

## Chapter -82

[TUBULAR!] said the mouth on my sentient longboard, as I slid around a corner on just one wheel, before kicking off the ground and catching my wheels on the bottom of a truck that was knocked onto its side.

Bee was high in the air, mostly just using them to glide, while keeping an eye on the Great Game Agents and their many flying potato vessels.

“You know, those probably aren’t potatoes,” Panda commented, once again using his unnerving insight to spy into my thoughts.

“What are they then?” I asked, while skating along the roof of a limousine that was bent around an indestructible fire hydrant.

[BLASHPEMOUS!] exclaimed the board under my feet, surprising me with its sudden word choice and volume.

“Settle down or I’ll stuff a suck in your mouth,” I told it.

“They’re dung balls,” Panda said.

“What?”

“I said, I don’t think they’re potatoes, I think they’re dung balls.”

“Ah. That would explain why those Ant guys called them ‘dung-eaters’. But why do they have wings?”

Panda shrugged.

“I don’t think they’re following us!” Bee yelled from up high. “But they have started heading towards Logan’s beacon!”

“Maybe they lost the means to track you,” the plushie guessed.

“When I think back, they were only able to easily track me in the beginning thanks to the beacon I got from being the first to clear a Dungeon.”

“It’s also possible that, with the Broadcast Department’s nest under the Mall being destroyed, they lost their means to observe you.”

“It’s not completely destroyed though,” I argued. “We never found the Psychic Snail powering it.”

“Still, whatever the reason, they don’t seem to have a way to track you, although they could somehow tell when you left the safety of the Safe Zone.”

“Should I start to worry about being ambushed?” I asked.  
Just then an achievement popped:

<b>Congratulations! You have unlocked an achievement!</b> <sup>x</sup>
<i>‘Have to go quick!’</i>
<b>Traveled 15 miles using a faster alternative to running.</b>
<i>This is a cumulative reward for every foot you’ve moved while traveling above the average running speed of a human.</i>
<i>We only really looked into the average human speed after implementing many of the monsters in the Dungeons, and we realized that the denizens of ‘Dirt’ aren’t really that fast.</i>
<i>Explains a lot of the early Player deaths as well.</i>
<i>This is a band-aid fix to compensate for that, although our legal team says we don’t have the copyrights to the actual reference, so this is a knock-off tribute. Surprising that, despite your entire world being in the grips of an apocalypse,</i>
<i><b>Copyright Law</b> still persists.</i>
<b>Reward:</b> <i>‘Schmonic Boots’</i>

<b>‘Schmonic Boots’</b> <sup>x</sup>
<i>The shoes of the iconic, Schmonic the Molerat!</i>
<i>You know, the guy that always says, ‘Have to go quick!’</i>
<i>Alright, this is a knock-off. What do you want from us? An apology!? Sorry! Okay!? We just couldn’t get the permission to use the name S***c, and they’ll slaughter us in court!</i>

<i>Increases movement speed by 10% but reduces kicking damage by 50%</i>
<b>Weight: 3.85 Pandas</b>

“Schmonic? Do they mean S\*\*\*c?”

“S\*\*\*c,” Panda said, but the word was bleeped as well.

“Even saying it out loud is bleeped... that’s odd.”

“Did you say S\*\*\*c!?” Bee asked from the air. “I used to love S\*\*\*c, when I was a kid! Wait, why am I censored?”

“I got some dump rip-off boots,” I told her, half-yelling so that she could hear me.

Since the buff from them was pretty nice, I put them on. It was like wearing foam socks, and they had a pee-stained-white look to them.

“I just got an achievement too!” Bee announced. “It gave me ‘*Schmonic Gloves*’. It’s a 10% speed boost to spell-casting, but my punches become half as strong.”

With the new boots on, and the fact that the speed buff from the longboard seemed to add multiplicatively, it meant that I gained something close to twenty percent extra speed, which immediately sent me zooming down the street. With my extra speed, I had to really concentrate on maneuvering the pile-up of cars, as well as fallen-over lampposts.

In the distance was the hum of the beetles in their flying dung vessels, but it seemed we were closing in on Logan’s pillar of light. It hadn’t moved in a while, so either he was stuck in a fight somewhere or had made the wise decision of heading into a dungeon to even the odds.

The road I was traveling down started to ease up on the congestion, though the cause was immediately clear, as I saw the oh-so-familiar deep furrow in the ground that indicated the Metro-Train patrolled through here.

[逃げるのはおやめください。]

The sound echoed across the wider Downtown area. It was spoken in that polite-but-horrifying electronic PA voice. I had no idea what it meant, but I was fairly sure that it was in the middle of chasing some Players.

“That Japanese Metro is hunting down a really big group of people!” Bee announced from the sky, where she had a better view of the upcoming streets.

“So long as it doesn’t go towards the beacon, we’re fine!” I called back.

“It moved right past the area. It’s already level 91 though! It must have eaten a lot of Players!”

Panda grimaced.

“Yeah, my bad, I maybe should’ve predicted that.”

“Glad you’re self-aware enough to realize the mess you’ve caused,” he told me.

“They do need to take some responsibility for themselves though!”

“I guess that’s fair. Even if you unintentionally led a bunch of curious people into the maw of a hungry-hungry train.”

“I think you ought to blame Logan, if anything. No one would’ve been eaten by the train if he’d stayed near the Mayor’s house.”

“The beacon is right on top of a movie theatre!” Bee announced.

She began drifting down towards me and I slowed a little to let her grab onto my shoulders and float behind me while I sped off with the longboard. While one of her hands were holding on, her other was casually petting Lordie, who began purring in a frequency that made my teeth hurt.

“I want a pet too,” she complained, as I swung left through an intersection, using the deep furrow in the asphalt as a halfpipe to keep building up speed.

[RADICAL!] said the board as I popped out of the furrow and skidded to a halt on its nose, while standing directly on top of other end.

I hopped off and the longboard disappeared.

“What the hell kind of trick was that?” Panda asked, while Bee relaxed her wings and settled down on the ground.

“No idea, maybe like an extreme nose stall or something?”

In the front of us was an old-styled cinema with the marquee stating ‘*Louie the Laggard*’ in big blocky letters.

The glass doors below the marquee awning were impossible to look through, but it seemed fairly obvious that Logan had gone in here.

“I wonder why he picked this dungeon,” Panda remarked.

I held out my hand to the door and said, “*Inspect.*”

**DUNGEON ‘The Dark Theatre’ SNEAK-PEEK:**

**Recommended Player level: 9**

**Average Player level: 7**

**Players inside: 6**

**Player deaths: 11**

**Enemies slain: 0**

**Bosses slain: 0**

“Hm, only level 9. That shouldn’t be too bad.”

“I feel like the level scale is a bad indicator. I mean, look at the amount of deaths. Also, the text on the marquee must mean something, right?” the plushie replied.

“The deaths are probably because of Logan,” Bee commented after inspecting the entrance as well.

“Let’s just enter,” I said, impatiently.

Before anyone could stop me with convincing logic, I pushed the doors open and crossed the threshold. My surroundings were swallowed by darkness.

**WARNING!**

**Now entering level 9 Dungeon ‘The Dark Theatre’!**