

## Manifestations - S01 E04 - The Fire (aka Ostium Door 129)

*Intro Music - Breathe, by Chill Carrier <https://chillcarrier.bandcamp.com/>*

**Voiceover:** Manifestations is a podcast of the Ostium Network

**Voiceover:** Time is not linear, but our story is.  
Please join us ... on our journey.  
We, are Manifestations.

*Music becomes dramatic then fades out*

*Read by Alan -*

"Time does not flow from past to present to future. Most of us only perceive it that way."  
-- Jacksson Proud

*Background - Ostium music by Chris Fletcher*

**Alan** - I am here, now. It's warm and full of light. I'm anxious, but I think I'm safe.

**Alan** - I was in an utterly dark place. I could see my legs, torso, and arms. There was no light source, but I could see myself. I was floating, maybe flying. There was a definite sense of motion. Was I moving? Or was the "nothing" around me, shooting by? In which direction? There was a sound like a rushing wind, or maybe a large, roaring waterfall. And the pain. There was pain, with intense pressure.

I was there. I remember it. But I am here, now. I am me. Though I feel I've forgotten or lost something.

*[PAUSE]*

**Alan** - This new place is full of bright but slowly dimming light. I see the blue of a sky, and details of trees and buildings form as the light gets to a normal level. I am sitting on a bench under a tree. There is a cool breeze moving through the branches of an old maple tree, which towers above me. I can see the deep green leaves which make a low rustling sound. Birds are chirping and a dog barks, playfully off in the distance. *(dog bark)* The sounds of cars moving down the road *(sounds of traffic start)* and an odd sounding horn. *(ooga horn)*

**Alan** - I start walking, out of a small park onto a street. There is an intersection of road signs. Pennsylvania RT-61 and RT-42. I know this town. It, It's just . . . impossible. It shouldn't be here. At least, not like this. It was like this. Before. Full of buildings and people. Once.

**Alan** - It was abandoned when I was a child.

**Alan** - I'm in . . . Centralia?! *(sounds of traffic stop)*

*[PAUSE]*

**Alan** - There was a fire. No, not like you think. A mine fire under the town made it unsafe to live here.

Carbon monoxide rose up; filtered into homes. A poisonous gas looking for victims. Cracks formed, issuing smoke. Little Todd nearly died when the ground beneath him caved in.

**Alan** - The government relocated the people and demolished the houses. The grass and trees reclaimed the side streets and land no longer in use; took back what was once theirs. Some oak and maple trees still remain, but mostly it's pine and birch. It didn't happen overnight, but it's hard to tell parts of the town were ever inhabited. Or at least it should be.

**Alan** - I am here. The Centralia of old. The way it used to be. There are houses, businesses, and streets. And people. Glorious people. Things look old, but not ancient. Like they did when I was a kid. A Shell gas station is here. The logo is scallop-shaped in a hand-drawn style. There is a full service attendant. The cars are new, but they're also old. A Dodge Town Wagon, a Ford Falcon, and next to it an F100 pickup. Just like the one I drove when I was younger, and living in southern California.

[PAUSE]

**Alan** - People walking down the street are dressed like something from Mayberry. I don't want to admit it. This is either an elaborate movie set, or I'm in the past. My past.

**Alan** - A festival is going on. Signs and banners cross the street announcing the Memorial Day celebration. Is that why no one is paying attention to me? They see me, some nod and say hello, but none are shocked that I'm here. I continue walking.

**Alan** - Main Street is eerie, though it shouldn't be. Nothing is out of place. Nothing except me. *I'm* out of place. This should be empty ground. It's full of life in a way I've never seen it. I-I'm really enjoying seeing it this way. It's . . . it's perfect.

**Alan** - A garbage truck followed by a fire truck turns down a side street. The fear and panic flood over me like a cold bucket of water. This is the day. The day when a routine controlled burn at the town landfill started the fire. mine fire that would never stop until everything was consumed.

**Alan** - I'm running. I'm not a runner. *(running foot falls)*

**Alan** - The trucks are out of sight, but I know where they're going. I run on. Past Odd Fellow Cemetery. I see men from the fire company getting ready to light a fire.

**Alan** - What do I say? What was the theory? The incendiary spark? The clay barrier between the landfill and ground below wasn't properly installed. The fire wasn't properly extinguished and spread into the vein of coal beneath the town. *(sounds of running ends)*

**Alan** - I shout: **STOP!**

[PAUSE]

**Alan** - And I regret it. Time travel stories race through my mind. Someone tries to impart information from the future, to fix things. It always ends badly.

**Alan** - Calmly now, I tell them the clay barrier wasn't inspected properly and they can't start the burn.

Trying to sound intelligent and composed. Normal. "It's not safe," I say. They look at each other and then at me. I don't know which of us is more confused.

**Alan** - A sensation spreads over me. It's almost electrical. I'm sensing the choices being made in their minds. It's like I can feel the quantum probabilities playing out. One small act, then a big change. I feel a shift. It's discernable to me. Like your ears clearing after a pressure change.

**Alan** - The men stop. They seem more concerned about me than the burn. I must be out of breath, light headed from the run. It's impossible to concentrate. It's getting hard to focus, hard to stand.

**Alan** - One man takes me under the arm and helps me to a nearby car. As he's lowering me into the seat, I see myself in the mirror. Or, I see that it's not me. The reflection is that of an old man. At least seventy, or more. Is that really me? No. it doesn't even look like a relative. Who is that person looking back?

**Alan** - The men are talking to me again. They're concerned. Running must have pushed this old body past its limit. I can't hear what they're saying. I nod at them, trying to look them in the eye, trying to keep it together.

*[PAUSE]*

**Alan** - As I sit there, I hear the noise again. Soft at first, then louder as the blackness slowly moves into my peripheral vision. But no, it's not. As I turn my head to the left, the blackness is there. It's like I'm being pulled backward into it. Or, is it the man in the car being pushed forward, into his future?

**Alan** - At that thought the blackness surrounds me and it's hard to tell if I'm moving. The sense of velocity is greater this time. But, there's no pain. I'm calm. I don't know where I am, or when. I don't know if this place has definitions for things like that.

**Alan** - I feel different than before. I feel like I've forgotten or lost something. I'm okay with that. I'll be fine.

**Alan** - The blackness takes me and I am returned to the beginning.

*Outro music - Sunshine, by CobyCracker <https://cobyCracker.bandcamp.com/>*

#### **Voiceover:**

Manifestations Season 1, The Reset, was written, acted, and produced by Dwayne Farver. With input and help from Alex C. Telander.

We were serious when we said time is not linear. This was the first story I wrote for Manifestations. I originally wrote it as a fan story for the Ostium podcast. Alex asked me to record it. He added music and sound effects. It was then released as bonus content to Patreon supporters. It's offered here in that original format. The addition of the Manifestations intro and end credits are the only changes.

This story grew into the larger world we're about to explore starting in episode 5. All because people kept asking, "What happens next?" I want to thank Alex, my beta readers, many in the audio drama community, and of course my family for their continued support and encouragement.

Our intro music is Breathe, by Chill Carrier

<https://chillcarrier.bandcamp.com/> <https://www.chillcarrier.de/>

The music heard here is Sunshine, by Cobycracker

<https://cobycracker.bandcamp.com/>

You can them at [bandcamp.com](https://bandcamp.com)

Also heard in this episode is background music composed by Chris Fletcher for the Ostium podcast.

Sound effects are from [freesound.org](https://freesound.org)

Links to the music and transcripts can be found in the show notes

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Or, look for us at [podmanifest.com](https://podmanifest.com)

As long as we have access to the temporal feed, we will transmit more of our story each Wednesday and Saturday. We hope you join us.

*Music fades*