

I AM NOT PSYCHIC. I DO NOT SEE SIGNS AND PORTENTS IN THE SKY.

I DON'T HAVE A GYPSY'S ABILITY TO DISCERN THE PATTERNS OF FATE IN WET TEA LEAVES.

BUT I KNEW THE RINGING TELEPHONE MEANT THAT A TERRIBLE CHANGE WAS COMING.

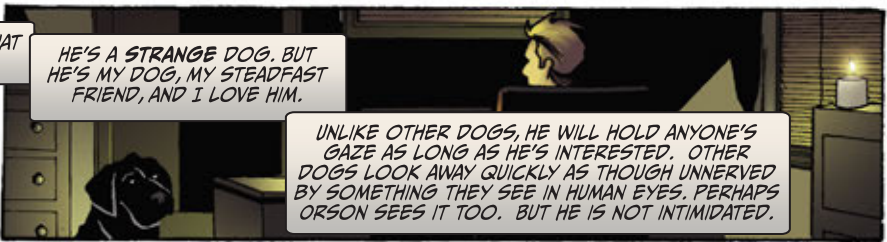
MY FATHER HAD BEEN DYING FOR DAYS. I HAD SPENT THE PREVIOUS NIGHT MOPPING SWEAT FROM HIS FOREHEAD AND LISTENING TO HIS LABORED BREATHING.

RINGING RING

I DREADED LOSING HIM AND, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY 28 YEARS, OF BEING ALONE. I HAD LOST MY MOTHER TWO YEARS EARLIER AND NOW I WAS TO LOSE MY FATHER.



ORSON ALSO KNEW WHAT THE RINGING MEANT.



HE'S A STRANGE DOG. BUT HE'S MY DOG, MY STEADFAST FRIEND, AND I LOVE HIM.

UNLIKE OTHER DOGS, HE WILL HOLD ANYONE'S GAZE AS LONG AS HE'S INTERESTED. OTHER DOGS LOOK AWAY QUICKLY AS THOUGH UNNERVED BY SOMETHING THEY SEE IN HUMAN EYES. PERHAPS ORSON SEES IT TOO. BUT HE IS NOT INTIMIDATED.



HELLO?

CHRIS, IT'S ANGELA. IT'S NOT LOOKING GOOD. YOU BETTER COME DOWN TO THE HOSPITAL.

I UNDERSTAND. THANK YOU.





SASHA. I HAD TO CALL SASHA.

SASHA GOODALL SPUN MUSIC FROM MIDNIGHT UNTIL SIX AM ON KBAY, THE ONLY STATION IN MOONLIGHT BAY. SO AT A FEW MINUTES PAST FIVE, SHE WAS MOST LIKELY SLEEPING AND I REGRETTED HAVING TO WAKE HER. BUT I NEEDED A RIDE TO THE HOSPITAL.



AT NIGHT, I WOULD BE ABLE TO WALK TO THE HOSPITAL ON MY OWN. BUT AT THIS TIME OF DAY, IT WOULD MAKE ME TOO MUCH OF A SPECTACLE AND PUT ME AT TOO GREAT A RISK.



CHRIS, I'M SO SORRY.

IT WAS AS THOUGH SHE'D BEEN WAITING FOR THIS CALL, AS IF SHE'D HEARD THE SAME OMINOUS TONE IN THE RING OF HER PHONE THAT ORSON AND I HAD HEARD IN MINE.



I HAD HELD OUT HOPE THAT EVEN AT THE ELEVENTH HOUR, THE CANCER WOULD GO INTO REMISSION.

I BELIEVE IN THE POSSIBILITY OF MIRACLES. AFTER ALL, DESPITE MY CONDITION, I HAVE LIVED FOR MORE THAN 28 YEARS.

MORE TO THE POINT, I BELIEVE IN OUR NEED FOR MIRACLES.



I'LL BE THERE IN FIVE MINUTES.

NO. DRIVE CAREFULLY. I'LL PROBABLY TAKE TEN MINUTES OR MORE TO GET READY.

LOVE YOU, SNOWMAN.

LOVE YOU TOO.









I HAVE XERODERMA PIGMENTOSUM, XP FOR SHORT, A RARE AND FREQUENTLY FATAL GENETIC DISORDER.

EVERYONE INCURS SUNLIGHT DAMAGE TO THEIR DNA.




HEALTHY PEOPLE'S CELLULAR REPAIR SYSTEMS NATURALLY MEND THIS DAMAGE.

THIS IS NOT THE CASE FOR US XPEERS.



ULTRAVIOLET INDUCED CANCER OF THE SKIN AND EYES DEVELOP EASILY AND QUICKLY. AND THEY METASTASIZE UNCHECKED.



I HAVE LIVED MORE THAN 28 YEARS WHICH IS A MIRACLE OF SORTS- ALTHOUGH SOME PEOPLE, SEEING MY LIFE FROM OUTSIDE, MIGHT THINK IT A CURSE.



SASHA TELLS ME THAT I REMIND HER OF JAMES DEAN, MORE AS HE WAS IN "EAST OF EDEN" THAN IN "REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE."

SORRY, ORSON, I'M SURE DAD WOULD LOVE TO SEE YOU ONE LAST TIME.

I DON'T SEE THE RESEMBLANCE. SURE, THE HAIR IS THE SAME, AND THE PALE BLUE EYES. BUT HE LOOKED SO WOUNDED, AND I DON'T SEE MYSELF THAT WAY.



I'M SURE OF IT...



I'M NOT JAMES DEAN.

WHERE IS THAT HAT?



HERE WE GO.







I AM NO ONE BUT ME, CHRISTOPHER SNOW, AND I CAN LIVE WITH THAT.



I COULD'VE SWORN HIS GAZE BRIMMED WITH GRIEF AND SYMPATHY. PERHAPS IT WAS BECAUSE I WAS LOOKING AT HIM THROUGH REPRESSED TEARS OF MY OWN.

MY FRIEND BOBBY SAYS THAT I TEND TO ANTHROPOMORPHIZE ANIMALS. GIVING THEM HUMAN ATTRIBUTES AND ATTITUDES THAT THEY DON'T, IN FACT, POSSESS.

PERHAPS IT'S BECAUSE ANIMALS, UNLIKE PEOPLE, HAVE ACCEPTED ME FOR WHAT I AM.

WE'LL BE ALL RIGHT, BOY.



THESE FOUR-LEGGED CITIZENS OF MOONLIGHT BAY SEEM TO POSSESS A MORE COMPLEX UNDERSTANDING OF LIFE AND KINDNESS THAN AT LEAST SOME OF MY NEIGHBORS.

HONK HONK

BOBBY TELLS ME THAT ANTHROPOMORPHIZING ANIMALS, REGARDLESS OF MY EXPERIENCES WITH THEM, IS A SIGN OF IMMATURITY.

I TELL BOBBY TO GO COPULATE WITH HIMSELF.



WE'LL BE ALL RIGHT. I PROMISE.