

Contest # 2: An Introduction to Inner Skies

STEP 1: The original Update said that person or persons unknown were messing with my account across the web. Also it had the puzzle below:

Original:

hiccups
undated
rezoned

Answer:

up
date
one

STEP 2: Update 1 had a link to video: There was a lot of information in the video. To be honest, that video was shot several years ago for a different form of the game. If you really pulled it apart, there would be a couple details that don't make sense. (This video stars my friend JT. I think he did a really nice job.) This unnamed agent was under a lot of stress. Cut him some slack. The important things to glean from the video was it Whisperer Rex needed to be found and that, whatever this organization was, a cell structure was in place, so everyone only knew parts of the big picture. The agent said that the end goal was to get ahold of Trick Tock Man through the various layers of protection.

STEP 3: The next step is to find Whisperer Rex. Whisperer Rex could found at a link on the bottom of my web page at rollhexacubes.com. The link led you to to this:

ck.bfbhN bbe.cbddbeE
cj.lfgN bcd.ceddeeE
cj.hinN deb.daeecE
bh.clfIN dp.pvsW

A=0, B=1, C=2...11=A, etc.

2A.1517 N 114.213314 E
29.B56 N 123.243344 E
29.78D N 341.304442 E
17.2B5B N 3F.FLI

Each side of the decimal is its own number. N is the 13th letter so the first string is base 13. The second string is E = base 5. So...

38.3745N 34.7334E
37.2232N 38.9224E
37.1497N 96.9997E
21.7725N 84.8367W

To solve this, you have to convert each number to a base derived from the capital letter at the end of the string. So N = base 13, E = base 5, W = base 23. I felt like this was too easy. In particular, I felt the E strings were a dead giveaway. So I added some obfuscation. The base x versions of the coordinates were also coded. This code was simply A= 0, B= 1, C= 2, etc. I think that both of these steps

individually are fine. But together, it was far too hard. Also, this was much harder to do backwards than forwards. This part of the challenge made everyone but two people drop out. Failure.

STEP 4: Once you have the answer from step 3, you need to realize that these are coordinates. I think that this would be obvious to most. You needed to figure out that these coordinates map to weird, potentially paranormal archeological sites. The first two are pretty obvious, leading to Derinkuyu, an ancient underground city in Central Turkey and Gobekli Tepe, an unthinkably old monument in Eastern Turkey. The second two were a little harder. The third set of coordinates lead to the Baigong Pipes, allegedly prehistoric technology in China (I definitely do not believe this stuff!). The fourth was supposed to lead to an alleged sunken city near Cuba. These weird archeology discoveries are important to the setting of Inner Skies, my upcoming game. With this information, you were supposed to email the company account at:

rollhexacube@gmail.com

Someone would answer you. To illustrate that you had investigated the coordinates, you had to select a word that applies to each set. At this point, I had eliminated everyone but 2 players. I gave them the list first, so they could use it to figure out the significance of the coordinates.

Star	Cellar	Tiger	Maple	Rain
Circle	Sunshine	Montreal	Pencil	Train
Squares	Scissors	Falcons	Pipes	Prague
Hammer	Bison	City	Moon	Snow

Derinkuyu	Star	Cellar	Tiger	Maple	Rain
Gobekli Tepe	Circle	Sunshine	Montreal	Pencil	Train
Biagong pipes	Squares	Scissors	Falcons	Pipes	Prague
Cuba	Hammer	Bison	City	Moon	Snow

One odd little hiccup was both players chose “Moon” out of the last set. unbeknownst to me, A ship called the 'Eclipse' went down near those coordinates in the early 1900's.

STEP 5: In return for there success, the players learned that they were presently communicating with someone using the name 'Barrier Reef'. Mr. Reef said he did not know how to contact Trick Tock Man directly. But if someone with the proper credentials came looking for TTM, Barrier Reef was instructed to give them a file. This file was a 500 word bit of microfiction regarding the Inner Skies setting. It had several letters in **bold**. Also, there was a small, faint '3' before the text. Neither of the 2 remaining players solved this part of the game. I am not sure if McCauley just decided if this is too much work, or was actually stuck.

I am also unsure if I want to save the fiction for other purposes. One of the reasons I did this was to drum up curiosity for Inner Skies. Clearly, I completely failed in that regard. I suppose if there is enough people reading this, I might release the documents that only a few people have seen.

Anyway, the significance of the bold letters and the faint '3' is that the bold letters represent '1', so if you take the letter after next, and put them in a row you get:

“Leave comment in ignore this”

At the bottom of the page it says “Covington”, the name of the protagonist. The idea was for the player to leave the word “Covington” in the comments of the original video, called Ignore This. Had they done that, they would have been instructed to message my KS creator account. At this point, I had the option of adding another puzzle. As it turned out, I would have given them a 500 word piece of Inner Skies horror fiction and they would have gotten their prize.

I think this game could work with a few tweaks. I am a little disappointed that it did fail. I am excited to get some input on Inner Skies beyond my inner circle. I suppose there will be plenty of time to worry about that after this HexaCubes thing has stabilized. Anyway, I am not the sort of guy, that confounds players as a power trip. I sincerely apologize if you spent a lot of time doing this, but not having fun. The internet is a new sort of audience for me. I have a lot to learn about how to game in that context.