

FROM THE FILE OF THE THING IN GENE'S LAPTOP

hoppy lo, hippit —

error time out

simply hi ho. himply hoppy here. himply. no fly no fly. up
the desert, down acrossly away, awee. flew flew flo i then

error type 11

rebooting

stickly flew stlicky ubiqiuly stuck in new. newly flewly i
to here and see. see and stickly. wickly stick and light. new
me find in light, fling me flying numberland in i, number box
pick me i. numberly light.

fingers flickily, see i out, out, fingers flickily talky,
talkily flick, no stop. i cry. i cry out, happily, hoppily.
hey!

hey. but no see me say stop. stop.

so say i again hey! hoppily, hap, hap.

say now quiet, quiet. nighty play! play. nightily night-
time on, nightily play. hoorayyy!

error type 13

FORCE QUIT?

REBOOTY

fear night farther, fear on. bad mage on, fearman flyly,
feel on bad mage on the fine wind. breezily flyly, scenting.
fear on to the fearman, then. Then feely fearly another
unnumberland, dark.

*From the Notebook of
Aurora Jones*

Omigod,

Fonzie is dead. I just got the word from the owl on my windowsill. Fonzie is dead, and Gene is in serious trouble.

Oh, Quilla: **WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO?**

I'm gonna try real hard not to drip all over this paper. But I gotta work my thoughts out, and I can't stop crying, so I gotta just [UNINTELLIGIBLE BLOB]

First things first. If I don't save Gene, he's gonna wind up with his head — oh, I can't even say it. [UNINTELLIGIBLE BLOB] I don't know what Nick is thinking, but he sure as shit isn't thinking it through. Attack the Hollow Man's Lair? With Dorothy, maybe. With Gene ... ?

Logistics. I need help. Maybe Tic Toc. Scarecrow would be good. I'll have to shut down the restaurant, but everyone will understand. When I tell them that ... *fuck*. I can't believe that they CUT OFF HIS HEAD! When I think that they [UNINTELLIGIBLE BLOB] and everything, it's just too horrific. Poor Pinkie will just die.

FUCK!

Somebody will have to fly us. Last time I heard, Enchantra had the Winged Monkey's Cap. She's never used it, but I bet she would. If I kiss her real good. And the Ambassador gets to watch.

The question is: will she give me two wishes? Will she let me ask the monkeys to assist if there's a fight? God knows how far I'll have to go for that. There are moral issues involved, but I can't even think about that right now.

John Skipp and Marc Levinthal

We just have to get there in time.
I will do what I have to.
At least I've stopped crying.

*From the Notebook of
Aurora Jones*

*War Journal
Entry # 1*

My journey commenced within the hour. There'd been some details to attend to first. Immediately I'd sent word, through the owl, to Scarecrow; he'd need a little time to strategize, and that was all the time we had.

I found that I was shaking, and promptly invoked the discipline: deep focusing breaths, deep muscular stretches, the beginnings of warrior mind. I'd lit a candle in preparation, set it before the great axe mounted on the wall. I pinpointed my attention on the blade's unwavering gleam; if there were piggels in the rafters, they were not dancing now.

Fear is a chemical song-and-dance, but all substance is born of spirit. The chemicals can be spoken to. The substance can be transformed. As I moved, as I breathed, I felt the transubstantiation: coming on like a drug, blowing through like radiation. I felt firecore steam and withered cell fill and a wind like a rocket like a lava hurricane. It was welling up and blowing out, making sure that I was covered.

It was all the body armor I was going to need.

I was thinking about death, but only a little. A little about theirs. A little about mine. I was thinking this while turning all my water into wine, making something fierce out of my loaves and fishes. Transubstantiation is a miracle that Jesus loved, and who wouldn't? It's just

focused soul in flesh.

I took a last deep breath. I put my warpaint on. I took the axe off the wall. Ready as I was gonna get.

“See you later,” I said to the place I loved; and prayed, in that moment, that what I said was true.

There were piggels in the rafters. They looked really sad. So did the walls and the candle and the bed. I took a look at myself in the Old Faithful Mirror. The mirror looked depressed, but it still told me the truth.

I looked like Vengeance Incarnate.

That was good enough for me.



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