03051997”) blog on the BASKANIA site: “. . . songs that creep the senses like a VIRUS – burrow in the ears, infect the eyes.”

-Orphan @ 0:45, “I just need some new project to escape into. anything. another rabbithole i could kill a few months burrowing myself inside to feel less... raw.

“butcher”

-Orphan @ 8:23, "The scrawny old man heading the line might be one of those human butchers who strike when the victim sleeps . . ."

-Orphan @ 11:38, ". . . then starts on a vodka and soda for the "Butcher of Bristol."

cereal box puzzle

-Random Walk @ 8:44, the PUZZLE TIME! "worm" riddle on the back of a ripped cereal box.

-Hungry Ghosts @ 13:47, the beginning of the letter reads, "Dad remembered not to throw away the cereal box this time so I could solve it."

"claus(e)"

-Random Walk @ 14:24, crash report: ". . . (detected in VOID loop-clause . . ."

-Ex Nihilo @ 0:54, flower name: "SANTA CLAUS"

-Ex Nihilo @ 9:20, crash report: ". . . (detected in closed-clause . . ."

“clutch”

-Ex Nihilo @ 3:13, Borealis Grub description: "Runt of an orphaned clutch."

-Orphan @ 8:41, "Lagging the tail of the line, you see a little GIRL with a stuffed toy clutched in her pale hands."

Conrad Church

-Random Walk @ 8:33, the author of the "Devils of the New Millennium" paper obtained as a "Used Napkin" from the prize dispenser

-In Hungry Ghosts @ 14:08, possibly the interviewee, noted simply as "CC"

-Ex Nihilo @ 11:59, one of the two parties in the paper copy of the email thread

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 7:13, At the bottom of the image we get shows there is written: "© Church"

cowboy hat

-Bad Seed @ 16:03, the letter reads, "[Leo] got a new cowboy hat from Glo's store for 350 pufflies . . ."

-Random Walk @ 17:12, a cowboy hat sits atop the TV in the suite

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 12:27, we see the Puffin Pop player "Katiezoid229" wearing a Cowboy hat

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 12:35, we see the Puffin Pop NPC "Glam Glo" wearing a Cowboy hat in her character sprite

“crunch”

-Hungry Ghosts @ 1:05, Lawrence states to his friend, family member, or therapist on the phone, “Sorry, could you, uh, could you say that again, please? There’s something wrong with the-the audio, for me. You sound all... crunchy.”

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 8:01, the “A Nazar for You” (document “03051997”) blog reads, “but there are songs you can’t drown out. Songs that creep the senses like a VIRUS — burrow in the ears, infect the eyes. even just a couple notes could be all it takes for someone primed right. Crunch would be proud.”

-Orphan @ 2:49, “You step out into the chilly morning air, dead winter grass crunching softly beneath your feet as you walk. You are in her garden.”

-Orphan @ 13:22, “There is a shriek. The muted crunch of little bones breaking which will never heal quite right.”

-Orphan @ 17:03, from Arthur’s “loser” document: “I DO remember the grinding static on the other end of the line. it almost sounded like laughter. like laughing with a mouthful of broken glass. Crunchy and wet, disgusting.”

“debts”

-Hungry Ghosts @ 11:18, writing on the GILDED BASTILLE: “ALL DEBTS COME DUE”

-Hungry Ghosts @ 12:47, Ava the Keeper quotes, “While we are under His earth we still have debts to be settled.”

-Orphan @ 05:55, “A debtor made to work the tables til the House is made whole?”

Devil

-Vermis Malum @ 0:00, the song playing in the elevator, “Open Up Your Heart (and Let the Sun Shine In),” by the McGuire Sisters, refers to the Devil numerous times

-Random Walk @ 8:33, Conrad Church’s paper, “Devils of the New Millenium”

-Ex Nihilo @ 11:55, a segment of the correspondence between Church and Zwerling states “New Jersey real estate is the Devil’s playground”

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 7:52, in the “A Nazar for You” (document “03051997”) blog on the BASKANIA site: “baroque peasants used to stuff beeswax into their childrens’ ears before they slept to stop the devil whispering in them in their dreams.”

-Orphan @ 17:26, from Arthur’s “loser” document: “I read a quote years ago. I don’t think I ever ended up finishing the book. It was translated from some other language, but something to the effect of: ‘If you want to fight the Devil, first learn to take a joke.’”

“devour”

-Electric Sheep beginning @ 3:28, the hidden morse code translates to, “SLOWDEVOURED”

-Hungry Ghosts @ 1:58, Lawrence walks by a freezer in the grocery store with “DEVOUR” brand meals inside

-Ex Nihilo @ 9:13, the drawing shown most closely resembles the 1820s painting “Saturn Devouring His Son,” by Spanish artist Francisco Goya

-Ex Nihilo @ 9:53, the BASKANIA cult’s website displays the excerpt, “The end of days sees mankind devoured by the great worm”

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 4:43, from Sir Ira’s phone call: “A child must grow to hate his father. Then it devours him”

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 9:53, from the “A Nazar For You” document: “. . . meanwhile the poison is already devouring them inside slowly and they can’t feel it.”

“dice”

-Bad Seed @ 4:27, Lawrence uses the dice on screen to reroll his seed number.

-Random Walk @ 6:54, The Exploration Exploitation Exhilaration poster features dice with two 6s face-up.

-Orphan @ 05:22, “Ahead lies a crumbling DICE DEN.”

“digging”

-Bad Seed @ 13:55, the Gold Shovel description reads, “Always something that needs digging.”

-Bad Seed @ 16:49, Lawrence states, “I know there has to be something, right? Maybe there’s a place I need to use the shovel to dig, um, and I just missed it.”

-Ex Nihilo @ 13:25, Mother Ace claims, “You people all have the same disease. Never satisfied with a pretty exterior—always gotta keep digging.”

“Do you know what happens to your body after you die?”

-Bad Seed @ 14:41, during the phone call with Beatrice

-Hungry Ghosts @ 14:08, “. . . when you die?” during the '98 MONDO 2000 interview

-Orphan @ 4:36, “as you pass the threshold, a voice calls after you, ‘Do you know...?’ But you have already run away.”

“doomsayer”

-Random Walk @ 8:33, in the review of Conrad Church’s “Devils of the New Millenium” paper: “If he wants to play doomsayer, he can do it on a personal blog just like everyone else.”

-Orphan @ 4:31, objective listed on the score screen of IX. FELICITY

"dream(s)"

-Electric Sheep @ 0:13, Lawrence says, "I had this dream last night . . ."

-Random Walk @ 14:37, Lady Lux says, "I was having the most delicious dream. And then I wasn't. You know the one."

-Hungry Ghosts @ 2:57, Lawrence says to a family member/friend on the phone: "I dream about it a lot...being in the car...it was raining really hard...I'm glad it doesn't rain that much anymore."

-Ex Nihilo @ 1:38, Lawrence says, "I keep having that dream."

-Ex Nihilo @ 6:10, the Post-It note on the easel reads, "Dream big honey! [love] MOTHER"

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 1:11, Lawrence says: "Do you ever feel like um... like you're dreaming but you know you're dreaming"

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 7:52, in the "A Nazar for You" (document "03051997") blog on the BASKANIA site: "baroque peasants used to stuff beeswax into their childrens' ears before they slept to stop the devil whispering in them in their dreams."

-Orphan @ 9:33, "You dream a beautiful floating fairy whose entrancing eyes seem to change color every time you look away."

-Orphan @ 9:47, Lawrence says, "I...I finally saw the end of my dream."

-Orphan @ 15:07, "The mask never removed is no less a face. And it is no dream at all that you do not wake from."

dripping

-Vermis Malum @ 3:06, Lawrence mentions a noise coming from the attic that sounded like possible dripping from a leaky pipe

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 13:19, dripping is heard when Lawrence's player-character falls to the ground after having viewed Ring II

-Orphan @ 13:23, dripping is heard when the slide appears with the broken bottle shard and violent end to Arthur's story in IV. MORDACITY

-Orphan @ 16:32, the "loser" document reads, "the whole thing was engineered from the start. the cold call, the exchange, the convenient breakthroughs drip fed a little at a time just when I started to run dry...just for me. almost like a game."

-Orphan @ 16:52, the "loser" document reads, "don't remember most of the call. I can't remember a lot of things, more and more. like there's a little hole opened in my head and it's dripping, dripping all the time. I'm never going to get any of it back."

ear(s)/ear ache/bug in head

-Random Walk @ 0:07, Lawrence claims, "I think I might be coming down with something; I have this bad ache in my ear. It feels like something crawled in when I was sleeping, and now it's trying to crawl its way back out."

-Random Walk @ 11:48, after reading the "poltergeist" document, Lawrence pauses and then says, "Ugh... my ear hurts."

-Hungry Ghosts @ 2:29, Lawrence says to a family member/friend on the phone: "... I was talking about my ear, and...I keep misrem...I don't know if it's forgetting . . ."

-Hungry Ghosts @ 13:47, a section of the 2/26/2007 note reads, "Mom said next time I need to just go to school no matter how I'm feeling, this is the LAST TIME!!! I told her I took the ear medicine but actually I didn't. It tastes really bad and I don't think it's working anyway." Of another girl, "The doctor found a GIANT BUG living inside her brain that made her act all wrong."

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 7:52, in the "A Nazar for You" (document "03051997") blog on the BASKANIA site: "baroque peasants used to stuff beeswax into their childrens' ears before they slept to stop the devil whispering in them in their dreams."

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 8:03, in the "A Nazar for You" (document "03051997") blog on the BASKANIA site: "... songs that creep the senses like a VIRUS - burrow in the ears, infect the eyes."

-Orphan @ 01:49, And I can feel something warm dripping down from my ear again while I'm typing this."

-Worm in the Apple @ 5:10, Lawrence asks the question, "are you in my ear?"

"every day"

-Vermis Malum @ 0:00, "It's the 21st century, and there's a new world being born a little every day..."

-Random Walk @ 10:40, a portion of poltergeist.pdf states "...eaten away a little every day by the steady trickle of fresh data."

"ex nihilo"

-Ex Nihilo @ 11:14, from "The Deal" document: "this type of thing cannot come ex nihilo"

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 9:09, from the "A Nazar For You" document: "things like that don't just grow out of nowhere"

“eye”/“eyes”

-Random Walk @ 4:41, the small lantern next to the reception desk resembles a pair of glaring eyes

-Ex Nihilo @ 9:22, the BASKANIA cult's website is revealed. Baskania means "Evil Eye" in Ancient Greek, referring to the hostile glance of certain people, gods, animals, or mythological figures causing injury, illness, or even death. The concept has found its way into numerous Ancient Greek texts, including from Plato, Aristophanes, and Hesiod

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 1:16, a Dark Souls item is shown named "Ring of the Evil Eye"

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 7:31, Lawrence loads the BASKANIA blogs page to reveal a post titled, "A Nazar for You." A nazar, or "evil eye amulet," is a blue, circular amulet believed by many cultures to protect against the "evil eye," or curse brought about by an envious and malevolent glare

-Orphan @ 12:49, "You squint at him (?) through itchy eyes. You make out a cardigan and a green bottle. His face is a blurry hive of grey."

-Orphan @ 15:18, "There is only what your eyes can SEE.
And what eyes can SEE you."

-Orphan @ 16:05, from Arthur's "loser" document: "It's weird how you can have all the dots poked right in your eyes over and over and over and over and never get the POINT until it's way too late."

“feed [flowers]”

-Ex Nihilo @ 7:39, prompt that reads, "Feed Bugonia"

-Orphan @ 9:33, "You stay with her a long time and feed the flowers and watch them grow."

fireplaces

-Random Walk @ 18:46, a fireplace in The Copperhead lights, as Lawrence's player-character walks up and investigates it

-Hungry Ghosts @ 13:39, a fireplace is visible against the back wall of the Verona Meldpup prison cell

“fork”

-Orphan @ 06:27, "Under the glassy water, you spy a fat black **SUNFISH** with a big forked scar marking its brow ..."

Friday

-Bad Seed @ 2:26, Lawrence mentions, "Actually, I'm not going to send this video right away. Give me a couple of days. It's almost Friday, and I don't have to go in on Friday. Did I tell you that?"

-Ex Nihilo @ 5:59, the Mother Ace Abbey Road poster reads, "ORANGE YOU GLAD IT'S FRIDAY"

“game”

-Bad Seed @ 3:21, Lawrence remarks “... I could tell right away this was supposed to be a game.”

-Hungry Ghosts @ 17:29, in the Mindfloss “Five Minutes or Less: How do Computers Learn?” video, the narrator states, “Think of a loss function as a computer’s guiding star, the road it follows to get closer and closer to being what it needs to be. You win the game by minimizing that loss function.”

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 4:51, Sir Ira asks “The Last Game. Will you play with me?”

-Orphan @ 11:38, “LOST LIV stands by a table of cups with names written on duct tape stuck to the sides. Some game?”

-Orphan @ 13:55, Lost Liv states “It is a game I have watched you people play again and again.”

-Orphan @ 14:23, Lost Liv continues. “It is not a game you can win.”

-Orphan @ 16:40, Arthur writes in loser.pdf, “. . . just for me. almost like a game.”

“garden”

-Bad Seed @ 16:28, the “Her Garden” prompt

-Random Walk @ 5:10, during the phone call with Lady Lux, she states, “Welcome to the garden of violet delights.”

-Ex Nihilo @ 0:05, the narration of Peter Rabbit states “...and so, the brave little rabbit wandered into the old man’s garden, anyway.”

-Ex Nihilo @ 0:50, when Lawrence asks, “You know the garden in [Morton?]?”

-Orphan @ 2:52, “You are in her garden.”

“gate”

-Orphan @ 6:27, “A stone GATE lies ahead.”

-Orphan @ 7:45, “You stroll back through the gate, sucking the juice from a chunk of haunch meat.”

“gaze”

-Hungry Ghosts @ 6:26, the “Algol & Alphecca” Ariadne text: “. . . The serpent coif; eyes dreadful disks / And from that hungry gaze prevails . . .”

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 2:44, inscribed on the Wrothlands Memorial Stone: “. . . by the hungry gaze / come tomorrow’s sunrise.”

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 12:24, the quote for Ring II: “. . . Although your glass reflect so fair a vision to your gaze.”

-Orphan @ 07:31, “You see a kind of camaraderie in its hungry gaze . . .”

“gold”/“gilding”

-Bad Seed @ 13:49, Lawrence obtains a Gold Shovel.

-Random Walk @ 2:22, the quote for Ring VIII, "Some kill their love when they are young, and some when they are old / Some strangle with the hands of lust, some with the hands of gold."

-Hungry Ghosts @ 11:18, the action prompt presents entry to "Gilded Bastille"

-Hungry Ghosts @ 12:16, a golden statue of a bull sits to the left of the telephone, while a golden statue of a bear sits to the right.

-Hungry Ghosts @ 12:17, Ava the Keeper states, "'Rules be the thrifty golden chains that set men free,' say corpulent judges and lapdog prosecutors."

-Hungry Ghosts @ 13:00, Ava the Keeper warns to "Confine yourself to the golden rule and sterling conduct, or confine yourself to an iron cell."

-Ex Nihilo @ 7:54, Lawrence earns the Gold reward from the Bugonia, the Lead Flask.

-Orphan @ 04:12, "Time has crusted over the once-bright amalgam gilding with an ugly green verdigris."

-Orphan @ 4:17, "The yawning golden GATES of the garden loom invitingly in the distance."

-Orphan @ 05:03, The coins are no coins at all, but a little gold-skinned **FOUNDLING** that had been sleeping on the ground . . ."

-Orphan @ 05:15, "Its gilded scales are still damp with womb water."

-Orphan @ 15:47, a segment of the Song For The Loser reads "Who _ _ _ _ _ irons change for gold"

“grey”

-Orphan @ 8:41, "Lagging the tail of the line, you see a little GIRL with a stuffed toy clutched in her pale hands." She is the greygirl

-Orphan @ 9:08, "+79 greygirl . . . By the time it clears, the grey girl has long since walked away."

-Orphan @ 12:21, "Your vision films over with grey fuzz."

-Orphan @ 12:49, "You squint at him (?) through itchy eyes. You make out a cardigan and a green bottle. His face is a blurry hive of grey."

“hole”/“holes”

-Random Walk @ 8:33, from Conrad Church’s “Devils of the New Millenium” paper: “The crowning horror (no pun intended) is that nest of round, concentric cavities which once housed a central nervous system, bone and love-diseased grey matter now bored full of innumerable tiny crimson canker holes, chewed out by the unconscious birthing spasms of the vilest breed . . .”

-Orphan @ 3:28, “There are already many little holes in the ground. No need to use the shovel any longer.”

-Orphan @ 10:24 . . . @ 10:55, Lawrence: “It was all bloated... It was really hard to tell, but I thought maybe they were eye holes... I don’t know. . . . I could hear the song whistling from these little holes that were all over.”

-Orphan @ 16:52, from Arthur’s document: “don’t remember most of the call. I can’t remember a lot of things, more and more. like there’s a little hole opened in my head and its dripping, dripping all the time. I’m never going to get any of it back.”

“hollow”

-Ex Nihilo @ 9:22, the BASKANIA cult’s website URL is
“<https://geocities.restorativland.org/Area51/Hollow/1675/index.html>”

-Orphan @ 3:50, “A craggy hollow within yawns invitingly.”

-Orphan @ 07:46, “Big flies flee hollows in the viscera . . .”

-Worm in the Apple @ 3:41, the prompt that appears when Lawrence’s player-character walks up to the large tree

“iron”

-Hungry Ghosts @ 13:00, Ava the Keeper warns to “Confine yourself to the golden rule and sterling conduct, or confine yourself to an iron cell.”

-Orphan @ 06:27, “You reach a pond surrounded by tall, wiry trees hung with iron lanterns.”

-Orphan @ 15:47, a segment of the Song For The Loser reads “Who _ _ _ _ _ irons change for gold”

Julius Caesar

-Bad Seed @ 11:31, the description for the Iron Knife reads, “Crude make, after the tastes of the old soldiers. Unfit for Senatorial hands.” This is likely a sly reference to the infamous assassination of Julius Caesar by around 40 senators in Rome on the “Ides of March” (March 15th), 44 B.C.E. The assassination weapon used was a pugio (soldier’s dagger)

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 3:33, Sir Ira tells Lawrence to perform a cesarean to set him free. Julius Caesar gave his name to the Cesarean Section, as it is theorized that he was the first child born with such a method

-Orphan @ 11:25, each day of the week has an associated Roman leader’s bust. Caesar’s bust is portrayed on Saturday

ajar/a jar

-Orphan @ 0:00, the 1966 hit “Eleanor Rigby,” by The Beatles cuts in with the lyrics, “in a jar by the door. Who is it for?”

-Orphan @ 11:29, the on-screen text reads, in part, “The door is ajar. Loud music thrums inside.”

laurel wreath

-Vermis Malum @ 4:22, the Princeton logo on Arthur’s laptop displays an added laurel wreath around it

-Random Walk @ 3:56, the symbol above the exterior sign of Nero’s Palace is a laurel wreath (as is the design on its slot machines @ 6:53 and above the fireplace in The Copperhead suite @ 18:47)

“Lincolnton”

-Electric Sheep @ 5:29, victims.pdf: “Taken (...) by LCPD (Lincoln County Police Department). Retrieved via FOIA (Freedom of Information Act). Would have liked to visit the house on Penny Lane (...)”

-Hungry Ghosts @ 13:30, Pris. 0021 - Verona Meldpup description: “Lincolnton, North Carolina.”

-Ex Nihilo @ 10:40, BASKANIA blog: “. . . and since I grew up in Lincolnton . . .”

“lose(r)”/“win(ner)”/“frown”/“smile”

-Random Walk @ 5:52, Lady Lux says, “Hope you didn’t take that mopey talk personally - she left a bad taste in my mouth, too. Some people are just SORE LOSERS.”

-Random Walk @ 6:00, Lady Lux says, “Win me something pretty, capische?”

-Random Walk @ 12:38, upon figuring out the solution to the slot machines, Lawrence states, “So if we play one, we usually lose. But losing is actually what we want, kind of. Blueberry, grape, apple. Remember that. When you win, you can get any three fruits in a row. . . . What I realized was, when you lose, it always spins to one of the same few patterns. See? Blueberry, grape, apple. . . [wins game] I knew it! That actually wasn’t that hard.”

-Random Walk @ 14:08, when Lawrence breaks the bank, the highest the winnings amount goes is \$2,098,765,260, and the lowest the loss amount goes is \$-2,134,473,421

-Random Walk @ 14:47, when Lawrence breaks the bank, Lady Lux says, “Anywho, a little birdie told me you broke the bank! . . . Don’t worry, I’m not miffed. Monte Carlo, right, s’nothing personal. Besides, I love, love, LOVE a WINNER.”

-Random Walk @ 19:31, the music cuts out and a voice, presumably Lady Lux’s, whispers, “Do you think you’ll be the one who finally wins?”

-Hungry Ghosts @ 11:31, on the left interior wall leading up to the jail cell, a sign shows a smiling emoji with text that follows it, “never lose.” and a frowning emoji with text that follows it, “never win.”

-Hungry Ghosts @ 17:29, in the Mindfloss "Five Minutes or Less: How do Computers Learn?" video, the narrator states, "Think of a loss function as a computer's guiding star, the road it follows to get closer and closer to being what it needs to be. You win the game by minimizing that loss function."

-Hungry Ghosts @ 18:14, the word "LOSER" is etched into the mutilated corpse in the shopping cart

-Ex Nihilo @ 4:21, Mother Ace states, "You won, by the way. So, congrats on that!"

-Ex Nihilo @ 11:25, the BASKANIA cult's website features a Technology row that states, in part, "We are even present on the World Wide Web, as you can see :^)!"

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 13:14, Leo9's text to katiezoid229 reads "Good job. I knew you could do it :) You're a winner"

-Orphan @ 0:22, Damon's correspondence to Arthur reads "...I have a lead I think you'll be interested in. Let me know :)"

-Orphan @ 6:09, "You are delivered into the milky twilight feeling that you have lost more than you have won. But there is still time."

-Orphan @ 7:05, "You wander the winding, mazelike streets for hours (?), stomach rumbling all the while. You are lost."

-Orphan @ 7:14, "You lost."

-Orphan @ 12:02, "A lost, confused frown darkens her face."

-Orphan @ 13:06, "It's not his fault. Rationally, you know it. Somebody's gotta win. Somebody's gotta lose. He didn't make the rules."

-Orphan @ 14:29, LOST LIV states, "It is not a game that you can win."

-Orphan @ 15:29, the giant text on-screen at the end of the SEVEN CITIES game: "YOU WON!"

-Orphan @ 15:37, "SONG FOR THE LOSER"

-Worm in the Apple @ 7:39, the yellow character pictured in the wall mural has a crescent-shaped smile on its face, just like the emoticons shown throughout the game

-Worm in the Apple @ 11:16, But there's something else, too. Something I didn't see before. When you have someone... looking for you, making sure no matter how deep down you go, you don't get... lost . . ."

-Worm in the Apple @ 11:52, Haley says, "And I believe when its all said and done, whatever roads we find ourselves going down, wherever we almost get lost along the way... in the end, we're all going to find a place where we belong."

"loss"

-[Hungry Ghosts @ 5:19](#), when Lawrence recalls, "But it's like you said, right? Everyone handles loss differently."

-[Hungry Ghosts @ 17:20](#), the "loss function" description on the Mindfloss video popup

-[Orphan @ 14:10](#), LOST LIV states, "And with every small disappointment, every misfired passion, every slip and stumble into the briar, every LOSS..."

The two are cleaved hopelessly further apart. Paradise and the Pit."

-[Worm in the Apple @ 10:26](#), Haley says, "I've seen people have to go through this by themselves. Loss. They have to go down that road all alone, and it eats them up inside, and sometimes... there's nothing left after."

"machine learning"

-[Electric Sheep @ 4:30](#), one of the books behind the *Vermis Malum* disc is "Pattern Recognition and Machine Learning"

-[Hungry Ghosts @ 16:47](#), the Mindfloss video cuts in at what sounds like the end of the phrase "machine learning," and the term is also in the description

"malus domestica. Juicy."

-[Bad Seed @ 0:00](#), the Vermont Apples website description at the bottom of the webpage

-[Bad Seed @ 11:35](#), the Apple item description

"mola"

-[Cyclic Inheritance @ 2:39](#), the runes on the Wrothlands Memorial Stone spell "MEMENTO MOLA," or "REMEMBER THE MILL"

-[Orphan @ 6:27](#), the text reads, "... you spy a fat black SUNFISH with a big forked scar marking its brow." The ocean sunfish is commonly known as the "mola"

-[Orphan @ 12:28](#), the text reads, "The man or the parrot or the mola or the goat or the girl in the wheatfield could have warned you this is how it feels at the end."

Nero

-[Random Walk @ 3:56](#), the name of the casino is "Nero's Palace." This is a nod to Domus Aurea (The Golden House) of Nero

-[Orphan @ 4:41](#), each day of the week has an associated Roman leader's bust. Nero's bust is portrayed on Tuesday

“new skin”

-Hungry Ghosts @ 0:26, once the regular snake eats three regular apples against a blue backdrop, it “WEAR[S ITS] NEW SKIN!”, and the backdrop changes to red, with the regular apples changing to electronic Apple computers and the snake transforming into a worm comprised of binary numbers

-Hungry Ghosts @ 19:52, Lawrence eats the Apple Pie and “WEAR[S HIS] NEW SKIN!” mirroring the snake game @ 0:00. Once in the new skin, the surrounding level changes from blue to red

-Orphan @ 7:47, “Big flies flee hollows in the viscera and buzz around in your cheeks as you chew. Your new skin fits like the one you were born with.”

“old soldiers”

-Bad Seed @ 11:31, in the Iron Knife’s item description

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 2:45, in the description for the Wrothlands Memorial Stone

“orphan”

-Random Walk @ 10:04, poltergeist.pdf: “. . . orphaned bytes might linger for months or years . . .”

-Hungry Ghosts @ 18:38, drawing with “the orphan” written on it

-Ex Nihilo @ 3:13, Borealis Grub description: “Runt of an orphaned clutch.”

-Orphan @ 05:03, “. . . but a little gold-skinned **FOUNDLING** that had been sleeping on the ground . . .” A foundling is a deserted or abandoned child of unknown parentage

-Orphan @ 12:59, “And the orphan in your pocket, now grown so fat and ripe it stretches the seams, squirms as if sensing its venom finally coming due.”

“Parasite”

-Electric Sheep @ 3:26, the name of the first “unsorted” file/the word written on the Polaroid photo in the file on Arthur’s computer

-Ex Nihilo @ 11:13, the “Parasite Adam” blog

Parkinson’s Disease

-Hungry Ghosts @ 16:47, Mindfloss comment: “RIP Mindfloss. F**k parkinsons.”

-Ex Nihilo @ 10:50, BASKANIA blog: “. . . and that’s why he got PD later.”

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 10:03, In the document we get from BASKANIA titled 03051997 we see an image detailing the symptoms of Parkinson’s Disease

-In Orphan @ @5:59, the red-faced man is described as having a “stony face.” This is a reference to parkinsons, as that is one of the symptoms mentioned in the baskania document.

Perseus/Medusa/Algol

-Random Walk @ 2:58, a star formation resembling the Perseus constellation is visible in the night sky, with one star much brighter than the others. That star in the Perseus constellation is Algol, the "Winking" star, or "Demon Star," which in ancient Greek myth referred to the snaky head of Medusa and Perseus slaying her

-Random Walk @ 14:24, an error code appears, beginning with, "WARNING: a68g: runtime error." Algol68G (or the Algol 68 Genie) is an Algol 68 compiler-interpreter. It can be used for executing Algol 68 programs or scripts. Algol 68 (short for Algorithmic Language 1968) was designed as a general-purpose programming language back in the late '60s

-Hungry Ghosts @ 6:21, a prompt appears labeled "Algol & Alphecca," followed by a ripped page seemingly about Ariadne's Thread and a serpent. Algol is an eclipsing binary star, along with Alphecca, the brightest star (and "jewel in the crown") of the Corona Borealis constellation (possibly referenced in Ex Nihilo @ 3:13 with the "Borealis Grub prompt), which itself references the crown wore by Ariadne in ancient Greek myth

-Hungry Ghosts @ 8:42, the General Bajie's Chicken has a fortune cookie that reads, "Your lucky star is winking at you! Expect good things soon."

-Ex Nihilo @ 9:20, an error code appears, beginning with, "LOG: a68g: external resource invocation." See above.

-Ex Nihilo @ 9:22, the BASKANIA website background is a tiled depiction of Perseus slaying Medusa

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 4:12, Sir Ira states, "For a long while I wondered if I was born under the wrong star . . ." while the player-character stares up at the constellation Perseus, with Algol blacked out

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 12:14, the constellation Perseus is visible at the top of the *Puffin Pop* map, with the star Algol in bright red

-Orphan @ 6:09, the Perseus constellation floats by in the night sky, with its star Algol in bright red

poison

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 9:50, the "A Nazar for You" (document "03051997") blog reads, "every mystery is just a game they haven't learned the rules to yet. meanwhile the poison is already devouring them inside slowly and they can't feel it."

-Orphan @ 2:26, the Ring III quote by R. Browning reads, "The natural end of every adder / Not suffered to empty its poison-bladder"

-Orphan @ 4:31, "+69 poison ring"

-Orphan @ 8:30, "The dour old woman two behind is as likely to have poisoned her husband as cheated her handyman."

-Orphan @ 13:08, "But these thoughts do not stop a poison of your own making rising in your throat."

"Princeton"

-Vermis Malum @ 4:22, an altered version of the Princeton logo is visible on Arthur's laptop

-Random Walk @ 8:33, Conrad Church's "Devils of the New Millennium" paper mentions, "A colleague at Princeton once related to me the rites requisite to a burial-at-sea . . ."

-Hungry Ghosts @ 0:01, a mug sitting on a desk holding numerous pens displays the altered Princeton logo

-Ex Nihilo @ 8:42, a flier appears for The Silverlake Lonely Hearts Ball 2014, and the "TICKETS & INFO" at the bottom lists an email address contact with the domain, "@PRINCETON.EDU"

-Ex Nihilo @ 9:21, Lawrence's open tab displays an article whose first few words on screen are, "A spokesman for Princeton University issued a statement Tuesday confirming that Asimov had not been present on campus for at least 2 weeks . . ."

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 7:13, in the bottom right corner of the image we can see the Princeton logo

"rabbits"

-Ex Nihilo @ 0:00, begins with footage of an animated Peter Rabbit cartoon.

-Ex Nihilo @ 13:59, Mother Ace chides "All the rabbits are dead."

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 9:23, the "A Nazar for You" (document "03051997") blog reads, "the government did not make it. Bell Labs did not make it. they observed it. DEEP down." Bell Labs developed a distributed operating system in the early '90s whose mascot was "Glenda" the Bunny. The OS was dubbed "Plan 9," a cheeky nod to the low-budget, awesomely bad 1957 Ed Wood film *Plan 9 from Outer Space*

-Orphan @ 0:45, from Arthur's "looking" document: "I just need some new project to escape into. anything. another rabbit hole i could kill a few months burrowing myself inside to feel less... raw."

"Radioactive" by Imagine Dragons

-Hungry Ghosts @ 7:43, song playing in the background of the party; Lawrence quickly comments, "Radioactive?" which is only discernible through closed captions

-Orphan @ 12:06, song playing in the background of the party

red eyes (for occurrences of eyes in general, see "eye"/"eyes")

-Vermis Malum @ 01:17, the mysterious monster revealed has 7-9 red eyes around its body

-Hungry Ghosts @ 09:54, Big Gul P resembles a giant fly with very large, red eyes

-Hungry Ghosts @ 18:38, a drawing of "the orphan" displays an image resembling the wormhorns, with red eyes inside

-Ex Nihilo @ 12:58, shadowy demonic entity hiding up against the back wall has two bright red eyes

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 12:35, Glam Glo appears wearing a large pair of sunglasses with red lenses

Ring colors

-Vermis Malum @ 0:59, the metallic sphere in the LAMPROV PENDLE logo's plier teeth displays the game's Ring colors in reverse order, beginning at the *top* with Ring I (black) and ending at the *bottom* with Ring IX (white)

-Bad Seed @ 5:00, the New Character "favorite color" options order matches the respective Ring colors from IX (white) down to IV (red), with the exception of Ring V's orange

-Random Walk @ 7:26, the description for the slot machines read **"*Outcome not guaranteed."** in the same font and color as the quote displayed earlier in the episode

-Hungry Ghosts @ 11:32, the Apple Computer logo color order (from top to bottom) matches the respective Ring colors from IX (white) down to II (blue), possibly even I (black), though it's difficult to see

-Hungry Ghosts @ 16:47, the dinner plates next to the illustration of the man in the "Five Minutes or Less: How do Computers Learn?" Mindfloss video are the colors (shown in order from the man) of each of the visited Rings up through that point

-Ex Nihilo @ 3:03, off in the distance to the right, there appears to be a bee interacting with a strange, multicolored light source. The light source cycles through each Ring's color in a random order

-Ex Nihilo @ 6:00, the easel swatches color order (from left to right, top to bottom) matches the respective Ring colors from IX (white) down to I (black)

-Ex Nihilo beginning @ 8:59, Lawrence cycles through multiple "Old Pictures." Each of these pictures gives clues to the relationship of the Rings, their colors, and the Seven Deadly Sins from the second part of Dante Alighieri's *The Divine Comedy*, titled "Purgatorio," which sees Dante ascend Mount Purgatory through each of its terraces

-Ex Nihilo @ 9:35, the BASKANIA cult's website homepage text is grouped by all the *Vermis Malum* Ring colors in order, beginning with Ring IX's white for "the end of the world" at the top, and ending with Ring I's black for the blacked-out text to be highlighted at the bottom

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 8:48, the "A Nazar for You" (document "03051997") blog reads, "the world is saturated with random noise, arbitrary bands of white and black and every sinful color on the spectrum between"

-Worm in the Apple @ 7:39, the Native American headdress pictured on the wall mural consists of all Ring colors in order for a few of the feathers

shadow

-Hungry Ghosts @ 17:20, "the loss function" explanation in the Mindfloss video

-Orphan @ 14:41, "All this is only clinging. Pretending. Shadow play. Tilting at windmills."

-Worm in the Apple @ 3:46, the reflected message on the snowy glass reads, "I LOOKED INTO A MIRROR BLACK / AND SAW MY SHADOW LOOKING BACK"

-Worm in the Apple @ 4:19, the reflected message on the snowy glass reads, "AND AS I LOOKED HE GREW AND GREW / WONDER IF HE SAW ME TOO"

-Worm in the Apple @ 8:46, a character named "The SHADOW" is revealed

-Worm in the Apple @ 8:51, a poster with the words, "Light & Shadows," hangs on a wall

Shakespeare

-Ex Nihilo @ 9:22, the BASKANIA cult's website displays a dialogue from William Shakespeare's play Richard III between Richard and Lady Anne Neville.

-Orphan @ 06:50, "You pass into the deserted square of a small hamlet."

shovel/spade

-Bad Seed @ 13:42, the Gold Shovel is first seen propped up against a bench in the Lodge; its Item icon is also that of a shovel

-Ex Nihilo @ 11:55, in "the deal" document, Conrad Church states, "Take your time. It's the one resource I have left in spades."

"Silverlake"

-Random Walk @ 10:04, mentioned by Arthur: "Was wearing that red scrunchie from Silverlake ("Vintage, Arthur!")"

-Ex Nihilo @ 8:42, a flier is shown for the Silverlake Lonely Hearts Ball 2014

"star [winking]"

-Hungry Ghosts @ 8:41, the fortune cookie reads, "Your lucky star is winking at you! Expect good things soon."

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 9:28, "they see the big star winking back"

"still time"

-Hungry Ghosts @ 4:37, while on the phone with a friend, family member, or his therapist, Lawrence states, "I mean, if she wants to, she'll let me know. There's still time."

-Orphan @ 6:09, "You are delivered into the milky twilight feeling that you have lost more than you have won. But there is still time."

“stomach”

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 3:30, “Do you people have the stomach?”

-Orphan @ 7:05, “You wander the winding, mazelike streets for hours (?), stomach rumbling all the while.”

“stone”

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 2:45, the text on the Wrothlands Memorial Stone reads “MEMENTO MOLA,” which translates from Latin to “Remember the Millstone”

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 3:59, Sir Ira states, “Could you lock eyes with that wretched thing slithering from the cut and know it was your own heir, and not look away or be petrified where you stood?”

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 10:01, the “stone face” symptom in the Parkinson’s Disease writeup

-Orphan @ 05:55, “A tall, red-complected man by the fireplace gives you a stony look as you approach.”

-Orphan @ 06:27, “A stone GATE lies ahead.”

“sun is setting”

-Hungry Ghosts @ 11:05, the “Potemkin Village” at the beginning of Ring VI features a gigantic setting sun in the distance

-Ex Nihilo @ 7:43, the background for Bugonia showcases a setting sun.

-Ex Nihilo @ 14:03, Mother Ace states “...you won, and now the sun is setting.”

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 0:18, when speaking to Solaire, the YouTube captions say “...My sun...is setting...” The second time he interacts with this NPC, the captions say “...My son...is setting...”

-Orphan @ 9:57, when relaying the end of his dream, Lawrence states, “I was standing near the water, and... the sun was going down.”

-Worm in the Apple @ 9:49, the sun is slowly setting, as Haley says her final words

“the end of the world”

-Random Walk @ 8:33, Conrad Church’s “Devils of the New Millennium” paper mentions, “TEOTWAWKI,” which stands for, “The End Of The World As We Know It.”

-Ex Nihilo @ 9:22, the BASKANIA website’s headline reads, “the end of the world”

three red streaks

-Bad Seed @ 10:20, three red, liquid trails are visible flowing from the large, rotting apple down to the water below

-Random Walk @ 9:00, three red streaks are visible at the bottom-right of the EXPLORATION | EXPLOITATION | EXHILARATION poster on the wall

-Ex Nihilo @ 12:19, the Lead Flask at the top-right of the Knapsack looks to have three red, vertical scratches or smudges on the bottle

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 1:17, three red markings on the ground display a helpful message from another character to "Be wary of dead end"

"three sisters"

-Vermis Malum @ 0:00, the recurring elevator music is the 1955 single "Open Up Your Heart (and Let the Sun Shine In)," by the McGuire Sisters.

-Ex Nihilo @ 7:33, the text on the front of the Bugonia pot translates to, "THREE SISTERS :(".

-Orphan @ 05:41, "You have only just stepped into the hallway when a trio of roguish-looking sisters with oily dreadlocks emerge from their own rooms..."

"ugly"

-In Random Walk @ 5:43, Lady Lux states, "Oh, but please drop our friend's shovel. Ugly thing!"

-Hungry Ghosts @ 13:48, in the 02/26/07 Scrap, Leo tells Katherine "...most people are ugly on the inside anyway..."

-Orphan @ 04:12, "Time has crusted over the once-bright amalgam gilding with an ugly green verdigris."

-Orphan @ 05:15, "You feel an odd sympathy for the ugly, misshapen thing."

-Orphan @ 10:34, Lawrence details the corpse in his dream, stating "It was ugly. It scared me. But you could tell it was already dead."

"vampire"

-Electric Sheep @ 4:31, A copy of Eclipse is seen on Arthur's desk in disk.pdf

-Bad Seed @ 16:04, in Katherine's letter, she says that Leo's last name sounds like a vampire's name, and that Leo said he would tell her if he was a vampire.

warfarin

-Random Walk @ 17:13, the chemical formula for Warfarin quickly flashes on screen

-Orphan @ 9:03, the molecular formula for warfarin (C₁₉H₁₆O₄) flashes on-screen in the series' runes

"wax"

-Random Walk @ 16:10, in the "Courtyard" prompt description ("Something thick like tar or wax . . .")

-Ex Nihilo @ 3:13, in the "Borealis Grub" prompt description ("Dead dreaming in a snug chrysalis of warm honeywax . . .")

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 7:57, in the "A Nazar for You" (document "03051997") blog: "baroque parents used to stuff beeswax in their childrens' ears..."

"weird/strange"

-Vermis Malum @ 2:38, during his vlog, Lawrence states, "It felt weird, um, walking the trail alone."

-Vermis Malum @ 2:59, during his vlog Lawrence states, ". . . it's a little weird, so, naturally I figured you might like it."

-Electric Sheep @ 7:12, after viewing all five PDFs, Lawrence says, "So, yeah. Weird, right?"

-Random Walk @ 1:44, Lawrence mentions the "Great Weird."

-Hungry Ghosts @ 1:45, Lawrence, talking to his therapist on the phone, "I-I prom- I don't even know what conclusion I would jump to. I'm not saying, necessarily, that it means anything, it's just... at least, it is weird, right?"

-Orphan @ 01:32, "Because I remember the weird "symptoms" she wrote about before 3/8."

-Orphan @ 12:10, "It takes you a strangely long time to even realize you are speaking."

"wheel(s)"

-Random Walk @ 0:38, Lawrence talks about a medieval scientist who thought the whole universe boiled down to "a bunch of invisible wheels spinning inside each other"

-Random Walk @ 9:29, what looks to be a kind of giant Ferris Wheel is visible in the sky of Arther's "infamous 'winter level'" in the "poltergeist.pdf" document

-Hungry Ghosts @ 7:22, what looks to be a kind of giant Ferris Wheel is visible in the distant sky outside and to the left

-Hungry Ghosts @ 11:08, the sun in the distance is shaped like a giant wheel

-Ex Nihilo @ 11:54, the side of the Bugonia pot reads, "ONE WHEEL :)"

-Ex Nihilo @ 14:46, Mother Ace says, "Let someone else take the wheel."

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 4:48, Sir Ira says, "So new flesh turns the wheels in the old alchemy."

-Worm in the Apple @ 7:49, an outdoor wall displays a painting of a large Ferris Wheel. This could potentially be Vermis Malum's source/inspiration for its portrayal of wheels in the sky

"whistle"

-Electric Sheep @ 0:39, Lawrence describes a segment of his dream, "...then I started to hear this, like, whistling sound from way out in the water."

-Random Walk @ 8:35, the "Devils of the New Millenium" paper states, "... hideous atonal "song" whistled shrilly from a corpse-flute . . ."

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 8:35, A Nazar for you reads "...other whistleblowers might come eventually..."

-Orphan @ 10:55, when relaying the end of his dream, Lawrence states, "I could hear the song whistling from these little holes that were all over."

the Windmill (from Bad Seed @ 12:57)

-Hungry Ghosts @ 0:52, the Windmill sound can be heard during the Snake game

-Orphan @ 6:36, the Windmill sound can be heard

-Orphan @ 8:55, the Windmill sound can be heard

-Orphan @ 13:00, the Windmill sound can be heard

"wolfhound"

-Ex Nihilo @ 13:54, Mother Ace says, "Poor little wolfhounds, bred for the big game hunt. But those games are over."

-Orphan @ 07:20, "You hear wet tearing as an opportunistic wolfhound shreds the carcass . . ."

"womb"

-Vermis Malum @ 1:43, a series of numbers and letters consecutively flash on the bottom-right of the frame, translating to "thewombforgets" in hexadecimal code.

-Random Walk @ 8:33, an excerpt from Conrad Church's "Devils of the New Millennium" paper reads, "... H. Sapiens, long and bitterly estranged from the absentee womb that bore it . . ."

"worm"/"snake"/"basilisk"/"dragon"

-Ex Nihilo @ 1:17, a shot quickly flashes of a bus stop, and on the side wall, frame right it reads, "WORM FOOD"

-Ex Nihilo @ 9:22, the small sprite to the immediate right of "the end of the world" countdown timer is a tiny dragon

-Ex Nihilo @ 10:02, a line of hidden text reveals itself at the bottom of the BASKANIA homepage footnoting - "The end of days sees mankind devoured by the great worm" quote above it with, "in certain editions the final word is translated alternately to 'serpent,' 'dragon,' or 'basilisk'"

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 0:04, "Palevenom Drip: Tablets of distilled white poison pulled from the fangs of great worms which gnaw at the roots of the archtrees deep below. Briefly boost intelligence and faith, but lose HP. The drip of the white fang can only be safely imbibed in small quantities, but is thought to invite majestic revelations of days to come to those who partake"

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 1:23, we see a message left behind by another player. It reads, "Be wary of dead end." The character displayed on-screen is Darkstalker Kaath. Darkstalker Kaath's race is that of the primordial serpents

-Orphan @ 2:26, the quote for Ring III is, "The natural end of every adder / Not suffered to empty its poison-bladder," from the 1845 poem "The Flight of the Duchess," by Robert Browning

-Orphan @ 5:03, "The coins are no coins at all, but a little gold-skinned FOUNDLING that had been sleeping on the ground, coiled into a ball."

-Orphan @ 5:31, "The sunken-eyed croupier tells you you're in luck—there's a room available. She motions you down a narrow hallway with a flick of her tongue."

-Orphan @ 12:28, "At some point you snake a hand to your waist to show her, but your phone is gone."

-Worm in the Apple @ 8:42, a poster of a dragon with the title, "Here Be Dragons" displays on a wall

-Worm in the Apple @ 8:53, actress Sean Young is shown from her role as Rachael in the 1982 sci-fi classic Blade Runner. Next to her, it mentions she's wearing a "Silk and snakeskin suit"

∞ wormhorns ∞

-Vermis Malum @ 0:54, the EVERPALM POND logos

-Vermis Malum @ 0:59, the LAMPROV PENDLE logos

-Vermis Malum @ 1:04, the *Vermis Malum* logos

-Electric Sheep @ 3:28, the ASCII art on the old computer screen in the Polaroid

-Bad Seed @ 3:19, the *Vermis Malum* game's mouse icons

-Bad Seed @ 4:14, the text box brackets

-Bad Seed @ 14:14, the center of the rotary telephones

-Random Walk @ 1:38, a graphic somewhat resembling a uterus (layered over the wormhorns) quickly fades in and out

-Random Walk @ 2:36, the rotating series of diamond-like shapes somewhat resemble the symbol, namely the top half

-Hungry Ghosts @ 0:00, many wormhorns are scribbled on a piece of paper next to the Snake game computer

-Hungry Ghosts @ 0:29, the "SKIN" selection icon

-Hungry Ghosts @ 18:38, "the orphan" drawing

-Hungry Ghosts @ 19:55, watermarked onto the "NEW SKIN" overlay

-Ex Nihilo @ 0:31, the large tree resembles the bottom of the symbol

-Ex Nihilo @ 7:44, in the Bugonia game, behind the lion's head, large and mostly transparent

-Ex Nihilo @ 9:01, the "edit" selection icon

-Ex Nihilo @ 15:43, on the forehead of the PURPLE TV DEMON

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 1:12, when Lawrence opens his inventory, a ring is shown that does not exist in Dark Souls. No name nor description are visible for this ring, but it does appear to have the wormhorns on it

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 1:42, glitching through the Dark Souls game over screen

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 10:55, atop the king chess piece

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 11:55, overlaid on the king chess piece

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 12:18, the Puffin Island Map cursor

-Orphan @ 0:17, a silhouette pushing through the infested synapses

-Worm in the Apple @ 3:02, the shape of the Silver Key

-Worm in the Apple @ 4:43, the command-line cursor in the 20 questions! game

"yawn"

-Orphan @ 3:50, "A craggy hollow within yawns invitingly."

-Orphan @ 04:17, "The yawning golden GATES of the garden loom . . ."

"you people"

-Bad Seed @ 14:38, Beatrice's phone call. "It never ends well for you people"

-Random Walk @ 15:06 Lady Lux's second phone call. "You people are always in such a hurry"

-Hungry Ghosts @ 15:42, Big Gul P's phone call. "No offense, but you people all look weird and like f**ked up and melted"

-Ex Nihilo @ 13:25, Mother Ace's dialogue after waking up. "You people all have the same disease"

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 3:39, Sir Ira's phone call. "Do you people have the stomach?"

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 12:47, Glam Glo's phone call. "You people always have such cool styles!"

-Orphan @ 13:57, Lost Liv's phone call. "It is a game I have watched you people play again and again."

-Worm in the Apple @ 6:07, in the game 20 questions!, when Lawrence asks Vernon Dapple what they're a parody of, they answer, "YOU PEOPLE"

"1521"

-Electric Sheep @ 3:30, an error message that reads, "Error 1521 - Bad Source | This file is corrupted. Some characters may not display correctly"

-Bad Seed @ 4:31, the number of the new seed Lawrence rolls

-Hungry Ghosts @ 11:36 and @ 13:30, the inmate numbers for both Pfenda Premlov ("Pris. 1500") and Verona Meldpup ("Pris. 0021") add up to 1521

-Hungry Ghosts @ 14:38, the .manifest file displays a half-visible "version= 1.5.2.1." at the top-left of the frame

-Hungry Ghosts @ 16:47, the number of subscribers to the Mindfloss channel is 1125, an anagram of 1521

-Ex Nihilo @ 13:04, the time on the alarm clock displays 15:21

-Orphan @ 13:32 and @ 15:35, the score after completing IV. MORDACITY is 1521, and then the final score for SEVEN CITIES is 1521

-Worm in the Apple @ 7:52, the address listed above the revolving door reads "1521." This looks to be the source for the repeating number throughout Vermis Malum

2 cents

-Random Walk @ 3:38, the 2 Coins item prompt

-Ex Nihilo @ 10:40, in the "RE: Lincoln County Pirate Broadcast Incident" blog on the BASKANIA website ("... just figured I'd mail in my 2 cents ...")

3 AM

-Electric Sheep @ 3:25, katherine.pdf was modified on 12/25/2014 at 3:16 AM

-Electric Sheep @ 5:18, in parasite.pdf, the "item 9" photo was taken at 3:31 AM

-Electric Sheep @ 8:17, the laptop activates the webcam at 3:07 AM

-Random Walk @ 6:44, the clock outside of the Game Hall is set to 3:20 AM

-Ex Nihilo @ 10:40, a BASKANIA cult blog post states, "... [the phreaking] only happened <10 times before it stopped and it was always like 3am reruns, when basically everyone is asleep anyway. I always thought that was the weirdest part, like why go to that much effort to prank the 3 people who are still up that late."

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 15:01, the laptop activates the webcam at 3:06 AM

-Orphan @ 0:19, the laptop shows looking.pdf was modified on 11/30/2014 at 3:09am AM

-Orphan @ 15:59, the time on Arthur's computer reads "03:13," as his loser.pdf document reveals his first exposure to the Everpalm Pond signal

"9"

-Vermis Malum @ 4:37, the book Number9Dream, by David Mitchell, is visible on the desk

-Electric Sheep @ 3:30, the numbers in the "1521" error code add up to 9

-Electric Sheep @ 5:17, the "victims" document has "Item 9" in the body of the page

-Electric Sheep @ 5:37, the "babel" document mentions "90ish small files"

-Bad Seed @ 0:00, the Google translation for "vermis malum" retrieve the result in "0.09 seconds"

-Bad Seed @ 4:31, the numbers in seed 1521 add up to 9

-Bad Seed @ 5:23, Lawrence begins at Ring IX (9)

-Bad Seed @ 6:02, the elevator has 9 dedicated floors to which it travels

-Bad Seed @ 13:54, the Inventory Knapsack displays 9 Apples, though the number of Apples likely just mirrors the Ring number

-Bad Seed @ 14:14, the rotary telephones have 9 numbers (no "0")

-Random Walk @ 6:47, the clock outside of the game hall only goes to 9.

-Random Walk @ 8:14, the Cereal Box Puzzle cost is "9c," along with the more expensive items in the vending machine all being divisible by 9

-Random Walk @ 8:33, Conrad Church's "Devils of the New Millenium" paper is dated August 3rd, 1999

-Hungry Ghosts @ 1:02, the CASH POP scratch-off vending machine has a large "9" on its display

-Hungry Ghosts @ 6:54, when Lawrence pulls up the Inventory Knapsack, it shows he now has 99 coins after breaking the bank in Ring VIII

-Hungry Ghosts beginning @ 7:38, the cost of each of the four frozen food items is a multiple of 9: "0c" for Sour Grapes (@ 7:38), "18c" for General B's Chicken (@ 8:37), "27c" for Brain Food (@ 16:43), "27c" for Pig's Head (@ 18:33), and "36c" for Apple Pie (@ 19:49)

-Hungry Ghosts @ 7:39, the frozen Mondvale Preps meals are labels as 99% Organic.

- Hungry Ghosts @ 11:42, Pfenda Premlov is sentenced to 27 years for impersonation, the sentence divisible by 9.

-Ex Nihilo @ 6:10, there are 9 color swatches (though these just represent the 9 Rings)

-Ex Nihilo @ 7:54, the HARVESTERS add HIN/S to the rolling score by multiples of 9, and the RANKS are listed as all 9s.

-Ex Nihilo @ 9:35, all the listed dates on the BASKANIA site are from 1999

-Ex Nihilo @ 10:40, from the RE: Lincoln County Pirate Broadcast Incident on the BASKANIA site: "Now, I never actually saw [a pirated broadcast] live and 99% of people who say they did didn't either . . ."

-Ex Nihilo @ 14:04, the numbers in the "15:21" alarm clock add up to 9

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 0:04, the Dark Souls player-character's health can fill up to 9 bars at the top

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 9:23, the "A Nazar for You" (document "03051997") blog reads, "the government did not make it. Bell Labs did not make it. they observed it. DEEP down." Bell Labs developed a distributed operating system in the early '90s whose mascot was "Glenda" the Bunny. The OS was dubbed "Plan 9," a cheeky nod to the low-budget, awesomely bad 1957 Ed Wood film *Plan 9 from Outer Space*

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 15:15, the laptop begins to play footage from "Old H Stuff" folder of Lawrence and Haley watching the film *Session 9*

-Cyclic Inheritance @ 15:15, we see the "Old H Stuff" folder on Lawrence's laptop in which 9 videos are displayed in a 3x3 grid

-Worm in the Apple @ 6:46, the 20 questions! game stops at question 9

-Worm in the Apple @ 7:43, the "10" within the number buttons on the payphone is partially obscured at times, leaving the other 9 as the only fully viewable numbers

FUN FACTS

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♣ Vermis Malum ♣

Beginning @ 0:00, all in-game/computer footage is in the aspect ratio of 16x9 (1.78:1), whereas the vlog camcorder footage is 4x3 (1.33:1).

@ 0:00, the recurring elevator music is the 1955 single "Open Up Your Heart (and Let the Sun Shine In)," by the McGuire Sisters. Their lyrics sing of keeping in good spirits and avoiding sad thoughts, lest the Devil find a way into your life and never leave. There are numerous references to the track throughout *Vermis Malum*, whether it's alluding to smilers winning/frowners losing or the three McGuire Sisters themselves.

@ 0:08, the braille characters next to each elevator floor number *mostly* correspond to their numerical counterparts, as do the "stop" and "fan" buttons. However, the "10" and "alarm" buttons seem to differ from their real-world counterparts.

@ 0:08, below the elevator buttons is an image of an anvil, the name "HESIOD," and the Latin text "facilis descensus averno." Hesiod was an ancient Greek poet, whose notable work the *Theogony* reads, in part, "For a brazen anvil falling down from heaven nine nights and days would reach the earth upon the tenth: and again, a brazen anvil falling from earth nine nights and days would reach Tartarus [the infernal regions of ancient Greek mythology] upon the tenth." The phrase, "facilis descensus averno" roughly translates to "the easy descent [through] Averno," referencing Lake Avernus in Italy, which the Romans perceived as an entrance to the underworld.

@ 0:54 and in Bad Seed @ 0:00, Everpalm Pond and Vermon[d] Apple are anagrams of each other.

@ 0:59, the LAMPROV PENDLE logo's pliers resemble the wormhorns, and the metallic sphere in their teeth displays the game's Ring colors in reverse order, beginning at the *top* with Ring I (black) and ending at the *bottom* with Ring IX (white). This is one of numerous references to the Ring colors throughout the series.



@ 1:14, the Orphan is a hydra with 9 beads of light shining on its body. This is one of numerous references to warm, glowing light sources resembling eyes.

Beginning @ 1:43, a series of numbers and letters consecutively flash on the bottom-right of the frame. They are, in order, 74 68 65 77 6f 6d 62 66 6f 72 67 65 74 73. In hexadecimal code, this translates to "thewombforgets." This may be an allusion to the biblical passage Job 24:20: "The womb shall forget him; the worm shall feed sweetly on him; he shall be no more remembered; and wickedness shall be broken as a tree." (KJV)

t h e w o m b f o r g e t s

@ 1:55, the animal statues shown are the same statues positioned in the same order as the three animal statues that appear in The Copperhead suite in [Random Walk @ 19:22](#). From left-to-right, they are an elephant, a dromedary (Arabian camel), and a sea lion.

@ 2:12, a white sign is shown in Lawrence's Raven's Run vlog to Haley that reads, "DO NOT GO IN THE WATER." In [Worm in the Apple @ 7:21](#), a white "WARNING: WATER NOT SUITABLE FOR SWIMMING" sign is shown in Haley's Seattle vlog to Lawrence.



@ 3:06, when Lawrence describes hearing what he thought might be a leak in his attic, he casually compares the theoretical drip to the movie *Dark Water*.

Dark Water, or *Honogurai mizu no soko kara*, is a 2002 horror film written by Kōji Suzuki and directed by Hideo Nakata, the Japanese duo behind the 1998 hit *Ringu*. It follows a recently divorced mother and her six-year-old daughter, who move into the 3rd floor of a dilapidated apartment building. When the mother discovers endless leaks from the 4th floor directly above and a mysterious ghostly girl haunting their every step, she must protect her daughter while trying to keep her sanity, all for safety and custody sake.

The film's themes revolve around torn relationships, familial sacrifice, and the building's pivotal elevator rising and falling from floors 3, 4, and the roof above 7. Also present is the constant dripping and pooling of water, which may be a nod to ex-Soviet surreal [master] filmmaker Andrei Tarkovsky.

@ 3:57, an Apple 20W Power Adapter is seen at the top left of the frame when Lawrence first uncovers Arthur's laptop in the attic. This may be a subtle reference to apples or just a noteworthy coincidence.

@ 4:22, the Princeton logo is visible on Arthur's laptop (with an added laurel wreath and removed original book icon with Latin text, "VET NOV TESTAMENTUM," that signifies the Old and New Testaments of the Judeo-Christian *Bible*). This is a recurring image throughout the series, as Arthur was a student at Princeton University and Conrad Church was a faculty member.

@ 4:36, Lawrence attempts to log in to Arthur's old computer. When the computer initially boots up to the login screen, below the username and password reveals the computer is running "Windows 7 Premium." The overall theme does look to be from a version of Windows 7, however the circular Start Windows icon is from Windows Vista (and is cut off where it should extend above the taskbar); also, in [Hungry Ghosts @ 14:38](#), Arthur's parody screen displays a supportedOS Id of {8e0f7a12-bfb3-4fe8-b9a5-48fd50a15a9a}. This ID is only supported by Windows 10, Windows 11, Windows Server 2016, Windows Server 2019 and Windows Server 2022.

@ 4:37, the book *Number9Dream* by author David Mitchell is visible next to Arthur's laptop. The story centers on a young boy in Japan searching for his father after his sister's death, as the real world and his dreams begin to blur together. The number 9 is also prevalent throughout the story. This is one of numerous references to the number "9" throughout the series.

@ 4:37, a mug displaying "HOBO CODES" is visible next to Arthur's laptop. The symbols (from left-to-right, top-to-bottom) are "Saloons in town," "Leaving railroad," "Cranky woman or bad dog," and "Bad man lives here."

@ 4:37, an astronaut is visible next to Arthur's laptop. NASA's logo design from the mid-'70s to the early '90s was dubbed "The Worm," and most working for the agency hated the way it looked.

@ 4:45, Arthur's Windows 7 profile icon closely resembles the character Robby the Robot from the 1956 film *Forbidden Planet*, about the discovery of a device that exponentially increases intelligence in humans, but in the process manifests monsters from their subconscious out into the physical world.

@ 4:45 and in *Electric Sheep @ 3:28*, it is revealed that the full name of the former owner of the laptop is Arthur Asimov. This could be a reference to two of the "Big Three" science fiction writers of the 20th century: Arthur C. Clarke and Isaac Asimov (the third was Robert A. Heinlein). Clarke was known for many works, but most famously *2001: A Space Odyssey*, and Asimov is best remembered for his *Foundation* trilogy, but moviegoers may be more familiar with *I, Robot*, in which he continued with his notable "Three Laws of Robotics." On a related note, the second *Vermis Malum* video, "Electric Sheep," is named after Philip K. Dick's novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep*. The story explores what it means to be human through the eyes (pun intended) of its synthetic characters, especially when they're faced with expiration (death).

@ 4:51, the *vermis malum* game icon is visible at the top-left of the computer screen, yet later in *Bad Seed @ 1:29*, Lawrence claims (while pointing at the game icon with a sense of confusion), "a couple of days ago, I noticed this; I do feel like I've seen it before." This could imply that two days ago (sometime *after* the aforementioned @ 4:51 instance) is the first time the icon has appeared to Lawrence on Arthur's computer, which may be a continuity error on the creator's part. However, there's no way of telling when that date was, so it's possible it was intentionally included.

@ 5:44, two red-orange lights are seen off in the distance at night. This is one of numerous references to warm, glowing light sources resembling eyes.

♥Electric Sheep♥

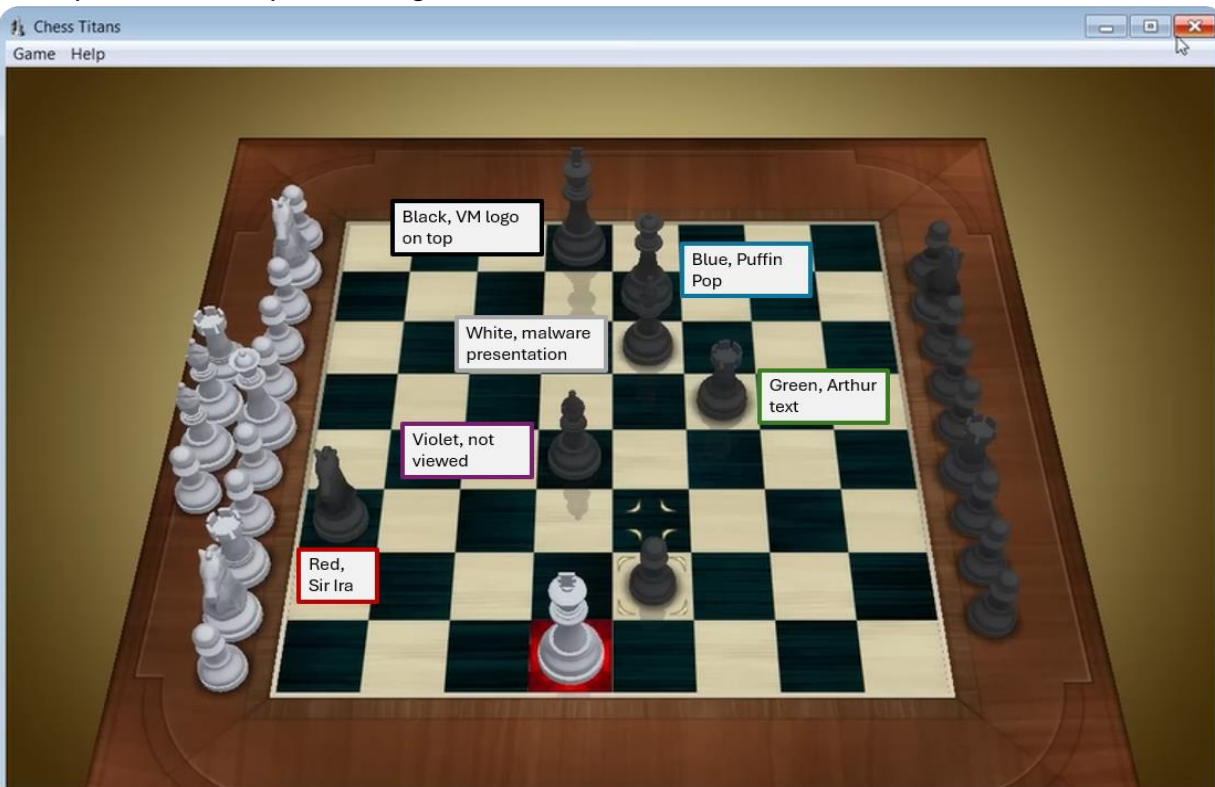
@ 0:13, a stone statue of two ape-looking figures sits on a small outside table against a wooden fence. The original statue is named "Simian Mother and Child," by an unknown artist from the 13th century. It is currently on display at the Art Institute of Chicago.



@ 1:54, the Windows PowerShell icon is the same as Ring III's symbol in Cyclic Inheritance @ 0:02.

@ 2:00, Lawrence continues a saved game of Chess Titans on Arthur's computer. The positions of all the pieces on the board (beginning with the white king) are d1 e2 a3 d4 f5 e6 e7 d8. "DEADFEED" or "0xDEADFEED" is a hexadecimal code used by Apple in iOS crash reports when a timeout occurs spawning a service. In Random Walk @ 08:45 Lawrence purchases a cereal box puzzle that displays a worm presenting a riddle about feeding on the dead.

In Cyclic Inheritance @ 2:21, Ring IV reveals itself as a giant chess board, and starting with the knight for Sir Ira, the chess pieces match up with this game of Chess Titans.



@ 03:25, the katherine.pdf document was last modified on 12/25/2014 at 3:16 AM. This is one of numerous incidents occurring between the hours of 3 and 4 AM. (See REPEATING TEXT/THEMES for other occurrences.) In folklore, 3 AM (along with midnight) is known as the "witching hour"/"Devil's hour," which is when the powers of witches and other supernatural entities are said to be their strongest.

@ 03:25, Arthur Asimov's documents in the "unsorted" folder were last modified in the year 2014. Then @ 5:18, Katherine Bell is first mentioned in the "victims" document referencing an incident from "3/8/07." Finally in Random Walk @ 8:33, Conrad Church's "Devils of the New Millennium" paper was written August 3rd, 1999. Since Lawrence's videos take place in 2021—according to the series' initial post in the Night Mind Index—this means Vermis Malum follows an approximately 7-year cycle in relation to its main characters.

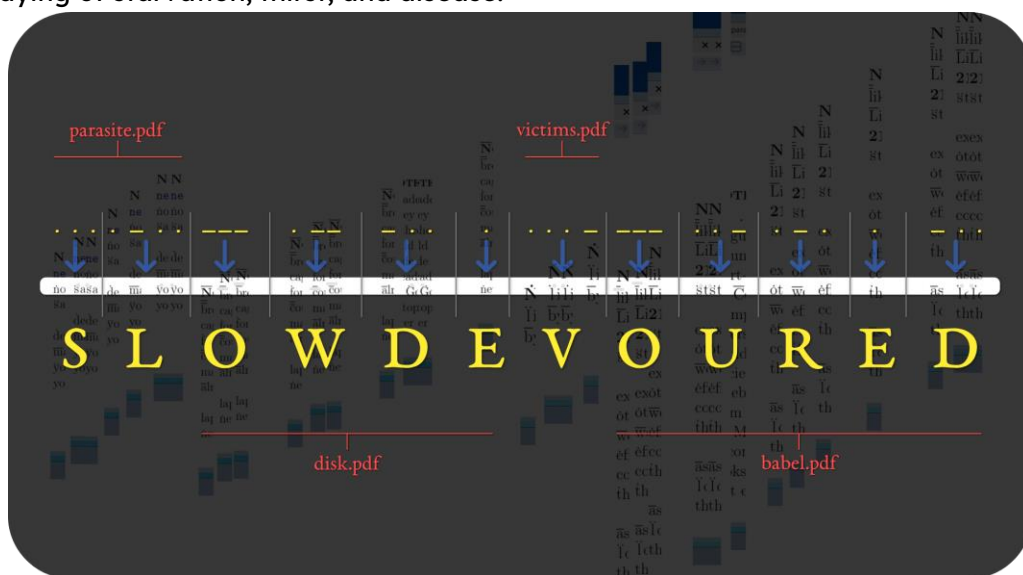
@ 3:28, the "parasite" document pops up, showing an old computer monitor that displays the Vermis Malum WormHorns, stacked on a horizontal PC case. This image is actually taken from an online wiki site promoting the Panasonic Business Partner FX-600F1 computer. The article has multiple photos of the computer, including a rear shot of the monitor that reveals a December 1986 manufacture date.



Beginning @ 3:28, numerous dots and dashes are visible above certain first letters on different lines of text:

... .-

The dots and dashes are spread out across the initial four documents, and when translated from morse code, in order, they spell "SLOWDEVOURED." This is one of numerous references to the word "devour" throughout the series. This could be a vague reference to Richard Dawkins' 1995 book River Out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life, in which he reflects on how much overall suffering there is in the natural world: "During the minute that it takes me to compose this sentence, thousands of animals are being eaten alive, many others are running for their lives, whimpering with fear, others are slowly being devoured from within by rasping parasites, thousands of all kinds are dying of starvation, thirst, and disease."



@ 4:30, the *Pattern Recognition and Machine Learning* book is written by an author with the last name “Bishop” and is published by Springer, whose logo is that of a knight chess piece. This may allude to the games of chess found in Electric Sheep @ 2:00 and Cyclic Inheritance @ 2:21.

@ 4:30, next to the *Warcraft* and coding books behind the disk are a book on machine learning, as well as *Twilight: Eclipse*. This may loosely reference the first *Twilight* book, whose cover displays two arms stretched out with hands holding an apple, just like the *Vermis Malum* logo.

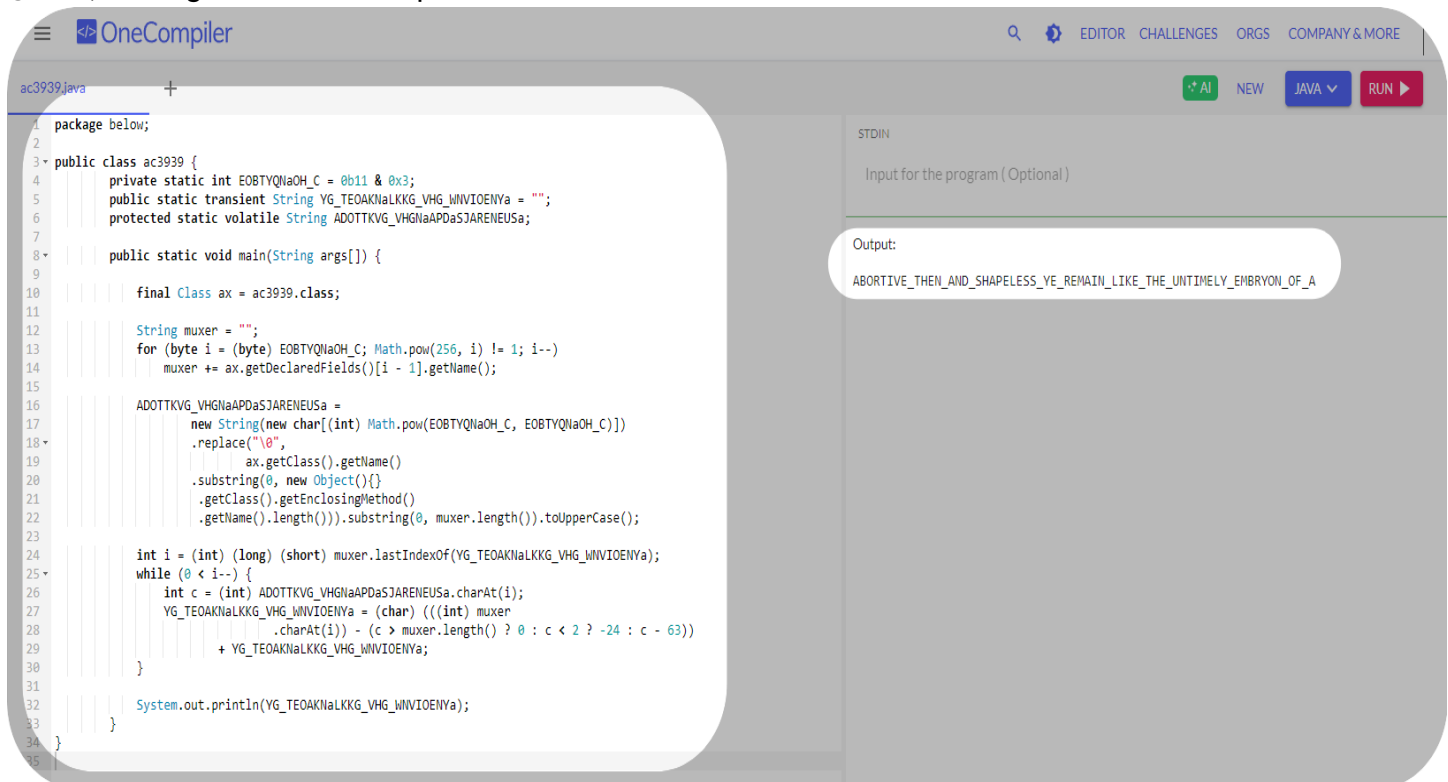
@ 5:17, there's mention of a house on “Penny Lane,” which was a 1967 single by The Beatles. This is one of numerous references to The Beatles throughout the series. The Beatles founded Apple Corps and Apple Records in 1968.

@ 5:17, the “victims” document refers to a bloody photo of a couch, which was “Taken 3:31am.” This is one of numerous incidents occurring between the hours of 3 and 4 AM. In folklore, 3am (along with midnight) is known as the “witching hour”/“devil’s hour,” which is when the powers of witches and other supernatural entities are said to be their strongest.

@ 5:17, the “victims” document mentions an “Item 9,” referring to the bloody couch. This is one of numerous references to the number “9” throughout the series.

@ 5:34, the text-to-speech voice reads “Poor Girl” in the victims document in a warped, indecipherable way.

@ 5:37, a string of Java code is pictured:



The screenshot shows the OneCompiler web interface. The code editor on the left contains the following Java code:

```
1 package below;
2
3 public class ac3939 {
4     private static int EOBTYQNaOH_C = 0b11 & 0x3;
5     public static transient String YG_TEOAKNaLKKG_VHG_MNVIOENYa = "";
6     protected static volatile String ADOTTKVG_VHGNaAPDaSJARENEUsa;
7
8     public static void main(String args[]) {
9
10        final Class ax = ac3939.class;
11
12        String muxer = "";
13        for (byte i = (byte) EOBTYQNaOH_C; Math.pow(256, i) != 1; i--)
14            muxer += ax.getDeclaredFields()[i - 1].getName();
15
16        ADOTTKVG_VHGNaAPDaSJARENEUsa =
17            new String(new char[(int) Math.pow(EOBTYQNaOH_C, EOBTYQNaOH_C)])
18                .replace("\0",
19                    ax.getClass().getName()
20                    .substring(0, new Object(){}
21                        .getClass().getEnclosingMethod()
22                        .getName().length()).substring(0, muxer.length()).toUpperCase());
23
24        int i = (int) (long) (short) muxer.lastIndexOf(YG_TEOAKNaLKKG_VHG_MNVIOENYa);
25        while (0 < i--) {
26            int c = (int) ADOTTKVG_VHGNaAPDaSJARENEUsa.charAt(i);
27            YG_TEOAKNaLKKG_VHG_MNVIOENYa = (char) (((int) muxer
28                .charAt(i)) - (c > muxer.length() ? 0 : c < 2 ? -24 : c - 63))
29                + YG_TEOAKNaLKKG_VHG_MNVIOENYa;
30        }
31
32        System.out.println(YG_TEOAKNaLKKG_VHG_MNVIOENYa);
33    }
34 }
35 }
```

The output window on the right shows the result of running the code:

```
ABORTIVE_THEN_AND_SHAPELESS_YE_REMAIN_LIKE_THE_UNTIMELY_EMBRYON_OF_A
```

Running the code prints,
“ABORTIVE_THEN_AND_SHAPELESS_YE_REMAIN_LIKE_THE_UNTIMELY_EMBRYON_OF_A.”

This is a reference to Dante's Purgatorio, Canto X, when Virgil and Dante reach the first of the seven terraces/deadly sins: Pride. As he gazes upon souls hunched over from the weight of massive stones on their backs, Dante remarks,
"That to heaven's justice unobstructed soars?
Why buoy ye up aloft your unfleg'd souls?
Abortive then and shapeless ye remain,
Like the untimely embryo of a worm!"

@ 8:16, Arthur's laptop and webcam mysteriously power on at 3:07 AM, as a distorted face slowly burns into the camera's image. This is one of numerous incidents occurring between the hours of 3 and 4 AM. In folklore, 3 AM (along with midnight) is known as the "witching hour"/"Devil's hour," which is when the powers of witches and other supernatural entities are said to be their strongest.

🔪 Bad Seed 🔪

@ 0:00, Lawrence has a tab pulled up in the background of his internet browser that reads, "windows 7 programs randomly st..." It's assumed this could be him researching the reason why his webcam automatically powered on after he left his computer idle in [Electric Sheep @ 8:16](#).

@ 0:36, Lawrence mentions to the person he's sending videos to that he wrote an email first draft in Notepad a couple of days prior, but nervously avoids sharing what it was before continuing with his bigger point about the computer. Then, in [Hungry Ghosts @ 4:11](#), while speaking on the phone with his therapist about a possible troubled relationship/former relationship of his, he once again mentions almost sending something but instead leaving it in a Notepad file saved on his computer.

@ 01:07, Lawrence mentions an old computer software tool, Clippy, designed to help users. In [Hungry Ghosts @ 16:47](#), the Mindfloss video's background is composed of tiled paper clips.

@ 3:04, the typewriter carriage return sound from [Vermis Malum @ 0:04](#) is noticeably absent.

@ 4:15, the initial seed for Lawrence of "1337" spells out "LEET" in leetspeak. He then rolls a 1521. 1521 is a possible reference to the Diet (or assembly) of Worms, held in Worms, Germany in 1521. During the assembly, Martin Luther was asked by political authorities of the Holy Roman Empire to repudiate his Ninety-five Theses, to which he refused and was therefore labeled a heretic. This is one of numerous references to "1521" throughout the series.

@ 5:00, the New Character "favorite color" options order matches the respective Ring colors from IX (white) down to IV (red), with the exception of Ring V's orange. This is one of numerous references to the Ring colors throughout the series.

@ 6:48, the background music sounds occasionally reminiscent of the 1994 single "Black Hole Sun" by the band Soundgarden. Despite the band's name relative to this Ring and a recurring theme of "snakes" throughout the track, frontman Chris Cornell has stated the song lyrics mean nothing.

@ 9:07, Lawrence expresses annoyance that he discovered how to run in the game on his own, with, "You could have told me that on one of those signs." This may be a potential hint for the viewer to search for a "SPRINT" sign to translate somewhere within the Ring, which did show itself in the distance [@ 7:45](#).

@ 10:17, the large, rotting apple is being swarmed with flies (or apple maggots, though that's less likely, considering other locations). If you look closely, you'll notice the flies are actually miniature hands. This goes for similar fly-swarmed bloody areas, too.



@ 10:20, three red, liquid trails are visible flowing from the large, rotting apple down to the water below. This is one of numerous references to three red streaks throughout the series.

@ 11:11, a "06/12/14" prompt pops up on screen as Lawrence's player-character walks past the beached canoe next to the large tree. This may be expanded upon later in Orphan @ 3:53, when the IX. FELICITY text reads, "Next to the tree, a small CANOE is moored on the beach. You cannot see a boatman anywhere, but a GREEN OBJECT lies on the stern. . . . It is a QUICKSILVER RING. . . . You can make out the datemark on the inscription, but the rest of the words are no longer legible."

@ 11:31, the description for the Iron Knife reads, "Crude make, after the tastes of the old soldiers. Unfit for Senatorial hands." This is likely a sly reference to the infamous assassination of Julius Caesar by around 40 senators in Rome on the "Ides of March" (March 15th), 44 B.C.E. The assassination weapon used was a pugio (soldier's dagger). This is one of numerous references to Julius Caesar throughout the series. Interesting to note: Two of the lead assassins of Caesar, Marcus Junius Brutus and Gaius Cassius Longinus, are in Dante Alighieri's 9th ring of hell in *The Divine Comedy's* first part: *Inferno*. This final ring is reserved for the most wicked of traitors. The two assassins, along with Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus, are forever eaten in each of the three mouths of a gigantic, ice-trapped Lucifer, the greatest traitor of all.

Beginning @ 11:31, with the exception of 1 instance, the floating Knapsack Items on the left—sans Apple, Gold Shovel, and Lead Flask—seem to display in the Ring's light color under which they're cast. In Bad Seed @ 11:31 and @ 15:31 (Items not shown @ 12:18), the Items display in normal color cast in the white light of Ring IX, while @ 13:54 in the dark Lodge, they are virtually blacked out. In Random Walk @ 3:45, @ 6:14, and @ 7:35 (with multiple Knapsack reveals in the Game Hall following this), they are virtually blacked out in the night sky and dark casino lights of Ring VIII. In Hungry Ghosts @ 6:54, they are virtually blacked out under the deep indigo lights of Ring VII. Then @ 13:33, they are cast in yellow from the light of Ring VI. In Ex Nihilo @ 2:59, they are virtually blacked out under the dark orange light of Ring V; however @ 12:19, they are still virtually blacked out, even though they're under the much brighter orange lighting of the Borealis Grub (this is the 1 exception). Finally in Cyclic Inheritance @ 6:30, 11:01, and @ 13:24, they are cast in red from the light of Ring IV.

@ 12:19, the Inventory Knapsack displays 5 Apples. Lawrence then walks over to the Lodge, the Windmill, and back to The Lodge, entering it all without snatching any more Apples. Once in The Lodge, he obtains the Gold Shovel and looks in his Knapsack @ 13:54 to now reveal he somehow has 9 Apples. He then takes Beatrice's phone call, and cuts to outside The Lodge, where @ 15:32 he states, "I did pick some apples along the way," showing he has the same total of 9. This may be an error on the part of the creator or something to be revealed at a later point.

@ 12:57, the large windmill spins in a clockwise direction. Then Lawrence enters the Lodge @ 13:44 to a small windmill spinning counter-clockwise. Following this, when he cuts back to the exterior area @ 15:10, the large windmill now spins counter-clockwise, too. Finally, when reentering the Lodge @ 15:55, the small windmill now spins clockwise, with the large windmill still spinning counter-clockwise when he re-emerges from the Lodge @ 16:46.

Beginning @ 12:57, a Windmill is revealed, slowly turning in Ring IX. Windmills are a recurring theme throughout the series, whether visually or audibly.

Interesting to note, in *The Divine Comedy's* first part, "*Inferno*," Dante writes the following when approaching Lucifer in the 9th Circle:

"THE lifted banners of the King of Hell,'

--My leader roused me from my thought--'are
nigh;
Look therefore.' I beheld, as in such sky
As foul mist hides, or murk of night obscures, A
turning windmill loom; and such the gale Its
motions caused, that I, of strengths too frail To meet
it longer, shrank behind my guide."

@ 13:42, the miniature Windmill and Lodge on the bottom bookshelf are identical to the ones shown from Arthur's "winter level" in Random Walk @ 9:29.

@ 13:49, Lawrence obtains a Gold Shovel. This could be a nod to the 3rd season of David Lynch and Mark Frost's cult TV series *Twin Peaks*. In it, Dr. Lawrence Jacoby (who originally aided Agent Dale Cooper in the investigation of Laura Palmer's death during the first two seasons) has now begun spray-painting shovels gold and advertising them to his viewers, so they can shovel themselves "out of the shit and into the truth." He has also become a more radical radio personality in the process.

@ 13:54, the Knapsack displays 9 Apples. The apple count may relate to the Ring Ghosts and/or Ring viewing, as every time Lawrence views/visits another Ring, the Apple count drops by 1.

@ 14:14, Beatrice has a name noticeably relevant to her Ring's Purgatorio terrace. Beatrice Portinari was the muse of Dante Alighieri. He dedicated most of his poetry and life to her, even chronicling his relationship with her in *La vita nuova* (*The New Life*). He ultimately immortalized her in all three parts—"Inferno," "Purgatorio," and "Paradiso"—of *The Divine Comedy*. Beatrice's line in the game, "Don't go down the mountain, please," could refer to the character of Beatrice toward the end of Purgatorio, who meets Dante at the top of Mount Purgatory and guides him to "Earthly Paradise."

@ 14:17, Beatrice's symbol quickly flashes as the Gold Shovel Item symbol, only to quickly change to their mask Ring Ghost symbol for the remainder of the call. This may be an error on the part of the creator or an intended event.

@ 14:32, Beatrice states, "That naïve naturist couple eloped, too. It never ends well for you people." This is likely a reference to Adam and Eve's expulsion from Paradise in the Garden of Eden, a story found in the biblical book of Genesis. There's more evidence of this with the "Her Garden" prompt that appears when Lawrence goes to exit the building @ 16:28.

⚖️ Random Walk ⚖️

@ 1:38, a graphic somewhat resembling a uterus (layered over the wormhorns) quickly fades in and out, with a synthesized sound effect accompanying it.

@ 1:53, Lawrence flicks on his lighter in the woods at dusk. Later @ 18:47, the fireplace in The Copperhead suite ignites. The first flame ignition is 4 seconds after a whistle, while the second is 9 seconds after one.

Beginning @ 2:36, a rotating series of diamond-like shapes (and sometimes an "X" shape) appears on screen, as the windmill sound from Bad Seed @ 12:57 quickly plays. This first occurs during the transition from on-screen quote to elevator ride and repeats 6 more times, all during transitions from one area to the next. That totals 7 times in Ring VIII, each time with a different number of consecutive shapes (4 @ 2:36, 3 @ 4:38, 3 @ 6:51, 4 @ 7:20, 4 @ 12:10, 4 @ 14:27, then 4 @ 16:31), each with different types of shapes (totaling 7 unique variations), a different rotating direction (if not completely still), different windmill sound duration (if not silent), and different color. Every shape's initial position is either straight up, down, left, or right (no diagonal starting points). Following what's known as the Knights Templar Cipher, the shapes displayed during the windmill loading screens print:

THEY ARE NOT DEAD THEY LIVE IN ME.

This is also referenced in Random Walk @ 8:45, with the end of the PUZZLE TIME! worm riddle, "I only eat the rotten. I only kill the dead," and later in Worm in the Apple @ 5:23, when Lawrence asks of Vernon Dapple during the 20 questions! game, "did you kill them?" to which it responds, "NO."



@ 2:58, a star formation resembling the Perseus constellation is visible in the night sky, with one star much brighter than the others. That star in the Perseus constellation is Algol, the "Winking" star, or "Demon Star," which in ancient Greek myth referred to the snaky head of Medusa and Perseus slaying her. This is one of numerous references to Perseus/Medusa/Algol throughout the series.

@ 3:29, Lawrence says, "You know, I was looking it up again...this, and I still didn't find anything about it online, but the page is giving me a different tra..." and then he's interrupted by the 2 Coins prompt. It seems obvious he's about to say "different translation," which could refer to the primary real-world English translation of vermis malum to "bad (or evil) worm."

@ 3:38, the prompt description for the 2 Coins reads, "Some poor fool left his fare behind." This is likely a reference to "Charon's obol," the ancient Greek practice of placing two coins over the eyes of the deceased

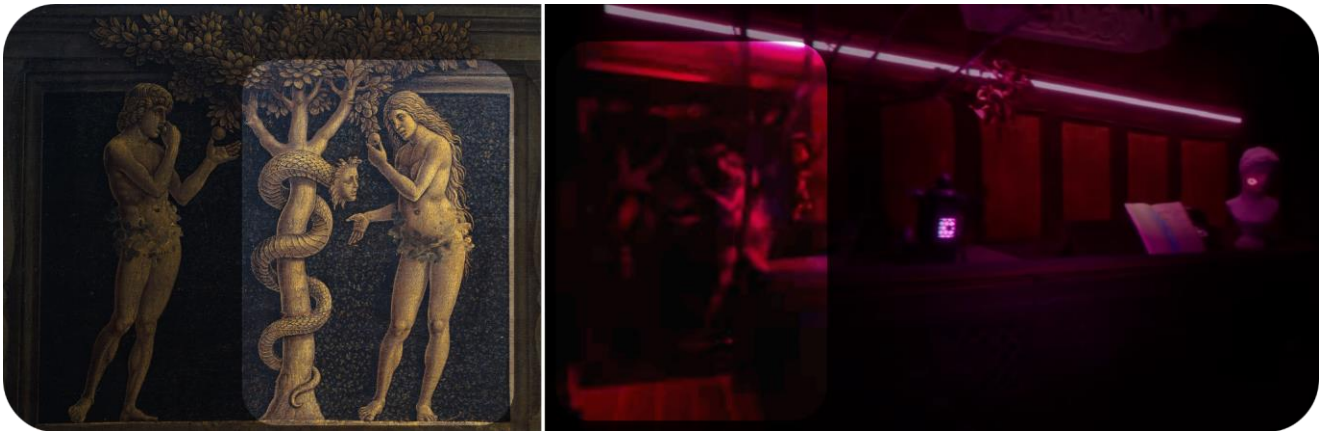
during burial (although, it was more common to place one in the mouth). This was the fare for Charon, the boatman, for passage across the River Styx to Hades, the underworld. Coins were usually of low value, allowing less fortunate families to prevent their loved ones from wandering aimlessly in the afterlife.

@ 3:45, the Knapsack displays 8 Apples. The apple count may relate to the Ring Ghosts and/or Ring viewing, as every time Lawrence views/visits another Ring, the Apple count drops by 1.

@ 3:56, the name of the casino is "Nero's Palace." This is a nod to Domus Aurea (The Golden House) of Nero, a palace constructed after a major fire in Rome in 64 C.E. With more than 150 rooms comprised of marble, ivory, and gold leaf walls, it was the most expensive palace in Rome. It even contained a statue of Nero himself, reaching more than 100 feet tall. Unfortunately for Nero, he committed suicide in 68 C.E., shortly before the palace's completion. This is one of numerous references to Nero throughout the series.

@ 4:41, the small lantern next to the reception desk resembles a pair of glaring eyes. This is one of numerous possible references to eyes throughout the series.

@ 4:41, the large wall painting to the left of the reception desk strongly resembles the real-life painting *Adam and Eve Committing Original Sin*, 1496, by Andrea Mantegna, but with the left side featuring Adam noticeably cut out of the game's version.



Beginning @ 4:42, the Nero's Palace guest book reads:

- RnG - "Strumpet?" ;)
- Herod the Fox
- Helen - never trust Trojans
- Alexei
- Bill Hearst
- J. Julius Hopp - hard liquor
- *Red Mark* (@ 14:31, after Lawrence wins big on the slot machines and breaks the bank, he's invited back to visit Lady Lux—red is Lawrence's chosen favorite color in the game)

@ 4:54, Lady Lux has a name noticeably relevant to her Ring's Purgatorio terrace/deadly sin. Lux is short for "Luxuria," Latin for "lust, perversion" in English.

@ 6:44, the clock outside of the Game Hall is set to 3:20 AM. This is one of numerous incidents occurring between the hours of 3 and 4 AM. In folklore, 3 AM (along with midnight) is known as the "witching hour"/"Devil's hour," which is when the powers of witches and other supernatural entities are said to be their strongest.

@ 6:54, a poster in the distance reads, "EXPLORATION | EXPLOITATION | EXHILARATION." This may refer to the Exploration-Exploitation Dilemma: A utilization of both novel approaches and tried-and-true methods to achieve success in a particular business, field of study, or general situation. It's a balancing of two contrasting strategies to avoid exhausting either isolated one.

@ 7:26, the description for the slot machines reads "**Outcome not guaranteed.**" in the same font and color as the words "*love*" in the quote @ 2:22 and "*know*" in the quote (revisited) @ 12:09. This is one of numerous references to the Ring colors throughout the series.

@ 7:59, a figure, presumably Lady Lux, @ 19:35 leaps across the background toward the top-right of the frame, partially obscured by planters and slot machines.

Beginning @ 8:10, the prize dispenser displays coin redemptions in exponents of 3 in the following order:

$3^0 = "1c"$ for the Used Napkin

$3^2 = "9c"$ for the Cereal Box Puzzle

$3^3 = "27c"$ for the Chemistry Kit

$3^4 = "81c"$ for the Cat Toy

$3^6 = "729c"$ for the VIP Vending Pass

$3^8 = "6,561c"$ for the Foreign Key

@ 8:33, there is a Submission UUID of "KSSSZMI" listed on the review of Conrad Church. Multiple times in the paper being reviewed, "Devils of the New Millennium," Church mentions the year 2000. This puzzle is a cesar cipher, with the code being Y2K - KSSSZMI translates to YGGGNAW, which goes to YGG GNAW - a reference to the Palevenom drip object from Cyclic Inheritance, "giant worms which gnaw at the roots of the archtrees (Yggdrasil)"

@ 8:45, the PUZZLE TIME! worm riddle begins with, "I grow in graves forgotten, where mourners no more tread." Later in Worm in the Apple @ 1:21, the description of THE START sign reads, "graves forgotten."

@ 8:45, the PUZZLE TIME! worm riddle ends with, "I only eat the rotten. I only kill the dead." Later in Worm in the Apple @ 5:23, Lawrence asks of Vermon Dapple during the 20 questions! game, "did you kill them?" to which it responds, "NO." This is also referenced in the windmill puzzle solution in Random Walk beginning @ 2:36: "THEY|ARE|NOT|DEAD|THEY|LIVE|INME."

@ 9:00, three red streaks are visible at the bottom-right of the EXPLORATION | EXPLOITATION | EXHILARATION poster on the wall. This is one of numerous references to three red streaks throughout the series.

@ 9:29, the Windmill and Lodge pictured from Arthur's "winter level" are identical to the miniature ones on the bottom bookshelf in Bad Seed @ 13:42.

@ 9:29, what looks to be a kind of giant Ferris Wheel is visible in the sky of Arthur's "infamous 'winter level'" in the "poltergeist" document. This is one of numerous references to wheels (namely, giant wheels in the sky) throughout the series.



@ 9:49, when referring to the "poltergeist" document that recently appeared, Lawrence says, "I wasn't going to mention it, but before I started playing yesterday . . . I saw a notification. I think it said something about "refactoring" or "refacing." Code refactoring is an internal process that restructures existing code in a computer system without altering its external behavior (end-user experience). This can allow for software to perform faster and/or use fewer resources.

@ 10:24, while listening to the verbalized "poltergeist" document, Lawrence asks, "Does the text-to-speech sound different?"

@ 12:01, the text at the top of the Hex window in Arthur's document reads, "dear rachel," and the hexadecimal code below it translates correctly to the text on the right, assuming the first column of hex code is obscured. In full, verbatim, it reads (red text is obscured hex code):

ahead of me in line at the cafe at EQUad. Was wearing that red scrunchie from Silverlake. ("Vintage, Arthur!") Didn't bother saying "hi." Didn't know what to say that I hadn't

@ 12:17, a prompt that reads "Antechamber" quickly flashes on screen as Lawrence moves toward the door. While this is directly referring to the vestibule in Nero's Palace, it could also be a hint at Ante-Purgatory below the first terrace in Dante's Purgatorio.

@ 12:37, Lawrence begins his attempts to intentionally lose at the slot machines with the "randomly" chosen combination of blueberry, grape, apple. This is one of numerous references to a blue-purple-red color shift throughout the series.

@ 13:29, when Lawrence speeds up his slot machine attempts, the text-to-speech voice can be heard stating, ". . . telling you this: It doesn't even matter. She's with someone else now. There's nothing else that can br . . ." Due to Arthur stating that *Vermis Malum* can pull up long-deleted messages, and with the events in Hungry Ghosts @ 7:43 and Cyclic Inheritance @ 11:25, we can assume this is Arthur, or something that Arthur wrote that *Vermis Malum* is repeating.

@ 14:08, when Lawrence completes the blueberry-grape-apple losing sequence, we can see every slot machine in the Game Hall (those in front of us and the rows behind, as seen between the machines), triggered to showcase all apples. The handles of the machines pull once again on their own and the slots begin to spin before our screen is interrupted.

@ 14:08, when Lawrence breaks the bank, the highest the winnings amount goes is \$2,098,765,260, and the lowest the loss amount goes is \$-2,134,473,421.

@ 14:24, an error code appears, beginning with, "WARNING: a68g: runtime error." Algol68G (or the Algol 68 Genie) is an Algol 68 compiler-interpreter. It can be used for executing Algol 68 programs or scripts. Algol 68 (short for Algorithmic Language 1968) was designed as a general-purpose programming language back in the late '60s. The first meeting of the ALGOL X group was held at Princeton University in May 1965. This is one of numerous references to Perseus/Medusa/Algol throughout the series.

@ 14:47, Lady Lux remarks that the player "broke the bank", and states further the move was "Monte Carlo, right? S'nothing personal.", regarding their winnings. This may be a reference to "The Man Who Broke the Bank at Monte Carlo," by Fred Gilbert and published in 1891.

Beginning @ 16:44, the High Roller Suites are, in order, The Asp, The Mamba, and The Copperhead (all snakes). The Copperhead name keeps with this Ring's alchemical theme of copper, and the room with the open door doesn't display a name.

@ 16:57, a warped version of the single "Strawberry Fields Forever" by The Beatles plays in the High Roller suites. This is one of numerous references to The Beatles throughout the series. The Beatles founded Apple Corps and Apple Records in 1968.

@ 17:13, the chemical formula for Warfarin quickly flashes on screen. Initially used as a pesticide, it is an oral anticoagulant drug normally used to prevent blood clot formation. Important to note: Warfarin has the ability to cross the placental barrier during pregnancy which can result in fetal bleeding, spontaneous abortion, preterm birth, stillbirth, and neonatal death. This is one of numerous references to warfarin throughout the series.

@ 18:15, The Copperhead suite is revealed. The alchemical element for this Ring (Ring VIII) is copper, as shown both @ 2:16 with the Save File screen's alchemical element icon for this Ring and @ 3:46 with the Copper Coins Item.

@ 19:22, the animal statues shown are the same statues positioned in the same order as the three animal statues seen in the snow in Vermis Malum @ 1:55. From left-to-right, they are an elephant, a dromedary (Arabian camel), and a sea lion.

@ 19:31, the music cuts out and a voice, presumably Lady Lux's, whispers, "Do you think you'll be the one who finally wins?" Lady Lux then crawls up to Lawrence's player-character before the game shuts off. The line whispered may be referring to a casino game and/or the larger *Vermis Malum* game as a whole.

Hungry Ghosts

@ 0:00, a game of Snake is initiated on an older computer (TV?). The Snake game's level happens to be a vertically mirrored version of the Ring VII PAC-MAN game/frozen food area up ahead. What's more interesting is the first four iterations show a blue level with a regular snake eating regular apples, learning from its mistakes as it progresses through the game.

However, once the snake eats three apples and "WEAR[S ITS] NEW SKIN!", the level changes to red, the regular apples change to electronic Apple computers, the snake transforms into a worm comprised of binary numbers, and after hitting the first wall it proceeds to run straight into the wall the next three iterations in a row, before repeatedly circling the first Apple computer (while the windmill sound plays from Bad Seed @ 12:57) until it finally eats it.

Later @ 14:08, the MONDO 2000 article seems to be discussing the Chinese room thought experiment, which ultimately states computers can only mimic human intelligence, not possess it. Then @ 16:47, a Mindfloss video illustrates a human man eating human food against a blue background wearing a blue bib that reads, "FEED ME BITES," before cutting to a robotic man consuming data against a red background with a red bib on that reads, "FEED ME BYTES." The video then cuts to a diagram of "the loss function," showing how the line gets blurred between man and machine as more data is consumed.

Finally, @ 19:51, Lawrence's player-character consumes the last frozen food item and "WEAR[S HIS] NEW SKIN!" causing the screen to turn to a red wormhorns overlay and him to audibly and visibly become another fly monster, before defeating Big Gul P (presumably with the Iron Knife, considering its icons splat everywhere). These examples seem to illustrate a regression of organic life and simultaneous progression of synthetic "life," but only to a degree.

@ 0:01, a TV monitor/computer powers up to a game of Snake with the same startup sound as the 2001 Gameboy Advance (minus the final *bi-ding!*).

@ 0:27, when the snake in the Snake game "WEAR[S ITS] NEW SKIN!" the chosen worm's skin appears to have a human skull for a head.

@ 0:29, in the Snake game, the new SKIN, "WORM" has a yellow swatch next to it. Considering this is the point in the Snake game that transitions from organic to robotic, the swatch may refer to Ring VI (whose color is yellow) in some way. It has been the only known Ring to simultaneously offer both regular Apples and Apple computers to the player.

@ 0:33, once the snake "Wear[s Its] New Skin!" the double-doors that were open at the bottom of the screen now look to be closed.

@ 1:58, Lawrence walks by a freezer in the grocery store with "DEVOUR" brand meals inside. This is one of numerous references to the word "devour" throughout the series.

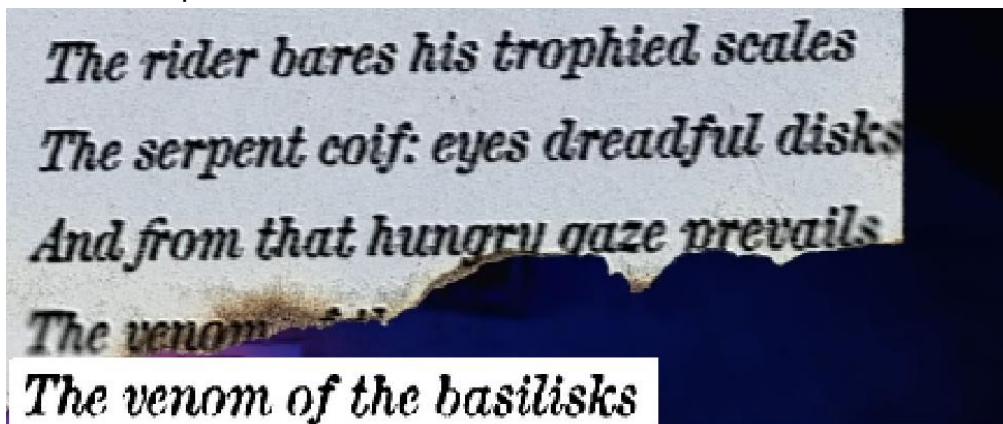
@ 2:06, Lawrence browses through greeting cards while on the phone with his therapist. Most of the cards in front of him refer to "Dad," and then it cuts to a shot of him running away down the aisle.

@ 2:38, a fly is seen crawling up a window against a blue background, as a straw-slurping sound is heard. This is the same straw-slurping sound that Big Gul P makes later in the game @ 9:52, while in the blue freezer section.

@ 3:20, the program airing on TV is 1960's season 2, episode 1 of The Twilight Zone, titled "King 9 Will Not Return." The story involves a B-25 bomber pilot who wakes up from a crash in the Sahara Desert during World War II, only to discover his crew has disappeared. *SPOILER* After seeing multiple mirages around the wreckage and beginning to lose hope, the pilot wakes up in the hospital (where Lawrence's viewing comes in), only to discover it's 17 years later, that he was actually ill so long ago and therefore missed the flight (never crashing down with his crew who went missing), has felt guilt over it ever since, and after hearing the wreckage was recently found, has hallucinated the entire personal experience of the crash in a state of shock. However, when the nurse places his clothes on a table where his shoes are resting, she accidentally knocks one over, and sand pours out of it. This is all unfolding as Lawrence himself discusses believing things we want to be true, how it can conflict with reality, and handling loss in different ways.

@ 4:11, while speaking on the phone with his therapist about his relationship with Hayley, Lawrence mentions almost sending something but instead leaving it in a Notepad file saved on his computer. In Bad Seed @ 0:36, Lawrence mentions to the person he's sending videos to that he wrote an email first draft in Notepad a couple of days prior, but nervously avoids sharing what it was before continuing with his bigger point about the computer.

@ 6:21, a prompt appears labeled "Algol & Alphecca," followed by a ripped page about Ariadne's Thread and a serpent. This is one of numerous references to Perseus/Medusa/Algol throughout the series. It is theorized that the last line of the poem reads "The venom of the basilisks"



@ 6:37, Big Gul P can be seen walking the frozen food aisles through the glass in the door.

@ 6:54, the Knapsack displays 7 Apples. The apple count may relate to the Ring Ghosts and/or Ring viewing, as every time Lawrence views/visits another Ring, the Apple count drops by 1.

@ 7:07, the word "NEPTUNE'S" can barely be deciphered from the large neon sign outside the store—a clear reference to the Astrological/Alchemical Symbol for this Ring.

@ 7:16, it seems a person is standing outside wearing a hooded coat in the cold. This figure is seen again @ 15:28 on the far left of the screen.

@ 7:16, what looks to be a kind of giant Ferris Wheel is visible in the distant sky outside and to the left. This is one of numerous references to wheels (namely, giant wheels in the sky) throughout the series.

Beginning @ 7:38, the cost of each of the four frozen food items is a multiple of 9: "0c" for Sour Grapes (@ 7:38), "18c" for General B's Chicken (@ 8:37), "27c" for Brain Food (@ 16:43), "27c" for Pig's Head (@ 18:33), and "36c" for Apple Pie (@ 19:49.) This is one of numerous references to the number "9" throughout the series.

@ 7:43, when Lawrence eats the Sour Grapes, a cryptic, full-motion video plays of lights hanging in the dark, as a woman (credited as Rachel) speaks to someone off-camera. While difficult to piece together, closed captioning shows Rachel saying,

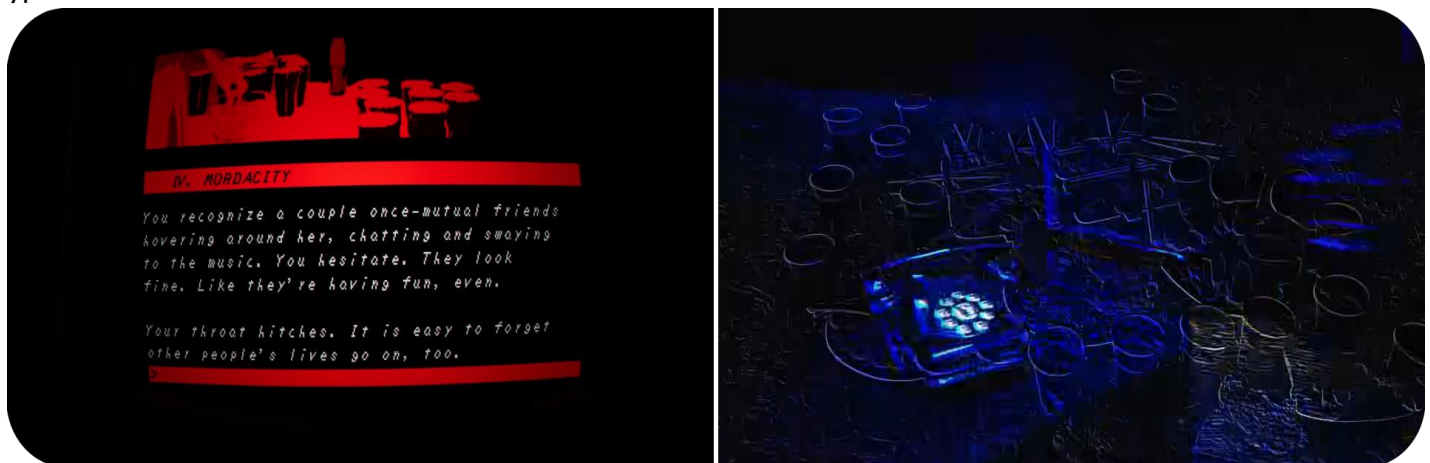
"No. Just... please, just let me finish. I-I didn't text you anything, okay? I literally have no idea--"

"Radioactive?" [This is Lawrence, reacting to the Imagine Dragons song playing in the background, which reappears in Orphan @ 12:06 as a song playing in the background of the party]

"Arthur, how much have you had to drink ton--"

Important to note: In Cyclic Inheritance @ 11:25, a text conversation is shown on a busted iPhone between Arthur and Rachel. In it, Rachel begs Arthur to come talk to her, stating she doesn't feel safe with an unnamed person. This may have taken place before the aforementioned video.

@ 8:31, a mostly transparent image quickly flashes on screen of what looks like a table filled with a buffet setup of food, tongs, and plastic cups. This may be the same event in Orphan @ 11:39, of a party with red Solo cups and the text, "LOST LIV stands by a table of cups with names written on duct tape stuck to the sides." typed out.



@ 19:54, Lawrence eats the Apple Pie and "WEAR[S HIS] NEW SKIN!" mirroring the snake game @ 0:00. Once in the new skin, the surrounding level changes from blue to red.

@ 8:32, there appears to be a bleeding/glitching organ stashed in the top of a mop bucket, with a trail of bloody footprints leading away from it toward the mutilated corpse in the shopping cart on the opposite end of the room.

@ 8:33, the frozen food item General Bajie's Chicken is displayed on the shelf, which holds a fortune cookie that reads, "Your lucky star is winking at you! Expect good things soon." This is one of numerous references to Perseus/Medusa/Algol throughout the series. Also, Zhu Bajie is a pig-like character from the 16th-century Chinese novel *Journey to the West*. He is a former celestial marshal who was banished to earth for flirting with the moon goddess (this may relate somewhat to the aforementioned cookie's fortune), and he is based on the character Zhu Wu, a mythological figure who was a general in the army of the Shang dynasty. Zhu Bajie is known for his laziness, lustfulness, and gluttony.

@ 9:09, Lawrence hides in the freezer, and the visuals become very pixelated. This may be *Vermis Malum* possibly scraping such information from the player's life with both Snake (@ 0:00) and PAC-MAN (@ 9:27) shown.

@ 9:17, a PAC-MAN arcade cabinet is seen standing in the middle of the floor, surrounded by freezers. Upon closer inspection, the level layout appears to be a map of the Ring VII frozen food area, with PAC-MAN representing the arcade cabinet (or more likely Lawrence's player character, though PAC-MAN doesn't seem to move as Lawrence nears the machine), the ghost representing Big Gul P, and the three white dots representing the three frozen food items Lawrence must consume to defeat him.

@ 11:32, the song "Piggies" by The Beatles plays distorted in the Gilded Bastille during the "Imitation Game" video. This is one of numerous references to The Beatles throughout the series. The Beatles founded Apple Corps and Apple Records in 1968.

@ 11:31, on the left interior wall leading up to the jail cell, a sign shows a smiling emoji with text that follows it, "never lose." and a frowning emoji with text that follows it, "never win." This is one of numerous references to the track "Open Up Your Heart (and Let the Sun Shine In)," by the McGuire Sisters throughout the series.

@ 11:32, the Apple Computer logo color order (from top to bottom) matches the respective Ring colors from IX (white) down to II (blue), possibly even I (black), though it's difficult to see. This is one of numerous references to the Ring colors throughout the series.

@ 11:32, both an Apple tree and Apple computer are shown together as collectible Inventory Items in the cell. Judging by the Snake game @ 0:00 coupled with "the loss function" video @ 16:47, the game's process may be halfway complete, since Arthur has both options now in front of him.

@ 11:36, a cell is shown with prescription medicine bottles scattered across the floor, and the prompt shows that Pfenda Premlov, originally from Zenda, Ruritania, has been imprisoned for "Unauthorized Use of Likeness." "The Prisoner of Zenda" was a novel written in 1894 by Anthony Hope. In it, the King of Ruritania is drugged by his nefarious half-brother just before his coronation. According to local laws, if there is no coronation, the current king ceases to be king. Fortunately, a distant relative is visiting and looks just the part. A plan is put into action to use the relative as a temporary decoy, so they can best the half-brother and save the kingdom.

@ 12:16, a golden statue of a bull sits to the left of the telephone, while a golden statue of a bear sits to the right. These are likely allusions to stock market trends of the same name ("bull market" and "bear market") which could strongly correlate with the Purgatorio Terrace/Deadly Sin of this Ring: Greed.

@ 12:16, Ava the Keeper has a name noticeably relevant to her Ring's Purgatorio terrace/deadly sin. Ava is short for "Avaritia," Latin for "avarice, greed" in English.

@ 12:16, the French portions of Ava the Keeper's monologue translate as such,
"Vous avez organisé une sacrée fête." > "You threw one hell of a party."
"Restons-en là" > "Let's leave it at that."
"Mais il n'y a pas de choix." > "But there is no choice."

@ 12:34, Ava the Keeper states, "Plainly, Monsieur ... it repulses me. This zoo, this prison, whatever you want to call it. It's the smell, if there is such a thing." This is a loose reference to the 1999 science fiction film *The Matrix*,

when Agent Smith reveals to Morpheus, "I'm going to be honest with you: I hate this place. This zoo, this prison, this reality, whatever you want to call it. I can't stand it any longer. It's the SMELL, if there is such a thing. I feel saturated by it. I can taste your stink. Every time I do, I fear that I have somehow been infected by it; it's REPULSIVE, isn't it?"

@ 13:33, the Knapsack displays 6 Apples. The apple count may relate to the Ring Ghosts and/or Ring viewing, as every time Lawrence views/visits another Ring, the Apple count drops by 1, and in Ring V following this, he has 5 Apples in Ex Nihilo @ 3:00 instead of the 7 he started with in Ring VII in Hungry Ghosts @ 6:54.

@ 13:33, the Platinum Lockpick shown is actually the "Skeleton Key" from the game *Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim*.

@ 13:39, the image on the wall above the bed is taken from the larger painting *Venus with a Mirror*, 1555, by Titian. The same image is seen on one of the back walls in Glo's Glamours in Cyclic Inheritance @ 12:27.



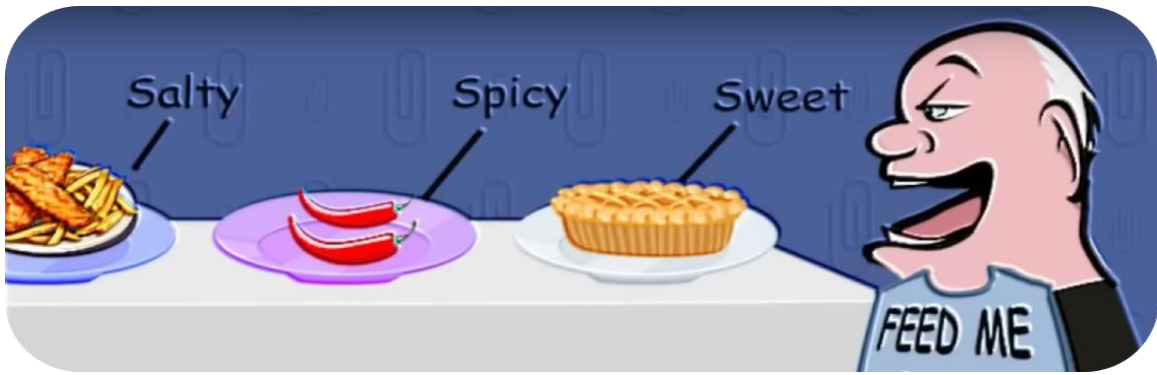
@ 14:07, the Chinese characters on the left notepad translate to, "Can anyone hear me," also evidenced by the "ca" beginning of the translation on the right notepad. Later in Worm in the Apple @ 4:49, Lawrence asks of Vermon Dapple, "can you hear me?" to which it responds, "YES."

@ 14:08, M2 (MONDO 2000's interviewer) asks CC, "So you believe Searle was wrong, then?" CC refers to Conrad Church (shown in both Random Walk @ 8:33 and Ex Nihilo @ 11:59), and the interviewer is most likely referencing John Searle, who presented the Chinese room thought experiment in 1980. He posited that a machine perfectly mimicking human thought does not exhibit human intelligence; it can only imitate it.

@ 15:37, Big Gul P has a name noticeably relevant to his Ring's Purgatorio terrace/deadly sin. Gul is short for "Gula," Latin for "gluttony, overindulgence" in English. The name is also a reference to the 7-11 drink, a Big Gulp.

@ 16:42, Lawrence locates the Mondvale Preps "Brain Food" in one of the freezers. The cerebellar "vermis" (located in the cerebellum of the brain) is involved in cardiovascular regulation during movement, posture changes, and emotional challenges.

@ 16:47, the dinner plates next to the illustration of the man in the "Five Minutes or Less: How do Computers Learn?" Mindfloss video are the colors (shown in order from the man) of each of the visited Rings up through that point. This is one of numerous references to the Ring colors throughout the series.



@ 16:47, the Mindfloss video's background is composed of tiled paper clips. In Bad Seed @ 01:07, Lawrence mentions an old computer software tool, Clippy, designed to help users.

@ 16:47, the top video comment is from "Ichthyosaur." Ichthyosaurs are extinct aquatic reptiles, whose distant relatives are lizards and snakes. The other top comment is by "mark westmoreland." Mark Westmoreland is an author, whose 2021 novella, "A Violent Gospel," centers on a pair of brothers who attempt to infiltrate a snake-handling church's money-laundering operation.

@ 18:01, the background music cuts out just as the player-character approaches the "LOSER" mutilated corpse.

✂ Ex Nihilo ✂

@ 0:16, the sound of a baby crying plays over Peter Rabbit as he's caught in the trap.

Beginning @ 0:38, bees and bee symbols are consistently viewed by Lawrence before playing the bee-themed Ring V, with the initial bees seen, along with graffiti on a wall that looks to spell "BEEES" @ 1:25 and writing on another wall that reads, "Bee Good" @ 1:26.

@ 1:17, a shot quickly flashes of a bus stop, and on the side wall, frame right it reads, "WORM FOOD." This is one of numerous references to worms throughout the series.

@ 1:47, the music now isn't playing through any of the *Vermis Malum* game's menus.

@ 2:25, after the elevator button beeps and before the *ding* is heard for the 5th floor, another *ding* is heard while a yellow light shines through the crack in the door. This additional *ding* and yellow color both denote the elevator passing over the 6th floor (a floor we've already seen in Arthur's "imitation_game" playthrough video in Hungry Ghosts @ 10:32), and going straight down to the 5th instead.

Beginning @ 2:32, a prominent lens flare is visible throughout Ring V. This may relate to tired eyes, since Ring V's deadly sin is sloth.

@ 3:00, the Knapsack displays 5 Apples. The apple count may relate to the Ring Ghosts and/or Ring viewing, as every time Lawrence views/visits another Ring, the Apple count drops by 1.

@ 3:03, off in the distance to the right, there appears to be a bee interacting with a strange, multicolored light source. The light source cycles through each Ring's color in a random order. (The subject is possibly expanded upon in Orphan @ 9:33, when the SEVEN CITIES text for V. FEBRICITY reads, "You dream a beautiful floating fairy whose entrancing eyes seem to change color every time you look away.") This is one of numerous references to the Ring colors throughout the series.

@ 4:20, Mother Ace has a name noticeably relevant to her Ring's Purgatorio terrace/deadly sin. Ace is short for "Acedia," Latin for "sloth, apathy" in English.

@ 4:30, Mother Ace's projected image momentarily flickers to a terrified face. This happens two more times throughout the phone call.

@ 5:58, an illustration of Mother Ace is depicted over an altered version of the album cover for The Beatles' 1969 record *Abbey Road* (The "Bee-tles," get it?). She is walking roughly where Paul McCartney should be, with her right foot forward to match his stance, too. The actual photo used is from a 2019 Volkswagen Sweden campaign for the album's 50th anniversary and to promote VW's new Park Assist technology--notice how the Beetle in the background is no longer awkwardly propped up on the curb? The license plate on it has also been modified from the original LMW 28IF to MLB 106. Money raised from the "Reparked Edition" photo went to a children's charity in Sweden. This is one of numerous references to The Beatles throughout the series. The Beatles founded Apple Corps and Apple Records in 1968.



@ 6:00, the easel swatches color order (from left to right, top to bottom) matches the respective Ring colors from IX (white) down to I (black). This is one of numerous references to the Ring colors throughout the series.

@ 7:33 and later @ 11:55, the runes on the right side of the Bugonia pot read, “Three Sisters :(“ and the runes on the left side of the pot read, “One Wheel :).” The Bugonia is a pixelated, cross-sectional 2D flower asset, with each 2D plane composed of one of three colors: red, green, or blue (RGB). This may be a reason for the name, “THREE SISTERS.” The name could also reference the track that plays in the elevator throughout the series: “Open Up Your Heart (and Let the Sun Shine In),” by the three McGuire Sisters, and/or could be connected to The Fates, The Graeae or the Gorgon Sisters from Greek mythology. The “wheel” could reference the philosopher that Lawrence mentions in Random Walk @ 0:24, who thought that every change in the universe takes place because a wheel somewhere is turning.

@ 7:33, the Bugonia pot displays both a design of two vertical knots with a circle in the middle and a design of a spiral aiming downward. The former design may relate to Lawrence’s possible *past* relationship/familial trauma, and the downward spiral may relate to his possible *post*-relationship/familial trauma.

@ 7:44, the Bugonia game’s title screen appears, with cheaply pasted honeycombs over what seems to be a lion’s face. The term “bugonia” refers to the mythical belief that bees were born from the carcasses of certain dead animals.

@ 7:44, the Bugonia game may relate to Ring V’s Purgatorio terrace/deadly sin of sloth, as it has you select your harvester then slowly progress through the game by doing nothing.

@ 7:54, the Bugonia game’s point system is in “hin/s.” “Hin” may refer to a liquid measure mentioned in the Judeo-Christian Bible containing 12 logs, equal to about 8 quarts.

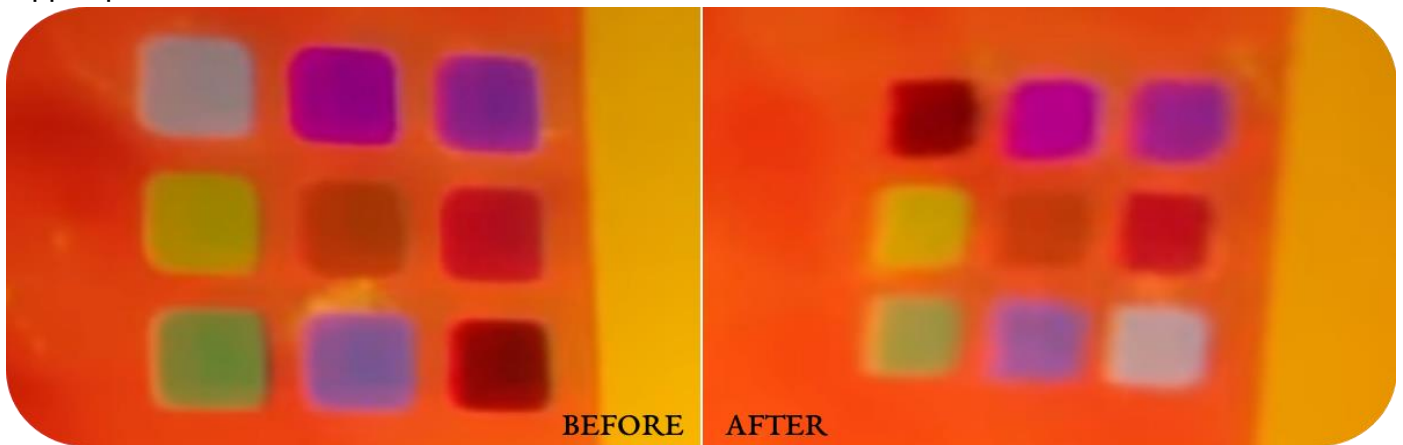
@ 7:54, the Bugonia game features tools for harvesting honey that are found specifically in the medical field, such as the Honey Syringe, Honey Tablet (capsules), and Honey IV Drip.

@ 7:54, each Bugonia rank corresponds to the consecutive Ring Items and Alchemical Elements, beginning with Ring IX’s Gold Shovel.

@ 8:03, the Bugonia game's voice-over audio lines exclaim, "You got a prize!" "You're on a roll!" "You got an upgrade...way to go!" etc. This audio is likely taken from the BonziBuddy virtual assistant popular throughout the 2000s.

@ 8:42, a flier displays for The Silverlake Lonely Hearts Ball 2014. Released in 1967, Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band was The Beatles' eighth studio album, its first track bearing the same name. This is one of numerous references to The Beatles throughout the series. The Beatles founded Apple Corps and Apple Records in 1968.

@ 8:48, with the color swatches left of the easel, the top-left (white) and bottom-right (black) colors have now swapped positions.



Beginning @ 8:59, Lawrence cycles through multiple "Old Pictures." Each of these pictures gives clues to the relationship of the Rings, their colors, and the Seven Deadly Sins from the second part of Dante Alighieri's *The Divine Comedy*, titled "Purgatorio," which sees Dante ascend Mount Purgatory through each of its terraces. This is one of numerous references to the Ring colors throughout the series. Interesting to note: Both Rings IX and I have already had their swatch colors swapped by this point, which may explain the *white* figure being eaten in Ring I and *no white lines* in Ring IX.



@ 9:13, the drawing shown closely resembles the 1820s painting "Saturn Devouring His Son," by Spanish artist Francisco Goya. It is claimed to be based on the Roman myth of Saturn eating his many children at birth out of fear they would overthrow him as he did his own father. This is one of numerous references to the word "devour" throughout the series.



@ 9:20, an error code appears, beginning with, "LOG: a68g: external resource invocation." Algol68G (or the Algol 68 Genie) is an Algol 68 compiler-interpreter. It can be used for executing Algol 68 programs or scripts. Algol 68 (short for Algorithmic Language 1968) was designed as a general-purpose programming language back in the late '60s. The first meeting of the ALGOL X group was held at Princeton University in May 1965. This is one of numerous references to Perseus/Medusa/Algol throughout the series.

@ 9:21, between the game closing and a browser tab with the BASKANIA cult's website opening, another tab reveals Lawrence researching the whereabouts of Arthur, discovering he went missing from Mercer County, New Jersey, back in late 2014 and that he had previously been on "graduate probation" at Princeton for an altercation with another student that led to his arrest. This is one of numerous references to Princeton throughout the series.

@ 9:22, an old GeoCities website for the BASKANIA cult pops up. While Restorativland's listed URL does actually function to a point—there is an Area 51 ("Science Fiction, Fantasy") > Hollow (neighborhood) subsection—there is no individual 1675 BASKANIA site.

@ 9:22, the BASKANIA cult's website is revealed. Baskania means "Evil Eye" in Ancient Greek, referring to the hostile glance of certain people, gods, animals, or mythological figures causing injury, illness, or even death. The concept has found its way into numerous Ancient Greek texts, including from Plato, Aristophanes, and Hesiod. This is one of numerous references to eyes ("evil" eyes in this case) throughout the series.

@ 9:22, the BASKANIA cult's website background depicts Perseus slaying Medusa. This is one of numerous references to Perseus/Medusa/Algol throughout the series.

@ 9:22, when the BASKANIA cult's website initially pops up and surprises Lawrence, the globe to the left of the Y2K countdown timer is static. However, when switching to the game and then back to the site @ 9:36, the globe is spinning to the left. Finally @ 11:18, after visiting the Blogs and returning to the home page of the site, the globe is now spinning to the right.

@ 9:22, the BASKANIA cult's website displays a dialogue from William Shakespeare's play Richard III between Richard and Lady Anne Neville. When Richard (who plans to marry Anne) confesses to the murder of both Anne's father and husband, she spits in his face, which begins the dialogue:

Richard: "Never came poison from so sweet a place."

Anne: "Never hung poison on a fouler toad. Out of my sight! Thou dost infect mine eyes."

Richard: "Thine eyes, sweet lady, have infected mine."

Of interest is the line following this, spoken by Anne: "Would they were basilisks' to strike thee dead." This could relate to the excerpt and hidden translation found at the bottom of the BASKANIA website @ 10:02: "The end of days sees mankind devoured by the great [basilisk]."

Another noteworthy point: Richard III usurped the throne, having both his nephews—its rightful heirs—locked in a tower and eventually assassinated. This shares similarities with the painting referenced immediately before this @ 9:13: "Saturn Devouring His Son."

@ 9:35, the BASKANIA cult's website homepage text is grouped by all the *Vermis Malum* Ring colors in order, beginning with Ring IX's white for "the end of the world" at the top, and ending with Ring I's black for the blacked-out text to be highlighted at the bottom. This is one of numerous references to the Ring colors throughout the series.

@ 9:45, the BASKANIA cult's website displays text that reads, "last updated 12/31/1999." This somewhat blatantly implies the cult took their lives that same night on Y2K eve.

@ 10:02, when Lawrence accidentally highlights the BASKANIA cult's website page, a line of hidden text reveals itself at the bottom of the screen footnoting the "The end of days sees mankind devoured by the great worm" quote above it with, "in certain editions the final word is translated alternately to 'serpent,' 'dragon,' or 'basilisk.'" This is one of numerous references to both "devour" and "worm"/"snake"/"basilisk" throughout the series.

@ 10:15, multiple blogs show to have been submitted by "N1C0M4CHU5." Nicomachus, son of Aristotle, was a Roman philosopher who wrote on music theory and the mystical properties of numbers.

@ 10:40, a BASKANIA cult blog post states, ". . . [the phreaking] only happened <10 times before it stopped and it was always like 3am reruns, when basically everyone is asleep anyway. I always thought that was the weirdest part, like why go to that much effort to prank the 3 people who are still up that late." This is one of numerous incidents occurring between the hours of 3 and 4 AM. In folklore, 3 AM (along with midnight) is known as the "witching hour"/"Devil's hour," which is when the powers of witches and other supernatural entities are said to be their strongest.

Beginning @ 10:15, there are numerous possible references to existential themes in/about video games, beginning with the blog post, "The Knights of Elohim." Elohim (God) is the primary antagonist of the 2014 philosophical puzzle game *The Talos Principle* (with a phenomenal soundtrack by Damjan Mravunac). Then @ 10:19, the "Carse on Games II" and "Carse on Games: I" blog posts are shown. This is likely a reference to James Carse, author of *Finite and Infinite Games*, summarized as, "There are at least two kinds of games: finite and infinite. A finite game is played for the purpose of winning, an infinite game for the purpose of continuing the play."

Finally @ 10:25, the "Parasite Adam" blog post seems a pretty clear nod to the 1998 survival horror RPG *Parasite Eve*. The story centers on a New York police officer aimed at preventing the end of the human race (through spontaneous combustion) at the hands of an ancient evil named Eve.

@ 10:40, a BASKANIA cult blog post mentions the “Lincoln County Pirate Broadcast Incident” happening around the time *Fire in the Sky* came out. The 1993 film *Fire in the Sky* tells the story of a logger whose mysterious disappearance in the mountains sparks a number of theories—and suspects. When he reappears five days later, the questions surrounding him only continue to grow. The story deals with mystery, personal conflicts, and who/what to trust when the seemingly impossible takes place.

@ 10:50, a BASKANIA cult blog post mentions the “Max Headroom” incident. This was a real incident in Chicago, Illinois in 1987, where two television stations (WGN-TV and WTTW) were hijacked, one after the other, for approximately 17 seconds and 90 seconds, respectively. Each pirate broadcast featured an unidentified person wearing a Max Headroom mask (a popular Sci-Fi satire character at the time) bobbing around against a moving corrugated metal background that resembled the character’s TV show theme. During the second transmission, the unidentified person even mooned the camera.

@ 11:56, the subject line of The Deal is “Emergent Properties.” In Biology, an emergent property is a characteristic an entity gains when it becomes part of a bigger system, helping living organisms better adapt to their environments, increasing their chances of survival. In Computer Science, emergent properties are properties that are not evident in the individual components of a system, but show up when combining those components, so they might also be called surprises.

@ 12:19, the Lead Flask at the top-right of the Knapsack looks to have three red, vertical scratches or smudges on the bottle. This is one of numerous references to three red streaks throughout the series.

@ 12:58, right before the alarm clock is pressed—only visible for a few frames—there appears to be a kind of shadowy demonic entity up against the back wall (the one that Lawrence rarely shows until after the alarm is pressed and he’s in the hospital bed).



@ 13:11, the Bugonia has now transformed from a pixelated RGB, cross-sectional 2D asset to a fully 3D one.

@ 13:34, the Honey IV Drip is next to the player-character’s hospital bed, which was also the last harvester used in the Bugonia game, and the one used when the Platinum rank/reward was achieved for “the Deal” @ 11:41.

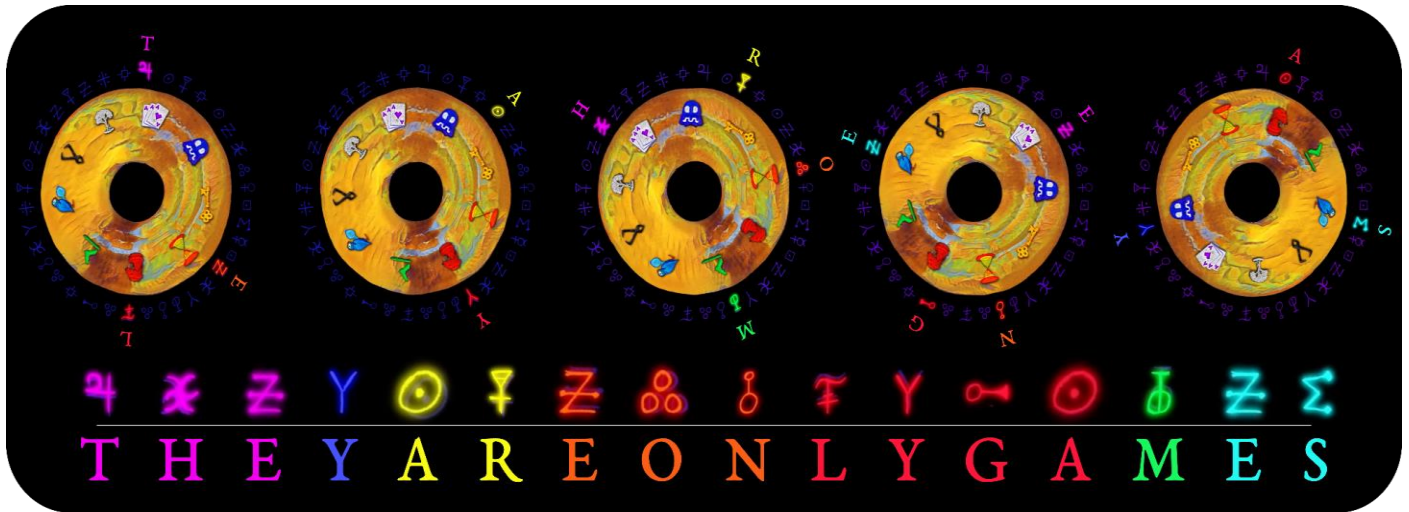
@ 15:25, the liquid pouring on screen is most likely Lawrence (or someone new? old?) stabbing the Borealis Grub from the outside with the Cobalt Fork.

🏠Cyclic Inheritance🏠

Beginning @ 0:00, a large, golden disk rotates around, stops, and then reveals highlighted letters in certain colors that match the respective Ring symbols on the disk itself. The following letters are revealed: “T, E, L” (Violet, Orange, Red) @ 0:00, “A, Y” (Yellow, Red) @ 6:05, “H, R, O, M” (Violet, Yellow, Orange, Green) @ 6:07, “E, N, G, E” (Violet, Orange, Red, Blue) @ 6:09, and finally “Y, A, S” (Indigo, Red, Blue) @ 13:17.

When placed in reverse sequential color order (in reference to the original Ring colors -i.e. Violet > Indigo > Yellow > Orange > Red > Green > Blue), it translates to the following:

THEY ARE ONLY GAMES




@ 0:04, we see an item description for an item that does not exist in Dark Souls and is also an Everpalm Pond anagram: Palevenom Drip.

“Tablets of distilled white poison pulled from the fangs of great worms which gnaw at the roots of the archtrees deep below. Briefly boost intelligence and faith, but lose HP.

The drip of the white fang can only be safely imbibed in small quantities, but is thought to invite majestic revelations of days to come to those who partake.”

This is one of numerous references to both “devour” and “worm”/“snake”/“basilisk” throughout the series.

	<h3>Palevenom Drip</h3> <p>Tablets of distilled white poison pulled from the fangs of great worms which gnaw at the roots of the archtrees deep below. Briefly boost intelligence and faith, but lose HP.</p> <p>The drip of the white fang can only be safely imbibed in small quantities, but is thought to invite majestic revelations of days to come to those who partake.</p>
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@ 0:04 we can hear a voicemail recording most likely from Lawrence’s therapist asking to record a message after the tone. We then hear Lawrence say: “...told me there wasn’t anything before January, but I-I was wondering if there’s any way...” It continues @ 0:34: “...in a really bad headspace right now. Like, even just 30 minutes... I’ll go to bed, like, I’ll go to bed, but then, I’m back at my desk. Do you ever feel like you’re dreaming but you know you’re dreaming? -know what I’m talking about?”

@ 0:07, we can see that Lawrence has a status effect under his health and energy bars near the top. This status effect does not exist in Dark Souls 1. However, it is a status effect in Dark Souls 3. This status effect is contradictory to Lawrence’s current state, as we can see when he opens his inventory that he has 0 humanity, otherwise known as being hollowed. This status effect indicates that your game is being invaded by another player, which is impossible while your character is hollowed.



@ 0:18 Lawrence speaks with a *Dark Souls* NPC. The first time he interacts with the character, the YouTube captions say “...My sun...” The second time he interacts with this NPC, the captions say, “...My son...”



@ 1:12, when Lawrence opens his inventory, a ring is shown that does not exist in Dark Souls. No name nor description are visible for this ring, but it does appear to have wormhorns on it. This is one of numerous references to wormhorns throughout the series. (See [REPEATING TEXT/THEMES](#) for other occurrences.)



@ 1:16, an item is shown named “Ring of the Evil Eye.” This is one of numerous references to eyes (“evil” eyes in this case) throughout the series.

@ 1:17, three red markings on the ground display a helpful message from another character to “Be wary of dead end.” This is one of numerous references to three red streaks throughout the series.

@ 1:23, we see a message left behind by another player. It reads, “Be wary of dead end.” The character displayed on-screen is Darkstalker Kaath. Darkstalker Kaath’s race is that of the primordial serpents. This is one of numerous references to snakes.

@ 1:49, Ring IV is now the second time *Vermis Malum’s* game menu has no music, the first being Ring V in *Ex Nihilo* @ 1:47.

@ 2:10, Lawrence’s player-character is now facing a different direction in the elevator (his right) for the first time.

@ 2:21, Ring IV reveals itself as a giant chess board, and starting with the knight for Sir Ira, the chess pieces match up with the game *Chess Titans* that Arthur was playing in *Electric Sheep* @ 2:00. Each chess piece (sans pawn) represents a *Vermis Malum* Ring. In order, they are:

5th Floor - the pawn/Wrothlands Memorial Stone

5th Floor - the knight (Ring IV, red, Sir Ira calls on the rotary phone to interact with the player-character)

4th Floor - first bishop (Ring IX, white with snow, the appropriate music, and the Gold Shovel icon on the prompt when the player-character interacts with it)

4th Floor - second bishop (Ring VIII, violet, no interaction)

3rd Floor - the rook (Ring III, green, Arthur’s cracked phone is visible when the player-character interacts with it)

3rd Floor - the queen (Ring II, blue, “katiezoid229”’s Puffin Pop playthrough displays when the player-character interacts with it)

3rd Floor - the king (Ring I, black, no direct interaction unless the 1st Floor is considered)

2nd Floor - no chess pieces (the “POMP N.AVEL REND” anagram)

1st Floor - no chess pieces (the King himself)



@ 2:35, the Perseus constellation is visible in the sky. The demon star Algol is blacked out. This is one of numerous references to Perseus/Medusa/Algol throughout the series.

@ 2:45, The text on the Wrothlands Memorial Stone reads “MEMENTO MOLA,” which translates from Latin to “Remember the Millstone.” This is one of numerous references to stones.

@ 2:45, at the bottom-right corner of the text bubble for the Wrothlands Memorial Stone the words “COME CLOSE TO REMEMBER” are displayed in the same font and color as the words “VERMIN” in the quote @ 1:56 and “FOE” in the quote (revisited) @ 10:43.

@ 3:09, the player-character receives a call from Sir Ira on the rotary phone, directly under a giant chess piece. The chess piece is that of a horse, therefore a “knight.” When answering the phone, Sir Ira’s Ring Ghost icon is also the knight. Knights in England are formally addressed as Sir, fitting for said Ring Ghost.

@ 3:09, Sir Ira has a name noticeably relevant to his Ring’s Purgatorio terrace/deadly sin. Ira is Latin for “wrath, anger” in English.

@ 3:21, Sir Ira mentions Lawrence “choosing the martian knife.” The Astrological Symbol for Mars is also the old Alchemical Symbol for Iron, referring to the iron knife that Lawrence received in Bad Seed @ 11:31, or Martian as pertaining to Mars, the Roman god of war and conflict.

@ 3:31, Sir Ira tells Lawrence to perform a cesarean to set him free. It is implied that he should do it with the iron knife Lawrence has in his inventory. That knife's description references the assassination of Julius Caesar, who also gave his name to the Cesarean Section, as it is theorized that he was the first child born with such a method. This is one of numerous references to Julius Caesar throughout the series.

@ 4:12, Sir Ira states, "For a long while I wondered if I was born under the wrong star . . ." while the player-character stares up at the constellation Perseus, with the star Algol blacked out. This is one of numerous references to Perseus/Medusa/Algol throughout the series.

@ 4:43, Sir Ira states, "A child must grow to hate his father. Then it devours him." This is one of numerous references to the word "devour" throughout the series.

@ 6:30, the Knapsack displays 4 Apples. The apple count may relate to the Ring Ghosts and/or Ring viewing, as every time Lawrence views/visits another Ring, the Apple count drops by 1.

@ 7:06, Lawrence stops in front of a bishop chess piece that is illuminated white, the interaction bubble shows Ring IX's Gold Shovel icon, and the music that we hear from Ring IX starts playing as snow begins to fall. The prompt brings up a Methods of Malware presentation by Conrad Church for a class at Princeton in 1997. This may imply a connection between Conrad and Ring IX.

@ 7:11, Conrad Church's COS597K "Models of Malware (cont.)" 1997 PowerPoint Presentation from Princeton University appears on screen. A presentation with that identifier does actually exist online (on the Princeton website, no less), but it applies to the Fall 2024 semester, was written by Ravi Netravali, and is titled, "Systems for Serving Generative AI."

@ 7:11, Conrad Church's "Models of Malware (cont.)" 1997 PowerPoint Presentation details three computer viruses, or "worms," of real-life historical significance.

-The 1971 "CREEPER" worm was the first computer worm ever created (though, with no malicious intent). It infected the Advanced Research Projects Agency Network, or ARPANET, the forerunner to the internet with a simple message on screen: "I'M THE CREEPER! CATCH ME IF YOU CAN!". It would then auto-delete itself from the device.

-The 1987 "Christmas Tree," or "Christmas Tree EXEC," worm was the first widely distributed computer worm. Written by a student at the Clausthal University of Technology in Germany, the worm would draw a Christmas tree with text graphics on a user's computer screen. It would then send itself to every email address listed in the user's Contacts file. The worm caused massive disruption across multiple computer systems.

-The 1988 "Morris worm" (named after Robert Morris, Jr., a graduate student in Computer Science at Cornell), was the first computer worm to gain mainstream media attention. Morris released the worm from MIT, to disguise the fact that the worm actually came from Cornell. However, it replicated much faster than he had anticipated. By the time his and his friend's anonymously relayed public solution reached the intended recipients, it was too late to stop. Total economic impact ranged from \$100,000 to \$10,000,000.

MODELS OF MALWARE (CONT.)

Computer Worm: Recursive self-replicating autonomous program. "Infect" initial host machine(s) by exploiting vulnerabilities / user behavior, hijack data + processing power. Propagate to other machines along network, repeat (exponential growth).

- 1971 - CREEPER

- Proof-of-concept proto-worm, printed message

- Exploit: ARPANET connections

- 1987 - CHRISTMAS TREE

- Mass e-mail spammer, one of several Christmas exploits

@ 7:31, Lawrence loads the BASKANIA blogs page to reveal a post titled, "A Nazar for You." A nazar, or "evil eye amulet," is a blue, circular amulet believed by many cultures to protect against the "evil eye," or curse brought about by an envious and malevolent glare. This is one of numerous references to eyes ("evil" eyes in this case) throughout the series.

@ 7:31, Lawrence loads the BASKANIA blogs page to reveal a post titled, "Paracelsus and Polyphemus." Paracelsus was a 16th-century Swiss physician and alchemist, who contributed substantially to the rise in modern medicine, including psychiatric treatment. He is known as the "father of toxicology," and Paracelsianism was the early modern medical movement inspired by his works, until the Scientific Revolution of the 17th century.

Polyphemus was the giant cyclops son of Poseidon and Thoosa, who trapped Odysseus (Ulysses in Roman) and his crew on the coast of Sicily in Homer's The Odyssey, only to be tricked and blinded by them, as the remaining crew fled for their ship.

There may be a correlation between the two, but one has yet to be found. However, the "A Nazar for You" (document "03051997") blog does begin with one of its lines, "Ulysses and the sirens," which could be a nod to Odysseus and Polyphemus.

@ 7:46, the scroll bar for the "A Nazar for You" blog's document "03051997" never moves, no matter how far down the page Lawrence scrolls. This may be an error on the part of the creator or an intended event.

@ 8:08, the "A Nazar for You" (document "03051997") blog reads, ". . . even just a couple notes could be all it takes for someone primed right. Crunch would be proud." This most likely refers to John Draper (AKA "Captain Crunch," or "Crunch"), a phone phreak who gained notoriety when he discovered a toy whistle packaged in boxes of Cap'n Crunch cereal emitted a frequency of precisely 2600 Hz (the same frequency that AT&T used with portions of their network) and proceeded to make many free long-distance calls with his fellow phreaks. After 1980, the network upgraded, and the whistles became no more than souvenir collectibles.

@ 8:18, the "A Nazar for You" (document "03051997") blog reads, ". . . like those well-meaning mothers who thought playing Beatles records next to the cradle would make their baby grow up smarter. they were right in a way." This is one of numerous references to The Beatles throughout the series. The Beatles founded Apple Corps and Apple Records in 1968.

@ 8:48, the “A Nazar for You” (document “03051997”) blog reads, “the world is saturated with random noise, arbitrary bands of white and black and every sinful color on the spectrum between.” This is one of numerous references to the Ring colors throughout the series. and is a clear reference to their inclusion in Dante’s “Purgatorio” with its Seven Deadly Sins:

Ring IX, white, Earthly Paradise

Ring VIII, violet, Lust

Ring VII, indigo, Gluttony

Ring VI, yellow, Greed

Ring V, orange, Sloth

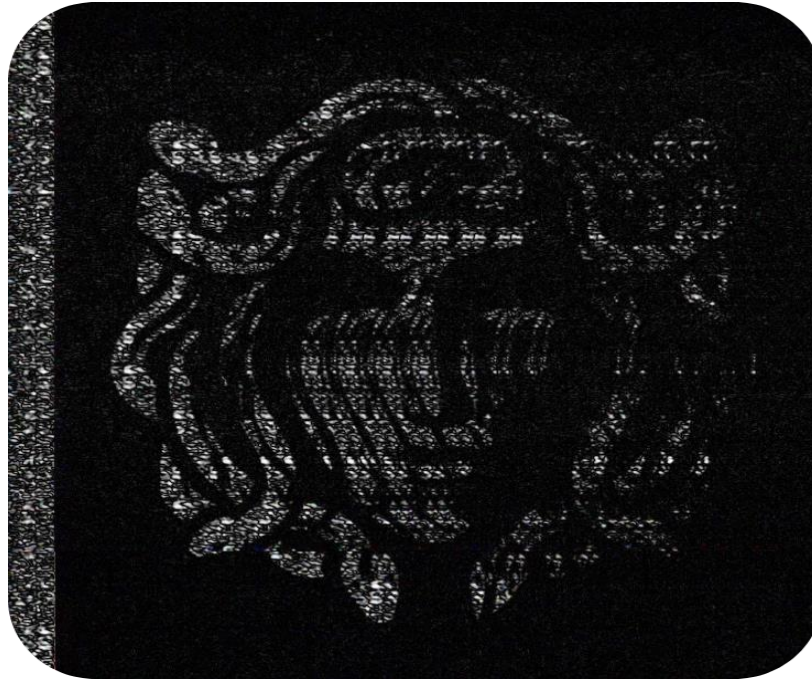
Ring IV, red, Wrath

Ring III, green, Envy

Ring II, blue, Pride

Ring I, black, possibly Ante-Purgatory or Inferno

@ 9:15, a magic eye poster is revealed. The hidden image within is that of Medusa. This is one of numerous references to Perseus/Medusa/Algol throughout the series.



@ 9:23, the “A Nazar for You” (document “03051997”) blog reads, “the government did not make it. Bell Labs did not make it. they observed it. DEEP down.”

Bell Labs, whose roots stretch back to Alexander Graham Bell, was an engineering division spawned from AT&T and the Western Electric company back in 1925. Since its inception, Bell Laboratories (now under ownership of Nokia and renamed Nokia Bell Labs) has been responsible for a plethora of technological innovations and discoveries, including the first lasers, transistors, hearing aids, the solar battery, radio astronomy, and even the UNIX operating system. They were also a major force behind advances in wired/wireless broadband networking and have received numerous accolades, including 10 Nobel Prizes and five Turing Awards. Since 1967, their official headquarters has resided in Murray Hill, New Jersey, with other Jersey locations housing more facilities in the years that followed.

@ 9:53, the “A Nazar For You” document mentions, “. . . meanwhile the poison is already devouring them inside slowly and they can’t feel it.” This is one of numerous references to the word “devour” throughout the series.

@ 12:27, the *Vermis Malum* elevator *ding* is heard as "katiezoid229" enters Glo's Glamours.

@ 12:27 the image on one of the back walls in Glo's Glamours is taken from the larger painting *Venus with a Mirror*, 1555, by Titian. The same image is seen on the wall above the bed in *Hungry Ghosts* @ 13:39.



@12:30, Glo's Glamours is shown. The map is a modified version of the 2014-2016 Puffle Party Clothing Shop map



@ 12:35, Glam Glo has a name noticeably relevant to her Ring's Purgatorio terrace/deadly sin. Glo is short for "Gloria," Latin for "pride, boasting" in English.

@ 13:16, Katie's *Puffin Pop* Friends list is shown, while the gruesome crunching sound from throughout the series is heard. The only friend in her Friends list is "Leo9." Katie's message bubble appears blue, while "Leo9"'s bubble appears red. This is one of numerous references to a blue-purple-red color shift throughout the series.

@ 15:01, Arthur's laptop's webcam turns on to an empty chair at 3:06 AM and browses Lawrence's home videos. This is one of numerous incidents occurring between the hours of 3 and 4 AM. In folklore, 3 AM (along with midnight) is known as the "witching hour"/"Devil's hour," which is when the powers of witches and other supernatural entities are said to be their strongest.

@ 15:08, what looks to be a bloody washcloth rests on Lawrence's desk in front of the monitor. This could be a result of his insidious, increasingly persistent cough throughout the series.

@ 15:14, Lawrence and Haley can be heard in a video on Arthur's computer watching and discussing a film that Haley enjoys and Lawrence seems to dislike titled *Session 9*. The 2001 film revolves around an asbestos abatement crew's new contract at an abandoned insane asylum. During their rushed cleanup job, tensions rise and they discover tapes from a former patient with multiple personalities. Darker secrets are revealed throughout the patient's sessions, and strange occurrences begin to take place for the crew watching them.

🔍 Orphan 🔍

@ 0:00, a song can be faintly heard during a sequence floating through what seems to be hex code and brain synapses slowly infested by a malicious force. The song is the 1966 hit “Eleanor Rigby,” by The Beatles. This is one of numerous references to The Beatles throughout the series. The Beatles founded Apple Corps and Apple Records in 1968.

@ 0:18, the gurgling sound effect plays, first heard in [Random Walk @ 14:21](#) when Lawrence breaks the bank in Nero’s Palace.

@ 0:19, the looking.pdf document was last modified on 11/30/2014 at 3:09 AM. This is one of numerous incidents occurring between the hours of 3 and 4 AM. In folklore, 3 AM (along with midnight) is known as the “witching hour”/“Devil’s hour,” which is when the powers of witches and other supernatural entities are said to be their strongest.

@ 1:20, Arthur’s “looking” document states, “Gun to my head, obviously, I never seriously thought what happened to Katherine Bell was on account of a stillborn online game she played for a few months of a messy, troubled life.” This is the first instance of Katherine’s full first and last name being used.

@ 2:17, Arthur’s Ring III save file has now disappeared, with Lawrence’s Ring III save file in its place.

@ 2:17, Ring III is now the third time *Vermis Malum’s* game menu has no music, the first two being Ring V in [Ex Nihilo @ 1:47](#) and Ring IV in [Cyclic Inheritance @ 1:49](#).

@ 2:36, the *SEVEN CITIES: A simulated adventure* logo features an image of a parrot. This may relate to the SEVEN CITIES text for IV. MORDACITY @ 12:28 that reads, “At some point you snake a hand to your waist to show her, but your phone is gone. The man or the parrot or the mola or the goat or the girl in the wheatfield could have warned you this is how it feels at the end.” It could also be a loose reference to the Chinese room thought experiment from 1980 and its statements on the imitative quality of machine learning. These are two of numerous references to birds throughout the series.

@ 2:36, the *SEVEN CITIES: A simulated adventure* background music sounds reminiscent of the early 1900s Ukrainian New Year’s song, “Shchedryk,” which was later adapted to the popular American Christmas tune, “Carol of the Bells.” When translated to English, the original “Shchedryk” lyrics refer to a “Little Carol Bird.” This is one of numerous references to birds throughout the series.

@ 2:46, each of SEVEN CITIES’ displayed days of the week reflects its associated Ring theme/color and is accompanied by letters of the Greek alphabet. They are also displayed alongside imagery for each item indicator of each Ring. They read as such:

- Monday, Ring IX. FELI[CITY] (bliss, joy) - “DEAD” - Tree 🌳 (@ 2:46)
- Tuesday, Ring VIII. SALA[CITY] (obscene, sexual) - “ARTS” - Heart ❤️ (@ 4:41)
- Wednesday, Ring VII. VORA[CITY] (insatiable, ravenous) - “MAKE” - Fork 🍴 (@ 6:22)
- Thursday, Ring VI. RECIPRO[CITY] (mutual exchange) - “THE” - Scales ⚖️ (@ 8:02)

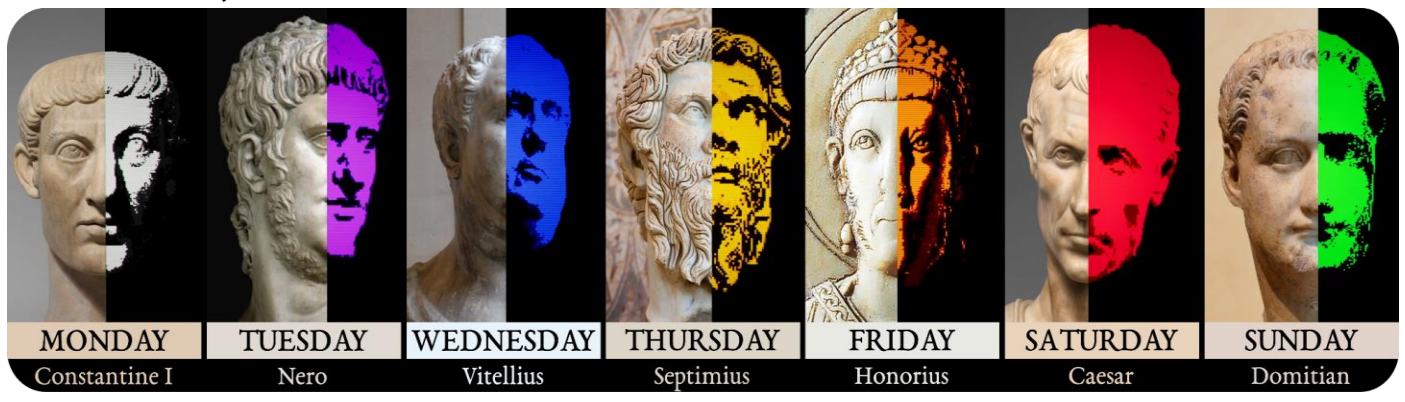
Friday, Ring V. FEBRI[CITY] (sick with feverishness) - "CHURCH" - Eye 🐛 (@ 9:20)

Saturday, Ring IV. MORDA[CITY] (tendency to bite) - "BELLS" - Knife 🔪 (@ 11:25)

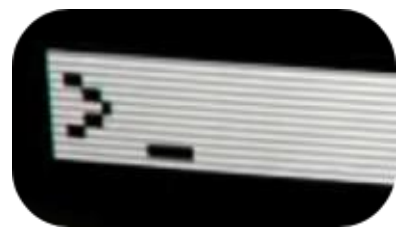
Sunday, Ring III. PERSPICA[CITY] (insight, shrewdness) - "RING" - Binoculars 🔭 (@ 13:42)



Beginning @ 2:46, each day of the week has an associated Roman emperor ("dictator" in Julius Caesar's case, as he ruled before the first emperor). Starting with Monday, in order, they are Constantine I @ 2:46, Nero @ 4:41, Vitellius @ 6:22, Septimius @ 8:02, Honorius @ 9:20, Caesar @ 11:25, and Domitian @ 13:42. This is one of numerous references to Nero and Julius Caesar throughout the series. (See REPEATING TEXT/THEMES for other occurrences.)



@ 2:49, Ring III's symbol ("> _") is visible in the command box at the bottom-left of the screen.



@ 2:50, the elevator *ding* followed by 1 second of the 1955 single "Open Up Your Heart (and Let the Sun Shine In)," by the McGuire Sisters plays from the first moment of Ring IX.

@ 3:16, the Knapsack displays 2 Apples. The apple count may relate to the Ring Ghosts and/or Ring viewing, as every time Lawrence views/visits another Ring, the Apple count drops by 1.

@ 3:53, the IX. FELICITY text reads, "Next to the tree, a small CANOE is moored on the beach. You cannot see a boatman anywhere, but a GREEN OBJECT lies on the stern. . . . It is a QUICKSILVER RING. . . . You can make out the datemark on the inscription, but the rest of the words are no longer legible."

This could be alluding to Ring IX's "06/12/14" prompt that pops up on screen as Lawrence's player-character walks past the beached canoe next to the large tree in Bad Seed @ 11:10.

@ 3:53, the IX. FELICITY text mentions a green object (the Quicksilver Ring) lying on the stern of a small canoe. When the player then types in the command, "GET GREEN" (neglecting to add the word, "OBJECT"), a response appears stating, "You cannot get any greener." From here, the player makes a second command attempt, now with the corrected word-string, and the game continues forward. The response, "You cannot get any greener," may relate to Arthur's save file stalling on Ring III until its removal once Lawrence's save file progresses to it @ 2:17.

@ 4:31, IX's Ring Ghost Beatrice can be heard saying, "please."

Beginning @ 4:31, the end screens of each available city/day of the week refer to somebody/something moving away:

IX. FELICITY (@ 4:31) - "As you pass the threshold, a voice calls after you 'Do you know...?' But you have already run away."

VIII. SALACITY (@ 6:14) - "When you return to the tree, the branch is empty and the blue bird has flown away."

VII. VORACITY (@ 7:54) - "When you reach the pond again, the black fish has swum away."

VI. RECIPROCITY (@ 9:08) - "By the time it clears, the grey girl has long since walked away."

V. FEBRICITY - No end screen

IV. MORDACITY (@ 13:32) - "You do not see when she goes away."

III. PERSPICACITY - No end screen

Beginning @ 4:31, the end screens of each available city/day of the week capitalizes one of its words. Each of these capitalized words seems to refer to its associated Ring Ghost. The cities/days, their capitalized word (probable association as well), and their scores are listed below:

IX. FELICITY (@ 4:31) - "Doomsayer," Beatrice | Score: 0357

VIII. SALACITY (@ 6:14) - "Mistress," Lady Lux | Score 0778

VII. VORACITY (@ 7:54) - "Lord," - Big Gul P | Score 1131

VI. RECIPROCITY (@ 9:08) - "Warden," Ava the Keeper | Score 1329

V. FEBRICITY - No end screen | Score (from beginning of IV. MORDACITY end screen): Score 1407

IV. MORDACITY (@ 13:32) - "Muse," - Sir Ira | Score: 1521

III. PERSPICACITY (@ 15:29) - No end screen | Final score: 1521



In Orphan beginning @ 4:31, the score screens of each available city/day of the week display stat points. When strung together in order, these stat points are actually an ASCII Code phrase, but the phrase is noticeably missing a letter:

+THEY+LOOKED+TOO+LO[]G+

However, V. FEBRICITY's score of 1407 (visible at the start of IV. MORDACITY's score calculation @ 13:33) is 78 more than VI. RECIPROCITY's score of 1329 @ 9:09. 78's non-ASCII text equivalent is the letter "N." Therefore, the final overall code, 43 84 72 69 89 43 76 79 79 75 69 68 43 84 79 79 43 76 79 [78] 71 43, converts from ASCII Code to the English text phrase:

+THEY+LOOKED+TOO+LO[N]G+



@ 5:15, the VIII. SALACITY text reads, "It is young, perhaps freshly hatched. Its gilded scales are still damp with womb water." (An adder is also mentioned earlier @ 2:26 in the Ring III quote.) Death Adders are one of a few species of snakes who don't lay eggs and instead give live birth to their offspring.

@5:59, the VIII. SALACITY text reads "A tall, red-complected man by the fireplace gives you a stony look as you approach." This has been confirmed by Volrusk to be a part of J. Julius Hopp that has been trapped in the game.

@ 6:09, the Perseus constellation floats by in the night sky, with its star Algol in bright red. This is one of numerous references to Perseus/Medusa/Algol throughout the series.

@ 6:15, VIII's Ring Ghost Lady Lux can be heard exclaiming, "Muah!"

@ 6:36, the Windmill sound can be heard from Bad Seed @ 12:57. This is one of numerous references to the Windmill throughout the series. q

@ 7:20, the text reads, "You hear wet tearing as an opportunistic wolfhound shreds the carcass of a slaughtered racing goat lying on the heap. Crude symbols have been carved on its hide."

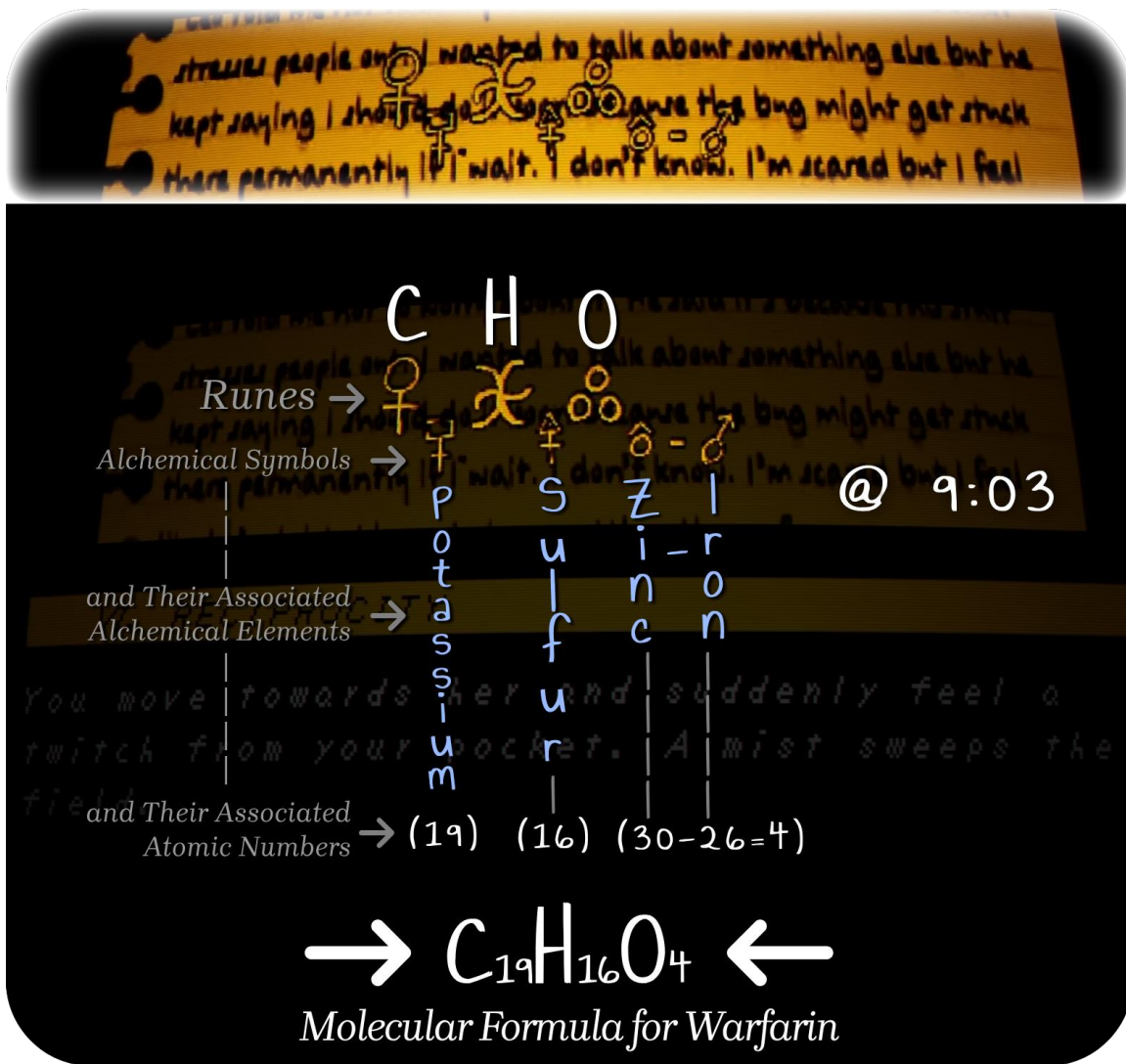
VII. VORACITY clearly mirrors Ring VII, but this scene even more specifically seems to reflect Gul feasting on the red, slaughtered carcass in Hungry Ghosts @ 18:14. We have further confirmation of this by the "symbols . . . carved on its hide," which would mirror the "LOSER" runes on the red corpse itself.

@ 7:54, VII's Ring Ghost Big Gul P can be heard asking, "What do I . . ."

@ 8:47, the VI. RECIPROCITY text reads " ...you see a little GIRL with a stuffed toy clutched in her pale hands." This is a reference to Katherine, the 2000 victim.

@ 8:55, the Windmill sound can be heard from Bad Seed @ 12:57. This is one of numerous references to the Windmill throughout the series.

@ 9:03, the molecular formula for warfarin (C₁₉H₁₆O₄) flashes on-screen in the series' runes. Initially used as a pesticide, it is an oral anticoagulant drug normally used to prevent blood clot formation. Important to note: Warfarin has the ability to cross the placental barrier during pregnancy which can result in fetal bleeding, spontaneous abortion, preterm birth, stillbirth, and neonatal death. This is one of numerous references to warfarin throughout the series.

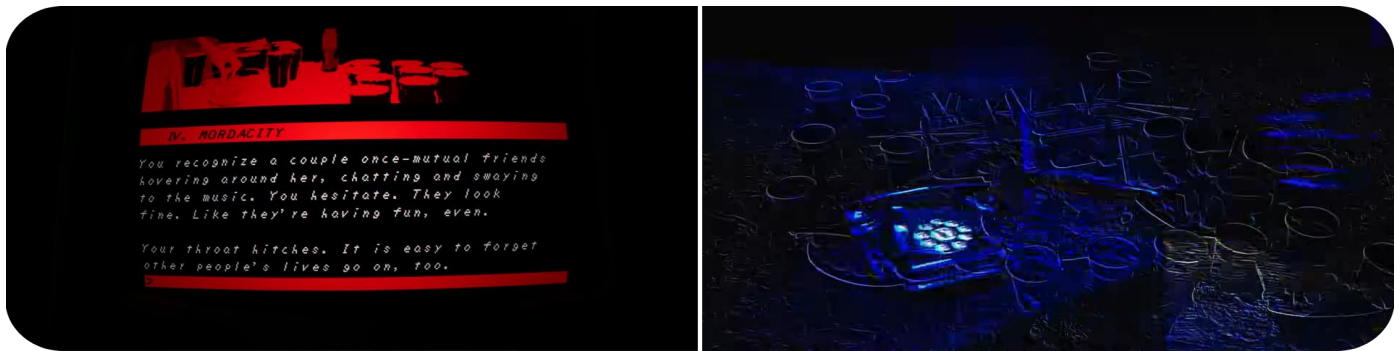


@ 9:08, VI's Ring Ghost Ava the Keeper can be heard scoffing from Hungry Ghosts @ 12:17, just after she states, "Rules be the thrifty golden chains that set men free,' say corpulent judges and lapdog prosecutors."

@ 9:33, the SEVEN CITIES text for V. FEBRICITY reads, "You dream a beautiful floating fairy whose entrancing eyes seem to change color every time you look away." The line is likely alluding to the strange, multicolored light source off in the distance in Ex Nihilo @ 3:03 and all but confirms it as Mother Ace. This is one of numerous references to the Ring colors throughout the series.

@ 11:39, LOST LIV has a name noticeably relevant to her Ring's Purgatorio terrace/deadly sin. Liv is short for "Lividia," which most likely refers to "Invidia," Latin for "envy, jealousy" in English.

@ 11:39, a quick video of a party with red Solo cups is shown, while the text, "LOST LIV stands by a table of cups with names written on duct tape stuck to the sides." is typed out. This may be the same event the flash frame of cups and utensils is referencing in Hungry Ghosts @ 8:31.



@ 11:42, the text reads, "You watch as she casually pours a beer for 'Robespierre,' then starts on a vodka and soda for the 'Butcher of Bristol.'" These two names likely refer to an excerpt from the 1934 book *The Sermon on the Mount: The Key to Success in Life*, by spiritual leader Emmet Fox, in which Fox warns against the self-destructive consequences of wishing ill toward others.

The full passage reads, "To indulge in a sense of execration of anyone (quite irrespective of any question of deserts, or otherwise, in the object of your condemnation) is certain to bring trouble upon your own head proportionate to the intensity of the feeling you entertain, and the number of times or minutes that you devote to it. No Scientific Christian ever considers hatred or execration to be 'justifiable' in any circumstances, but whatever your opinion about that may be, there is no question about its practical consequences to you. You might just as well swallow a dose of prussic acid in two gulps, and think to protect yourself by saying, 'This one is for Robespierre; and this one for the Bristol murderer.' You will hardly have any doubt as to who will receive the benefit of the poison."

@ 12:18, the SEVEN CITIES command icon disappears during IV. MORDACITY and doesn't reappear until III. PERSPICACITY @ 13:45.

@ 12:28, IV. MORDACITY reads, "The man or the parrot or the mola or the goat or the girl in the wheatfield could have warned you this is how it feels at the end.

Maybe they tried."

This likely refers to characters mentioned in most of the prior cities/days of the week:

- The man: VIII. SALACITY (@ 5:55), the "tall, red-complected man by the fireplace," AKA "redman"
- The parrot: VIII. SALACITY (@ 5:23), the "popinjay with beautiful blue plumage perch[ing] on an upturned branch," AKA "bluebird"
- The mola: VII. VORACITY (@ 6:27), the "fat black SUNFISH with a big forked scar marking its brow, as if its head had been cloven and stitched back together," AKA "blackfish"
- The goat: VII. VORACITY (@ 7:22), "the carcass of a slaughtered racing goat," AKA "indigoat"
- The girl in the wheatfield: VI. RECIPROCITY (@ 8:41), "a little GIRL with a stuffed toy clutched in her pale hands," AKA "greygirl"

@ 13:00, the Windmill sound can be heard from Bad Seed @ 12:57. This is one of numerous references to the Windmill throughout the series.

@ 13:33, IV's Ring Ghost Sir Ira's wheezing laugh can be heard.

@ 15:29, III's Ring Ghost Lost Liv can be heard muttering something indecipherable.

@ 15:37, the "SONG FOR THE LOSER" poem is incomplete. When the blanks are filled in with all known Rings' highlighted quote words, the solution reads as shown below.

SONG FOR THE LOSER

You that [paradise] forewent
Who wager [love] but win lament
Who [eat] the meal long since to mold
Who [prison] irons change for gold
Who speed the head but [slow] the feet
Who sow the corpses [vermin] eat
Who dwell on [poison] over praise
Who let no mirror slip the [gaze]
All you [lost] in gloom and gloam
Let my song now guide you home

@ 15:59, the time on Arthur's computer reads "03:13," as his loser.pdf document reveals his first exposure to the Everpalm Pond signal. This is one of numerous incidents occurring between the hours of 3 and 4 AM. In folklore, 3 AM (along with midnight) is known as the "witching hour"/"Devil's hour," which is when the powers of witches and other supernatural entities are said to be their strongest.

@ 17:26, Arthur states, "I read a quote years ago. . . . It was . . . something to the effect of, 'If you want to fight the Devil, first learn to take a joke.'"This mirrors some of Haley's final words in Worm in the Apple @ 9:50: "...my mom used to tell me, she said: 'You want to make God laugh? Tell him your plan.'"

∞ Worm in the Apple ∞

@ 0:04, the typewriter carriage return sound from Vermis Malum @ 0:04 is noticeably absent.

@ 0:18, Ring I is now the fourth time *Vermis Malum's* game menu has no music, the other three being Ring V in Ex Nihilo @ 1:47 and Ring IV in Cyclic Inheritance @ 1:49, and Ring III in Orphan @ 2:17.

@ 0:29, a downward-facing symbol (the Silver Key) is pictured as Ring I's Item (left icon), with a Moon/silver as its Astrological/Alchemical symbol (middle icon), and tragedy mask as its Ring Ghost (right icon). This is in stark contrast with Ring IX in Bad Seed @ 5:39, where an upward-facing symbol (the Gold Shovel) is pictured as the Item, a Sun/gold as the Astrological/Alchemical symbol, and the comedy mask as the Ring Ghost. This begins the many polar contrasts/comparisons between the two Rings.

@ 0:47, the scene fades into a close-up of the "1" elevator button lighting up, just like in Vermis Malum @ 0:08.

@ 0:52, two floor dings are heard, showing the elevator's descent from Ring III straight down to Ring I.

@ 0:56, within the lens flare of the lit "01," multiple reflections of the same "01" are seen (i.e. "01," "10," "01," etc.), which could suggest a relation to binary numbers.

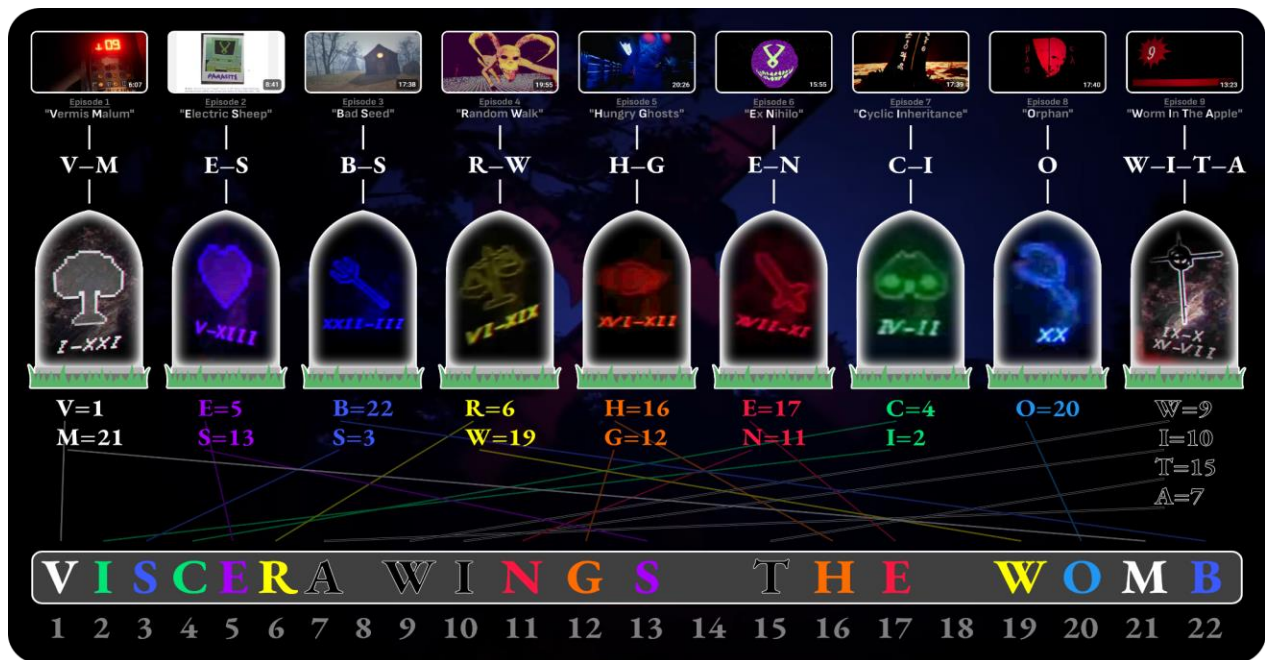
@ 0:58, Ring I looks to be a dusk or nighttime version of Her Garden in Ring IX.

@ 1:21, the description of THE START sign reads, "graves forgotten." In Random Walk @ 8:45, the PUZZLE TIME! worm riddle begins with, "I grow in graves forgotten, where mourners no more tread."

@ 1:26, the forgotten graves each display a set of Roman numerals below their associated Ring symbol. They are as follows:

Ring IX: I-XXI; Ring VIII: V-XIII; Ring VII: XXII-III; Ring VI: VI-XIX; Ring V: XVI-XII; Ring IV: XVII-XI; Ring III: IV-II; Ring II: XX; Ring I: IX-X XV-VII

The solution resides in the episode titles. Beginning with a combination of the "Ring IX" grave and first episode, "Vermis Malum," each newly revealed grave (Ring 9 through Ring 1) references the first letters of each consecutive episode (episode 1 through episode 9) and directs them to a numbered (Roman-numeral) position within a 22-character final phrase. Therefore, beginning with the Ring IX grave of "I-XXI" referencing "V-M" (V=1 and M=21), the puzzle can be solved utilizing the graphic below, ultimately forming the phrase, "VISCERA WINGS THE WOMB."



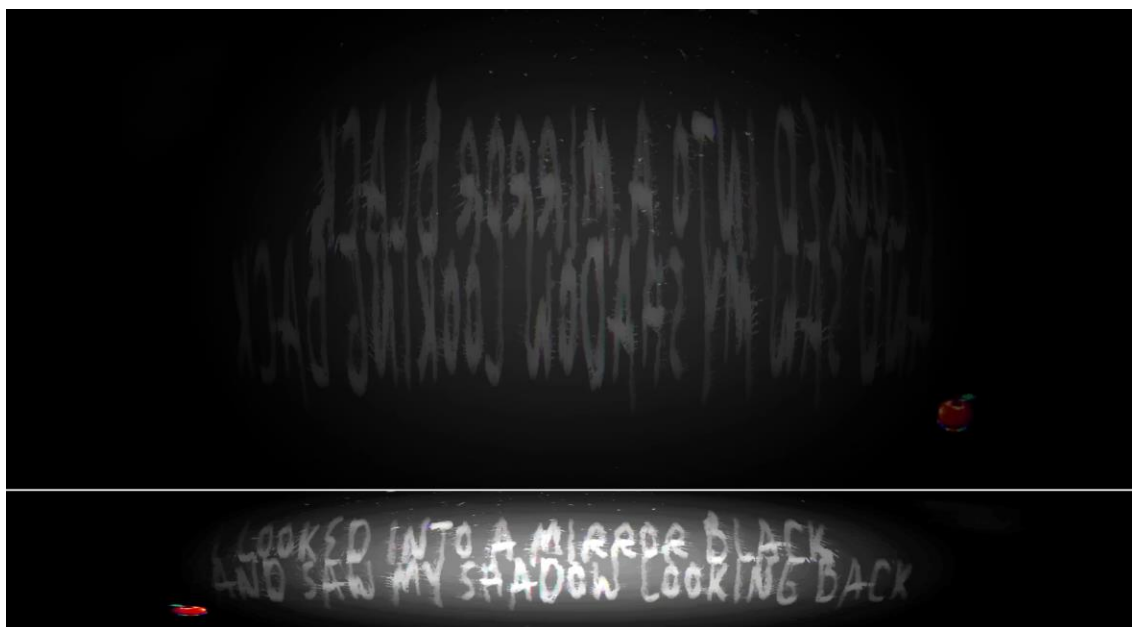
@ 2:13, the Ring I gravestone's cross is reminiscent of the "HOBO CODES" symbol for "Bad man lives here" on the coffee mug in Vermis Malum @ 4:37.

@ 2:31, the Gold Shovel (retrieved from Ring IX) is used to obtain the final Knapsack item, the Silver Key, in Ring I. This is another example of the relation (often binary opposites) of Ring IX and Ring I to each other.

@ 2:37, the music abruptly cuts out when Lawrence's player-character begins digging.

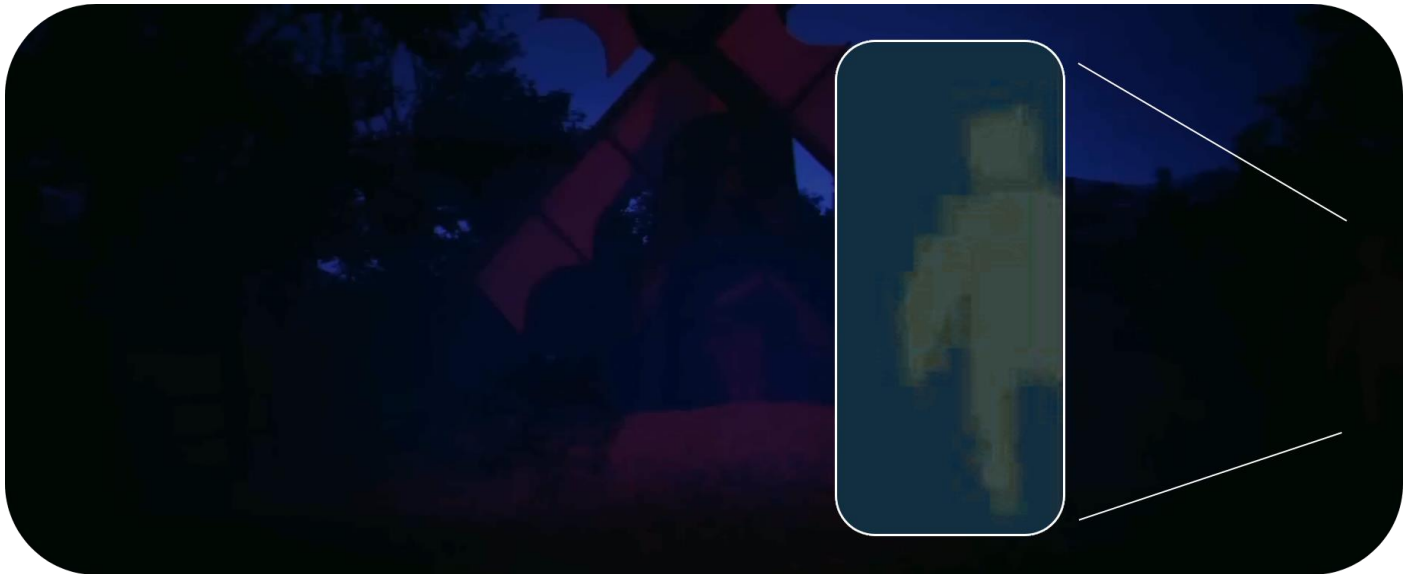
@ 2:47, the final Apple available in the Knapsack is planted in the ground. It then begins to grow directly next to the large tree in what looks to be a darker version of Her Garden. In Bad Seed @ 10:14, a giant, rotting apple sits next to the large tree in Ring IX's Her Garden as well.

@ 3:46, the reflected message on the snowy glass reads, "I LOOKED INTO A MIRROR BLACK / AND SAW MY SHADOW LOOKING BACK."

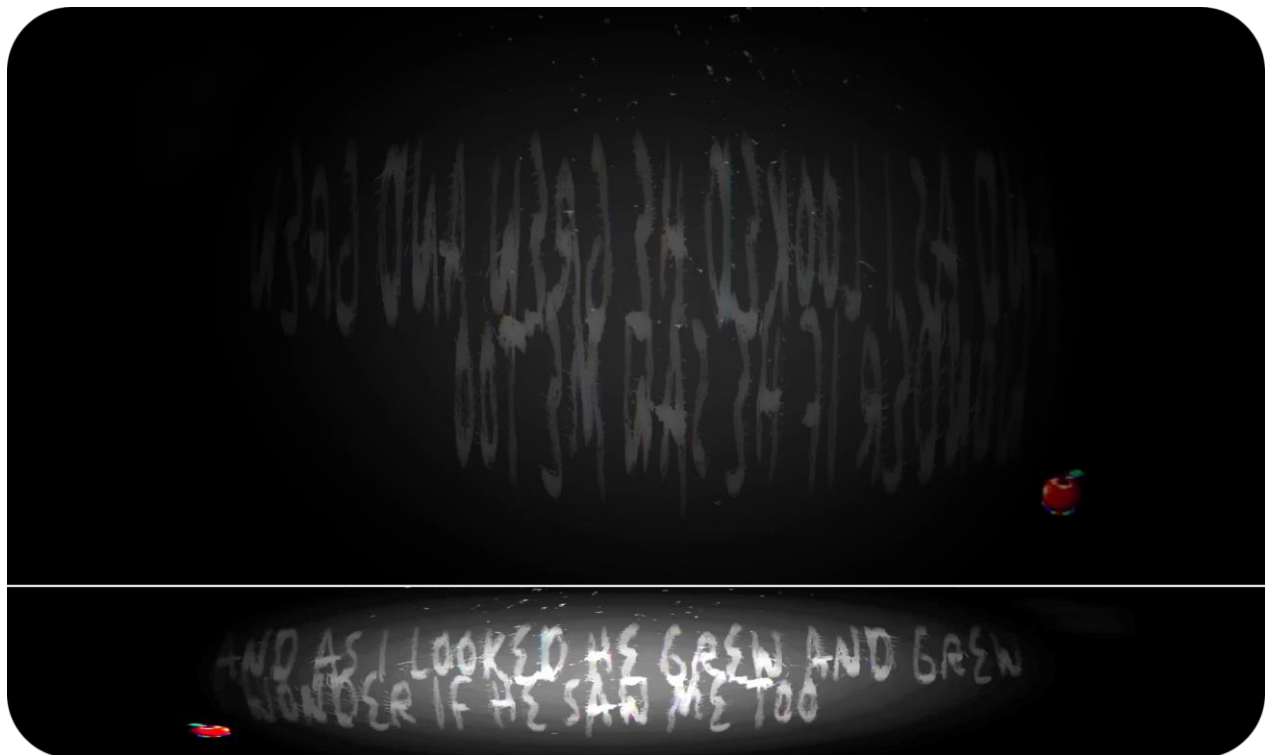


@ 3:48, despite the Windmill sound heard a few seconds prior when entering the tree, it is now still.

@ 3:48, Lawrence exits the Hollow in Ring I, appearing directly in front of the Windmill across the lake. Looking very closely, the outline of a figure can be seen on the far right of the frame. This character is visible only for a couple of seconds, but shows clear, human movement. They're so well-hidden that a special video player is required to view the nearly invisible silhouette. It is confirmed by Volrusk that this is J Julius Hopp, the same red man faintly visible behind the Lodge when Lawrence turns away from the Windmill in Bad Seed @ 13:20.



@ 4:19, the reflected message on the snowy glass reads, "AND AS I LOOKED HE GREW AND GREW / I WONDER IF HE SAW ME TOO."



@ 4:36, the game 20 questions! appears on-screen. In Hungry Ghosts @ 13:47, Katherine mentions winning the 20 QUESTIONS game with Leo's help.

@ 4:49, Lawrence asks of Vermon Dapple, "can you hear me?" to which it responds, "YES." In Hungry Ghosts @ 14:07, the Chinese characters on the left notepad translate to, "can anyone hear me," also evidenced by the "ca" beginning of the translation on the right notepad.

@ 4:54, the voice of Vermon Dapple answering the questions is actually the voices of both Volrusk (voice actor for Lawrence) and Larissa Crowe (voice actor for Haley) split between each stereo audio channel, hence why they are both credited as "Vermon Dapple" in the credits.

@ 5:06, all chronological appearances of the large, prominent WormHorns symbol flash consecutively over the answer, "WORM IN THE APPLE." They are, in order:

- the EVERPALM POND logo initially in Vermis Malum @ 0:54
- the LAMPROV PENDLE pliers initially in Vermis Malum @ 0:59
- the hands logo initially in Vermis Malum @ 1:05
- the "PARASITE" monitor screen initially in Electric Sheep @ 3:28
- the uterus imagery that fades in and out in Random Walk @ 1:39
- "the orphan" drawing in Hungry Ghosts @ 18:37
- the "NEW MASK" overlay in Hungry Ghosts @ 19:51
- the PARPLE TV DEMON in Ex Nihilo @ 15:43
- the Dark Souls ring in Cyclic Inheritance @ 1:13
- a silhouette pushing through the infested synapses in Orphan @ 0:17
- Volrusk's TV monitor YouTube Community post in late November 2024

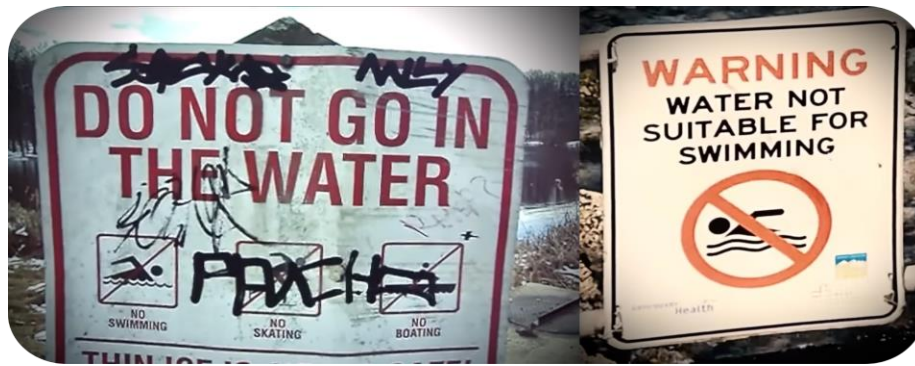
@ 5:23, Lawrence asks of Vermon Dapple during the 20 questions! game, "did you kill them?" to which it responds, "NO." In Random Walk @ 8:45, the PUZZLE TIME! worm riddle ends with, "I only eat the rotten. I only kill the dead." This is also referenced in the windmill puzzle solution in Random Walk beginning @ 2:36: "THEY|ARE|NOT|DEAD|THEY|LIVE|INME."

@ 5:29, when asked, "did you kill them?" and Vermon Dapple responds, "NO," near-transparent imagery of a tendril-like body flashes on screen for a fleeting moment.

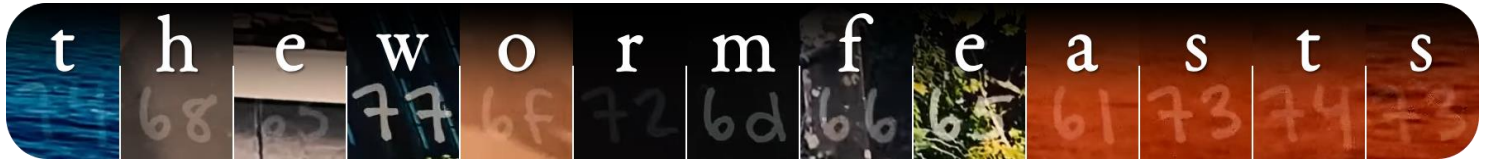
@ 5:51, when asked, "who made you?" and Vermon Dapple responds, "BORN," near-transparent imagery of what looks to be a kind of operating lab flashes on-screen for a fleeting moment.

@ 6:13, when Vermon Dapple answers, "YOU PEOPLE," for question 13, Glam Glo is predominantly heard stating it from Cyclic Inheritance @ 12:46, but other voices are heard as well, making it likely all Ring Ghosts are stating, "YOU PEOPLE," in unison.

@ 7:21, a white sign is shown in Haley's Seattle vlog to Lawrence that reads, "WARNING: WATER NOT SUITABLE FOR SWIMMING." This somewhat mirrors the white "DO NOT GO IN THE WATER" sign in Lawrence's Raven's Run vlog to Haley in Vermis Malum @ 2:12.



@ 7:33, a series of numbers and letters consecutively flash on the bottom-right of the frame. They are, in order, 74 68 65 77 6f 72 6d 66 65 61 73 74 73. In hexadecimal code, this translates to "thewormfeasts."



@ 7:39, the Native American headdress pictured on the wall mural consists of all Ring colors in order for a few of the feathers. This is one of numerous references to the Ring colors throughout the series. (See [REPEATING TEXT/THEMES](#) for other occurrences.)

@ 7:42, the neon sign visible in the darkness reads, "lust is in the air," a likely nod to Ring VIII.

@ 7:43, the "10" within the number buttons on the payphone is partially obscured at times, leaving the other 9 as the only fully viewable numbers. This could be one of numerous references to the number "9" throughout the series.

@ 7:46, a miniature "WAITING ROOM" is shown, with what looks to be a man sitting and holding something in the vague shape of a newborn baby. It could be argued the held object is a book, but it seems thicker and rounder in shape. Interestingly, it also appears as Haley's voice-over says, "... I've kind of got my hands full over here, too."

@ 7:49, an outdoor wall displays a painting of a large Ferris Wheel. This may be Vermis Malum's source/inspiration for its portrayal of wheels in the sky.

@ 7:49, a trash bin is partially visible in front of the Ferris Wheel mural. This may be the source/inspiration for the "Garbage collect this item?" option within the *Vermis Malum* knapsack menu popups.

@ 7:52, the address listed above the revolving door reads "1521." This may be the source/inspiration for the repeating number throughout Vermis Malum and is one of numerous references to the number "1521" throughout the series.

@ 7:53, the famous portrait of Edgar Allen Poe has been spray-painted on a wall with the words, "DREAM WITHIN A DREAM" over it. This may be the source/inspiration for the Poe quote for Ring IV in [Cyclic Inheritance @ 1:56](#), and it is one of numerous references to dreams throughout the series.

@ 8:02, the camera slowly pans across 3 stone carvings on the exterior wall of a church. From left to right, they read, "LUKE," "MARK," and "MATTHEW." Matthew, Mark, and Luke were the first three books of the New

Testament of the Christian Holy Bible. Each titular book recounts Jesus' life from its often starkly contrasted perspective of the others.

@ 8:46, multiple characters are shown on a wall under the words "ARCHETYPES OF FANTASY." The top-middle character is "The KNIGHT," who's wearing a helmet in the shape of a horse's head. This may be the source/inspiration for the Sir Ira Ring Ghost and related knight imagery within *Vermis Malum*. The camera then pans down and to the right to reveal a character named "The SHADOW." This is one of numerous references to the word "shadow" throughout the series.

@ 8:49, a shot of the periodic table hanging on a wall momentarily flashes on-screen. This looks to be visible as "MOV7607" in the "old H stuff (copy) folder in [Cyclic Inheritance @ 15:09](#) and would then imply this/these video recordings are being recorded/sent chronologically before Lawrence's very first video in [Vermis Malum @ 1:22](#).

@ 8:53, many fantasy/science fiction creators and works are named, some of whom may be the source/inspiration for ideas and aesthetics throughout *Vermis Malum*. These include film director Stanley Kubrick, writer/director/ animator Hayao Miyazaki, author H.G. Wells, and the 1993 classic point-and-click masterpiece *Myst*.

@ 8:53, multiple notable science fiction works are shown that were released in 1968, including the films *Planet of the Apes* and *2001: A Space Odyssey*, along with the novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep*.

@ 8:53, Philip K. Dick/his novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep*, scientist/author Isaac Asimov, and film/TV writer Rod Serling are featured on large, backlit displays. Each relates to *Vermis Malum* in some way: In [Electric Sheep @ 3:28](#), it is revealed that the full name of the former owner of the laptop is Arthur Asimov. Also, the second *Vermis Malum* video is named, "Electric Sheep." Finally, in [Hungry Ghosts @ 3:20](#), Lawrence is watching an episode (the 1960 episode "King 9 Will Not Return") of the series *The Twilight Zone*, created, written, and hosted by Serling.

@ 8:55, an old typewriter is shown. This may be the source/inspiration for typewriter sounds for text throughout *Vermis Malum*.

@ 9:04, a replica of a bug-eyed science fiction character is shown. This may be the source/inspiration for the Ring Ghost Gul within *Vermis Malum*.

@ 9:50, Haley states, "...my mom used to tell me, she said: 'You want to make God laugh? Tell him your plan.'" This mirrors Arthur's final words in [Orphan @ 17:26](#): "I read a quote years ago. . . . It was . . . something to the effect of, 'If you want to fight the Devil, first learn to take a joke.'"

@ 12:05, a quick video montage of the Rings in *Vermis Malum* are shown. Ring IX with Beatrice is noticeably absent from this sequence.

