

FADE IN:

COMPUTER SCREEN

A retro social media page reads "1 friend online." A game window pops up, loading "Warriors of the Quest: Online."

EXT. FOREST ENVIRONMENT - DAY

Scott's avatar fades into the game.

ROBIN

Hey, look who finally decided to show up.

SCOTT

Yeah, Yeah, I'm not a Gaming savant like you. This is my first non-console game that isn't Solitaire.

Robin

I'm surprised your Soviet Era internet connection can even run this game. How's the lag?

Scott,

You're teleporting a little, but it's barely noticeable. Man, these graphics are Awesome.

Robin

It's the 21st century my man.
Mastered the controls already.
Check this out.

[Gameplay] Robin jumps, moves in a circle, then guides Scott around the environment.

Robin

So, yeah. W, A, S 'n D to move.
Space to jump.

Robin jumps onto a ledge, then waits for Scott to follow.

Robin

I hate platforming

Scott
(sarcastic)
Alright, movement. A lot of
advanced mechanics to master so
far.

Robin
But that's just the start, my friend.
So, Ima kick this pig with right click.

Robin kicks an evil pig towards Scott, landing on its' back

Robin
Now strike it with left click.
Scott strikes the pig, making it fade to a squeal.

Scott
So we have to kick enemies first?

Robin
Nah it just makes it easier. Plus we get bonus
points if we both work together to something one
out, which is pretty fun.
We're head towards that castle'y lookin
thing over there.

They move towards the landmark, fighting evil pigs along the
way.

Scott
I feel kinda bad fighting these
guys. They're too cute.

Robin
Piggies gotta pay--

ROBIN'S MOM
(Distant on Robin's mic)
Robin, come over here.

Robin's UI indicates switching to mute, then switches back.

Scott
Everything okay?

Robin
mhmm, just told her I'm busy.

Scott
I can wait up.

Robin
No it's just... That tone. She's
going to rag on me about AP
Calculus. Or talk about how my
Dad would've--blah blah blah.

The two come to a
DEN OF PIGS

Robin's Mom
(Distant on Robin's mic)
ROBIN! Ben paca!

They start to fight.

Robin's Mom (cont'd)
(Distant on Robin's mic)
ROBIN! Verrcito.

Scott
Think I heard her from across the
street that time.

Robin
Yikes. Right back.

Robin mutes his mic.

Robin's avatar stops moving. Scott fights off all the pigs. Two
bags of coin appear as a reward. Scott can take both or save one
for Robin.

Robin unmutes his mic.

Robin
Dude! I just got the letter back

from Uni!

Scott

Oh sick.

//if Scott chooses to save a bag for Robin:

Robin

Ooh, loot! Thanks for saving some
for me.

Robin takes his loot.

Scott

Open the letter!

//if Scott chooses to take both bags for himself:

Robin

Oh wait, you didn't save any loot
for me?

Scott

Ha-ha, yuh snooze, you lose.

Robin

Uh, yeah. Anyways...

The letter rips open. Pause.

Robin

I didn't get in...

Scott

Ah, man, that sucks. You applied to
other colleges too though, right?

Robin

Only Flinn College.

Scott

That's not that bad. You can get
you basics out of there cheaper,
right?

Robin
Sure...

Scott
Come on man, just think of the job
you'll get 10 years from now.
We'll be laughing about
Flindergarden.

Robin
If we even stay friends... that long
I mean.

Scott
Right... I mean I want to.

Robin
(Low energy)
Yeah, yeah, of course.

"4 Months Later" FADES ONTO THE BLACK SCREEN.
FADE TO the game.

EXT. Deep Woods - DAY

Scott's fades into the game with Robin waiting in front on him.

Scott
Yo.

Robin
Wassup?

Scott
Hey, sorry I've been busy last week.
Been wanting to keep up more, but
these first exams have been crazy.

Robin
No sweat. C'mon, I want to beat
the main quest before our coin's
worth paper. oh! Maybe we can find
some rare loot before more players

make it this far.

They walk through the forest slaying warthog enemies.

Robin

So, make any more new friends in
Chicago?

Scott

A few. It's pretty easy to just
start talking to people on campus.
How's college treating you?

Robin

SURE is college. Yuh know?

Scott

Uh, right. Classes?--

Robin

Educational. Am'I'right?

They arrive at a SPLIT PATH, which look relatively similar.

Scott

Okay, both ways are kinda sketchy.

Robin

Let's go right.

Scott

Oh, ok. Why right?

Robin

It's like a lore thing. "To follow
the right hand path is just."

Scott

Really? I mean I havn't spent any
time of the forums--

Robin

C'mon! I got this.

Robin goes down the left path.

//if Scott chooses to FOLLOW Robin:

The path is smooth going, fighting a few hogs along the way.
Robin visalbe in the distancce.

They meet up at the end.

Robin

What did I say? Only a few push-over
level 1's to fight

Scott

I gotta hand it to you. Not too
bad. You knew your stuff.

Robin

Yeah, I'm pretty great.

//if Scott chooses to TAKE OTHER PATH from Robin:

Scott goes down a narrow path, avoiding the pits below, while
fighting off many hogs.

They meet up at the end.

Robin

uhuh, this is the hard path alright.

Scott

Ok, my bad for not taking your word
for it.

Robin

Yep. I try to be as good as I can
at what I dedicate my time to. Not
sure why you don't believe me.

Scott

(serious)

Sorry--

Robin
You're goood, don't worry about it.

They move on to towards the end of the level, coming to a horde of hogs.

Robin
Oh look! You're gunna get owned at the next encounter--

Robin's mom
(in the distance)
Robin! Are you working on your studies?

Robin
(impatiant)
I'll be back.

Robin's UI indicates switching to mute, then switches back just as fast.

Both players fight hogs, Robin slowly, and ineffectley.

Robin
(projecting his voice)
What?

Robin's mom
(closer)
You heard me. I'm not paying the bills for you to goof off on technology all day.

Robin
(nervouly)
I *am* a computer science major.

Robin's mom
(closer)
No jokes. I need you to focus on school or get out.

Robin
(low voice)
I understand.

Robin's mom
(closer)
Your father dreamed you could find
a job that wouldn't break your
body like he had to. Sloth is sin.
Get your grades up, then vege out.

Robin
Yes, ma'am...

The small sound of a whimper can be made out. Robin takes a
breath, and mutes himself. Pause. Unmute.

Robin
Wait, was I...

Scott
(gently)
The whole time... Do you want to
talk--

Robin
No! No, I'm good. But if I need help
getting all EMO, you'll be be the
first person I'll call.

The horde has been defeated and a magic hammer appears.

Robin
Oh dude! Thor's Bomb-slinger That's
a great drop. We could defeat the
boss easy with that baby.

Scott
You can take it.

Robin
What? You up and carried me though.
What did I do?

Scott

I mean nothing I guess, but I can
still want you to have it, right.

Robin

Sure, I guess.

Robin laughs.

Robin takes it.

Oh thanks, man! I'll make up for
it. I'll save up all the throws for
the big fight.

Scott

(chuckling)

Alright, if you want. It's really
fine though.

FADE TO BLACK

"2 Months Later" FADES ONTO THE BLACK SCREEN.

FADE TO the game.

INT. CURSED TEMPLE, THE LAYER OF THE FINAL BEAST - DAY

Columns and other stone architecture dwarf over the players, and
runic symbols evoke an ominous, ritualistic nature to the
structures.

COLD OPEN

Within an arena of several demonic hog creatures. The
conversation casually overlays the gameplay.

SCOTT

Wow, it's been a bit since we last played.

ROBIN

Yeah, I've been pretty preoccupied with
school. Crushing it, as usual.

SCOTT

Oh really?

ROBIN

Not even joking, college is a cakewalk
compared to High School.
I could tutor you if you want.
50% off

SCOTT
50% off? Like your aim?

ROBIN
Whatever man.

The player and Robin finish off the last enemy, before
approaching A SPLIT PATHWAY

One path contains a treacherous platforming section, while the
other a set of stairs leading upwards. This mirrors the previous
split pathway situation presented.

ROBIN
Which way you thinkin?

SCOTT
Well the left has platforming,
which you're terrible at-

ROBIN
What are you talking about?
I'm great at platforming

SCOTT
Didn't you say it gives you vertigo?
Like actual nausea?

ROBIN
Tell you what, lets race. If you do this
section with me, last one to the end or first
to die gives up 100 gold

SCOTT
You've been saving up 3 levels for a
new helmet. You don't need to prove anything
to me dude.

ROBIN

We racing or not?

//If the Player declines by stepping into the safe path:

SCOTT

Yeah I'm good on taking your gold.

ROBIN

That's what I thought.

//If the player accepts by lining up with Scott on his path:

Robin quickly runs off the edge, plummeting into the black abyss before respawning next to Scott.

SCOTT

(Barely stifling laughter)

PFFFTT, bro I *TOLD* you.

ROBIN

Yeah yeah ok. Take your gold.

Is that what you wanted?

SCOTT

I really don't want your gold man.

ROBIN

Just come on.

Robin starts of the stairs from the alternate path, prompting the player to follow. They ascend to the OUTSIDE ROOF OF THE TEMPLE, the red natural light of dawn creating a stark contrast from the torchlit interior. Before them lies a new set of stone stairs, more weathered than the last and leading to the top of a volcano, the Beast's resting place.

ROBIN

This place is Hella' creepy

SCOTT

(laughing a bit)

Yeah its like..uhh actually nevermind

ROBIN

Nevermind?

SCOTT

It's a Chicago thing, don't worry about it.

ROBIN

Are you really pulling a "you had to be there"?

SCOTT

(awkward chuckle)

Hehe no its..There's this, uh, dingey street me and my friends walk across to get to a coffee shop. I forgot you wouldnt have seen it.

ROBIN

Ah...yeah, that makes sense.

SCOTT

That's gotta be the final boss.
Are you ready for this?

ROBIN

Oh more than ready. You know how I've been saving all the bombs in thor's-bomb-slinger?

SCOTT

Yeah?

ROBIN

Well my computer science classes are finally paying off. I hacked the bombs' code to give it the damage of 50 explosions.

SCOTT

No way, really?

ROBIN

Yup, it'll be an instant kill.

SCOTT

Dang!...and you're sure that'll work?

ROBIN

Of course it'll work! I triple
checked the syntax and everything.
Trust me.

SCOTT

...ok man. If you say so...
Lets blow this sucker up.

ROBIN

Heck yeah bro!

Scott and Robin ascend the steps up to a circular arena atop the volcano, the floor decorated with runic symbols of a matching aesthetic to the Beast slumbering in its center. The Beast is giant and imposing, far more so than any foe encountered previously. Robin, having led the way, reaches the top step first but stops just short of entering the battlefield.

ROBIN

Stand back..

Robin throws the bomb into the arena. It lands in front of the Beast, sitting for several tense beats before its detonation.

ROBIN

So long lo-o-o-o-o-o-o-oo-o-o-o-o-o-

Robins audio glitches and repeats over itself along with a cacophony of explosions, THE SCREEN LAGS AND GLITCHES, becoming visually unintelligible. After about 5 seconds of this sensory overload, THE NEW ENVIRONMENT OF A DEEP CAVERN comes into view. Robin and Scott are now in the middle of a dim and damp cave, visible only by the torches perched along its walls. The echo of trickling rhythmically breaks an otherwise dead silence.

SCOTT

What just happened? Is this...
yeah this is the cave we beat

like a month ago

ROBIN

No...no that doesn't make sense.
That makes zero sense.

SCOTT

Do we have to do this all again.
And the snow level? Oh God,
and the swamp level.

ROBIN

It was a simple adjustment.
I only changed like 2 lines of code.
Why would-

SCOTT

2 lines? I think it'd take more than that
to hack the game, right? Aren't you
Ace'ing your classes?

ROBIN

I'M NOT, OK! I'M FAILING.
EVERY. SINGLE. GRADE.

SCOTT

You're failing? Seriously?

ROBIN

Oh like that's *SO HARD* to believe!
You knew I never stood a chance from
the start. The only one stupid enough
to believe in me is my mom, and now
she's paying the price. 6,000 dollars
in tuition!

SCOTT

Hey you can still turn this around.
I know a few good tutoring websites-

ROBIN

You think I haven't tried tutoring?
I've gone through 3 tutors in 2 months!
I'M AWFUL AT CODE! I'M AWFUL AT EVERYTHING!

SCOTT

Why...why didn't you say anything?
Why lie?

ROBIN

What, so you can look down on me more than
you already do in your Ivy League Tower? We
only hang out so you can laugh at my failures.
Don't lie to me, I'm just your clown!

SCOTT

Is that really what you think of me?

ROBIN

I'm not *that* stupid Scott. Let's not pretend
that we'd even be friends if we weren't neighbors

SCOTT

I...

PHONE RINGING is heard through Robin's microphone.

ROBIN

Oh great that's exactly what I need.
Time for my weekly reminder of how I'm bleeding
my Mom's checking account to flunk remedial
programming courses.
I'll...

(deep inhale)

...yeah

Robin disconnects. Pause a few moments.

FADE TO BLACK

"1 Month Later" FADES ONTO THE BLACK SCREEN.

FADE TO the game.

INT. CAVE - DAY

Runic symbols light the cave. Scott fades into the game.

Scott is free to walk around for a second.

Robin fades in.

Scott
Hey, it's been a while.

Pause. Via chat, Robin texts "Sure has."

Scott
Yeah.. Uh, how's winter break at home going?

"Hanging in there."

Scott
Yeah, gotcha... no Mic today?

Robin
"Yeah I lost it"

They move throughout the cave, slaying enemies, and finding a puzzle.

Robin
"Wait do you see that?" Sure

Scott
Do I see what?

"The way these runes are on these tiles. It's like a code."

Scott
I don't really see how. They're just
Look like symbols.

"They're a language. One half of a symbol represents a consonant and the other represents a vowel." Pause. "It's like."

Robin goes to one of the runes.

Robin unmutes himself.

Robin
The only other glowing runes we've seen besides here were the ones at the boss's lair--

Scott
Oh so you found your mic?

Robin
Yeah yeah under my desk. Anyways I think it's the boss's true name.

Scott
You can read that?

Robin
Some people on the forums write memes with it, so I picked it up. Do you see what I'm talking about? I think if we spell it out like this... now you stand on that bottom left square

The two of them solve a puzzle by one of them standing on one tile, opening up a door.

Scott
(excited)
Wait...

Robin
No way!

Scott sighs relief.

Scott
Oh that's weeks less ground to cover!

Robin
We can beat the boss this session!

Scott
Lets do it

The two get to a platforming challenging with two bags of coin at the end. Robin continues to die, leaving Scott to get to the coin first.

Robin
Wait for me!

//if Scott chooses to save a bag for Robin:

Robin makes it to where Robin is, seeing he took both.

Robin
(bitter)
Ok, well sorry for making us back
track so much I guess.

//if Scott chooses to take both bags for himself:

Robin
Thanks for waiting.

Robin takes the other bag.

They make it back to the boss's lair.

Robin
Epic, this is it!

Scott
Yup. This time for real

They attack the boss, avoiding its attacks. The boss is brought
to the ground.

Robin
Ok! One of us hold em down, the
other hits his weak spot.

One of them hold it down, while the other strikes it. This
happens again.

Robin
That's it, you make the final blow!

Scott
Really?

Robin
(happy)
Trust me. It's okay.

//if Scott chooses to MAKE ROBIN TAKE FINAL BLOW:

Scott goes to Robin's position then starting kicking to keep the

boss down instead of him.

Robin

Hey, I just said.

Scott

Don't worry, I know how much you
want to do this.

Robin

But no, I'm trying to...

(disappointed)

Whatever, we don't have time...

Robin takes the final blow, killing the boss.

//if Scott chooses to TAKE FINAL BLOW:

Scott takes the final blow, killing the boss.

In a puff of smoke, the environment changes to healing tones, as
if the boss's existence was disease on the land.

Robin

That was sick!

Scott laughs in relief.

Scott

I'm just surprised we really did it.

A welcome pause slowly grows awkward.

Scott

So, what do we play now?

Robin

I mean, I don't know. I... First I
want to apologize about the way I
acted before. Not just last time
and today. For a long time. I keep
feeling seen as a failure, and I
took it out on you. I've been a bad
friend.

Scott
I forgive you, bro... So you're
good now? We're good?

Robin
Yeah. I think I'm done beating
myself up.

Pause.

Scott
Are we good?

Robin
I think... With everything, can I
have some time to think about it?
Tomorrow. It's getting late on the
East Coast.

Scott
Sure, man. Me too.

CUT TO BLACK
Retro social media page FADES IN
Scott can choose to unfriend or call Robin.

//if Scott chooses to UNFRIEND:

FADE TO BLACK

//if Scott chooses to CALL and FRIENDLY CHOICES =<3:

The phone icon rings and rings.

FADE TO BLACK

//if Scott chooses to CALL and FRIENDLY CHOICES =>3:

Scott
Hey! How's it going?

Robin

Oh yuh, know. My mom's doing her routine. Freaking out about my classes... And Im thinking about changing majors.

Scott

Really? What to?

Robin

It's called *visualization*.

Scott

Okay, you just made that up.

FADE OUT