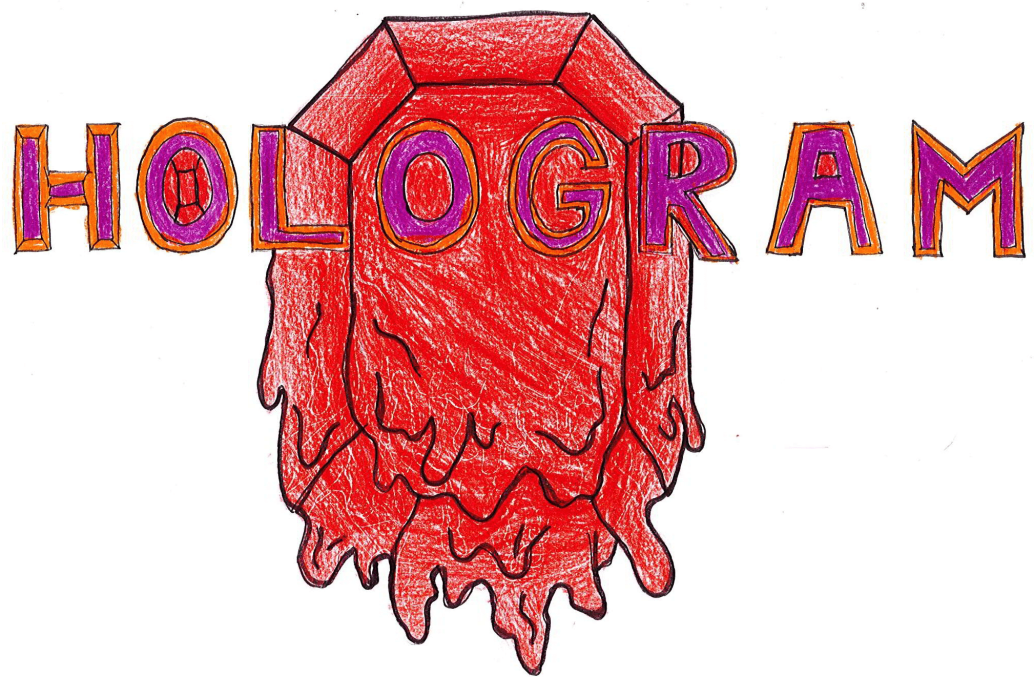




HOLOGRAM

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Parameters:

Random Words:

Protagonist 1: Weightlifter

Ruby

Antagonist 1: Researcher

Melts

Non-Human Character: Ostrich

Shiver

Setting: Sydney Harbor Bridge

Tasty

Issue: Mysterious Gift

Sponge

PART I

Origins: Where it all started

The war between Frank Fox and Thor Step started back in the year 2016. They used to be best friends and they would use every summer as bonding time. Each summer they would hang out together and enjoy every moment together.

But as the time went by the two slowly separated as they started to start their own life.

Frank started a family and Thor started his career.

From that point on they became Brain Vs Brawn. Always competing on who's better. Each summer they would prank each other too much and a so-called war would arise.

They kept on pranking each other to the point that they couldn't have a break anymore. And that never ended in anyone being happy. It was a constant war against each other. Brawn vs Brain.

It's never ending, not on any circumstance. Not for the rest of their living days.

PART II

Prologue

The making of the Dark Ruby

A silhouetted man held a glistening red stone in his hand and slipped it an envelope ruby for a final test. Addressed to 32 Belvedere Drive, it was finalised. It would be sudden, with no warning.

“This Ruby will bring forth the certain doom of the state of Sydney.” The Dark Man groaned with villainous intent. “That’ll teach that brawny, stupid, arm-breaking manifestation of hell to mess with the great power of the brain.” He cackled.

The sparks continued to fly around the room and the crackling sounded throughout his entire workshop, along with his villainous, crackling, vibrating laughter. Light still filled the room in a flash of orange and evil. The man kept coughing and wheezing but didn’t seem to care. His brown eyes were entirely boring into the new machine.

“My genius invention will crush this state, this country, maybe even the world, and then there will just be me and my bestial beauty”. He laughed. He looked at a photo of his daughter.

“My darling daughter. I’m sorry, but this is what I must do for the both of us, even if you won’t have a part in it. I’ll make it fair and, more importantly, I’ll make you proud. My greatest gift.”

For a moment, it seemed his words were sincere, which they were. His eyes shed tears as he knew what would come of her, but he had to protect her from his worst enemy, and this machine would do the trick. He began to cackle a sickly, old cackle that filled the room with crazy laughter louder than the grinding. Something was coming to Sydney, and that mechanical monster had a large part in it.

Chapter 1

The Inception

It was Friday, 16th September 2023. Another fresh, peaceful morning in the Australian State of Sydney. A parcel, dressed in regular cardboard, held the address of *32 Belvedere Drive*, and it was addressed to *Mr. Thor Step*.

The person it was addressed to picked up the parcel. It was beautifully wrapped, with red accents on the wrapping paper. Thor was a weightlifter who had a kind heart and room-filling presence. His hair always had a brilliant sheen. He clutched the parcel, wondering if he should open it at that very moment.

“I don’t have time for this. I’ll come back later.”

Thor arrived at the gym an hour later after walking to and from, worrying whether to open it. He had walked in the direction of the gym but had abruptly changed direction when his curiosity burned stronger.

Thor set down his gym bag. He spotted his friend, Lucas Yan. Thor’s friend had been waiting for him, holding his lunch in his hand. Thor lit up when he saw it was the “Tasty Cheese Toastie” from the local Gym café.

“How are ya, mate?”

“Great,” Thor replied, although he wasn’t. His mind continued worrying away about the mysterious parcel, even though he was munching on the “Tasty Cheese Toastie”.

A beautiful fashion model suddenly appeared in the Gym, carrying a Pilates mat and stick. The people in the gym all turned their heads, pausing in the process. Everyone was thinking the same thought: a celebrity in the local gym? It was the unmistakable face of Grace Faith Fox, a famous model and daughter of Thor’s nemesis, Frank Fox.

Frank Fox was a researcher, who valued brain over brawn. Thor believed the opposite, which had caused a dark rivalry between the two. Over time, their hate had grown, trying to prove that their own beliefs were true.

“I need to finish up early today...” Thor noted, remembering the parcel he had thrown roughly on the couch at home. A sudden rush of adrenaline filled him as he walked home, his curiosity burning inside him.

Chapter

The Message

When Thor got home, he opened his fridge and pulled out a frozen pizza. He put it in the microwave and left it to defrost. He then left to where he had left the box at the couch in his living room. As he grasped the ribbon and pulled, the box opened. He glimpsed what was in the parcel. A ruby, nestled in velvet. It was glowing and pulsing, gleaming in his eyes.

The ruby began glowing brighter and brighter. Suddenly, a holographic ostrich started to take shape from the velvet ruby.

“Thor...” said the ostrich in a voice that sounded vaguely familiar, although thanks to the holographic projection, it wasn’t as familiar as it would have been.

“I need...I need your help.” It seemed as if the voice was recorded. “There is, I regret to say that I have manifested it. This hologram...it is the key to the giant ostrich. If you harm it, all of Sydney will be in terrible peril. It has great and dangerous power. I await your reply.”

“In danger? A giant ostrich? And that voice. It sounded like... Frank Fox?”

Thor threw the box out of the dusty window in confusion. A loud crash followed.

Later, when Thor was washing the dishes, he looked at the piles of dishes in the sink.

“I have to wash these dishes quickly, they’re piling up.”

As Thor rinsed and scrubbed hard at the dishes, he stared at the sponge he was holding, guiltily reliving the moment he had thrown the box out the window. He regretted doing that and hadn’t thought it through far enough. Thor didn’t know what to do. Frank Fox had been his biggest enemy for nearly 7 complete years. The message lingered in his mind, never straying afar. He couldn’t think straight. He couldn’t think straight at all.

“What the hell am I doing? I need to recover that box. I need to recover Ruby. That message!”

He exited the house at night, after struggling to get to sleep. Thor became desperate to find the box again. Thor grappled in the darkness, scraping his fingers across rough gravel.

“Doh! Where’s my phone when I need it?” he whispered. His fingers touched the sharp edges of the box as he opened it in the dark. The ruby was gone.

He sprinted towards his car, thanking his legs for being so strong, and opened the door. He started up the engine and reversed out the driveway.

Thor spotted a glistening red light, which led him to drive under the Sydney Harbour Bridge. As he drove, he lost sight of the red shine. Once he was under the Sydney Harbour Bridge, Thor glimpsed the red glow again, although it was higher up the bridge.

Thor began climbing up the brick wall, but when he looked up, the light of the ruby became the eye of the Giant Ostrich. “Argh!” Thor screamed. He dashed to his car, stamped hard on the reverse pedal, and the car screeched backwards.

Chapter 3

The Meetup

“I hope he received my message.” Frank Fox said, sitting in his messy laboratory, staring hopelessly at his computer screen. Suddenly, Frank’s daughter walked in.

“Hey, Dad,” Grace Fox greeted.

“Any reply?” she asked

“No, not yet.” Frank answered

“How are you so calm about this?”

Grace paused, thinking.

“Well, it’s not like people will hate me after this, given I’m a celebrity.”

At that moment, Frank’s phone started ringing.

“Hey, Frank,” Thor said after a moment’s hesitation.

“Thor! You got my message, I presume.”

“Yeah, um. I just met a... giant ostrich. Like you said in the hologram.”

“Oh yeah.”

“Meet at Sydney Opera House this arvo, we need to talk right away.”

“I’ll be there,” he promised.

Frank put down his cell-phone and leaned back against his chair.

Later, at the Sydney Opera House, Thor, Frank, and Grace met up in second row.

“Hey Frank. Uh, hi Grace.” Thor stuttered as soon as his eyes met Grace’s.

“H-hi, Thor.” Grace responded.

“Hey, Thor. Let’s take this outside.” Frank wheezed from the rush to the Opera House.

Outside the Opera House, the wind was rough and scattered with light rain. “Alright *wheeze* let’s discuss details. The giant ostrich is going to rise from beneath the Sydney Harbor Bridge and attack tonight,” Frank announced.

“Yes. I went down to the Harbor Bridge last night. I think it’s ready to attack.” Thor added.

“Well then,” began Grace. “Our plan is to stop this giant ostrich and protect this state. That would mean we need to know all of its weaknesses.”

Frank nodded and Thor had a flashback from the previous night: the ruby cracked, and the giant ostrich boomed as it emerged.

“The ruby!” Thor yelled with realisation. “As I tried to escape, the ruby cracked, and the giant ostrich was distracted. That would be a weakness.” Frank cheered with certainty.

Chapter 4

The Demolition

A few moments later, the Harbour Bridge collapsed as the giant ostrich the size of the Eureka Tower in Melbourne, Victoria rose from hiding. It boomed, ready to cause more destruction as its anger grew by the minute. The people of Sydney felt a tremor and began to scream as the giant ostrich attacked. Sirens rang and people and cars ran everywhere. The giant ostrich was loose, and it was destroying everything in sight. The Government House, the Cadman Cottage, the Vaucluse house, 1 Bligh Street, Georges Head Battery, even the Sydney Harbor Defences, were all crushed to pieces. An immense feather fell on the gas factory, and in moments, the nearby forest blew up in flames. Thor watched in horror as, slowly, Sydney went alight. All his memories exploded. The candy shop down Bligh Street, now ashes. The local magazine shop gone. The shop's frame was now a scarred skeleton. The gym... all that was left was the basketball court, and even that was in flaming pieces. Everything was gone. For good.



“We can’t do this alone, we need help,” Thor realised desperately.

“I can ask on my Instagram. There are always some fans who are online, even in an apocalypse apparently. My agents can also go and get help,” Grace put in.

“I have some friends from the gym. I could try to get their help,” Thor offered. “Although we do need someone to get the ruby.”

“I’ll do it,” volunteered Frank. “After all, it is *my* fault that the ostrich is here, terrorising the city.”

Thor left to each of the homes of his gym friends to try to recruit help. Grace took cover as she asked her friends and fans on social media to help. Frank, on the other hand, took a deep breath and went to retrieve the ruby from the giant ostrich, slow as he is because he’s old. Frank looked up at the towering height of that seen Frank since he had volunteered for the recovery of the ruby.

Chapter 5

The Search

“Where are your friends?” Grace asked as soon as Thor came back.

“They didn’t want to be put in harm's way, or in front of a huge, terrifying Ostrich... but wait where's your dad?” Thor finally noticed that Frank was missing. He hadn’t seen Frank since he had volunteered to recover the ruby as best as he could.

“He hasn’t come back yet.” Grace fretted, seemingly worried.

“I never thought I’d say this, but I’m worried for him.” Thor admitted, mostly to himself.

Thor and Grace searched the ashen buildings and splintered cars. Off in the distance he saw an old figure in a white suit.

“Wait a second! THERE! Here’s over there!” he exclaimed to Grace.

Thor and Grace went to help him to safety. She smiled in relief and then, ten minutes later, Frank unveiled the ruby, wheezing and coughing heavily as he was.

“Dad, you seem more tired than usual. Are you okay?” Grace’s face was the picture of concern.

“Yes, I’m fine, Darling, come on, let’s get this thing destroyed.” Frank assured hurriedly. The Ostrich boomed again, seemingly angrier than Grace, Frank, and Thor were back together again. It threw building debris at them with a large, clawed foot, its claw breaking the Debris. Frank, Thor, and Grace all looked at each other and nodded.

“We have to get the ruby to safety! Does anyone know anywhere we can hide?”

Thor yelled over the rain and debris.

“Dad! Thor! Over there!” Grace called urgently. She was pointing at a small cave, hidden by overgrown shrubbery, Rosebush and burning debris. Thor

and Frank rushed behind Grace, dark footprints carved into the ash and destroyed floors.

It seemed calm inside the cave. A steady drip echoed around the cave from the roof. Their breathing seemed magnified, the only sound to be heard.

The giant ostrich was destroying everything in sight, its anger growing stronger, yet it didn't see them enter the cave, so it just continued its rampage. Now the only building left standing was the Sydney Opera House. The trio glanced melancholily at the flaming city.

"How could this have happened?" Grace sobbed. "The city is in ruins and the place I have called home is now cinders." Thor was filled with sorrow. At least now they had peace and were free from the ostrich.

The giant ostrich, on noticing the cave, used its beak to split open the cave and its surrounding trees. Grace, Thor and Frank were now exposed to the giant ostrich and covered in debris, but just as the ostrich's ruby-red eyes swivelled to the place where the trio were cowering, the shrubbery that had surrounded the cave collapsed and smothered Grace and Thor. Frank leapt in with them just in time.

"Is everyone alright? Dad? Thor?" Grace whispered tensely. Thor and Frank nodded silently, sensing that the danger had not yet passed. Frank let out a cough, keeping it as quiet as he possibly could.

"The ruby. It bounced out of my hand when the giant ostrich attacked," Thor panicked, grappling with anything he could get his hands on.

Grace and Frank joined Thor in searching for the ruby or any red glow. Thor heard a dinging sound as something hit the floor and the Monster shrieked in pain. It was the ruby, bouncing to a stop below a few meters in a large crack in the ground.

"Found it!" Thor exclaimed. Frank and Grace gasped as the noise from Thor's exclamation had caused a slight tremor. The ruby wobbled, then rolled into the crevice. Thor and Grace slowly climbed down into the crevice, a slow trickle crawling down with them through their spines. Moss clung to the edges of the aged rock face. Grace looked back up as she noticed that Frank was still standing at the edge of the crevice.

"Dad, aren't you coming?"

"I'm too old to climb down. I'll find another way. There must be a connection between this crevice and another place." Frank reassured. "I'm sure of it, Sweetheart."

Thor and Grace landed at the bottom and caught sight of the ruby on the floor. Grace pulled out her phone and turned on the flashlight. Thor took hold of the ruby before it could fall down any further.

Then, a crack. A silhouette flitted through the shadows. Suddenly, out of nowhere, Thor and Grace were knocked down and the silhouette walked out of the shadows. It was sudden.

Chapter 6

The Betrayal

It was Frank. Thor felt deceived. After trying to forgive Frank, this was what he was left with. A huge betrayal. It was a giant ostrich destroying all his most tender memories.

“Oh, you fools, I wanted all of this to happen,” Frank cackled merrily.

“Frank, how could you?” Thor yelled. “After trusting you, through everything you did. You made that ostrich on purpose, didn’t you?”

“You think you’re strong now, tough guy? I told you. Brain *always* triumphs over brawn!” Frank sneered.

“Enjoy the end of Sydney!”

“Grace, I’m sorry. I never should have trusted him. I should have known. He was my best friend; I knew everything about him. His flaws. It was natural that he would have done this~~”

“It’s fine.” Grace cut in. “But how could you do this to us, Dad? You lying snake!”

“You know...” Frank began slyly, not noticing Thor sneaking up behind him.

“I can’t believe you tricked us!” yelled Thor in rage, cutting off Frank as he tackled him to the ground.

Chapter

The Destruction

Although, as Frank valued brain over brawn, he wasn't instantly defeated, being able to notice a pattern in Thor's attacks. Meanwhile, Grace went scrambling for the ruby. The battle between Thor and Frank was a distraction by Thor for Grace. She began grabbing wooden debris and started trying to start a few sparks into a fire. A flame light on the end gleamed in the dark.

"Grace! DO IT!" Thor yelled. Frank noticed and looked back anxiously. Grace held the blowtorch, trying to make sure it **melts**. "NOOOOO!" Frank screamed. He quickly knocked the flame out of her hand onto the floor and it went out.

"Ha ha! I-I've won. I've WOOOOON!" he screamed happily

"No, you haven't! Not yet!" Grace exclaimed.

"How? The flame is gone. You truly are foolish, girl."

Grace ignored him and climbed out of the hole. The Giant Ostrich was standing in front of her destroying everything in its sight, until it noticed her and looked her dead in the eye. The Ostrich screeched a blood-piercing scream and tried to stomp its huge foot on her. Grace dived out of the way and threw the Ruby under its foot. The Ostrich stepped on the Ruby and shattered it. Frank screamed.

"NOOOOO!!!" Frank screamed.

The Monster continuously shrieked and screamed and its body started to disappear. Its body blew away in pieces and its screeching came to an end. The Giant Ostrich had been defeated. It had been killed by itself.

Chapter

The Aftermath

As soon as the Ostrich disappeared, people cheered, screamed excitement and relief. Almost immediately the police, firefighters and ambulances reacted, putting out the blaze and saving the civilians. A police officer suddenly grabbed Frank by the arms and put him in handcuffs. His blue glasses filled with steam in stress.

“Dr. Frank Fox, you’re under arrest for the attack on Sydney and summoning the Giant Ostrich.” Yelled a Police Officer.

“W-Where’s your evidence?” Asked Frank shivering. He was confused, how someone else had found out about his plans. He felt scared.

Thor waved a phone camera in Frank’s face. “I recorded the whole thing and sent it to them!” he said with a grin. I really did have my phone on me, he thought to himself with a smile.

Thor and Grace watched Frank being put in a police car and driven off.

“I’ll never forgive him,” said Grace angrily. “Although now I have no one to take care of me,” Grace said, worried. “Well, you could come with me... couldn’t you,” she asked hopefully

“I guess I could,” Thor offered.

“You could?” asked Grace.

“Yea of course” Thor said kindly

He held Grace’s hand and smiled, they looked into each other’s eyes, and embraced. The city was saved, and Frank was put to justice.

2 Years later:

Grace and Thor wanted to start a life together.

THE END

BLURB

Two rivals must work together to stop something that they had never imagined. A bygone rivalry provokes an anger that could set Sydney on fire. Maybe knowing whether brain or brawn never mattered. Opposites are forced into a task that will change both their futures and their beliefs.