

Returned: two Rice Krispies treats.

3

Piro worked his thumbs into the tense muscle wire that threaded through the divorcée's neck and shoulders.

"You may require maintenance," he said, flatly.

Atlas continued to jot down notes. Throwing down her cigarette, the divorcée wobbled to her feet and vacated the head.

"This place is deserted. All that's left are the women."

Piro nodded, and in response Atlas looked even more upset.

"This vacation sucks."

He kicked the trash can with his oversized chin.

4

Paper advertisements whipped through the grounds, battering store fronts and light poles, propelled by the high winds of the circulation system. Compost. Piro leaned back against a dumpster and gazed up at the stars.

"Back when I first started out, this place was always packed with children." He unzipped his backpack, rummaging through his gear for a candy bar. "Native arcade did good business."

"Never been here, myself. Of course, I've heard of the place."

"My... Slake used to bring me here, between missions."

"The guy with the donkey head?"

Piro froze. Eyes to the giant, floating face.

"How do you know of him?"

"*Everybody* knows of him. Where *I'm* from. Old family name. Some legal troubles, as I interpret the narrative."

Piro unlatched his holster.

"I think you'd better elaborate."

5

Piro killed the deity and boarded the RAGNAROK, ready to resume his mission. Left the corpse to blow in the wind.

Too many memories on the station.

As he punched in the latest rash of launch codes, he was delighted by the ship's audible response. A familiar series of confirming bleeps echoed through the corridors. Something he hadn't registered since childhood. The bridge seemed to glow even more pink than was normal during the day shift.

"Mother..." he said, smoothing his hands over the armrests of his captain's chair. He hadn't really expected an answer. He'd never even heard the sound of her voice.