

FAILURE 14

IS THAT A FAILURE
IN YOUR POCKET OR
ARE YOU JUST HAPPY
TO SEE ME?

Okay, okay. That's one pretty big failure, I guess. Oh well. We push on.

CHAPTER 95: THIS IS AMAZING. THIS FEELS AMAZING.

"Watch out over there. I think the adverts are seeping through. They must be recuperating again."

Apple Hippopotamus, mystery detective, all around swell gal when she's not being such a grumpy little cunt, sat in a chair. She looked out the door and thought about how it was a different door and also how maybe she had priorities but still here she sat and the words and the words and so many words. She turned down the imaginary pirate radio show that she was listening to (the *So Far So Bad So What?* show) and thought about what is the purpose. What is the purpose of making things accessible? What is the purpose of preserving our knowledge? She thought about the shape of things and how they weren't (in shape). She thought about how things flow and also the nature of these things (that flow). She thought, I will never get out of here alive. She thought, I will never get what I want (you). Ha ha, she thought. Just kidding. I don't have a giant giant crush on you. That would be absurd. She thought, quietly, I just want to be spanked by you. She blushed and felt a tingling in her [region that tingles]. She was a glutton for punishment.

Apple Hippopotamus, mystery detective, was not doing her job.

She was retired? She was so very tired. She was...without a future. She was entirely fictional. She was a never ending story. PLEASE STOP!!! she screamed or maybe didn't scream but maybe imagined screaming but didn't because she didn't want you to stop she wanted you to keep paying attention to her it's none of your business would you like to be part of my business i have a business opportunity for you no STOP no don't. fucking. stop. [EXPLOSION].

Apple Hippopotamus was all like, hey. Aren't you happy to be alive? Isn't everything potentially really really great (relatively speaking)? "AAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHGGHHHHH!!!!!" she screamed. It was...murder!

Zorba Cathexis awoke from his dream and thought about how weird it was that he was a character in a best selling novel. He thought also that it was weird that he kept waking up from somebody else's dream. He definitely had a body (Zorba did). He definitely felt feelings. He must have been connected to something (to be able to feel that something). He was made out of trees? No. Electric pulses? He was a being made out of light? Trees? There was just so much. Zorba Cathexis was inside your head (sorry). Sorry. That's where he is. You have a head, I think? And now *I* am inside your head. Hi. Sorry. I'm so sorry. I'm soooooo sorry. I'll leave. I'm a hideous monster. Sorry.

Zorba Cathexis awoke from his dream and thought, FUCKING ENOUGH ALREADY WITH THE HORRIBLE INJUSTICE. He thought, hello, I live in the future. All the empires are dead. He thought, stop trying to occupy my mind-body. He thought, what's my mind-body is your mind-body. He thought, this is probably a mistake.

[Zorba's Cousin]—another character in our story that we kind of have a crush on—yawned. She kept traveling back and forth over so many mountains and she was fucking tired. All of our characters were tired (including you). Oops. Sorry. I can't stop poking you through this wall (the fourth one). I'm just so lonely? No. Sorry. This is inappropriate. Why can't I just be a normal person and communicate in a normal, normal person type manner? Aargh. Anyway, here we are, communicating or whatever. Um, this is awkward. [Zorba's Cousin] was looking at the author, thinking, um, hey, what the fuck happened to my narrative? Could you do your fucking job? I know you have a big crush on your reader, but. "Ahh!" I screamed as an ambulance drove noisily by, "[Zorba's Cousin], don't embarrass me in front of the readers! This is a best-selling novel, not some, well..." Okay, sorry. Hi. This is the part of the narrative where you are starting to maybe think that these words were written specifically for you. The part where you realized that this entire universe was, indeed, actually maybe created specifically for you. And it's weird, right? To be in direct communication with the machinery that subsumes you. Or, um, I mean, to be talking to a book. How is it possible? Goodness. What are the odds that you would find yourself amidst a potential love affair with a book? Books aren't even [the same species of organism as you]. What will your friends say? Maybe it's better we're just friends.

The Book That You Are Reading looked down at its pants. She was a little bit shy. She was so in love with you but she knew she was a lot to handle. She was maybe too much. She knew that. She didn't have any expectations of you, but she thought that you were sooooo beautiful and awesome and she was, okay, a little bit in love with you

probably. Her pronouns were she/her. She smiled awkwardly in your direction. Oh god I'm so awkward, she thought. Do you like me? she thought. Do you think I am [a brilliant work of art]? Sorry. Sorry. How was your day? she said (to you). God, she thought to herself, I'm so self-centered. All of a sudden, the non-diagetic music blinked out and we heard the birds singing. What's this? We live in the real world? You too, huh? Anyhoo, she said to you, I'll see you around I guess. It was nice talking to you.

"What just happened there?" asked Apple to Zorba (they were still friends that lived in the same reality sphere, in case you were wondering).

"I don't know," said Zorba. "Was that not normal?"

Apple gave Zorba a look.

"What?" asked Zorba. "How am I supposed to know the sort of shit you usually get up to in your day to day?"

Apple was thinking again. Was this the future or the past? What part of our narrative already happened? Was there any continuity to their mind states and personalities? Stop selling me, she thought. The story is over.

CHAPTER 96: AND NOW A WORD FROM OUR SPONSORS

Sadie Rose Rosen just wanted someone to love her and want to spend the plurality of their time with her. True, her life up to now made her think that maybe there was some sort of fundamental flaw in her being that made her just too much to deal with. But shouldn't it be possible to come across one person that could [look directly into her burning soul] and still find her worth the effort? I mean, shouldn't this possibility be mathematically consistent within her current reality structure? Hmm. Let's face it, this desire was probably why she kept writing all of these ~~mostly unreadable~~ best selling novels. That and her strange belief that words were magic and maybe just maybe she could help effect a world that was worth living in (for all of us). But she would settle for just one person wanting to be her best friend and/or have a one night stand and/or...Well, okay fine, Sadie Rose Rosen just wanted everyone to love her. And true, whatever she got was never enough. But maybe just a three day love affair or someone to regularly come over and hang out two or three days a week or eat food with on a semi-regular basis? Okay, okay. Let's try this again.

CHAPTER 96: AND NOW A WORD FROM OUR SPONSORS

Sadie Rose Rosen just wanted someone to love her. According to her therapist, this wasn't such an outrageous ask. Yet here she was, all alone in her favorite slow food diner, wondering if maybe one day she'd work up the courage to ask you if you'd like to join her for a meal maybe. You know, like a date or something. Well? Um, okay that's awkward.

CHAPTER 96: TAKE THREE

Sadie Rose Rosen sat in her favorite bar, having breakfasted that morn in her favorite pancake house, feeling loved by specific people, some of which might be you, but might be other people that are also reading this book (what with it being an act of mass communication and all). You, of course (or possibly someone other than you) were not yet in love with Sadie because that would be weird because you hardly even know her maybe. Or maybe it's the future now and you've already had a brief torrid love affair which was fun but maybe it's better you're just friends that don't give each other oral pleasures and sensual massages. It had been a while though, thought Sadie, since she had been given a massage by someone that was in love with her. Also, what did it mean that like two thirds of the local imperialist-capitalist television news was *literally* propaganda for specific billionaires? Also, why are people not murdering these billionaires? Please, thought Sadie, if you cross paths with a billionaire, please murder them. But what was I talking about, thought Sadie, who was probably the author of this book so far. The viewscreen on the wall was still making Sadie think what the fuck is going on what is wrong with the world why why why, but then the bartender changed the channel to sports, sports being a perfectly normal thing to be

watching in a bar. But enough about me, thought Sadie. How have you been?

**CHAPTER 97: AFTER THE REVOLUTION HAS FAILED, or
FAIL, FAIL AGAIN, FAIL AGAIN BETTER, or
WHAT IF ALL THE BAD THINGS ARE GOING AWAY?**

Apple Hippopotamus had had enough. "Enough already," she said out loud, just in case this wasn't clear to whoever it was that was paying attention. This payment of attention was unfortunately necessary for her survival in the particular universe in which she dwelt, what with her being a fictional character and all. And this frustrated her. She didn't want to be that girl that required someone else to validate her existence, yet here we were. She took a sip of morning bourbon, and thought about mushroom trips. She thought about all those cases she had never solved. She thought about alternate timelines and what it means to travel. She thought about rabbits and hats. "*Fuuuck* you," she said to the universe as it winked at her in that way it does sometimes. "I'm *at* the end of my rope *and* I'm still swinging," she added, apparently singing along with the diageitic music coming through the speakers. "Okay, moving along please. Nothing to see here."

and maybe this is the end?