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In this opening chapter, the protagonist, Mickey, finds himself in darkness on a cold stone floor, questioning how he ended up there. His last memories are fragmented, recalling instances of being dropped off at a crevasse and his distracted fall into a hole while observing a rock formation that amused him, which he likens to a monkey's head. The fall has left him injured—his left wrist is swollen and painful. Mickey checks for a signal and manages to contact Berto, who confirms his precarious predicament, acknowledging he saw Mickey's misstep but refuses to risk a rescue since Mickey is classified as an Expendable—a program designed to replace workers when they die.

As the conversation unfolds, Mickey and Berto exchange banter about the absurdity of his situation. Mickey is clearly frustrated that no one will come for him, but he also acknowledges the realities of his role. His thoughts drift to the cold and the likelihood of freezing to death, a fate he has pondered throughout his time on this inhospitable planet. The narrative is infused with a blend of humor and somber introspection as Mickey reflects on his life, the concept of dying, and the nature of identity.

Suddenly, Nasha—a character connected to Mickey—contacts him, revealing that she is en route to attempt a rescue. Her willingness to help ignites hope in Mickey, who nevertheless understands the risks involved. As their conversation continues, Mickey ultimately decides to dissuade Nasha from coming for him, recognizing that he is too deep underground to be effectively retrieved and that her safety matters more than his own predicament.

With a heavy heart, Mickey concludes that he will not survive this fall and prepares for his eventual fate, contemplating freezing to death as a method of exit. However, his resolve wavers as he senses hope in Nasha's determination. The chapter ends on an unresolved note, with Mickey grappling with the emotional weight of his potential death and the impact it may have on those he cares about, notably Nasha, whose presence provided a glimmer of hope amid his dire situation.