

## UAC-MC-Δ1129/01-1M1-x

The air around me, thick with death. Just like it's been since I got deployed to this red rock.

But it's somehow... different this time. Shapes that I should be able to recall from memory, just different enough to make me constantly question my own judgment. Hallways I *know* I've seen before, countless times, across countless completely identical battles, jutting out in slightly different directions, towards noticeably different destinations. One minute I'm in the main hangar of the Mars base. The next minute I'm back at the entryway to Scott AFB where I touched back down on Earth.

And then I'm in neither of those places.

Has that chainsaw always been there? What does *that* button do *now*? Didn't this room use to have a lot more...or a lot *less*...radioactive waste?

Discordant music further obfuscates my senses. It sounds like I'm walking past a red light where every car has their windows down, and they are all playing their own music at exactly the same volume. I have a hard time grasping any semblance of melody or timing, just thudding polyrhythms attempting to drown out a chord progression I feel like I knew in another life.

Reeling from the mutation of my surroundings, I rely on sheer instinct. With one or two violent exceptions, I'm able to feel my way through the various spaces and creations before me, largely anticipating where any of my opposition could be. But the placement of creatures feels like...an omen. Was the familiarity of my arrival merely a ruse to get me to lower my guard for future encounters, or am I subject to further questioning of my own memory and reality?

Only one way to find out. Downward and onward, as an old gaming buddy used to say.

## **UAC-MC-Δ1129/02-1M2-x**

A damp musk fills the air as I approach what was once a familiar plaza of doors and pathways.

Even this soon into my journey, I find myself unable to really rely on my memories as well as I could during my entry to this realm. The paths before me feel more openly hostile than before - rather than (seemingly) drawing its power from (traumatic) memories of areas I've already visited, this place seems equally intent on challenging me to act on instinct, and as it is to frustrate those gut reactions at every turn.

There's a lot more water here than I thought was possible. Concerningly, I find myself able to interact with it safely. This interaction frequently just leads me into more trouble - demons, the twisted forms of my former comrades-in-arms - as though whoever led me here knew I wouldn't be able to resist attempting to change my environment.

And how could I? The last time I was trapped in the steam tunnels en route from Scott, all I could do was open some doors. This time, I'm actually able to affect my environment in ways that would never have been possible in another time or place. Such were the limitations of my material reality. Despite the frequent injury this brought me, I couldn't avoid the temptation to press every switch and open every door I could find, just to know I did.

I eventually found myself needing to leave after locating the specific required keys to free me, before I was confronted with what might have been the most welcoming and memorable sight in this whole place - a thin hallway, filled with explosive barrels.

Was I confused as to the rocky outcroppings it led me to? Of course. But a morbid smile crept across my face as the explosions echoed down the hallway all the same.

## **UAC-MC-Δ1129/03-1M3-x**

Groping my way through the darkness, I find myself approaching an opening...but then, not really.

A dank brown room full of monsters and supplies. It lines up with what I remember of this place before. As always, my memories are quickly betrayed as I find myself exploring my surroundings in all new ways that I wouldn't have even fathomed last time. Floors moving up and down! Switches that need a keycard to activate! The sort of thing UAC would usually tell us was "beyond current budgetary scope".

It created an oddly...cohesive effect that I might not have expected from my current predicament. Familiar landscapes cross my path - most of them involving sudden drops into hazardous liquids - but the experience feels more thought-out, as though whatever force or "maker" is forcing me through these realms had more experience in these places than I did.

This feeling came to a head when I found a room that I always remembered being full of water, yet never remembered being this...accessible. Plunging into the murky runoff, I found stairs to climb and towers of crates to clamber, almost as if something...wanted to help me after falling in there. I explored this area with an excitement I'd rarely felt since arriving, finding myself more than amply equipped for the challenges ahead.

Call me a dreamer, but...it felt as though something out there shared the same memories I did, and simply wanted to prove to us both how nice things could be with a little effort.

Either that or I'm going to find myself gnawed to death by something I didn't see coming. More likely, all told.

## **UAC-MC-Δ1129/04-1M4-x**

You spend enough time in UAC facilities, you start to pick up on certain...design quirks.

Most of them are due to sheer laziness or oversight. (Often the case in government work.) Some of them could be attributed to more...sinister intentions, although it's a theory I have a hard time subscribing to, because that would imply the fat cats up at UAC HQ spend enough time thinking about us to have sinister intentions.

Back on subject. Typically, at this point in a UAC facility, you start to encounter a lot of switch redundancies, dangerous drop-offs, and sloppily-stored nuclear waste that would turn an OSHA inspector into the protagonist of a Lovecraft novel (but less racist, hopefully). Wherever I am now, it's no different...and yet it is.

The UAC loves their overly-complex security switch layouts, frequently requiring someone to press multiple switches at just the right time to do something as simple as raise a platform or move a crate. While my current surroundings did offer a touch of that, it didn't feel quite so...punishing? Quite the contrary in fact; each space actually seemed like it served a purpose, and flowed into one another like it was a space designed for real humans to navigate. (Imagine that.)

This ease of navigation, however...seemed to extend to the demons as well. However the hell they found their way in here, they knew how to absolutely make the use of their space. Former soldiers tucked into nooks and crannies. Pinkies jamming up every hallway like I was back in training at Pendleton. I could've spent all night trying to get them to walk just a LITTLE closer to those poorly-stored waste barrels, but I didn't have that kind of time. Too many flesh wounds to properly enjoy myself. (Duct tape to the rescue again.)

But suddenly, as my muscle memory took over and I found myself hitting two switches in order to raise a walkway, I was glad to know that some things about the UAC will never change.

Like that goddamn shutter that keeps opening and closing. I'd probably give my soul over to the forces of Hell too if I had to hear that thing every damned day.

## **UAC-MC-Δ1129/05-1M5-x**

Spoke a little too soon about the occupational hazards of a UAC installation.

Pretty much any UAC facility you find yourself stationed at will have a steady stream of waste. I don't mean recyclable drink containers, I mean actual nuclear sludge from whatever Robert Oppenheimer fever dream powers these places.

And there's (typically) two ways of handling it: processing and reclamation facilities kept far away from where the 'normies' work, and then labyrinthine rivers of slime leaving to God knows where.

Wherever I find myself right now, it clearly couldn't decide between the two.

My trip through...whatever this is, had the same vibes as one of those nightmares where you're back at school but nothing is where it used to be. I can recall vague shapes and layouts, but there's always a catch - a hallway isn't where it used to be, an elevator doesn't go where it once did, a door doesn't look like any door you've seen before. And yet there's still a strange logic behind it all.

I say this knowing full well that my time here included some kind of...hall of mirrors. This is where the dream became a nightmare: the exit constantly eluding my grasp, terror and the unknown around every corner, with nothing but some hastily-scrawled exit arrows to guide the way. Has someone been here before me and fumbled their way through the nightmare, being selfless enough to mark their path through?

Or was it left here by whoever's creating this horrible mockery of my lived experiences?

Has this entire thing been a dream? Christ, I'm starting to hope so.

## **UAC-MC-Δ1129/06-1M6-x**

Whatever force is propelling - no, *dragging* - me through here, has already started to find new ways to play with my sense of reality.

My memories of UAC bases tend to involve a lot of computers. Big, giant, wall-to-wall ENIACs like you'd have seen in the early days of NASA. Still there in most cases, but now there's something almost...taunting about their presence.

Cracks in the floors where the ground used to be solid. Lava and toxic waste swirl about me, replacing familiar surfaces with deadly substances. Stairs where there were elevators, elevators where there was once nothing. Nothingness where there was once *anything*.

And the demons. Every time I flash back to what happened that day, when Hell first arrived on Mars, I know it was many of my comrades who went first, turned into hordes of snarling, sub-human beasts. Pawns for Hell's whims. And they tended to put up much less of a fight than some of the larger horrors I confronted later on. (Were they alive, I'm sure they'd have plenty of thoughts about hearing this.)

And yet the larger horrors are showing up already. Bonies decorate every small space, while the various royalty of Hell (goat-legged monstrosities straight out of my old Catholic school) roam the hallways. Even one of those godforsaken spider-brains. (Funny to think I once believed there was only one of them, and it was pulling the strings.)

The more confident I was in my memories of this place, the more abstract and incorrect they got. The spaces around me that weren't altered beyond recognition were changed just enough to make me constantly second-guess myself, and this confusion nearly became a bigger obstacle than the demons themselves.

It knows I've been here before. It knows I've done this already. And it's only going to make it harder on me from here.

## **UAC-MC-Δ1129/07-1M7-x**

In all my years spent tracking these things across the galaxy - across realities, if you're the religious type - I've often wondered how these monsters are so adaptable to their environments.

Maybe I'm as bad at learning my lesson as everyone told me I was growing up. All too often, I open a door only to narrowly avoid a face-ful of buckshot, or an honest-to-god ambush around a corner. Maybe that's on me, for not thinking these creatures capable of moment-to-moment tactical decision making.

But then, how do they know how to do this?

Did those huge, blaster-armed steam bastards know where to stand in that giant open area in case I show up? (Would you believe this isn't the first time they've done this?) Did that spider thing put himself in that spiral staircase in case someone happened by?

Or...or is something helping them do it? Is whatever force reconstructing these skirmishes also somehow helping the demons better understand their role in the conflict? Did something learn from their previous defeats and then decide to help make sure it couldn't happen again?

I find the thought too terrifying to face right now. Good thing the incessant clanking of those spider-brains wandering around stops me from being able to think about too much.

MAP08+E1M8

It's a funny thing, dying. It feels exactly like you expect, and yet it feels like nothing at all. One minute you're there, and you feel something awful, and then you don't feel anything.

If you're reading this, you should know I died once. I know what your reaction to that is. It's the same reaction as all the psych evaluators I had to talk to after I got back from Deimos the first time. But I died. Died and went to Hell, just like my grandmother warned me. (She thought it would be because of my "filthy sailor mouth", but who's keeping score?)

And the other funny thing about death is that it helps you keep an eye out for it. You tend to remember something like death, if you get a chance to come back from it. Or, at the very least, you remember the circumstances under which it happened.

The concerning thing is that I think something else remembers how and when I died. As I trod these mildew-infested stone hallways, something started to feel a bit...familiar. More familiar than the rest, I should say. And yet, as I encountered every trap, every teleporter to nowhere, every monster-infested architectural symbol, I couldn't help but feel like I was reliving one of the worst parts of my life.

Imagine my surprise when I found myself more-or-less back in the very room where it happened.

One of my favorite writers once said "worry is a dividend paid to disaster before it is due". Maybe he was right.

Now I just need to figure out where the hell I am.



## **UAC-MC-Δ1129/02-1M2-x**

I find myself plummeting to the bottom of a dank chasm. Something at the bottom reminds me of water, but it would be an insult to water to compare them.

As always, everything in here feels deliberately placed, but...more intentional this time. It seems like the demons are just as confused as to why they're here as I am - many of them are locked behind doors or grates that need some kind of intervention to open (which is typically my dumb ass, since I've found "pressing every button I find" is the only way to proceed through these places sometimes). Is this some kind of...prison? Have I been thrown into some kind of demon jail? And if so, am I a prisoner...or the warden?

"I'm not locked in here with YOU, YOU'RE locked in here with ME." Sorry I never gave you all those comics back, Dacote.

Don't get sentimental, Blazkowicz. You need to get out of here first.

Circular. The logic and the rooms. I'm chasing my own tail trying to find out just how every room in here is connected. Have I been here before? Did I miss something the last time? The disorientation sets in early, rendering me confused as to just where I need to be, and why.

And something knows that. The demons are placed more like they're a football team or some big obstacle in a kid's game show (the kind my dumb jock little sister always thought she'd be great at), like something was expecting me to try and get past them. It's just confirming my fears from before.

The infinite hallways eventually give way to something I can...understand, at least geometrically. I limp to freedom, bloodied, battered, and reeking of overheated plasma cells. (Copper wire and argon. Hard smell to forget.)

The Great Escape, my ass. I have a feeling I'm going to regret leaving my little prison cell.

## **UAC-MC-Δ1129/1-1M10-x**

Lurching out of the dungeon, battered and bloodied, I stop for a break. More accurately, my bloodied form gives out under me for a moment. Closest thing to a nap I've had in...who knows.

My surroundings indicate I may be in some kind of launch bay. I can hear a song from somewhere, maybe from somewhere deep in my memory, but it's discordant and full of gaps, as though I don't remember the whole thing, or maybe never knew it to begin with.

That feeling isn't quite going away as I explore this area. So much of the rest of my recent ordeals were pulled from memories I can rely on, from places I know I've seen before and been forced to battle my way through, but this one is...fuzzier. Did this place ever exist prior to this? And if it did...have I ever been here, or did someone just...tell me about it at some point?

Think later, Blaz. Figure out how those goddamn meatballs keep coming up out of pools of blood, which I know damn well they never used to do. Or the seemingly uncrossable pools of toxic sludge. Or anything else here.

I spit the blood out of my mouth (mostly mine, thank god) and drag my sorry ass far enough off the floor to find some first-aid and supplies. It's enough to help me limp my way through the maze of storage facilities, waste dumps, and...rotting flesh-walls, until I finally stumble across a massive elevator by accident, and then...

Ah. I should've expected. Or not. It wouldn't have made it feel any better.

## **UAC-MC-Δ1129/11-2M1-x**

I awakened an unknown amount of time later, completely bereft of any of my ammunition or equipment, faced with an all-too-familiar and unwelcome sight: the corrupted Deimos moon base. Yet again.

I've been here before, countless times, both in life and in my memories, and yet I still felt unprepared. I was right to feel this way.

I found myself stumbling through endless, nameless corridors of twisting brick, elevated platforms, and strategically-placed ambushes at every turn. Ambushes that the previous Deimos invasion couldn't possibly have had the knowledge or foresight to prepare.

My armaments are returned to me quickly. Alarmingly so. I used to revel in the warm glow of a discarded chaingun or one of those insane UAC plasma weapons, but in my current state it feels like they're here just as much to mock me as help me. "Want this blaster, soldier boy? Better be careful about that screaming fire-eater around the corner."

Better get used to feeling this way.

## **UAC-MC-Δ1129/12-2M2-x**

Dazed from my previous encounter, unaware of how long I've been here, I pry a door open to find myself in a crude recreation of Earth.

Nice to know I wasn't really on Deimos. I guess.

Looks to be in an industrial area of some sort. Imagine you've never been to Earth, and then someone described to you what their first shitty factory job was like, and then you tried to recreate it from memory.

Everything seems to function exactly like it would in an actual factory. Conveyor belts move, platforms go up and down, and nobody but the big wigs feels particularly welcome in the office. (Speaking from experience, here. You don't exactly enlist for the Space Marines without exhausting all your options for economic advancement back home.) My memories of these spaces serve me well as I navigate each corridor, storage area, and shop floor, allowing me to reach the exit with considerable ease.

It does raise the question, however - were these monsters sent here, or are they...living here? Some of those offices and shipping areas seem a little...well-worn and lived in.

Wonder later. For right now, it's time to teach these assholes the meaning of work-life balance.

Sorry. Blame my dad for that one.

## **UAC-MC-Δ1129/13-2M3-x**

Much like I expected - or feared, more accurately - I emerge from the rear exit of the factory into a vague mockery of an Earth city.

Never been an expert on urban warfare. They don't really train you in clearing city blocks when most of your deployments are in space, but I can still immediately tell something is wrong here. The vaguely metallic smell of nuclear waste is my first sign, and the second is how...disconnected it all seems. It's as though something is trying to make an MC Escher out of how I remembered the fight back home, back when the bastards actually had the gall to land on Earth instead of keeping it strictly to the red planet.

But even if I'm no good at navigating urban environments, I still know how to handle most of these cretins. Hell's love of fighting amongst one another gave me a brief glimmer of hope to cling to as I navigated the tortured husks of what may or may not have ever been skyscrapers at one point, all to find myself...

...diving into some kind of hole.

If you're reading this, this can't all be news to you, right? Surely you remember the effect it had on the landscape when the demons arrived on Earth?

Please tell me you remember this too.

#### **UAC-MC-Δrecov/⊗14\_4-**

One second, I'm in some kind of laboratory. The next second, I'm in Hell.

I want to think I've been in Hell the whole time, but I know enough about Hell to know it when I see it. No, instead I'm facing down some sort of...collage art. A pieced together nightmare made up of all my mental-illness greatest hits.

Conveyors. Doors to nowhere. Senseless placement of buttons, levels, and safety hazards. Skulls. Blood. Death. The grinding sound. The grinding sound never stops.

The shrieks of those who would do me harm, the mephitic stench of death, flame, brimstone, and all-too-Earthly chemicals...the cacophony all comes together in a way that still can't drown out the grinding. The noises that a UAC base door or fixture would make. The sound of some...demonic sculpture changing its form in order to slow my progress. They all make the same sound.

They all make the same sound, and I can't get the sound to stop

**UAC-MC-Δ1129/15-2M5-x**

Hallways I've seen, combined with areas I can't tell if I've ever been to before. Or maybe I imagined those. Maybe I imagined both.

What's that word for being homesick for somewhere you've never been? Once I remember that, I need to come back here once I learn the opposite of "homesickness". (Probably a German word.)

Chasing shadows this whole time, trying to both find something familiar, and an explanation for why everything is so familiar. For the briefest moment in time, I remember a single hallway, or the shape of a staircase, before it all descends into nonsense around me.

Geometry with no regard to anything around it, suddenly opening into a corridor that fills me with dread because of what happened the last time I was in it. A basketball court on the roof of something that could generously be considered a "building", mocking what humans would expect to see here. An office with a computer, directly adjacent to a mysteriously-appearing bridge, lined with torches. Corpses in every room - were they placed here, or did someone else find themselves trapped in this labyrinth and already succumbed to the ~~minotaur~~?

Don't romanticize this for yourself. That was a literal racetrack they put you through, with spectators and everything. Something's enjoying this.

Good for them. I'm sure as hell not.

**UAC-MC-Δ1129/16-2M6-x**

I fear that these things are getting...smarter.

Squint, and you could almost consider this area some sort of...habitat. A twisted mockery of an area where you might see humans living. Pulled from some distant memory of their incursion into human suburbs from long ago? (Memories I share and am cursed with to this day.) An attempt to create some kind of "habitat" for me? Or am I overthinking it, and it turns out even demons need a place to store toxic waste?

Wherever these spaces come from, the bastards are getting a lot better at using them. Ambushes around every corner. Honest to god ambushes, with foresight and planning. Above and beyond the concerning amount of nuclear material, there's constantly opening panels, platforms, and shifting landscapes just enough to make me the ideal target.

And there's the landscape itself. I'm used enough to the endless hallways, but why do so many of these connect in unexpected ways? Am I actually supposed to find my way through here, or am I just supposed to be more grist for the mill? Nothing syncs up in a way that indicates these buildings could possibly exist for any purpose, and yet the way I'm expected to make my way through here is...fitting. Makes no sense, but it's fitting.

It also makes no sense why I'm still writing these, but nothing has made sense lately.



## UAC-MC-Δ11πx/∞.2M7x

The pounding in my head becomes a mocking, discordant, music-box melody. I both have no idea where I am, and know exactly where I am.

I grew up here. This is the old tenement block in my hometown that I spent far too much of my life in. How do they know that. *How do they know that.*

They were there once, in a sense. But only briefly, and only because I was the last Marine stupid and alive enough to do anything about it. (God, and to think I was so sure pressing the launch button would be the end of my troubles.)

Get over it, Blaz. Keep moving.

Barracks. Industrial areas. Places I worked, back when my life was...close to normal. (As normal as it could be, right before you sign up for the Marines.) The card table I used to lose at. (Buddy would laugh if he heard me finally admit that.)

As soon as I get my footing, everything falls out from under me again. Caves of impossible geometry and shifting growth stretch out before me, underneath hallways I'd walked through a billion times before. Lava, sludge, filth, and horror stretch out before me, just long enough to make me question my sanity before tossing me back down a staircase I used to walk to get to my usual detail.

I don't know which is making me question my sanity more. No backing out now.

## **UAC-MC-Δ1129/18-2M8-x**

I used to think there would be some end to the demons.

A literal endpoint. Something I could do, some button I could press, some monstrosity I could take down with whatever human weaponry was available to me at the time. And it would make them all just...go away, somehow. Maybe they'd surrender. Maybe they'd get dramatically teleported back to Hell as Gabriel's trumpet sounded (wouldn't my grandpa's crazy neighbor love that). Maybe they'd just drop dead on the goddamn spot. Who cares.

It's a mistake I've made a few times before. Once with those two things I battled on the surface of Phobos, right before I...well, we've beaten that subject to death. Once when I walked all the way back across the then-barren plains of Hell. Once when I took out the Mother Demon. And once when I fought this big steam-powered cyber-dude.

And yet, here I am, staring another one directly in the face. At first, I felt almost smug about defeating it. If these things are the toughest that Hell can send my way, keep 'em coming! (Of course, I only won the fight by cheating. Something made the mistake of giving me a BFG. I'm continuing to make it their problem.)

Of course, I then turn around to see two of them at once. The landscape shifted around me, adding columns and unveiling new areas to me. A literal labyrinth with my own set of dueling **minotaurs**.

Dread in my heart and resignation in my brain, I stood my ground, and I took them both out. I may not have even had to. Maybe they just wanted to toy with me for a while. Maybe the whole universe is just toying with me, and I'm taking the assignment far too seriously. Wouldn't be the first time I'm accused of it.

But hey, if I expect to get let into 'Valhalla', like all the hardasses on my squad used to say awaited us Marines, then how could I look it in the face and tell them I ran when I didn't have to?

## **UAC-MC-Δ1129/19-2M9-x**

Reeling with adrenaline from the previous encounter with the minotaurs, I round a corner and immediately unload rounds into a room full of nearby Spinys and...humanoids. I don't know what to call them. I gave up long ago on the idea of them - or ANYTHING in here - having been related to humanity.

Catch your breath and think. Where have you seen this before? The demons have always had a weird tendency towards...houses of worship. Whether of themselves, or some "higher" (lower?) power, is hard to say - the fact they display corpses of their own, just as readily as they display corpses of whatever species they currently have issue with, would make a field day for anthropologists. Or at least someone with more college credits than me.

I step forward into some kind of...citadel. This part, at least, looks familiar. Towers and spires built in some combination of reverence and war preparation dot the landscape as they have before, although the parapets seem a bit better prepared for my arrival this time.

Further inside is where things start to get a little hazy. Clearly I'm inside some kind of fortress, but have I seen this place before, or just been told about it? Worse yet, did I just dream it, somehow? Am I dreaming currently?

And if I'm dreaming, why the hell does it hurt?

I ignore the sounds and questions in my head long enough to rely on the one true memory I have from this place, or any place like it - the Pumpkins and the royalty of Hell do not like each other one bit. I almost feel bad egging them on the way I do, but it isn't the first time I've gotten someone else's ass kicked after running my own mouth.

Reaching the end, I'm alarmed at how little resistance I find - why all the corpses? I know I didn't do it. What did, and why was it so important I see them?

In my head, the sounds get a little longer. Even if I don't know where I was, I know where I'm going - and where I have to go again.

**UAC-MC-Δ11πx/∞.20.4M9-%%%%**

I've been here for hours. Days.

I don't mean "in hell", I mean...here. Specifically. Sprawling, endless hallways stretch before me, longer than they have any right to be, going through terrain that shouldn't be possible here. I know damn well I haven't been here before, not in any tangible way.

The orange sky above mocks me. I genuinely can't even tell if I'm underground or not. Not like it makes any difference. (And it sure wouldn't smell any better.)

Parts of...wherever I am remind me of encounters I've had in the past, at least in reaction if not geographic similarity. Spinies and pinkies waiting for me everywhere. Hell royalty, encaged, waiting to be set free upon me. At one point there was even a steam demon AND a spidermind, across from one another. You can imagine how well it went, having them in close proximity to one another.

(Still struggling to understand why so many of Hell's races don't get along. They all clearly agree that they want me dead.)

My goal becomes clearer as I work my way through the area. I have a nagging feeling that I'm close now, very close. Shards of memory rip through my subconscious, memories of the times I've had to toss myself into various, painful, dimensional portals to get to Hell and stop the incursion at its source. Damn strange thing to be thinking about due to all the blood loss, but the brain is funny like that.

I stand at the edge of my most recent portal. I know exactly how it's going to feel. I don't look forward to it. Wonder if this is how it feels on Star Trek.

Who am I kidding, Picard never went to Hell. (Not unless Lwaxana was visiting. If you find this, and I'm dead, I hope you get that joke. Means we could've been friends.)

## **UAC-MC-Δ1129/22-3M2-x**

Never been sure how I felt about reincarnation.

Someone better-versed in the concept than I once told me it was called samsara, or something similar. The idea, if I remember right, is that one day, when you finally nail it, you've finally purged yourself of all earthly desires and attempts to avoid suffering, and you have nothing else to do here, you don't have to come back.

That part always fascinated me. A lot of people think you get to come back, but maybe the problem is that you keep having to come back until you've finally figured out what the hell is going on, and you get to go on to...whatever nirvana awaits us.

Here I am, trying to sound all deep, but I'm sure you get where I'm going with this. Is this what happened to me? Did whatever cosmic force governs the realities of Hell and earth decide I needed one more go-round through the whole thing before I get to move on?

It would explain a lot. It would explain how I'm both treading ground I know like the back of my hand, in ways I've never seen before, seeing things that didn't exist until something willed it into existence.

And the fact that I've been given something close to the illusion of choice (who'd have thought there could be a Hell with such placid blue skies? almost reminds me of back home, except less polluted somehow) kind of reaffirms the idea that I'm destined to do this over and over again until I get it right.

I'm probably over-thinking it again. Maybe something just enjoys watching me cause fights between spinies and pumpkins.

Ever downward.

## **UAC-MC-Δ1129/23-3M3-Δ**

Ears ringing from multiple explosions, arm hair singed from proximity to the fire, a gleeful look on my face as the flames consume whatever demons were left standing in that room.

Do I care where all the toxic sludge came from? I might have if I was anywhere resembling Earth. Frankly, I'm not even totally convinced that I'm alive right now.

Lucky them, I decided to let the intrusive thoughts win. If they didn't want to explode, they shouldn't have been standing there.

Maybe I'm suffering from oxygen deprivation, but I actually found myself having fun here. It isn't the first time I've weaponized improperly-stored hazmat against the forces of Hell, but it might be the first time I've done so with such little disregard for my own safety. Something left these explosives here for me, and I'm not one to look the proverbial gift horse in the mouth.

Why should I? I don't know where I am. I don't know how I got here. I don't know if I'm going home. I do know, however, that I was more than happy to watch my millionth Spidermind go down in flames as I laughed. I laughed and laughed and laughed and laughed and

[page missing]

*if the world is gonna burn  
everyone should get a turn to light it up*

## **UAC-MC-Δ1129/24-3M4-x**

They're coming in droves now. Endless, screaming, fetid droves.

Pinkies. Pumpkins. Clydes. Everywhere I turn, I hear the familiar flicker of perverted UAC technology before being faced with unthinkable hordes.

Ripping, tearing, clawing. I'm literally only here because of stimulants and painkillers. I haven't seen the sun in days. It doesn't matter if I've been here before anymore.

And yet every time I'm finally about to give up, something keeps me alive. Intentionally. My very existence has become a spectator sport.

It's watching me and it knows when I'm at my lowest and it continues to challenge me as though it doesn't matter what shape I'm in.

It doesn't matter if I make it out or not. I probably never will. It's having too much fun. It's having too much fun seeing me navigate non-Euclidian geometry. It's having too much fun seeing me claw my way through a literal intestinal wall of Hellgrowth to see me come out the other side, battered and bruised, before tossing me the briefest of reprieves.

A friend of mine from the Air Force once said I was "too angry to die". If only she knew how scared I am of her being right.

## **UAC-MC-Δ1129/25-3M5-x**

Don't ever let anyone tell you blood tastes like pennies. It's much, much worse.

Especially when it's flowing around you, as some kind of twisted monument to the idea of "life giving liquid".

I seem to have been right in my earlier assessment of the demons needing their own areas of worship. The blood seems to be flowing directly towards a center area, whose usage I'm not in the right frame of mind to even try to speculate. It was bad enough when the blood seemed to be a naturally occurring phenomenon, and yet here it's being specifically funneled for...for a purpose.

Not that I have the braincells left to understand why. It's getting so much worse. Floods of demons where there used to be minor opposition. Every square foot covered with pustulous minions of some greater power I may never understand. The fear that I'll meet that power soon.

I can't keep this up. Every bone in my body has been fractured beyond usefulness. Every muscle strains under the weight of time, injury, and impending loss of will. I just want to sleep. I can't keep doing this. I can't keep coming back to some hallucinatory version of Mars, tormenting me with my ugliest memories and greatest fears, all for the amusement of someone pulling the strings and watching from afar.

Those same strings are keeping me alive, however. Whether I want to or not. I've had so many recent near-misses with crushers, traps, surprise appearances from Hell royalty and spiderbabies, and the like. I should have died a dozen times.

I should have. Maybe I need to. But I won't. Something keeps stopping me from dying. Sometimes in obvious ways, such as the Hell artifacts that continue to heal my wounds. Sometimes in more subtle ways, like the. concerning blackouts I've been having.

Maybe I'll stop having them someday. Means one of two things happened, and I'm fine with either.



## **UAC-MC-Δ1129/26-3M6-x**

Enough pontificating. If I'm going to get out of here with any shred of my sanity intact, I'm going to have to start taking the initiative.

Say what you will about Hell, but at least it's...interesting to look at. Or difficult to forget. I stare across a seemingly-endless expanse I prayed I'd never see again. The idea of praying for anything is hilarious right now.

And I'm not alone. Still unable to shake the idea that something is watching and tracking my every move, the defenses around here are just as heightened as they've ever been, showing a level of organization that's concerning for the creatures of instinct I always assumed they were.

But you know what? Right now I don't care. Thanks to a combination of blood loss, sleep deprivation, and oxygen deprivation (not to mention I'm not totally sure when I last saw the sun), I've got the confidence of the condemned man and the arrogance of drunk pedestrians. The pounding in my head takes the form of double-kick drums and morbid funerary strings all at once. It's almost enough to drown out the roars and screams around me.

I'm almost coherent enough to remember some of the old tricks. Two doors opening at once. The exact distance a pumpkin tends to fly back when colliding with an M136 round. Whatever that...shimmering red-and-blue surface is made out of. The oddly cold, yet welcoming, feeling of those blue orbs.

I don't know how long this second wind will last, but at least I'll know I died with my boots on.

**UAC\_ME-ΔSYN/##.§27**

I can tell I'm getting close.

Because they're trying harder to stop me.

I find myself back in some kind of...limbo. A space between spaces. Nothing to help find my way except ankle-deep sludge, and a mockingly large arrow to guide the way.

And the demons themselves are out in droves. I'm met with increasing resistance at every turn. They seem to be...placed in such a way that I have to make myself get through them to progress. It's one thing to have to battle them just to survive, it's another to have to negotiate them like they're...obstacles, placed by some insidious puppetmaster. Multiple-choice doors appear in front of me like some kind of hideous game show. None of them offer safety or freedom, merely...less suffering.

I recognize fewer of the landmarks as I go on, but I'm sure I'd barely recognize myself if I saw myself.

Maybe I'll never see myself again. Nothing but reconstituted nightmares, and that unending pounding in my head.

**UAC-MC-ΔΔΔΔΔ-ΔΔΔ/#####**

I'm...home.

I'm somewhere I shouldn't be.

I'm in between two existences. Life and death. Heaven and hell. Here and there.

The sky, a very mockery of the idea, glistens with that iridescent red/blue mineral they prize in Hell.

I fall to my death several times, only to find myself teleported to safety. I find a clearly-marked exit several times, only to be met with the unending mechanical clanking of spiders and their mothers. I turn to face a sound, only to hear its source teleported away from me at the last second.

I'm tormented with the idea of safety. Of a place I may never return to. No choice I make is correct, because it won't let me make a correct choice. Merely more violence and death, however inadvertent on my part.

Something compels me forward, out of a combination of my own still-flickering desire to survive, and my own still-flickering need for an answer. And...something beyond that. Something just behind my instincts, unwilling to let me stop.

I only pray it ends soon. Somehow. I know I tried. I know I fought as hard as I could. However it ends for me, I accept it.

Whatever happens, happens.

**UAC-MC-[UNREADABLE]/--.--**

Well, isn't this unexpected.

I've been here before. I've never seen this place in my life. It doesn't matter if I have or not.

What matters is that I have my instincts. I have nothing but my instincts. Instincts and the best firepower I could drag along with me, just like old times.

I remember that Hell's architecture favors thin pathways. I remember what all the skulls represent. I remember exactly how durable a bony can be (way more than you'd think for a skeleton).

Unrealistic geometry stretches out around me, stairways to nothing emerging from even deeper nothing. Sometimes it works to my favor (knocked one of those fire-eaters right down into a lava pit, where it belongs), sometimes it doesn't (how many of these doorways do I have to open and find a Hell Prince behind it?). One soldiers on.

Cyberdudes. Pumpkins. After a while, it doesn't matter. I lurch forward, muscles aching with lactic acid, towards whatever awaits me next.

Eventually I find myself falling. I fall and I fall so long that it starts to feel like I'm going upwards. Maybe I am. Maybe it doesn't matter anymore.

If you're reading this, assume I arrived wherever I was going, whether up or down. Maybe you'll even figure out where I was going before I do.

**Oct. 10, 1994**

The remnants of what came to be colloquially referred to as "the doom-guy's journal", due to the unconfirmed identity of the author and the frequent references to Hell and apocalyptic mythology (the name itself potentially being a reference to the internet slang "doomer", describing anyone overly fatalistic in nature), are hard to decipher after a certain point. *(For the purposes of this review, "doom guy" will be used as an informal reference, but the gender pronouns will be kept neutral due to the unconfirmed identity of the Marine themselves.)*

At first, the section largely assumed to be the final chapter begins coherently enough:

*"I'm here. I'm back. I've returned to a place etched into my subconscious, and yet have never been before.*

*I blink, and I enter another reality. Another layer. Who knows. But I'm here. I'm here and I'm close.*

*I'm close, and I'm cold. Colder than I should be. Colder than I've ever been."*

Most readers of the journal assume this means the Marine (their enlistment in the US Space Marines being one of the few facts we CAN confirm about "doom guy") narrating the story arrived at their destination. Debates and theories abound as to the true nature of their destination; some supernaturally-minded readers are compelled to believe that they did indeed arrive in some sort of handcrafted purgatory, specifically designed and chosen for them by a higher power seeking revenge or mere amusement. Others choose the more prosaic belief that it was a mere mental decline, another victim of underfunded PTSD treatment for our nation's veterans.

The text begins to lose any sense of coherency from there. Frequent repeated phrases and discoveries, hastily scrawled in blood-stained ink from a damaged pen (confirmed due to a reference to how "it still has ink from when she gave it to me??" crammed into a margin), seem to reflect more of an ongoing combat log than a collection of after-action thoughts. Many of the references resolve around "the face", seemingly an entity or monument manifesting at their destination. These references frequently include brief, nearly illegible mentions of "the face" having appeared to the Marine at various points during their life, during nightmares and hangovers, as well as a short diversion into Mormon theology whose significance to the rest of the document has yet to be determined.

From there it comes off as more of an instruction manual. One of the more memorable lines of the journal implores, *"the FACES! it's behind the FACES! GET BEHIND THE FACES!"*, potentially describing a method of navigating this realm. On the reverse of this page, in massive underlined letters, reads a heartrending plea:

**"THE GRINDING WON'T STOP UNTIL THE SPIDERS ARE GONE"**

Given the charred, damaged nature of the remaining scanned pages of the journal, much of the text from this point is impossible to truly decipher or provide any objective discussion on. All save, of course, for one of the journal's more memorable and discussed entries, and the final (readable) page available to this point:

"SEE  
YOU  
IN  
THIRTY  
YEARS"

A warning of evils to come? A promise on behalf of the Marine to return and defend us from these creatures once more? Potentially both?

Despite the anonymity of the author, many parts of the story can potentially be corroborated. While the UAC is always loath to give up details (as is the tendency of military contractors), many FOIA requests can uncover reports of supernatural, religiously-themed activity on the moons of Mars. This is, of course, ignoring the massive evidence of the Dallas Invasion, a brief siege of the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex by otherworldly forces, seemingly (and improbably) battled back by one lone survivor of the Marine Corps. (Not our planet's first encounter with creatures from beyond our reality, but likely to remain the most violent and destructive.) It is not the nature of this paper to uncover the Marine's identity, merely to prove that there may be some truth to the story they tell, above and beyond what the internet typically refers to as "creepypastas" (a category in which the journal is typically, and wrongly, inserted, due to the unclear origin and occasionally factual nature of the events described within).

But above and beyond the scant details afforded to us by the federal government, the constant sightings provide an additional layer of speculation. After the Dallas Invasion, numerous outlets reported an increase in alleged ghost and UFO sightings across both platforms informal (social media) and formal (FBI tip lines, major psychiatric outlets). While the descriptions vary slightly, the one thing many of them have in common is a muscular figure of lean body, brimming with weaponry, quickly putting an end to these sightings before further details can be explored.

While it may be too romantic a notion to discuss in any scholarly fashion, it would be a fitting coda for the trials of this Marine to know that they're out there somewhere, between our world and the next, continuing to fight for humanity's safety against the machinations of whatever lies beyond.

Perhaps the readers of the journal can find some comfort in that, if nothing else.

- The Nature of Amalgamation: Analyzing "The Doom-Guy's Journal" and its Effect on Modern Supernatural Beliefs and Faith in American Military Structures, T. Davidson

## Appendice

### Ap. 1



### Ap. 2

