

Dystopians, Issue 2: "Does He Need A Towel?"

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Panel 1 - The Preacher stands on the carnival stage, between two cages. He gestures towards Rosko with a maniacal look on his face. Rosko's cage is to the right of the stage. He is angry. In the other cage, red blood flows from a dead man's body.

Preacher: God has listened / and he's coming!

SFX: Hmmmmmm...

Panel 2 - Rosko gestures towards his backpack, which is laying on the stage.

Rosko: Does he need a towel? / I have one in my pack.

Caption:

Rosko

Age 15

Hatian

Angry punk smart-ass

SFX: Hmmmmmm...

Panel 3 - A full-length shot of the Preacher, his face looking more sinister. For the first time, we see that there is a dagger on the ground. It is covered in bright red blood. Off in the distance tendrils of the haze creep towards the crowd.

Preacher: Some would mock God.

SFX: Hmmmmmm...

Panel 4 - Rosko is standing up now, holding the bars. The humming is getting louder.

Rosko: Some would mock you.

SFX: Hmmmmmm...

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Panel 1 - Mya and Jayn cautiously step out from behind the bleachers. Jayn hugs Tibbers tightly. The crowd have very black eyes. The haze is right behind them. The hum is very loud.

Jayn: I don't think they can see us.

SFX: Hmmmmmm...

Panel 2 - Mya waves her hand in front of a young girl on the edge of the crowd. The girl stands still and doesn't react. Jayn looks back at the haze.

Mya: Let's move closer.

SFX: Hmmmmmm...

Panel 3 - Close-up of the cage with the dead man who was stabbed in the chest. He wears a shirt with a rainbow on it. He has a bushy beard. The blood coming from him is bright red. The hum is getting louder.

Preacher: (off-panel) But God will not be mocked!

SFX: Hmmmmmmm....

Panel 4 - Over the Preacher's shoulder, the haze engulfs a stage light, which explodes and pops with sparks.

Preacher: Can you feel it? / I can. / Feel God's presence getting stronger!

SFX: Hmmmmmm...

SFX: Crackle! Pop! Snap!

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Panel 1 - From behind, the Preacher kneels down and picks up the bloody dagger. In the crowd, Mya and Jayn getting closer. The haze is near the back row of people.

Preacher: God speaks to me...

SFX: Hmmmmmm...

Panel 2 - The Preacher stands up, holding the knife to the sky. The hum gets louder.

Preacher: And I speak for God!

SFX: Hmmmmmm...

Panel 3 - The Preacher raises his hands in a "V" towards the sky.

Preacher: I am the voice of God!

SFX: Hmmmmmm...

Panel 4 - Close-up of Rosko in the cage.

Rosko: You're a fucking movie director. And a bad one at that.

SFX: Hmmmmmm...

Panel 5 - Mya and Jayn are close to the stage, very near the steps that lead up to the Preacher.

SFX: Hmmmmmm...

Panel 6 - A tendril of the haze curls around the ankle of an audience member. She vomits. The people near her look queasy.

SFX: Hmmmmmm...

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Panel 1 - The Preacher stands with his arms raised in a "V." More than half the crowd is enveloped in the haze. Those who are not look ill or nauseous. Some are vomiting. Nothing can be seen beyond the haze.

Preacher: I can feel him, he's here!

SFX: Hmmmmmm...

Panel 2 - The Preacher points the dagger at Rosko.

Preacher: God demands justice! / Bring *that* one to me!

SFX: Hmmmmmm...

Panel 3 - The guard with the key unlocks the cage.

Preacher: God demands retribution!

SFX: Hmmmmmm...

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Panel 1 - The two guards walk Rosko towards the Preacher.

Preacher: God demands sacrifice!

SFX: Hmmmmmm...

Panel 2 - Mya and Jayn rush the stage, each smashing into one of the surprised guards. The guards lose their grip on Rosko. Jayn bounces off a guard and falls to the ground. The Preacher doesn't notice.

Preacher: And I am God's instrument!

Mya: What is wrong with you people!

SFX: Hmmmmmm...

Panel 3 - Rosko elbows one of the guards in the face.

SFX: Hmmmmmm...

Panel 4 - Rosko and the guard fall. Rosko lands next to his backpack. The guard falls off the stage. The Preacher turns to see them, his face in shock.

Preacher: What! / No, you can't!

SFX: Hmmmmmm...

Panel 5 - The other guard grabs Jayn. Mya tries to break her free.

Preacher: (off panel) God won't allow it!

SFX: Hmmmmmm...

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Panel 1 - Rosko stands with the baseball bat gripped tightly in his hands.

SFX: Hmmmmmm...

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Panel 2 - Rosko smacks the guard that is struggling with Mya and Jayn with the bat. He lets go of the girls. In the background, the entire crowd except for a few stragglers has been enveloped by the haze.

Preacher: This can't be happening!

SFX: Hmmmmmm...

Panel 3 - The Preacher cowers as Rosko and Mya advance toward him.

Preacher: God...God is angry. What would you have me do?

SFX: Hmmmmmm...

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Panel 1 - Mya punches the Preacher and he falls backwards off the stage and into the haze. The hum is the loudest it has been.

Mya: I don't know? / What would Jesus do?

SFX: Hmmmmmm...

Panel 2 - Rosko picks up his backpack.

Rosko: We absolutely have to get the holy hell out of here! / RIGHT NOW!

SFX: Hmmmmmm...

Panel 3 - Mya grabs Jayn's hand and they follow Rosko off the stage and away from the haze.

SFX: Hmmmmmm...

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Panel 1 - Over Mya's shoulder as she looks back at the fair. No people are left and the haze is so powerful it breaks through the edge of the panel.

SFX: Hmmmmmm...

Panel 2 - Same shot, although Mya is no longer in it. Almost all of the panel is engulfed by the haze. Jefferson runs off the screen in the direction Mya went, his leash trailing behind.

SFX: Hmmmmmm...

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Panel 1 - Mya and Jayn have caught up to Rosko. Jefferson trails behind them. No one else follows. They move down a row of small town main street-style buildings (barber shops and general stores and solo lawyer's offices) as the hum fades.

Rosko: What the fuck was that stuff?

SFX: Hmmmmmm...

Panel 2 - Close-up of Jayn.

Jayn: It's the haze.

Panel 3 - Over Mya's shoulder, hints of the fair's edge, but the haze covers most of it.

Mya: Whatever it is, it's coming this way. Almost like it's following us.

SFX: Hmmmmmm...

Panel 4 - Rosko sticks the baseball bat into his backpack.

Rosko: Then let's get moving. I don't want to know what it is or what the fuck it does!

SFX: Hmmmmmm...

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Panel 1 - Rosko now has the backpack on his shoulder. They pass in front of a comic book store called the Grinning Gremlin. The hum is almost completely gone.

Rosko: So who the hell are you?

SFX: Hmmmmmm...

Panel 2 - Mya is taken aback by Rosko's rudeness. The hum is gone.

Mya: I'm... / I'm Mya.

Panel 3 - Rosko has a condescending look on his face.

Rosko: That doesn't tell me anything. Who are you?

Panel 4 - Mya looks puzzled.

Mya: I'm just... / ...me.

Panel 5 - Mya and Jayn walk past Rosko. Jefferson trots alongside them. Rosko watches them, an exclamation point over his head.

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Panel 1 - The group reaches the end of the block, a dentist's office on the corner. Across the street is the edge of a gas station parking lot. They stop at the stop sign, as if it still matters.

Rosko: (smiling) Well, whoever you are, Mya, thanks. I don't usually get rescued by such cute girls.

Panel 2 - Mya crosses the street, holding Jayn's hand and Jefferson's leash.

Mya: So, you get rescued a lot, do you?

Panel 3 - Rosko blushes (with actual redness appearing on his cheeks).

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Panel 1 - They walk across the gas station parking lot. The one gas pump looks old and unused. The building is covered with lots of product signs (including Nails cigarettes, Red Apple cigarettes, Buzz Cola, Duff Beer, etc.). A large sign in the window reads Take Me to the Candy Shoppe.

Panel 2 - Jayn points to the Candy Shoppe sign.

Jayn: I want to go to there!

Panel 3 - Jayn runs towards the building. Rosko and Mya exchange puzzled looks.

Rosko: Look out for zombies! / They always hide in the gas station!

Panel 4 - Mya punches Rosko in the shoulder.

Mya: Idiot.

Panel 5 - Mya follows Jayn. Rosko grins.

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Panel 1 - Interior shot of the gas station. Jayn runs towards the candy section. Mya walks down the snack aisle. Rosko heads straight for the beer cooler.

Panel 2 - Mya grabs a bag of salt and vinegar chips.

Mya: So, who are *you*, Rosko?

Panel 3 - Rosko pulls a six-pack of canned beer out of the cooler.

Rosko: I am -- well, I was -- a film student at THE Adams College. Until people started disappearing. Then the shit hit the fan!

Panel 4 - Jayn chows down on a chocolate bar, Tibbers forgotten on the floor. Rosko drinks a beer. Mya reaches into a cooler to grab a bottle of water.

Mya: Do you have any idea what's happening?

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Panel 1 - Rosko opens another beer. Jayn eats bright red licorice vines.

Rosko: Not really. This is some strange shit. A few days ago, my friend Nathan just up and disappeared.

SFX: Beer opening

Panel 2 - Rosko drinks the beer. Jayn carries Tibbers towards the soda cooler.

Mya: Disappeared?

Panel 3 - Mya drinks her water. Jayn chugs a Mountain Dew. Rosko throws a crushed beer can at the cash register. Jefferson takes off after the can.

Rosko: Not like in front of me or anything, but I talked to him the night before. / We went and played trivia up at B-dubs. / The next day he wasn't there. Not in class. Not on set. Not at his apartment. / He was just gone.

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Panel 1 - Rosko holds a new six-pack, this time bottles. The remains of the old six-pack lay on the floor at his feet.

Rosko: It happened to a bunch of people. Classes started getting smaller. / A number of people who are always on set just didn't show up. That never happens. / What about you, anybody disappear?

Panel 2 - Mya holds the bottle of water and the chips while looking at the ceiling in deep thought.

Mya: My parents have been out of town and I stayed home binge watching Stranger Things all weekend. / I didn't want to deal with anyone.

Panel 3 - Jayn looks really happy, hugging Tibbers with one arm and eating a chocolate bar with the other. There is a pile of chocolate and other candy at her feet. Jefferson sits at her feet, gnawing on one of Rosko's empty beer cans.

Rosko: Maybe you were better off. / Those who stayed around at the college... / Well, you met them.

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Panel 1 - Rosko chugs another beer.

Mya: Like your preacher friend?

Panel 2 - Rosko throws the beer bottle at the back of the store and it smashes.

Rosko: Herman wasn't a friend of mine and he wasn't a preacher. He was a director at the film school and he was a dick.

SFX: Crash!

Panel 3 - Rosko walks towards Mya and Jayn and grabs a bag of chips. Jayn stuffs candy into her pockets. The hum has arrived, but is soft.

Rosko: Before all this shit started, I mean. Obviously he went all Charlie Manson yesterday. / Then he started taking us SINNERS hostage and executing us.

Jayn: My tummy hurts.

SFX: Hmmmmmm...

Panel 4 - Jayn stands up and Rosko moves towards the door. Mya stands completely stiff, her face emotionless, and her eyes go completely black.

Caption: Mya! Go now! It's not safe!

Mya: Uh... / Let's get out of here.

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Panel 1 - They walk out the door, Jayn has left behind all the candy. She even emptied her pockets, which now hang outside of her dress. Tibbers' eye and ear peak out from behind the mountain of candy. The hum is louder.

Mya: He really killed that guy. That's insane.

SFX: Hmmmmmm...

Panel 2 - From behind them, we look back towards the carnival, which is fully enveloped in the haze. The haze moves down the street, following them.

Rosko: All of this is insane! All those people went insane! And everybody else disappeared!

SFX: Hmmmmmm...

Panel 3 - They walk down the street, moving away from the haze. Jefferson follows behind, his leash dragging along.

SFX: Hmmmmmm...

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Panel 1 - Jayn stands in front of the group, holding up a hand to stop them. She does not have Tibbers.

Jayn: Wait!

Mya: Jayn, we have to get out of here now.

SFX: Hmmmmmm...

Panel 2 - Close-up on Jayn, with a tear in her eye.

Jayn: I forgot Tibbers!

SFX: Hmmmmmm...

Panel 3 - Rosko looks angry. Mya has a concerned look on her face and kneels down to Jayn's level. She puts her hand on Jayn's shoulder. Jayn cries.

Mya: Don't worry, I'll go get Tibbers.

SFX: Hmmmmmm...

Panel 4 - Jayn grabs the door to go back inside.

Rosko: We have to go now. It's here.

SFX: Hmmmmmm...

Panel 5 - Jayn runs from the store, holding Tibbers. And all of the candy and snacks she previously left behind. The hum is louder.

Rosko: You've got to be kidding me.

Jayn: Well, YOU never would have found him!

SFX: Hmmmmmm...

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Panel 1 - They run away from the convenience store. The haze creeps into the panel and the hum is super loud.

SFX: Hmmmmmm...

Panel 2: Wide shot as they run away from the store. The haze follows, but they have distanced themselves from it some. The hum gets softer again. They head towards the pathway into a heavily-wooded park.

SFX: Hmmmmmm...

Panel 3 - Tighter shot on the group, now inside the wooded park. It is notably darker now. At the far end of the panel, they see a row of empty park benches. The hum is much quieter now.

Mya: Where is everybody?

Rosko: I wouldn't be surprised if we're the last people in this shit-hole town. Just like in that movie...

Jayn: (whispering) They're all gone.

SFX: Hmmmmmm...

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Panel 1 - The group is parallel now with the first of three benches. On the last bench, the leg and foot of a man in brown pants and brown shoes peeks into the panel.

Panel 2 - PAUL sits on the third bench, eating a sandwich, looking a lot like the Sad Keanu meme. He doesn't notice his new guests. Paul is in his early 40s and is clearly a college professor. He wears a dull, all-brown suit, with matching shoes and tie. His shirt is white. His glasses make his eyes look too big for his face. He is balding in a George Constanza-kind of way and has a bushy mustache.

Panel 3 - As they get closer, Paul takes another bite, recreating another Sad Keanu shot.

Panel 4 - Paul wipes his hands with a bright red handkerchief. He looks up at them with a fatherly smile.

Paul: Hello, I'm Paul!

Caption:

Paul

Age 42

Mathematician

Thinks about the end of the world a lot

End.