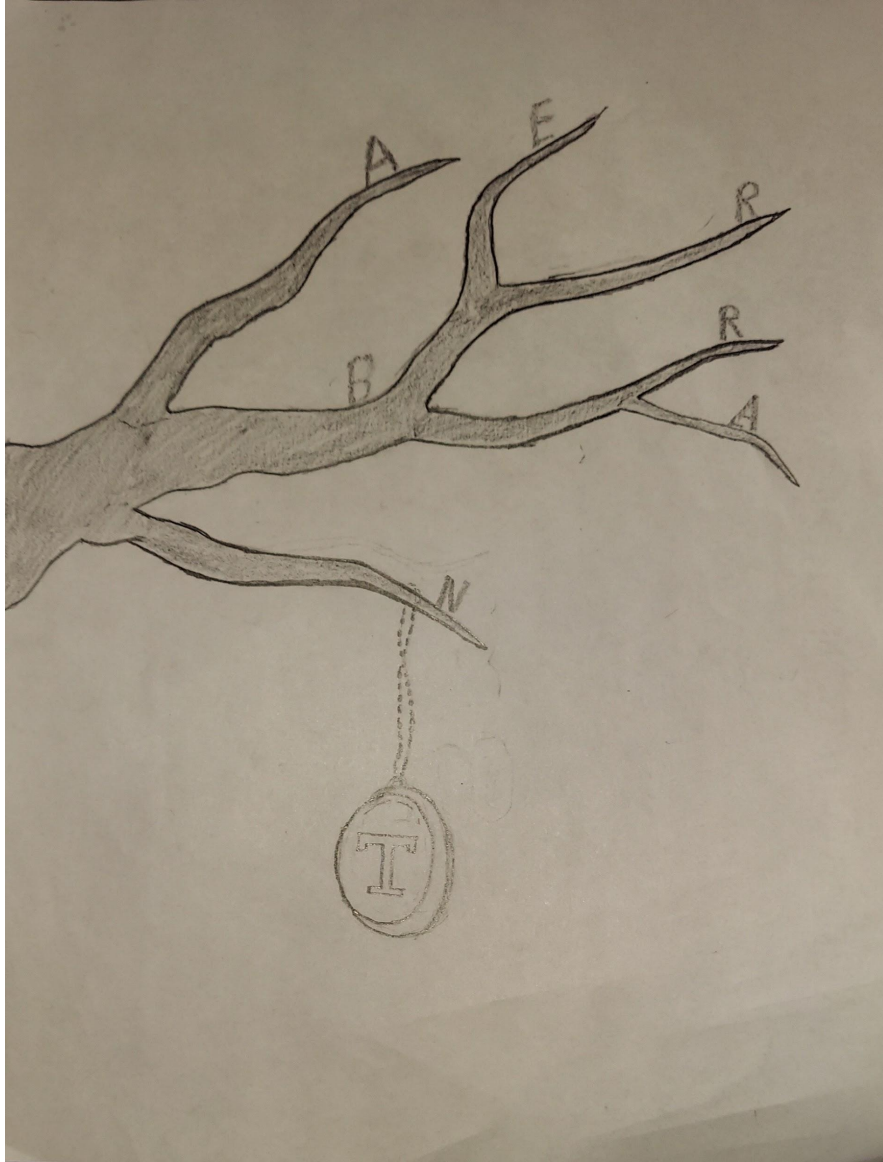


aberrant



“Why is it that you’re always the one leaving me, leaving us?” the woman asked through ruffled sniffles and tears.

“I’m sorry Mary, I have no other choice.”

“You always say that! When will you choose to stay with your family Maverick?”

## αβεrrant

Maverick winced at the remark, feeling the full effect of his responsibility in the actions of his wife. He had gone through this too many times. The pain of leaving, returning, and leaving again.

“Mary, look at the world we’re in right now. It’s in shambles, they need people like us to piece it back together again. I know it’s my leave but this had to be expected somewhat given my position.”

No response, Mary only hugged his back tighter.

“I promise you, this will be the last time this happens. When I come back I’ll resign and take care of both you and Rebecca.”

“You better.”

Maverick finished getting ready and left his wife, stepping out of the door and into a darkened world.

“YO MAVERICK!”

In the blink of an eye, Maverick sprung to his feet, combat knife in one hand and the other opened to intercept an attack. He steadily glared at the man who had called his name, until settling down after realizing the situation.

“Good morning to you too” the man said, hands still raised in the air. “The briefing’s about to start, everyone else is there so put that knife away and come downstairs. You might want to put on a shirt too.”

The man left, and Maverick sheathed his knife, quickly got dressed, and started making his way to the briefing room. Opening the door, he was greeted by the strong breeze of salty sea wind. The rocking of the boat and the beautiful bright blue ocean spanding out into what looked like forever established a sense of mesmerizing tranquility. From the sight before him, no one would be able to tell that the entire world is in a great state of peril.

## αβεrrant

“What will we really find over there in the land of the free home of the brave.?” he said

And after taking in the scenery for a few minutes more, he started on his way to the briefing room. There were still so many questions he had that were unanswered. Everything happened so fast there wasn't much time to think, only respond.

Maverick swiped his card and moved swiftly inside. All eyes turned to him as he entered the room

“Maverick! It's a pleasure for you to join us today.”

A man in a white lab coat greeted him from the center of the room. In front of him was a table where 6/7 seats were filled.

“Why don't you take a seat, we're about to get started.” the man gestured over to the last remaining open seat. He broke off from the entrance and sat down like he was instructed.

“Now I think it's best that we introduce ourselves.”

The man in the lab coat pushed up his glasses and then bowed.

“My name is Theta, Dr Theta Boudin. And this is my partner. Dr Aluwayzan”

He raised his head and gestured across the room to the right. In the corner of the room was a young blonde hair woman. She sat typing away on her laptop while not even glancing in the direction of the man who just called her name.

“Yo Doc!”

attention then fell on a tall bulky man at the end of the table.

“Shouldn't you introduce yourself over here too?”

It was obvious that the man was pulling some sort of joke, however, Theta responded as if it were a serious question.

## αβerrant

“My partner is running a very important analysis of our situation and it is best that she isn’t disturbed.”

The bulky man backed off, assessing that it was not worth stirring up any trouble over any jokes.

“Why are we here Dr?” Asked another soldier. He had wire-framed glasses and sat attentively in his chair.

Theta started again.

“As you all know, the world is in quite a sorry state ever since we lost contact with both the Northern and Southern American continent. As of right now, this is the state of the world.”

To the right of him, a hologram popped up displaying multiple screens. The world has gotten a lot worse than it was 3 weeks ago. The holograms displayed mass protests happening all over the world. People holding signs demanding answers, from the police stationed around the perimeter. Buildings were on fire and grocery stores were being emptied out. Entire offices were empty and transportation services were stopped as people boycotted the system. Almost every country showed the same results.

“What about our families, are they safe?”

Asked another soldier. He was by far the thinnest soldier there. On his neck, there was a tattoo of the scope of an m82 sniper rifle.

“As a precaution, all of your respective family members have been moved to a secure location,” responded Theta

Multiple soldiers couldn't help but sigh in relief and Maverick couldn't help but join them.

“While dangerous civilian scimmages break out in communities, their political leaders are also on the verge of collapse as well.”

## αβεραη†

Theta pulled up another hologram with a recording of a press conference.

"Earlier this week diplomats from foreign countries got into a fight about which countries will take the mantle of replacing the missing power houses. Knowing that this would happen, that's when "we" decided to take action."

An even bigger hologram popped up this time.

"We are S.E.R.A, a world government tasked with dealing with political and biological world crises. With one of the most important power houses gone the world is in need of answers that whatever happened there can't happen anywhere else.

"And what exactly happened over there in the first place?" the tattoo soldier asked.

Before he could respond, Dr Aluwayzan stopped typing and interrupted

"We're not entirely sure. As S.E.R.A monitoring other countries' technological and scientific state is part of the Job. "Though barely, we managed to stay involved with America's scientific development while staying under the radar."

She flipped up some documents and sent them to the hologram.

"Reports say that Canada and America were working on a serum called Rejuvinal that would completely stop the effects of aging. As you may have guessed, something as powerful as that falling into the wrong hands would be catastrophic to the ruling system of the entire world. Scientists there seemed to realize it as well and apparently sabotaged the entire project. But a strain of Rejuvenal survived, and instead mutated into something else."

"This was the last image we were able to take of the United States before satellite communications went dark," said Theta.

On screen an image was displayed of complete chaos. There was a burning city with people running from grocery stores and all over the place. However there was something off with how they looked. Before Maverick could analyze the image further, it quickly flew off to the side of the hologram.

## αβερραντ

“And this is where you all come in. Team IRIS, hand picked the best soldiers from around the world.”

“You flatter me,” the bulky man replied snobbishly.

Theta continued talking as if nothing had happened.

“Team IRIS will be deployed in Delaware, our mission will be to reach a scientific facility a few miles in to retrieve information regarding.”

“What about the people?” a new soldier replied this time. He had darker skin and scars over the side of his head.

“Due to the contagious nature of the strand as well as the total blackout of communication with the country, we have reason to believe that people have been infected. Therefore, for your safety you will be wearing hazmat suits during these operations.” said Dr Alwayzan.

Maverick stood up, “Permission to speak freely doctors.”

“Go ahead,” responded theta.

“What should be our course of action if one of these “infected citizens” confront us.”

Dr Alwayzan hesitated, “When the time comes you will be tasked with neutralizing them with tranq darts. We don’t know the full effects the strand has had on people but hostility should be expected.”

He sat down emotionally puzzled at how they were to treat infectious needy citizens of another country. Were they not still people? Since when did being infected with some sort of disease warrant tranq darts and machine guns. Something isn’t right with this operation.

“Before we disperse and leave we would like for you all to introduce yourselves and your specialties.” Theta asked humbly. “This is so you can each get familiar with each other as a team and-”

# αβεrrant

Before Theta could finish speaking, the bulky man shot up obnoxiously.

“My name is **Guts, Guts Berserk**. Weapons specialist and heavy lifter.”

Guts sat down with a big grin on his face, expecting some sort of recognition from the others, but none was received.

“I guess I’ll go next then.” The thin man with glasses and a scope tattoo stood up this time.

“Diego Hernandez, ex special ops marksman.”

The soldier with wire framed glasses stepped up next.

“Abutundae verner” Technology specialist and data analyzer.

“Smith, ex afghan insurgency”

“Toby Tonor, Medic and communications specialist.”

“David”

Maverick recognized this voice. This was the man who managed to sneak up on him while he was sleeping.

“David Morveino, ex army lieutenant.”

He sat down and Maverick couldn't help but eye him. It was rare seeing an ex lieutenant still fighting in the army, as well as on the front lines of an assault.

## αβεραη†

With a deep breath, Maverick stood up, “Sergeant Maverick Johnson. NATO army. Tactical leader.”

With the meeting dismissed preparations were being made for the ground assault. It was early noon and with Delaware clearly in sight, it was time to depart from the research vessel. Maverick quickly put on his hazmat suit, kissing the picture of his wife before he left his dorm.

“When I come back I’ll resign and take care of both you and Rebecca.”

Remembering the promise he made to them, he left his dorm behind him. Closing the door, and locking it.

## αβεραη†

Part 2 unfinished

Guts grunts as he sets down his abnormally large backpack on the boat.

“Guns?” Diego questions.

“Guns and tranq darts.” Guts answers sourly

“Where the hell is Abutundae?” Maverick demands.



# Aberrant

Abutundae rushes out of the research boat “Right here sir sorry for the delay I had to fetch some more equipment.”

“It's fine but don't let it happen again.” Maverick

As the boat takes off to Delaware Maverick gets a weird feeling about the missions and starts thinking to himself why was the mission brief so vague what are the hazmats suit protecting us from what caused the communications to go dark like that? Maverick realizes that the others are probably thinking the same thing so to get their minds off the danger of the mission he introduces himself again.

“As you all know I am the mission leader my name is Maverick but for the purpose of this mission you can call me Mav.”

“Our first mission as team IRIS is to reach a scientific facility where the last signal was sent before the breakout and record and send out as much information back to SERA about the mutated virus as possible.”

“Understood?”

“Understood” the group responds.

Part 3  
Ms.Pahomov

English 2

09 January 2023

Aberrant

# αβεραη†

The overgrown tree roots break the sidewalk, through the rubble, you can see fragments of what used to be a thriving city. A city of marble turned into a city of bricks. The first state turned to the last thriving state. According to the map we can make it the bunker that might hold the secrets to these creatures that took the lives of our squad and the United states.

“Why the long face Mav?” Diego says

“We are in an unfamiliar territory facing an enemy we don’t know. It was my fault- if we had just set up the transceivers<sup>1</sup> and communicated like we did in the briefing.” Maverick replies while clutching his cross necklace, holding back tears.

“ Smith had it coming, his ego would have killed him if those *demonios*<sup>2</sup> didn’t. But Toby was a tragedy. What do we tell his granddad?”

“I- I don’t know.”

“He had a notebook in the bag.” Abutande says while rummaging for it

“Focus on the rear and the radio Abutande, right now you’re our only hope.”

Diego says while taking the notebook from Abutande

“Fine” Abutande replies as he continues to scout with the drone overhead

“Alright Mav, it says to look for the place where man-”

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<sup>1</sup> Known commonly as walkie-talkies

<sup>2</sup> Demons in spanish

# αβεrrant

“10 o'clock and approaching fast!” Abutande interrupts

“That's fine we'll just brute force it” responded Diego

“No, the radars are now picking up a group from the west, wait no from the south as well. Totaling to nine.” Abutande says as he hesitates to reach for his rifle.

“ Alright Diego and Abu, get the rear and the sides, I'll get the ones in the front”

'Aye Aye” says Diego

“Hold on, they all stopped. Now only two are still coming at us, one from the front and one from the rear. “

“They're using guerilla warfare tactics. They're going to attack in waves, be ready.” Diego says while reloading his 44 magnum and taking in the deepest breath he can with the hazmat suit filter. Still puzzled on why they fully need them

Suddenly there is this loud whistling sound, like someone set off a firework, then BOOM, there was a sound that can only be described as a large shockwave.

“The connection with the drone has- has been severed.” Abutande says while tossing aside the controller.

## αβεrrant

“Impossible, they should not know what a drone does, in fact they should not have long range weapons, the briefing did not tell-” Diego says shivering in his boots.

“Enough with the briefing! We were told we would go home all intact and look at us now. Our only hope is to reconnect with the ship and get the *hell* out of here.” Maverick says while looking at Mary and the kids one last time.

“*Tranquilo mi amigo*, they don’t have infinite numbers, just aim for their joints, cut their range of mobility and are fine, so that we can snag a few skin samples and make them like an egg and scram.” Diego says while confidently gripping his AR15. “Alright we’ll follow through with your plan” Maverick says

The beasts charge at them, they have human features, a face, hair, but they somewhat resemble that of death. Soulless eyes, constant groaning and screaming, grayish skin. However the most outstanding trait of them all, they are resilient. As their joints are shot and limbs immobilized, they still move, at fast speeds too. But rather than targeting the people, they target the notebook that holds the secrets to their kind.

“What the *hell*, if these things were humans they would not be able to move by now.” Abutande says. Reaching for his last magazine.

“ It looks like they are going for Toby’s notebook!” Diego says while suppressing the enemy’s attacks”

# αβεrrant

“Enough with the talking, focus on the bigger one!” Maverick says.

As all three of them finish the big one, the smaller variant circles back and swipes the notebook from them. Diego sees this and disengages and runs after the monster.

“HEY! Get back here!” Diego says while lining up the shot to end its existence.

“Diego, you idiot!” Maverick says while the bigger creature dashes past Maverick and Abutande to the turned back of Diego.

Diego kills the smaller one with the notebook, but the bigger variant makes three gaps in his hazmat suit, like three scratch marks. The bigger one then doubles back but ultimately is put down by Diego.

“Your suit is ripped, it's only a matter of time before you become one of those things.” Maverick says, once again clutching his cross.

“Wherever we are right now, there is no god to protect us. Holding that chain is useless.” Diego responds while falling into the arms of Abutande.

“Get the notebook Mav. It holds the answers to this *hellhole*.” Abutande says while checking out how deep the slashes on Diego’s back are.

# αβεραη†

“It's not deep. I can still carry out the mission.” Diego says.

“You're bleeding out. What do you mean? You're going to die-”

“Hey. Remember when I said I'm finding my calling. Well, I found it. Although these past few hours have been a living *hell*, *it was* the most action I had in years. For a few moments, my life wasn't such a bore. Please let me have this.” Diego says

“Sorry to interrupt your little rant, but found the notebook.” Maverick says with a sharp exhale.

“Alright well open it up and see what it says.” Abutande says

“That's the thing. It's blank.” Maverick says while frantically flipping through the pages in search of a sentence.”

“Check page 93, it was his birth year.” Diego says, followed with an array of coughing.

“Found something, it says to look for the place where man walked across the clouds. And to follow where the waves run rampant.” Maverick says with his eyebrows furrowed and a puzzled look on his face.

## αβεrrant

“He must be referring to the Bellanca Airfield Museum. But that's a few miles north east from here. We won't make it especially with the group of 8 variants still waiting for us.” Abutande says, looking at the dark gray clouds in the sky.

“Waves meaning radio waves, if we assume that then it must be the Air Mobility Command Museum. Check the map.”

“According to this we should be just to the left of it.” Abutande says with a bright smile on his face.

“Hate to ruin the fun but the creatures in the front and the sides are coming in, putting the distance of these binoculars into the equation I estimate we only have a minute before they get here.” Maverick says while he feels a drop of rain fall on the side of his suit.

“You guys go, who else will tell Toby's grandpa his last wish.” Diego says as he takes in one last big breath.

“We can't just leave you-” Abutande says on the verge of tears.

“There are eight of them and three- no two and a half of us, we can't win. I'll give you time.” Diego says while using all of his energy to stand and clutch his grenade belt. “ Let me have this.” He says

## αβεραη

"It's been one *hell* of a ride Diego" Maverick says while hesitating to move

"Same to you, *amigo*." Diego says as he pulls all the pins of his grenade belt.

"May, we have a problem, the doors are locked." Abutande says

"We have literal monsters chasing us and you are worried about breaking open a door" says Maverick as he shoots lock and barges through the door.

"Okay so where the waves run rampant must be the radio waves section. There we might be able to fix the radio and get in contact with the ship." Abutande says. Hearing consecutive explosions in the background

"That must be Diego, let's hurry."

"This place has to have a broadcasting system."

"Well, you better find it quickly before it becomes the fourth of July here as well." Maverick says helping Abutande search for the broadcasting station

"Found it, and I'm connecting it now." Abutande says grasping on to the bit of hope they have left.

"Be prepared to give a long explanation to the higher-ups Abutande." Says Maverick as he guards the stairs.



# αβεραη†

“Uss-Nemites, come in and part on the shore, we are about to lose, requesting backup.”

“Uss-Nemites, notified, arriving shortly.

As the cannons of the grand warship fire the remaining variants drag what seems to be a dead Diego across the city to a rundown bunker. The presumed dead Diego slowly lifts up his eyelids and sees hundreds, if not thousands of the beasts that gave them hardship in low numbers. However, something is off about this batch. They’re bigger, have more limbs. One of them walks up to Diego and to break the eerie silence, a few broken words are said.

“ΒΥαη†, fear U , ωε D⊙ η⊙† fear η.υεΔη ” ??? Says

## Annotations Part 1

*Annotation #1 - In 50-100 words, describe a technique you use in this piece. Why did you make that choice, and what impact does it have on the reader's understanding of the story? Make sure to quote a phrase or sentence from your writing. Bonus points for explaining how another author influenced your choice!*

*A technique that I decided to use for my story was writing in a third person point of view. Writing in a third person point of view allowed me as an author to add thoughts that wouldn't have been able to be known if it were in third person. These internal thoughts allowed the story to flow more thoroughly as well as allow me to establish the allegorical elements of separation, as well as the greediness of people. The effect that this had on the reader was for them to feel more aware of what was going on around them. "Opening the door, he was greeted by the strong breeze of salty sea wind. The rocking of the boat and the beautiful bright blue ocean spanding out into what looked like forever established a sense of mesmerizing tranquility."*

*Annotation #2 - In 50-100 words, describe a technique you use in this piece. Why did you make that choice, and what impact does it have on the reader's understanding of the story? Make sure to quote a phrase or sentence from your writing. Bonus points for explaining how another author influenced your choice!*

*Another technique that I decided to use was to add extensive dialog between the characters. Doing this allowed for the characters to come to understand the true effect of what the disappearance of America has had on the rest of the world. It also helps the reader understand the state of the world as well and how big of a problem this is "While dangerous civilian scrimmages break out in communities, their political leaders are also on the verge of collapse as well."*

*Annotation #3 - In 50-100 words, describe a technique you use in this piece. Why did you make that choice, and what impact does it have on the reader's understanding of the story? Make sure to quote a phrase or sentence from your writing. Bonus points for explaining how another author influenced your choice!*

*One of the main establishing techniques I did was at the start of my story where Maverick had a time skip from leaving his family, to waking up on the research vessel. He woke up from a dream of him leaving his family already on the boat. The reason I choose to use this approach was to show how worse the world has gotten since Maverick left, as well as to establish a hint of longing he has for his family, ultimately being the drive that pushes him through this mission.*

αβerrant

Annotations 2

## Annotations Part 3

Annotation #1 - In 50-100 words, describe a technique you use in this piece. Why did you make that choice, and what impact does it have on the reader's understanding of the story? Make sure to quote a phrase or sentence from your writing. Bonus points for explaining how another author influenced your choice!

I used a lot of dialogue in my writing. I did this because it allows me to show the characters' thoughts without it being in an awkward format like if I had said the same thing in 3rd person.

"It's been one hell of a ride Diego" Maverick says while hesitating to move

"Same to you, amigo." Diego says as he pulls all the pins of his grenade belt.

The lord of the flies, inspired me to have a combination of 3rd person narration and excessive dialogue, I felt through this technique I could have more in depth explanation of the characters, you could empathize with them more.

Annotation #2 - In 50-100 words, describe a technique you use in this piece. Why did you make that choice, and what impact does it have on the reader's understanding of the story? Make sure to quote a phrase or sentence from your writing. Bonus points for explaining how another author influenced your choice!

I focused on writing shorter sentences that hold tension with the dialogue, however for the writing, I purposely made the sentences a bit lengthier compared to the dialogue.

"Diego, you idiot!" Maverick says while the bigger creature dashes past Maverick and Abutande to the turned back of Diego. As you can see from the example, I tried to have a similar format in all of the lines of dialogue, the words they say, conversing with others, but also the body language and what is happening around them through the narration. Lord of the flies again inspired me to do this, I felt as if it built tension and allowed me to describe the landscape and what is happening that can not be described through dialogue.

# aberrant

Annotation #3 - In 50-100 words, describe a technique you use in this piece. Why did you make that choice, and what impact does it have on the reader's understanding of the story? Make sure to quote a phrase or sentence from your writing. Bonus points for explaining how another author influenced your choice!

I made sure to have Diego, speak a few words of Spanish. Essentially this was just to build character, just to help the readers visualize Diego as a Marsman, whose native language is Spanish. I also decided to make characters constantly repeat the word hell. I made them do that to show symbolically how the former Delaware was now a place that can only be described as hell on Earth. This is just for more visualization of the story and world/ character building.