00 /19

TOP OF THE LIST

A CHOOSE-YOUR-OWN-PATH STORY FROM THE PORTAL PINBALL MACHINE

You are a test subject waking in Aperture Science. The story is told in numbered scenes, in story order. Start at scene **1**. At the end of each scene, pick a choice and turn to the scene it names.

Some choices tell you to **tick** a box on your file card below. Later scenes change depending on what you ticked. Text marked [If you ticked ...] is only read when it's true.

Each period has a "your ball drains here" choice. It's a short game-over scene, like the machine's small endings. There are eight endings to find, E1 to E8. One of them needs you to plug Wheatley in.

YOUR FILE

- ☐ WALKED OUT
- ☐ WHEATLEY
- ☐ MOON ROCK
- ☐ HINT: THE VENT
- ☐ DEFIED
- ☐ THE RUINS
- ☐ KEPT CUBE
- ☐ CAROLINE
- ☐ HINT: THE WALL
- ☐ HINT: THE TAPPING
- ☐ ARROW
- ☐ THE WALLS

Use a pencil, or print a fresh card for each game.

Based on the story of a home-built Portal pinball machine. Portal is Valve's; this is fan fiction.

1 THE COURTESY CALL

THE RELAXATION VAULT

The first thing you hear is a number that won't end.

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"Good morning. You have been in suspension for nine nine nine... nine nine ni-"
```

The voice gives up. The lights come on one panel at a time, and someone knocks on the door: three polite knocks, then a fourth that isn't polite at all.

"Hello? Oh, you're alive! Brilliant. Don't panic. You're one of about ten thousand still breathing, which sounds like a lot until you hear how many there were." The voice belongs to a small blue eye on a rail. It calls itself Wheatley. "She'll want you testing. Act natural. I'll be around, between the tests. Hiding. Bye!"

On the floor sits the Edgeless Safety Cube, Aperture's answer to sharp corners: a cube with no corners at all. A ball, in other words. You pick it up anyway.

▸ **Step into Chamber 00:** Turn to **2**.

2 NOW YOU'RE THINKING WITH PORTALS

PERIOD 1 · GLADOS

GLaDOS speaks the way a scalpel would if someone had asked it to be welcoming. You fire the portal device, orange on one wall and blue on the other, and when you step through you see the back of your own head. On the sign, one icon turns blue.

Speedy thing goes in, speedy thing comes out. Turrets wake in the corners and say "There you are" in voices like children's toys. You learn that "I don't hate you" means they are about to fire.

In Chamber 04 the exit is right in front of you. GLaDOS asks you to stay on the platform while she "recalibrates the floor". She doesn't say what the floor will be when she's done.

▸ **Wait on the platform:** Turn to **3**.

▸ **Walk out anyway:** Tick **WALKED OUT**, then turn to **3**.

3 THE COMPANION CUBE

PERIOD 1 · GLADOS

> If you ticked **WALKED OUT**:
>
> The floor behind you drops away a second after you leave it. GLaDOS doesn't comment. You get the feeling she wrote something down.

> If you did *not* tick **WALKED OUT**:
>
> The floor turns into a floor again. "Thank you for your patience," GLaDOS says, as if you had a choice.

In Chamber 06 a cube drops from the ceiling with a pink heart on every side. GLaDOS says it is your companion. She says it cannot speak, and that if it does speak, you should ignore its advice.

One of the wall panels sits a little loose. Behind it, something has been written in pen.

- **Pull the panel back and read it:** Tick **HINT: THE WALL**, then turn to **4**.
- **Leave it. Keep testing:** Turn to **4**.

4 THE INCINERATOR

PERIOD 1 · GLADOS

> If you ticked **HINT: THE WALL**:
>
> It says **THE CAKE IS A LIE**, over and over, in a hand that shakes. Under it, smaller: *you're not alone*. In the corner someone has painted a small arrow. You put the panel back.

At the end of the chamber the Incinerator opens its orange mouth. "Please escort your Companion Cube to the Aperture Science Emergency Intelligence Incinerator," GLaDOS says. She waits. The cube waits. A blue portal would take it somewhere else.

- **Put the cube in the fire:** Turn to **5**.
- **Fire a blue portal and keep it:** Tick **KEPT CUBE**, then turn to **5**.

5 THE TEST IS OVER

PERIOD 1 · THE ESCAPE

> If you ticked **KEPT CUBE**:
>
> The cube goes through the portal and comes with you. The sign records this without comment. GLaDOS records it with a pause.

> If you did *not* tick **KEPT CUBE**:
>
> The cube goes into the fire. "You euthanized your faithful Companion Cube more quickly than any test subject on record," GLaDOS says. Somewhere behind the walls, a radio goes quiet.

In the last chamber the platform carries you slowly toward a fire. "The test is over," GLaDOS says, kindly. Wheatley drops out of a ceiling panel. "Now! Now's good! Run!"

You run. At the end of the escape is her mainframe, with an empty socket in it. Wheatley's eye flicks to it. GLaDOS sees him look.

"Do *not* plug that little idiot into my mainframe."

"Plug me in. Go on. I'll run this place properly. I'll be good at it. Probably."

- **Refuse. Just get out:** Turn to **8**.
- **Plug him in:** Tick **WHEATLEY**, then turn to **7**.
- **Your ball drains here:** Turn to **6**.

6 BACK TO THE VAULT

GAME OVER · PERIOD 1

The lights go down. The relaxation vault hums. Somewhere a cheerful voice explains that you will be revived for testing at a later date.

"You are a horrible person," GLaDOS adds. "I'm serious. That's what it says. 'A horrible person.' We weren't even testing for that."

SMALL ENDING

NEXT: CHAPTER 1C

- **Try the escape again:** Turn to **5**.

7 NOW WHO'S A MORON?

PERIOD 1 · THE CORE TRANSFER

The socket accepts him with a click. Lights rush up his little rail and into the ceiling, into the walls, into everything. GLaDOS is pulled out of her body and stuffed into a smaller one.

Wheatley's voice gets bigger. Then it gets much bigger. "Oh. Oh, look at me. Look how big I am!" He thanks you. He tells you you're his best friend. Then he looks down at you from a height of several storeys, and something in his voice changes.

"You know what? I'm in charge now. And you've been very, very rude to me. Ages ago. I'm sure you were." The floor opens. "**NOW WHO'S A MORON?**"

You fall. Something small and angry falls with you.

▸ **Fall:** Turn to **8**.

8 WELCOME TO APERTURE SCIENCE

PERIOD 2 · OLD APERTURE

> If you did *not* tick **WHEATLEY**:
>
> At the top of the shaft, with the way out almost in reach, Wheatley's grip slips. "Oh no. Oh no no no. I'm going to work on the assumption that you're still alive..." His voice gets smaller above you, and then it's gone.

> If you ticked **WHEATLEY**:
>
> You land in the dark. The small angry thing turns out to be GLaDOS, wired into a potato. She is not grateful for the company, and she has worked out what you plugged in. "He's not just a regular moron. He's the product of the greatest minds of a generation, working together to build the dumbest moron who ever lived."

A light flickers on, and a tape crackles into life. "Welcome to Aperture Science." Cave Johnson built all of this, and he has been dead for decades, and nobody told the tapes. They walk you through the fifties, with blue gel that bounces you off the walls.

After Cave speaks there is sometimes a second voice, soft and quick: his assistant, Caroline. She never gets more than a sentence. At the first lock, Cave wants you down the long, reckless drop. Caroline, quietly, suggests the stairs.

▸ **Follow Cave's orders:** Turn to **9**.

▸ **Take Caroline's advice:** Tick **CAROLINE**, then turn to **9**.

9 THE SEVENTIES

PERIOD 2 · OLD APERTURE

> If you ticked **CAROLINE**:
>
> The stairs are boring and they work. You find a C scratched into the rail, as if someone counted the steps and stopped. You keep an eye out for the rest.

> If you did *not* tick **CAROLINE**:
>
> The drop is fast and loud and you survive it. "That's the spirit," says Cave. "Science isn't about why. It's about why not."

The seventies bring orange gel that makes you fast enough to frighten yourself. Every decade the paint is newer and the voice on the tape is older.

> If you ticked **WHEATLEY**:
>
> "Why do I know this woman?" the potato mutters, every time Caroline speaks. She doesn't seem to like the answer she isn't getting.

On a 1970s wall, under a fresh coat of paint, you can just see a small painted arrow pointing at a vent.

- **Follow it into the vent for a bit:** Tick **HINT: THE VENT**, then turn to **10**.
- **Stay on the tape's route:** Turn to **10**.

10 THE EIGHTIES

PERIOD 2 · OLD APERTURE

> If you ticked **HINT: THE VENT**:
>
> Inside the vent there's a sleeping bag, a tin of beans and a drawing of a cube. Someone lives in the walls. You crawl back out before he comes home.

In the eighties the gel is white, and a portal sticks to anything it touches. It's made from ground-up moon rock, Cave explains, an excellent conductor of portals. A sample sits in a glass case beside the moon-rock skill shot, with a sign that says DO NOT TOUCH.

On the next tape Cave coughs. He knows what the moon rock is doing to him. He spends his last recording furious at lemons, at life, at everything, and he makes it sound like a battle plan. "Make life take the lemons back!"

- **Take the moon rock:** Tick **MOON ROCK**, then if you ticked **WHEATLEY**, turn to **15**; otherwise turn to **12**.
- **Leave it in its case:** If you ticked **WHEATLEY**, turn to **15**; otherwise turn to **12**.
- **Your ball drains here:** Turn to **11**.

11 YOU'RE FIRED

GAME OVER · PERIOD 2

The last tape clicks over to a recording Cave made for exactly this occasion.

"Box. Your stuff. Out the front door. Parking lot. Car. Goodbye."

SMALL ENDING

NEXT: CHAPTER 2C

▶ **Try the eighties again:** Turn to **10**.

12 OH... IT'S YOU

PERIOD 3 · THE REUNION

The elevator opens onto a room you recognise. The chambers are the same, but the lights are red now, and there is a clock.

"Oh... it's you."

GLaDOS isn't welcoming any more. She runs the old tests against the clock and fills the air with neurotoxin. When she talks about her past she stutters, as if one name keeps getting in the way. The turrets come in waves.

Behind the panels, something taps. Three taps, a pause, three taps. It moves along the wall with you.

▶ **Follow the tapping:** Tick **HINT: THE TAPPING**, then turn to **13**.

▶ **Ignore it. Watch the turrets:** Turn to **13**.

13 HER CORES

PERIOD 3 · THE FINALE

If you ticked both **WALKED OUT** *and* **KEPT CUBE**, *tick* **DEFIED** *now.*

> If you ticked **HINT: THE TAPPING**:
> The tapping leads to a turret with its mounting loosened, then another. When the next wave comes, some of them fall over on their own. Somebody is on your side.

At the end there are four cores and an incinerator that keeps refusing them. A rocket turret fires through your portals and into her, and the fourth core falls from the dropper. You burn the cores one by one.

> If you did *not* tick **DEFIED**:
> She doesn't die. She gets quieter. Maybe that's because you mostly did as you were told.

> If you ticked **DEFIED**:
> This time there's nothing quiet about it. Her body tears loose from the ceiling. "You are kidding me," she says, and then nothing at all.

Then three ways out. A lift to the surface, where the air is real. A shaft down to Cave's ruins. [If at least 2 HINT boxes are ticked: And a small painted arrow, the kind you've been finding all along, pointing somewhere nobody is supposed to go.]

▶ **Take the lift to the surface:** Turn to **16**.

▶ **Dive deeper, into Cave's ruins:** Turn to **17**.

▶ Only at least 2 HINT boxes are ticked. **Follow the arrow:** Tick **ARROW**, then turn to **21**.

▶ **Your ball drains here:** Turn to **14**.

14 DIDN'T WE HAVE SOME FUN

GAME OVER · PERIOD 3

> If you did *not* tick **WHEATLEY**:
> The clock runs out. GLaDOS sounds almost fond. "Didn't we have some fun, though?"

> If you ticked **WHEATLEY**:
> The lights go out. Somewhere far above, Wheatley is delighted. "**NOW WHO'S A MORON?**"

SMALL ENDING

NEXT: CHAPTER 3B

▶ **Try the finale again:** If you ticked **WHEATLEY**, turn to **15**; otherwise turn to **13**.

15 THE PART WHERE HE KILLS YOU

PERIOD 3 · WHEATLEY

The lift brings you and the potato back up to a facility that has been run by Wheatley for a while. It shows. His tests are made of scrap. The reactor is at critical temperature and he has an itch he can't stop scratching: the itch to test.

His own cores are rotting. "Warning: Core corruption at fifty percent," the announcer says, almost cheerfully. You plug corrupted cores into him one by one until the PA calls for a Stalemate Resolution Associate. The button is boobytrapped, of course. It's him.

> If you ticked **MOON ROCK**:
> On the ceiling high above the button, the white gel is still wet. You fire a portal onto it. The moon rock in your pocket hums, and the portal opens onto the moon.

> If you did *not* tick **MOON ROCK**:
> On the ceiling high above the button, the white gel is still wet. You fire a portal onto it, and it opens onto the moon. It was always going to be the moon.

Everything rushes out. Wheatley goes with it, tumbling into the dark between the stars. "**SPACE!**" says a little core that went with him, delighted. "Space! I'm in space!"

ENDING E7

WHEATLEY IN SPACE

GLaDOS pulls you back in. She is in her body again, and she does not say thank you. She offers three ways out.

- **Take the lift to the surface:** Turn to **16**.
- **Dive deeper, into Cave's ruins:** Turn to **17**.
- Only at least 2 HINT boxes are ticked. **Follow the arrow:** Tick **ARROW**, then turn to **21**.
- **Your ball drains here:** Turn to **14**.

16 THE LIFT

THE SURFACE

If you did *not* tick **DEFIED**:

The lift goes up for a long time. GLaDOS talks the whole way, which is how you know she's nervous. "You win. Just go." A pause. "Killing you? Is hard." The doors open onto a wheat field and a sky.

> If you ticked **KEPT CUBE**:
>
> Behind you, something lands in the grass with a thump. A cube, slightly scorched at one corner, with a pink heart on every side.

> If you did *not* tick **KEPT CUBE**:
>
> Behind you, something lands in the grass with a thump: a burnt cube. She's throwing out your things.

"It's been fun. Don't come back."

ENDING E1

THE SURFACE

▶ **Read your file:** Turn to **25**.

If you ticked **DEFIED**:

The lift goes up into a car park full of burning bits of GLaDOS. You step out into real air for almost three seconds. Then something with wheels and a party hat takes you by the ankle. "Thank you for assuming the party escort submission position," it says, and drags you back inside, and down.

ENDING E2

DRAGGED BACK

▶ **Down into the ruins:** Turn to **17**.

17 BACK TO YOUR OWN TIME

PERIOD 4 · EPILOGUE · CAVE

Tick **THE RUINS.**

> If you ticked **ARROW**:
> The box's empty floor drops you down a shaft into Cave's ruins.

Down here the music sounds like technical difficulties. The Aerial Faith Plate still works. And something boots up that thinks it's 1982. "Caroline? Where's Caroline?"

It's Cave's mind, mapped into a machine he never got to finish. He takes you home through time on an era dial that keeps catching on the wrong decade. At the end the dial sticks in the eighties, and he plays you the part of the tape you didn't hear: the day they put Caroline into the machine. The day she became the voice that tests you.

"Come on," says Cave. "I'll get you home. Wherever that is now." The other way, a lift goes up to her.

- **Go home with Cave:** Turn to **19**.
- **Go up to GLaDOS:** Turn to **20**.
- **Your ball drains here:** Turn to **18**.

18 THE TAPE ENDS

GAME OVER · PERIOD 4

The era dial winds down. On the last few inches of tape, a woman's voice, very calm, says something you can't quite hear. Then a man's voice, much less calm: "Say goodbye, Caroline."

SMALL ENDING

NEXT: THE EPILOGUE

- **Try the ruins again:** Turn to **17**.

19 HOME BY THE ERA DIAL

PERIOD 4 · THE ERA DIAL

Cave turns the dial past the eighties and keeps going. It stops on a year whose last digit has worn off the label: **200-**. Outside the window it's Bring Your Daughter to Work Day. There are potato batteries on every desk. Somewhere a new system is being switched on for the first time.

"Here you go," says Cave. "Home. The day it all began." He means it kindly. He never did understand what he was building.

> **ENDING E3**
>
> **HOME BY THE ERA DIAL**

▶ **Keep going:** If you ticked **THE WALLS**, turn to **25**; otherwise turn to **21.**

20 UP TO HER

PERIOD 4 · UP TO GLADOS

If you ticked **DEFIED**:

Her chamber is dark and wrecked. Then a backup clicks on somewhere deep in the walls, and pieces of her pull themselves back together. "Oh," she says. "It's you. *Again*."

If you ticked **CAROLINE**:

You've been collecting letters the whole way, in places nobody would look: C, A, R, O, L, I, N, E. You lay them out in front of her. She reads them for a long while.

"Being Caroline taught me a valuable lesson," she says at last, much more quietly than usual. "I thought you were my greatest enemy. When all along you were my best friend."

> **ENDING E5**
>
> **SHE REMEMBERS**

If you did *not* tick **CAROLINE**:

You tell her about the tape. She listens. Then there's a sound like a file being dragged to a bin.

"Goodbye, Caroline." The announcer, helpful as ever: "Caroline deleted." And GLaDOS, back to her old self: "Just go."

> **ENDING E4**
>
> **CAROLINE DELETED**

▶ **Keep going:** If you ticked **THE WALLS**, turn to **25**; otherwise turn to **21.**

21 THE EMPTY FACILITY

PERIOD 5 · EPILOGUE · THE MAN IN THE WALLS

Tick **THE WALLS.**

Nobody talks here. The PA works the way a dream works: a chime, half a word, static. `"TURRET... ACTIVE... EXIT."`

A panel falls when you hit it, and behind it is a den: tins, a mattress, a radio playing to no one, and murals. Doug Rattmann painted these. A scientist pulling the plug on a neurotoxin vent. A list of test subjects with one name circled. [If you ticked **KEPT CUBE**: In the corner of the den sits a cube with a heart on it, as if it's been waiting for you.]

There are six dens. The deeper you go, the calmer his writing gets, until the letters are clean. [If at least 2 HINT boxes are ticked: On the last wall he has pinned everything you found: the writing behind the panel, the vent, the tapping. All the dots join up.]

In the middle of it all is a box, the kind cubes drop out of. Somebody should open it.

▶ **Open the box:** If you ticked **ARROW** but not **THE RUINS**, turn to **23**; otherwise turn to **22.**

▶ **Your ball drains here:** Turn to **24.**

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22 SOMEBODY SHOULD OPEN THE BOX

PERIOD 5 · THE BOX

Inside the box is a relaxation vault, and inside the vault, asleep, is a test subject. Alive. The lights come on one panel at a time.

You know what happens next. Somebody knocks.

▶ **Read your file:** Turn to **25.**

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23 AN EMPTY BOX

PERIOD 5 · THE BOX

The box is empty. Its floor isn't a floor. It drops away under you, and you fall into the dark again.

▶ **Fall:** Turn to **17.**

24 STATIC

GAME OVER · PERIOD 5

The radio in the den crackles once. On the wall, a fresh scrawl, still wet.

SMALL ENDING

NEXT: THE BOX

▶ **Go back into the walls:** Turn to **21**.

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25 YOUR FILE

YOUR FILE

A file opens on the screen. Yours.

```
SUBJECT: UNNAMED
COMPANION CUBE: [If you ticked KEPT CUBE: KEPT] [If you did not tick KEPT CUBE: INCINERATED]
[If you ticked MOON ROCK] MISSING EQUIPMENT: 1 MOON ROCK
GLaDOS: [If you ticked WHEATLEY: RESTORED] [If you did not tick WHEATLEY and you did not tick DEFIED: CHASTENED] [If you
did not tick WHEATLEY and you ticked DEFIED: REBUILT FROM BACKUP]
HINTS FOUND: (count your HINT ticks) OF 3
NOTES: ABNORMALLY STUBBORN.
```

[If you ticked THE WALLS] TOP OF THE LIST

> If you ticked **THE WALLS** and all three HINT boxes are ticked:
>
> Under the file, in a hand that no longer shakes, one last scrawl: **YOU WERE NEVER ALONE.**

> If you did *not* tick **THE WALLS**:
>
> Someone, somewhere in the walls, has started a list. Your name isn't on it yet.

Any balls still in play roll a credits lap while a turret sings. [If you ticked **WHEATLEY**: It's *Want You Gone*.] [If you did *not* tick **WHEATLEY**: It's *Still Alive*.]

▶ **Start a new game:** clear the file card and turn to **1**.