

THIS STATEMENT IS FALSE

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A RED LIGHT TURNED ON AND OFF, ON AND OFF, AGAIN AND again, accompanied by a high pitched beep; this sound woke him up. Arthur was still sitting in his chair, right in front of his computer screen. He must have fallen asleep while working; he couldn't remember what he had been doing, he had a headache that radiated from the back of his head throughout his skull. He decided that if anything important had been done on his computer he should probably save it, no use angering the boss, no use losing work. Arthur shook the mouse to wake up the computer and tapped a button on top of the alarm clock to turn it off. The bright, pale light that came from the monitor was an odd contrast to the dark room, Arthur had to squint to look at the screen. As Arthur looked at the computer screen, the puzzled look on his face grew. The background was a milky white, and there was nothing on the screen except for an odd sentence, written in black: "This statement is false" What confused Arthur just as much was that the screen kept flickering in irregular intervals, turning to black over and over again.

Freaked out by the odd behaviour of his computer Arthur got up and walked away, he may have had no clue what was happening, but he wasn't naive, something was going on. He was almost out of his room when an odd sound came from the previously silent computer. It sounded similar to the static someone would get when they turned their radio to the wrong station. This sound started to get louder and louder. Arthur cautiously walked over to the computer, the static slowly subsided as he slid into his chair and placed his fingers over the familiar keyboard.

The screen flickered, the odd statement slightly changed, again dominating the white background. "These statements are false" Arthur began to puzzle over what it could mean, but before he could begin to think the screen flickered to black. The static sound came back again, louder this time than before. Arthur clapped his hands over his ears and got out of his chair. He bent down and yanked the computer cord out of the wall, the awful sound subsided and the monitor turned off. He felt that was enough so he walked away determined to finish his daily routine. Walking was all he could manage in his current groggy state. Arthur forced himself out of the room, trying to

drive the awful sound out of his mind. His head was pounding. The digital clock that hung above his front door read 5:43 a.m. Considering how far away his job was, he thought he could probably get there close to on time. He was confused and his head throbbed as he grabbed his work bag with his laptop in it. He took the keys off of the hook that hung next to his door and walked outside.

The temperature must have been at least -25 degrees celsius, snow covered the ground, cold wind whipped around him, threatening to freeze him to death. Arthur got into his car and pulled out of the driveway, looking back at his small, one story house still thinking about the computer. The drive was just as long as ever, and hunger that nearly always plagued him was ever so present. The traffic must have been terrible, because he found himself dozing off during red lights. The static sound echoed through his mind, and the sentence, "This statement is false" bewildered him as well. He pushed that out of his mind, and slowly but surely he was making progress, the traffic was clearing up, he got few red lights, but he was still going to be at least ten minutes late. His car hit a couple potholes, and he nearly hit a jaywalking pedestrian, but he wasn't going to be too late.

When the large white building came into sight it was already 8:20, twenty minutes after he should have been there. Arthur drove up to a parking spot and got out, bringing only his work bag. The large glass doors silently slid open as he walked up to them, bringing warm air that was so much nicer than the frigid outside. Arthur walked in, looking around, surprised to see that few people were there. His

footsteps echoed against the polished-looking faux marble floor as he made his way to his office. The openness of the building mixed with all the white reflective surfaces made walking out it in open feel odd to Arthur. He was surprised that his boss didn't stop him and begin yelling about how important it is to not be late. The usual commotion was replaced with eerie silence. Inside he set his bag down and pulled out his computer, ready to get on with the tedious and monotonous daily routine, the events of the morning entirely out of Arthur's mind. When he opened his computer he jumped back, nearly screaming in fear. The screen was white, and in black text it read "These statements are false"

Arthur nearly fell out of his chair in shock when he saw that statement. *Why had it followed him here!* He decided that if he was to get on with his day he would need to see what all this was about. So he started thinking, wondering. It was a well known paradox, if what the statement said was true, then that would mean it was false, making it impossible to complete, but it usually went "This statement is false" the word "These" made no sense. Arthur went to see if he could interact with the computer, he swiped on the mouse pad, but nothing happened, there was no mouse on screen. He clicked over and over again, and began hitting the keyboard randomly. One time his finger hit the letter "T" on the keyboard. The screen blinked and the "T" in "These statements are false" became red. Arthur hit "H" and the same thing occurred with the second letter in the statement.

Arthur repeated the process with every letter. Immediately when

he hit the last “E” the screen turned red, the loud static returned. Arthur clamped his hands over his ears, the static sound was much louder than the computer’s speakers must have been. This time instead of backing away, Arthur stared at the screen, which at the time was slowly changing into darker shades of red. After the screen had turned black a new message appeared, this time in white with a black background, “Time moves as normal” Arthur got up and slammed his chair in - *at least the computer could give him one thing that makes sense!*

As he began to walk away the computer made a static sound. Arthur turned around and on the screen was a new message, this one in red “You can’t leave us” Arthur reluctantly sat back down and the static sound stopped. The message changed, “Time moves as normal” Arthur typed “T” to see if it would work in the same way that the last statement did. He waited a second afterwards, nothing happened. He typed it again, and still nothing happened. The words stayed white, the background stayed black. Arthur sat there waiting, wondering, why was that statement on the screen, what was going on. He decided to walk around and think about it.

Before the static started he said: “Shut it, I’m just going for a walk” oddly enough the computer stayed silent, no loud static sounds. Arthur felt safe enough, so he walked out of his office, the white floors reflecting all of the overly bright lights above. He went over to the water fountain, his throat feeling as though he hadn’t drank anything in weeks. Above the water fountain was a clock, the time on the clock read “7:00 a.m” It took Arthur

a few minutes of looking at the time before he was hit with the shock, he had gotten there at 8:20, so there was no way that it could be 7:00. He ran back to the computer, the screen pure white this time, and completely blank. He tapped the mouse pad, the screen flickered a few times, but nothing else happened. He began to type, what started off at first as quick clicks of the keyboard, quickly descended into violent slams as Arthur lost his temper, but even through that no words appeared on the screen.

Footsteps sounded behind Arthur, he jerked his head around to see what it was, but nothing was there. When he turned back to the computer screen it read “Everything you believe is true” Arthur couldn’t figure out what was going on, what did this all mean, this computer was only telling him things that made no sense whatsoever. He started to click and type, but the message still read: “Everything you believe is true” Arthur got up and walked away from the computer. Suddenly, all of the computers in the room flashed white. On their screens were the words “This statement is false” The static sound echoed throughout the entire building. Building up as each computer joined in, like an orchestra of broken radios. He tried to calmly walk to the front door, to hide the fear that was building up inside him, from whatever thing was watching him. His slow walk quickly turned into a sprint.

When he reached the front door to the building he heard footsteps behind him, he whipped around, but again there was nothing there. Arthur ran through the doors, almost hitting them as they opened. The cold air outside hit him like a punch to the gut,

taking the air out of his lungs, but still he ran, out of fear and, likely, necessity. There were no other cars in the parking lot, only his car. He ran to it and jumped in, nervously trying to turn on the engine. It took just as long as normal, but seemed to take an eternity. Arthur looked to the left of him, footsteps in the snow, much larger than his own, went from the front door of the building to about five feet away from his car. He hadn't heard the footsteps as he was running, but they were there. Arthur stepped on the gas, taking off as quickly as possible. The wheels slid across the snow covered asphalt as he drove out of the parking lot. He was driving far over the speed limit, and ignoring all traffic laws, but it didn't matter, he couldn't see any cars nearby anyway. Actually, he hadn't seen anyone at all since he walked into his office, he saw a few people before, but afterwards they were all gone.

Arthur passed by his house, sooner than he thought possible, but he didn't stop, he couldn't risk it, considering the morning events, even his house wasn't safe. He continued driving for a while, no cars around him, no one at all. After what felt like a few minutes something to the right caught Arthur's eyes; a house, one that looked exactly like his own. He brushed this off as being lazy designers, ones without enough creativity to make houses that weren't all the same. He looked down at the clock, it read 7:00. He could have sworn that he saw it change from 7:00 to 7:01 a couple of minutes ago, but he couldn't be sure of anything, his headache dominated his attention, his vision was going red.

Arthur's eyes were again caught by something to his right,

another house identical to his own! He had enough, he pulled off to the right, a pointless action as it seemed that there were no cars or people around, and ran to the house. He put the key in the door, turning it slowly, afraid of what was going to happen. The door opened. It was his house! Immediately when he stuck his first foot in he heard footsteps behind him, heavy footsteps that crunched the snow under them. He ran into his house, stumbling over his coffee table and chair. He reached out and pulled himself into his room, slamming the door as he came in. Arthur held his head in his hands, the headache had an exceptionally bad swell, the room nearly went black. He recovered and walked over to the monitor, sliding the chair out of his way. The background was black, the text on the screen was in red. It said: "Reality is a lie". He slid into his chair, the text sent a shiver through him. He was so focused on the statement that he didn't hear his door open, but he did hear the heavy footsteps that sounded behind him. Loud, shaking the ground, though Arthur didn't have time to turn around before he felt a sharp pain on the back of his head. Everything went dark.

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