# Introduction

 Hey, all! This week, we have a glimpse at a story I’ve been trying to write forever. Called Dark One, it’s the story of a kid who is prophesied to become the Dark One--kind of an anti-Harry-Potter type story.

 This is one of the worst attempts I’ve made at getting into the story. The first two attempts were both high fantasy, and here, I thought I’d try to ground the story in our world first, and see how that turned out.

 It turned out poorly.

 This was just too dry for me. It felt too much like a hundred other similar “portal fantasy” middle grade stories. I abandoned the attempt after this short free write, though I did try one more that worked better, using the same “portal fantasy” style of story. (I’ve eventually settled on bringing it back to high fantasy, and am hoping to fit it into the cosmere. But I’ll show you future glimpses of it in coming months.)

 Hopefully, you can learn from my failures!

# Dark One Chapter One:

 Ominous clouds had not been part of the day’s weather forecast.

 Lawrence Silver was certain of this, for he looked up weather reports each morning. He checked them again on his phone as the bus stopped at an intersection; they still said the city was to have sunshine all day.

 The clouds, unfortunately, did not appear to have Google. They rolled toward the city like a pack of street thugs with nothing better to do than loiter about and darken everyone’s day. Lawrence did not mind rain, so long as it was planned for. This storm, however, was entirely unexpected--and therefore suspect.

 “What are you looking at, Larry?” Raul asked, leaning over and peering out the window.

 “The storm,” Lawrence said. “And don’t call me Larry.”

 “Huh,” Raul said, squinting at the dark clouds. They rolled toward the city like a group of hoodlums looking for trouble. “Good thing we’ll be inside today, eh?”
 The bus--one of the nicer, charter-types--hauled a load of ninth graders to Ahlstrom Museum, which was the nicest museum in town, as the only other museum being about the history of linoleum. The other members of Lawrence’s grade were understandably excited, their enthusiasm dampened only a slight degree by the assignments they carried, to be filled out at the museum. Still, field trips were few and far between in the ninth grade. It was only this fall trip and a visit to the local college in the spring.

 Raul turned around and began flirting with Becky Straton across the aisle, a girl who had far too much hair and far too little chin. Raul himself was wiry, Hispanic, and an absolute genius with a soccer ball. Unfortunately, he did not share a similar enthusiasm for politics, despite having agreed to be Lawrence’s running made for class elections.

 “Raul,” Lawrence said, nudging him. “Come on. We need to work on our platform.”

 “It doesn’t matter,” Raul said, giving Becky a wink but turning back to Lawrence. “We’re going to win, man.”

 “Charles will be stiff competition.”

 Raul rolled his eyes. “You were seventh grade class president. You were eighth grade class president. You’re going to be class president this year. This is a thing that happens, Larry.”

 “It’s best not to take anything for granted,” Lawrence said. “And don’t call me Larry.” He held up a sheet. The bus rolled around a corner.

 Raul took the sheet, cocking an eyebrow as he read. “You’re going to take out the soda machines?”

 “And replace them with healthy options.”

 “This is your idea of a campaign promise? I know I said you were going to win...but dudes like their soda, man.”

 “We just need to find a way to present it, to sell it. You’re an athlete; I think you should champion healthy eating and drinking habits in the school. The students will listen to you.”

 “I don’t know, man. Why this? Shouldn’t we pick something that will...you know, help us win?”

 “Being the ones who effected a school changeover from sugary drinks to healthy alternatives will look very good on our college applications.”

 “College applications? Dude. We’re in ninth grade.”

 “Most universities look back four years,” Lawrence said, sliding the campaign sheet into his binder.

 As he did so, Raul slipped some fingers in and pulled loose a sheet from the binder. “What’s this?” Raul asked. “Harvard? Don’t tell me you’ve actually started filling out applications?”

 “I like to be prepared,” Lawrence said, taking the sheet back and sliding it into his binder’s pocket with a precise motion.

 “You’re filling out your college applications four years early?”

 “It’s good practice.”

 “Lawrence,” Raul said. “I like you. You’re helpful and you think about things. You’re also a very strange dude.”

 “Odd you should say that,” Lawrence said, snapping his binder closed. “As most days, I feel like I’m the only sane one around. Those clouds should not be gathering like this. I looked this up, Raul. Someone at the weather website is going to get fired.”

 The rain began as their bus turgidly pulled into the museum parking lot. Lawrence watched out the window, breath fogging the glass, as a group of younger students from another school scattered before the rain like ducklings who had seen a fox. Raul had gone back to flirting, this time with Maria Lopez in the seat in front of him.