

CLOUD-BOUND CUCKOO

Written by

Name of Dillon Deveney

Dilloniusdeveney@gmail.com
(908)-433-0799
3149 Whisper Lake Lane Apt. E
Winter Park, FL, 32792

EXT. ABOVE THE CLOUDS - DAY

A bright sun shines down on an endless scape of golden clouds.

STRAHLEND (V.O.)

If I had known then what I know
now... Would I have guessed things
would turn out differently?

A small pocket of clouds swirls like a whirlpool followed by a RUMBLE OF THUNDER and a flash of lightning.

A stunning medieval castle-city made of gold and silver appears. Around it, forests, rivers, deserts and mountains begin to form and expand for miles.

STRAHLEND (V.O.)

I mean, a reality-shifting world
above the clouds would have shocked
most people, but I was studying
alternate universes at the time, so
that was easy enough.

INT. CLOUD-BOUND KINGDOM - THRONE ROOM - DAY

ORIGIN, no visible age, androgynous gender, face shrouded by a sun mask, six-armed cloud entity wearing king's robes and knight armor, sits upon a golden throne.

Origin is surrounded by TEN CLOUD PALADINS, four-armed cloud entities resembling Origin, clad in knight armor, wearing moon masks. Origin surveys the ornate throne room, nods in approval and claps.

STRAHLEND (V.O.)

The fact that it was ruled by a
magical cloud-deity? No problem.

ZYGANDER, 39, rolled up lab coat revealing tattooed arms, thick-rimmed glasses, permanently scowling, storms the room. He checks his pocket-watch and marches to the steps of Origin's throne.

STRAHLEND (V.O.)

My mega-crazy professor being a
manipulative jerk-face? DUH.

Zygander tilts his glasses, winks and grows a villainous grin. Origin nods in approval and claps. Zygander's watch vibrates and transforms into a sun-shaped pocket-watch.

INT. CLOUD-BOUND KINGDOM - TREASURE ROOM - DAY

Origin and Zygander saunter amongst a vault of treasures, swords, jewels, gold, paintings, creatures and so on. They stop before a giant pedestal.

STRAHLEND (V.O.)

But if I'm being honest...

On top sits a rainbow crystal-egg, no bigger than a melon. Origin nods in approval. Zygander adjusts his glasses and grins.

STRAHLEND (V.O.)

That it would end here, like this?

The egg vibrates and its color's begin to shift. It takes on a golden aura.

EXT. CLOUD-BOUND KINGDOM - DAY

The Cloud-Bound Kingdom ripples with a golden wave. It changes into a city of water, then to a city made of desserts, and finally into a city of giant mushrooms.

STRAHLEND (V.O.)

I never would have guessed.

The clouds supporting the city grow stormy and rain upon the Earth below. One glowing rain drop falls faster than the rest.

EXT. PROVIDENCE, RI - DUCK LOVING NEIGHBOR'S COTTAGE - DAY

SCHRÖDINGER, 3, green-eyed zebra-striped cat, sits on the roof of a tiny cottage and licks his paws. The glowing rain drop splashes onto the roof forming a gold flower. Schrödinger meows and leaps down to the cottage's doorstep.

INT. DUCK LOVING NEIGHBOR'S COTTAGE - TINY KITCHEN - DAY

Harsh sunlight fills the cramped kitchen and spotlights STRAHLEND, 20, albino, wearing a worn lab coat and protective goggles, who sits at a tiny kitchen table and fiddles with three electrical wires sticking out from a mechanical device that resembles a digital wristwatch.

Sweat drips down her nose as she blows a few pieces of hair off of her forehead and licks her lips. A charm bracelet slides down from her upper arm to her wrist.

STRAHLEND

Red wire... green wire...
periwinkle wire...

MRS. TOHOLGA, 45, rotund and wearing a duck-patterned sweat suit, stumbles into the room, fanning herself with a rolled-up magazine and clutching a taxidermied duck.

MRS. TOHOLGA

Strahlend, honey-biscuit-dearie, I couldn't find no copper-wiring. I even checked in my good-for-nothing air conditioner like you said.

STRAHLEND

Aw, goop. I appreciate the search effort, Mrs. Toholga. I guess I'll have to do this... Tesla-style.

Strahlend sniffs each wire and licks the periwinkle one. Mrs. Toholga grabs a plate of duck-shaped cookies from a nearby tiny stove and eats three at once. Strahlend's phone BUZZES in her coat's breast-pocket. She ignores it.

MRS. TOHOLGA

Well, I appreciate you helping me fix my sweltering heat problem with that fancy-schmancy icicle doo-dad.

STRAHLEND

Cyro-Launcher. It's supposed to strip excited electron's of their energy using simple car coolant, thus reducing the heat and --

MRS. TOHOLGA

Ooh! Strahlend you are just too clever! Shame on, old Mr. Jaunder, calling you a loony-crazykins.

Strahlend flinches at the word "crazy" and lets out a sigh.

Mrs. Toholga leans over Strahlend's shoulder and intently snacks on cookies. Crumbs fall onto Strahlend's ear and shoulder. Every smack of her lips makes Strahlend squirm.

STRAHLEND

Um. Looks like I'm about finished here, I'll just put all of my faith in the periwinkle wire and --

Strahlend brings the periwinkle wire and red wire together. Suddenly, a miniature hologram of JORDANNA, 24, Hawaiian beauty wearing a 'Save the Mermaids' T-shirt, in a wheel chair, beams from her phone onto the table.

JORDANNA
Yoooooooooooo! Gotta Q for you.

With a high-pitched yelp, Strahlend crosses the periwinkle with the green. The watch begins to shake uncontrollably.

JORDANNA (CONT'D)
Did I --

STRAHLEND
Yes.

The watch launches an ice beam that bounces off a tiny painting of a duck and freezes it, bounces then to tiny stove and freezes it, and finally launches itself at Strahlend and Mrs. Toholga.

Strahlend throws her chair back and falls with it. Her phone bounces onto the table. Jordanna reaches her hand forward towards Mrs. Toholga.

JORDANNA
Lady! Duck!

STRAHLEND
Jordanna! Noooooo!

Mrs. Toholga turns to the hologram with a gleaming smile.

MRS. TOHOLGA
Duck?!

Strahlend shields her eyes as the bright ice beam smashes into Mrs. Toholga with a FREEZING CRACKLE.

EXT. DUCK LOVING NEIGHBOR'S COTTAGE - SIDEWALK - DAY

Strahlend quickly flees from the front door of Mrs. Toholga's house, clutching her machine in her left hand, unfolding a parasol in her right and holding her phone in her mouth.

JORDANNA
I can't believe you froze, Mrs. Toholga.

STRAHLEND
Mm!

JORDANNA

Yeah, I guess you're right. I can't believe I froze, Mrs. Toholga.

Strahlend reaches her motor-scooter, pockets her machine, folds her parasol and hooks her phone into an outfitted display panel. Jordanna's hologram fixates on the new position.

JORDANNA (CONT'D)

It was an important call though! We need a new piece for the blog. I'm thinking we try and prove the Simulation Theory today and boy, do I know a good site I can hack for the deets.

Strahlend removes her goggles, revealing her bright purple eyes and tears.

JORDANNA (CONT'D)

Aw, Strahlend... I'm sorry. But look at the facts, yo. You DID fix her heat problem.

INT. DUCK LOVING NEIGHBOR'S COTTAGE - TINY KITCHEN - DAY

Mrs. Toholga is suspended in an ice block that leaves nothing uncovered but her head. She snacks happily on a plate of cookies left on the edge of the ice block.

STRAHLEND (V.O.)

I mean she did seem kind of happy when we left...

EXT. BUSY ROAD - DAY

Strahlend swerves amongst cars double her size with ease.

JORDANNA

... So come on! Keep the confidence up! Remember, you're a super beautiful super genius ready to rock the world into the super future!

STRAHLEND

Hey! Quit being cute. You know I hate it when you're cute. You'll distract me and I'll crash and I'll die.

Jordanna cheers. Strahlend cuts off a truck on accident.

JORDANNA
That's the passive aggressive
Strahlend Baskerville I know and
love!

EXT. BASKERVILLE'S COTTAGE - DAY

Strahlend and hologram Jordanna, pull into the driveway of her suburban Germanic-cottage. The lawn is a one giant garden and wooden sculptures decorate it. She dons her parasol and skips to the gate of her home.

FALCO, 48, oh-so German, massive beard and muscular, wearing nothing but suspenders, whittles a giant cat out of a log on the front lawn. KEESHA, 42, dark-skinned, wearing a gypsy-like dress, practices Tai Chi by the sprinklers.

STRAHLEND
Guten Tag, Vater! Hiya, Keesha!

JORDANNA
Aloha, Baskervillians!

Falco drops his work immediately and envelops Strahlend in a bear hug. His beard tickles Strahlend who giggles.

FALCO
Straleigh, mein Leibe! And hullo to
you, Jordanna-dearest.

JORDANNA
Beard! The beard!

Falco releases her, only to be hugged by Keesha.

KEESHA
Hi, honey! How was Mrs. Toholga's?

Strahlend bashfully scratches her head.

STRAHLEND
Weeeeeeeell --

JORDANNA
It was cool! She's chilln' now!

Strahlend mouths: "Oh. My. God.", to Jordanna.

KEESHA

Wonderful! I know you two have a bunch of blogging to do, but don't forget, tonight is vegi-loaf night!

Strahlend fails to mask her horror.

STRAHLEND

I, uh, probs won't make it to dinner! I have my exam tomorrow remember? So --

Strahlend's phone BUZZES. It reads: "PROFESSOR PROTO".

INT. BASKERVILLE'S COTTAGE - STRAHLEND'S BASEMENT LAB - NIGHT

Test tubes, half-finished machines, crumpled up notes and paper plates covered with the remains of hot dogs with eggs, cover the many tables of Strahlend's makeshift lab.

Strahlend rummages through a tool box underneath her desk while a life-sized hologram of PROFESSOR PROTO, 56, wearing a lab coat and safety goggles, walks with a cane, looks like a skinny Santa Claus, paces back and forth.

PROFESSOR PROTO

Strahlend, I have all the faith in the world in you. But you must not underestimate Professor Zygander. He is looking for any reason to fail you with this exam.

STRAHLEND

You let loose a marching band of mechanical elves one time in the faculty's office and your branded a deviant for life.

PROFESSOR PROTO

This serious, Strahlend. He's looking to fail anyone who can't prove their thesis. I don't have the influence I used to, I can't vouch for your... eccentric theories and have it be readily accepted anymore.

Strahlend finds a monkey wrench and marches over to a large machine, resembling a fridge with spider legs. She unscrews the front panel of the machine with precision.

STRAHLEND

Eccentric is a polite word, I appreciate it Professor.

PROFESSOR PROTO

I'll be earnest, Your R-Shift Particle Detector is going to be a hard sell. You're essentially trying to prove magic to these people. Are you sure you can --

Strahlend rips off the cover of her machine and throws the monkey wrench aside. A small shadow scampers past her feet. She dons her goggles.

STRAHLEND

It's not a theory anymore, Professor, my machine is proof. This won't be like last year.

A golden glow exudes from the machine's core. Strahlend poses fiercely by her creation. Professor Proto nods.

PROFESSOR PROTO

Stubborn. Alright, Strahlend, I'll see you tomorrow. Nine AM sharp. Please try hard not to be late this time.

She flashes a grin before turning back to her machine. Professor Proto disappears.

Strahlend lets out a long sigh. She flops down on a nearby couch, rips her goggles off and rubs her eyes for a bit.

STRAHLEND

Tomorrow needs to be amazing.

Schrödinger bounds out of the shadows and leaps into Strahlend's lap.

STRAHLEND (CONT'D)

Hi, hi, Schrödinger.

Schrödinger purrs and rubs up against Strahlend's arm. She pets him as he settles into her side.

STRAHLEND (CONT'D)

How's the cat-cam? Vid anything neato-conquito?

Strahlend pets underneath his neck and brushes against a small camera imbedded in the collar. A light above the lens blinks red.

Underneath the cat-cam, a small box hangs on by a chain attached to Schrödinger's name tag. She removes the box, sniffs then opens it. A folded note is inside and it reads:

"Strahlend,
I know you're under a lot of pressure because of tomorrow and that's only natural. You're going to be greatastic (as always). I found this when I was cleaning out your father's extensive shoe closet. I'm sure your mother would have loved to give you this herself. You make us so proud. We love you oodles!
XOXO, Keesha."

Tears fall onto the paper as Schrödinger meows. Strahlend retrieves a small sun charm from the box. She slides down her bracelet and attaches the charm.

INT. BASKERVILLE'S COTTAGE - STRAHLEND'S BEDROOM - DAY

Morning sunbeams scatter across Strahlend who tosses and turns in her unkempt bed. Her room is much smaller than her lab but just as messy.

Notes, mechanical bits, open books and dozens of clothes strewn about on the floor. A coat rack of goggles teeter from a ceiling fan's wind.

Her phone BUZZES on her bedside table. Jordanna's mini hologram pops up.

JORDANNA

Yoooooo! Gotta Q for you.

Strahlend pushes her phone off the table and rolls over.

STRAHLEND

Sleepy. Go 'way.

JORDANNA

No, yo! Question about today's blog piece. Everyone's itching to hear about your R-Shift reveal. Should I run the article?

Strahlend scoots herself onto the floor and grabs her phone. She's wearing a tank top and mustache-patterned boxers.

STRAHLEND

Nooo. Not until it's official.
Just, um, run something about the
Alternate Universe Theory.

JORDANNA

Boring. We've done that already.

STRAHLEND

Hey! It's not boring! That theory
is the basis of my R-Shift --

JORDANNA

Yeeeeeah, I knooow. But our readers
don't want old cool stuff, they
won't new cool stuff, yeah?

Strahlend barely gets to her feet before she falls onto her
bed. She groans.

STRAHLEND

Well, run anything.
SecretScienceStuff.com only thrives
because we post about secret
science stuff.

She claps her hands three times. The ceiling fan stops.

JORDANNA

Then hurry up and actually prove
yo' stuff!

Strahlend sticks her tongue out. The ceiling fan's blades
sprout into mechanical arms that undress and redress
Strahlend. Jordanna looks away as she types off-hologram.

JORDANNA (CONT'D)

Don't forget to wear the lucky
undies.

STRAHLEND

Duh. So how do I look?

Jordanna looks up at Strahlend, dressed exactly the same as
yesterday. Jordanna stifles a grin.

JORDANNA

Looooking fiiine, gurl. And ready
to kick some Zygander butt.

STRAHLEND

Thank you kindly. Do me a favor,
send my parent's a message saying I
left. I don't wanna wake them up.

Jordanna writes off-hologram. Strahlend picks up the phone with her foot. Jordanna's hologram grows life-sized.

EXT. LONELY NEIGHBORHOOD ROAD - DAY

Strahlend zooms down a barren neighborhood road. A small metal caboose is attached to the back of her scooter.

JORDANNA (V.O.)
Yo, can you do me a favor?

STRAHLEND (V.O.)
Sure, sure. What's up?

EXT. TOWN PARK - DAY

Strahlend slows down as she passes THREE KIDS, 6-8, in school clothes, at a park. A kite is stuck in a tree.

JORDANNA (V.O.)
Take the long way to school. Don't go through town.

STRAHLEND (V.O.)
Why come?

Strahlend pulls out a toothbrush-device. She sprints to Three Kids. The machine extends into a giant hand that picks up the kite and returns it. Three Kids laugh and cheer.

JORDANNA (V.O.)
Because you'll stop and help everyone with a problem! You'll be late to class and Zygander will have all the more reason to fail you.

INT. TEGMARK UNIVERSITY - PHYSICS LAB - DAY

Zygander leans by the lab's entrance. He taps his foot and checks his sun-shaped pocket-watch. It reads: "9:01 AM".

STRAHLEND (V.O.)
Zygander is nothing but talkity-talk with no walkity-walk, okay?

Professor Proto checks his watch as he sits amongst a crowd of STUDENTS, ages 20-24, various races, wearing ID tags, and PROFESSORS, ages 35-60, various races, wearing lab coats.

JORDANNA (V.O.)

No, I don't think he is. In fact, I think he has a lot of walkity-walk, which is why I want you to lose the macho-facade and do as I ask.

Professor Proto rises. Zygander adjusts his glasses. He snaps his fingers at Professor Proto and motions him to sit down. Professor Proto pauses and takes to his seat.

EXT. QUAIN TOWN MAIN STREET - DAY

Strahlend drives through a main street, old two-story architecture with ivy-covered buildings. OLD ROOF MAN, 67, scraggly and Italian, struggles with shingling a roof. Strahlend offers help but he yells her away.

STRAHLEND (V.O.)

Jordanna you can't expect me to --

JORDANNA (V.O.)

Strahlend Baskerville, promise me.

Old Roof Man loses his balance and falls. Strahlend frantically reaches into her caboose and pulls out a grenade painted like a lemon. She tosses it and it explodes into gold foam that catches Old Roof Man. He ignores her help up.

INT. BASKERVILLE'S COTTAGE - STRAHLEND'S BEDROOM - DAY

Jordanna reaches out her holographic hand. Strahlend sighs, slaps through the holo-hand and the two embrace in a holo-hug. Strahlend's fingers are crossed.

JORDANNA

Thank you. Focus on you for once.

STRAHLEND

Yeah, yeah, you bum. I'll call you when it's over. Hugs and meows.

EXT. BASKERVILLE'S COTTAGE - DAY

Schrödinger stands on top of a garage and watches Strahlend zoom away. He meows and leaps in suit.

INT. TEGMARK UNIVERSITY - PHYSICS LAB - DAY

Zygander leans on one of many white boards at the front of the lab. A small blanket-covered machine sits by him. He taps his foot and checks his pocket-watch. It reads: "9:41 AM".

STRAHLEND (O.S.)

Two-thousand ninety-nine...

Strahlend is a few white boards down from him speed-writing the same sentence over and over again: "I, Strahlend Baskerville, love wasting Spencer Zygander's time. It's my favorite hobby."

She finishes writing and slams the marker down in the board's marker tray.

STRAHLEND (CONT'D)

Three-thousand! May I begin, sir?

ZYGANDER

I really want to say no, but... you ever seen a train wreck? It's a tad horrifying but it's just so fun to watch! So, yes, you may begin.

Zygander bows and leans onto the front desk. He clicks his pocket watch.

ZYGANDER (CONT'D)

Let's hope this year's presentation doesn't end with a chemical fire.

A few Students and Professors chuckle.

Strahlend looks down, takes three deep breathes and shakes her entire body. She snaps up with a gleam of confidence.

STRAHLEND

Salutations, friendlies! My name is Strahlend Baskerville. Today I will be presenting my R-Shift Particle Theory.

A few Students roll their eyes. Professor Proto straightens.

Zygander's eyes bulge as his face scrunches.

ZYGANDER

Did you just say... R-Shift Particles?

STRAHLEND

Yep. You didn't read my proposal
did you?

Sweat beads form on Zygander's forehead. He composes himself,
removes his glasses and cleans them on his shirt.

ZYGANDER

O-Of course not.

Both Strahlend and Professor Proto eye Zygander then look to
each other.

STRAHLEND

Essentially, R-Shift Particles are
a currently unproven theory by
award-winning, theoretical
physicist, Ezekiel Rassmasson.

Zygander chokes. He motions for Strahlend to continue.

STRAHLEND (CONT'D)

R-Shift Particles are subatomic
variables that have no defined make-
up or function. Rassmasson's
initial discovery was met with
disdain and skepticism.

Strahlend reveals a toothy smile. She pulls a TV-remote from
her coat pocket and spins it as if it were a six-shooter.

STRAHLEND (CONT'D)

Well. I'm here to tell you all...
they're reeeeeeal!

She triumphantly poses and extends her TV Remote skyward. The
lights dim. She clicks a big button and the blanket-covered
machine grows eight-feet tall.

The blanket falls off the machine revealing her spider-fridge
R-Shift Particle Detector.

STRAHLEND (CONT'D)

Meet the R-Shift Particle Detector
Mark IV! Her name is Jordy.

Awkward applause ensues.

STRAHLEND (CONT'D)

Jordy can detect patches of R-
Shift Particles inside of objects.
She can then stimulate them,
rewrite them, thus transforming one
object into another!

Zygander leaps from his front desk.

ZYGANDER
Ridiculous! Impossible! Outrageous!

STRAHLEND
Excuse me, sir?

ZYGANDER
You are an embarrassment to the scientific community. This lunacy is exactly why you should have been kicked out last year.

STRAHLEND
But, sir, I can prove it! Just --

Zygander stomps his foot. Strahlend flinches.

ZYGANDER
No you cannot!

Professor Proto rises, tapping his cane on his table.

PROFESSOR PROTO
Professor Zygander, please keep your emotional attachments out of this. Just because your grandfather could not prove his theory doesn't mean young, Strahlend here can't.

Zygander charges towards Professor Proto, waving his finger.

ZYGANDER
You don't speak of things you don't understand you decrepid piece of --

A shadow passes by Zygander's feet. He stumbles and drops his pocket-watch. He catches it just before it hits the ground. He stares into his own reflection and smirks.

ZYGANDER (CONT'D)
I apologize, wholeheartedly.

He pivots on his foot and returns to the front of the classroom, clutching his pocket-watch.

ZYGANDER (CONT'D)
Please, wow us with your magic show, dearest Strahlend.

Strahlend hurriedly wipes a few tears from her cheeks. She reaches into her scooter's caboose and retrieves a melon.

She opens up the front panel of the R-Shift Particle Detector and places it inside.

STRAHLEND

So... my machine will alter this
melon into um, a basketball.

She taps on her phone a few times and the R-Shift Particle Detector springs to life. Gold lights shine from the front window panel. It stands up on its spider legs.

Above the front panel is a screen that reads: "R-SHIFT PRESENCE: 67%". The melon vibrates. The Professors and Students gasp and lean forward in their chairs.

A tiny red light blinks in the shadows above Zygander.

ZYGANDER

Not this time.

Zygander wears a wicked smile. He clicks his pocket. Inside are a few star-shaped buttons, Zygander presses a purple one and looks towards Strahlend.

Suddenly, the R-Shift Particle Detector's lights change to purple. Speakers rise from the top and boom a WARNING SIREN. Strahlend immediately takes to her phone and taps furiously.

STRAHLEND

No! No? No. No. No. No!

The melon inside explodes into green fire. The front panel bursts open with an arc of flames. Strahlend falls to her knees tapping her phone, typing various lines of code.

The Professors and Students scrambles from their seats in panic. Zygander crashes into the machine, rips three metal panels off and pulls six wires out. The machine shuts down.

Strahlend sobs into her phone.

ZYGANDER

I told you all. It cannot be done.

The overhead sprinklers go off. Everyone groans. Zygander looks down to Strahlend.

ZYGANDER (CONT'D)

Strahlend Baskerville?

Strahlend looks up, eyes watering and lips quivering.

ZYGANDER (CONT'D)

Failure.

