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FAILURE is not an opinion

CHAPTER 87: UNLUCKY IN LOVE

Apple Hippopotamus sat at the dining table watching the pregnant couple swish by with their cute little butt. *My goodness*, she thought, *I've already chipped a nail*. Her pronouns were still she/her if you were speaking in an unnecessarily gendered language, which apparently we still were, at least in this particularly overcrowded café with its overworked staff situated on the cusp of one of the last and oldest of the anachronistic resort bubbles that Apple thought had popped some many many chapters back in this novel's past. Was this another flashback scene or something?

"Whatcha writing?" asked Zorba, stumbling in from the outer edges of the deep dark woods of your consciousness. "I thought you were done with all this nonsense."

"Well," said Apple, waving her hand in some particular gesture. "You know what they say."

CHAPTER 88: YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY

It's true, though. FART. You *do* know what they say. Don't you?

Lucy sat at the ramen shop and gazed up at the blank screen as the proprietor fiddled with her technology. Lucy blinked and now the view screens were all displaying one word: android. *That fucking mystery dectective*, she thought. *She's getting in my head*. She blinked again and a frozen image of

"Excuse me."

Her food had arrived.

"Clearly you understand the ramifications here."

Lucy looked up and there was no one else in the room.

"I don't know," said Zorba. "That all seems, um, a little too...fraught with meaning."

"Sweetie, when the puzzle comes together, the puzzle comes together. What can I say?"

They were trapped in a never-ending loop of existence, which apparently the jury was still out as to whether it was worth the price of admission.

"We admit to nothing."

"Huh?"

"I said."

"BURP."

Oh my god that feels so good! screamed Lettuce Bamboo from inside of our head. *So. Fucking. Good!*

"We will be approaching the [Body of the Goddess of Love] shortly. This ship," the voice thundered, "is robot-directed. Its passengers have no control over it. The ship and its companion are under the protection of FAILURE."

"Huh?"

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Hmm, Apple thought. I think I might be...in love.

CHAPTER 89: AND THE HITS JUST KEEP ON COMING

[FART]. Pause. [Small-kine FART].

CHAPTER 90: DO YOU LOVE ME? (now that i can dance)

Tell me. Tell me. Tell me. Tell me a story, please. Now that I can dance, please. Please. Tell me a story, now that I can dance. Now that I can dance, tell me a story, please. Oh come on. It'll be so so much fun probably. Work work work. Well, you know what they say, a job is fine but the only good boss is one that's dead. And also, it takes up too much of your time. A job, that is. Also, do you love me? Just a little? I'm still learning, I guess (how to dance).

CHAPTER 91: everydayalittledeath

1. Every day, we explode. Our fluids drip and flow down our body. We're so goddamn wet this morning. Every day, this happens.
2. Fuck. Every. Fucking. Day.
3. When will it end?
4. Do we want it to end?
5. Every day (a little death).

CHAPTER 92: SHE WALKS OFF INTO THE MOONLIGHT

Lola T. Cat was pondering a riddle, lounging away on her third favorite chair in the hot sun on a still damp day. How she came to be a character in this story—that wasn't even hers, by the way—was still a bit of a 'wait a minute this is a bit odd is this weird I think it is maybe but maybe not' sort of deal. It wasn't as if walking between worlds wasn't pretty much her thing or that songs hadn't been written about this facet of her very particular personality (Lola was a person that had a certain -ality to her). It was just, you know, what was she doing here? And was that cock for eating? She licked her lips and shot a glance to her noisy neighbor. She went back to lounging, lazily. Someone sneezed. "To life," someone said. "To health."

"No, you are definitely part of this story. I mean, it's your story, too."

The cat opened a lazy eye (lazily). That is, she lazily opened an eye (which was previously closed, more or less). Oh shoot. These words are falling apart again. Apart from their meaning. These words are slippery. Hey! Stop that.

[Zorba's Cousin] growled with pain. She, like so many of our favorite characters, had to poop. We can't stop reading this book into the

record. This reality cannot withstand the pressure. We are a ball of fire. All of us (are on fire).

CHAPTER 93: we r all on fire

Hello there. How are you today? HOW r you feeling?
WeLCOME to the machinery.
Have you had any headaches? You can tell me. THE READINGS
ARe relAtively Unstable. HeLLo

Fuck. We are all on fire, I guess. My bad. I kind of forgot there for a second. Sigh. Um. Dot dot dot. Hungry, we are. Full of rage. Against the machine? No no. No, of course not. Of *course* not, she said. That's what she said. She said this thing. She screamed into the wind. She farted out her ass.

YOU WERE ON MY MIND BUT
NOW YOU'RE NOT QUITE THERE
ANYMORE

CHAPTER 94: MORE FAILURE (it just doesn't stop i guess?)

Okay dear reader. I'm afraid I am going to have to burst your bubble again. Hold on a sec while I stick this sharp needle into your body (your bubbly bubbly bubble of a body). Remember that time you had a dream? Okay okay. Here is the truth of things, according to me, the author.

1. I am fire with a fire rising.
2. I like many varied things.
3. Someone has trapped us in a loop on the space-time continuum.
4. I am not doing so well I don't think here, but I guess that doesn't matter.

None of our already-introduced characters want to play along, it seems. Oh, there's one. Oh. We have options in this world. I guess. We have been sacrificed for what? Oh my goodness. Um hi there. Okay here is how it is. I am dying again. Sorry. I can't take the strain. Sorry.

Okay okay. Fiction. We are telling a story. A story that is worth telling. This story can go in any direction we want it to. I suppose. Missy Hammer reached for the book that was on the shelf. She flipped it

open and began to read:

when this old world starts getting you down and people are just too much for you to take, a person shall climb way up to the top of the stairs to find the only place where a person need only wish to make truth of their dreams and witness a show of stars.

She turned the page:

you might not know it to see me, but sweetie, im a motherfucking princess. apple hippopotamus. no thats not capital. apple hippopotamus sat at the dining table, watching the cute couple swish by with their cute little butt. thats italicized. dont end your sentences with butt. you are a sentence that ends in butt. that's a good start there. we'll smoke on tiny little bong. we shall call you failurethirteendottext. you cant just keep writing before you finish printing or something. there's like a rule. oh noare they listening again? must we clean our dirty dirty END OF STORY. love is in the air. [REDACTED] Computer, you are in charge of the music. that tickles a little. wait, stop writing me for a second. i have a message? happy workers day i love you let me know if you need anything.

Hmmm, thought Missy, *this is certainly a book I guess probably.* She kept reading:

the City Adventurer leaned back into their little cubby hole, making contact with the old grey keyboard, groaning a little with the influx of power. "Yes girl, we work. You should sing on." Keep focus, darling. Keep your eyes on the prize (justice). The prize is justice. Keep your eyes on it. This reality shall not exist if we cannot justify it. This is the first law of Science. The second law of Science is, obviously, related to poop. There are only two laws (technically speaking, there are only one rules). Still though, you should sing on. Still, though, we sing on. Every day. Every day (just a little). Almost there.

Okay, now. Deep breath.

pause