



The lines fade away and your surroundings start to morph into some sort of room, but what you see looks utterly bizarre and almost alien. In fact, they remind you of the television screens from earlier. Your body shudders at the reminder of the peculiarities that have occurred in this one day.

You see a silhouette not far ahead of you, steadily approaching. Your body recoils, prepared to flee, but you don't see anywhere good to hide. Nothing in this world looks like anything you're used to.

As you become able to make out the silhouette's face, you notice that while the body shape looks familiar, the colours, texture and other visual features of this creature are unfamiliar to you. Starting to feel concerned you hold up your own hands, only to discover that you have somehow also taken a similar form. You turn your wrist with the uncomfortable realisation that you no longer know the backs of your own hands.

Mezza also appears to have followed you into this world, but similarly looks... different. The bird screeches as the figure stops its walking, not far in front of you.

"Welcome... to this world."

You don't particularly feel at ease, so you keep quiet while what looks like a person continues.

"Did you bring it?"

Unsure of what they mean, you ask them to clarify.

"The crosswords."

A... cross... word? Still perplexed, you ask for a clarification once more.

"The newspaper and the flier. We've noticed that you have taken a liking to those puzzles, since we saw you put them into your backpack."

How did they see you? Who are they? What is this world? You have too many questions, but you don't know where to start.

"Oh, I see. You're concerned at the thought that you have been watched. Don't worry, now that we've finally gotten you out of there, that will continue no longer."



“We’ve” finally gotten? Was it not yourself who somehow stumbled out here, out of your own accord?

“I’m sure you have much to ask, but for now it’s time to see how well you know your own world. If you succeed, you may be able to join us, in our world. We need brains like yours, and it would be a shame to see it wasted in that tiny land you were in.”

The person points at a display. You recognise the visuals immediately, for they remind you of your own home.

“You were inside what we call a ‘game’, an artificial world created to simulate ours, but changed through imagination to form a fantastic setting. I’m sorry to say this, but that’s how it is. You were made to believe that you had a goal and never question why you went to specific places or did certain actions.”

“However, it’s not like we controlled your every thought — many aspects of your life were indeed by your own volition, such as choosing what to do with the newspaper and flier. But in terms of broader activities, that was all us, until we managed to bring you out just now.”

“Every year, when we bring a character out, we give them a test. This year we did something a little different. Something has been missing all along, but it’s not like you would know. You might want to check out that newspaper in further detail though.”

You take out the newspaper from earlier this morning, questioning your own actions as you do so. You unfold the pages and check the contents, noticing something within...

