The Complete Fool's Guide to Second Life

UNOFFICIAL

Second Life

First Name: New   Last Name: Avatar   Password:
☑ Remember password

New Account...   Preferences...
Connect   Quit

1.10.0 (32)

Written by
Foolish Frost

"What do I know? I'm just a wandering Fool..."

1

What is SecondLife?

A little over one year ago, I found and joined an online community called "Second Life". From the first moment I arrived in that world, I was amazed at the variety of creations, personalities, and places I have seen. I have talked to anthromorphic animals called 'furries', wandered island paradises, and seen wars fought over land.

I have created devices that entertain and educate, built landmarks that survive even to this day, and even taught classes on subjects relevant to SL and it's inhabitants.

What I hope to offer you with this book is a good starting education in what SL is, and how to get the most out of it. In addition, you will notice a fictionalized account of a new player entering and learning about SL. While this story is told, SL's interface and functions will be explained to you as well.

And now, please relax and allow me to both entertain and educate you. While Second Life is not for everyone, I will do my best to offer you the best chance you can have to get a fair view of it to make up your own mind. Either way you decide, just remember that Second Life allows you a LOT of options, and those options can also frustrate and confuse you sometimes. Trust me when I say that it's worth it.

Contents

Second Life is a 3D virtual environment that was created by Linden Lab. Unlike most 3D worlds, Second Life was created to allow better communication of ideas and information, as opposed to blowing each other up with guns or spells.

That, more than anything else, is what helps define what makes Second Life different from every other online world currently available. Nowhere else can you buy land, build a home on it of your own design, and fill it with devices and gadgets of your own creation. Most online worlds say that you cannot buy and sell things, as this unbalances the world's economy. Linden Lab decided to open the economy of SL so that commerce could thrive.

Even knowing that, SL can be fun even without spending any money. Anything you could buy in SL is also something you could make yourself!

You will notice that instructions will sometimes be given in the format Do part A -> do part B -> Etc... This format walks you through what menu items, tabs, and buttons to click in order to get to a specific menu or option.

The following is fiction. Period. It never happened. Well. I'd never admit it if it did...

"My Second Life"

Written by Foolish Frost of Second Life...

You know, people take reality for granted. No, Really! They do... Take for instance the day I was surfing the net, and tripped over a site called SecondLife.Com.

Well, the site didn't say much about it, except that it was some kind of online 3D game that you could create stuff in.

Boy! Was that an understatement or what?

Anyway, the last thing I remembered was installing the setup file that they offered, and punching the 'login' button...

Welcome to your first step in joining Second Life. If you have already registered and installed Second Life, then you can skip these steps.

Setting Up

First, go to http://secondlife.com/ and click on the "Join Now" button.

FREE MEMBERSHIP JOIN NOW!

From here, it will ask you to fill out a registration form. This form allows you to enter a first name for yourself, and to choose a second name from a list. The list normally contains dozens of last names that are currently available, but these do change over time. Some names are retired, and new ones are added to replace them as enough people register to take up all the slots available for that last name.

Another thing to note is that SL is limited to people 18 years of age or older. This is due to the fact that some content in Second Life is for mature audiences only, and there is no way to limit the content from being seen. Keep in mind, adult content is created by your fellow residents in second life, and not by Linden Lab.

They do have a separate 'teen grid' for youths of 13-17 years of age. This special section of SL is off-limits to adults, except those undergoing extensive background checks and with heavy monitoring from SL staff. More information on the Teen Grid can be found on the Second Life website.

If you only choose a basic account, then Second Life will need no further info to register your avatar. Basic accounts do not have the option of owning land, and don't get the option of a weekly allowance. If you choose a premium account, then it will ask for either a credit card, PayPal, or mobile phone to confirm your account. Premium accounts are allowed to buy land and get a better weekly allowance of money to spend in world, but neither of these is needed to enjoy second life.

You will also see the Terms of Service here. Read it.

No... I mean **read** it.

Done? Good. Those Terms of Service explain how you should act, and what will happen to your account if you misbehave. It's not that hard to understand, just look down until you get to part 4.1 and read those if nothing else. You should also read the Community Standards at http://secondlife.com/corporate/cs.php, since it has all of the major rules in an easy to read format.

Now, if everything went smoothly, you should be able to download the client software to load onto your computer.

5
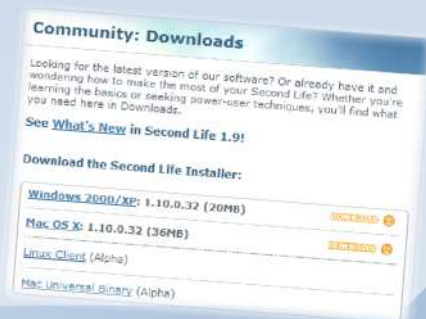
The SL (Second Life) client software is not installed any differently than any other program for you PC or Mac. Download it from the web site, and run the file. It should walk you through the install easily.

Once you have installed it, just run the program as you would any other program and enter your login information into the bottom of the screen. That should be the first name, last name, and password you choose during registration. The password is case sensitive.

I must have blacked out, and was looking around for several moments before I figured out I wasn't sitting at my desk anymore. I wasn't even in my house anymore...

Dear Lord... I wasn't in MY BODY anymore...

I didn't know whose body I had gotten, but it was wired weird compared to mine. My hands weren't mine anymore, and my body felt funny in ways I could not even begin to describe. Even stranger, while standing didn't take much effort, I couldn't figure out how to sit down. Considering the shock, I did what any person would do under the circumstances.

I panicked.

You don't have to Panic. Nothing in SL can do you personal harm! Also, you have as much time as you need to adjust.

Well. That lasted me a few minutes, and allowed my brain just enough time to realize that it wasn't working before forcing me to switch tracks to curiosity.

Ok. I was not in my body, I was in a strange place, and...

Hello? Where was I?

As I looked around for the first time, I mean actually LOOKED, I realized I was near a shoreline. Water seemed to disappear into the distance, and the horizon looked a bit strange... I was standing on a circular platform, and it was surrounded by a rope rail with a path leading off from it.

This is also where you will appear when you first login. Unlike the avatar of the story, you may see other new avatars appear while you are wandering about. Don't worry about it, and feel free to even say "hi!" to them! Be patient, though: They may not know how to chat in SL yet.

Manufactured goods = civilization. Check. I'm not totally alone then. Let's get down to if that's good or bad later.

Near me was a pedestal with a glowing logo of a hand that was spinning quietly atop it. The hand seemed to be solid, but nothing was holding it up. I did what any curious stranger would do.

I poked it.

Then I panicked again.

Really, you can't blame me. The previous few minutes HAD been pretty stressful. Combine that with the sudden surprise of having a piece of paper smack you across the face, momentarily blinding you, and anyone would have freaked out...

Pulling it back from my face, I was able to make out the title.

"Welcome to your Second Life".

Ho, boy...

The Avatar just received his first Notecard. They are displayed in a window across your world view when shown.

Now that you're logged into SL, let's look over the screen and see what the interface looks like.

Interface

On the menu above, you will notice a series of buttons across the bottom of the screen. A menu bar also is in place near the top of the screen as well, and a large amount of info is also available on the screen. Feel free to pause a moment and take it all in. We will discuss sections of it as this guide moves forward.

Let's look at a few basics: Clicking on objects, The pie menu, Chat, and choosing menu items.

SL's interface was designed with a two button wheel mouse in mind. While this tutorial is fully usable by Mac systems, it is based on a three button mouse. The difference between these two systems is minimal, but you will need to keep them in mind.

Left Clicking in SL has the same effect in SL as you are used to in other programs. It activates buttons, objects, and menu items.

Right clicking in the 3D screen will normally bring up the 'pie menu'. This circular menu gives a series of options based on what the SL object has been designed to do.

Movement

Movement in SL is as easy as it can get: Use the arrow keys to turn left and right and walk backwards and forwards.

By left-clicking and holding on your avatar (your character in-world) in the middle of the screen, you can use the mouse to rotate and move about. Try it and see what I'm talking about, it's fairly easy!

By tapping the Page-up key once, your character can jump. This can be useful when trying to get to a nearby higher platform or over an obstacle. The Page-down key allows your character to crouch. While crouching looks interesting, it does not serve much function in SL normally.
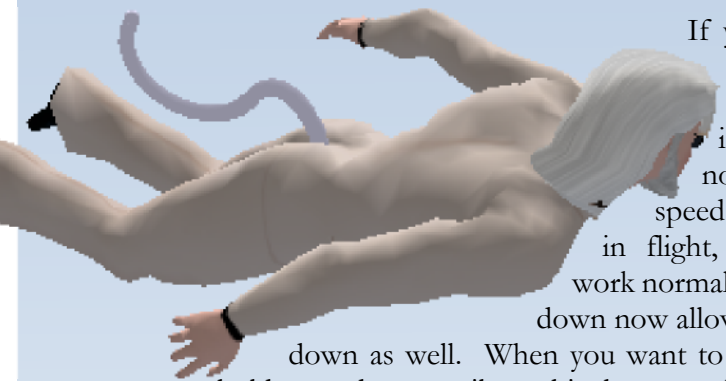
If you hold Page-up, you will quickly start to fly. When in flight, you will notice that your speed increases. When in flight, your arrow keys work normally, but page up and down now allow you to fly up and down as well. When you want to land, you can just hold page down until you hit the ground. Your avatar will exit flight mode and begin walking again. We will deal with advanced flight a bit later, but feel free to experiment.

Chat

Chatting is something you will do a lot of in SL. By either clicking on the chat button at the bottom of the screen or hitting enter, you can activate the chatbar. The chatbar, when visible, sits directly above the buttons across the bottom of your screen. By clicking in there with your mouse, you can type what you want to say and hit enter. Your avatar will then say the chat to everyone within 20 meters of you. Normally, your chatbar stays open while you chat, allowing you to just type what you want to say, hit enter, and type some more.

You have three ways to display chat conversations. The default way is for chat to overlay your world display with the partially transparent chat text scrolling up the left side.

Another way to display chat is to click the history button next to the chatbar and have the chat text displayed in it's own window. This window makes looking back through your chat history easier. Just use the scrollbar on the right side of the window to find the text you want to look at. Also, you can copy text out of that window just like it was a text editor.

The third way is to use chat bubbles. While some find this an easier way to figure out who said what, it can easily clutter up your 3D window with a lot of people's conversation. This is turned on in the Preferences Menu. You can get to the Chat Bubble option by choosing Edit -> Preferences, and then going to the Chat tab in the window that pops up. We will talk more about the Preferences Menu later.
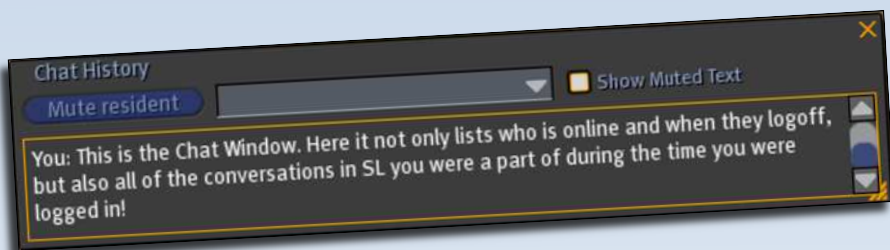
"So... That's how you talk..." I started at the sound of my own voice. It had been a productive few minutes, and I already had figured out how to walk about and speak. In addition, there were notes on how to interact with the world and...

Notes...

...On how to...

...fly?

"Okaaay." I decided to put the note away and look about. The moment it occurred to me, the note vanished. I refused to be surprised by this.

Actually, he did it by clicking on the 'X' in the upper right corner of the Notecard window. You can close it the same way!

The path was the only visible direction I had, and it seemed better than standing around. It wound a few feet down a slope, and ended at a pair of posters hung on wooden racks. One poster showed a man, and the other a woman. The man looked to be wearing the same clothing I was.

And in between was a spinning hand floating on a pedestal.

With a nod to myself, I reached out and touched the hand again.

WHAP!

...and peeled the paper off my face with a sigh.

This one advised me on how to not only change my cloths, but how to make myself look like anything I like. Not disguises, mind you. I'm talking about changing everything from my weight, ethnic looks, and even gender.

Changing the look of your avatar can seem intimidating at first. Just keep in mind that you can always change it again later!

And all without the need of painful internal surgery. Or any surgery. Or any real effort.

The note also mentioned that my clothes were stored in my inventory. I tried to snap my fingers in understanding, failed miserably, and then walked back up the hill to the first pedestal.

Snapping your fingers, and other animations such as bowing or waving, are pre-recorder items that you can play back in order to make your avatar 'emote' to others. You can even dance!

A quick touch later and I was wearing the welcome note again. Looking at it, I scanned through the section talking about inventory.

"Ah!" I waved my hand down and to the right, following the example gesture. My vision was suddenly clouded by what looked like a vast warehouse.

The gestures of the story are only a metaphor for the menu and mouse options you will use to do similar things. Also, the 'warehouse' mentioned represents your inventory window, as is shown on the opposite page.

It was mostly empty. I shrugged.

A quick scan of it allowed me to see the first Welcome note I had picked up. I also saw a shelf labeled 'Clothing'. On it were some basic clothes. Jeans, t-shirt, skirt?, women's shoes?... Ah! There were shelves here for both men AND women's clothing. Not that I have anything against people dressing in drag, but...

A few minutes later, I was dressed in a reasonably comfortable fashion with the new clothes I had picked. One more look at the note told me what I needed to know about getting out of my inventory, and a gestured my hand appropriately. The warehouse faded from view.

That wasn't so bad...

Inventory

Your inventory is probably the single most important aspect of your avatar, second only to the ability to chat. It is where you store all of the clothing, information, and gadgets you will find and buy while exploring second life.

The Inventory button is in the lower right corner of the screen. Clicking it will pop up a listing of folders that store everything that you own. The folders are layed out in a standard branching format that should allow you to organize all of your belongings in any way you like.

At the top of the Inventory list you will notice a section called 'Library'. This is not your personal inventory, but common items that anyone can use. They were provided by Linden Lab, allowing everyone a basic set of beginner items.

Keep in mind, you cannot store things in the Library, only your personal Inventory.

Here is a list of the folders and different kinds of items in SL:

Animations: Here you store all of the animations that you may have either uploaded or acquired from inside SL. This files can be tied into scripted objects and Gestures to animate your avatar with poses. Dancing, bowing, standing in a certain way. All of these are animations.

> **Keeping your inventory sorted is a pastime of sorts among the residents of SL. If you don't believe it, ask someone you meet just how many items in their inventory are named 'object'...**

Body Parts: Here is normally where you would store the parts that make up your avatars visual appearance. Your avatar can look like anything, and often you will want to make a folder that stores all the parts that create a certain style avatar for easy access. That would include any attachments like tails or shoes.

Calling Cards: Avatars can trade Calling Cards. These items can allow you to know when they are online in SL by the Icon in front of the card. If they are online, the card icon is white, otherwise it grays out. They can also be used to communicate with their owner: Just right click on them for a menu.

Clothing: Clothing is normally stored in here. While sometimes, the clothing is a part of the avatar, in most cases you store the clothing sets you collect here to change clothes on your avatar as your mood changes.

Gestures: A Gesture is a macro of sorts. It allows you to create pre-build actions your avatar can do. You could make a gesture that animates you avatar to look like he's laughing and also play a sound of someone laughing too. You could even have the avatar automatically say "Ho, ho, ho!" at the same time in chat.

Landmarks: A landmark is an item that allows you to teleport to a place, much like the 'tickets' you will heard about from the story.

Lost and Found: If you forget to pick back up a motorcycle you were riding, and leave it on someone's land, they will probably return it. Anything that get's returned to you from a person's land will return to here.

Notecards: Notecards are exactly what they sound like. Small information storage items that can be used like the windows Notepad. You can copy and past from them, just like normal.

Objects: This is where objects created in SL are stored. Note in this case, object means a 3D object created in SL. All Objects are created from Prims (explained later).

Photo Album: You have the ability to take pictures in SL using the Snapshot button on the bottom of the screen. They will be stored in this folder if you choose the "Save as Texture" option.

Scripts: Scripts are encoded programs that are created to make objects do things in SL. This is a long and complicated subject, and will be talked about later.
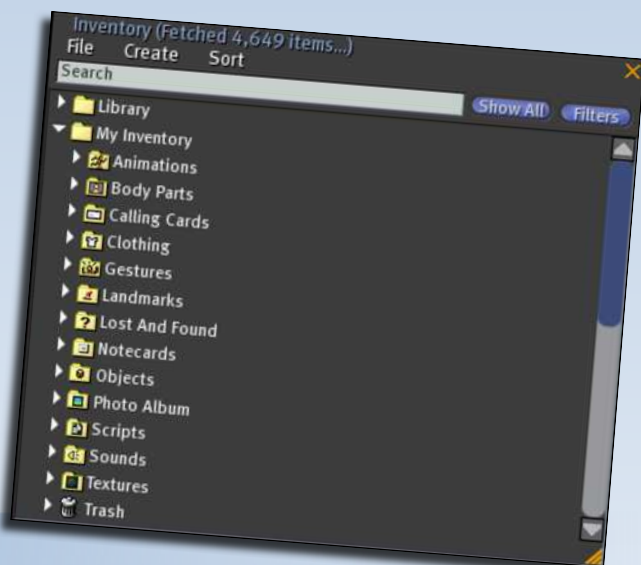
Sounds: Sounds are sound files that you either collected in SL, or uploaded yourself. They can be added to gestures or scripted objects.

Textures: Textures are images that are 'painted' on objects, avatars, and nearly anything else in SL. They are what provides most of the visual detail to SL when you look around.

Trash: Anything you delete is stored here, normally until you empty the Trash by right-clicking on this folder and choosing 'Empty Trash'.

Now, while those folders are the standard ones, nothing stops you from creating new folders anywhere you like. In fact, you can create sub folders inside of folders, allowing you to sort your belongings in as detailed a way as you like.

Once you start storing things in your inventory, you will also want to become familiar with the search and filter features near the top of the Inventory window. Search allows you to look for things by either full or partial item name. Filter allows you to limit what will be displayed by using the checkboxes in the Filter submenu.

Keep in mind, your inventory is stored on the servers of SL, not your computer. This means that it can take time to look through all your items with the search feature. This is normal.

I jogged down the hill again while looking at the second note's info on changing my looks. Let's see... Gesture like THIS and...

Begin flailing uncontrollably as my vision is ripped from its rightful place in my (someone's?) skull, spun 180 degrees, and locked into looking at my body's blank face. Mind you, the only reason it was blank was that I hadn't figured out how to scream in terror yet.

My limbs were locked spread wide, and I was in a rather vulnerable looking position. It took me a few moments to realize that I could still gesture, even though my hand would not move. Repeating the same gesture, it dropped me back to the ground and put my eyes back where they belonged.

I felt my face to make sure there was no damage. Nope. Eyes were intact. Really, I had known that already. I SAW they were intact when my vision had spun back to look at me. There had been no pain, or even discomfort aside from having my traditional point-of-view snatched away.

I stood up, took a deep breath, and gestured again.

It's wasn't even half as bad the second time. I only whimpered a bit.

Tinkering with my looks was a quick lesson in two things. One, it was easy to alter your features in nearly any way. A touch here, a shift there, my height, weight, build, skin color, even hair were easily altered. It was all so easy, it was almost frightening.

Second, I had absolutely NO talent for it, and ended up with something that looked like an ugly purple dwarf with big ears, and arms to my knees. Thank the powers-that-be that I could cancel the changes just by repeating the gesture.

Oh... And I made an ugly woman too...

Putting both notes away, I looked to the path again. Time to move on.

Choose your form, Avatar!

Appearance

As you found out in the story, it is possible to make your character look like anything in SL. Male, female, animal, robot, a flaming meteor... All of it is possible in SL. Some avatars ARE harder than others to design: Human characters are by far the easiest and most common, and the farther you move away from that base, the more complex it becomes to create it.

Of course, there are those who create these complex avatars for a living in SL. This gives you the option of either creating one yourself or buying an avatar design off of one of your fellow residents. Either way, your options are limitless.

Now, let's take a look at the Appearance window that allows you to edit your character's appearance! First, right click on your avatar and choose Appearance. You can also access the window by clicking on the Edit and Appearance options in the top menu.

In this window, you will see all of the options you need to modify your character!

While I could explain every option in the menu, most of it is fairly simple. To change the shape of you avatar, you use the slider controls. The images show a visual representation of what your avatar will look like if you slide the bar toward the side the image is on.

In addition, you can use textures to color and detail your avatar. These images can be applied to your avatar's skin and clothing easily, just by clicking in the small squares that display them.

Camera

Now that you are done for the moment changing you character, this is also a good time to talk about your camera view. Normally, your camera allows you to look at the world from a point above and slightly behind you. This allows you to see your avatar and your surroundings in an easy manner while walking (and flying) about.

Sometimes, though, you want to get a closer look at something. This is done by using the mouse, and holding the ALT key while left clicking on something. Your camera will immediately focus on what you clicked on, and if you continue to hold the ALT and left mouse button, you can change the camera angle while looking at the item. When in this mode, moving the mouse left and right orbits the camera around the object, while up and down move you closer and farther away.

In addition, if you also hold down the CTRL key (in addition to the ALT and left mouse), the up and down mouse movements will actually orbit the camera up and down now, allowing you to get a full spherical view of the object.

Once you are done looking at something, all you have to do to restore your camera is move you avatar with the arrow keys. If you are sitting (discussed later), you will have to stand and then move your avatar. Either way, your camera will snap back to it's normal place behind you.

View	World	Tools	Help
Mouselook			M
Build			B
Reset View			Esc
X Toolbar			
X Chat History			Ctrl-H

You also have the ability to look out your avatars eyes, just as if you were playing a first person shooter game. This is called 'Mouselook'. You enter Mouselook by going to the top menu and VIEW -> MOUSELOOK. You can exit mouselook by hitting ESC on the keyboard.

It changes your arrow keys on the keyboard so that left and right arrows actually side-step you to the left and right. To change your facing, you actually just move the mouse to look around.

This 'avatar eye view' has several advantages:

- It's easier to navigate narrow hallways and areas with low ceilings in this view.

- You can see things from your avatar's perspective, allowing you to see things as if you were really there.

- Flying is much easier for some people, since it feels more 'natural' to them. Landing on narrow ledges is also easier, since you can see where you will land.
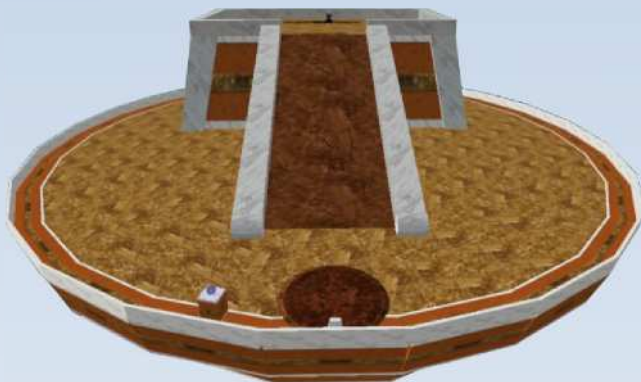
I was coming to realize this island was some kind of training ground. The paths were easy to see and follow, and each platform I came to offered another small bit of knowledge.

For some reason, I had trouble getting the parrot I found at one waypoint to respond to me. The next one tried to teach me how to move my visual 'point of view' to any spot I liked with almost no effort at all. While I understood the idea, and figured it worked much like the way the option to change my appearance did, I avoided that one. I just did not like my vision wandering away like that.

I crossed over a nice little creek-bridge, and arrived at a spot with a table and a beach ball. And another Helping Hand, as I had come to think of them.

Touch.

Snatch! "Ha!" I had managed to catch this one before it could attach itself to my face like an errant face-hugger. Looking at it, I was offered advice on how to move objects that allowed such activity. It did not take me long to figure out that some objects I would not be able to move because they were secured somehow in place.

The beach ball, though, was supposedly not secured, and was fully capable of being knocked around.

Gesture. LIFT!

...

Nothing.

"Okay... I'm doing something wrong then..." I reread the note, thought about it a moment, and tried again.

Gesture. LIFT!

...

Hmnnn... Right! Reread the note again, and try and read between the lines about something they did not mention because it's obvious to anyone reading the other first notes.

Gesture. LIFT!

Damnit!

"Can I help you?"

I did NOT squeal like an anime schoolgirl in a cheap hentai flick. I don't care what he told you. I didn't even know what a gesture WAS yet.

He explained while I talked my panic button off the ledge.

"We noticed you having trouble with the ball, and thought we might give a hand. We are Linden." You know, after seeing the mess I made of myself when I tried to change my avatar, seeing his blue skin and glowing eyes didn't even begin to startle me.

"Ah. Thanks. I must be doing something wrong, because I can't seem to move it..."

"I understand. New Avatars like yourself often have trouble with some skills at first. We will show you." His hand came up, flicked a casual gesture...

And the ball didn't move.

He gestured again.

Nothing.

He seemed to look at his hand, and frowned. Seeing a frown on that face was slightly unsettling, though I would be hard-pressed to say why. It just seemed unhealthy to be near an unhappy Linden.

Raising his hand, he made a new gesture, and the ball vanished.

Note to self: Linden can make things vanish. Do not tick off Linden.

I watched as a new ball appeared, or perhaps the same ball. I really didn't want to ask. He then raised his hand, gestured, and the ball moved.

"There we are! We have fixed it. Please try it again." He seemed pleased with himself.

Gesturing again, I was able to put the ball on the table on the first try.

Now that you have met the fictional "Linden", let's discuss their non-fiction SL counterpart!

You will sometimes notice an avatar with the last name of Linden. These people are the administrators of Second Life. All Lindens are Linden Lab employees, and are normally working when seen online. This should not stop you from saying hello, but be understanding if one tells you that they can't stop to chat. Their occupation keeps them very busy, and sometimes they can't even acknowledge people before having to disappear and move on to the next job.

Sometimes, things just don't work right in SL. This is largely due to the ability for players to create objects of their own. If these items have some flaw in their design, they can malfunction in an infinite variety of ways. They might stop functioning, might KEEP functioning when they should stop, or could even disappear. When you run across something that is not working, it's a good idea to look at who owns the item and let them know about it. Keep in mind, it's also possible that it works just fine and that you are not totally familiar with its operation.

"Very good!" He praised me like a child talking his first step. "Remember this, Avatar: If you are in need of help, you may just do this gesture and someone will offer you whatever help you need."

I memorized the gesture. Without even another word, he vanished.

Nope. Not surprised at that either. So there!

All right... Maybe a little.

I moved on down the path.

Help

Active help can be found in the top menu bar under HELP -> LIVE HELP. By clicking on this option, you can bring up a special chat window that will allow you to talk with volunteer helpers that can answer your questions. These mentors are players like yourself, and are normally not Lindens or employees of Linden Lab. They are a knowledgeable and helpful bunch, however, so never be afraid to ask them about something that you are confused or curious about.

When you open the Help Chat menu, be sure not to close it until you are done. When you close the Help Chat window, no one can respond to you.

THUD.

"Okay... Flying sucks." The sound you just heard was the dozenth such one I had inflicted on myself in my attempts to learn how to fly. Whoever the moron was who decided to put the final waypoint where you HAVE to fly to get to it should be...

Focus.

Okay. Jump, Gesture, and Gooooo!

This time, I didn't hit the ground again. I mentally patted myself on the back. I willed myself to the ground, and tried it again.

Back in the air, hovering. By George, I think I've got it.

All right, now just move over to the temple, and...

WHOOSH!

"Arrgggg!" Trees zoomed by as I missed the temple by a country mile. I turned, trying to correct, and watched as a pillar of the temple came up to greet me, promising to be my best friend for the rest of my suddenly shorter life.

WHAM!

...

"Owie." I stood back up and looked around. Funny thing: I didn't really get hurt from the impact. A quick look about showed me the local pedestal and hand. I reached out, caught the note, and immediately had something else slap me in the face.

I gave another tired sigh and peeled it loose. It was a ticket.

The note advised me my training period was over on the island, and all I needed to do was tear the ticket in half to join everyone else in the rest of the world.

Everyone else? Rest of the world?

I looked at the ticket, looked around at the surrounding temple, and scanned the distant view of the island around me.

I shrugged and tore the ticket in two.

Help Island

While the Avatar teleported to the mainland of Second Life at this point, you have another option open to you! HELP ISLAND.

If you look about, you will see a sign that will offer information on how to get to the HELP ISLAND and what you can learn there. Mentors are normally available to help out new players, and can offer training, advice, and general information on SL.

HELP ISLAND is often updated to deal with changes in SL, so it's a good idea to go there before Teleporting to the mainland. Once in the mainland, you can never come back to the training isles.

Even then, you still have access to LIVE HELP, so it's not really a problem.

Dying

While moving about on the ground, in the air, and under the water, it should be made clear on something: You cannot normally be hurt in SL. You do not take damage from falling or drowning, and can only be hurt by weapons on land that specifically has damage turned on. Look for this symbol ♥ 100% on the bar across the top of your menu, if you see it, then you can be damaged by weapons of other players.

Regardless of the weapon, the worst that can be done to you is being sent to your home location. You are not penalized for dying, nor can anyone take things from you while you are 'dead'.

You should also note that a few places can 'kill' avatars as well. The Linden volcano in the Mahulu Sim is one such place.

> **Something that needs to be said is the fact that SL is NOT a combat game. On average, the places that encourage combat and fighting using weapons are rare and secluded. Attacking people with weapons away from these places is not only socially unacceptable, but punishable if the victim reports you for abuse. If you want to play with weapons, it's a good idea to find one of the places that finds combat acceptable and play there.**

One of the things you may notice on your screen is the MiniMap. It looks like a small map that rotates as your avatar turns his facing left and right.

If you do not have a MiniMap, you can just click on the MiniMap button at the bottom of your screen. This window, just like Notecards, can be moved about the world screen or closed.

A few things to note about the MiniMap: Objects that are owned by you will show up as a light blue on this map, objects and buildings by other people are gray. Water is blue, and the land looks like the land it represents.

If you right-click on the MiniMap, it gives you the option of showing small, medium, or large versions of the map. This allows you to see a larger area, if you so choose. Left clicking on the MiniMap will bring up the main Map, which we will discuss later. Green dots on the map represent people, while the yellow dot is your avatar.

As the fog rolled back from my vision, I noticed I was in something that looked like a cross between a highway rest-stop and a train station. I looked about for a few moments, and within seconds, someone popped into existence beside me, said "Excuse me", and walked away.

My eyes scanned the area, and my brain shut down.

An angel (halo, wings, harp... The whole shebang) was chatting with what looked like a cross between a dog and a man. A rather cute looking girl was talking with a green skinned creature that looked disturbingly thin. I woman dressed in nothing but leather straps and bladed spikes seemed to be talking to a group of people that included some kind of floating robot, a walking tree, and what might be an elf of the Tolkien variety.

I prided myself on being cosmopolitan and my willingness not to judge others by appearance. I was still way out of my depth.

I looked about for the most human looking of the bunch, and walked over to him.

"Excuse me, Sir?" Politeness never hurts, and I figured a conservative stance would help out until I knew what people were like.

He turned around, looked at me with red flaming eyes set in a face covered in tattoos... and said absolutely nothing.

I waited for a bit, and then tried again.

"Sir, I was wanting to know if..." I blinked. He was no longer there, or anywhere I could see for that matter. "Ah... Well..." I blinked and looked about to try again. I was surprised to have what looked like a ten-foot tall humanoid robot standing behind me. Again, I can promise I did not squeak, squeal, or otherwise wet myself. I did take a few steps back, though.

"Hi, Newbie!" His voice seemed at odds with his hulking form.

"Er... Hello?" Was this a person or a thing? Better treat it like people until it proves it's and 'it'...

"R u needing help, newbie?" The way he talked was strangely accented, causing me to have to think about what he said for a few moment's longer than I normally would have. I hazard a guess.

"Yes?"

"Cool! Follow me and I'll show u around and give u some stuff."

I blinked slowly. His way of talking was not too hard to follow, but did slow me down a bit. By the time I realized what he said, he was flying off fast and fading from view into the distance.

I sighed, hopped into the air, and tried to follow him.

Flying in a straight line wasn't as bad as last time, though I did nearly miss him and was forced to walk back to where he was when I landed.

"U still learning to fly? It can be hard, flying takes practice and you need to work at it to get better." I was catching up now. I didn't even have to pause to think about it.

"Thanks. Where are we?"

"Sandbox. I stay here a lot. U can make stuff here and test your builds."

"My builds? Sandbox?" I looked around, but no sand was in site. Not even water, really. I could tell I was going to play 'stranger in a strange land' today, and I was all out of Grok.

The People of SL

Let me point out something that should seem obvious, but is often forgotten: The avatars you meet in SL are actually other people from around the world that are sitting at computers. No one you meet is 'fake'. When you meet a 10 foot tall monster or warrior with a glowing sword, you are meeting another player. They have no scripts, other than what they make for themselves.

There are no levels, quests, or other goals in SL. You have no limits to what you can do, aside from the Terms of Service and Community Standards, and people have to find their own way. Some band together in order to share their enjoyment of SL, others stand alone. All that really matters is that at the end of the day, everyone enjoyed themselves.

Not everyone has English for their first language. Making fun of someone's spelling can lead to a very embarrassing situation where they ask you how well you can type in Japanese…

Most of the people you meet are not from the same place as you, and have a different perspective on 'how life is'. What that means is that something acceptable to them may not be acceptable to you. When a conflict like this happens, it's a good idea to either change the subject or excuse yourself if you find yourself in uncomfortable surroundings. If someone comes onto your land and acts in a way that makes you feel uneasy, then let them know in the most polite of terms that you would like them to stop.

But keeping all that in mind, people sometimes do not get along. Arguments happen, and feelings are hurt. The fast pace of SL seems to also include friendships on occasion, causing people to overreact to perceived (and often real) slights and criticisms. The only advice I can give you is to try and treat others as well as you can, and to think before you 'say' something you can't take back. Remember, it takes longer to type than to talk, so you have more time to not hit the 'send' key. When you are angry or upset, use that time to hit the delete key instead.

Regardless, there are not heroes or villains in SL. Just people. Just like you.

I was surrounded by over a dozen people in the distance. Nearly all were silently gesturing and bringing what looked like shaped blocks of wood into existence. They would then take that block, and attach it to whatever they were creating. One was building a jet-fighter, while another seemed to be building his own robotic arm.

The robot who had guided me here pointed at me and gestured. I heard a female voice whisper into my ear that I had been offered a 'Shotgun', and asked me to accept or decline.

I accepted automatically, and looked about. Nothing that looked like a shotgun. Must have gone directly into that warehouse.

That female voice then began peppering me with the very same question about dozens of other items: Plasma disruptors, 57 magnums, missile launchers...

When someone offers you an item, a blue pop-up window will appear in the upper right corner of the screen, asking if you want to accept it. Just click Yes or No as you wish, and it will either be added to your inventory in the proper folder or rejected and dropped into your trash folder.

Offering other people items from your inventory is nearly as simple. If they are nearby, you can drag the item from your inventory and drop it on them. They will then be able to accept or decline the offer as they choose. You can also drop items onto an avatar's profile window. This allows you to send objects to people who are either not within sight, or moving too much for you to drop items on their avatar.

It's a good idea to ask a person if they want to have items dropped on them before doing so. The pop up window might distract them from something they are currently doing.

In the story, it was mentioned that the Avatar saw people that seemed to have things 'attached' to them. The robot of the story was actually a normal avatar with objects placed on him to make him look mechanical. The avatar with the robotic arm was very similar, but only replacing one arm.

In fact, things like earrings, some clothing, and custom avatars make use of these customized items to make them look more unique.

Where the HELL was I, and why did I need to pack a frigging ROCKET LAUNCHER?!

"Er... Thanks?"

"Np, newbie. Hope you like them."

I thought about it, and decided that I had better ask now.

"Er... Is it THAT dangerous here?"

"What do u mean?"

"You did just hand me an arsenal that the government would envy. Why do I need it? Are muggings by things that need a rocket launcher to take out that common?"

"LOL. U R funny. No you just get those because I had them and they are free. Here is some other stuff too."

The little voice continued to call out things being dumped into my warehouse. I think she was getting a bit strained by the time he was through.

He then waved at me, said "l8er" and vanished.

It took me days to figure out what that meant.

And now I was lost...

Well. I wasn't that bad off. I knew how to do everything I had been told about so far, though obviously there was much I still didn't know. I knew I could fly, after a fashion, and was able to move things and pick them up.

Everyone looked busy here, and I figured that going it alone was the next step.

Three steps, jump and away a go.

Heck I even missed the trees this time!

This time it was the building that just seemed to appear in front of me that wanted to get to know my face intimately. I obliged it.

"Owie. Again."

I floated up above it, and flew out again, looking at the view...

...And watching things appear randomly around me as I moved?

Things would often appear near the edge of my visual range, but even more disturbing was the tendency of a few items to suddenly materialize near me.

Often right in my flight path.

I experimented with waiting a few moments in my flight, and found that the more detailed the building, the longer it took to appear fully to me. It seemed that it took time for me to see things in a new place, or for them to appear. It was hard to tell which it was.

I was in an area filled with buildings, and some people seemed to be milling about. I landed, this time right where I wanted to, and looked about to get a fix on my surroundings.

You may wonder why SL has things appear piecemeal around you as you move about and teleport. The fact is, SL is a dynamic world, and all the objects you see are downloaded from the Second Life servers as you come within range. This means that things take time to become visible to you. Places you go often show up faster, since the information is cached on your hard drive. This is very similar to the way your web browser works.

It was amazing.

The buildings were as unique as the people. I looked at a Victorian mansion that sat right next to what looked like a ginger-bread house with a Godzilla-sized bite taken out of it. A white tower stood behind them both, rising above them in terrible majesty. I also noted a log house, rocket ship crashed nose first into the ground, and what I think was a tomb.

Rather eclectic little layout, it seems...

"Want to know how far down this rabbit hole goes?" The voice behind me seemed amused. I must have been gawking too long. Not to be undone by a touch of humor, I gave the proper response.

"Why, oh why, didn't I take the blue pill?"

I turned and looked him. He seemed to be human, and old, if not elderly. He was sitting on a nearby rock, holding a staff he had across his lap as he waited.

I grinned and continued, "Kind of fitting, since I don't seem to be in Kansas anymore."

He stood and bowed. "Greetings, Avatar." He looked up while still bent at the waist. "Did you come seeking knowledge of the world you have been thrust into, or shall I let you wander and learn on your own?"

Lag is a term used for a wide range of technical problems that generally disrupt your ability to play SL comfortably. Low framerate can cause slowdowns when a lot of complex objects are on your screen. Poor network performance can cause objects to not appear at all, or even kick you offline. An overworked Sim can be slow to respond to avatar actions, such as chat or movement.

"I... I'm not sure. I was just looking about..."

"As do we all, when we first came here. I still wander, which is why we just met." It was so smoothly added, I didn't mind the interruption. "Some might call it fate, others providence."

He stopped bowing and looked me in the eye, "I will always call it 'Fool's Luck'".

I paused, not sure how to respond. He seemed friendly enough, but...

"What would you need from me?" I hated asking the question, but could not think of a better way to phrase it.

He didn't even blink. "A single dollar. Pay enough I think for my skills and knowledge."

I thought about it, and looked in my inventory. I saw no money listed.

"I'm sorry, I don't think I have..."

His voice was measured, friendly patience. "You don't look for how much money you have. Think on it, and you will KNOW how much you have."

Within a few minutes, he had shown me not only how to figure out how much money I had, but also how to pay him a dollar out of the two-hundred and fifty I had appeared with.

Funny thing is, it took me days to realize he had taken the money just to keep me happy. A dollar won't buy much. Not even in Second Life.

Money

The denomination of money in SL is called the Linden (not to be confused with the employees of Linden Lab that go by the same name). Linden dollars are used to buy things in SL, such as clothing, gadgets, and even land. As of the time of this writing, a single Linden Dollar is worth roughly 1/3 of a real life penny. Another way to put it is a dollar is worth between 300 and 400 Lindens.

Money in SL can be traded between avatars in exchange for goods, services, and any other reason you can think of. It is also possible to buy goods from automated vending machines.

Keep in mind, when dealing in money, use common sense. "Buyer beware" has meaning in SL as well as real life.

He ran his fingers through his hair, his bearded face lost in thought for a moment. He seemed to come to a decision with a snap, and turned to look at me.

"We have three ways to go about this, son. I can take you on a whirlwind tour of our world, answer your questions here, or I can take you to a nice spot to sit back, relax, and ask whatever you like." He really didn't inflect much about which one to choose, but for some reason it seemed to be a test of sorts. Perhaps to find out more about me. Or maybe to just decide if I was worth the trouble.

I decided to be clever about it. "What would YOU do?"

"Well, lad... I would tell you that as a hired servant, I have no place in telling you WHAT you should do. I give options and information. I don't make decisions for ye..." His eyes almost glowed with glee.

"Right. I'll take the quiet relaxing spot then."

He slapped his knee and hooted. "Good choice, lad. Keep in mind, there were no bad ones either. Sometimes, a question is just that: A question."

And then he disappeared. I looked about in confusion a moment, wondering what happened. About the time I decided I must have offended him somehow, I heard a chime and something smacked me in the face.

It was a ticket. I KNEW this one already.

As I tore it in half, I swore I would ask him about some way to stop having things hit me in the face.

One thing to keep in mind about SL is that the longer you are in it, the more you will learn, and the easier doing things will become. Building and scripting takes study and practice, but are as rewarding as learning the same skills in RL.

In that same vein, things like flying and maneuvering in tight spaces come easier to some than to others. Keep that in mind when learning a new skill, and you will avoid a lot of frustration.

Teleporting

Accepting teleport offers is fairly simple: If you have been given a landmark, you can just click 'Teleport' and you're on your way. You will appear in the same Sim, with a red beacon showing the way to the exact position of the landmark.

You can create your own landmarks by using the main menu bar and choosing WORLD -> CREATE LANDMARK. This will create a landmark for the current position of your avatar. This landmark will be stored in your Landmark folder in your inventory.

Teleport offers from other people are even easier. All you have to do is agree to the teleport offer. In that case, you will appear within a few meters of the person who sent the invitation.

Sending a Teleport offer is made easy by SL. You can send Teleport offers to others from their profiles or from your own friends list..

I appeared in a clearing, near what looked to be a large tower that was capped with a glass dome. My new 'guide' was standing on a porch in front of it waiting for me.

Instead of following him directly to the tower, I looked about for a moment. A castle, looking somewhat unfinished, was to my left, to my right a series of beach chairs facing what seemed to be the shore and a scoreboard. I also saw what looked to be a saloon nearby. In the distance, I could see what looked like a church. I even saw sails from what I assumed were boats or ships.

Turning back to the tower, He seemed to be waiting patently for me to notice him and follow. I did so.

"Sorry. Was taking a look around."

"Not a problem, lad. Something for you to keep in mind: When you appear in a new place for the first time, it can take a few minutes for everything to appear fully. Most people understand this, and will give you a few minutes to adjust before pushing you to move."

"Yeah! I noticed that when I was flying. Things would just pop in if I moved too fast. Made flying hazardous."

"The effect is called 'Rezzing'. It has a few meanings, but generally when a place, person or item is appearing or still 'fuzzy' they say it's rezzing"

He pointed to an open section of ground and gestured. I watched as a fountain appeared quickly and colored itself to look like marble and stone.

"It happened quickly, but if you watched closely, you would see each Prim that made a part of the fountain appear."

I caught that. "Prims? They make things? Like some kind of fairy?"

He laughed. He really 'laughed'. The full motion and all. "Sorry, lad. My mistake. I meant that the fountain is made FROM Prims. Prims are the building blocks you see for everything in Second Life."

His hand waved and a series of wooden shapes appeared. A sphere, cone, cube, cylinder, and a few others I didn't know names for.

"Just like playing with blocks as a wee lad. You stack them, shape them, and color them into whatever you like. Toys, jewelry, buildings."

I nodded. The idea was simple enough. "So, how do I do that?"

He waved his hand and all the 'Prims' vanished. "Hold there, lad. Let's try and get you used to this place before I unleash you on building. Trust me, building is the least of your worries yet."

I felt a little cheated by this. "Why should I have to wait? You offered to answer any questions I had."

He smirked. "All right lad. Take me to a sandbox of your choosing, and I'll show you the basics."

I stopped being irritated, and looked around in confusion for a moment.

"Okay. Where's the sandbox?"

He looked at me patiently. I fidgeted.

I gave up. "Right. You win."

"No lad. YOU win. Just keep in mind, some of us had to learn the hard way. It's possible, but I would NOT advise it as the way to go for most people."

Sitting down is as simple as right clicking on the place you want to sit and choosing 'Sit Here'!

He turned and walked into the tower. "Come on in, lad. We can take a moment to sit down and figure out where you want to start."

As I followed him in, I already knew what I was going to ask him first.

I mean, how DO you sit here, anyway?

X: 196.210 Y: 214.389 Z: 24.842
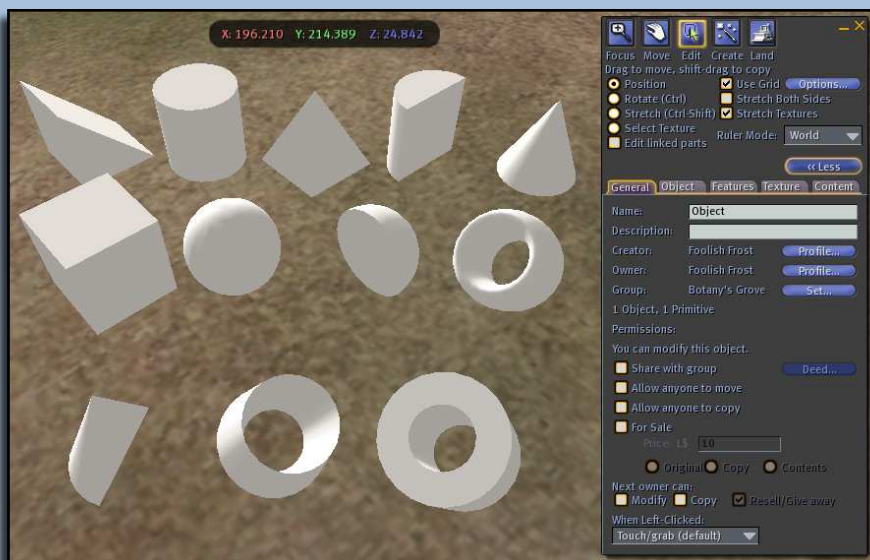
Editing Prims

This is a good place to discuss Prims and editing them. As you were told in the story, Prims make up just about everything in SL. They can create devices, buildings, jewelry, and even body parts on your avatar.

To begin building, you can go to the top menu and click TOOLS -> SELECT TOOLS -> EDIT. This brings up the edit menu that allows you to edit and create Prims. You can also use the BUILD button on the bottom menu to bring up the edit menu.

Across the top of this window you will see a series of buttons. Let's go over the function of each of them:

Focus: This option allows you to manually edit the camera view. It serves the same function as the Ctrl and Alt keys when changing your visual focus, zoom, and angle.

> **Some places do not allow building. If when you try to build, the options seem to either be missing or do not work, then the land owner has probably turned off the ability to build. Sandbox sims are a good place to tinker with building.**

38

 Move: From here, you can move objects around. Since you can also move objects in the Edit menu, this option does not serve much additional function.

 Edit: This is one of the two main menus we will be discussing, this screen allows you to edit Prims. This menu contains several menu tabs, including General, Object, Features, Texture, and Content.

The General tab allows you to edit an object's name and Description. It also allows you to see who created the item originally, and who currently owns it. Below that, you can see the permissions of who can do what to the object.

You will hear the term Object and Prim used alot. While a Prim is a single shape that can be used to build something, an Object is a collection of Prims that are linked. Objects would be things like the wall of a building, or a pair of sunglasses. Prims are the parts that make objects, such as the flattened cube that makes the plane of glass in a window.

The Object tab shows all of the physical properties of a Prim. You are able to see all of the numerical attributes of the prim, allowing you to change it's position, size, shape, and even make cuts to the prim to drastically change it's form.

The Features tab offers options to add special effects to an object. These options include the ability to have the Prim provide light and glow, or even become flexible

The Texture tab has all the options to change the color and images that are displayed on a Prim. These images are called Textures, and allow you to make a prim look more detailed without making it's physical more complicated.

The Content tab shows what the Prim contains in it's inventory. Prims and Objects have the ability to store items inside themselves. Items are stored inside a prim for various functions: It may contain a Script that allows the Object to do things, such as a door that opens. It may be acting as a container for items you purchased. Often, Notecards are contained here, allowing you to read what the original creator of the object wanted it to do and how it is used.

Create: This allows you to create Prims. The button in the upper section of the menu, you have the options of creating thirteen different prims. You also have two buttons to create landscaping grass and trees on land you own.

Land: This menu allows you to edit the shape of your land. You can change the height of sections of land, section your land into parcels, and even buy land from here.

You may see a button that says Abandon. This takes land you own and gives it back to Linden Lab. Don't hit this button unless you want to give up your land without any payment for it.

The inside of the tower was almost gothic. Rows of church benches sat in front of a speaker's podium sitting on a stage. He turned and sat on the edge of the stage, and offered me a seat on one of the benches.

I looked at the bench. It mocked me for not knowing something as simple as sitting on it.

"Just gesture with your off hand, and then think about sitting."

I took the offered gesture and repeated it toward the bench. I then walked over to throw my legs over the back of the bench, and laid back-down on the seat. I looked up at him and sighed.

He never even snickered, though the pleasant smile never lost it's place. "Try again lad. Just think about standing up, and you'll be right as rain."

He was right. I got up without any problems. It tried it again, and this time ended right-side up... Or in this case, down.

"To be fair to yourself, lad, sometimes chairs don't work quite right. It helps to gesture at the exact spot you want to place your bum."

I filed that away. "So. Where are we?"

"My guild hall. I often use this for teaching classes, having get togethers, watching movies..." He nodded to the back. "I also run a small shop from here, selling my wares."

I looked back, there were two picture frames that contained pictures. Below each were dollar amounts with arrows on either side.

"Those are called 'vendors'. They allow you to buy things, and for me to sell them. They can look like anything, but that kind is one of the most common."

"So I spend money on things here? What do I need to buy to play?"

He nodded. "Let's get something straight right now, lad. You don't have to buy anything to enjoy your time here. You don't need to eat, drink, or seek shelter. There is nothing out there that you can buy that you can't build yourself, given you put the effort into it."

I had noticed that I didn't feel hungry here.

Sitting back, he then changed his tone. "But!" He paused to make sure he had my attention. "Buying things here is one of life's simple pleasures. While I love to build, I also love to see others' works as well. Sometimes I see one I think is so grand that I buy it for no other reason than to reward the person who made it for entertaining me with such a wonderful toy."

"When I go to play bingo with some friends, I put money in the pot as a courtesy. Also, when someone sets up an event, I put a little something in their tip jar to show my appreciation for such a fine time they gave me."

"Money can be used for even more than that, but that's for later. Right now, you should know that cash is as much a toy as a tool here, and that being broke should never mean you have to do without fun."

I thought about it a moment, and asked the obvious question. "So how do I get more money?"

"Many ways, nearly as many as the first world. You can make things and sell them. You can work for someone and get paid for your time. You can even try your luck at the local games, like Bingo or Tringo, and see if you can win a few dollars here and there."

"You also have an allowance that offers you some basic spending cash each week. Keep an eye on your money, and you'll see when it increases."

"How much of an allowance?"

"Well, lad. That depends on a lot of boring factors you would not understand yet. Best way to know how much you would make is to wait until they dump the allowance on you. It won't matter until then anyway."

I couldn't argue with that logic.

He clapped his hands together. "Well. Shall we go over some of the basic functions you're going to need? Using the functions for Find, Maps, and Friends?"

I learned a lot that day. Wish I could remember most of it.

Friends

On the bottom of the screen, you can see buttons that say Friends, Find, and Map. Each of these buttons allow you to keep track of the things important to you in SL.

The friends menu allows you to keep track of Avatars you have formed a friendship with. The window that Pops up has a list of friends for you to choose from, and buttons below giving options.

The **IM** button allows you to open an Instant Message window to the chosen friend.

Profile allows you to open the highlighted Avatar's Profile. Here you can get more information about the Avatar and the person behind it.

Remove is used to remove the highlighted Avatar from the list.

Offer Teleport sends an offer to the Avatar that allows them to Teleport directly to you.

Pay send Linden Money to the individual you highlighted. A window will pop-up asking how much you wish to send.

Grant Modify Rights is an especially powerful and dangerous option. It allows the other avatar you chose to edit and copy ALL of your objects and builds.

**Close** just closes the Friends window.
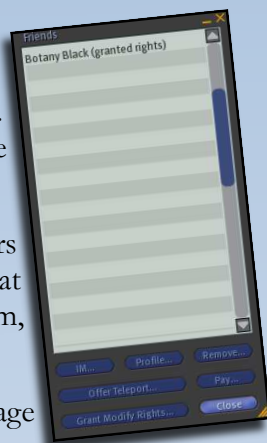
Find

Find is the primary search engine of SL. From here, you can Search for Events, Places, Land to buy, people, and even Groups. Events are sponsored social events that you can attend. They can be anything from parties to game shows. Groups are clubs that you can join to be around other like-minded people. Places, people, and land are self explanatory.

Map

The Map window allows you to see the entire SL map and see where things are in a easily read format. Using this map, you can teleport to new locations just by double-clicking a point on the map. Once you get to the sim, just follow the red column of light until you get to the exact place you wanted to be on the map.
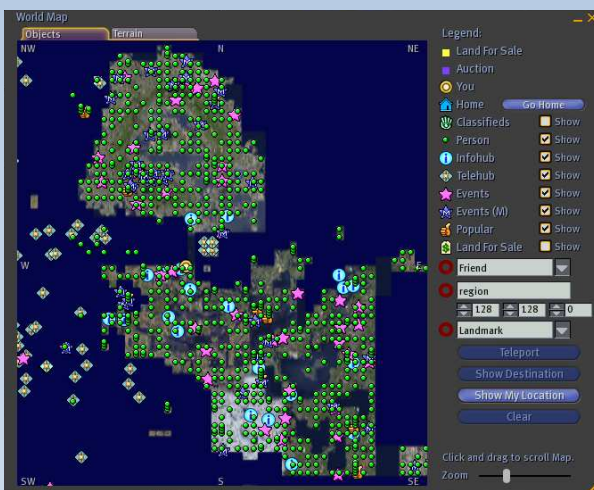
You can also see where people are located by watching the green dots. The map key on the right of the window allows you to choose how much you can see on the map. You can also search for locations by typing in part of the Sim name here.

"So, lad... Have you got all that?"

I sat numbly on the bench. I felt like someone had tried to jam a manual into my brain through my ears.

I nodded just to make it stop.

"I thought so. Information overload, they call it. Let's go meet some people, shall we?" He stood up and waved for me to follow him.

We walked to the back of the room, and he showed me two blue glowing buttons. With a nod toward them, he began explaining.

"You will find many things here to interact with, and may ways to get from one place to another. The buttons are my version of a teleporter. If you gesture at them, and then think about teleporting to wherever they lead, you'll be transported there."

"Do I have to know where they go?"

"Not at all, choose the one for the 3rd floor, lad."

He was obviously waiting for me to try it first, so I did.

And I was in the glass dome of the tower I had seen before. It was filled with a full garden, with plants and trees set neatly to offer a comforting view of the area.

My mentor popped in beside me.

He took a deep breath and smiled wide. "This is one of my little hideaways. Made it to allow me a moment of peace now and again."

I looked about for a moment. "And what's here?"

He grinned. "Nothing, lad. I just like showing off my handiwork. One of my few and fatal flaws."

"Oh. Well, it is nice." I wasn't humoring him. It was comfortable.

"But I do have another quick lesson for you..."

I knew it.

"All you need to do, is gesture this way, and make a landmark for yourself to find my tower again later."

I followed his instructions, and was rewarded with it being added to the warehouse I called my inventory.

"Out of curiosity, how much can my inventory hold?"

"How much do you want to put in it, lad?"

I was getting a bit peevish by this point. "It's a straight question. Can't you just answer it?"

His eyebrow rose, and he paused for a moment. "All right, lad. I did answer it, but I can take a hint when someone's temper is raw. It can hold anything, any size, and any number. That good enough for you?"

I felt a bit irritable by this point, not at him, but at myself for snapping over something so trivial. He didn't wait for an apology and continued on.

"All right lad, with that landmark, you can teleport to the nearest tele-hub and get a visual pointer to this tower. You can make other landmarks for yourself as well, and even share them with others to show them places you've been and found interesting."

I followed most of that easily enough, and even thought I knew what a tele-hub was: Something like that place I first teleported to. Must be a lot of them scattered around.

"Now, I'm going to give you a landmark for the next place were going to go, and you're going to use it to find your way there."

I paused. "You're not going to teleport me straight there?"

"No, lad. You need practice navigating on your own. Don't worry though, I can find you if you get lost again."

"Good point. Ok." I started to tear the ticket in half, and paused. "Oh, I forgot to ask. What's your name?"

"Foolish Frost, Avatar. And I'm sure and pleased to meet you. Be off now, I have someone waiting to greet you there."

And with the ticket ripped in half, I began the next step of my journey in Second Life.

You know, following a red column of light that shines like a beacon from heaven can really help hurry your travel. I don't even remember half of what I saw on my way there from the tele-hub, but that red glow kept calling me forward like a depressed lemming on speed.

And I only hit three or four buildings this time. What they were doing floating in mid-air I'll probably never know, but from the sounds coming from inside them I really would rather not examine it too closely.

Flying was really a great way to travel. It's not only extremely pleasant, it's reasonably fast as well. I watched as the clouds rolled by, letting my mind wander a bit as I followed the column in the distance...

And I passed the column...

Whoops!

Turning around, I started toward it and downward.

When I got back below the clouds, I was mildly surprised to see the beacon was focused on a tree sitting near the shore of an island.

A big tree.

A dock was sitting out in front of it, and someone was standing on it. I decided to be clever and land on it.

Did you know, when you fall in the water in Second Life, you don't drown? In fact, you don't even get wet.

Pity I didn't realize that then.

It must have been impressive. A man soars from the sky, lands feet first on the dock, bounces and slides into the water without even a splash.

Then, doing what I do best, I panicked and turned off anything I might have been using for a brain. I turned ran for the shore, and got myself totally trapped in the netting around the underside of the docks.

"Hi, Avatar. Are you okay?"

Botany is a good example of how easy it is to modify your looks in Second Life. She's mostly a normal female avatar, but uses a special skin texture to make her look like she has bark for skin.

I turned, thanked the pretty bark skinned girl with green eyes for asking, and continued panicking in the net.

I stopped.

"Can't drown here, huh?"

"Nope." She smiled, her hands held behind her back comfortably as she watched me.

She was a wonderful looking woman, if that's what she really was. Her skin looked to be made of tree bark and her hair was like smooth green grass. She was clothed in nothing but leaves that made up her top and skirt. A few stray vines wrapped around her legs and arms. The most striking thing about her was her eyes. They were not just green, they were a green that pinned you to the spot when she looked at you.

"So..." I paused, trying to think of anything intelligent to say.

"Would you like a tour of my tree?"

"Please. Thank you." I followed her out of the water, walking up and onto the beach. Flowers were growing everywhere, and small lights wafted by on the breeze, bobbing as if living things. The tree towered above us, its purple leaves offering a magnificent view. The trunk was huge, tinted in red bark. A building of some kind was partially hidden in its branches.

"You live up there?"

"Nope. That's the Commons. We entertain visitors there."

"Oh." I looked around and noticed a gazebo-like building made of stone and iron sitting next to the tree. Not much else was visible nearby.

Her hand came up with a practiced move and the tree trunk... Well... It's hard to describe, but part of it just vanished leaving an opening into a hollow tree. Smiling, she walked into the opening and waved me inside.

Upon entering, I noticed two things: It was cozy, and no furniture was anywhere to be seen. She walked to the far wall, and pointed at a pair of glowing blue flowers.

"Do you know how to use teleporters, Avatar?" I looked at the flowers a moment, not making the connection.

Both the buttons at Foolish Frost's tower and the flowers were blue.

"So, they can look like anything, but are always blue?"

She frowned. "I don't understand. What is always blue?"

I knew I was probably wrong by this point. Her confusion warned me of that. "I thought that since both teleporters I had seen were both blue, that all of them were. Not really right, huh?"

"Well, you did notice a pattern, but it's only that Foolish like the blue color for buttons. They can look like anything, really. He just likes to be consistent in some small ways."

"Ah. Others don't do the same thing?"

"Not like he does, but you will notice a lot of common designs. You'll also notice a lot more exceptions to that rule. No one has to conform to any one design style when building here."

"Ah... Umnnn... Then how do you know what a teleporter looks like?"

Devices may not always be what they seem. Shoes might help you fly faster, a pair of wings might offer a force field, or a gun might pay people that you shoot money from your account.

When you find a device for the first time, be wary until you can be sure what it does. You never know...

"You don't, sometimes. Most people put notices or signs near them, if they want them to be used by others. Another way to see if something does something is to focus your attention on it and see if you're able to activate it."

I hovered my hand near the flower, and felt it welcome my touch. Reaching toward the nearby wall, I did not feel anything.

"I see."

"Yes. You will also find there are times the only way to learn what something does is to touch it and see."

She waited, the smile cheerfully playing across her lips.

I took the hint and touched the bottom flower.

That female voice from earlier instructed me on how to use the teleporter, and that it would send me to the second floor of the tree.

A simple gesture later, I was looking at a simple round room that was only occupied by the two teleporters and another flower on the far wall. She appeared next to me without fanfare and continued with her tour.

"Foolish made this place for me so that I could have a tree and a home in one, and I like open places, so..." She touched the flower, causing the side of the tree to open and show a balcony that looked like a tree-mushroom coming out the side with iron railing.

I walked out and looked around. The view was about as good as you can get without being breathtaking. "Nice."

"Thank you."

I caught up with something she had said, and turned toward her. "You said Foolish made this? It's made of Prims too?"

She nodded. "Everything here, other than avatars like you or me, is made of Prims." She nodded to the view behind me. "Tree's, flowers, stones... The only things not Prims in that view is the ground itself and the water."

I nodded again.

"Would you like to see around the base of the tree?"

"Very much. Thanks."

"No problem. I enjoy showing off my home."

Objects that do things (scripted objects, for one example) will often have information on them when you hover the mouse cursor over them. This information will pop-up in a little bubble on the screen to allow you to see more information.

Picture Frame
No pictures found.
Owner: Foolish Frost
Script Touch (Right-click for menu)

I followed her as she showed me the land surrounding her tree, until I realized something.

"Wait. You OWN this? You can own land here?"

She nodded, stopped short for a moment, and then nodded again. "Yes, but it's a bit complex. You could describe it this way: I bought and paid for this land, and own it. I also have to pay the Linden for the RIGHT to own land, and that's another monthly charge. Did that make sense?"

I thought about it, and shook my head. "So you're renting?"

She sighed and tried again. "Think of the money as a monthly 'tax' I have to pay for the right to own land. If I don't pay that tax, I lose the right to own land, and obviously lose the land. Got that?"

I nodded.

"Good. But I also bought this land from someone, and paid them money to transfer this land to my name. I could do anything I want on it now, including sell it to someone else. Still following?"

I nodded again.

"That's all there is to it, really. Pay the monthly 'tax', we call it 'tier', and buy as much land as you're allowed to have."

"How much are you allowed?"

"Depends on how much you're willing to pay the Linden each month. The more you pay, the more land you can own."

"Ah. I think I got it."

"Great! Now, let's go to the Commons and relax with some friends of mine..."

Land and Tier

The concepts of Tier, owning land, and renting are as complex in SL as they are in real life. Let's begin with Tier:

In order to own land on the Second Life mainland, you need to have a Premium account. This premium account will allow you to purchase up to a 512 square meter plot. All land is measured in square meters, and while the shape of a plot can vary wildly, a 512 plot is about 22 meters x 22 meters on average.

Once you have a Premium account, you can then increase your Tier. See the chart on the page to see what the cost of each Tier level is in US$, vs. how much land you are allowed to own.

Tier Level and Monthly Fee	Allowed land (square meters)	Percentage of a Sim
Premium account ($10)	512 meters total	Less than 1% of a Sim
Premium plus $5 Tier	1,024 meters total	Over 1% of a Sim
Premium plus $8 Tier	1,536 meters total	Over 2% of a Sim
Premium plus $15 Tier	2,560 meters total	4% of a Sim
Premium plus $25 Tier	4,608 meters total	7% of a Sim
Premium plus $40 Tier	8,704 meters total	13% of a Sim
Premium plus $75 Tier	16,896 meters total	25% of a Sim
Premium plus $125 Tier	33,280 meters total	50% of a Sim
Premium plus $195 Tier	66,048 meters total	100% of a Sim (256 x 256 meters)

As you can see, Tier can get expensive for large sections of land. Something to keep in mind though, is that owning land is like owning an Internet website. It costs a monthly fee, and allows others to see information you put there.

It's a good idea to start small at first, and use your first 512 plot of land to learn with. If you enjoy owning land, you will more than likely purchase a larger plot and begin expanding from there.

If you get tired of your first land, don't take the first offer you get for it. Many people will offer you an extremely low amount of money for it, and then try and 'hard sell' to convince you to have to take the offer quickly before you lose out. You may find you can get a better deal elsewhere if you wait a bit.

Once you have the Tier level you need, you can purchase the land itself. Most land in SL is purchased using Linden dollars, and a listing of available land for sale can be found in the FIND window under the LAND SALES tab.

Land value may vary, as may it's price. Most land is bought and sold by other players, though Linden Lab does sell land from new Sims that they have added to Second Life.

New avatars have the option to buy a special kind of land called First Land. This land is priced especially low and is sold by Linden Lab to allow new players a chance to have land without paying high prices.

Buying land is simple: Find a plot you can afford, and right click on the ground (not a Prim floor, the actual SL ground). One of the options will be Buy Land. Once you have confirmed your purchase, the money will be subtracted from your SL account, and you will have ownership of the land.
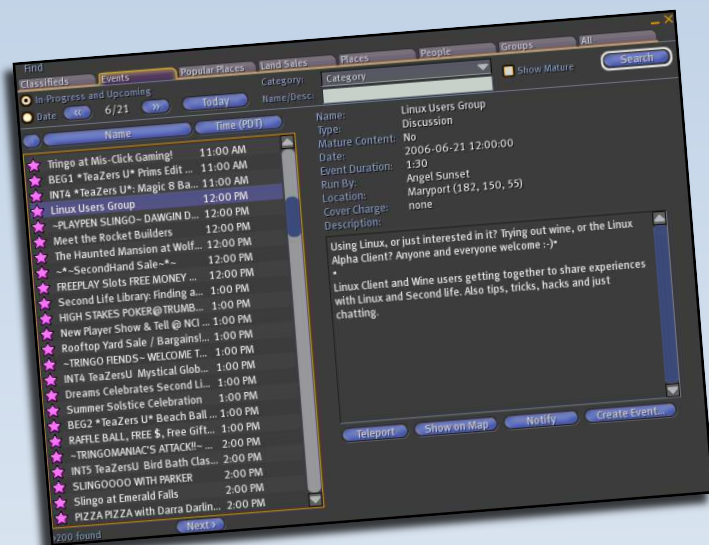
You know, it's funny how life works some times... You wake up on your day off, thinking you're going to relax in front of the tube and catch a couple of shows...

And you end up competing to solve a riddle against a green-skinned orc, a demonic looking fellow shrouded in night-black robes, and an elf with green wings that was constantly arguing with his talking pet... Well... I don't know WHAT it was, but it about as obnoxious as they come.

Foolish was behind the bar and Botany, the girl who had shown me around the tree, was leaned back on a barstool. We were all in the Commons, a tavern they ran in the bough of Botany Black's tree. Botany and I had been hanging out for a few hours with people wandering in to chat, when Foolish showed up and put something on the chalkboard that sat behind the bar.

(santa's helper, to have interpreted written words)

(strike, pointed extension on a horseshoe)

It was a riddle of some kind.

"Ohhh. Another one, Fool?" The demon leaned forward and became quiet.

The orc turned to look at it. "Hurmnnn. What's the theme?"

Foolish flashed a smile. "Try it without a clue for a bit. If I have to give a clue, then you don't get the pride of doing it all yourself."

Events

One of the questions asked often in SL is: "What is there to DO here, anyway?"

The answer is simple, anything you want!

One easy way to find something interesting to do is look at events. Just go into the FIND window and open the EVENTS tab.

Watch that 'mature' checkbox. If you check it, you will have the option to see events that may not be appropriate for work or kids.

If you look at the mini-map, you may notice a lot of people in one place when you teleport to a Sim with an Event. That's probably where the party is.

Once you have set any options you want to limit your search with, you can see what events other people have scheduled for the moment. Events can be anything: Parties, discussions, dances, battles, and even contests!

To join an event, all you have to do it teleport using the option at the bottom of the Event window. Then just follow the red beacon column the rest of the way to where everyone is.

The elf's pet piped up. "I know what the answer is."

"Quiet, you flying twit." The elf swatted at it and missed.

"Keep it up, ya flop-eared dandy, and I'll give the answer to ugly over there."

Both the demon and the orc looked at each other, shrugged, and went back to staring at the board.

"Stow the bug, lad." Foolish sounded amused, but firm.

"As you say, Mi'lord." The elf pointed at his pet, causing it to fade from view. Silence ruled for a few more moments, until Botany spoke up.

"I have the first part figured out, but I'm having trouble with the horseshoe one."

I looked at the board. Reaching out, I touched it and had a note appear in my hand. The game was deceptively simple. Each of the phrases referred to a word. The word was then similar to the sound that was part of another word. Words were shown by the use of parenthesis, so this riddle was two words long.

And I did not have a single clue as to what the answer was.

The demon seemed to nod. "I think I have that part too..."

Foolish came around the bar and sat in a chair near the table. "Anyone mind some music?"

Assent was voiced around, and he waved a hand toward the ceiling. A cheerful song about a woman solder in London began playing. Seems the Foolish was a Celtic music fan.

Mind you, even though I've never been a fan, I had to admit that it sounded right for this place.

The elf stood up. "Got it. The answer..."

The explosion from outside drowned out whatever he was going to say. I was thrown part way across the room, and then froze in midair. I could barely make out Botany running for the door, and Foolish hit the floor with curse.

"What the BLOODY HELL is he doing?" In the few hours I had met him, I had never heard Foolish talk like that. He was looking at... No... THROUGH the wall of the commons, and was obviously watching something outside.

Was the wall warping, or was I imagining things?

Botany yelled through they door. "Physics Sim crash attack. He's collapsing it right next door!"

When I looked back at Foolish, he was holding a small phone and tapping a finger with the patience of a man who had no choice but to wait.

"Hullo, Linden? This is Foolish Frost. Sorry, not a social call I'm afraid." He paused a moment, sticking a finger in his off ear to hear over the din of whatever was happening. "Well, I have this little problem... Yes, well... It seems some bloody griefer is trying to bring down the Sim we're in around OUR BLOODY EARS!"

He wasn't shouting from anger, or at least I don't think he was. It was just that at about that time the noise and shaking got so bad that I couldn't even make out the walls anymore.

And then I was nowhere.

"Hello?"

It was grey, ugly, and literally contained nothing. No ground was under my feet, no sky.

This is a good time to let you know that while you can be shot, stabbed, and blown up in second life, that you cannot be hurt.

Even in land that has the option turned out to allow damage and combat, you will find that the only penalty is being sent back to wherever you have set your 'home' teleport point to. This means that no matter what happens, the worst attack can only annoy you.

Also, while it is possible that your Sim can be crashed and you logged off or frozen, no 'real' harm can come to anyone from it. Just log back in and you're ready for whatever you want to do!

Ding Foolish Frost would like to speak to you.

Well. That was new. I accepted the call.

[Hello?]

[Hullo, lad. You good?]

I looked around. [Er... No... I don't think so.]

[Well, where are you lad?]

[I don't think I'm anywhere...]

He said something unrepeatable by a gentle soul like myself.

[Okay, lad. I'm going to try and send a teleport. If that doesn't work, then worse comes to worse, you just log out and back in. 'Kay?]

[Fine by me. How do you log out?]

[...]

[Foolish?]

[Let's just try the teleport first, son.]

Why did that response not instill me with confidence?

I'm not used to real discomfort here.

Seriously. Since the time I had been in Second Life, I had never felt anything more than momentary disorientation I tended to think of as pain, but this was different. The grey of the empty place was starting to make me a bit nauseous, especially when combined with the fact I didn't have any point of reference for up or down.

[Frost?]

[Just a moment more, lad. I'm finding an empty Sim to teleport you into. The less lag the better your chances.]

I closed my eyes and concentrated on his voice, distant as it was. [What's a Sim, Frost?]

[Lad, Botany is going to talk to you now. I have to run a search for someplace safe to 'port ye to.]

Ding Botany Black would like to speak to you.

I slammed the mental accept switch. Probably a little too hard, but in the moment that Frost was gone, I felt more alone than anything I could have ever imagined.

[Avatar? How you doing?]

[Just dandy! Did you know that we can't hurl chunks here either?]

[It's only going to be a few minutes. He said you wanted to ask me something?]

[What?] I was having trouble concentrating. [Right! Sorry. What's a Sim?]

[A Sim is a physical section of land in Second Life. The land is made up of hundreds of square land sections that border off the world into separate parts. The borders are mostly invisible, and crossing them is usually not even noticeable unless something goes wrong. You probably crossed dozens on your way to my tree from Fool's tower]

I loved the sound of her voice. Pity I wasn't paying a lot of attention to what she was saying.

[Avatar?]

[HERE!]

[...Frost is going to send you a TP, and he wants you to wait until I tell you to use it.]

[Got it. Don't tear the ticket in half in blind panic. I can do that.]

[Good.]

When the ticket arrived, I held it in my clenched fist and waited.

...

[Botany?]

[Just a couple of more seconds, Avatar]

[Okay.]

About a million years later, she gave me the go to teleport.

I tore the ticket in half.

Glitches and Crashes

Sometimes, things go wrong for no apparent reason. You will try to Teleport to somewhere only to have it fail, or worse, seemingly freeze up the SL client software.

When things like this happen, it's always a good idea to close the SL client, and if time permits, reboot the computer. While rebooting is not always necessary, it's hard to tell when it will help. If you forgo a reboot and the problem happens again, then reboot the computer.

After rebooting, if it STILL continues to happen, check with online help to see if anyone knows of an issue. It may be that SL is under more stress than normal, and affecting your ability to do certain things.

If you find an issue you can cause to happen on a repeated basis, then file a bug report with all the information you can. This will help Linden Lab to correct the issue for you, and everyone else in SL as well!

On occasion, a Sim will malfunction. When that happens, it's a good idea to contact live help and ask them about it. Often, a Linden will come by and examine the Sim in order to figure out what is wrong.

One of the most common ways to fix a Sim is to restart it. In fact, when a Sim detects it's not working properly, they will often restart themselves automatically. This will log off anyone in the Sim at the time. Just log back in after a minute or so and everything is usually fine.

If not, then contact a Linden to assist. It may take them a few minutes to get to you, but they are normally open to requests to help.

"WAUUUUUUUGGGGGG!!!!"

That scream was brought to you by the ground, which was coming up to meet me at a speed that would have normally made me need new underwear, if I had the option of that bodily function anymore.

Yes, I know you can't get hurt hitting the ground, but can you really ever believe that when traveling toward it at high speed with the wind whistling past your ears?

And can I watch at a safe distance and laugh when you make the same sound?

The ground came up, I kissed my kiester goodbye...

And went right on through the ground without even slowing.

Damnit. I was in the grey again.

[Son, what happened?]

I sighed and told him.

[Good! It at least didn't tell you that you were stuck there. Try it again.]

I took the ticket that appeared and ripped it in half.

Falling. Ground coming up to meet me. Prepared for the grey place again.

Another ticket appeared. I tore it in half automatically.

And I was greeted by a VERY solid feeling ground.

Nah. Didn't hurt. Really.

"Son, how ye doing?"

I looked up from the ground and saw Foolish and Botany kneeling down next to me. The orc was nearby, talking with the demon. The elf was nowhere to be seen.

"Much..." I savored the way there was sky above me, and nice hard ground I could smash my body into again if I wanted. "... Better."

When I got up, all of us walked across the hills for a while. Foolish was adamant about not trying to teleport or move too quickly from Sim to Sim until a little time had passed. Something about the Asset Server possibly being unstable for a few minutes.

"When you're in a Sim, lad, you are actually being moved from one tiny part of the world to a new one. The Asset Server is the accountant that

coordinates this, and if it goes haywire, we can accidentally get sent to the Void."

I nodded. "That's where I was, right?"

"Aye, lad. Nasty bit of work, that. It's not a place, but the absence of a place." He shook his head. "Purgatory for an avatar."

Botany spoke up. "I've been there once or twice myself." She shrugged. "Not something I want to repeat."

It was a long walk. Foolish must have been hunting a while for the Sim to pull me to. We finally were able to fly the rest of the way, and passed a tower that looked a lot like Foolish's Tower.

We landed on a bridge attached to it and walked to the end.

End of the world, it seemed.

The bridge ended suddenly, with nothing beyond it except strange looking ocean.

"Where are we?"

Botany was seething. I put two and two together.

"The tree is gone?"

Foolish was quiet as he rezzed his phone and dialed. "The whole bloody Sim is gone, lad."

I blinked. "You can lose a Sim?"

Botany nodded. "Just like first life, Avatar. Anyone can make a bomb and knock down a building. Anyone here with the right knowledge can wreck a Sim."

"Why do they let people do that?"

Botany shook her head and Foolish started talking to someone on his phone. "They can't stop them for the same reasons that you can't stop a first lifer from making a home-made bomb. They use the available tools to do this kind of damage." She shrugged helplessly. "You can't have places like my tree without leaving the door open for someone to make a bomb the same way..."

It was sudden, and beautiful as well. The ground became visible like a thick fog had fallen away. In the distance, the bridge literally formed from the air, materializing before us piece-by-piece in mere moments. Foolish began walking across without a word.

We arrived to utter devastation. Botany's tree was ruined.

Really, the most horrible thing about it was the way half of it was just... missing. The Commons had no floor, and the trunk of the tree itself was missing huge chunks. Even the standing stone circle was damaged, missing two out of its four majestic stones. The iron ring above it just hung in midair.

I must have made a whimpering sound, because Botany put a hand on my shoulder and nodded toward Foolish. "It's okay, Avatar. Watch."

Foolish did something that caused me to nearly choke. He began waving his staff around in sweeping gestures, causing everything nearby to begin vanishing. Within seconds, the land was bare, with no sign it had ever been there.

"The tree is a funny thing." Botany's voice came from behind me. "Did you know many breeds of tree will not flourish unless razed by fire and allowed to re-grow?"

Foolish's staff came up a final time. With it, I watched as roots appeared in midair, followed by the huge trunk of a tree. The leaves exploded from it's top, shrouding the newly restored Commons.

And in total silence, it lowered into the ground and sat.

Foolish's grin as he looked at me spread quickly. "There's a good lesson for you, lad: Always carry a spare."

> **A good way to help place large builds that you've rezzed is to go into edit mode before you rez it. When you rez an object from inventory while in edit mode, you automatically select the entire object, regardless of its size. You can then carefully place the build on your land without having to select all the parts one at a time.**

> **It is possible to store and rez again VERY large items from your inventory. Buildings that number in the thousands of prims can be pulled out your pocket and rezzed into place on your (and other people's) land.**
>
> **When you do this, it's a good idea to warn other people in the Sim, since it can disrupt what they were doing at the time.**

We were still chatting near the base of the tree when a guy flew in from somewhere and landed next to us. He was dressed in the same clothing that I first appeared with in the world, and really did not even look like he had changed his avatar much, if at all.

In his hand materialized a nasty looking item that screamed 'weapon' to me. I looked down the barrel of the thing...

And the next thing I know, I'm flying through the air at high speed and a sneaking suspicion of how I got there.

Another ticket appeared in my hand, and I tore it in half with a frustrated rip.

I was back. The new guy was pointing the gun at foolish and firing a devastating onslaught...

Foolish for his part nodded at him as he sat on his rock, a friendly smile on his face that didn't quite reach his eyes.

"Boyo, I want you to know that you have actually spited me today. It's a feat I'd not envy you for, but..."

Foolish raised his hand. The maniac was thrown bodily from the ground nearby, and slammed into the side of a hill.

Botany looked at me. "You can eject anyone you like from land you own."

I watched as the... Griefer? That's what Foolish has called him... He got back up and waved his own hand. A large collection of bars, balls, and cubes began forming next to him.

Foolish smiled. "Not again, ye of little wit." He hit a button on his phone.

The griefer was getting ready to do whatever he was going to do, and never saw the Linden appear behind him. I watched as Linden's glowing blue eyes turned into red flaming storms. He didn't even move as I watched the griefer become frozen in place with a startled look on his face.

"MALTOKICA BRELLACORE. YOU HAVE BEEN FOUND GUILTY OF DISRUPTING THE BALANCE OF THIS SIM. WHAT HAVE YOU TO SAY FOR YOURSELF?"

The griefer's mouth seemed to unfreeze. "Ths aint your deal, go way and let me go."

"YOU DISRUPTED A SIM. YOU MADE THIS MY BUSINESS. THE EVIDENCE IS HERE WITH YOUR PHYSICS CRASHING DEVICE, AND IN THE RECORDS OF THE LINDEN. THIS IS YOUR THIRD OFFENCE IN ONE MONTH, USING TWO DIFFERENT AVATARS."

The Linden pointed at the griefer.

"I SENTENCE YOU TO PERMANENT BANISHMENT. EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY."

I watched in horrid fascination as the griefer vanished in a slow, and very permanent looking fashion. The sounds he made as he faded from view would stay with me for a while. They didn't sound pleasant.

Note to self: Theory that Linden can make PEOPLE vanish confirmed. Do not tick off Linden. Ever.

When I looked back at the Linden, his eyes were normal again. Foolish for his part looked tired, but undisturbed by the scene. The orc looked a little greener than normal.

The Linden approached. "Is everything in order?"

Foolish carried a grin that still didn't reach his eyes. "I had hopes for that boy. Pity."

The Linden nodded. "He was a very talented scripter. Not that it matters now." I saw a moment of sympathy. "He chose his path."

"Aye. Right off a cliff." Foolish stood up and held out his hand. "Thanks for the save, Linden."

Linden took it without expression. "Better late than never?"

"You weren't late the second time."

The Linden vanished without even letting go of Foolish's hand.

Foolish grimaced. "I could use a drink."

I looked at him and shrugged. "I thought you said you can't drink here?"

"Nay, lad. I said you didn't HAVE to. I need a cup of the Ishkabaha, and I'm buying."

We went back to the commons and found our cups.

Griefing

Let's talk for a moment about the [Terms of Service](#) and [Community Standards](#) again. Generally, they offer information on what is allowed and what is not. When you break the rules of SL, you risk punishment. On average, that punishment is based on the crime and any previous offenses that have also been noted. Griefers and TOS breakers could find themselves kicked out of Second Life for a period of time, Banned permanently, or even more severe measures. It's even possible that those who premeditatedly attack SL and its inhabitants could have legal action taken against them.

Keep in mind, this is not meant to frighten or warn you off of SL. The point of this is that Linden Lab is doing its best to try and keep its residents happy. They do not hand out punishments without looking at ALL the information they have at hand, and try to be as fair as they can. Most people in SL will never even get a warning from a Linden, let alone be banned.

If for any reason, you accidentally do something that would normally get you in trouble, such as crashing a Sim with a device you were experimenting with, the best first step is to contact a Linden and let them know what happened. Everyone makes mistakes, even the Lindens, and they have no interest in punishing accidents.

If for some reason, someone is griefing you (disrupting your day in a significant manner, not just annoying you), then file an abuse report and send it in. If you are hosting an event or have several people with you, ask them to file abuse reports as well. This documents the problem and allows Lindens the evidence they need to deal with griefers properly.

It also needs to be said that you should NEVER retaliate against a griefer. Doing that makes you vulnerable to abuse reports as well, and could quickly lead to everyone who decided to break the TOS being warned or punished. If a griefer is causing problems, then you can often use the Pie menu to good effect by choosing the options to Freeze, Teleport home, or even Ban the griefer. These tools are absolutely legal to use, but are only available to the owner of the land the griefer is standing on.

There are a lot of information and tools available on dealing with griefers. One good place to look for such things is the Second Life Forums.

"Soooo..." I sat back in the chair, drink in hand. The Commons looked just like before, without even a picture out of place on the wall.

"Aye?" Foolish was kicked back on the barstool closest to the fireplace.

"What was all that..." I waved my hand around vaguely. "...about?"

"Ah." He slumped slightly and shrugged. "Difference of opinion on a philosophical issue, I'm afraid."

I waited quietly, turning his own patient look back on him.

"Right then..." He took another drink. "When a new person comes to second life, many will go and take them under wing. Offer lessons and help, as just a part of common courtesy."

I cut through the fog. "You helped him out like you did me, and he turned out to be a jerk."

He winced, and raised his glass to me. "Nothing as simple as all that, but..." He nodded assent.

Botany was sitting on the bar itself. "He seemed nice at first, but got worse quickly." She shook her head. "It's easy to make a good mask to fool people for a while, but with the nastier people..."

Foolish finished for her. "They can't keep the blackness of their twisted little mind from showing eventually."

I took a guess. "But by then, you had already taught him what he needed to know to be a problem."

This time he didn't just wince, he flinched. "Aye."

"So why are you acting like it's your fault? He was the one doing it."

He shook his head. "Nay, lad. You misread me. I don't balk 'cause I think I did something wrong. I just had high hopes for him, and he turned out to be a braggart bully in need of a hiding." He shrugged. "I usually have better taste than that."

Botany grinned evilly from behind him, but let it pass.

So did I, considering I was supposedly his current pupil.

Everyone else had gone for the night, and I was getting a bit tired myself.

Foolish stood up. "Well, lad. It's about time for my beauty rest. Lord knows without it I'm even a sorrier sight than I am now."

Botany nodded. "I need to go too."

I remembered something then.

"WAIT! How do I log out?"

Foolish looked at me and showed me a gesture. I tried it.

Logging out is a simple process. Just close the program like you would any other. This will shut down the SL client and your avatar will fade from the world of Second Life.

But the world moves on!

While you are logged off, thousands of other people are logged in and enjoying their second life. People will create new gadgets and homes, have events, and generally enjoy all that SL has to offer. You may come back in a day or a month, and your friends may or may not be online. You might have new neighbors, or a dozen people might be looking at your building and commenting on its design.

The only constant in SL is change, and it happens often and fast.

I was sitting in front of a computer, in a heavy body that would never fly under its own power. It was tired, and telling me I needed to take care of basic needs I had neglected for far too long. The blurring of my vision told me that sleep was one of them.

I had to go back. Soon.

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Very soon.

I want to thank you for taking the time to listen to my story, and to join us in Second Life. We look forward to seeing you someday, and hope, like Avatar of the story; you decide to stay with us.

Either way, good fortune to you and yours!

Links of Interest

Second Life Drama: Forums and News

http://www.SLDrama.com/

The Second Life Daily Events

http://secondlife.com/events/

Your Second Life Friends Online

http://secondlife.com/community/friends.php

The Second Life Information Wikis

http://secondlife.com/tiki/tiki-index.php

The Second Life Downloads

http://secondlife.com/community/downloads.php

The Second Life Troubleshooting guides

http://secondlife.com/community/troubleshooting.php

The Second Life Terms of Service

http://secondlife.com/corporate/tos.php

The Second Life Current Server Status

http://secondlife.com/status/

Thanks to...