



FALLING POINT





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////////////////////////////////////
CONNECTING TO JACKPOINT VPN...
...IDENTITY SPOOFED
...ENCRYPTION KEYS GENERATED
...CONNECTED TO ONION ROUTERS
////////////////////////////////////

>LOGIN
>ENTER PASSCODE

...BIOMETRIC SCAN CONFIRMED
CONNECTED TO <ERROR: NODE UNKNOWN>
////////////////////////////////////

“Things fall apart; the center cannot hold.”
– William Butler Yeats

////////////////////////////////////
Welcome back to JackPoint, chummer; your last connection was severed **12 hours, 32 minutes, 17 seconds ago**

TODAY'S HEADS-UP

Some want to hasten the fall, some want to profit off it, and some may even want to stop it.
But most of them seem to think a fall is coming.
–Glitch

INCOMING

////////////////////////////////////
>>> Start hanging out with the type of people who complain about the quality of their pillow mints. [TAG: NEEDLE'S EYE]
>>> Put 'em on the table and roll the dice. [TAG: FINAL BETS]
>>> Turns out there's both art and science to making people not hate you. [TAG: SMOOTH OPERATIONS]
////////////////////////////////////

TOP NEWS ITEMS

////////////////////////////////////
>>> Defiant Spinrad spokesperson says if children don't want to be crushed by thirty-ton blocks, they shouldn't trespass.
>>> Seelie Court warns of travel restrictions unless Yellowstone Anomaly access is better controlled.
>>> Aztechnology trademarks “Flesheez”; rumors describe it as artificial flesh for ghouls to eat.
////////////////////////////////////

JACKPOINT STATS

73 Users are active on the network.

LATEST NEWS

Interpol calls so-called “Week of Death” a “statistical anomaly.”

PERSONAL ALERTS

>>> You have 9 new private messages.
>>> You have 12 new responses to your JackPoint posts.
>>> It's Taco Temple coupon day!
>>> You're running low on toilet paper.

There are six Members online and in your area.

YOUR CURRENT REP SCORE: 708 (73% POSITIVE)

CURRENT TIME: 22 February 2083, 2122 hrs
////////////////////////////////////



CHAOS TACOS

BY JASON M. HARDY

The Taco Temple evening rush was in full swing. Really Big Drink after Really Big Drink flowed from the fountain. Massive plastic jars of salsa were opened, poured into bins, then mixed with sprigs of cilantro and called “fresh.” Food was grabbed by customers and couriers; most of it was eaten somewhere else. A cleaning drone gently blinked a blue light as it cleaned crumbs and drops of soda left by those few who stayed.

A madman entered the restaurant. You could tell he was mad by the wild eyes, the stained and ripped long-coat, and the flashing neon wand, the kind they sell to kids on summer evenings, he held in his right hand. No one paid attention to him. This was Seattle. No one had time to look at every madman they encountered in the course of their day.

The madman looked around, possibly in two directions at once due to the unevenness of his eyes. He considered the crowd around him.

“You people don’t know the truth!” he yelled.

That’s right, the people thought. We don’t. It’s okay. The truth just gets you in trouble. Leave us to our burritos in peace.

The madman shambled toward the counter, head bobbing this way and that, neon wand waving. “The

basement! You don’t know what they have in the basement!” he yelled. His voice cracked as he shouted.

A woman with black hair that ended in red tips and a black business suit worn to present an air of authority emerged from the back. “Sir, I need you to stop disturbing the other customers.”

“The basement!” the madman yelled without looking at the woman.

“There is no basement here.”

“The basement! They keep it in the basement!”

“Sir, please. We are a small restaurant. We have no basement.”

The madman became more agitated. He started moving around the small interior of the Taco Temple in a kind of loping hop. He pointed his wand at the manager the whole time. “It’s there! It’s there! You say there is no basement, but the jaws that can rip a skull apart, the eyeballs crowded into a face, and the shooting stars! The stars that burn you! They will burn you all!”

“Sir, I’m going to have to ask you to leave.”

As it turned out, the request was not necessary. The madman was already shambling toward the door. Whatever he thought his purpose had been in the restaurant, it had been served.

The manager shook her head. “I apologize to you for that scene. Please enjoy a small TortiYes with our compliments.” She turned to the back of the restaurant, then stopped and looked at the customers. “Poor man. Completely insane.”