

VERTIGO

ESSENTIAL VERTIGO

DC COMICS

IN WHICH THE DEAD RETURN;  
AND CHARLES ROWLAND  
CONCLUDES HIS EDUCATION.

# THE SANDMAN

SEASON OF MISTS 4



DIRECT SALES

02511 >

7 61941 20846 6

gaiman wagner jones III

25 AUG 98 \$1.95 US \$2.75 CAN  
SUGGESTED FOR MATURE READERS

OBI



*W*

IN WHICH THE DEAD RETURN;  
AND CHARLES ROWLAND  
CONCLUDES HIS EDUCATION.

SUGGESTED  
FOR MATURE  
READERS

NO. 25  
APR 1991  
\$1.50 US  
\$1.85 CAN  
80p UK

the  
**SANDMAN**<sup>TM</sup>  
E A S O N   O F   I S T S   4



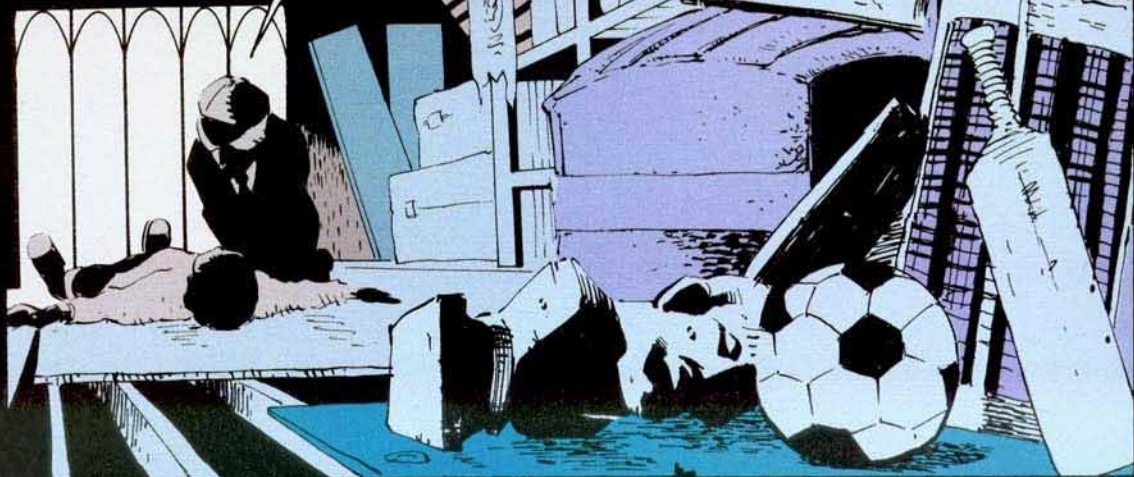
g a i m a n   w a g n e r   j o n e s III

# SEASON of MISTS Chapter = 4

*In which the dead return;  
and Charles Rowland  
concludes his education.*

DECEMBER  
1990.

ROWLAND?  
ARE YOU AWAKE  
YET?



MUMMY...?

I'M SO  
HOT...

AM I REALLY  
HERE? I HAD  
THIS DREAM.

YES, I'M  
HERE.

NO, IT'S ME,  
PAINE. DO YOU  
FEEL ANY  
BETTER?

I WASN'T  
SURE WHERE  
I WAS.

HOLD MY  
HAND.

PAINE?





I THINK IT WAS A DREAM.

BUT IT SEEMED SO REAL. LIKE I WAS REALLY THERE.

"BLOOD-RED WORMS WERE FEEDING ON MY ARM."



"THEY DIDN'T HURT MUCH, BUT WHEN THEY FELL OFF AND WRIGGLED AWAY, I FOUND MY ARM WAS RIDDLED WITH HOLES... LIKE SOMETHING THAT HAD BEEN UNDER THE SEA FOR A LONG TIME."



"AND I RAN OUT CRYING INTO THE OPEN, BUT IT WAS SNOWING."



"ONLY IT WASN'T SNOW. IT WAS THE SKELETONS OF BIRDS, FALLING FROM THE SKY. THEY CRUNCHED UNDERFOOT AS I RAN."



"AND THEN I SAW THAT THEY WERE TRYING TO MOVE. EVEN THE ONES I HAD CRUNCHED TO BITS."



THE WHOLE WORLD WAS COVERED WITH DEAD BIRDS... TRYING TO FLY.



I THINK IT WAS A DREAM.

BUT IT SEEMED SO REAL. LIKE I WAS REALLY THERE.



"BLOOD-RED WORMS WERE FEEDING ON MY ARM."

"THEY DIDN'T HURT MUCH, BUT WHEN THEY FELL OFF AND WRIGGLED AWAY, I FOUND MY ARM WAS RIDDLED WITH HOLES... LIKE SOMETHING THAT HAD BEEN UNDER THE SEA FOR A LONG TIME."



"AND I RAN OUT CRYING INTO THE OPEN, BUT IT WAS SNOWING."



"ONLY IT WASN'T SNOW. IT WAS THE SKELETONS OF BIRDS, FALLING FROM THE SKY. THEY CRUNCHED UNDERFOOT AS I RAN."



"AND THEN I SAW THAT THEY WERE TRYING TO MOVE. EVEN THE ONES I HAD CRUNCHED TO BITS."



THE WHOLE WORLD WAS COVERED WITH DEAD BIRDS... TRYING TO FLY.



DON'T WORRY, OLD MAN. YOU'LL BE WELL AGAIN SOON. IT WAS JUST A DREAM.

I'M SO HOT... I WANT SOME WATER.

THERE'S NO WATER LEFT, ROWLAND.

OH.



YOUR HAND... IT'S SO COLD...



WELL, THAT'S NOT EXACTLY SURPRISING, IS IT?

NO... SORRY...



I... I KEEP THINKING I CAN HEAR PEOPLE SINGING.

YOU CAN. IT'S SUNDAY MORNING, ROWLAND.

IT'S CHAPEL SERVICE. THEY'RE SINGING HYMNS.



CHAPEL? BUT WHO HAVE THEY GOT TO PRAY TO? THAT'S SICK...

SUNDAY? YOU SAID IT WAS SUNDAY.

YES.



SIX DAYS, THEN... THAT'S ALL IT'S BEEN?

THAT'S RIGHT.

IT... SEEMS LIKE A LIFETIME...



DON'T WORRY, OLD MAN. YOU'LL BE WELL AGAIN SOON. IT WAS JUST A DREAM.

I'M SO HOT... I WANT SOME WATER.

THERE'S NO WATER LEFT, ROWLAND.

OH.



YOUR HAND... IT'S SO COLD...



WELL, THAT'S NOT EXACTLY SURPRISING, IS IT?

NO... SORRY...



I... I KEEP THINKING I CAN HEAR PEOPLE SINGING.

YOU CAN. IT'S SUNDAY MORNING, ROWLAND.

IT'S CHAPEL SERVICE. THEY'RE SINGING HYMNS.



CHAPEL? BUT WHO HAVE THEY GOT TO PRAY TO? THAT'S SICK...

SUNDAY? YOU SAID IT WAS SUNDAY.

YES.



SIX DAYS, THEN... THAT'S ALL IT'S BEEN?

THAT'S RIGHT.

IT... SEEMS LIKE A LIFETIME...

MONDAY, SIX DAYS AGO.

EVEN WHEN EVERYONE'S GONE AWAY, THOUGHT CHARLES ROWLAND, THE SCHOOL SMELLS THE SAME...

THE SMELL OF SCHOOL IS A STRANGE, PERVASIVE THING: IT'S DISINFECTANT, WOOD POLISH AND INK, CHALK DUST, PIPE TOBACCO, BOILED CABBAGE, PAPER, FLATULENCE AND SOCKS.

THEY SAT AWKWARDLY IN ONE CORNER OF THE DINING HALL, WHILE LONG-DEAD HEADMASTERS STARED DOWN AT THEM STERNLY FROM DUSTY FORMAL PORTRAITS, HIGH ABOVE.

CHARLES ROWLAND HAD JUST TURNED THIRTEEN.

SO... WHAT DO YOU HAVE PLANNED FOR THIS EVENING, THEN, EH, YOUNG ROWLAND?

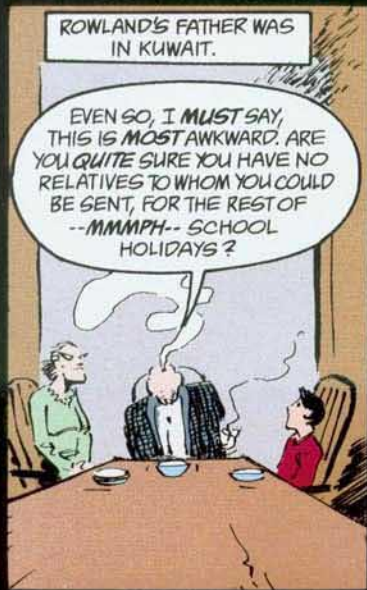
I DON'T KNOW, SIR. I'VE GOT TO WRITE A LETTER TO MY FATHER. AND THEN I'LL PROBABLY JUST GO UP TO THE LIBRARY AND READ.

IF THE FOG LIFTS I'LL GO FOR A WALK.

MMPH.

GOOD, GOOD. KEEP YOURSELF OCCUPIED. THAT'S THE IMPORTANT THING. KEEP YOUR MIND OFF IT. I'LL BE IN MY STUDY. IF THERE ARE ANY TELEPHONE CALLS FOR YOU, I'LL COME AND--MMPH-- FIND YOU.

THANK YOU, SIR.



ROWLAND'S FATHER WAS IN KUWAIT.

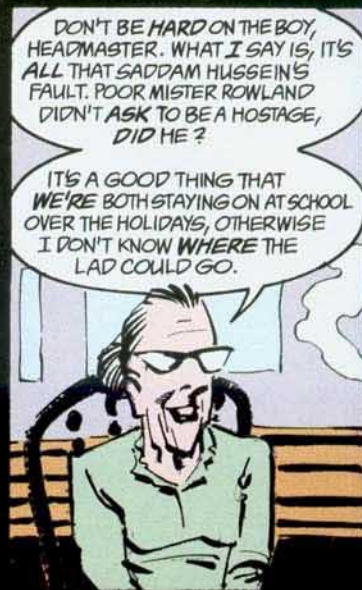
EVEN SO, I MUST SAY, THIS IS MOST AWKWARD. ARE YOU QUITE SURE YOU HAVE NO RELATIVES TO WHOM YOU COULD BE SENT, FOR THE REST OF --MMMPPH-- SCHOOL HOLIDAYS?



THERE'S NO ONE THAT I KNOW OF, SIR.

FATHER WAS GOING TO FLY ME OUT TO KUWAIT, IN THE HOLS. I'VE ALWAYS SPENT THE HOLIDAYS WITH HIM. UNTIL NOW.

MMMPPH.



DON'T BE HARD ON THE BOY, HEADMASTER. WHAT I SAY IS, IT'S ALL THAT SADDAM HUSSEIN'S FAULT. POOR MISTER ROWLAND DIDN'T ASK TO BE A HOSTAGE, DID HE?

IT'S A GOOD THING THAT WE'RE BOTH STAYING ON AT SCHOOL OVER THE HOLIDAYS, OTHERWISE I DON'T KNOW WHERE THE LAD COULD GO.



YOU'RE RIGHT, OF COURSE, MISS GRIBBLE.

OF COURSE I AM. AND ROWLAND CAN KEEP HIMSELF OCCUPIED. CAN'T YOU, DEAR?

YES, MATRON.



THAT'S RIGHT, LOVE. IF YOU GET BORED, COME ON UP TO THE SAN.-- I'LL MAKE YOU A CUP OF TEA, AND WE CAN HAVE A BIT OF A NATTER.

YES, MATRON.




RIGHT. NOW, YOU RUN ALONG. DON'T WORRY ABOUT THE PLATES. ALFRED WILL CLEAN UP LATER.

ALL RIGHT. THANK YOU, MATRON. THANK YOU, SIR.



REV. A. N. PARKINSON, M.A. (OXON) HEADMASTER 1901-1916

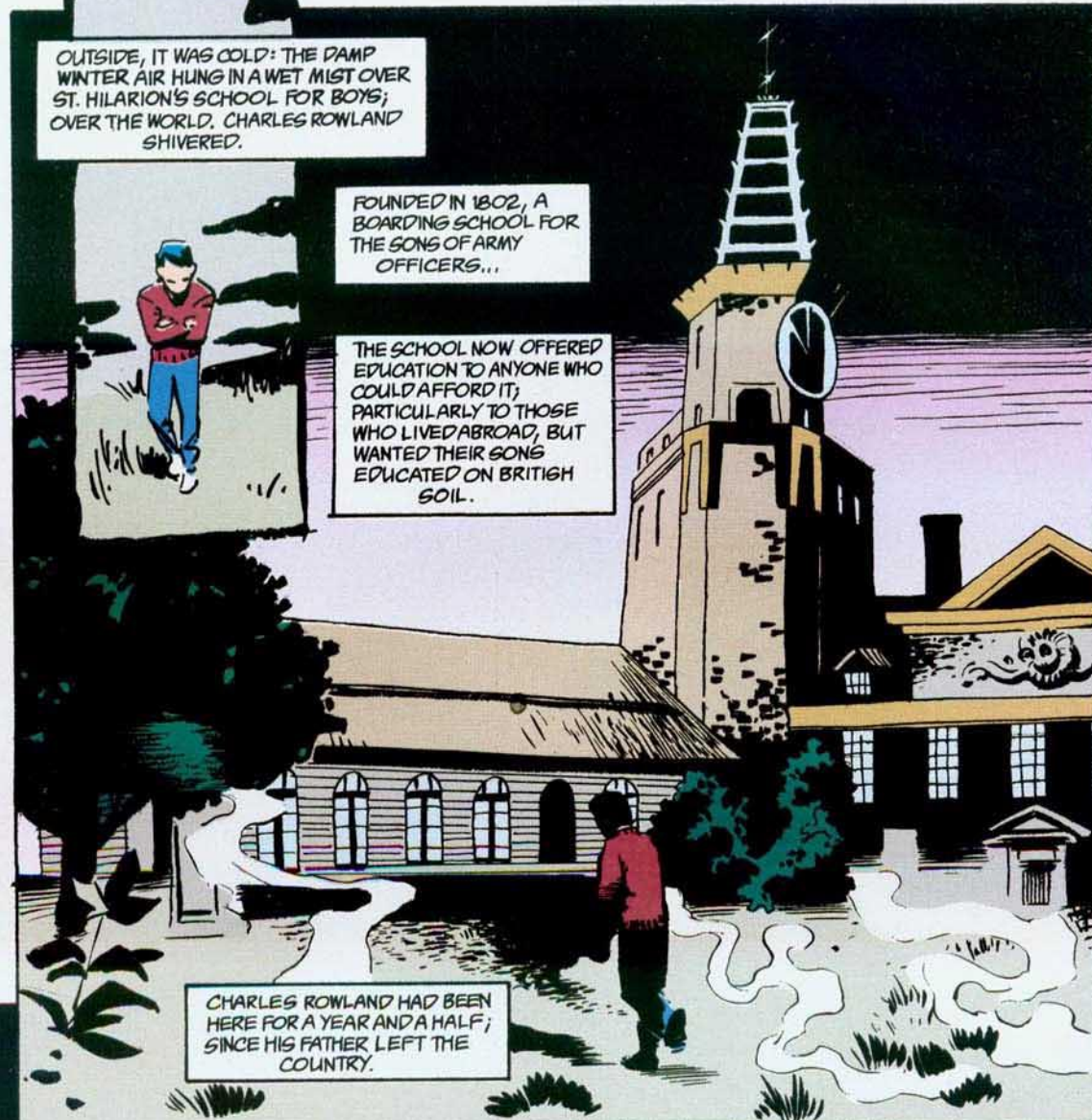




OUTSIDE, IT WAS COLD: THE DAMP WINTER AIR HUNG IN A WET MIST OVER ST. HILARION'S SCHOOL FOR BOYS; OVER THE WORLD, CHARLES ROWLAND SHIVERED.

FOUNDED IN 1802, A BOARDING SCHOOL FOR THE SONS OF ARMY OFFICERS...

THE SCHOOL NOW OFFERED EDUCATION TO ANYONE WHO COULD AFFORD IT; PARTICULARLY TO THOSE WHO LIVED ABROAD, BUT WANTED THEIR SONS EDUCATED ON BRITISH SOIL.




CHARLES ROWLAND HAD BEEN HERE FOR A YEAR AND A HALF; SINCE HIS FATHER LEFT THE COUNTRY.



HIS FATHER WAS AN ARCHITECT, A TALL, NERVOUS MAN, WHO DESIGNED HOSPITALS.

HIS MOTHER WAS LONG DEAD.

HE WALKED OVER TO THE EMPTY LIBRARY, COMPOSING A LETTER IN HIS HEAD, TO HIS FATHER.



IT WAS THE SAME LETTER HE HAD WANTED TO WRITE FOR A YEAR AND A HALF, AND NEVER HAD

"PLEASE, DADDY.

"TAKE ME HOME."



She looked through the tattered curtain, across at the handsome face of her husband, in whose lazy blue eyes, and behind whose inane smile she could now so plainly see the strength, energy and resourcefulness --

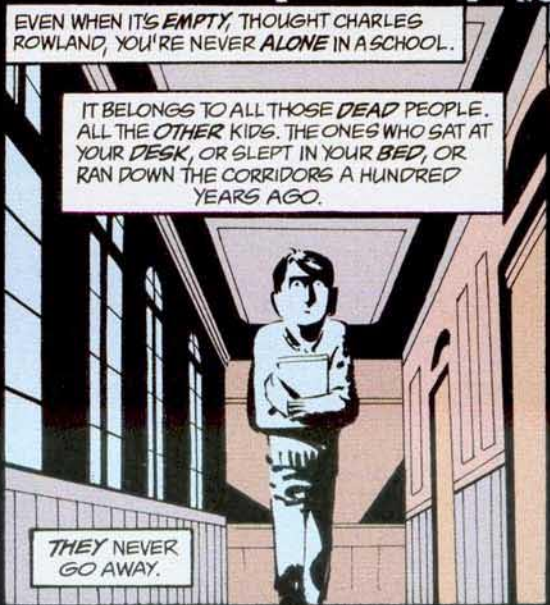
-- which had caused the Scarlet Pimpernel to be revered and trusted by his followers.

ROWLAND?  
CHARLES?



I KNOW THERE AREN'T ANY LIGHTS-OUT BELLS, WITH EVERYONE AWAY, BUT STILL, SPIT-SPOUT, TIME FOR YOU TO GET SOME SLEEP, YOUNG MAN.

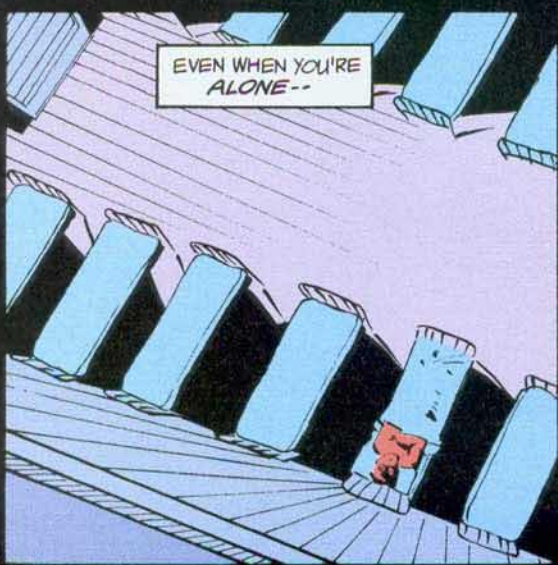
ALL RIGHT, MATRON.



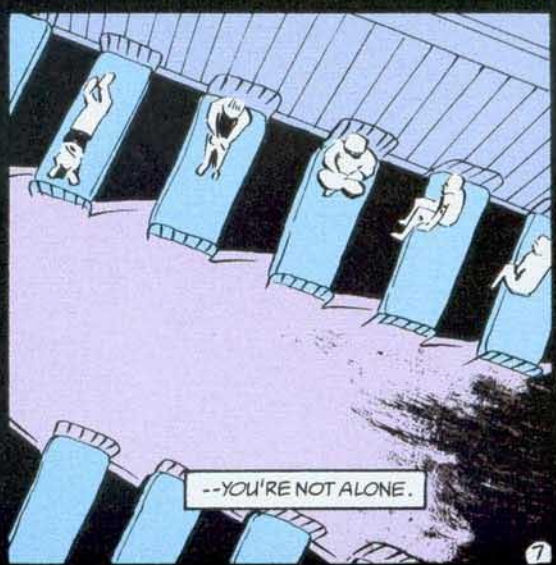
EVEN WHEN IT'S EMPTY, THOUGHT CHARLES ROWLAND, YOU'RE NEVER ALONE IN A SCHOOL.

IT BELONGS TO ALL THOSE DEAD PEOPLE. ALL THE OTHER KIDS. THE ONES WHO SAT AT YOUR DESK, OR SLEPT IN YOUR BED, OR RAN DOWN THE CORRIDORS A HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

THEY NEVER GO AWAY.



EVEN WHEN YOU'RE ALONE --



-- YOU'RE NOT ALONE.



...PAIN?  
WHAT WAS IT  
LIKE? AFTER  
YOU DIED?

NOT VERY  
NICE. I WENT  
TO HELL.



I THINK IT  
WAS HELL.

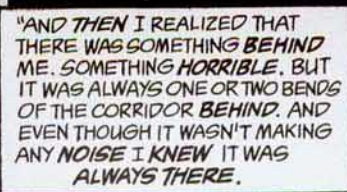


IT WAS LIKE A NIGHTMARE.  
THE KIND WHERE YOU KNOW IT'S A  
NIGHTMARE BUT YOU STILL CAN'T  
WAKE YOURSELF UP.

IT WAS JUST  
CORRIDORS.



"AND I WAS HURRYING DOWN  
THESE CORRIDORS, BECAUSE  
I KNEW I WAS LATE FOR  
SOMETHING, BUT I COULDN'T  
QUITE REMEMBER WHAT.



"AND THEN I REALIZED THAT  
THERE WAS SOMETHING BEHIND  
ME. SOMETHING HORRIBLE. BUT  
IT WAS ALWAYS ONE OR TWO BENDS  
OF THE CORRIDOR BEHIND. AND  
EVEN THOUGH IT WASN'T MAKING  
ANY NOISE I KNEW IT WAS  
ALWAYS THERE.



"AND IF I STARTED TO RUN  
IT WOULD GET ME.

"SO I JUST KEPT WALKING,  
AS FAST AS I COULD, DOWN  
THESE CORRIDORS, WITH  
SOMETHING SILENTLY WALKING  
BEHIND ME. SOMETHING SAD  
AND LONELY AND TERRIBLE.



"SOMETHING THAT HAD  
ALL THE TIME IN THE  
WORLD...



HOW... HOW  
LONG DID THIS  
GO ON FOR?

WHAT  
YEAR ARE WE  
IN NOW?



1990.

ABOUT 75  
YEARS, I  
SUPPOSE. BUT  
IT SEEMED  
FAR  
LONGER.

...PAIN?



YES.

I'M... I'M NOT  
AFRAID OF  
DYING.



YOU  
SHOULD  
BE.

TUESDAY. FIVE DAYS AGO.

CHARLES ROWLAND WENT DOWN FOR BREAKFAST, BUT THERE WAS NOBODY THERE, AND NO BREAKFAST IN SIGHT.

PUZZLED AND HUNGRY, HE WENT TO HIS LOCKER, AND GOT OUT HIS LAST PACKET OF CHOCOLATE DIGESTIVE BISCUITS.

THEN HE WALKED OUTSIDE, AND SAT ON THE WAR MEMORIAL, AND ATE THE WHOLE PACKET.

AT LUNCHTIME, WHEN NO ONE APPEARED IN THE DINING HALL, HE WENT UP TO THE HEADMASTER'S STUDY.

KNOCK KNOCK

COME!

HMMPH. THEODORE, WHO'S YOUR LITTLE FRIEND?

AH. ROWLAND. YES. ROWLAND, THIS IS MY MOTHER. MOTHER, THIS IS ROWLAND.

HOW DO YOU DO, YOUNG MAN?

ER...HELLO.

THE MISTS STILL HUNG LOW AROUND THE SCHOOL; THEY HAD SWALLOWED THE PLAYING FIELDS, AND THE PAVILION, AND THE ART ROOMS.

IN MEMORY OF THOSE BOYS FROM ST. HILARION'S WHO LAID DOWN THEIR LIVES IN THE GREAT WAR (1914-1918)

ANDREWS, R. M.  
AWCOCK, G. C.  
BARROW, L. T.  
BEETLE, J.  
BLEEK, T. L.  
BRUNT-SMITH, K. W.  
CHEESEMAN, N. K.  
COOK, S.  
CROTTY, R. R.  
CUTHBERTSON, S. M. L. W.  
DAVIES, P.  
DEVILS, H. P.

ROWLAND WAS COLD, AND HIS HAIR AND SKIN FELT DAMP.

VERY WELL, THANKS.

LIM, HOW ARE YOU?

DEAD.

I DIED IN JANUARY, 1942. UPON MY DEATH I FOUND MYSELF IN HELL. THIS DID NOT COME ENTIRELY AS A SURPRISE TO ME.



THEODORE'S FATHER, WHO OUTLIVED ME, HAD QUITE RUINED MY NERVES AND CONSTITUTION BY COMPELLING ME TO SUBMIT TO CERTAIN HUNNISH PRACTICES IN THE MARITAL BED.



I SUPPOSE I COULD HAVE ASKED FOR A DIVORCE. BUT HOW WOULD THAT HAVE LOOKED?

I COULD NOT HAVE STOOD UP THERE AND TOLD A JUDGE THE REVOLTING THINGS THAT THEODORE'S FATHER FORCED ME TO DO.



I BANNED HIM FROM MY BEDROOM; AND HE SLAKED HIS UNNATURAL LUSTS UPON THE HOUSEMAID.



AS I SAID; I WENT TO HELL. WHERE I WAS PUNISHED PAINFULLY, AND AT LENGTH.



PUNISHED AND PUNISHED AND PUNISHED.

THEODORE? WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU ARE DOING? REVOLTING HABIT!

MMPH. MOTHER, I AM HEADMASTER.

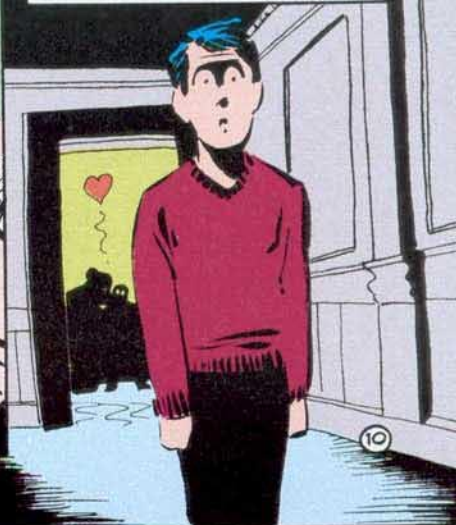


YOU ARE NOTHING OF THE KIND. YOU'RE MOTHER'S LITTLE BOY.



THAT'S RIGHT, MOTHER. SORRY, MOTHER.

STRANGE PEOPLE, THOUGHT CHARLES ROWLAND. HE FOUND HIMSELF WONDERING ABOUT INSANITY; BUT ADULTS WERE STRANGE, AND HE HAD FEW CRITERIA BY WHICH TO JUDGE THEM.

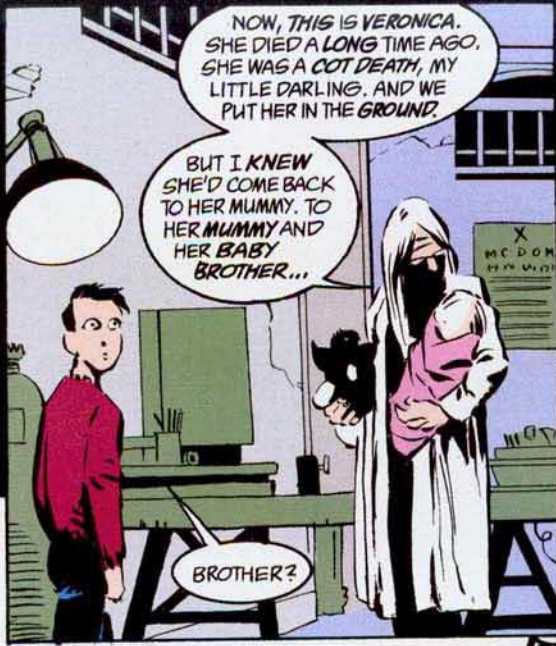




TROUBLED, HE HEADED FOR THE SANATORIUM, TO TALK TO THE MATRON.

CHARLES?  
HELLO, DEAR. COME IN. I'VE GOT SOME CHILDREN TO INTRODUCE YOU TO. I HAVEN'T SEEN THEM FOR SO LONG...

WELL, ONE OF THEM I NEVER REALLY SAW AT ALL.



NOW, THIS IS VERONICA. SHE DIED A LONG TIME AGO. SHE WAS A COT DEATH, MY LITTLE DARLING. AND WE PUT HER IN THE GROUND.

BUT I KNEW SHE'D COME BACK TO HER MUMMY. TO HER MUMMY AND HER BABY BROTHER...

BROTHER?



I... I THINK IT'S HER BROTHER.



IT... IT NEVER ACTUALLY GOT BORN. I WAS ONLY SIXTEEN. I CAUGHT GERMAN MEASLES... AND...

SAY HELLO TO CHARLES, BABY.



HELLO... CHARLES...



CHARLES?  
DON'T YOU WANT TO PLAY WITH MY BABIES?

CHARLES?

CHARLES ROWLAND RETURNED TO THE DORMITORY, HUNGRY AND SCARED. THAT EVENING HE STARED AT THE MIST, AS NIGHT FELL.

HE SAT UP IN BED THAT NIGHT, HUNGRY AND FRIGHTENED; NOBODY CAME TO TURN OFF THE LIGHTS.



HE WATCHED AS ALFRED, THE SCHOOL GROUNDS-MAN, RAN PAST, WAILING SOFTLY, PURSUED BY A WOMAN AND A CHILD. THE MISTS SWALLOWED THE THREE OF THEM; HE SAW NONE OF THEM AGAIN.



HE LET THEM BURN.

AND EVENTUALLY, CHARLES ROWLAND FELL ASLEEP.

WHY ARE YOU ... UP HERE? I MEAN, WHY DID YOU HIDE IN THE ATTIC?

BECAUSE MY BONES ARE UP HERE. IN THAT TRUNK. SEE? THIS IS WHERE I DIED.

THEY HID IT HERE. NO ONE EVER FOUND OUT.



HONESTLY-- I DON'T THINK THEY COULD HAVE LOOKED VERY HARD!

ALL THEIR STUFF IS STILL HERE. THEY HARDLY EVEN COVERED THEIR TRACKS. YOU CAN STILL SEE THE CIRCLE THEY DREW ON THE FLOOR OVER THERE ...

THIS WAS WHERE THEY USED TO COME, YOU SEE.

AT NIGHT, TRYING TO RAISE DEVILS THAT NEVER CAME.

THEY'D DRESS UP, AND THEY'D DO STUFF. THEY'D KILL FROGS AND RABBITS AND CATS...

AND YOU.



AND ME.

WEDNESDAY.  
FOUR DAYS  
AGO.

GOD,  
IT'S A  
BUG!

YUCK!  
A BUG.

WAKE  
THE BUG UP,  
CHEESEY.

WHAT'S YOUR  
PATHETIC NAME,  
BUG?

GOD,  
WHAT A  
SUB-HUMAN  
MORON. COME  
ON, SCUMBUG.  
WHAT'S YOUR  
NAME?

OWWW!  
PLEASE! IT'S CHARLES  
ROWLAND.

OW!

THAT'S  
BETTER, BUG. I'M  
CHEESEMAN.

I'M BARROW.

I'M SKINNER.  
WE'RE OLD BOYS.

VERY  
OLD, HEE HEE  
HEE.





YOU THREE! YOU SILLY BOYS! I KNOW YOU THREE, DON'T THINK I DON'T! GET AWAY FROM THAT BOY.

BARROW, CHEESEMAN, AND... HMM, SKINNER, ISN'T IT?



YES, HEADMASTER. SORRY, HEADMASTER.

I NEVER TRUSTED YOU THREE. YOU DID SOMETHING TO THAT BOY, DIDN'T YOU? THE ONE WHO DISAPPEARED.

NOT US, SIR. NO, SIR.

LIARS. STILL, IT'S ALL HISTORY NOW.

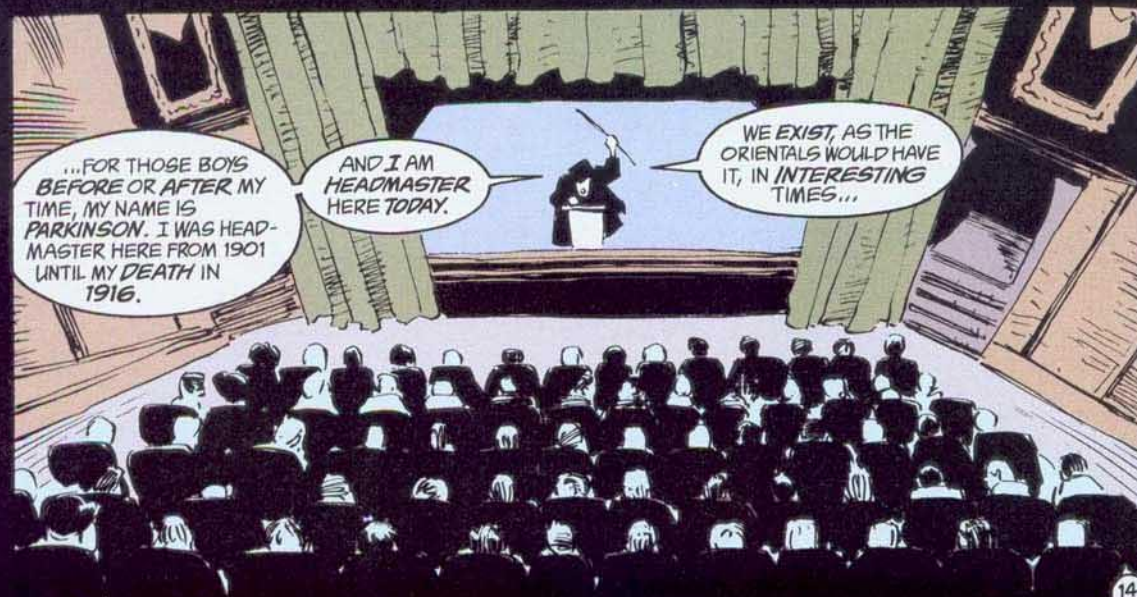


ASSEMBLY IN TEN MINUTES IN THE MAIN HALL. AND YOU-- LIVE BOY!--CLEAN YOURSELF UP!

Y-YES, SIR.



WE CAN WAIT, LITTLE BUG. WE CAN WAIT.



...FOR THOSE BOYS BEFORE OR AFTER MY TIME, MY NAME IS PARKINSON. I WAS HEADMASTER HERE FROM 1901 UNTIL MY DEATH IN 1916.

AND I AM HEADMASTER HERE TODAY.

WE EXIST, AS THE ORIENTALS WOULD HAVE IT, IN INTERESTING TIMES...



HOWEVER, DESPITE ANY TRIBULATIONS WE MIGHT HAVE EXPERIENCED, WE ARE ALL NOW BACK AT SCHOOL. AT THE OLD SCHOOL.

AND I WILL NOT TOLERATE SLACKNESS, OR LACK OF DISCIPLINE, FROM ANY OF YOU.

EVIL LITTLE BOYS.

YOU ALL DIED HERE, OR HAD NO PLACE ELSE TO WHICH YOU COULD RETURN.

IT SEEMS THAT I AM THE ONLY MASTER WHO HAS RESUMED HIS DUTIES AT ST. HILARION'S.

VERY WELL, EVIL LITTLE BOYS. I AM THE ONLY MASTER.



I WILL TEACH YOU WHAT I LEARNED.

IN HELL I LEARNED SO MANY THINGS.

YOU, BOY. THE BOY BLUBBING. FRONT ROW. WHAT'S YOUR NAME?



MOULD, SIR. SIMON MOULD, SIR.

WHEN WERE YOU HERE?

I DIED IN 1953, SIR. I HUNG MYSELF, SIR. I'M SORRY, SIR. I DIDN'T MEAN TO, SIR.



OF COURSE YOU MEANT TO, YOU SILLY LITTLE BOY. NOW, STOP BLUBBING. OR I'LL GIVE YOU SOMETHING TO BLUB ABOUT.

I WILL SPEND TODAY DRAWING UP A TIMETABLE FOR THE SCHOOL; SO THIS DAY WILL BE DEVOTED TO SILENT STUDY. I'LL WANT TO HEAR SILENCE FROM ALL OF YOU.



WHAT'S THE POINT? I MEAN, WHAT ARE WE GOING TO STUDY?

DEAD LANGUAGES?



AAGH!

WAK!

POP!



YOU WILL MIND YOUR MANNERS, BOY. WHO ARE YOU?

PETER HINCHCLIFFE, SIR. I CHOKED ON MY OWN VOMIT IN 1977, SIR. BOOZE AND PILLS.



GET YOUR HAIR CUT, HINCHCLIFFE.

YOU ARE SCHOOLBOYS.

YOU ARE AT SCHOOL.

YOU COME TO SCHOOL TO STUDY.



THEREFORE, YOU WILL STUDY.



mens sana in corpore morua. EH, BOYS? "A HEALTHY MIND IN A DEAD BODY..."

CHARLES ROWLAND SAT, HUNGRY, IN A ROOM SURROUNDED BY DEAD BOYS, AND TRIED TO FOCUS ON HIS TEXT-BOOK.



AFTER A WHILE HE BECAME AWARE THAT NO ONE ELSE IN THE ROOM WAS BREATHING.

IN THE AFTERNOON, THE NEW HEADMASTER SENT THE BOYS DOWN TO THE SCHOOL LAKE, TO BATHE.



CHARLES FELT HIS LIPS TURNING BLUE. HIS FINGERS AND TOES BECAME NUMB. NO ONE ELSE SEEMED TO NOTICE THE COLD.

THERE WAS NO FOOD THAT NIGHT.



AFTER LIGHTS OUT, WHEN THE OTHER BOYS WERE LAID OUT IN THEIR BEDS, CHARLES CREEPT OUT OF THE DORMITORY, DRIVEN BY HUNGER.



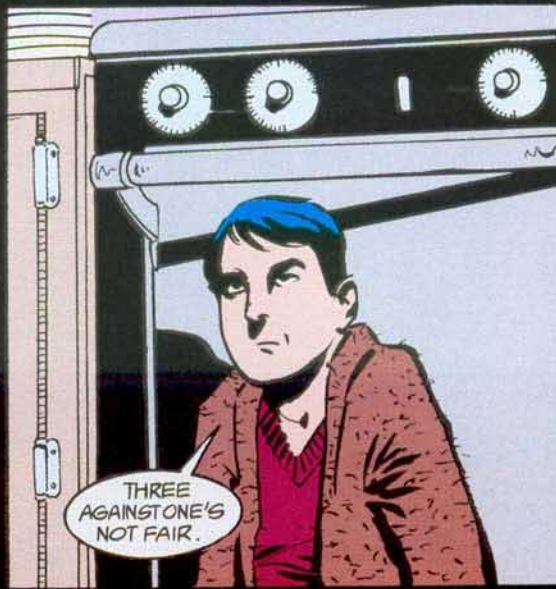
WELL, LOOK WHO'S SNEAKING OUT OF THE DORM AFTER LIGHTS-OUT, CHEESEY. IT'S THE NEW BUG.



WE SAID WE COULD WAIT, NEW BUG.

WE DON'T LIKE YOU, NEW BUG. WE THINK YOU'RE PATHETIC.

WE'RE GOING TO MAKE YOU SORRY YOU WERE EVER BORN...



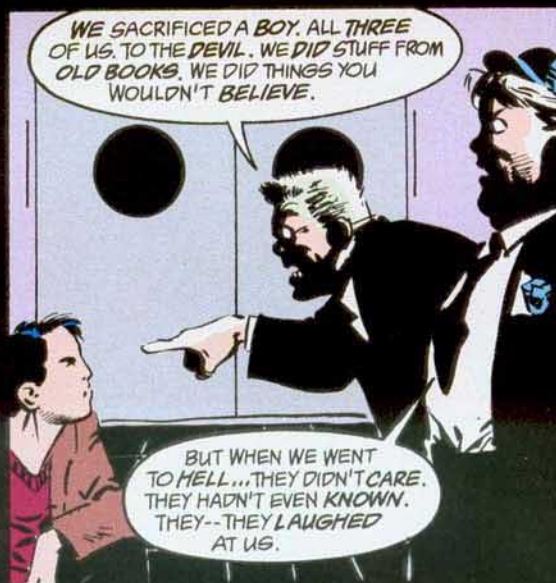
THREE AGAINSTONE'S NOT FAIR.



FAIR? WHAT'S FAIR?

CHEESEMAN WAS KILLED IN THE TRENCHES, AFTER HE WAS EXPELLED. HE WAS ONLY SEVENTEEN. BARROW AND I HAD ALREADY DIED OF DIPHTHERIA.

WAS THAT FAIR? WE WERE ONLY KIDS.



WE SACRIFICED A BOY. ALL THREE OF US. TO THE DEVIL. WE DID STUFF FROM OLD BOOKS. WE DID THINGS YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE.

BUT WHEN WE WENT TO HELL...THEY DIDN'T CARE. THEY HADN'T EVEN KNOWN. THEY--THEY LAUGHED AT US.



THAT'S NOT WHAT I CALL FAIR.

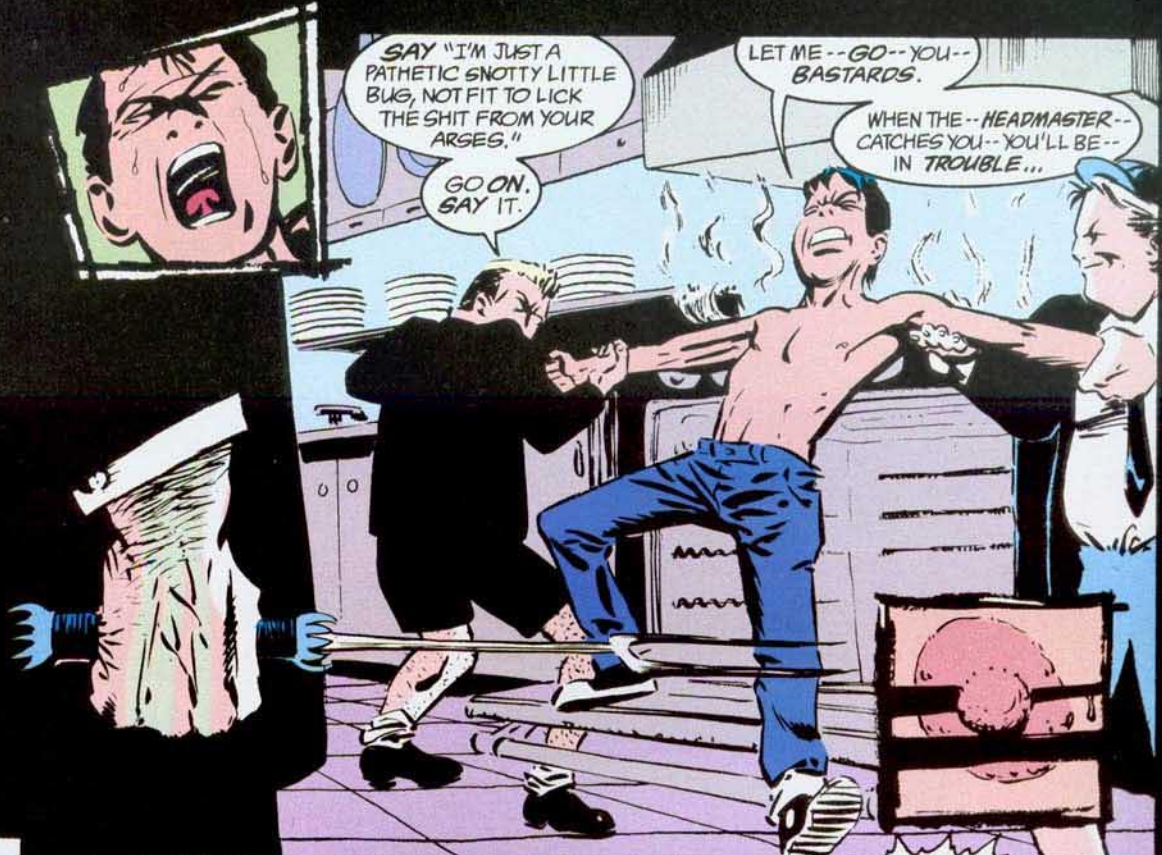
ALL THE TROUBLE WE WENT THROUGH WITH THE LITTLE BRAT. DRINKING HIS BLOOD. HIDING THE CORPSE. STEALING THE HOST FROM THE CHAPEL...

...AND NOBODY IN HELL GAVE A TOSS.



WE BURNED ANYWAY.

JUST LIKE YOU'RE GOING TO, BUG.



SAY "I'M JUST A PATHETIC SNOTTY LITTLE BUG, NOT FIT TO LICK THE SHIT FROM YOUR ARGES."

GO ON. SAY IT.

LET ME -- GO -- YOU -- BASTARDS.

WHEN THE -- HEADMASTER -- CATCHES YOU -- YOU'LL BE -- IN TROUBLE...



WHAT'S HE GOING TO DO TO US, THEN, BUG? EH?

KILL US?



NOW, SAY IT.



I'M A... I'M A...

UHN.



BLOODY HELL, FELLOWS. HE'S OUT COLD ALREADY. WE'D HARDLY STARTED.

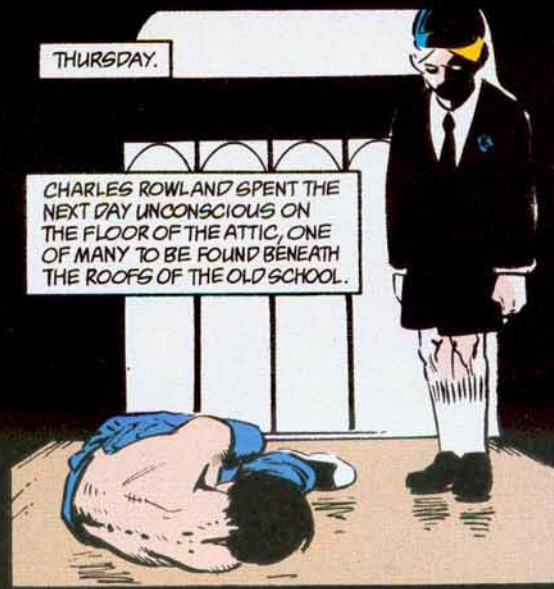
IN OUR DAY A GOOD NEW BUG WOULD LAST FOR MUCH LONGER THAN THAT.

REMEMBER SOMERVILLE? OR BARTLETT-JONES? OR THE YATES TWINS?

THOSE WERE THE GOOD OLD DAYS.

HAPPIEST DAYS OF OUR LIVES...







ON SUNDAY, CHARLES ROWLAND DIED.





IS THAT ME?  
GOSH, I LOOK TERRIBLE.

NAH--YOUR BODY DOESN'T LOOK THAT BAD. I'VE SEEN MUCH WORSE.



OKAY, CHARLES. ENOUGH SIGHTSEEING. WE HAVE TO GO NOW.

WHAT ABOUT PAINEZ?

IT'S YOU I'M HERE FOR, CHARLES. NOT HIM.



IT'S FINE, ROWLAND. DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME. YOU GO.

I TOOK HIM ALREADY, CHARLES. AND HE'S STILL DEAD. NOW IT'S YOUR TURN.



NO. IF HE'S NOT GOING, THEN NEITHER AM I. HE'S MY FRIEND.



I DON'T HAVE TIME TO ARGUE, CHARLES. THERE'S TOO MUCH GOING ON RIGHT NOW...

LOOK. YOU'RE COMING WITH ME. HE STAYS.



TAKE MY HAND, CHARLES.



I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE.

NOT WITHOUT HIM. I'M SORRY. I'M JUST NOT GOING.



CHARLES...

OKAY. OKAY. FINE. STAY.

THERE REALLY ISN'T TIME TO ARGUE ABOUT THIS-- AND I JUST DON'T HAVE THE ENERGY. I'VE GOT TOO MANY OTHER THINGS TO WORRY ABOUT. STAY IF YOU HAVE TO. I'LL CATCH UP WITH YOU LATER.



UM. THANK YOU. I REALLY MEAN IT. THANKS.

YEAH. WELL, I'LL PICK YOU UP AS SOON AS THINGS ARE LESS CRAZY, CHARLES.

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELVES.



SO, WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO NOW?

I'M NOT SURE. BUT I CAN TELL YOU WHAT WE'RE NOT GOING TO DO. WE'RE NOT STAYING HERE ANY LONGER.

HUH?



LEAVE THE ATTIC?

BUT WE CAN'T. I MEAN, MY BONES ARE UP HERE.

WELL, SO ARE MINE.



NOT TO MENTION MY FLESH AND HAIR AND STUFF. BUT I DON'T SEE WHY THAT MEANS I HAVE TO SIT AROUND UP HERE UNTIL SHE COMES BACK FOR US.



ANYWAY, I DON'T FEEL ILL ANY MORE. I FEEL FINE.

DEAD, BUT FINE.

COME ON.



ROWLAND. I'M SCARED.



LOOK AT IT THIS WAY: DO YOU WANT TO BE A GHOST IN AN ATTIC ALL YOUR LIFE?

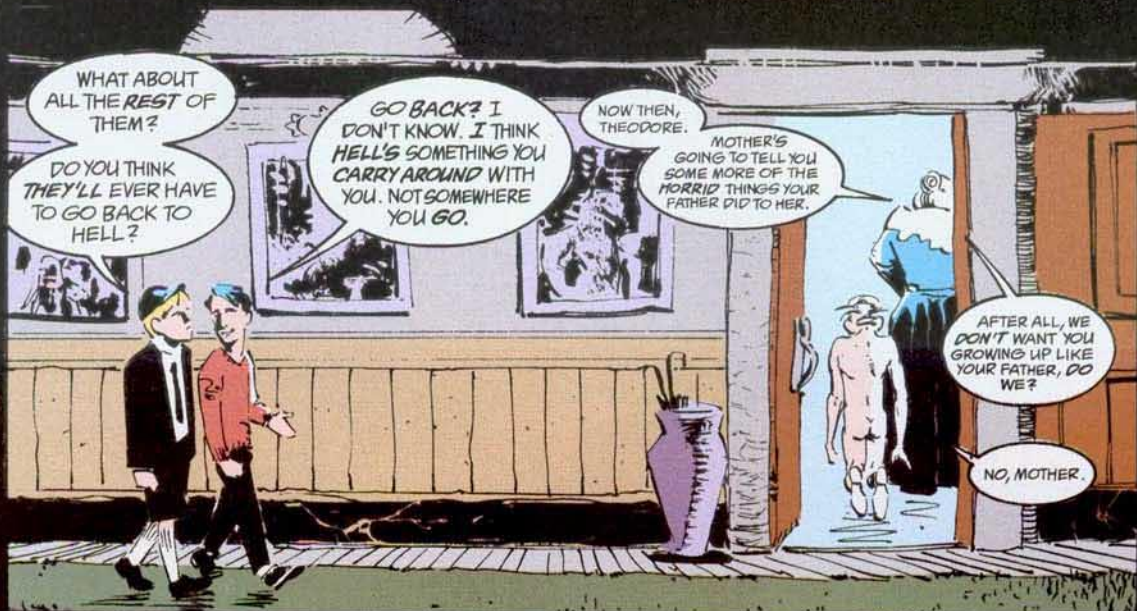


YES, YOU'RE RIGHT. IT'S PART OF GROWING UP, I SUPPOSE...



YOU ALWAYS HAVE TO LEAVE SOMETHING BEHIND YOU.





WHAT ABOUT ALL THE REST OF THEM?

DO YOU THINK THEY'LL EVER HAVE TO GO BACK TO HELL?

GO BACK? I DON'T KNOW. I THINK HELL'S SOMETHING YOU CARRY AROUND WITH YOU. NOT SOMEWHERE YOU GO.

NOW THEN, THEODORE.

MOTHER'S GOING TO TELL YOU SOME MORE OF THE HORRID THINGS YOUR FATHER DID TO HER.

AFTER ALL, WE DON'T WANT YOU GROWING UP LIKE YOUR FATHER, DO WE?

NO, MOTHER.



OW! CHEESEMAN! YOU BRUTE! STOP IT!

SORRY, BARROW, OLD MAN. BUT WITH NONE OF THE LITTLE TARTS TO FAG FOR ME AND SKINNER, IT'S GOING TO HAVE TO BE YOU. WE HAVE TO HAVE OUR LITTLE FUN.

YAARGH! YOU...

LANGUAGE, BARROW. LANGUAGE.

THEY'RE DOING THE SAME THINGS THEY ALWAYS DID. THEY'RE DOING IT TO THEMSELVES. THAT'S HELL.



COGITO ERGO SUM, DESCARTES' MAXIM, WAS UNPHILOSOPHICAL IN THE EXTREME. WHY? BECAUSE HE ASSUMES THE EXISTENCE OF THE THINKER. --STOP THAT, CONNELLY!-- HE MIGHT AS WELL HAVE SAID THAT A ROSE IS RED, AND THEREFORE IT EXISTS.

Schedule of Classes

MANSON, PUT THAT AWAY! JUST BECAUSE I'M NOT LOOKING DOESN'T MEAN I CAN'T SEE YOU!

"HIGHER THAN HIMSELF CAN NO MAN THINK," --TUPPER!-- AS THE LEARNED PROTAGORAS ONCE SAID.

I DON'T THINK I AGREE. I THINK MAYBE HELL IS A PLACE.

BUT YOU DON'T HAVE TO STAY ANYWHERE FOREVER.



SO WHERE ARE WE GOING NOW?

I DON'T KNOW. AWAY FROM HERE. I'M SICK OF THIS PLACE. THERE'S A WHOLE WORLD OUT THERE.

I BET WE'VE GOT A WHILE BEFORE THEY SORT THIS MESS OUT, AND SHE COMES BACK TO GET US.



I'M GAME IF YOU ARE.

ERR. YOU CAN CALL ME EDWIN, YOU KNOW. IF YOU WANT TO.

OH. FAIR ENOUGH. I'M CHARLES.



CHARLES? WHAT WILL YOUR FATHER THINK ABOUT YOU BEING DEAD?

HE'LL PROBABLY BE RELIEVED. I DON'T THINK HE EVER LIKED BEING A PARENT.

AND MY MUM WON'T MIND. SHE'S DEAD ALREADY, SO SHE WON'T BE PREJUDICED.



HOW LONG DO YOU THINK WE'VE GOT? UNTIL SHE CATCHES UP WITH US AGAIN?

I DUNNO.

BUT WE MIGHT AS WELL MAKE THE MOST OF IT. JUST TAKE IT AS IT COMES.

DEATH, YOU MEAN? OR LIFE?



EITHER. BOTH. ANYWAY, I THINK WE'VE LEARNED ALL WE'RE GOING TO AT SCHOOL.

NOW: LET'S SEE WHAT LIFE'S GOT TO OFFER US...