

The Physics of Zen: Arrival of Artemis the Lupincdeer

Zen could feel he was no longer falling down to earth. He felt wet. Information he could not comprehend continued to fill his mind as he lay unconscious. The first things to come to his mind were food, sports, art, music, fighting, power, and language. Zen did not dream. He only saw himself sitting, meditating on subjects he knew nothing about.

*Why is it that nothing makes sense to me?* He thought. *I know so much but understand so little. I wonder where all of this comes from. I don't remember anything up to when I woke up at the temple.* His train of thought stopped. *A temple, that's what it was. What was I doing there again? I was alone but I felt someone was there? It was me but not me.* He pondered these questions and the more Zen realized he wouldn't get an answer, the more his mind cleared, allowing information to flow easier.

Zen felt restricted. He couldn't move. He fought to lift his eyelids and the colors he saw were green. He blinked furiously and opened his eyes completely. Everything was green but blurred. Zen heard an unfamiliar sound. It was not the wind this time. The sound was bubbly, wet, cool, and he could feel it this time. The wind was a spontaneous and reoccurring feeling. This however was all around him, it felt relaxing, weightless but at the same time dense. *So this is...water?* He finally thought. *It feels...nice.* His blurry vision became clear but it was dark all around him. Green light illuminated from around him, which showed shadows of various objects scattered around the room. *Is this what earth is? Strange, when I looked at it from the sky I saw the earth was green but I also saw blue.* His mind at that moment raced back to the fight in the clouds, fast forwarding all the things that happened to him in several instances while the other images still remained blurry. *That's right. I won that battle. So where am I now, where's the orb? Can anyone*

*hear me?* No answer. It was silent. Zen began to look over his body and he could see nothing but his hands and paws. Several metal parts covered him from his face to his tails. He was floating, but not in the sky like he remembered what floating felt like. He was still and trapped. He tried to lift his arms but the calming effects of the water and the heavy machinery plugged into him made movement near impossible.

*Am I, in another dimension like I was in the clouds? I don't want to fight anymore. I thought I only had to do that once.* The room remained quiet and, feeling he could do little in the situation he was in, Zen floated in this tube of green water light and waited. He took the time to check his surroundings. From what little light his tube displayed, he could see black window boxes on the wall; below it were more mechanical parts he couldn't make out; everywhere else white items were scattered with black, blue or red markings on them. Some of those white items contained numbers, words, and strange symbols. The most obvious sight on these white square items was a big orange colored sphere circled around repeatedly with red circles around it. Another picture looked like a creature that looked familiar to Zen. It had a body, blue markings on his skin, and yellow colors in the center of the body, big ears with white stuff coming from it, and 3 busy things coming from its lower back. *That picture looks interesting. I wonder what it is.*

The lights from the room came on and Zen was stunned and blinded by the sudden flash. Something began to rumble, the black picture boxes began to activate and several activities took place within it. The mechanical parts below the boxes began to rumble and hum. Several lights on it began to activate. Zen could hear the different sounds past the bubbly noise of his container. It was new to him and both fascinated and frightened him. *Oh no, is this another battle world? The clouds changed colors and the songs became stronger just like this. I...I can't move though. How will I be able to fight?* Zen's eyes were wide-open despite the limited view he could receive

from the goggles that covered his face. Zen got use to the sounds and over time he started to relax and take in the white noise of these parts. His fear subsided and his unquenchable curiosity took hold. He scanned the room furiously. Despite everything looking green he could see the white colors of the room like when he was in the clouds. It amazed him; he questioned it, and for a moment thought that it would change colors too.

*Wow, he thought. This place is definitely new. How will I fight in here though? There's a lot of stuff lying around and it's small. I wonder if-*

“Though your data on Vulpisdeum proves him to be a primal candidate for what’s been happening in this world, I still have yet to receive any valuable data as to why these storms have been happening and how they got started in the first place Artemis.”

Zen’s curiosity broke and the feelings of nervousness that he was unaccustomed to bust out before he could control it. He panicked for a moment at the new sounds he was hearing. There were not like the machines he continued to hear. They were voices, two of them, getting louder and closer. Zen closed his eyes, pretending to be sleep, hoping he wouldn’t be found awake. He fought back the urge not to open them for fear that he’d die on the spot because his new opponent wanted him like he was. The doors to the room opened and the footsteps were sharp and moved in a rhythmic pattern.

“I understand Prof. Hord,” Artemis said. However, at this moment in time, it is not possible for me to ascertain everything we want to know in one day. I mean if I-”

“Let us review what we’ve discovered then shall we,” Hord said cutting her off, anxious and a slight bit impatient.

“Yes sir,” Artemis responded, typing on the keyboard and bringing up several images and moving pictures on the screen.

Zen could no longer fight his curiosity. He opened one eye and witnessed what seemed to be magic happening. With both eyes open, he marveled with amazement at the images changing in front of him. He remained careful not to move for fear of being noticed by the two creatures in front of him.

“Okay, from what I can gather,” Artemis began. “For the past 2 weeks there have been colossal storms happening all over the world. These storms, as you know, aren’t natural. High levels of dark matter have been reported on several of our radars leaving every scientist in the world nearly baffled. It’s quite amazing that the strongest source of this dark matter was actually to the north of us. However, no one could come even close to the storms. Wind, thunder, and dangerous levels of energy continued to spillover the land. ”

“Something else that caught my attention was that these storms did not move or fade away until just recently,” said Prof. Hord. They disappeared suddenly. On top of everything they appeared in unpopulated areas. No one was hurt in these catastrophes except for the ones who tried to go to the field itself and study it.”

“Really?” Artemis replied, shocked. “That’s sounds far too coordinated for dark matter. It’s impossible for it to only appear at specific, unpopulated places unless...”

They both gave each other a strange look. Zen closed his eyes as he felt they are going to look at him. They did, returned a look to each other, then finally to the screen.

“Unless someone was controlling it,” she finished.

“Artemis,” Hord said, taking off his glasses then rubbing his eyes before putting them back on.

“You know it as well as I do that that’s impossible. There is no possible way this creature, this fox,” pointing to Zen, raising his voice slightly. “Or ‘Vulpisdeum’ as you call him, could possibly posses enough energy to cause catastrophic thunderstorms for two weeks straight, in unpopulated areas, around the globe, in the middle of fall. Now even if we consider that fact to be true, if we are dealing with an omnipotent creature that has that power, there’s no way to control it at that level.”

“You may be right professor but-”

“I am right,” he said.

“You MAY be right,” Artemis repeated, finding it irritating to be interrupted when it was her turn to speak. “However, you’ve seen creatures that posses godlike powers. Sure some of them may or may not have had this level of power, but still, I can find no other explanation, at this moment, that would be more pleasing to hear.”

Prof. Hord stood back for a moment, placed his hands on the desk, leaned his head down, and tried to think.

“Alright, I’m going to join the expedition again today to see if there are anymore remnants of the storm in that area. I want you to continue researching this project Vulpisdeum in the meantime. The search will take all day so I’m afraid I’ll be too tired to come back and help you with the rest of the research, so I’ll come back tomorrow morning. I expect to have something ready by my return. If this fox is the very cause of this dark matter emerging I’d sooner have it erased than let it develop.”

He walked out the room, leaving Artemis to gather her scattered paperwork from around her office.

*What's dark matter? Zen wondered. He tried remembering his fight. Was that the black stuff the sphere was covered with, or was that the energy I felt coming from the spear that pierced me?*

*Zen began to recall the pain he felt when that battle took place. I still don't know how I did that.*

*It would be nice to understand more about this stuff. I guess I should listen to her. Though I don't know what she says most of the time, I get a sense she knows me more than I know myself*

Artemis continued to gather her work; the last paper she grabbed was the picture of Zen lying in front of his tube. She looked up and for a moment they met eye to eye. However, Artemis' thoughts were occupied and she immediately looked back at her work, walking around tables and chairs until she reached her monitor and keyboard. Zen froze. He realized this was the first person to whom he could talk too. The problem was he didn't know what to say or think at the moment.

Artemis began typing furiously, but after several seconds her fingers slowed down. Zen noticed and stared with curiosity. After glancing at the screen, Artemis could see Zen's reflection as she focused her eyes on him. She broke into a cold sweat and turned around.

"YOU'RE AWAKE," she screamed, knocking over some of the papers she just collected. Zen responded instantly to the scream. He wiggled and after imagining the action he would take, the machines disconnected and dropped to the bottom of the pool. His three tails grew longer and he curled himself in to big fur-ball, leaving only the mask on his face as a gap in his circular formation. Just as quickly, Artemis pushed a few buttons on her keyboard and the green water inside Zen's containment unit began to bubble more furiously. The sound of an alarm went off.

The clear green water began to fill with gas and soon Zen wasn't visible. Artemis, breathing heavily, slowly walked to the container.

*What am I going to do?* Artemis thought, still walking. *Okay, let me think, dark matter still lies within this fox. He's awake and didn't do anything. That's a good sign. So if I avoid making any reactions, maybe he'll stay calm.* She began rubbing her hair. *Ah, I don't know. Handling dark matter itself is one thing; how can I examine it better when it's inside a child?* She touched the glass, waiting to see what happened. The gas she let loose was meant to put the fox to sleep, hopefully stabilizing the dark matter within him. *From my research, he contains most of this dark matter in his head. That's completely impossible. A normal creature couldn't keep a small amount of dark energy in his hand let alone at a vital place inside a body. When did he wake up? Why does he have this power? What is he? Where did he come from? How is he connected to the thunderstorm?* She gasped for a moment, coming up with the most serious question she could think of. *Are there more of him?* By that time, she was far gone. Artemis immediately grabbed a notebook and wrote these questions down. Her focus shifted as her curiosity took her. She slammed the book on the desk.

"What am I doing?" She said to herself. "I can't be writing questions at this moment. I have to get back to work." She went to the phone next to the door of her office. "I don't usually do that, do I?" The sound of the alarms ceased and the gas started to clear away. Artemis looked back and saw Zen still curled into a ball. She was astounded. She stopped dialing the numbers and hung the phone up. "He shouldn't be like that. He can't be awake. The formula in the gas should have knocked him out. Is he still awake? He shouldn't be in that form." She walked over to the tube and gently pressed against it. When the glass cleared and Zen was visible she gave a faint tap on the glass. He didn't respond immediately, but began to loosen his formation. The mask was still

on his face but the mechanical parts covering his body had been taken off which intrigued Artemis. Zen's tails were still big enough to cover his body and he still covered himself, except for his head.

They stared at each other for a moment, both in silent thought unable to find out what to say to each other.

"Can you understand me?" Artemis began. Zen nodded. "My name is Artemis," she took a step back from the tube and spoke slowly. "What's your name?"

*I don't sense anything bad from her, Zen thought. I don't think I can speak though, I tried that already. I wish my head wasn't in this thing but I have a feeling that taking it off might be a bad idea. Wait, I can send my orb to...*

Zen looked around his container, the orb was missing. Artemis realized something was wrong and proceeded to draft a course of action. She turned around and began typing on her keyboard, talking to herself.

"Well, I can't very much out of you if I can't understand what you're saying. However I can't simply release you with all that dark matter in your head. Let's see." She stopped typing and sighed. Tapping on the panel she decided to take a risk. She turned around to the ever watchful fox staring at her. "Okay, I need you listen well and do as I say, understand?"

Zen tilted his head slightly to the left, ears up. "Don't get all cute and childish on me, this is serious." Zen tilted his head forward and listened with a curious expression on his face, of which Artemis still couldn't see. "Here's the deal, I'm going to let you out of there to answer my questions. I advise you to behave yourself. Any tricks and I will have to call my advisors. Trust

me, you don't want that. I don't know how much intelligence you have but know this: I'm here to help you."

*She seems a little on edge, Zen thought. If she doesn't like me, why bring me here? I get the feeling that she's a bit scared of me, but I didn't do anything. She hasn't made the room change and that other person left, so it doesn't seem like she wants to fight. I get the feeling that she's harmless. Zen tilted his head down, signaling he was thinking to Artemis. "What do I need help with? Maybe she meant how I have this power the orb talked about. But how did she know that? Did the orb communicate with her for me? I know the orb isn't taking her appearance like he did me. At the moment, though, I can't do anything. I don't want to do anything to get me into another fight. That last one hurt a lot and I still don't know why it happened. Well, I can't move so I'll do what she says."*

Zen nodded in approval. Artemis took that as a good sign and walked next to the tube. After pressing what Zen thought were colorful buttons, the chamber began to filter out the green water. Zen felt the water leaving him. It was the first time he experienced being wet. When the water was gone, Zen fell to the floor, amazed at how heavy he felt.

*Well that was new,* he thought. The mask on his face separated and he could breathe more easily. He opened his eyes again and looked at Artemis. Artemis shot him a quick glance and finished pushing the rest of the buttons. The glass that separated them began to lift. Zen sat in position as still as a statue, waiting to see what would happen. The office smell was new to Zen. There was no wind and the room didn't change like it had in the clouds. He took it as a sign that nothing bad was going to happen. However, he began to shiver and he felt his legs were still asleep. The

room temperature was fair and the sounds of the machines around him were clearer than when he was in water. Artemis got a towel from a hole inside the wall and bent down to dry him off.

*For a fur-ball possessing an incredible large amount of dark matter, you sure are incredibly cute,* Artemis thought. Zen didn't move but felt very strange as the towel touched his fur. The texture of it was new and interesting. He focused on the towel more as she kept patting him down.

Artemis continued to study Zen; her greatest interest was the blue designs on Zen's fur. She didn't understand their meaning, but found them fascinating. She then turned her attention to his three tails, surprisingly a different color from his overall fur. When she was finished, she helped Zen stand to his paws. He stumbled for a second, his knees still weak. She put him on a table and began to examine him. She examined his paws, the designs on the fur, the unusual coloring of his orange fur, yellow chest and stomach fur, the blue wings coming from his ears, and the black and white tips on his tails. Artemis got distracted and proceeded to rub the wings in his ear. Zen watched, unsure of how to react. After rubbing them for a few seconds, Artemis looked content and satisfied. When she noticed Zen looking at her in silence she blushed, realizing what she did was a bit unprofessional.

*Well that's something that changed colors,* Zen thought, looking at Artemis' face. She put a hand to her mouth and coughed, diminishing the red in her face and returning it to her natural colors.

"W-Well, time to get started," she began, regaining her composure. She pulled up a chair and took out a notepad from her desk. Zen sat on the table crossed-legged, never changing his curious expression. Artemis continued her examination. "Okay, you still haven't told me your name. What is it?" She asked. Zen's mouth moved but no sound came out. At first Artemis thought Zen was playing games with her, but decided to test her theory. She put the notepad down and walked

to her computer again. After furiously typing on her keyboard, a machine appeared from the ceiling.

*So that thing her hands are on summons her magic? Wow.* Zen watched as the machine came down in front of him. It looked like a claw but had a big black eye in front of it. A light began to glow blue and a beam flashed causing Zen to go blind for a moment. He rubbed his eyes, unaware that he was being scanned from bottom to top. The light disappeared and the sound of the machine stopped. Zen regained his sight but didn't know what happened. Artemis watched from where she stood, slightly amazed at how Zen was calm with the situation. She turned her attention back to the screen where the information had been processed. Zen was fascinated by the changing colors and moving words on the screen and stared with even more curiosity. He remembered to stay where he was for fear of angering Artemis.

"Alright, just as I thought," Artemis said to herself. "You have no signs of vocal cords in your body. However, a large amount of dark matter, as impossible as it is, is located in your head. Dear god, what are you?" She turned towards Zen, who felt a bit scared as he got the feeling he did something wrong. Artemis went up to Zen with a serious expression on her face. Zen didn't show the fearful reaction on his face but his tails began to cover his body like an animal curling in a ball, knowing his master would get angry with him. "Where did you come from?" She asked. Zen didn't know where he had been, so he didn't know how to respond. He pointed upwards but that only made Artemis more upset, as it didn't help her case. "You're going to have to do a little bit more than that, but since you can't talk I'll have to experiment to find the answer." Her voice was gentle on the last statement. She remembered that even though right in front of her was technically an unstable body of matter, he was still a child. She didn't want to cause any unnecessary reactions out of Zen that could potentially trigger any activity in the dark

matter within his head. She grabbed Zen's arm and guided him off the table. She lured him to a corner where a chair was located. She placed him in front of the chair and he proceeded to sit down. She pushed him gently so he was tilted slightly. She began to restrain him by locking his paws and hands but saw how nervous Zen was because his body was shaking.

"I know this looks scary but don't worry. Like I said before, I'm here to help." Although Zen showed no reaction, Artemis felt she should say more. "You're a very calm fox you know. You haven't made a fuss since you woke up and that's impressive. Don't worry. You're a special one, in a good way of course. I just want to know what's going through your mind right now so bear with me." She finished strapping Zen down to the chair.

*Oh! If you wanted to know what was on my mind you should have said so.* Zen began to picture the words he wanted to say. The machine began responding and Artemis jumped at the sound. She turned towards the monitor and saw an animated replica of Zen and the dark matter flowing through his mind. She turned again to Zen who was calm and had his eyes closed. She turned to the monitor and was so surprised she was speechless. The dark matter appeared in word-like shapes that spelled out "Hello". She paused for a moment, too baffled to even process what she saw. After recovering, she walked to the keyboard.

"How are you doing this?" She asked. The dark matter on the screen began to change into a new sentence.

"I don't know. Whenever I think of something, it just happens", she read.

Artemis began to grow irritated, as Zen's explanations did not help her. "Okay, where did you get this dark matter?"

The screen changed again. “I don’t know what dark matter is other than what you talked about. Do you mean this black stuff? I got it from the orb.”

“The orb?” Artemis asked.

The screen changed and Artemis continued reading out loud. “Yes, I thought it talked to you. I’m glad it didn’t try to hurt you like it did me. It can be very unclear when expressing its intentions.”

Artemis gave up. She didn’t know how to continue the conversation. It’s was completely illogical for dark matter to talk to a person. As far as some orb was concerned, Artemis didn’t see it. However, she did see something circular surrounding Zen’s head on the screen but again, all her questions had come to dead ends or at made little sense. She thought for a while and decided she had no other choice. She sighed and looked at Zen who opened his eyes when she didn’t ask him anything else.

“Okay, I have another idea and I need you to listen carefully. I’m a scientist; I study this stuff call dark matter, the thing you possess that allows you to physically think out your words. This matter in your head is unstable, in order words, dangerous. I’m here to help so it won’t be dangerous, you understand.” Zen nodded. “I’m going to perform some tests on you to find out about this dark matter you have, and I need you to cooperate, understand? These tests will help you since you can’t provide any answers to my questions that I can work with. Are you ready?”

Zen nodded in approval. Although he didn’t like the idea of being tied to a chair he felt no hostility towards her, plus the seat was comfortable. Not only that, but he had met someone who didn’t want to harm him but help him. He also had the chance to find out this power the orb

mentioned to him before his battle. Zen was content and sat still ready for these tests she had planned.

They started off fairly simple. Artemis would tap away on the computer while Zen only had to sit down and image words or images to communicate. She did a lot of mental studies on Zen as well as studying his personality from the few hours they spent together. Zen wished he could get up and explore more but his curiosity kept him in place as he continued to look at the changing screen and the scientist at work. Artemis felt a bit distracted because the muted Zen never changed his nonchalant expression but looked at everything in the room almost like he was studying. She still could not understand how the gas in his chamber didn't put him to sleep but the chemicals in it could put down an elephant or a continental sized furry.

The tests went for hours and Artemis made little progress with some of her questions. She began to get impatient with the safe procedures towards her subject. She looked at the clock and it was close to noon. She knew Professor Hord would be arriving soon and with the little information she had, she knew she would get in trouble. In fact, she could get into so much trouble, they could fire her. With the great deal of money it took to pay for her house as well as little to no friends, this was the only job Artemis had that occupied her interests and time, as well as paying her fairly. She didn't want to lose it. She sighed heavily for a moment and dropped her head on the panel. Though she was sad about what she was about to do, she had no choice but to dissect Zen's mind to get everything she needed. She began typing on the keyboard and a mechanical arm emerged from the ceiling, holding what appeared to be a giant needle with several cords connected to each other. It slowly approached Zen's head but stopped. Zen was still bit a little on edge. Artemis walked around to Zen.

“It’s going to be okay,” she said, trying to keep a serious look on her face. “You are doing just fine but I need you to hold still now. This may hurt, but trust me, it’s for the best.” She pulled down a helmet over Zen’s head. Zen’s body was shaking even though his face didn’t show it. Artemis saw noticed this but cast it aside. She tried to remember that this fox could be dangerous and technically should be contained, controlled, or destroyed. She turned around and proceeded to type on her keyboard again. She knew that she only had to press a button and the needle would be launched straight into Zen’s head. The dark matter would get sucked into it and then available to examine on her computer. Her finger trembled, inches away, but she could not force herself to push it.

Zen was in the chair waiting for something to happen. His body wouldn’t stop trembling but he didn’t understand why. He didn’t feel anxious or scared because he could feel no hostile intent in Artemis’ presence. However, he began to suspect something was wrong. His mind signaled to the screen and it read he didn’t want to do this anymore. Artemis read it and slowly her eyes began to tear. Before Zen transferred another message to the screen, Artemis let out a small shriek as she slammed on the button.

The machine began to sound and Zen’s body snapped to move but was still strapped down. Zen’s immediate thought at this sudden change of atmosphere was to ask the orb for protection. The orb responded a second too late. The needle was within inches of Zen’s brain before the dark matter became physical and stopped it. Zen struggled, causing severe mental damage to himself. He could not let out a cry, so Artemis was oblivious to what was happening to him. She closed her eyes and refused to look at him. When she opened them and looked at the screen she couldn’t believe that Zen’s mental strength and control of dark matter made it so that even though the needle was inside his skull, he didn’t die. Artemis was astounded but didn’t know what to do.

Unless the machine could dig deep into Zen's mind, her experiment was at a standstill. However, things took a turn for the worse.

The lights began to flicker, the desks and chairs began to disintegrate and paper as well as other small materials began to levitate. Zen continued to fight with the machine as well as fighting against the straps that held him down. The more he struggled, the stronger the dark matter became fueled with strength. Eventually, it became so strong the needle broke. Things got worse. Electricity began pouring out of the machine into Zen's mind. The dark matter didn't respond to this immediate threat and the shock wave of energy shot through Zen like a bullet. Zen let out a mental cry and his distorted mind caused everything in the room to either disintegrate faster or levitate uncontrollably. Artemis was pushed back by what appeared to be an invisible hand and smacked against the wall next to the door. The door opened and Professor Hord appeared. He was too stunned by what he saw to speak and watched what was about to unfold.

The screen began to change and its backup system engaged. All the files Artemis kept in her computer began to download into Zen. Zen couldn't comprehend the amount of information put into him nor could he fight against the straps. He wanted it all to stop. That's the only words he continued to think about. The screen showed it and both Hord and Artemis read it. Stop, Stop, Stop, Stop... It repeated it over and over again. Hord began running towards Zen but Artemis was too scared to move. Out of the countless things happening to him, Zen, for the first time, heard someone else's thoughts other than his own.

"This has gone on far enough," Zen heard from the thoughts of another. "You are dangerous, you are unstable, and I cannot allow you to live. You must die! Return to the abyss you came from." Hord pulled out a knife from his lab coat and charged Zen with fury.

“Download complete,” the computer voice said, statically and distorted. “All files downloaded.”

“*STOOOOP!*” Zen thought, and this thought reached out like a voice to everyone in the building, Artemis finally heard the thoughts of the silent Vulpisdeum, the fox favored by the gods. A massive mind wave was unleashed and a big white flashed blinded everyone.

Zen was dizzy; he no longer felt the pain of anything. The helmet on his head disintegrated and he opened his eyes, everything stood still. Artemis covered her eyes, Hord was suspended in the air but never came down, the papers and chairs were still and all was silent. Zen felt intoxicated and his head was pounding. He moved his arms and the straps restraining him turned to dust. He got up slowly, no longer thinking of his actions. He walked like a drunken man with a limp towards the door. However, the door was inches away from him and he was headed towards the wall. The wall turned to dust the instant he made contact with it. His breathing was heavy and slow. He walked straight out of the building but heard nothing as he entered the forest.