

# Chiaroscuro

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WE'RE SEEING A LOT OF YOU THIS WEEK, MR. ARKIN.

YEAH, I GUESS.

AH, STILL YOU.

IDENTITY CONFIRMED. DELIVERY CONFIRMED.

TOFU STEW AGAIN. SEEMS THE DATABASE KNOWS MY PREFERENCES NOW, I WON'T HAVE TO MANUALLY ORDER.

HMM... GETTING NICER PRODUCTS TO REVIEW NOW THANKS TO MY PROMOTION. ODD, I'M USUALLY SENT A DOWNLOAD LINK, THIS GAME MUST BE QUITE SPECIAL.

### LOOKUP

Options Help

Lookup:

**Noun:** *chiaroscuro* kee 'āru'skyūrow

1. The arrangement of light and dark parts in a work of art.
2. The art or practice of so arranging the light and dark parts so as to produce a harmonious effect.

Type of

icon  
ikon  
image  
picture

GLOBAL RADIATION LEVELS HAVE DROPPED BY 0.01 PERCENT TODAY. PLEASE REMEMBER TO USE AN ENVIRO-SUIT IF YOU ARE LEAVING YOUR DOMECILE AS POLLUTION LEVELS ARE STILL HIGH.

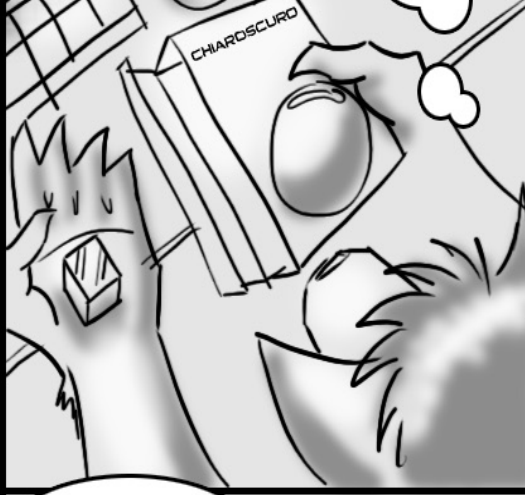
IN OTHER NEWS, THE YEARLY MEMORIAL TO HONOR THOSE LOST IN THE WAR WAS HELD YESTERDAY...



THE BOSS'S EMAIL SAID THAT REVIEWERS FROM OTHER COMPANIES WOULD BE PLAYING TOO. THAT MEANS THERE WILL EVENTUALLY BE CONTACT WITH THE OTHERS...

NOT SURE IF I LIKE THIS IDEA. I PREFER PLAYING THE GAME, NOT OTHER GAMERS.

OH WELL. I MIGHT AS WELL TRY...



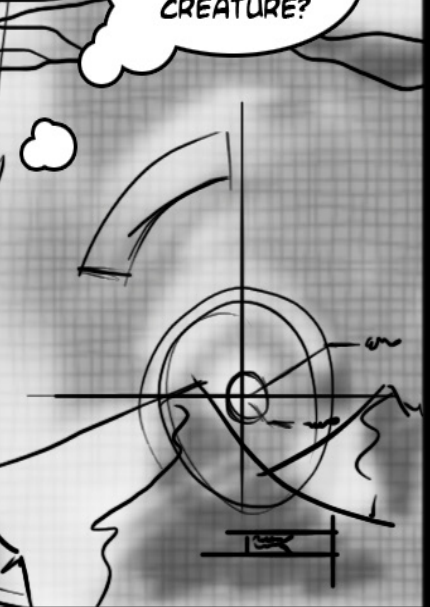
SYSTEM: THERE ARE TWO OTHER PLAYERS ONLINE.

THIS IS GETTING BORING...

WAIT, THERE'S SOMETHING...

LOST IT AGAIN...

IS THAT IT? ANOTHER GAME CREATURE?

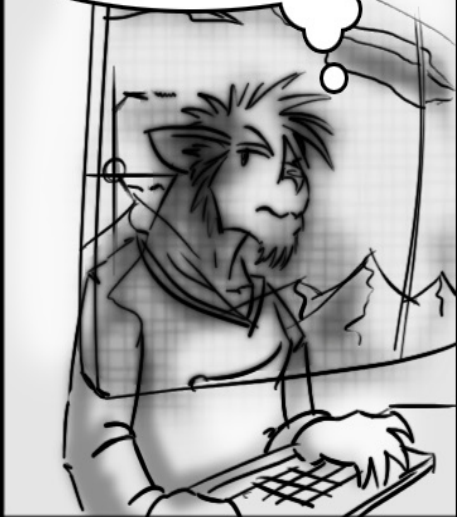


TWO OTHERS, OR MYSELF AND ONE OTHER?

ALWAYS FLANKING TO MY LEFT. I'M A SITTING DUCK OUT HERE ON THE PLAINS.

STUFF THIS, I'M BETTER OFF READING THE PROMOTIONAL BULLSHIT THAT CAME WITH THE GAME.

SYSTEM : SHUTDOWN

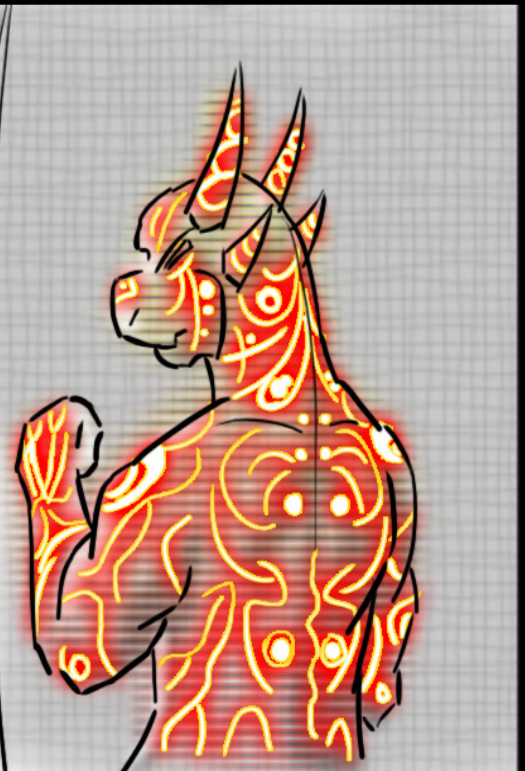




A FEW DAYS LATER...



GOTTA LURE HIM INTO THIS BOX CANYON...



SYSTEM: OTHER PLAYER LOGGED OFF.



SYSTEM: PRINTING SCREENSHOT OF CURRENT APPLICATION.





LATER THAT WEEK...

SEEMS THERE ARE MORE PLAYERS ONLINE, BUT NOT THE ONE I'M LOOKING FOR. I MIGHT AS WELL QU-



ACK!

GOTCHA!



SYSTEM: GAME OVER. LOGIN? Y/N

DAMN IT! I WAS SO...



SYSTEM: ACCEPT CHAT FROM PLAYER 'DAR CET'? Y/N



A WHAT? WAIT, I MEAN, SYSTEM: ACCEPT.

CHAT SESSION OPEN . .

**darcet**:: you should know better than to stand in the open like that



**arkin**:: how do you know it's me?

**darcet**:: there's a link back to all the players, don't you check who you're playing?

**arkin**:: sometimes I check

**darcet**:: :)

**arkin**:: and sometimes I don't

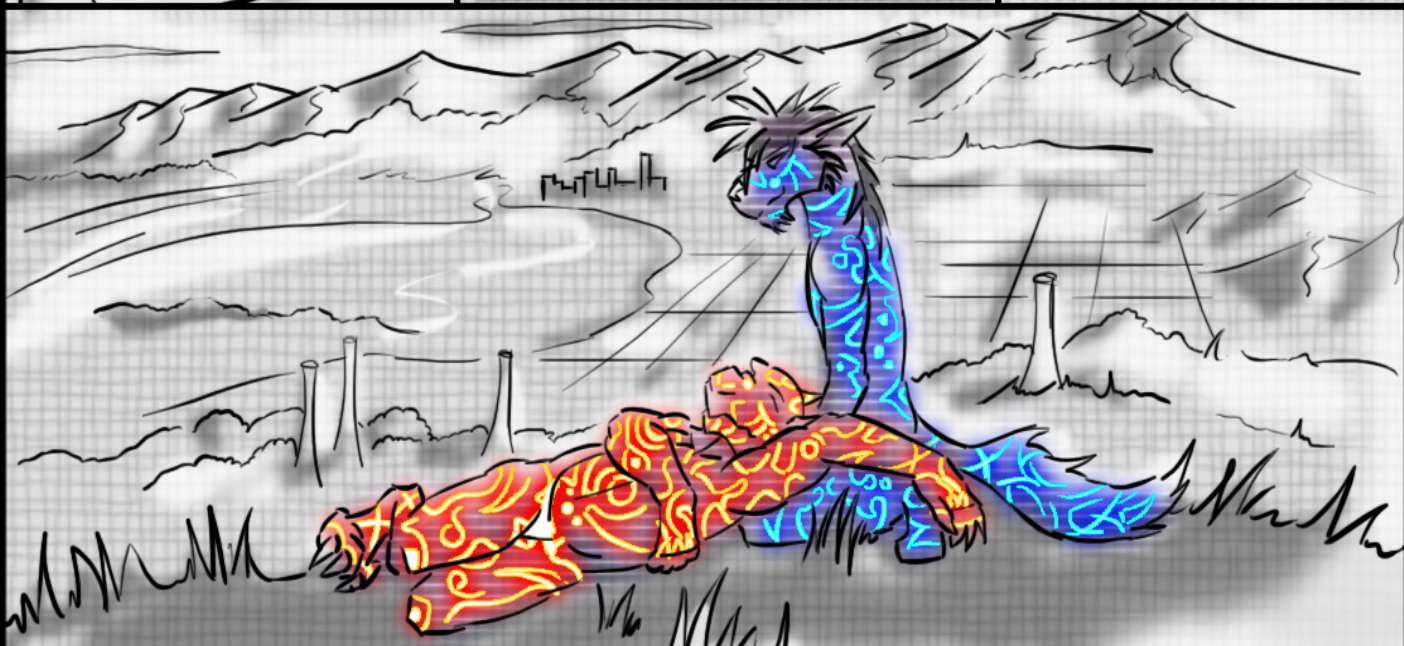
**darcet**:: :( ..you there?

**arkin**:: yeah

**darcet**:: log on

**arkin**:: it's so late

**darcet**:: i won't run





WE'RE SEEING A LOT OF YOU THIS WEEK, MR. ARKIN.

YEAH, I GUESS.

AH, STILL YOU.

IDENTITY CONFIRMED. DELIVERY CONFIRMED.

UM... THANK YOU... BOB.

YOU'RE WELCOME, MR. ARKIN

ODD... NEVER NOTICED HIS NAMEPLATE BEFORE...

SYSTEM: DAR CET ONLINE. CHAT? Y/N

**darcet**:: where are you?

**arkin**:: on the coast, you?

**darcet**:: same, near the delta

**arkin**:: me , too

**darcet**:: oh

**arkin**:: yeah

**darcet**:: it's nice here

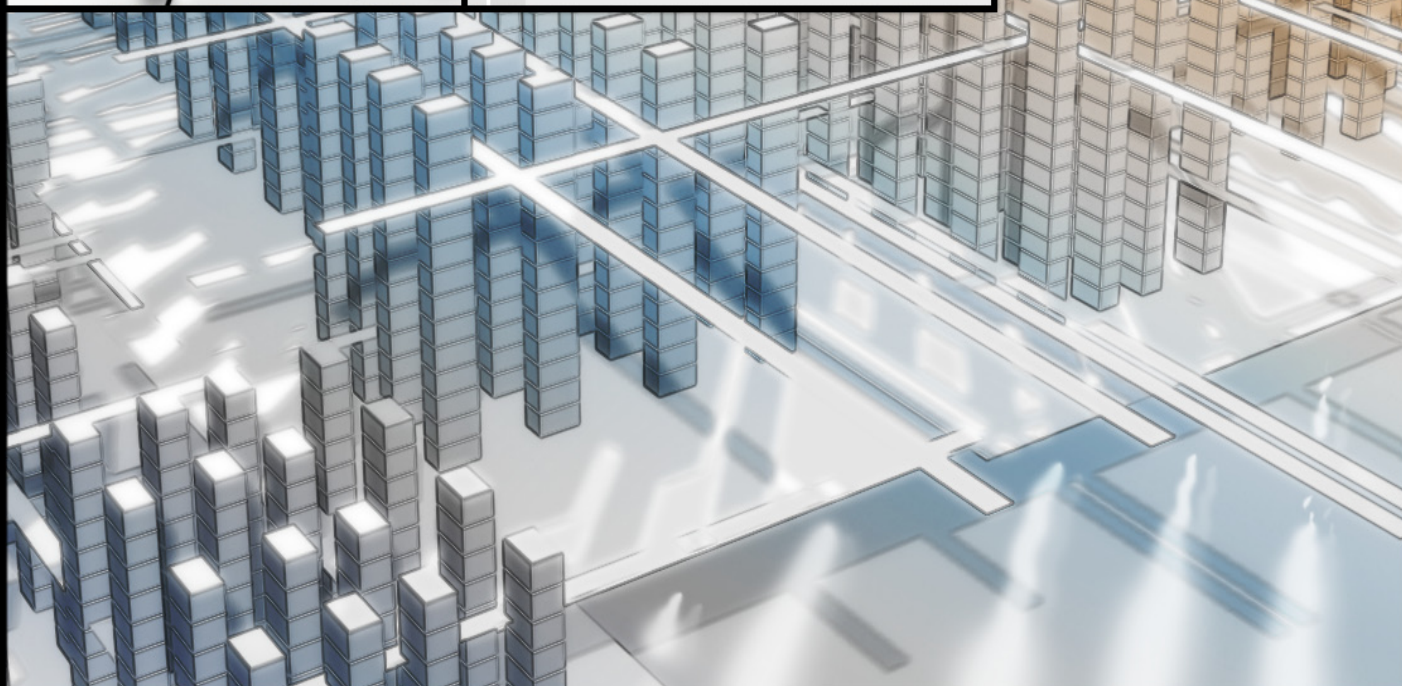
**arkin**:: yeah

THAT MEANS, WE'RE ONLY AN HOUR APART.

NO, THE GAME IS ENOUGH. FOR NOW.



SYSTEM: YES PLEASE.





WE'RE SEEING A LOT OF YOU THIS WEEK, MR. ARKIN.

YEAH, I GUESS... BOB.

AH, STILL YOU.

I SEE THIS IS FROM THE ENVIROSUIT COMPANY. GOING OUT?

MAYBE...

IDENTITY CONFIRMED. DELIVERY CONFIRMED.

YEAH...

THEN MAYBE SOMEDAY I'LL COME HERE AND YOU'LL BE OUT, MR. ARKIN

YEAH, MAYBE. MAYBE NOT.

**darcet**:: it doesn't bother you?

**arkin**:: what, that you're paralyzed from the waist down?

**darcet**:: yeah

**arkin**:: no, it doesn't.

**darcet**:: it means you will have to come here if we want to see each other...

**arkin**:: i know...

I'VE NOT BEEN OUTSIDE IN SO LONG...

I CANNOT KEEP LYING TO DAR CET LIKE THIS.

WHY DOES LEAVING MY APARTMENT SCARE ME SO?

I'VE GOT AN ENVIROSUIT NOW, I HAVE NO REASON NOT TO GO VISIT.

SURE, I DON'T REMEMBER HOW TO USE IT, BUT I CAN LOOK THAT UP...

**arkin**:: i have the

flu, sorry. I put it up to you promise...

**arkin**:: really tight deadline this week I just can't make it i'm sorry darcet.

**arkin**:: a package is arriving for my neighbor, I have to be here sure that i

**arkin**:: stupid thing really, I was walking too fast and I sprained my ankle, so I mustn't

**arkin**:: my envirosuit is really badly damaged, I have to get a new one...



I HAVE TO STOP BEING SCARED. I HAVE TO GET OUT. DAR CET ISN'T EVEN ASKING ME OVER ANYMORE...



THIS NEW GAME IS WELL-MADE, BUT KINDA BORING.

WILL DAR CET PLAY IT?

IF HE DOESN'T, DOES THAT MEAN OUR WORLDS WILL... DIVERGE?





**arkin::** are you on  
'trompe d'oeil'?

**darcet::** no

**arkin::** i can email it to  
you?

**darcet::** i have lots of  
games right now...

**arkin::** i can...

**darcet::** ...to review

**arkin::** ...bring it



**darcet::** i'm here

THE END

# shades of black

- . never underestimate emotion
- . always appreciate them
- . don't be afraid

A short story about love and reluctance.

special thanks to Ginger Mayerson  
for giving me such a beautiful story  
to experience and draw.

thanks to everyone who gave me  
support and motivation during  
this project.

. thank you

eurisko  
ginger  
gldm  
antioch  
dislekcia  
mom  
joanita