

Coherer

YOUNG DANNY IS ABOUT TO OPEN A DOOR THAT SHOULDN'T BE OPENED... BUT SOMETIMES, WHAT'S BEHIND YOU IS MORE TERRIFYING THAN WHAT'S AHEAD...

DANNY IS A YOUNG MAN WHO IS IN RECOVERY. NOT FROM SURGERY OR REHAB, BUT FROM THE SUDDEN DEATH OF HIS BELOVED FATHER--A HUMBLE MAN OF CHINESE DESCENT WHO ONLY WANTED TO PROVIDE FOR HIS FAMILY. CANCER TOOK HIM QUICKLY.

TRAPPED IN THE LONELY MANSION OF HIS MOTHER'S LONGTIME LOVER--AND NOW, HUSBAND--DANNY HAPPENS UPON A DISCOVERY IN THE ATTIC... HIS FATHER'S BELONGINGS, WHICH HE WAS TOLD HAD BEEN DISCARDED.

WHOA!

THIS IS DAD'S SHORTWAVE RADIO. MOM TOLD ME SHE THREW IT AWAY.

DANNY'S FATHER, LI WANG--A WWII VETERAN IN THE CHINESE ARMY--KILLED A JAPANESE SOLDIER IN HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT.

THIS SWORD WAS ONE OF HIS FATHER'S MOST PRIZED POSSESSIONS.

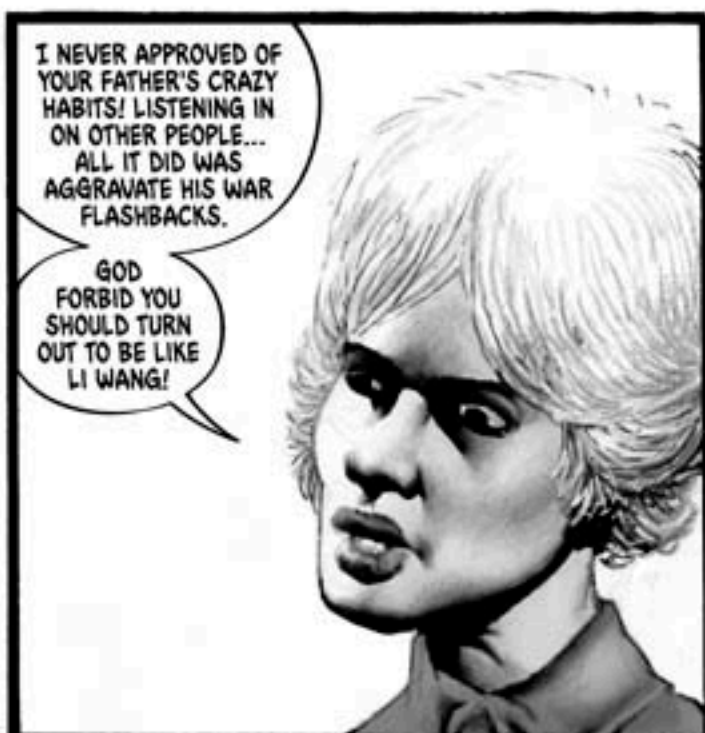
DANNY?! WHERE ARE YOU?!

COMING, MOTHER!



JUST WHERE THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING WITH THAT?

YOU TOLD ME YOU THREW OUT DAD'S STUFF. HE SAID I COULD HAVE HIS SHORTWAVE. WHY DID YOU *LIE* TO ME?



I NEVER APPROVED OF YOUR FATHER'S CRAZY HABITS! LISTENING IN ON OTHER PEOPLE... ALL IT DID WAS AGGRAVATE HIS WAR FLASHBACKS.

GOD FORBID YOU SHOULD TURN OUT TO BE LIKE LI WANG!



YOU HAD *NO RIGHT* TO DO THAT. I'M TAKING WHAT'S RIGHTFULLY MINE.

AND I'M KEEPING MY LAST NAME! DON'T EVER CALL ME DANNY NASH. I'M *DANNY WANG* FROM NOW ON!



YOU'VE BEEN NOTHING BUT TROUBLE, DANNY. *NOTHING!* AND YOU'RE NOT ALLOWED UP THERE ANYMORE!

I'M *KEEPING* THIS RADIO.



HE KNOWS, I TELL YOU. HE KNOWS.

HOW COULD HE KNOW? WE DID IT SLOWLY, PERFECTLY MIMICKING DEATH BY PANCREATIC CANCER. AND I SIGNED THE MEDICAL REPORTS. *AND I MADE SURE THERE WAS NO AUTOPSY.*




OH, GOD, STEVEN! WHY DID WE HAVE TO DO IT THIS WAY? HE LOOKED AT ME SO ODDLY TODAY WHEN HE FOUND HIS FATHER'S BELONGINGS.

DAMMIT! I KNEW WE SHOULD HAVE DESTROYED EVERYTHING. AND *EVERYONE!* STARTED FRESH, WITH A CLEAN SLATE. AFTER ALL, WE CAN ALWAYS HAVE NEW KIDS.






THE HYMN OF ORDEAL, NO. 23



MY DAUGHTER'S BONES, SUSPENDED IN MINERAL FLUIDS, TURN AS SMOOTHLY AND SHINE AS BRIGHTLY AS THE OIL-COATED JOINTS OF THE MECHANISM THEY GUIDE.



HUMAN BODIES DID NOT MAKE THE TRANSIT TO DEEP SPACE WHOLE, ONLY GUTS PACKED IN GEL AND NERVES STRUNG INTO WIRES.

WE HAD TRIED TO SEND LIVE, WHOLE SUBJECTS AT FIRST. THE RESULTS WERE... UNSAVORY.



I THOUGHT THE ADMIRAL RECOMMENDED THAT YOU NOT COME DOWN HERE, DR. RASKE.

JUST WANTED TO OVERSEE HER LAST DIAGNOSTIC TEST IN PERSON.

SHE KNEW WHAT SHE HAD VOLUNTEERED FOR BEFORE THE FIRST FLENSING CUT HAD BEEN MADE.




DO THEY ALWAYS MOVE THAT WAY?

SUBJECT 23? YEAH. IT'S THE NERVOUS SYSTEM TRYING TO STIMULATE HER MUSCULATURE AS SHE ADJUSTS TO THE SHIP'S CONTROLS.


SHE'S NOT REACTING TO YOU.



WE TOOK
APART THE
INVADERS, TO
DISCOVER
HOW THEY HAD
REACHED US.



THIS WAS THE PRICE
WE PAID TO TURN OUR
ROUT INTO A WAR:
RECONSTRUCTING
OURSELVES INTO
WEAPONS TO BE
SENT INTO THE VOID.



NOT AS PEOPLE OR SOLDIERS,
BUT AS SHRIKES--FOLDED
WARBIRDS SENT OUT TO
CLEANSE SPACE OF OUR
WOULD-BE INVADERS, LEAVING
THEIR BROKEN CHASSIS AND
FROZEN CORPSES SCATTERED
AS WARNINGS TO OTHERS
WHO MIGHT THREATEN US.

IF THE INVADERS
LEAVE CORPSES, I'VE
NEVER SEEN THEM,
ONLY THE SCARS OF
THEIR AGGRESSION
LEFT ACROSS THE
SKIN OF OUR EARTH.



PHONE,
REPLAY
SIGNE'S LAST
VOICEMAIL
MESSAGE.



"SORRY I
COULDN'T
REACH YOU
IN TIME.

"I DIDN'T
WANT THE
LAST THING I
SAID TO YOU
TO BE SO
TERSE."

T-MINUS
FIVE MINUTES
TO WAVE ONE
LAUNCH.



HER WORDS ARE
DISTANT AND THIN
IN THE RECORDING,
AS HOLLOW AS I
FELT WHEN I FIRST
HEARD THEM.

"LOOK,
MOM, I KNOW
WHAT I
VOLUNTEERED
FOR. I ACED
THE PSYCH
EVAL.

"IT'S LIKE
I WAS BORN
FOR THIS."

T-MINUS
ONE MINUTE.
CONDITIONS
CLEAR.



I THOUGHT
A SUICIDE
NOTE MIGHT
BE LESS
PAINFUL.



WE
ARE GO FOR
LAUNCH.



"I CAN'T
JUST SIT HERE
AND HOPE THEY'LL
NEVER COME
BACK."



"WE
CAN'T LET
THEM COME
BACK."

WE ARE TURNING
THE TIDES OF
HISTORY--THIS DAY,
THIS YEAR, THIS
CENTURY!