

I made my way across the ruins of Section III cautiously, gazing around in silent terror at how much destruction could come of a few short weeks of war. It was quiet. Too quiet. So quiet I was positive that something would break the silence and interrupt me before I had to think of a sentence dramatic enough to follow “Too quiet.” *Goddamnit. You gotta do everything yourself these days.*

“Hello?” I shouted. Then all of a sudden it wasn’t quiet at all. I heard a bloodthirsty feline snarling sound in the distance that quickly grew too loud for my liking. *Why is it never exactly the right level of quiet?* I didn’t have much time to contemplate this question, because that was when Cullen Seaton tackled me, knocking me to the ground behind a pile of debris. Seaton motioned for me to be quiet, and whatever was doing the snarling passed by without seeing us.

“What was *that?*”

“The Bobcats,” Seaton explained. “A savage, half-crazed street gang that came to power in Section II recently. They follow a mysterious leader known only as John, who apparently oscillates wildly between purring softly and trying to have sex with everything in sight.”

“So the Bobcats are in control of this sector?”

“For now,” Seaton said, gazing off into the distance wistfully. “But soon, the day will come when the citizens of Section III will rise up and take back the land that is rightfully ours. Nathan Bartley will be our king—”

“What? What does Bartley have to do with this?”

“—And I will be his consort...”

Seaton was almost certainly delusional, possibly shell-shocked, and no longer paying attention to me in any event, so I decided to get moving. As I walked onwards through the ruins of Hitchcock, I heard the shouts of demagogues and agitators, clinging to their criminally inefficient political system for comfort as the world they had known collapsed in chaos and violence all around them.

“If elected, I will make it mandatory that all my subjects perform one year of corvée labor! I mean, community service!”

“Motion to impeach! Your position was never in the constitution to begin with!”

“Everything you’ve heard about communism is wrong! The word ‘communism’ doesn’t even start with a ‘c!’”

A tragic story. But neither it nor any of the other atrocities I had witnessed since returning to Hitchcock prepared me for what I saw when I reached the border of Section IV: Sam Spiegel stood before me with six giant mechanical arms sprouting from his back. A small band of

guerilla fighters was huddled behind him, and in the distance, the armies of Section I stretched out across the horizon as far as the eye could see. There must have been thousands of them.

“Tens of thousands,” said Spiegel, as if reading my mind.

“I did read your mind,” he added.

“How?” I managed. “And what are you doing here?”

“It’s simple,” Spiegel explained. “I grafted these mechanical arms onto my back, and now I can intuitively weigh the costs and benefits of any series of decisions with up to eight possibilities at each node! More to the point, when I drilled holes in my back to attach the mechanical arms, I accidentally drilled through the fabric of the space-time continuum and saw the future!”

A maniacal gleam entered Spiegel’s eye.

“And what a future it is! Galileo’s ancient prediction that $y = t^2$ will come to pass, and the end of times will come upon us. A post-apocalyptic Hitchcock will be submerged beneath the waves! We stand right now in the valley of the shadow of death! And although my metaphors mix the old and new testaments indiscriminately with stuff that sounds like it was pulled from the Da Vinci Code, we shall not fail! Glory to Section IV! Avenge Graham’s Mohawk, martyred in the struggle against tyranny! Charge!”

I looked on in horror as a horrendously overwrought fight scene unfolded before my eyes for the second time in recent memory. Lightning flashed overhead as Spiegel’s guerillas charged down the slopes with a mighty roar, only to break against the endless legions of Section I like waves against an overused metaphor. From that point on, things only more epic.

Now as the two came closing on each other:

Spiegel, octobranchian, endowed with prophecy by the immortal gods
and the Jorgonaut, scourge of mortal men, his soul black as pitch.

Spiegel, son of Spiegel’s father, whose name I don’t know, spoke: “Harris —
tyrant that you are! — though it is fated —

spun, measured, and cut according to the will of the immortal gods—

that hot blood will gush from my gaping wounds

onto mother earth who reared us all,

your lust for carnage will come to naught!”

So saying, he hurled his gleaming spear tipped with bronze,

but alas! his adversary’s thick armadillo hide deflected the blow—

it glanced off — and Spiegel proceeded to throw the spears

he was holding in his other seven hands: to no avail.

The Jorgonaut unhinged his jaw, according to the will of the immortal gods,
and ate Spiegel.

So ended the life of a great hero. I was pretty sure that, if graced with the opportunity to choose his last words, Spiegel would have said something along the lines of “Brubaker... Take up my mantle... Prevent... the end of the world... urk...”

I looked out over the battlefield. The forces of Section IV were either dead or in retreat. And then it struck me. *Spiegel was right. Or rather, Spiegel would have been right if he had actually said that, which he didn't. Somebody has to save the world.* For too long I had stood by passively as the world around me spiraled into political and literary chaos. *I'm supposed to be a detective*, I reminded myself, making sure that my Homerically-inclined creator got the memo. It was high time to return to detecting. I would start by figuring out what on earth Spiegel's prophecies actually meant.

THAT SMART-ASS ERIC DRISCOLL INFORMED ME THAT ONE QUARTER IS ACTUALLY ONLY ENOUGH FOR AN EIGHTH OF A LOAD OF LAUNDRY. NONE OF YOU GAVE ME ANY SUGGESTIONS, SO THIS HEADING WILL CONTINUE TO BE ABOUT LAUNDRY UNTIL YOU DO.

- Don't open the door to the trash room in the middle of the night.
- Registration of bikes and laptops by the UCPD continues on November 23rd.
- There may be a House Trip to see a movie over Thanksgiving Break. The official Hitchcock House Augurs have interpreted the motions of the heads of the populace to indicate that it is the will of the gods that such a trip should occur on Friday rather than Saturday.
- Hilel and Todd are new residents of Sections II and III, respectively. Stay tuned for more news on the potential vampirism of the latter.
- Aaron Space has been impeached as At-Large Representative for not attending meetings. Tonight, if he's present, he will have the opportunity to make an impassioned speech in his own defense.