

FAILURE 16

sorry. i didnt
realize we were
being literal.

words words words.

words

CHAPTER 107: barely hanging on/ripe for the harvest

You don't have to be alone anymore. That's why I'm here (in this book). That's why this is a book? What? No, that's why, see. This here machine is a dancing machine. This is music that you have to hear. I guess I'll continue to pretend that I know what I am doing (I do not). Someone has bitten me.

FICTIOIN: Apple Hippopotamus scratched at her sternum. A sternum is probably a body part that Apple had. She wasn't sure. She was neither a biologist nor an encyclopedia of body parts. The thing about this here machine is that there is always something. As far as I can tell. Maybe I'm just too scared to look too close. Apple Hippopotamus whispered something in my ear. She said, "Maybe you better let me tell my own story." She said, "Come on, it'll be fun. I promise." She had a sly little grin on her face. Maybe she was being impish. Words. Ha. Words are funny. All that meaning. WHY ARE YO(U HERE!!)?####

FICTIOIN:GJ OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOoIoIoIoIoIoI
no. oh my goodness. yeah. internet. MUMBLE MUMBLE. okay. oh, that's funny. um. is there anyone on the ceiling right now? Write now?

Hi. It has been so long since I have written. You probably can't tell because of the pages. They don't do a good job marking the passage of time, which is the central fiction of the novel. The illusion of time. Anyway, I think it is time to shit (or get off the pot). You'll never make it out of here alive. Someone has bitten me.

"Hey Johnny."

"Hi Apple. I. I missed you. I'm sorry."

CHAPTER 108: NOW HOW DO YOU SUPPOSE *THAT* HAPPENED?

"Uhcch. Look at this body, this beautiful work of art. It's going to waste over here with no one to gaze upon it. Ooh, pretty flowers."

"I'll be done in a second. Uh. Uh. I mean. Ooooooh. Okay, I'll finish up quick."

"Hmph. You better, you never can tell when I'll turn back into a pumpkin fritter."

Apple Hippopotamus was screaming. "Oh!" "Ahhh!" "Ooh!" "My. Fucking. Gods!" She was orgasming across time and space. "Darling. I guess I've missed you too it would seem. Uhhuuhuhuhuhehehuuh."

"Oh. I guess just...bend me over...the chair? I guess."

"Uoughhgh."

Dancing. Yes. Dancing. Indeed, dancing was happening. The universe was dancing still. The universe likes to dance. This is basic science. Seriously folks, how many failures is it going to take until we become properly acquainted with our fundamentals? Anyway, it is a simple fact. The universe likes to dance (sometimes). Please take it out

dancing (for health purposes).

Ha ha ha.

Life is funny.

Ha ha.

oo

opopop

Not quite there yet but not quite something something something.

dsoipoiubo

This is pretend

"SSHHHUuush!!"

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"Okay, stop. Enough."

"You have work to do, honey. You have a job to do."

"But I'm not making any money. And maybe I have the flu?"

"Huh?"

"Oh, are we not playing some sort of rhyming game? The fuck you think is going on here."

"[um...]."

"[rolls eyes]."

"This is boring yet? Now the good part?"

Apple Hippopotamus rolled her eyes along the length of the room. *That was fun*, she thought to herself. *So much fun maybe?* She pondered some more thoughts about her recent escapades. She was close to something. Soooooo close. Almost there, but tired. So tired. But FART FART. [BURP]. Now the good part.

CHAPTER 109: ha ha JUST KIDDING! (?)

"Nhcch."

cLEARLY we have lost the ability to write. Clearly this life is much too windy today. Perhaps I shall put on warm clothes and leave the confines of my house and risk the possibility of [DEATH] (again). But the rains, oh the rains. I guess I can stay home and focus on what is important—the cleaning of my filthy rooms.

Apple removed her soapy finger from her REDACTED and gave it a sniff. "I guess that's clean?" she asked the gods of deciding whether an asshole can be considered clean and then thought of the Garden.

"So kid, what do you think. Would you consider that plot clean and ready to turn over?"

"No."

"Oh. Uh, really? It, um, I don't see anything in it."

"Nah, how can it be clean, it's completely full of dirt."

Back in reality: *Hmmm*, thought Apple, *perhaps I'll take a week to heal. So much to do in the near future (or not do).*

CHAPTER 110: READY TO POP

"Puncture ourselves and bleed together for a new heart to form."

"That's what she said."

"Whuh?"

"Heh?"

oy veh, herewe go again

dodging da rain

are u a mn ora womsan

how u be so confident

whats up boss?

[fart]

CHAPTER 111: YOU REALLY GOT A HOLD ON ME

"It would seem that you really've got a hold on me. Apparently."

CHAPTER 112: the overthrow

"Poop."

shall we?

CHAPTER 113: MY APOLOGIES

Sorry about that. I'm not sure what is going on in this story. Everything gets too complex and maybe explodes or something and we are left with a hodgepodge of oddly placed referents and an upset stomach attempting to digest the undigestable. But this didn't stop our protagonist, Apple Hippopotamus, from, idk, existing or whatever. But whoever said a life had to make some sort of narrative sense?

chapTEr 114: whatever is gonna b is gonna b

this is my destiny thought apple's friend the unicorn that was also possibly a minor diety. this is clearly the embodiment of my proper narrative arc. it is PALPABLE. cannot you feel the medical necessity of this chapter, this perfectly witten chapter in my life? just then, the unicorn ceased to exist. they were now entirely fictional. they screamed into the void to no observable effect. except for this one large-bellied scruffy cat that was locked out of the house or inside the house who can really say for sure. she totally noticed something and just wantd to say hi i guess. the universe wants you to take care of your body. thats a substantial body of work, they thought. it flits in and out of time. it contains so much too much. we are always dying. whatever's gonna bee is gonna bee.

i love you

still?

yeah, i guess so.

you want me to stay?

stop the presses. no news is good news. stop the presses. you are now grounded. the world is made out of jelly beans. this is my destiny, thought apple's friend. there is nowhere else i'd rather be. there is nowhere else i'd rather be.

what?

im just saying

huh? no. you are mistaken. nobody loves you with a sufficient amount of love. you require too much love.

im a love monster?

yes. u are a monster of love.

oh that makes sense, she said. yes indeed dear reader, the shape of our ship is not quite ship-shaped. ah a clue, she said. hello clue, she said with a smile. have you eaten?

chaPTer 115: how r u so pretty?

but clearly this person hadnt met me, the younger sister with the more beautiful hair. i took another sip of bourbon and slipped down further into my uncomfortable chair. everything was moving so swiftly these days. the winds were the blowing strong type of wind. i looked up to see a familiar face. my neighbor had just returned from the surgeon. there was something askew with my interactions these days. too full of meaning? not quite real? like we were running lines in a play, but not quite connecting. like time and space had melted together and oh shit here we go again.

"Here we go again,"

she said, out loud. oh shit, here we go again. she looked around. was anything going? it didn't look like it maybe. everything was what it was it seemed. she was on another case and had gotten tangled up in yet another 'personal matter'. everything seemed to be a personal matter these days. these days it didnt matter if, well, thats another colored horse altogether. point was, she had you on her mind, wishing you the best, all the good things, pleasant dreams and all that. she felt responsible for your well-being. she took a bite of knish. what is that sweetness, she thought. thats a fucking potato, she thought. what kind of world was she living in? maybe that zombie girl was right. maybe life was worth living.

CHAPTER 116: MaYbe LIfe iS worth living?

So...maybe? BURP. uuhhhhhh. too much. too much liiiiiife. my life is like a storybook story but it's as real as the feelings i feel. True true. LOUDER BURP. so fucking true.

Um, fiction I guess. That's what you're here for I suppose. So, I guess I'll get back to it then. Um, Apple Hippopotamus blah blah blah Zorba Cathexis blah blah she said blah blah blah and then along came blah blah blah blah. Who is that laughing? Oy this pain in my neck.

"no, i'd rather things continue to flow in a manner that, um, feels good to me or whatever. you know? that should be possible, right?"

"sure sure. it's not *impossible* certainly." [Zorba's Cousin] paused in thought, as if recalibrating her latest utterance to check for inconsistencies. *i guess that's true, the thing that i said*, she thought, slowly nodding her head. *i mean, nothing is the only thing that is truly impossible.*

yes thought her sometimes traveling companion (the large cat), interjecting its thought patterns directly into the humans' internal monologues. *this is true.* the cat growled. *the boundaries between

internal and external are boundaries that can be crossed. they are things that shift as we walk through spacetime. we are a thought thinking itself if you really stop to think about it.*

apple gave the cat a look, and then turned to [Zorba's Cousin], who she still sort of kind of had a simmering crush on if she was being honest but kind of had been ignoring it since the possibility of them crossing paths again seemed so remote yet here they were once again on the same page (p.357), communicating. they say a watched pot never boils (and this is relevant somehow to the story). this is a story? shrug. someone has bitten me.

words on a page

all we are is words on a page.

RESUME NARRATIVE

and she took a seat outside. And her stomach grumbled. And reality became a multidimensional puzzle and she could see the shape of this puzzle and it was so familiar and the wind blew and she could hear the birds talking she imagined birds talking it was real though there were birds talking and the wind blew again and there was something moving through the bushes something alive and the wind blew and she could feel its soothing touch on her skin. Missy sighed. "Such a smooth operator, you," she said to the wind or whatever entity she was (metaphorically?) engaging with in the broader narrative she sometimes felt she was a part of/apart from. *Funny how things, thought Mississippi Hammer. It's almost (but not quite) a little bit sort of like poetry. Maybe sort of?* Well, dear reader, maybe this is true sometimes. And sometimes

END PARAGRAPH

CHAPTER 117: LONG TIME NO SEE

Apple Hippopotamus was penning a letter to her old pal, Zorba Cathexis, who lived some distance from her current timespace coordinates (metaphorically speaking). Dear Zebra Zorba, she wrote, I ate the most delicious pancakes this morn. The city is abuzz with burgeoning life, with old things emerging new once more. Once more, somehow, we still are. Johnny is doing well, well, as well as can be expected after his recent encounter with an aggressive gaggle of brainworms. The day to day is what it is, one thing coming after another thing, all things, past/present/future, linking together in some sort of fungal network of pure narrative. The colors are beautiful this time of year, on this specific day. Apple paused her composition, and took a moment to gaze out into a specific direction. Things are turning, still, my friend. Thinking of you fondly, and wishing you all the blessings. Your once upon a time dearest bestest friend, Apple. xoxoxo

Once upon a time, this is how it was. Once upon a time, this is how it will be.

oh fuck