



#1
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BLACKWOOD



by EVAN DORKIN and VERONICA & ANDY FISH

RUSSELL, MY FRIEND.
BY ALL RIGHTS I SHOULD
BE TELLING YOU THIS IN
PERSON. I'M AFRAID THAT
ISN'T POSSIBLE, GIVEN THE
CIRCUMSTANCES.



I AM DYING.
AS I SPEAK TO YOU,
MY NERVOUS SYSTEM IS COLLAPSING,
THE RESULT OF A PSYCHIC ATTACK
OF SOME CONSIDERABLE
FORCE.



THE YEARS
HAVE WEAKENED ME,
AFFECTED MY MIND. I
DID NOT FORESEE THIS
HAPPENING. OTHERWISE
I WOULD HAVE BEEN
BETTER PREPARED.



FORGIVE
ME, RUSSELL.
I SHOULD HAVE
TRUSTED YOU--
AND SO, SO MANY
OTHERS--MORE
THAN I DID.

I SHOULD
HAVE REVEALED
TO YOU THE SECRET BENEATH
THE SECRETS. THE TRUE
REASON BLACKWOOD
EXISTS.

AND THE
REASON IT IS
DOOMED.



HMM. WHERE WAS I? OH, YES.

DOOM. DOOM. DOOM. DOOM.

I WAS TRANSLATING THE BOOK OF DESPAIR. A FALSE PAGE HAD BEEN INSERTED IN THE TEXT. A SPELL. I READ IT! AND I WEPT AS I MADE THE SIGNS!

IT WAS ME, GRACE! I OPENED THE WAY! FORGIVE ME!

EVEN NOW, I CAN FEEL ITS HIDEIOUS PRESENCE REACHING OUT TO ME! EVEN NOW, I--

>HRRNGHK



>GASP! IT'S GOOD THAT WE DIE. I'VE COME TO REALIZE THAT.



BUT N-NOT YET. NOT NOW.

THERE'S STILL SO MUCH I HAVE TO DO....



YOU THERE! YES, YOU! CAN YOU HEAR ME?

IT IS VITALLY IMPORTANT THAT YOU LISTEN TO ME! LISTEN AND REMEMBER!



THERE! YOU CAN SEE IT, CAN'T YOU? HOW THE AFFECTIVE CONTAGION IS AMPLIFIED, INTENSIFIED?

EMOTIONAL RESONANCE IS KEY! THE SYNERGIES OF MINDS! FEAR! ABJECT FEAR!



THEY SHALL REND THE VEIL! THE SLEEPWALKERS, THE DROWNED, THE SCREAMERS! THEN HE WILL AWAKEN! HE WHO IS BENEATH AND ABOVE!



EVEN GODS HAVE GODS, WHOM THEY WORSHIP AND SERVE! EVEN--

N-NO! TOO LATE! HE'S FOUND ME!



--UURGHK--
D-D-DRETH VES
UDRUMM! DRETH VES
ARGINOX!

THE BLOOD OF BILLIONS!
A WORLD IN SACRIFICE!

SCRIP K-LRAN



SKKRAACK



GAAHH!



YOU ALL RIGHT THERE, MISS? MISS?

UM, YEAH. YEAH, IT'S NOTHING.

BETTER GRAB YOUR THINGS, THEN. BLACKWOOD'S NEXT.



WE DON'T STOP THERE LONG.



BLACKWOOD! BLACKWOOD NEXT. ALL OUT FOR BLACKWOOD!





NICE WELCOME.

WHAT? OH, YOU SAW THAT? UNBELIEVABLE, RIGHT?



OH, HELL. THIS WON'T STOP. I SWEAR, I BET I'M ALLERGIC TO THIS DUMP.

FWIP?

HERE. TAKE THIS.



THANKS. >SHNORFK

HZZ

UGH. BLOOD DOWN MY THROAT. FREAKIN' GROSS.



HERE FOR THE ORIENTATION?

FFFF. I AIN'T HERE FOR THE NIGHT LIFE, THAT'S FOR SURE.



UGH! FRIGGIN' BUGS! FRIGGIN' NATURE!

I JUST KNEW THIS PLACE WAS GONNA SUCK!

REIKO OYUKI? WREN VALENTINE?



I'M SHERRY ALLEN, DEAN OGDEN'S ASSISTANT. WELCOME TO BLACKWOOD.

WE JUST HAVE TO SWING BY THE HOTEL FOR LAST NIGHT'S ARRIVALS AND WE'LL BE ON OUR WAY, OKAY?



--SO, I TOLD HER I WAS GOING TO LORE SCHOOL, BUT SHE THOUGHT I MEANT LAW SCHOOL. AAAAND, THAT TURNED INTO A TOTAL MESS.



SHE GOES, BLACKWOOD'S NOT A REAL COLLEGE, IT'S AN ALTERNATIVE COLLEGE. AND I'M LIKE, YEAH! AN ALTERNATIVE TO SOME BORING-ASS ACCOUNTING DEGREE!



ANYWAY, I THINK SHE'S JUST JEALOUS. CAN YOU BLAME HER?

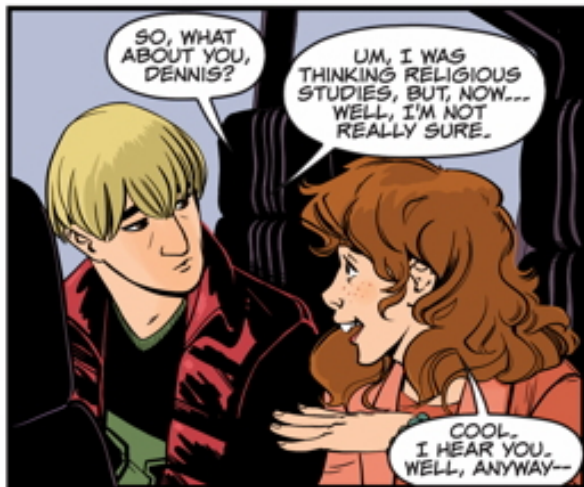
BURIED UP TO HER NOSE JOB IN LOANS WHILE I'M GETTING A FREE RIDE TO STUDY FAGAN WITCH CULTS?



IT'S NOT A LORE SCHOOL, LESLIE. IT'S A LORE DEPARTMENT. PART OF THE LIBERAL AND ESOTERIC ARTS PROGRAM--

I KNOW, OLIVER.

I READ THE BROCHURE, TOO. THANKS.



SO, WHAT ABOUT YOU, DENNIS?

UM, I WAS THINKING RELIGIOUS STUDIES, BUT, NOW... WELL, I'M NOT REALLY SURE.

COOL. I HEAR YOU. WELL, ANYWAY--



--HERE'S TO TRAVELING DOWN DIFFERENT PATHS ON OUR SHARED JOURNEY OF ENLIGHTENMENT.