

Once upon an instance, for it couldn't have been longer than the blink of an astral eye, in a nearby galaxy static in perpetual dusk, quiet of the solar noise, on a planet no more important than a speck of dust, but successors of the reptilian giants and the cunning brutes, wandered an aimless generation of invisible people. It wouldn't be accurate to say they chose to be unseen; it would be quite the contrary, in fact. They wallowed in their translucence and vacantly screamed for recognition. But, you see, they were cursed with a lack of substance.

No longer free of the ugly indulgence, the invisible people were chained to their machines and were slave to the green sovereign for longer than their barren minds could recall. A golden ideal had poisoned their veins hundreds of thousands of years before, when the first of their species had given value to nothingness. Now, memory had become myth, and the only reflection that could satiate the appetite of this invisible race was the taste of the intangible future.

But there was a time when they were present. There was a time when they were; when they had been. But only moments had to pass before the greed struck and they became sheer. The hungrier they got, the thinner they appeared. In their search for more substance, they soon had none, and the entire species vanished. Yet, although you could no longer see them, they were still there. Barely.

In this instance of bare existence—of microscopic significance amid the titanic magnitude of the universe so grand in comparison to the barely-there creatures, and in the midst of their mechanisms, and their machinery, and their sorrow, lived a pixelized man. There's no saying how he got there, or how long he would remain; all we can know is that he was three-fourths heavier the corpus of an invisible man and four-fifths graver the intellect.

Yes, the pixelized man, crowded with atoms and heavy with existence (or at least, heavier), in all his mass had more substance in the tip of his ear lobe than the entire invisible species combined—and for reasons unknown he was cursed with the ability to see them, to observe, and to witness. Yet, however much he wanted to feel remorse for this invisible population, there was nothing he could do to salvage their weight, and so he salvaged his own instead.

On the night of his birthday, he strolled through the nothingness in search of an evening dinner—for as you know, food produced by invisible people are equally as invisible and particularly

unsavory. On his walk he watched the miserable, filmy men pacing and meandering between work and home. They would never see him, for in complete irony he was as invisible to them as they to each other. He had often considered this phenomenon during his meager existence with no conclusion, but it is well known that a man with substance is well informed while a man with none is blind.

And so, the pixelized man watched without interruption. Considered without distraction. Wondered if it was truly better to subsist, to merely happen, yet age, or to be of little authenticity, but be so eternally. Transitory satisfaction or everlasting solemnity, he half thought. The pixelized man cannot be blamed for his curiosity. Though grander in core, he couldn't help but feel lonely in his quality—lonelier, in fact, than the collectively lonely species that, though somber, were somber in union. For a second, he envied the invisible and their blissful ignorance, and detested every pixel on his being—just for a second.

This was the instant of doubt. This is why a tale of infinite potential is but a fleeting chronicle in the history of earth. What could have been a revolutionary exhibition of strength told to upcoming generations of invisible children is just another occasion in which even the extraordinary succumbs to the influence of convention and the appeal of speculation. For what importance does a single phenomenon possess without recognition from an equally phenomenal multitude assembled in its opposition?

One cannot justify how quick the transition, or how brief the vulnerability passed within this moment of wonder, but this brevity was all it took to alter the pixelized man for eternity. You see, as he wondered of his age, as he questioned the stability of his existence and envied the vacant population of which he observed, a little bit of nothing tumbled by the foot of his trousers and brushed against his ankle. He looked at the tiny void, through it, around it, and for the first time in his pixelized life he imagined its potential and suddenly wished it were. But just as suddenly as he made this wish, his pixels faded. And by the time that rapidly manifesting little bit of nothing, now shimmering with value and potential, had graced the tip of his finger, one would never know the pixelized man had ever existed.