

TEXT ADVENTURE

'SPIRALS'

stanley lieber

Password Loggins jammed the barrel of his pistol into Slake Bottom's throat.

"Like these bullets don't spiral?"

Slake was non-committal. This had to be a violation of some Basement protocol. Up, through the wallets, Slake grasped for an answer. Any answer. Why had Paris Mold come for him, tried to take his life? And now, this little man.

Loggins re-stated his case.

"Get down on the God damned ground! Fucking *move!*"

Slake complied, thin line of a smile drawing across his face.

Unbuckled his trousers.

"You're not ready for what you'll find, down there."

Loggins spit a piece of straw onto the wallet floor.

Climbed in.

2

Down to nothing. Crawl through the murk. Inside, Slake's thoughts accumulated but did not scan. No conventional narrative. Frankly, Loggins was lost.

Monochrome, pale, vertical stripes, in and out of focus. Loggins negotiated the cascade of moiring fields, tentatively archiving his findings.

Naturally, comms were down.

No matter. Contingencies. Remember the training.

Loggins took an inventory and diffed against past results. This was not working out.

Something was missing.

3

Inside Loggins, apprehension spiked, spiraling beyond acceptable parameters.

Lunsford smiled.

Loggins reeled.

Nausea.

Slake retrenched. Then, revising his strategy, retreated.

Paris Mold's body lay crumpled at his feet. Degenerating to noise. No, layers. Overlapping fields. Slake tossed his wallet on the ground and crunched through the snow. Onward, into the water.

Left Japan forever.

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