

# **I REREAD MORNING GLORIES IN 2025 AND ALL I GOT FOR IT WAS 48,000+ WORDS OF AIMLESS THEORIZING**

hey. i'm sorry that you're here.

i'll make this short. i was a morning glories reader back when it was coming out; if you participated in the fandom at all, we definitely crossed paths. i'm basically an entirely different entity these days, but every couple years- almost always in springtime, because of course- i catch the bug and reread the entire thing.

this year, for reasons i genuinely do not fathom, i decided it might be funny to try something else. and that thing i tried was "solve (the mysteries of) morning glories." if we're never going to get the rest of it, someone ought to fill in the blanks, right?

this is inherently a useless endeavor, but it kind of appealed to me. i've been kind of getting back into print comics this year (shout out to the power fantasy), and looking at various subreddits and discussion spots, i was surprised to see that this comic still comes up somewhat often. is it ridiculously popular? oh, absolutely not, there's like fifty of us tops. but all of us still have the 8:13 brain disease, apparently. i am here to potentially soothe your mind: i have...kind of solved morning glories? i think i've got like 75% of it. well, maybe you think i'm completely wrong. we'll see.

this document's got two halves: a section with my liveblogging and notes and a final, shorter section where i try to summarize basically everything. feel free to scroll down to "SECTION 2" if that's all you care about, but hopefully my liveblog has enough funny jokes and/or side theories to keep your interest. i've purposefully kept this document messy- the following section is a shorter, sillier intro i put in when i shared this with a small group of old friends. i thought it might be fun to see my devolution in real time.

full disclosure. content warnings for everything in morning glories, i'm sure you know what you're dealing with. also, i love this book but i think it's quite flawed, so i am critical at various points here- but trust me, i could be a *lot* more harsh. this really is mostly for theorizing and pointing out interesting character and thematic things.

and as a sidenote...if you're one of the creators of this book, hello! i know some of you still look at mg stuff. have fun with this. i'd like to make a semi-formal request for you all to not make comments on/within this document, however- partly because i don't want anyone getting ahold of your google account info and being weird about it, and partly because i intended this to be For The Fans, so to speak. feel free to point and laugh at me though. we could all use getting pointed and laughed at once and a while.

---

**note 5/4:** been trying to read two issues a day or so, though i can't promise it. the other thing i do is that i initially take short, even one word notes and then fill them out later...so if you see WIP notes just come back like. an hour later or something. sometimes it takes longer. i've got a weird system alright.

oh yeah and **content warnings for everything in this book** but if you're reading this document you know what the game is.

## **Hey what the fuck**

lol

## **Why are you doing this?**

i just think it'd be funny if i solved morning glories in 2025. i'll never find out if i'm right i can just claim i solved it

edit 5/4: this is also kind of the year of the reread/replay for me. i'm replaying deltarune as i do this to prep for the new chapters coming up, i've been rereading hunter x hunter's chimera ant arc alongside media club plus' coverage of the anime, and i'm planning a wicdiv reread later this year when my compendium comes in. not sure what's gotten into me, but i've enjoyed reflecting on things.

also, again, it would be funny if i solved morning glories in 2025

## **What are you actually looking for in this reread?**

i actually know this but i'm gonna update this question later

edit: okay updating this after #10 with some things i've been honing in on

- alternate timeline stuff. have had a theory future jade is from an alternate timeline for a while and i think the future ike and future vanessa stuff backs it up. trying to figure out that.
- there's lots of talk of some ambiguous future war in this book. how does this tie into the main plot and what does it mean?
  - specifically, what is mga's goal in relation to this?
- we have hints that the school setting isn't quite "real." how so? what does that mean, precisely?

more on this...after season 1

btw reading this all physically. using my hardcovers until #39 at which point it's my single issues

---

## SECTION 1: I REREAD MORNING GLORIES

### #1

- thing i would elaborate upon if i made a five hour mg video essay: mg starting out as a shadowline book with an editor and then just not being that at a certain point?
- not gonna bother talking about this first page until we get to it again in 29 lol
- lots of weirdness around brendan. daramount and gibbs talk like they're not sure he'll die? gibbs explicitly says headmaster told him brendan wasn't special? if he wasn't one of abraham's where did he learn those sick moves??
  - i've had a loose theory for ages that brendan was an agent of some government-american, chinese, etc- or another party in this conflict, and he just happened to fall in with the truants when he fell for vanessa. we know so little about him, and the wider conflict, that it was always just a hunch, though.
- i feel like i should be able to get a firm guess on why the cylinder's set up and what's in the wallet by now. i really don't. years ago i guessed maybe the other truants set this up, but i feel like we'd know by #50.
- the implication that an archbishop thought ike could be the next antichrist is our first in what will be many potential antichrist figures in this book
- really interesting to see the first thing established about everyone. for most of the glories it's their family, but zoe's foster parent makes their mysterious first back of the head cameo here instead, and we don't see hisao until he's off the plane.
- explicit statement by jade's dad that mga claims to be in new york! i'm far more familiar with the lower hudson now...and i think nick probably intended it to be faux westchester, but it feels more like dutchess county to me, maybe putnam. it's a little bit the millbrook school.
- hisao in obvious secret agent mode here on reread. he's probing for data. also the vast majority of teenage boys i know would see "fauna jam yuk" and say "wow...i guess my guy isn't here yet..."
- as someone who now works with admissions, seventy ivy entrants each year is laughably unrealistic. don't fall for it casey!!! it's an online scam!!!
- dagney specifically given a job here as residence director.
- dagney's opening speech brings up the "we're your servants" thing for the first time and states that they're looking for "perfect tranquility, the very ends of knowledge itself" and "the key to the salvation and security of man throughout all time" might be within the kids.
  - kind of loosely been working with a theory that mga is justifying all this by trying to use the kids to prevent the seemingly inevitable nuclear war.
- the simplest answer to the parents seemingly forgetting the kids is that hodge or someone else with a control power just told them to forget their kid existed. but then again, we have a storyline about someone trying to wipe another person from existence later in this book.

- dan and kathy's corpses are so specifically staged that we all should have been suspicious of that situation sooner. not convinced they are dead for real anymore.

## #2

- georgina referring to herself as casey's teacher and the authority here, an early indication her methods differ from, say, dagney or even mr. n, who know they're serving the kids.
- ike dragging hunter into this is so funny on reread. desperate for friends much, ike.
- rough translation (as in: google translation) of the chant gibbs and the boys are doing is "The boundary lies barely ahead. The man is timid, but his fortune is certain." i get the idea it might be more "mankind" than "the man."
- zoe's team edward line is maybe the most dated this book ever is. that or ike's later joke about marriage only being legal in certain states.
- zoe trying to help jade here is the first sign she's quicker on her feet than she looks.
- so mga *purposefully* allows phones to be used for about half a day so the kids can call their families, then shuts it off. whatever mga is has to allow for something like that.
- hisao nearly giving away how much more he knows here. lol at daramount saying gibbs is predictable for liking him, but jun's a favorite of his, so it's true.
- gibbs saying daramount is predictable though is weirder- implicitly this is about ike. the only student we later learn georgina kept a close eye on is fortunato, who couldn't be more unlike him. this probably has something to do with abraham?
- jade's first attempt to die here. another loose theory i wanted to look into on this read is the link this has to her mom dying. kind of wondering if they were "supposed" to switch places like the twins later do, and jade's trying to make up for that not happening.
- "I wouldn't do that if I were you" is still bonkers. jun. you're never gonna believe it

## #3

- i know we as a fandom usually associate this first scene with the spanish inquisition, but the person on the other side of the wall says they've been imprisoned for 16 years, since before the inquisition properly began. this insinuates whatever is happening here started without the inquisition being needed for cover. (alternatively: time travel)
- also the first mention of the biblical daniel, whose lifetime will come up later in relation to nebuchadnezzar.
- really like how casey has not had time to change outfits since #1.
- nine is conceptually the funniest character in this book. inexplicable number name. wears a sexy nurse outfit for no reason. all she does is inject children with goo, which she has literally been doing since she was a toddler. incredible.
- that said, she'll restate she can feel which kids are special later in relation to fortunato, and she's right about him and wrong about jade. what's different about jade? did she give up some part of herself when she revived her mom?
- megan's a plot device of a character, but long term she'll connect a bunch of things- abraham's camp, the reincarnation plotline, the killing of parents who won't be emotionally there for their kids, etc. her baldness, while clearly aesthetic (out of universe)

to some extent, is striking on this read though. may want to hypothesize if this has anything to do with the nuclear signs when hodge returns to the academy...

- the last line of the teacher's discussion of tomas de torquemada is about how he participated in the expulsion of jewish people from spain but was actually of jewish descent himself. sort of another "you built your own prison." (that said, wikipedia tells me that a new study after this issue was published states that this actually isn't true about torquemada)

#### #4

- "it's from something i read once" that she GAVE HERSELF
- this issue's two days after #2.
- pam's behavior here makes even more sense in relation to akiko and vanessa being her previous roommates.
- jade/casey and hunter/hisao are so real in these early issues that i wonder if they were potentially in the early game plan before the book became a hit that could have a longer run.
- early irina reference here that insinuates everyone, staff included, is not meant to talk about her. she's sacrilege!
- gibbs insinuates they're looking for something that starts with "the". presumably he's got his own way to talk about the gifts? but maybe they're looking for a specific gift or person?
- jade is saying what future jade told her to say here, and it's not anything interesting to nine.
- nine thinks headmaster has been getting impatient.
- hunter picks up casey discussing dan in the past tense here, so i think he probably figured out that her parents were gone long before she breaks down in the debate.
- zoe states her parents sent her here, something she also claims in #1. her mysterious faceless parents?? she also gets upset at casey's affirmation that may 4th is her birthday. i think she's starting to remember her childhood (and more) and dislikes it.
- "thanks for hoisting that story off your chest and right onto my nerves" is maybe my favorite ike line.

#### #5

- gibbs stating he thinks what they do here at mga is "necessity." again, maybe they think this is world saving?
- gibbs states his role at the academy has changed in recent days. likely irina's attempt to kill the headmaster did this, along with the headmaster thinking they're running out of time. more of an enforcer than a teacher now?
- two interesting ike character beats: he says he "resents" that casey thought him being attracted to her would keep him in line (clearly casey did not actually think this), and says that the academy stated they wouldn't kill the rest of the glories, implying he might have asked about it.
- the scantron is still there when zoe gets to the cylinder!

- i suspect zoe meeting david here is what really jogs her memory enough to get her killing people by #7. ian later talks about remembering things in a similar fashion, saying oliver showing up caused him to remember more things. i think zoe and david must know each other through abraham, but what's the timeline there.
- we NEVER talk about the cylinder SPLITTING THE EARTH INTO A FIREY PIT. radioactive pit? either way, uh, what's happening there.
- gibbs states he's worked with daramount for years. likely since she was a teenager, maybe child.
- hunter i am five eleven
- hunter catching casey crying with the picture here is the other reason i think he'd already deciphered that casey's parents are dead.

## #6

- alicia complimenting julie's work when that work killed julie's dad lol
- somehow i didn't really process on my previous reads that andrew is discussing the scantron when talking about his old equipment here, even though it's right fucking in front of him. how did we take so long to figure that out as readers??
- wondering if this is the post-50 academy- as in, post-the big earthquake. the academy will look similar during woodrun. if this is another timeline, does that mean the earthquake is inevitable or that those events simply happened in other circumstances?
- future jade has enough political power to *shut down government agents*. how much do world governments know about MGA by this point? did they always?
- julie was the "former project manager for the greene foundation's work on plank particle accelerations." that appears to be a deliberate misspelling of [planck particles](#). julie later states that happened in durham, and since she wanted to take a plane to get to her dad, i imagine that means north carolina.
  - see also that it's john stewart bell, not "jonathan bell."
- the allusions to a large US-china conflict here (potentially with other states as proxies) is one of the most early 2010s things about this book. not that people don't still hypothesize that, but i think it was more "in the air" back then when you needed to talk about a future war in your fiction. (nowadays there tends to be a bit more internal US conflict. hm i wonder why /s)
- haha wait so is one of the parallels between julie and casey meant to be that they both created the sources of what killed their fathers? julie made the cylinder, casey set up her parent's deaths by being clarkson and sending her younger self to mga?
- jade states her both her parents died when she was young, not just her mom. i think in retrospect this was probably a sign this wasn't "our" jade, which is what i tend to believe these days.

## #7

- abraham renames zoe immediately, which leads me to believe it's been her name in previous lives and it was useful to keep it that way (or that a past zoe requested it?)
- casey says zoe's been acting weird "all week", so it's presumably been about a week since #5.

- sarah had dated most of the boys at school by this point and zoe apparently hadn't been dating at all- but in #1, we see zoe started copying sarah's behavior after all of this happened. a performance? a way to mimic sarah after she was gone? trying to cover up other behavior ie. remembering stuff?
- roy first appearance! truly the important things in this issue.
- the lie detector here seems like it could tie into some gifts. a headmaster creation?
- i probably shouldn't trust this from a male writer but there's some lowkey gender role stuff with zoe's reaction to finding out sarah and their teacher had a "relationship" (big air quotes) and immediately suggesting if this gets out sarah won't be able to do "good girl" things like go to college and get married- when zoe before this point has been the "good girl." it reads as a twisted kind of protectiveness of sarah in a way, that sarah will be safe if she presents a certain way? maybe zoe also not wanting attention on herself?
- the acknowledgement that zoe stopped a statutory rape there feels basic by 2020s standards, but i remember it being somewhat outside the norm in the early 2010s, when this issue was published and when so many teen shows still did a "scandalous" teacher relationship with their teen characters.
  - interesting contrast point with of all shows riverdale, who had one of those storylines in its first season and then much later in the show, as the social mores had changed, had a character point out that it had been grooming.
- amanda notes that zoe changes completely when she hears the question on david. i find it interesting that the question is "who is david"- the academy must know who david is, right? so they're looking into who he is *to zoe*. i also think this probably assisted in jogging her memory and leads to her killing amanda.
- daramount knows that besides the david question, the rest was in zoe's file. so they knew she killed the teacher, for example, even if it was never publicly known.
- amanda running down the halls implies there's some fear among the general student body of various factors at mg, probably primarily david.
- i really think zoe's murders must happen for the same reasons ian discusses in #50- some idea that something about mga isn't "real" and that the deaths may thus not be "real." it ties in with hodge later stating zoe isn't a killer and zoe herself showing up alive in morocco. zoe's trying to see if she can get people out of this situation, and amanda pissed her off, so she's a fine test subject. her definition of faith is "putting your hand in someone else's and learning to take the good with the bad"- having faith in zoe that she can free you from this even if it means killing you first?
  - presumably that's also her reasoning for "all will be free." it's a message- i've freed this one, i can free more!
- zoe knows what question casey is doing on her homework without seeing it, which implies a bit of telepathy that she also seems to use later, like when she tells hunter she knows he's lowkey suicidal in #19.

## #8

- abraham showing up here mildly insinuates there's a universe where hunter just gets hit by a truck and fucking dies.

- hunter later states that the 8:13 problem really got bad in his teens, so while he later says he thinks abraham cursed him, that doesn't really seem to be true.
- casey and hunter just had class on the great fire of rome. we'll see flashes later that look like they may take place there.
- rip hunter you never got to hear a yeasayer album after odd blood. (i'm surprised nick never referenced the more apocalyptic yeasayer songs, ie. "final path" and "2080")
- hunter tells his teacher the 8:13 problem has been going for "a few months." it seems to have started before his mom died, but maybe it started while she was sick? it would tie in with the implications of kids gaining their abilities after losing a parent.
- hunter's dad is an asshole but i really like how the situation is written here. hunter constantly trying to keep him out of things really makes it clear that the guy is that specific kind of emotionally abusive without even needing to show the guy for more than one panel.
- jun tells the guys to take hunter to "the yard" meaning the greenhouse. the guys instead say they were going to "hoist him over the fence" - the mga fence?? how?? probably a different fence. interesting how people are just allowed in the greenhouse without any permit to meet headmaster...he seems to only appear when he wants to there.
- jun is captain...of the towerball team.
- i truly have no thoughts to explain hunter's weird brain.
- why does clarkson use a gun on this doctor when she could use her speech power? probably just for the mystery to get across.
- chad and steve here are also in on the eyes opening stuff. presumably gribbs' teams get more info than most students. are they grabbing seeds? are you implying the eye opening goo is just ground down morning glory seeds.
- on reread, strong implication here that zoe kills these guys not just to help hunter but to send a message. i think she probably remembers headmaster lives here and wants him to see this. bold move by her for sure.

## #9

- this issue is ten days ago, so that gives us a pretty firm timeline for these first nine issues.
- georgina claiming her mom always said there was time for a good cup of tea. she literally did not know kseniya and did not know this, but i could plausibly see *dagney*, who raised her, saying that.
- "i will never let anything happen to you" setting up hisao's entire character arc and jun's entire subsequent guilt complex.
- jun doesn't want hisao to hurt "the people i care about" - who were jun's friends? mentors? everyone seems to consider him respected but an asshole. what was his perception of the last five years?
- gribbs and daramount specifically say that hisao was born at 23:59, and know jun isn't special the moment mari says jun was born a half hour earlier. the time window is important there.
- jun seeing gribbs murder his mother and then being brainwashed to the point of becoming his mentee is lowkey one of the more fucked things to happen to a kid in this



book. (for comparison points, see also lara and vanessa's relationship and implicitly georgina and fortunato's. and, hell, clarkson and casey, sort of)

- jun puts together that hisao must be a spy and must have been saved by the enemy really easily. probably using extra info he knows from working with gribbs.
- somehow it's not until this read that i'm putting together that abraham being here to save hisao, to pick zoe up when she's really young, to stop hunter from running into the road etc is because someone time traveled. specifically, casey/clarkson probably gave him the info for *all* this stuff.
  - also probably why he can firmly say that hisao *will* see jun again.
- this is a damn good issue of comics. mg is an acquired taste, but this and #17 are usually what i think of when i think of objectively good, well-told mg issues.

## #10

- interesting conflating of casey and megan here. jade and megan are probably those two girls in the prison in #3, but i'd love to know if they've been friends in other times/timelines.
- probably something to megan opening a door with a pile of bodies -> the headmaster being on the other side..
- the headmaster has a squad of scientists here that he clearly does not have in the present! was this pre-mga or will it be post-mga?
- [headmaster voice] they named you after jade? the immortality stone? are you serious Imao
- jade saying she "can't make anyone happy" and then the headmaster bringing in her mom- who she couldn't make happy after the accident and revival.
- the thing oliver is presumably right about is the stuff ian refers to in #50 about how the kids were "selected" by the cylinder- as in, oliver probably had a huge part in creating "our own gods"/the kids.
- with how important it becomes to ike in particular, it's funny that it takes ten issues to even mildly set up ike/jade. does this bell the sideburns guy (alexander?) rings appear again in ike's later flashes?
- the teacher says, on nooses, that they may be useful "when you get yourself into a jam." this is foreshadowing for both the reincarnation stuff and mga potentially being unreal, right? as in, treating death like it's not that big a deal.
- jade literally killing herself in front of casey to change the trajectory of her life
- future jade suggests jade could've drowned herself and that she was potentially expecting it, insinuating that she didn't know what jade would do here, pretty much confirming *some* sort of alternate timeline thing...has future jade fucked with multiple timelines and multiple jades?
- i think i briefly contemplated whether this house matches up with mr. n and irina's domicile. i don't think it does, but i might check when i get to #46.
- future jade asking about hunter, casey, and ike specifically, maybe insinuating there's no one else she expects jade to consistently know by this point?

- future jade saying “we’ve *always* got” pretty smiles- as in, in previous lives too probably. her line about sideburns guy implies she also remembers those past lives fine. christ maybe i should think more about what future jade’s actual deal is

## #11

- i’ve generally assumed the abraham timeline here was that the abraham helping ike in this scene was a past version of him and that the one ike kills in #24 is him at the end of his life. now not sure if that’s true.
- ike in #25 will imply he doesn’t understand his behavior around this time or why he did what he did. he definitely jumps between very knowledgeable (the garage attendant scene) and just his usual self (the party bus). we’ll later see clarkson using casey’s body back at mga...is a similar thing happening here?
- abraham tells ike that “the company” and “the foundation” are his now. the company’s probably wow-mo. is...is the foundation the greene foundation? where julie works in #6 and creates the cylinder?? did we never realize this???
- it would be funny if ike and abraham’s last name was greene the whole time.
- the two pictures on the wall in ike’s suite appear to be a portrait of a man and an island plateau that kind of looks like where the prison in #3 is.
- gibbs calls ike’s new quarters “the honored guest’s suite.” we’ll later see oliver looking very nervous there. i guess if oliver helped create the kids, he’s an honored guest.
- abraham was specifically a “billionaire ceo.” what the heck does wow-mo do!!
- ike is being questioned at the 23rd precinct, which is east harlem. his home(?) according to his lawyer is 82nd and park, down near the met and central park.
- interested in how gibbs talks about ike. he says he has a “meaningless little existence” and murder is the one thing he’s done right. this is so different to how the other special kids are talked about, and it’s probably because of gibbs’ history with abraham, but i wonder how it ties in with future ike saying ike wasn’t supposed to exist in #43.
- “you’re not the right one to ask” good lord, gibbs, who is.
- ike frequently makes fun of how corrupt he thinks abraham’s business is. a lot of it’s probably posturing for attention, but it’s an interesting thing to glom onto.
- ike’s alibi for the murders is a video of himself with two sisters whose dad is on abraham’s board. did he have to set that up later? time travel shenanigans?
- zoe’s archie reference is so wild in a pre-riverdale world. why has zoe read archie comics.
- zoe briefly using her telepathy here by insinuating that ike doesn’t have much to go home to.
- clarkson poisoning the attendant here is in *opposition* to ike, who wants the guy alive, even if it helps ike cover things up. so clarkson (and hodge presumably) want ike and abraham’s dealings covered up, and are even more okay with killing for it than *ike* is.
- not to sound like an ike apologist, but on this read it’s a little more obvious that ike has a lot more bark than bite; him telling the attendant to forget everything instead of killing him, immediately followed by him trying to turn down the offer to murder someone, kind of backs up the idea that he doesn’t go around wanting people dead often, and maybe actively dislikes it. will have to really pay attention to #24 on this front.

- interesting how gibbs wants to let ike out for killing abraham, whereas georgina during this seduction routine says it would be a waste to let him out early.
- ike takes abraham being alive here pretty well.
- editing this in a day later to say i should add this to the list of “objectively good mg issues.” this one’s just fun.

## #12

- welcome, everyone, to the lara hodge zone.
- we do not see what lara goes into when she’s “coming in”
- lara has been gone for a while and got a tan. was she where the beach is? did she have to be gone for a while because she was compiling her info that she gives casey/clarkson?
- god, i’m just gonna write out the journey into mga. it’s:
  - go in with guards.
  - put on hazard suits. go through a door.
  - go down a large industrial elevator.
  - get to a large warehouse space with radioactivity hazard signs. use a small cart to drive to other end.
  - enter a large set of doors. take off hazard suits. go through circular, scientific-looking opening. (this area looks a little like the headmaster’s lab?)
  - go through the front gates of mga.
- i do NOT know what any of that means, but there’s probably something to the fact that they’re going down? i kind of wonder if mga is on nuclear power and that’s how they’re so off the grid.
- hodge’s picture. i have no ideas about it either.
- hodge is legitimately saddened by the murders. in particular, interesting to think about her demanding to see brendan’s body in relation to her relationship with vanessa. she’ll later wipe brendan’s memory of present day vanessa in this same outfit.
- georgina thinks it’s too early for lara’s “type of intervention”, but lara already got “permission slips.” this is bringing the kids to shrines, i think? she’ll do this next issue with casey, jade and ike and later does it with vanessa.
- zoe’s file said she would need this gun in the future! which means it could have paid off post-50!
- “you’re not a killer, zoe” tying in with the idea that zoe is trying to free people, not kill them.
- hodge has a diploma on her wall. makes me wonder if her hippie persona and distance from the rest of the staff means she got to go to college outside mga?
- hodge states the files list the past, present *and* future up to a point. hodge can see all of them, presumably, while others like georgina wouldn’t be able to.
- it’s not “yet” time for hodge to work with ike.
- hodge says she’s worked for mga “more years than i care to count.” does she mean it’s been her whole life (25 years) or is she referring to past lives? other things she did via time travel? if clarkson could leave mga and come back in casey’s 16-year-old body, could hodge have done something similar...?

## #13

- dan's wearing a marines sweatshirt in this opening flashback, but he was army, right?
- more thoughts on the zoe and hunter confrontation next issue maybe. feel like i should have more. only really interested in zoe's side of things these days, because it feels like the plot-relevant side.
- forgot about ike trying to get casey to help abraham here! he keeps getting distracted by 1. casey looking for hunter and 2. his inability to not say something terrible, but he gets the memo that casey is the protagonist here, huh.
- dagney putting ike with the girls here shows she has no knowledge of hodge's plans, which makes sense, but is interesting to consider.
- i think in volume 5 it'll be implied this woodrun is to catch zoe and/or irina...so why the heck did they hold previous woodruns?
- and more importantly, my eternal morning glories question: Why Did They Hold Woodrun If Irina Was In The Woods
- casey telling ike he's going to watch them leave is brutal lmao
- details about plato's cave i don't think about enough: the christ's resurrection-esque boulder in front of it. the statues of gargoyles and men burning?
- "because god has a sense of humor" don't know what this means but it's an incredible line. i guess the headmaster *does* have a sense of humor.
- hodge's line about how the kids could use some stability feels like it could be a comment on a bunch of things- past lives, maybe, but also might be her reflecting on the truants, who are also very unstable.
- hodge emphasizing that only casey can stop all this. why casey? is it her power set? specific relation with the headmaster? link to david? All Of This?
- hodge's line about jade being able to handle ike insinuates she has some ike/jade knowledge.
- interesting spacial stuff here with hodge saying that jade can't hear casey and isn't up there. implies that there's a time separation that happens here, backed up by this happening immediately to casey and taking a while to occur for jade and ike in #17.
- i guess the last question to ask is why they need hunter specifically...actually two questions. why do they need hunter and when did hodge actually want to go back to

## #14

- a thing about mg is that sometimes an issue will just start with random puritan torture
- one of my favorite running gags in this book is the infinite amounts of random basement offices. they're multiplying.
- hodge in the same outfit as #12, #13 and #16- implying she ran right from one of those events to this. the lara hodge timeline would have gone crazy
- georgina says this was a *month's* worth of work...so before the glories? so this was planned for irina? alternatively, have they just not had a woodrun in a while and want to prune out who's special from the last couple years?
- hodge saying a lot of the kids they have locked up in padded rooms downstairs are from previous woodruns. so they found special kids via woodruns?

- georgina is not calling out brendan as a dead kid here- which implies amanda, chad and steve were all special and they still think brendan wasn't. hodge taking offense to this takes on a lot of context with her relationship with vanessa.
- georgina gets hodge to go quiet by implying that the headmaster wouldn't like to know where she's been. doesn't approve of clarkson?
- zoe's reactions to all of this are WILD if you believe she's trying to free people by killing them. i'm reading this whole conversation the girls are having about how she's a deranged murderer and thinking "but they don't know. they don't know!" no one knows but zoe...going wild, going crazy about this, etc.
- one of the girls referencing irina here and getting silenced, similar to the georgina and gibbs convo in #4.
- new info on the hodge picture: it's something that zoe would find puzzling and a little disgusting, if i'm reading her expression right?
- you have many problems with women.
- zoe threatens to get a jock to beat up hunter here, but i do like how she's clearly playing more on his guilt than any threat. honestly she's running on pure spite this whole back half of the issue and this is so cool of her.
- "to see who could tell the truth from the deceptions" ties in with that idea that woodruns are for finding special kids. i have less of an idea about what "a forest full of the ghosts of your lies" means. the...the shrines? maybe?
- christ the panel where zoe's just gonna let hunter look at an eclipse is so funny.
- georgina immediately asking for hodge when the time change happens ties in very well with how hodge is always the one to help her when things get bad, despite everything.

## #15

- hisao looking for guillaume is so fucking funny...he's sorry he can't participate in the plot right now he needs to be gay.
- av club setup! insinuates they may also have a physical classroom somewhere, not just their redone lab.
- maggie's team is clearly not her av club pals (i assume esi, hannah and andres are their own team. wait do they have accommodations for hannah). they DO seem to know her well enough to know about hunter though, even if she dislikes them.
- interesting how zoe keeps emphasizing this perfect type of "normal" life when talking to sarah. it does keep making me wonder if zoe is struggling to stay normal? like she inherently knows she has to stay off the radar.
- so i take scratch notes as i read and then come back later to fill them out. my note here is "the lab. weird helmet? fire. LASER BEAM"
  - anyway: looks like a weird helmet sitting in that chair? also kind of looks like fire powering this place but it's probably just orange glow. and yes there's a SECURITY LASER BEAM.
- hunter has a straight up time travel brain episode here. the "candy bar" line kind of reminds me of the 1950s-esque flashes. also we see library guy! a previous hunter?
- a trend of everyone giving their interpretations of casey begins here, and will continue with ike in #17. i will say where i think zoe and ike are wrong is the idea that casey does

this with any sort of enmity- i think she's sincere and sometimes doesn't realize how she comes off. clarkson, on the other hand...

- would not be shocked if zoe has some predictive knowledge on clarkson, actually. she could have met her.
- zoe tells hunter there will be "the day when [casey] blames you for dragging her down with you." foreshadowing?
- zoe is very...community brained? in the sense that she thinks a lot about how people interact with each other and relate to each other in social systems.
- is this a real san diego bridge?
- okay, zoe's arc is really coming together on this read in relation to the interpretation that she's trying to "save" people by killing them. she confesses to sarah here that she hid the murder in an attempt to protect sarah, knowing that her own reputation would probably be okay- doing something evil to protect someone and coming off as cruel. that's what she's doing with the students here at mga too! it's the central theme of her arc! really interesting.
- zoe's foster parents making a mystery appearance once again. mom has black hair and dad has some stubble. both light skinned. mom knows what it's like to say goodbye to a friend. hm.
- waaaay back when i first read this issue a decade plus ago i misinterpreted the last zoe and sarah scene here as zoe driving sarah to suicide- i think it was it being on a bridge that made me think it. i didn't realize that the implication is supposed to be that zoe killed her for about a full year. that said, going with my zoe theories on this read...now i'm wondering if my original read was right?

## #16

- dan being religious enough to pray before he paints is very interesting, because casey clearly is not.
- the chinese government mentioned once again! what the hell is up with that.
- "you know where we are." no i do not. actually. this is probably a central mystery for us to solve
- clarkson mention! i really like this one lol it's subtle but really funny once you know the context.
- first appearance of the mind control power. hodge later insinuates she can do this *without speaking directly to people*. how much has hodge used it before?
- hodge has a locker bag already planted. and already knows what's in it. i guess she's gonna have to come back and plant it later?
- "we needed hunter" this is clearly a moment in casey's past. were they meant to go to a place in *hunter's* past? wait, we saw hunter react to the shrine and he'll react to the tower later. is hunter...calibrated...to react to shrines?
- "being here is very dangerous for me" why's that hodge. you seem to be doing fine
- hodge states the instructions she leaves for casey/clarkson not only contain where to go, but "where not to go". where's that
- first person casey meets is clearly abraham. he has money, and she asks for a ticket to NYC at the end of the issue.

- hodge tells casey not to use the mind control more than she needs to. is there a limit?
- "all i've ever read about you, all i've ever seen" reading is the files, but seeing...has a younger hodge met or seen casey/clarkson? does she already know she's going to set up clarkson? so was she trying to change things by going to a different time?
  - this is maybe. alternate universes. again
- it is WILD that the first person casey controls is her dad.
- dan remembering time traveling casey here...did he and kathy have to be killed for this?
  - in #50, headmaster says that he didn't kill casey's parents ("not really") and when she knows who did, they'll understand each other. i wondered at the time if it was clarkson. does it count if clarkson lets them die to protect the fate of the world and/or to protect david and tom?
- dan and kathy are such great parts of this book. the scene with dan and casey in the forest in this issue is one of the best in the comic, and i think the later clarkson and kathy convo in the fifth arc is even better. nick and joe both do a great job portraying them as "real people" in a way many characters in mg don't feel like.

## #17

- it's interesting how jade doesn't have a coherent argument that casey saved her due to friendship rather than proving herself to the faculty.
- ike really is good at reading people- he knows that casey isn't doing this for jade (she's doing it for her parents), has picked up on jade's attempts to die, and doesn't seem that surprised when jade says she "has" to. unfortunately he enjoys using this skill in the worst ways possible
- the page ending with jade saying she always told her mom to wear her seatbelt was missing from my original digital version of this issue, and it still always feels like kind of a surprise.
- it's never explicitly stated, but jade is catholic, right?
- jimmy is the only older sibling of any of the kids, not counting jun being the older twin and georgina technically being irina's older sister; this is the only "traditional" older sibling. always happy to have his presence around in jade flashbacks.
- one fascinating thing i'm only processing on this reread is that this issue's actually the first time we get a good overall look at jade's personality. she has to be crying or sick for most of the first arc and #10 is her dreaming, so this is our first long scene with jade as her usual self. honestly makes this issue more impressive. i like the detail that she's the first in the book to ask the "big questions"- for the first time you can see how she could become dr. ellsworth.
- "what is god doing entertaining an audience with the devil?" is the most iconic quote in this book.
- what's with jade's vision of her mom? not something we ever get more context on. maybe tying in with the "jade was supposed to switch with her mom" idea?
- first use of the power of prayer!
- future jade talks about "resident's quarters" and states some people are coming that will be "here for a long time". lots of things this could be...more scientists to work with julie?

- abraham may not be completely lying when he tells gibbs he has no idea about the time change, since this is irina's plan against him. he's put things together by #25 though so maybe i'm thinking about it too hard and he's just fucking with gibbs
- "you never change. but then, i suppose that's the point" wooo reincarnation theory wooooo.
- david. referred to as abraham's son. well that's still unclear. but david probably lived at camp for a while, right?
- as i stated before: a great issue of comics. it takes a lot to make an issue that's mostly two people talking in a static environment seem fun and engaging. well told all around.

## #18

- this is the issue that got me to read mg! but it's kind of surreal to look back on now; at the time i saw a lot of talk about how fulfilling it was to see a big genre book have a prominent gay relationship, but within two years wicdiv would be coming out. to some extent this feels fairly standard now. not to downplay its importance to people, but it's fascinating how much things changed over the 2010s in terms of gay representation in comics and indie genre work in general.
  - i'm also saying this as someone who mostly interacts with small indie media these days, so i'm not comparing it to mainstream tv/movies/etc here.
- that said. i cheered myself up earlier today while driving simply by thinking "i get to read #18 and see guillaume!"
- again, jun kind of gets what's going on, he's just brainwashed and blinded by rage. when he accuses hisao of being part of the time change, he's assuming hisao is already working with the truants- which is a very fair assumption!
- "you're too afraid to fight dirty" read: you are not willing to sacrifice your stupid fucking brother whom i despise
- clarkson giving abraham the names of the truants here and saying they're the names in her file- as in hodge's files. hodge set this up! hodge set up the truants! she set up *her entire years long relationship with vanessa!* this is one of those things that has always been true but i really have to try to wrap my head around it this time.
- hisao being so dramatic about guillaume. I HATE HIM!!! they're too cute honestly
- "never confuse an opponent with an enemy" feels like a line that could wrap back around. fun ways to tie that into inter-glory, inter-truant conflict along with the constant plotting against each other between characters.
- oh no wonder the rumors started in season 2 about jun and guillaume- all the other students here saw guillaume knock out jun and then walk away with hisao!
- honestly it's so funny we did memes like the guillaume is evil campaign way back when because yeah. guillaume's a bad person and he doesn't hide it. and i love it. his beautiful hatred of all the brainwashed kids! he's such a fun scumbag!!
  - but this is his arc, right? he goes from someone who doesn't really care about anyone except hisao and *maybe* the other truants- and still is willing to sacrifice jun despite loving hisao- to someone who's willing to die to save jade, who the school explicitly thinks isn't special.



- you have to remember guillaume's lying about the plan when he talks to hisao here. he says hisao's here to save abraham- but guillaume isn't trying to save abraham anymore, since he's one of the only people in on irina's plan.
- abraham refers to "each time i have to see some of you go"- meaning kids at the camp have left before. plausible explanation for zoe and/or david.
- abraham discusses an agreement made by the camp. presumably with clarkson, who's later implied to have guided abraham to the camp's location. in exchange, he sends the kids away sometimes. grim.
- abraham talks about mga being full of lies, a theme restated in relation to the headmaster many times.
- "not all of you will come back home to us" well abraham at the current rate it's going to be fucking none of them
- thirty pounds for the bag, just like with mga. i feel like we're probably missing something obvious with this
- guillaume insinuates he's had his eyes opened. him being in on irina's plan kind of implies this happened during the two years at mga? but when?
- do you think irina built time into her plan for guillaume to fuck hisao or was this just a happy coincidence
- guillaume saying they wait until "the rest arrive" is a lie for hisao- irina's really having them wait until jun is preparing to perform the sacrifice, i think. guillaume acts like that wasn't in the plan, but i think it was expected.
  - did irina have some supernatural foresight on that?
- shout out to the for a better future sign in the background of this sex scene
- jun has a friend named howard here, and future jade mentions a howard in #17. either the name was on nick's mind or this is on purpose.
- abraham says guillaume chose living at the camp because of a "calling", implying he maybe could have grown up with his family? later clarkson will allude to meeting kids who don't seem to have been at the camp (i think she refers to meeting esi in ghana in...#44?), so i wonder if guillaume could have been a zoe situation with foster parents if it wasn't for his choice.
- The Promise That Was Made To Us. well now i've got to figure out what that is.
- the zoe misdirect here has confused so many for so long. in retrospect it's obvious to me that guillaume is talking about irina, and we're shifting to zoe because irina is about to kill her.

## #19

- is this issue the most beautiful mg ever is? i could believe it. joe and alex at the top of their game for sure.
- hunter mentions missing a deadline to sign up for a chicago trip. i like the little cosmic "hunter and casey could have met, but hunter screwed it up again" implication here.
- hunter's mom wanting him to apply to mga could be as simple as "mga sent materials to get the idea in her mind" and as complicated as "clarkson planted the idea in her head years ago."

- hunter's mom discussing how he's "special" and telling him he has to believe her, and she can't explain it, reminds me of julie's dad and how when he was dying they showed him the things julie would do in the future. she does seem to imply he did inexplicable things as a young child.
- IRINA. god. fucking finally. we're in the real morning glories now.
- irina appearing on the tv here has always read as irina infiltrating a dream of hunter's to me- he does appear to be trying not to nod off watching the tv, and it would explain the sort of slow bleed into irina's dialogue here. the more we learn about irina's abilities later in the book, and mr. n's implication that irina isn't really trapped at mga, the more it seems possible that she could do something like this.
  - but *why* did she do it? if it's to do something to hunter's mom, the woman was unfortunately terminally ill anyway.
- zoe tells hunter "i put you off as long as i could" and, more interesting to me, "none of this is your fault, after all. not in my opinion." is this about a past hunter? zoe's saying she doesn't blame him for anything at mga? really interesting implications about what zoe knows.
- zoe implies here that hunter wants to make things right with his mom. so *could* hunter say goodbye had zoe killed him here? what precisely is she enabling for him when she does this?
- "i'm the one who's willing to accept what i am!" like irina knows from what her mom taught her? like ian remembers over the course of season 2? i'm rubbing my hands together. it's all coming together. zoe remembers what the kids are! she remembers how to be free of this place!
- irina sees hunter and says "it's been a while". that would imply the the tv appearance is in fact a thing she's already done.
- vanessa reappearing 18 issues later. and also ian's here. i guess.

## #20

- hodge changed into a new outfit for the first time, notably with her timeline.
- there's nothing in #50 that will make how the headmaster injured georgina that obvious. after #35 i remember study hall suggested she was made to whip herself, and for the back injuries i think that's plausible. maybe it's forced self harm in general?
- lara's mom made some sort of "agreement" with the academy, according to dagney, that results in her being killed once lara is born.
- NINE. again. funniest character in this book. she looks about georgina's age?
- speaking of georgina's age- i always had it locked in my head that she's 28, but it occurs to me i'm just assuming that she's 3 in this scene. probably more of a 27-30 range.
- the academy looks like a wreck in the past, but now it occurs to me that this is probably somewhat soon after the headmaster bought the building as a monastery. it hasn't been entirely redone yet.
- i love how joe draws both young georgina and lara all throughout this issue. both in this scene where they run into ted and later when they're teens, it's so obvious it's them and the aging looks so natural.
- dagney knows ted by name. and that's even when he turns out to not be "one of them"

- lara also being able to pick up that ted isn't "one of them" implies that when mga gathered special people underground- as implied by this issue- there were some of them that they weren't even *sure* about.
- lara talks about the people underground calling out and saying they don't want to die. with the idea that you have to travel underground to get to mga in the future...are those people being stored where mga will eventually be? or is it just in the basement, like the future dungeons and padded cells?
- the note lara is given to read about the dead dog is really specific, like it'll turn out to be written by someone in particular in the future.
- dagney says that lara's mom passed down her gifts to lara. did this require her mom to be killed instantly, so lara would inherit it?
- when lara guesses that georgina's mom wasn't special, dagney's response is "no...not in that way". so was kseniya not special at all, or was something else going on? dagney looks a bit regretful.
- dagney explains that the headmaster is testing the girls to see who will be his successor here- but why do it at all? why not just raise one kid with that in mind?
  - maybe when georgina wasn't special, he felt like he had to hedge his bets and have at least one special heir...but he wanted to see if georgina could prove it anyway.
- lara and georgina associate their moms with ted- as in, they consider both moms to have been "one of them." this means georgina's not sympathetic, but lara is because she could sense ted wasn't hostile deep down. it's cool how we see how this eventually effected how they treat the kids. georgina in many ways is treating them as an enemy she has to overpower.
- this vanessa is definitely the one who ages into older vanessa with the scars- but it being *our* vanessa is a big question. at the very least, this is a version of her who likes and trusts hodge and who has been told about hodge's desire to meet her mother.
- plato's cave here clearly ties into the themes of mga potentially not being the "real world", looking at it now. if mga's all you can see, you assume it's real.
- vanessa says the cave exists to show hodge how to time travel and use her gifts, which ties into the idea that the shrines have been places of instruction. it also may explain why irina has been trying to destroy shrines- destroy mga's opportunities to train students with their ideology?
- when hodge asks if she can go back in time vanessa says "back in your past, yes." so can hodge only travel along her own timeline?
- vanessa says she's repaying a favor- after #32 i think we were meant to guess this was letting vanessa see brendan one more time. was it actually that? who knows!
- "you're one of them...the people we kept in the ground when i was little?" this is just giving the game away! my theory for a long time has been that mga rounded up special people and then killed a lot of them at once to get everyone the same birthday and raise them from scratch. they were alive when lara was five (before the kids were born) and are dead by this time (when the kids should be about three).
- grim that hodge appears to have gotten vanessa to travel back to do this partially by referencing her bond with ellen.

- interesting how vanessa says that hodge should be able to time travel immediately and doesn't have anyone else here to pray with.
- vanessa says that "all of us" are grateful for hodge and care for her. would she associate herself with the average mga student?
- mga's first students here also correspond timeline-wise with abraham meeting some of the earliest special kids (zoe, guillaume). maybe abraham hid some and then had to choose some to go to mga? because this was before the camp was finished, so maybe before he defected for real.
- "you were the one that reminded him of himself" interesting thing for hodge to say about georgina. maybe tells us a little of the headmaster's origins and personality.
- "i just needed to get them away from her" implicitly away from casey. does this imply that casey could have prevented this from happening had she done a normal woodrun?

## #21

- in retrospect, the truants' first proper scene being abraham saying they will not all come back to camp alive was blunt as a rock foreshadowing.
  - haha get it blunt as a rock because no i'm not going to finish this sentence
- ellen already talking about the phone
- despite this arc focusing so much on irina, during this read it's obvious that vanessa is also the "main character" of the truants in a lot of ways, especially in terms of paralleling casey. she's one of the first characters we meet in the book, she's the most blatantly heroic and nice one, and she attempted the big plan to save abraham that parallels casey's jade-saving plan in the first arc. ellen here talks about how she checks the box before she does something- which is similar to something dan has also said about casey in #16. and of course casey and vanessa both have future selves who are thirteen years older living in the present!
  - i remember nick once said that the truants were a version of the glories where zoe took charge instead of casey. that plays out pretty well here.
- ian's multiple bags seem to be a reference to the multiple ians, but we know that it's one ian manifesting in multiple places due to #50, not clones. so what the heck is in those bags!!
- akiko says fortunato has been praying for about four hours. cool and normal child.
- and meanwhile irina is in the back of the bus talking about how it's time to murder people. there are two types of children
- i really do love this bus scene. instant character establishment. a lot of the dynamics get set up here- the ian/akiko/fortunato triangle, vanessa as a sister figure to ian and close with him and akiko, and guillaume, irina and fortunato being sort of separate from that.
- speaking of vanessa and ian: knowing that they've been brought up together implicitly from infancy, a lot of their smaller interactions here gain new context (ie. vanessa glaring at him when he jokes they should've killed hunter)
- irina very much putting on a show here when she sees hisao and then hits guillaume. knowing what we know of her personality, she's really overdoing it!
- what was up with airport guy.

- vanessa's essay to get into mga was "why it's not too late to save the world." i wonder what older vanessa would think of it.
- vanessa apparently wrote about her mom dying- which would imply her foster mom might have died in the two years she was there? or that it was a full cover story in her essay. maybe she thought, knowing mga, that saying she had a dead parent would pique their interest.
- hey. i'm gonna say something about the ian/akiko/fortunato triangle, and you're all going to have to not kill me for it.
  - are you ready
  - alright
  - this storyline is just the reverse world version of the snowgrave route, right?
- guillaume's hatred of the normies is once again very funny.
- "she was not always this way" is an interesting thing for hisao to say about irina. i wonder what things she was up to at the camp.
- irina really did not need to fuck with steve here. like she's actively toying with the guy. much like guillaume, i do not think she respects the normies.
- i like how irina saying her family back home liked to have rules and order her around could apply to both kseniya and abraham.
- irina is still putting on a show for hisao when they talk, so it's interesting to consider if any of what she says here is true.
- irina says hisao brought out the best in everyone. of course, that means they're about to lose him.
- guillaume tells irina he "almost didn't" go through with tricking hisao. i'm sure he regrets that one.

## #22

- **IMPORTANT:** door ian
- "perhaps that is exactly what they intend- they are merely unable to" irina referring to some of the mysterious rules of the game here, i think. would the glories have actually died during #2 then? besides jade? they wouldn't have, i'd say.
- irina bringing up nebuchadnezzar here, implicitly setting up mr. n at least in the sense that he's implied to be quite ancient.
- there's a bit of a science vs. religion theme in this book as a whole that is obviously inherited from lost. this scene places the truants as religion in contrast to the science of the glories, which makes some sense on the surface, but that varies even within the groups. ian and fortunato will embody this same debate later.
- WHY does the academy do this test. implicitly, maybe, to let them know that they can only move forward if they reach agreements with the teachers and give them what they want to hear?
- so we have to ask how the tower is here. some sort of...unreal construction as all the shrines are? how are shrines built? we see again that they allow access to time travel, but in this case they seem to travel to an actual connected location rather than just to Wherever.

- a different book would have some gender thoughts about fortunato being the damsel in distress of the truants and jade's parallel. this book doesn't though. now the book i would write. that sure would
- **IMPORTANT #2:** floor ian
- irina really playacting an adult here, calling akiko and ian children.
- i remember study hall (or someone else?) suggesting that fortunato being gagged when he was kidnapped as a kid in #35 implied he had the mind control power. and look- he's gagged in nine's office, too.
- nine insinuates dagney hasn't been picking special kids right and that she might be self-conscious about this? did dagney used to have that ability like nine?
- nine making an age joke here that is implicitly about the samsara. get em.
- irina is doing a lot of lying here but she implies the tower was how the truants did the time change. plausible.
- the truants know abraham met hunter, gave him the watch, and implicitly what hunter can do in the tower- "it's the same reason we need you". How. oh this might have something to do with irina in his dreams in #19? has she been monitoring him?
- irina knows the exact timing of fortunato's signal, down to the second. presumably she had him time it?
- irina tells fortunato she remembers having her eyes opened. i would not put it past kseniya to have done this.
- for those of your rereading alongside me, [here's your convenient link to the study hall with the translation of this scene](#). thanks, matt meylikhov.
- a fun spacial thing here i've never really processed, where the kids have to climb up these stairs and then are on the top of stairs when they time travel- implicitly, this was the area of the tower that the stairs corresponded to before it was destroyed. cool.
- ian implies he has done this before, *multiple* times, when commenting on hunter's reaction. so maybe not just to make the time change.
- another thing i've technically noticed but never processed- irina CAN talk to the priest, despite the language barrier! they have a clear exchange! probably shows the extent of her abilities.
- i read the sprawl trilogy alongside shelved by genre recently and it occurred to me that i don't think there's any william gibson references in mg, despite all the nerdy jokes. i didn't think much of it until i realized that hunter is straight up johnny mnemonic in this scene.
  - all he needs to do is get fridged for casey's character development. shout out to johnny mnemonic, dying to break narrative gender stereotypes since 1984.
- the glow around hunter is cylinder shaped...
- irina puts her motivation in world-saving terms: "this world depends on us." she considers abraham "a weakling and a fool." putting this together...she thinks by ending things she's saving the world, and thinks abraham's methods are too slow and no longer work.
- which of course implies that whatever fortunato saw when his eyes were opened- and what she must have seen at some point- endorses this worldview? we see sort of apocalyptic scenes in #10, but jade has no context for them.

- more on this next issue with akiko!

## #23

- how did irina get access to talk to the headmaster in the greenhouse? we know from #8 that just going in doesn't mean the headmaster will appear and talk to you. did kseniya give her the information?
- now that we know the headmaster appears to be a fleshy human dude, one can imagine irina injured him pretty drastically. since irina herself was injured, it actually seems like it was a pretty close fight!
- honestly, fortunato, just let megan out. i know it's not part of the plan but come on. it'd be fun.
- akiko saying she knew fortunato would save her implies she saw her near future when her eyes were opened, like jade did- and presumably saw what happens in this issue. which means it's also likely she saw a different version of the sacrifice later in this issue...which i imagine influences her decision to sacrifice herself.
- does fortunato get the flare from hodge's office?
- between akiko babbling while drugged, fortunato trying to keep her in check, and the scene where everyone just drops hisao on the fucking ground, this issue is briefly a comedy. Until It Isn't
- "we are asking him to give more than any of us have" "speak for yourself" crazy exchange. it's correct though for the most part. guillaume went to camp of his own volition, ian and vanessa didn't have to lose their families to go, and even akiko didn't seem to know her dad died until #37 if i'm remembering right. irina and fortunato may be the exceptions?
- irina keeping up the abraham lie when yelling at hisao here- because it's also a lie for ian and vanessa.
- hisao saying he'll fix the damage irina has done. well I Guess He Sure Does Fix It
- you can pray to summon david
  - do...do they sacrifice goats to david in the ceremony. does david like goats.
- i love the jocks immediately identifying david as "him." the mga campus' urban legend david. resident ghost david. sometimes he murders kids and they're still just going to chem class in this goddamn building
- i'm thinking what akiko saw when her eyes were opened was what happens when david does this to jun without intervention- and she'll state later in #37 that she thought if she didn't do it, the world might end. maybe it's not the specific action of her sacrificing herself to david, but irina's plan overall? headmaster will also say she's wrong, which implies irina might be playing into his hand, but maybe i should save that for that issue.
- why doesn't fortunato just tackle her. i mean. it's for plot reasons. well he does seem like he gets the "freeze" reaction to things huh
- we know what happens to akiko here (coma), but what happens to *david*?
- fortunato is surprised when irina says she failed. which would imply that mga was giving off vibes like the headmaster was straight up dead?
- "he deceived me." classic "the headmaster lies" stuff, as is constantly stated. so what the hell did he deceive her about?

- so why does irina think she has to kill ike to end this. the only new thing popping into my head from this read: if ike is the one who sets up the funding for julie to create the cylinder and/or for future jade's work, does irina think stopping that from happening puts a stop to the mysterious future war?
- "i hadn't seen him in a year" yeah ike why haven't you. what did you do a year ago ike. go on

## #24

- abraham refusing to hold his newborn son, a CLASSIC abraham bad father moment. perhaps the most iconic one.
- gibbs calls abraham "a father at last", implying there's not already any kids gibbs would know about? relevant to david.
- "we've got a long night ahead of us" reminds me that this is i think the only time we've seen the night the kids were born. getting on a plane implies to me he's not going to mga, which if it's really in upstate ny would probably be a car ride from nyc. i could see him doing business with oliver and ellen, actually.
- i'm always assuming david is not related biologically to abraham...but gibbs certainly thinks so, referring to him as "flesh and blood" and commenting on the family resemblance. well now i've got to account for this.
- gibbs notes david not being able to kill abraham has to do with one of the rules.
- so i'm finally realizing on this read that one of the rules must be that abraham *has* to be killed by his kid. gibbs of course makes an attempt with david here, but the fine print must say it has to be ike.
- "you always did love a futile gesture" abraham says to gibbs here- i swear hodge later says this to older vanessa? what an interesting relationship parallel to exist.
- ike dreamed of hisao being saved by abraham and implicitly hunter getting abraham's watch- neither of which have yet happened, and abraham doesn't seem to recognize what ike is talking about.
- benjamin mention. a guy who is alive and calling abraham at this point. but when does he become an architect that headmaster makes fun of!
  - maybe benjamin is someone who always goes by the same name when reborn, like zoe?
- abraham's speech about faith here makes me wonder if his arc is about that- we've known him in relation to other characters more than as his own guy. he really does seem to be someone who is operating on having faith in a greater plan, and not making certain moves himself. irina despises that lack of action.
- jade's choice to kiss ike here is really defending casey- she prevents ike from mentioning the cave. truly god gives his hardest missions to his strongest soldiers.
- that picture of abraham and ike at coney island feels like a chekhov's gun. it's also a purposeful parallel to the picture of the camp kids abraham has later in this issue- they're both pictures of the kids at the age of 10.
  - there's no reason for it to be the picture on hodge's desk, right?
- abraham mentioning his father here seems to be for us as readers to pick up that he's not literally immortal- i remember while the book was coming out, someone looked up



these coasters and figured out that they seem to match up with abraham's purported age (as in, what he actually looks like).

- gribbs implies that the headmaster gave him permission to go rough due to daramount's failure. gribbs does *not* know jade is special and is believing nine- so if headmaster knows about jade, he's not even telling gribbs.
- ike burned down a facility the company owns that does animal testing. again. what does wow-mo DO
- i really wish the book had pulled on the thread of ike knowing about the camp pre-mga more- it would have been fun to see him converse with the truants about it directly. it's SUCH a bonkers piece of info for him to have figured out pre-series. your dad is raising child soldiers in egypt for god knows what reason. and he kind of acts like he loves them more than you.
- abraham talks a lot about protecting ike from some unknown force and leaving something behind for him. i imagine he had to make a lot of deals to prevent mga from coming to get ike sooner, which i think is alluded to next issue. what exactly did keeping ike out of all this entail?
- implicitly ike came up with the entire "use jade as a hostage to get answers from my dad" plan while gribbs was attacking jade. wild.
- finally time to consider abraham's timeline here when ike kills him. this point in the timeline corresponds with mga infiltrating the camp, so with just the first season you could assume that's why he's so upset- but we know that abraham got captured by mga after that, so how could he be here? on *this* read...you have to consider if this is an abraham who knows what happened to the truants in #50. or maybe even beyond that. he says he's got "nothing left to lose anyway." of course he'd have the picture of the kids at camp out then.
- hey do you think older vanessa is hearing this ruckus down the hall.
  - i would LOVE to see abraham's reaction to finding out older vanessa is down here, actually.
- so. abraham set up his own death, right? he very specifically has his will and the knife (sidenote: the knife!) out. ike even asks what abraham was trying to do. the will says ike will inherit nothing- but he does stay heir to the company after this, so this isn't a version of the will that's reproduced anywhere (ike will say he burned it in #25, but i mean, it sounds like abraham didn't send a copy to his lawyer or put it on the cloud or whatever). i've been noticing on this reread how ike isn't really the type to jump to murder despite clearly having the ability in him- it's only here and when he shoots gribbs and the guard upon seeing his dad again. in other words, he has to get *really* provoked. and i think abraham was literally setting up a situation where he'd get that upset! because for some reason he knew he had to die and that ike was the only one who could kill him! but good lord, why. i guess he needed to get ike to inherit the company/foundation as soon as possible? potentially to have it set up the moment ike left mga, if he knew by then that ike was going to mga?
  - and then we have to consider the other abraham that shows up in #11, who is not surprised at all this. despite all my alternate universe theories, this all being an

abraham on one timeline still does make sense (if we incorporate time travel). it seems like he had a long term plan.

- abraham knows who jade is and knows she's special. does he know dr. ellsworth?

## #25

- [dark souls font] WALID MENTIONED
- georgina and abraham know each other, which seems obvious when abraham also knows headmaster and gribbs, but it's fun to think about.
- one of the agreements was nullified when abraham sent the truants, or more specifically when irina broke cover. it's enough of a break that they could interfere with the camp *and* recruit ike and the rest of the glories.
  - i love how mga operates on pathologic rules here. ["It's all about trickery to you?"](#) Wherever have you come from?" "No, no- I detest trickery. But if we ourselves are to suffer deception, our hands are no longer tied."
- georgina's angry at the damage to headmaster, but he seems pretty much fine by #50. perhaps it's the spirit of the thing.
- abraham hid all the glories on purpose. this probably includes jade, who we never see him meeting pre-series like the rest.
- abraham wants to "end this." for all the differences between him and irina, they have that in common.
- lots of comments on abraham knowing this doesn't end and having seen "everything" here and in last issue, which contradicts the coney island stuff. guy is either a long term time traveler or maybe someone who's just prone to remembering all his past lives?
- guillaume interrupting fortunato here to say what he wants to say in the rudest way possible is one of my favorite smaller truant moments. incredible implied dynamic.
- irina has been "blowing up shrines", which vanessa doesn't approve of.
- vanessa says here that they all know what will happen if the new kids arrive- so implicitly truants know ike can kill abraham?? abraham did you tell your twelve year old adopted child soldiers that your son is allowed to murder you???
- i wonder if irina meditating here is how she does stuff like talk to hunter through the tv.
- kind of interesting that ian is the one who goes out and tells irina about the failure of vanessa's plan- honestly, i think they could've pulled him into it, at this point he'd be more loyal to akiko than abraham.
- irina's "what did i tell you?" and purposefully not telling ian akiko would get hurt implies irina may have some future foresight once again? that seems like a big deal.
- irina calling this all a game proves that woodrun is truly the mg equivalent of the chimera ant arc. 1. it is about games 2. it is so long that it takes up half the comic when it's finished 3. it draws narrative parallels between every possible character 4. irina not telling half her allies what her own plan is is an isaac netero gambit 5. it's so complicated that you can't keep track of everything on the first read and on the second you barely can
- vanessa's face is banged up when irina and ian first go rescue her...clearly meant to confuse us with what happened in #20, because this is actually *not* a vanessa who has

experienced that. honestly kind of just seems like adding confusion for no reason other than to trick us lol

- future jade's healing power is a thing that's real. can anyone else do that
- future jade states "all your friends- and everyone you ever cared about, in the entire world- will die" if they don't fix things quickly. this will certainly back up akiko's belief that the world will end if she doesn't intervene that she mentions in #37.
- abraham once again states to ike that "the entire reason i'm here- is to protect you." so he allowed himself to be locked up for that? but also he knows irina will want to kill ike- how and when did he figure out what she saw when she met the headmaster? simple putting pieces together in his head while hanging out in his cell?
- interesting to consider when irina and fortunato pulled guillaume into the "we're not saving abraham" plan. it implies he got his eyes opened within the two years at mga.
- irina like smh i have a simple and basic plan to kill abraham's dirtbag son and my crew of incompetents has to ruin it for me
- this brief scene with hisao and fortunato gets more and more depressing the further ahead you get in this story.
- the office shrine here has gotta be the funniest and weirdest one but even moreso when you consider that hunter seems to have made it himself. it looks like he wrote the "stand here" in fucking sharpie. classic hunter. can't even make a good, properly mysterious shrine
- future jade calling the school a monastery has a fun double meaning- we know from #50 it's literally a monastery the headmaster bought, but it's also a cloistered area for the kids to educate themselves and ruminate on the headmaster's belief system.
- jade saying irina and crew will have to "be in position" to kill ike implies they knew ike wouldn't be in the time change? might also be irina foresight. it also is very game-like, and future jade will make this all a chess metaphor in a couple issues.
- hunter's got that cylinder shape again
- Hisao Has Fixed The Problem
- vanessa implying to irina she won't be "on board for killing anyone" vs older vanessa literally being willing to kill her younger self in front of their mother
- i get why only ian ends up feeling this way, but there's a fun potential thread of fortunato becoming the truant's team fuckup here.
- akiko interrupted the sacrifice but jun still died- does this count as the sacrifice happening or not? guillaume implies a proper sacrifice would have locked in the time change. i guess maybe hunter wouldn't be able to bring everyone back to the right time if it had gone properly.
- wait. when hodge was getting ike and jade "away from her", did she mean irina, not casey? but it seems like irina predicted this.
- ike states he burned the will and the photo after killing abraham and abraham responds "good." i think this implies whatever future ike inhabited ike's body did so basically the moment after the stabbing?
  - and it must be a future ike because "it hasn't happened yet"
- older ike and the dog will show up in #43.

- the streaks in the sky appear after hunter does the change...who knows what that could mean. might have to see if there's consistency when they appear.
- so is casey the only one that can fix things because she can interact with the cylinder without a medium like the scantron? we see the cylinder turn on when julie shows up in #6, and they're clearly different versions of each other.
- i love the truants more than i love myself but it's truly wild on every reread how when you get to the end of #19 and irina shows up, it feels like you start reading a different book

## END OF SEASON 1 CHECK IN

somehow i managed to finish season 1 on may 3rd so i can make this public on may 4th with the whole first season done. i didn't even plan that. that's a higher power intervening, folks.

all seriousness though if the question is "have we actually solved anything?" it's...nothing big, but i do think some things are clicking together this time? just to jot some things down:

- i've basically solved zoe. or at least her entire character has clicked together for me for the first time on this read. assuming we can trust ian's perception of things in #50 (and i loathe to trust ian), something about mga is "not real", and both ian's statements there and zoe herself showing back up alive in #38 back that up. if zoe's trying to "free" people when she kills them, that would offer a narrative parallel to her relationship with sarah, where they hid the murder of the teacher out of zoe's desire to protect her. it gives zoe a very consistent thematic center about having to do horrible things and be vilified for them despite that those actions are for the greater good. mg is a messy and unclear book thematically, but this gives zoe a pretty clear narrative arc.
- the lowkey apocalyptic vibes of the book are more obvious to me on this read and are probably the largest part of the book's lore that we didn't really study closely while it was coming out. i think the goal of all the major parties in this book (headmaster, abraham, irina) is to steer the world in a better direction, and they're at odds about what the best route is- and at odds as to whether some of their actions might ensure the world actually ends. whatever happens, future jade is trying to stabilize things in the future, meaning at least in whatever timeline she's in, things haven't been resolved. might want to really dial down on this in season 2.
- want to also consider why certain students are so important compared to others. with casey it's definitely something to do with the cylinder. i think for ike it's actually what his wealth enables, plus his ability to kill abraham. for hunter...i feel like the cylinder-shape whenever he's activated means something. i'm kind of wondering if whatever is in his brain is calibrated to the cylinder? is he a human cylinder? (this means interesting things for casey and hunter's relationship, i think)
- what the fuck is hodge's plan. i think i might write out her timeline and outfits after season 2 just to see if there's any sense we can make of it. she's weirder to me on every read.

anyway as of this exact word this document is 14093 words. and like a maniac, i must continue. the only sacrifice i'm making here...is my goddamn time

## #26

- my third hardcover is so fucked up and not in a wear and tear way lol. the spine is like, outwardly ripped? part of the cover's warped? it still reads just fine. what the hell did i do to it. i think maybe it came to me this way and the damage was covered by the slipcover
- casey gives abraham a name for kiev, which insinuates they were looking for irina far before they found her- which would be four years later if i remember my timeline right. mr. n also states in #30 that mga looked for her for a long time.
- casey says abraham paid for both the meal and the hotel. so she gets all her money from him.
- casey is 19 here, but abraham trying to kiss her and their dialogue after actually makes me wonder if abraham even knows her actual age. hodge did say she'd made her ID say she was at least 21 when she was 16.
- it occurs to me that we only seem to have seen things that happened *after* casey started using the clarkson disguise. what was she doing *before* that?
- timeline wise, clarkson will be 29 when we get to the present day- roughly the same age as georgina, who is in that ~27-30 range. so that part of her disguise works as well. for all hodge says she made a mistake going that far back, it sure seems to have worked out perfectly...
- the black headscarf clarkson wears sometimes would also cover up if any of these scenes happened *before* the clarkson disguise. although she's also using it when she gives ellen the phone, and that happens when she's already clarkson. in-universe, it also probably exists to cover up her roots, lol.
- alright we're gonna have to go through this sequence of clarkson's actions panel by panel, huh. **green** for scenes we've seen, **red** for scenes we haven't.
  - **page 1, panels 1, 2 and 3:** these all appear to be a consecutive series of events, because she's wearing the same outfit and headscarf. getting on a plane, riding with military officers, walking like a cool guy away from an explosion. this probably has something to do with the ambiguous future conflict. is this the base the blevins' were living on in #16?
  - **page 1, panel 4:** meeting with what looks like a military officer on a porch on a lake or river. i think we see the back of this guy's head again. more importantly: his outfit is very hodge. is this where she was?
  - **page 2, panel 1:** giving ellen the phone. this is in #44. she's notably wearing the exact same outfit as she was in the first three panels, with the headscarf and shades. also confirms these can be out of order, because the very next panel happened a few days beforehand in-universe.
  - **page 2, panel 2:** going with oliver to meet ian in #36.
  - **page 2, panel 3:** shooting the guys who kidnapped fortunato in #35.
  - **page 2, panel 4:** arguing with abraham at camp- implicitly when she asked for the truants to be sent away in #18.

- **page 3, panel 1:** walking around some sorta casino. notably wearing the black headscarf. no connections i can think of.
- **page 3, panel 2:** talking to jade's mom at the restaurant in #45 before literally telling her to kill herself.
- **page 3, panel 3:** on the floor having been kicked around by irina in #46.
- **page 3, panel 4:** threatening hunter's doctor in #8.
- **page 4, panel 1:** visiting a hotel with what i believe is japanese script on the side. i'm inclined to think this might be the hotel hisao stayed at after escaping the camp? because clarkson's been associated with the childhoods of...every other glory/truant except him, guillaume and zoe, i think. could also have something to do with akiko's family.
- **page 4, panel 2:** playing chess. she's the white pieces. something something the game is all there is.
- **page 4, panel 3:** poisoning the drink of the garage attendant ike tries to bribe (and keep alive) in #11.
- **page 4, panel 4:** standing in the middle of the desert with a map. i think this is her finding the land for the camp.
- with all that written out, it's striking to me that many of these scenes connect her to the childhoods/pre-mga life of one of the other characters. from the glories we have scenes for ike, jade, and hunter here and for the truants we have scenes for vanessa, ian, fortunato, and irina. i could see her arguing with abraham counting as the guillaume scene as that was originally seen in #18, an issue about guillaume and hisao's relationship. so i think we may want to connect the other scenes to zoe, hisao, and akiko (and maybe guillaume). we do know clarkson met akiko and brought her to camp.
- isabel's timeline here- she has to have been in illinois by the time of the 8th grade science fair that casey "cheated" at. implicitly the glories are finishing 10th grade by their ages. so isabel spent around three years outside of mga, minimum?
- isabel rambles about a european vacation here. who's taking care of her? was that plot relevant?
  - it occurs to me that this would explain where mr. n was, but isabel's not much trouble, and his job seems to be to deal with troublesome kids.
- isabel knowing that casey "cheated" means she knows what's up with clarkson. was it just her noting the resemblance and having knowledge of time travel, or did someone (hodge?) tell her?

## #27

- ok yeah, the "her" in "get them away from her" was casey, i thought about it too hard.
- the punch...i had thought this casey was from after the car accident, but maybe i'm wrong? it does seem to be a direct response to something.
- clarkson says the "hour of our release draws near" is from "a book i read a long time ago" that takes place during the inquisition and was found anonymously in a monastery basement. er, a monastery like mga? was it written by someone in the past of the mga building, and that's why the building was the one headmaster picked and bought?

- casey talks about not being allowed to take a NYC class trip, an interesting contrast to hunter forgetting a chicago trip- it's not a direct exchange with hunter, it's instead foreshadowing her connection to abraham.
- gonna miss alex's lighting touches. the choice to darken the room and put clarkson and tom within the light of the blinds is so fucking good.
- first mention of daramount and fortunato's relationship here. georgina saying it's disappointing for him to participate in this implies she never figured out he was in on irina's plans the entire time. georgina. i don't know how to put this,
  - i think we really do have to consider whether fortunato becoming georgina's teacher's pet was a thing irina set up and encouraged for info gathering purposes.
- georgina implies the truants have had multiple plans and schemes- do those go beyond the ones we've seen (vanessa's in #1 and the saving fortunato plan in #23?)
- irina says that jade would let irina kill ike "if you knew who he really was, child." there's a lot of lowkey ike as headmaster stuff in this issue that we now know is not true, and also a lot of ike as antichrist figure...well, irina is sort of an antichrist figure, too. actually maybe more of a satan figure.
  - also notice irina playacting the adult again.
- hunter theorizes he'll make this shrine in the future knowing he'll need to use it, and jade confirms that is *not* true. i suspect this is the work of the last hunter, then.
- tom teaches history, which is not important but fun lore.
- clarkson is still doing trips for hodge *while* teaching.
- it was also mentioned back in #13, but this issue double-confirms that casey specifically grew up in schauburg, rather than chicago proper.
- abraham trying to convince irina to stop says "even if what you think you saw is true." so abraham is implying here that whatever irina saw when she faced the headmaster could have been a lie, which is *another* "headmaster lies" thing.
- "i am not supposed to be here at all, 'father'- none of us are, you remember?" this is one of those quotes i don't have an exact idea about but i have to rotate it in my head...i think maybe abraham was involved in something that caused mga and the current cycle to happen? like, if they'd succeeded last time all the torment of mga didn't have to happen? also maybe has to do with mga's ambiguous realness.
- in the same vein: "i am not going to die for you." irina seems to think abraham was also sending his children to their deaths. which, after #50, well. but why does she think that already?
- irina's frustration here is that abraham hid something, and she believes some of his own children won't be able to forgive him if they find out. this is kind of a plot device to explain why she doesn't just kill ike immediately, but it's worth thinking about what she even means. something that ensured the cycle continued this long?
- future jade's long explanation of the rules of the game here basically implies that the truants did something to break the rules to the point where the destruction of things was inevitable. most likely this is the time change by her wording, but would it also go all the way back to irina attacking headmaster?

- “they can do and move and change things however they see fit” is jade’s wording here, which would back up the time change.
- once again we have to ask if the fucked-up academy here is post-#50. actually, does that imply the truants’ actions in that issue *also* broke some rules?
- clarkson uses the wording “she doesn’t belong here” when talking to kathy about casey, which is a fun connection between her words and irina’s earlier this issue.
- said it before and i’ll say it again: this kathy and clarkson conversation is one of the best in the book. absolute gut punch when clarkson turns around and locks in her mother’s own fate, hoping against hope that hodge was right and it can change this time.
- this is clarkson telling kathy to let casey *apply*. did she have to do this again to get casey to go to the school?
- clarkson (as casey) tells hodge that she *still* doesn’t know why the academy has to treat them the way they do, which is an interesting gap in her knowledge.
- “we don’t do anything to you. this was your choice, remember? this is what you wanted.” is this about clarkson- casey’s choice to save her parents- or is it about a past version of casey? both, maybe?

## #28

- hodge insists that due to the academy’s policy on agreements, she’s kept her word about dan and kathy being savable.
  - have always loved paul’s choice to color this panel in ominous shadow.
- hodge says it’s “not yet” time to bring clarkson back, so maybe the car accident wasn’t that moment.
- hodge asks clarkson if she’s willing to give things up here and gets shut down, but knowing where this goes, hodge is clearly asking because of david and tom. it reminds me of in #49 and #50 when hodge is asking vanessa to trust her. i know hodge is a liar, but i’m inclined to think she means it when she asks this stuff.
- clarkson-as-casey recalling the flames underneath the school and dismissing it as a kid’s thought. so she knows what’s up with that now?
- hunter is getting his eyes opened here, i’m pretty sure? future jade says he just passed out, but i wouldn’t put it past her to trigger this if she thought it was time for hunter to know it, and it’s way less rough than getting an injection from nine, i figure. the passing through settings and time here- and the direct flow from hunter dreaming to being back in mga- back up a lot of the theories of mg being “unreal” and will tie into the av club dreams in a few issues.
- favorite part of this dream sequence is that the mention of mr. n here isn’t just nick throwing in foreshadowing, that’s straight up something that happened to descartes. which implies that mr. n might exist as a character to solve “who’s the mr. n in descartes’ dream?” well, probably more likely he was created to serve multiple purposes, but you know what i mean.
- i also seem to remember that this scene with fortunato was originally written for akiko? do i remember that wrong? it does seem more like akiko dialogue.



- irina and georgina's interactions here setting up the reveal that they're related in #30. i seem to remember nick saying that them being sisters wasn't in the original conception of irina's character, so i wonder when exactly it popped up as a possibility.
  - i bet she'll regret not letting her choke.
- irina refers to ike as "the reason for our suffering." kind of wondering if this is something a past ike did? but then why would she want to kill the current one to end things.
- clarkson-as-casey says irina "has every right to feel what she feels." interesting contrast to their later enmity.
- hodge restates that she and headmaster can't stop this, only casey can. i'm sure this is cylinder stuff.
- library guy and julie cameos in this scene. my inclination for a while has been that library guy was maybe the previous hunter and hunter is seeing julie as the next casey here, but i can't be sure.
- some of future jade's talk about how hunter has to find the answers himself is really pushing it in terms of mystery box storytelling, lol. these are the things that make people want to drop the book!
- future jade says what is being asked of casey "goes beyond words" - which implies she knows about tom and david.
- irina states there have been many times they have called upon teachers and guides and they fail every time. she elaborates that years ago "they were given a test of their own. and in their cowardice, they hid their failure from us." is...is this the reason mga exists? did the followers/allies of these superpowered people screw something up and they had to do a hard reset by having all the kids born at once? and irina interprets that as them causing undue suffering by hiding whatever the mistake was. i'm going to guess said mistake also has to do with pushing the doomsday clock forward (in the metaphorical sense).
- i don't know why i haven't said it before but my lowkey pet theory on the crying little girl in the closet is that it's akiko's briefly mentioned sister.
- headmaster's expression changes to sad here, maybe the only time i can think of him looking that way.
- clarkson hears psalms 116 here (KJV specifically), particularly that "shadows of death compassed me" line, which she also heard when time traveling in the cave in #13. is she just realizing something is wrong from recognizing that line or does she know something about time travel we don't?
  - if my memory is correct, fortunato recites this exact psalm before ian comes to kill him in #50. hm.

## #29

- so the opening page is back. i'm inclined to believe this is the night that tom and danielle found out they were having david- based on the doctor saying they have a lot to talk about- so this really centralizes one of the big inciting incidents *of the whole book* being david's existence. it also means someone who was *not* danielle was trying to intervene here, because danielle doesn't know about the note. hodge?

- casey's personality really shines through clarkson in this scene, for one of the first times i can think of- her calling the doctor a fascist is really charming.
- with all of that in mind, david being in the background of the big double page spread probably means...something.
- the most unusual and interesting thing that casey interacting with the cylinder does, to me, is removing irina's ability to mind control people. if it was still working, she could just turn around and control the guards again- evidently she can't do it *at all* at least for a while. would she have to...alter things to turn it back on again? could she not do it until she breaks the rules again?
  - i wonder if this is a mga specific rule- like the "outside world" is exempt, but she has to turn the "mind control" button on within mga.
- this irina and georgina exchange is so buckwild. there are some messed up sibling relationships in this book, but we really underrate this one. and i really don't think georgina *knows*.
- the other thing the cylinder does is remove abraham from the mga part of the board and put him in morocco, which insinuates abraham has a...default setting? hodge refers to this as part of a "deal" later.
- brutal detail that jade and hunter are, without realizing it, already using the right name for jun.
- this morning i had the stray thought that i think, in the universe where mg continued, that pamela would survive the ending. i just think she'd find some way to walk off into the sunset. it would suit her.
- oh yeah should probably talk about hodge having to talk with her dad through a recorder here. what's with that? can he only appear at certain times and circumstances? something to do with what irina did?
- "what started out as an attempt to catch a killer" ok so this was the quote that made me think woodrun was for catching zoe and/or irina, but the other things we know about woodrun don't match up. i'm wondering if woodrun was just usual for daramount and gribbs (to find special kids), but *hodge's* plans were to catch irina, and that's what she's referring to.
- for all her lying, i think hodge is being honest here talking to her dad. we know she loves him, even if she doesn't agree with everything going on. i do think she means it when she says she wants there to be another way, or her relationship with vanessa in particular doesn't make sense.
- "this is real, you know how i can tell? i still hate you" presumably something clarkson said when she did time travel...with all the implications about mga's nature, "this is real" is the most interesting part of that line.
- maybe the goal of this reread should be to figure out what's up with david.

## #30

- now here's an issue that makes me happy i have my own office at work. (it's the slow season.)
- in many ways the fight sequences in this one are an excuse for joe to indulge in ultraviolence. but he seems to have had fun, so no matter.

- mr. n asking how irina likes her eggs is likely [one of our more obscure lost references](#).
- mr. n says he spends most of his time "away from the main campus." are there...more campuses?
- got this thought a few days ago and now can drop it: if we consider that the headmaster potentially makes georgina self-harm, we have to consider whether he made kseniya put out her own eye. (and then we have to reflect on #35 with that in mind.)
- kseniya's "love will be no help to you there" an interesting contrast to pamela's iconic "sometimes love really does win in the end!" that ends #1.
- mr. n claims he met kseniya once a long time ago and that she was very different then, but still made a strong impression. i imagine this was around the time georgina was born? were she and headmaster married? in any case, a scene i would sure like to see.
- mr. n claims they looked for irina for a long time, the same way that abraham and clarkson evidently did. what i want to know is how they know irina existed- it seems like kseniya was trying to work in secret. it gets mentioned in #50 that the cylinder helped select the kids, so did kseniya interfere with that somehow? or irina is the headmaster's bio daughter, which i usually doubt, but is possible.
- plenty to be sad about this issue but irina telling her mom that she's sick and crazy for thinking someone is after them really struck me this time. there's definitely a sort of lowkey feeling of irina knowing her mom is "wrong" and trying to assert herself there. it feels like setup for her later adult playacting, calling the other kids "child" and such.
- i wonder if kseniya's constant talk of sparing irina from something has anything to do with the "something much worse" headmaster says is coming up for irina in #50.
- That One Knife is what irina uses to kill kseniya. i feel silly that it wasn't until this reread that i considered that there might be more than one and it's part of a set. ike will later use it to kill abraham, and dagney offers it to casey in #49 to kill headmaster.
- "i actually work with our most gifted students" okay wait, so maybe my theory that mr. n was supervising isabel for the last few years was true. i could believe class president is considered top-tier gifted.
- "we all want to see an end to this, but that does not mean the time is right" alright then what's the time? when headmaster has full control? when certain world events need to be stopped? give me some detail here man
- coming back here some hours later realizing i should have a thought about the "common enemy" line. it's interesting how it's framed as clarkson when you'd think he meant abraham. and how does this complicate hodge setting up clarkson in the first place?

## #31

- at the funeral they're only mourning those zoe killed and jun- in other words, they're not mourning anyone who was killed by faculty (like that kid gibbs murdered), or due to the truant's actions (brendan, zoe). there's an insinuation of worth for the special kids over others, and jun was just prominent enough to be noted.
- we talk a lot about the samsara in relation to this book but dagney also references orpheus here. i thought fandoms were obsessed with orpheus. i've seen severance fandom
- trouble in whatever state most recently legalized gay marriage

- incredible that hannah talks to hunter for thirty seconds and is instantly just like fuck it andres you have to cover this one
  - also, she works in the library. wonder if she knows dagney well.
- hunter remembers julie's full name.
- i really love the vetting the av club does with hunter, it shows off their personalities really well. it's a more lowkey secret agent type thing than, say, the truants do, which shows how they're basically working from scratch.
- do you think zoe will ever be able to see/access hunter saying all this?
- esi implies she may believe in the samsara stuff. we'll get an implication in #44 that she's met clarkson, so i wonder if she knows some things.
- esi implies hunter would rather be alone and helpless in this situation, because then he's not part of some larger conspiracy. lots of talk about hunter denying his true nature and true feelings in this book.
- the fact that the av club can change the lab to look how they want implies this can be done with other locations in dreams. is this something the headmaster does with the greenhouse?
- posturing as the av club when they're actually running the newspaper was esi's idea.
- hannah hates irina, probably based off not just woodrun but also things she knows from ian and akiko. hunter correcting her that irina is ukrainian is so funny...hunter she shot you...twice...
- the av club hasn't just figured out the dreams, they've figured out the psychic paper. interested to know what they figured out on their own and what they got from ian and akiko.
- esi basically confirms here that #28 was hunter's eyes being opened, and that he wouldn't be able to read the psychic paper without it. this implies all of them have their eyes open too?

## #32

- page 2 is so good- a slow character moment of the kind we don't often get in this book.
- vanessa's conversation with her older self here is a mimic of the two people talking in the first scene in #3. #42 will repeat a lot of #3 too, to the point that most of the issue gets mimicked at some point- which is interesting when to me, that's mostly a transitory issue.
- "i don't mind waiting" is another line associated with both vanessa and casey!
- older vanessa is clearly lying here- she certainly knows what happened with hodge. so why not tell her younger self the truth? didn't want to take her too far off path? but she'll eventually just kill her. probably not something i can guess at this point.
  - gigantic lmao at her saying she got locked up for "fighting with a teacher"
- hodge claims credit for the truants getting let out of their cells, implying she was the one who pushed for it with headmaster. (georgina will overrule her on fortunato, of course)
- "you more than anyone know that you are here for your own good" what does hodge mean by this? something about vanessa being born at the lab and then being sent here by abraham?

- hodge calls the shrine an "instruction site," really emphasizing it's there to teach the kids what they can do. backs up that this is her "type of intervention" mentioned in #12.
- hodge mildly implies she still can do a bit of mind reading like she does as a little kid in #20- she guesses, accurately, that vanessa is thinking of the night before brendan died.
- vanessa's time travel shots are explicitly a different set than casey's, with the sole exception of headmaster.
- vanessa *doesn't* vomit for once when she time travels here, which i'm guessing has to do with it being a similar geographic location and only a month ago.
- and vanessa's line that she's going to find a way to save brendan and "everyone" is also an echo of things casey said to dan in #16! really rubbing it in here.
- oh god it's time for hodge's timeline to get even more fucked up because she's in the brown outfit again when she comes to wipe brendan's memory. (why could she be here and not be at mga to stop vanessa's plan?)
- "that kind of death...that's a hard thread to unravel" "i know" this sounds like it's about david, and the truants implicitly know what's up with him.
- the book really hammers it in that hodge asking vanessa for a favor will be setting up little hodge hitting her with a rock in #20...but how would that happen now? Unless. well wait let me get to #50
- hodge legitimately has to steel herself before talking to older vanessa. if i believe hodge regrets one thing, it's the vanessa situation.
- i was right, the "futile gesture" line gets used again here! vanessa burying herself in narrative parallels! i guess the parallel there is the sense of betrayal?

### #33

- boxing. what could be more gay.
- i love how ike just appears to have spent all his time since woodrun reading in his dorm room. like yes i am just a normal student reading my assignments and i didn't have a mental breakdown and become the target of a large scale assassination attempt. i merely enjoy mary shelley.
- another brutal in retrospect moment here of guillaume just instantly assuming this is hisao and never doubting that it is until he's told.
- this is presumably the exact office in tokyo that akiko's dad worked at.
- this is six months ago- so after abraham is publicly believed to have died, which might explain things being empty at wow-mo.
- i always wondered what was up with the coloring here because hodge looks like she has a tan. somehow it's not until a goddamn decade later that i've remembered that the guards also comment on her having a tan when she gets back to mga in #12, so the tan might actually be on purpose. was she at the beach??
- shout out to mr. meylikhov.
- hodge makes the first allusion to the other students who escaped abraham's camp here, which i believe were intended to be referred to as the dropouts.
- "i know you weren't told about each other's cover families" interesting line because hisao appears to be living out of a hotel and walid and caleb will be in a random abandoned building in marrakesh- so i guess this is about the truants, who did have cover families.

- it's later confirmed hodge is asking for info on ellen, and claims hisao will know her whereabouts. she's probably back in the UK because her and oliver get caught together, but did she tell the kids where she'd be in case they needed her? ellen is a good person.
- hodge emphasizes that no one is going to hurt ellen or force her into anything. which, considering her relationship with vanessa, is probably something hodge pushed for.
- "they wouldn't even let you out of this building" real emphasis on hodge being "the nice one" in these last few issues, but with an almost...cruel undertone? basically, hodge's bizarre deals are your best bet because otherwise you'll get kidnapped, brainwashed, etc.
- hodge openly finds abraham's camp and their lingo to be a "cult" and "creepy." says the woman who grew up under the headmaster. but it's an interesting show of how "different" hodge comes off compared to her co-workers.
- guillaume keeps saying he would never agree to anything that would hurt hisao...but he's lying, right? he never says it in this issue, but we know he was in on irina's plan. at the very least, i guess it's possible that he didn't know jun was going to be killed until the plan was already in motion, but he certainly doesn't fight against it once he knows that's what's going on. it's a very, very interesting part of guillaume's characterization that he's so willing to lie about this. i know we love guillaume/hisao. i know they were adorable children. but i love that there's complications *this* fucked up.
  - meanwhile in the background of all this i love imagining irina's mental flowcharts of which trants she's telling what
- rereading these issues is so fucking wild because it's *painfully* obvious that this is jun and yet i'm pretty sure no one guessed it before this reveal happened. and then once you know it's like...oh yeah of course that wasn't our boy
- the letter (that guillaume never got) is sad in general, but the saddest part to me is that hisao emphasizes that seeing guillaume is the one selfish reason for him to go to mga. hisao's fundamentally a character whose arc is about sacrifice, but that's the exception. and it still got ruined!
- "that was all that kept me alive in this place" if guillaume did get his eyes opened while he was at mga...yeah, that makes sense.
- my single most problematic mg opinion is that i love this twist. i love hisao, we all love hisao, but throwing jun into the main cast is such an incredible wild card, and in the universe where we got season 3+ i would have loved to know where his arc could go.

## #34

- i hate to sound like an ike apologist again but i find ike really goddamn funny in this issue, but not in a "oh his funny zingers" way (they're not funny)- in a "this is pathetic behavior" way. ah yes i'm the evil one who betrayed you all but i must come to this funeral. i'm going to be making comments to jade the entire time. whenever someone says something important i must undercut it. please pay attention to me. i'm not having an existential crisis at all
  - him correcting jade on the pronunciation of "samsara" is probably my favorite, because it shows he is in fact paying attention to jade and even paid attention to

dagney's speech a few issues ago, but he can act like an asshole while he does it so it's okay to correct her.

- there's a lot of foreshadowing on casey and vanessa connecting here that doesn't really pay off, and it makes me wonder what it *would have* been leading toward had older vanessa not brought it to an abrupt halt. it kind of seems like she interrupted it on purpose.
- the first sign that the jade's mom death timeline wasn't what it seemed was that jade appears to have already gone full goth by the funeral. i remember trying to make sense of the timeline in my head before #45, and this is a big giveaway.
- it's kind of weird that we never see hunter have a larger reaction to losing hisao, but i think it's supposed to have a lot to do with him being "in shock" as zoe puts it.
- this vanessa and guillaume scene is BONKERS. now this is what makes me go crazy about the truants. vanessa genuinely guilty and never having known anything vs. guillaume, who was much closer to hisao, knowing that he's complicit and let this happen. the panel where he's trying to comfort her anyway. now THIS is interpersonal drama
- jun has a bonkers guilt complex. none of this is his fault really- he was pretty thoroughly traumatized and brainwashed. but he's blaming himself anyway, and it's gonna take him to a pretty fucked up place, because he also hasn't lost his superiority complex. feeling immensely guilty but still thinking you're better than anyone is a fun combo.
- jun saying he'll burn mga to the ground is an echo of casey, but it's also juxtaposed with jade's arson. real fire motif with the glories, which makes their watery detention pretty interesting (and the truants getting the reverse)
- hunter's line about how everyone should just talk to each other is once again pushing the mystery box stuff a little too far, but jun immediately shutting it down is funny to me every time.
- casey's brief argument with jun here is a real "casey's got morals but she isn't necessarily a great person" moment.
- jade's surprising leader moment here, where she really tries to synthesize what everyone is feeling into legitimate growth, is another scene where you can see how she could become dr. ellsworth.
- her funeral speech- and the fact that guillaume is the first to talk after she speaks- also sets up the jade-jun-guillaume storyline for the back half of this season. of course jun looks up her file after this.
- the blue light that jade's mom's corpse is bathed in here will come back when jade tries to revive hisao in #50...which means...something. i feel like after #45 i'm gonna have to try to figure out what's happening there and i'm worried, i won't,

## #35

- to just get it out of the way, there are quite a few points in mg where putting some thought about the backgrounds/identities of the characters in relation to what they're going through would have been a smart thing to do, and this issue is probably the most glaring example. (some parts of #44 also come to mind)

- (weirdly enough the ian/akiko/fortunato triangle actually seems like it's approaching being *aware* of this, but maybe i'm being generous. won't be long until i get to #40 i suppose)
- so why hire these guys to kidnap fortunato- and apparently *his dad*- in the first place? i'm very suspicious of the dad situation here for multiple reasons but this is the first one. usually mga seems to just invite the kids to the school and make the parents forget after (see #9), so the only reason for all this fanfare is if fortunato's dad knows mga is bad news, right?
- this is only four years into casey's time travel and one year into her clarkson identity and she's already graduated to very casual murder. what precisely was she doing during those first three years...
- fortunato knows clarkson by her first name, specifically.
- so if we assume the headmaster makes georgina self-harm, probably self-flagellate, and likely is responsible for kseniya's missing eye...we have to consider how much of what georgina is doing here is just classic cycles of abuse stuff, projecting onto her "favorite student" because she was her father's "favorite" and heir and that's what he does to her.
  - i'm biased but in general "what exactly was georgina and fortunato's dynamic like pre-woodrun" is another big "i would have loved to see that" thing for me, especially if you believe irina probably encouraged it.
- prayer being used again as a thing that Makes Stuff Happen, and needing multiple people.
- there was a lot of Deep Thought about why clarkson doesn't kill daramount here when this issue came out, but on this read the answer's pretty simple to me: she needs daramount alive so she can keep pretending to be her for hodge's plans.
- and here's the *other* scene that makes me think something is up with fortunato's dad: when fortunato asks if he's dead, clarkson's response is "we- we tried to save him...it was just too late" which is not something we see on panel and kind of sounds like an excuse. she doesn't deny it when fortunato says his dad's dead later, but she never says it herself.
  - mr. n being fortunato's dad was always very much a "crack theory" as they used to call it in 2009 but i always kind of liked it.
- i am again biased but i think one of the saddest parts of this issue for me is that fortunato was an extremely *normal* child. pretty much every other young kid we see is spouting prophecies and/or not doing that but acting pretty consistent with their older self. fortunato's just a normal and perfectly talkative kid who became way more stoic and reserved specifically because of this.
- fortunato confirms he's used his powers before this and does not elaborate on what exactly he did- which is interesting when most of the other kids seem to have forgotten about being supernatural by this age.
- in retrospect i wonder if the consistent thing with the truants was that all their parents knew something was up with the greater mystery? akiko's parents knew clarkson would come for her (and dad worked for wow-mo), ian and vanessa have oliver and ellen, irina has kseniya. we don't know anything about guillaume's family but he left willingly at 3. so that would back up fortunato's dad knowing something too.



- okay here's maybe the conversation in this book that makes me the most insane. maybe i'm reading too much into this one but clarkson basically accidentally creates fortunato's entire personality here. warning him that people like the two of them have to be careful what they say? putting everything in terms of religious callings? great job casey you've permanently changed this seven year old's brain chemistry!!
  - my favorite line here has always been "i would never ask you to do anything i wasn't willing to do myself." casey. you've time traveled back 13 years and started killing people and impersonating the woman you believe murdered your parents. you can't say this. And He's Seven
- clarkson states fortunato's the first person she's told about her parents dying, at least as clarkson. casey will later invalidate this by telling the entire damn school in the election debate. fun contrast.

## #36

- oh my god remember the who is ian promo
- oh yeah here's the weird android-ish lady i have no ideas about. but this issue and storyline becomes so invested in things like dreams and projection (more on that in a few bullets) that maybe that's what she is?
- "she doesn't like waiting" very interesting thing for ellen to observe about clarkson after all the "you know i don't mind waiting." i think clarkson probably knows she has to get out of here before mga shows up.
- interestingly, oliver *does* know clarkson as clarkson. so maybe they just got an description of georgina rather than her name?
- "the man whose genius is truly responsible for all of this" connect this to #10 and the talk he has with ian at the cylinder in #50 and the strong implication here is that oliver is responsible for the physics know-how to make this whole book happen- as in, to have all the special kids be born at once. his reward was getting to create a few special kids and study them (ian, vanessa).
  - this also implies he 1. maybe tracked down some of the special people to be killed (ie. ted) and 2. figured out how to use the cylinder?
- the beginning of the "ian cannot remember hunter's name" gag.
- ian's extreme angry reaction to akiko being brought up is foreshadowing for how much vehemence he has about that whole situation. it's also a lot like zoe's angry reactions to things like casey bringing up that her real birthday must be may 4th- as in, it's a sign ian is starting to remember and think about things.
- "the little bugger's like family to us" considering the resemblance between him and ian, i don't think it's *like*, oliver. but of course oliver's wording here reveals how ian could end up so screwed up in the long term.
- "difficult enough to cope with the manifestations in adult subjects" which implies oliver has worked with special adults as well, likely before they were all killed.
- in terms of ian forgetting things, oliver comments there's studies on how the brain "predict[s] the nature of images past obstructions and such", but this is the *opposite*; the nature of obstructions past images. kind of implying this is a consistent thing that happens in the brain to people who have these abilities?

- hunter questioning how hannah's MS can still effect her in dreams is the first of what will be multiple signs that what looks like walking through dreams is a little more like astral projection, which is what it seems like to me on this read. everyone can project themselves outside of sleep, and they may have some control over who can see them (ambiguous- everyone still hides from the guards here!), but they're actually still physically present.
  - me, nodding: this is like hanzo's nen ability
- is the delivery point where the kids come through, it's just that mga puts them to sleep during that process? it definitely seems to be different than hodge coming back in #12, as she went through the front gate. this will later be the site of the party in #47. which implies to me that entering this way is different than entering through the front, but i could be thinking too hard and they just have this as an alternative entrance for top-secret stuff.
- andres mentions he's seen ellen in a photo on vanessa's desk, so vanessa broke that rule abraham had to not bring anything that would identify her. it also implies andres has hung out in akiko and vanessa's old dorm room that they shared with pamela, which is fun.
- okay ian's powers and some of the abilities of the kids in general are clicking for me here. we know from #50 that ian can project himself multiple times at once, so this isn't a cloning scenario (well, i can believe he's oliver's clone, but i don't think there's more than one ian). i think what ian is doing here is the same astral projection they do while dreaming- except he was able to do it *without* dreaming, and to have his projections potentially work in tandem. totally possible that the other kids could do this with enough experience and time; it's likely irina was even projecting herself outside mga in #19, when hunter sees her on TV. it *also* seems that what we'll see akiko doing next issue is a messed-up variation on this.

## #37

- my interpretation of this first scene was always that akiko grew up somewhere primarily english-speaking and her dad worked in tokyo- hence her white teacher and classmates and the fact that she speaks english fluently. most of the kids seem to have grown up where they were born/their family was born, so cool to see one of them was a first or second gen immigrant.
- akiko's parents were actively in on abraham's camp and plans, hence her dad working on wow-mo. they put it religiously.
- i misremembered akiko's sister as explicitly being younger, but akiko just says "sister" here, no "older" or "younger"
- i like how this transition page happens a lot! it lets you read in from akiko's dialogue that she was asking about her coat, that clarkson was taking her to abraham, and that mga was hot on their heels.
- this door seems to be leading to an area that looks a lot like the back of a theatre, with a ladder and water cooler. so it's leading akiko to her final performance, but she'll hop around a bit first. but what's with this old guy?

- hodge and gibbs' stated enmity appearing once more. still no idea what they hate each other for...
- there's a bit of a trick being played with this blonde boy, where it could easily be caleb, but i (and much of the fandom) can't help but think it might be david, who we know is/was a blonde.
- abraham puts this story to the kids as a story about how god wants people to "stop running", and that god created humanity so they would not be alone. this is a really interesting example of how abraham treats this entire situation differently than a lot of the other adults; to many of them the *kids* are the gods, but abraham is a religious man, and while he knows they're special, he sees them as children with gifts. this has always been true about abraham but i've just never put it into words.
- i really have to think about how this scene ends, with akiko suggesting turning lot's wife to salt was an act of protection because the face of god would kill her otherwise. abraham seems very thoughtful about the suggestion. it kind of reminds me of my zoe theory? doing something that looks horrible as an act of mercy or love.
- the headmaster's lab is dark here, like it will be when casey visits him in #50.
- so akiko says she did what she did with david because she thought the world would end otherwise, and headmaster's response is "is that what they told you?" he's mad about what she's done. which is interesting, because otherwise irina's plan would have succeeded, right? what did this throw off for headmaster? something to do with david or akiko herself, probably- he presumably knew her past selves (as he seems to have with all the kids) and speaks to her about this part pretty plainly. who's "they?" presumably it's who she saw when her eyes were opened? maybe future jade and her group, actually.
- max planck's name *is* spelled right here, after being misspelled previously.
- akiko confirms she's been looking for ian here, which is really sad knowing future events. which i don't mean in a shipping way- of course not- but it really shows the extent of ian's betrayal.
- akiko asks why ian hasn't visited her, which he'll contradict in #50. maybe he only visited after she'd started spending her time with fortunato...meaning they *just* missed each other yet again.
- akiko's dad works in the tokyo office of wow-mo that's abandoned by the time hisao meets hodge there.
- lots of things akiko's dad could be referring to here, which is interesting to think about. akiko being taken to the camp (if he thinks maybe mga got her or something went wrong)? akiko being sent to mga later, if he was able to get word that happened? the camp being infiltrated by mga a year ago, if he knew that meant she was caught? interestingly, the one thing he *can't* be talking about is akiko's actual death in #50, because that's after wow-mo closed, and he seems to have done this in a functioning office.
  - which makes me wonder...is he talking about akiko's sister? did mga come after them and end up killing her?
- akiko summarizes her problem as "everyone around me keeps getting hurt. i try to help them- but i'm always too late." compare and contrast to jade's own "i can't make anyone

happy" issue in #10. this will, unfortunately, continue for akiko in #50, when she catches ian killing fortunato too late to stop him.

- most of the scenes in akiko's dance are explainable within the rest of the series, but there's also:
  - the people in cages- this was clearly the previous special/assumed-special people, including ted.
  - the bald guy with soldiers- this is the guy we see clarkson talking to in #26 i think, and likely someone hodge knows. big foreshadowing for the future warfare plot. linked to akiko via her trying to save the world, maybe?
  - the corpses in the theatre seats around jade. referring to much of mga being destroyed and maybe most of the other special folks being killed by future jade's time, maybe?
- "you always were the best of us" i've assumed for a bit this part about future jade knowing akiko was an indication of an alternate timeline, as jade and akiko never end up meeting. i'm now wondering if it's actually referring to a past life, as #10 indicates future jade remembers those. then again, she also asks jade what she's been up to...so maybe the answer is "both."
- "you can't save everyone...you have to choose" this is an interesting thing to introduce to akiko when she, uh, very much will not get to save fortunato. future jade also tells akiko to follow her heart, which does akiko right in one way (fortunato is the better person to be with than ian) and wrong in another (it leads to what happens in #50).
- fortunato's brain processing being blinded as punishment for what happened to akiko is crazy. this is what happens when you tell the seven year old that all his suffering is part of religious calling!!
- "to let you know god still loves you" i've never figured out what i think about this part of the issue. it's one of the only times a singular god is discussed in this book, but as we know, this storyline is going to end very badly. what's "god" to akiko, you know what i mean? i might have to sleep on this one. this is maybe one of the issues i still have the most questions about.

## #38

- abraham/gibbs. i mean truly how else am i meant to read this opening scene. what if you had such strong feelings for a guy that it awoke you from a coma
  - that's LITERALLY what happens to akiko in #50
- i think abraham showing up here in morocco has something to do with the rules. he gets a free gun here and a new shirt, inexplicably, and this seems to have happened when casey put things back to "default" with the cylinder. so i think this is abraham's "default setting", or one of them. presumably it's marrakesh because he has history there, as elaborated later in this issue.
- the dog and the "best two out of three" line will both reappear with old ike in #43. not sure that means anything other than "special people are sometimes cosmically linked to their parents"
- "she's out looking for hodge" this might imply this issue takes place simultaneously with #39?

- the page with gibbs approaching ike from behind is so fucking funny. classic ike patheticism trying so hard to get back into jade's social orbit that he misses that the guy he tried to kill is here.
- ike also mentions he's drunk here, which explains his fairly lackadaisical attitude this issue, but also kind of shows how deep in avoiding his issues he is at this point.
- who are these academy mercs in morocco? are they just stationed here in case abraham shows up.
- what's cooler than cool. walid! we only really get this one issue with walid, but i appreciate how he's an inexplicable action movie character dropped into this book.
- walid also says he's confused these mercs- it kind of seems like he threw his voice? or teleported?
- ike knowing irina is ukrainian is yet another sign he's paying much more attention than he can bear to let on.
- this injection would have opened ike's eyes! he doesn't really seem to get the full experience here, though- dagney will facilitate that in #43.
- walid says the kids who escaped the camp followed "the map" abraham had provided them. Can I See It
- there's five dropouts. caleb and walid are two, one is presumably hisao (who neither abraham or walid know the fate of...). who are the other two?
  - this also kind of makes zoe and hisao part of two groups, if you count zoe as a sixth dropout (and she kind of is).
- "this place, there's a way mommy and daddy never leave you. hodge'll tell you all about it if i let her keep breathing much longer" first off: interesting lore about how mga might want to use the connections students have with their parents, and why the kids might have powers triggered by a parent death. second: hmm, hodge who has been avoiding talking to ike? would that be something she would be instructing ike about at a shrine if needed?
- gibbs calls abraham and ike both "cowards who can't finish what they begin." probably this refers to whatever abraham did to betray mga and piss gibbs off.
- the place the dropouts are staying is somewhere where abraham did something that he hasn't told the kids about- walid says he and caleb have learned about it from zoe. is this maybe where he made the big mistake that irina speaks about? no one seems particularly mad at him, so maybe not. maybe something to do with clarkson?
- Finally. It Is Zoe Time.
  - nick talked about how they decided to have this reveal in #38 because it's mid-season and the end of the compendium, but they thought about doing it in #50- and if this had happened in #50 we'd perceive the truant deaths WAY differently.
  - with what we learn in #50, though, this makes way more sense. if something about mga isn't "real", maybe death can get you out of it. and if death can get you out of it, and zoe was starting to remember things...of course zoe with those memories would go off to find people linked to her old friend abraham. which also means she's free to use her powers outside of those confines, which we'll see in #46.

## #39

- we've switched to my single issues, which are thankfully still in good condition. this might have been the first issue with the tinychat on the back?
- this opening scene is three months ago, a month before the scene that ends #39 and probably in march-ish, assuming it's june by now.
- danielle is telling david the story about the girl in the prison we've heard so much about, but has added a new detail about a stranger appearing in the cell and saying something that's probably "only you can let yourself out"
- there's a photo on the wall that looks like it might be tom and danielle's wedding photo.
- is pamela doing the first proper title drop of "morning glories" here?
- forgot to mention it, but i remember after #38 we all wondered if ike had seen zoe. i still wouldn't rule it out completely, as ike is a peak In Denial guy.
- gribbs is flying overseas, but will be back in time for towerball...or maybe this is later in the timeline.
- oliver is in the honored guest's suite, seemingly nervous and about to meet with someone. i could see it being headmaster.
- paul is good with shadows- this last panel with pam and the scene with casey and hodge in the basement both look great.
- casey can now read the psychic papers, which *surprises* hodge. so clarkson got her eyes opened and hodge *didn't* plan for that? interesting.
- "you really don't remember?" this and other stuff later in this issue imply hodge didn't intend for casey to lose her memory to the cylinder, or didn't expect the cylinder to do that at least. which is really interesting! it gives her a lot of trust in casey/clarkson.
- Cake.
- i completely forgot that hodge almost literally tells casey everything! the thirteen years of time travel and giving up a lot, at least- she doesn't tell her about tom and david, or that she was clarkson. but she doesn't mind that casey knows she lived another life for 13 years. again, hodge is putting a lot of trust in her.
- isabel thinking here "mga murdered my parents and i had to live through hell to become class president and gain some power and this girl gets her past self to help her win a science fair and a easy ticket to the school??" and honestly, i kind of get it in that sense, lol
- casey and isabel's beautiful, homoerotic girl hatred. toxic yuri.
- hodge states that "we're not there yet" in terms of casey getting what she's worked for. the next step appears to be getting casey in contact with the headmaster. how would this all lead to casey getting dan and kathy back? is this a "you have to free yourself from your prison" thing where casey has to realize the true nature of what happened to dan and kathy first?
- "she was re-elected in absentia twice." incredible detail.
- hodge keeps trying to get casey to nine and saying that maybe she'll remember more if they bring her there. i wonder if what's happening here is that hodge thinks if nine opens casey's eyes again, things will lock into place for her? because this is sort of a casey who's had her eyes opened in a body that hasn't?

- i barely remembered this issue besides “isabel comes back” but i had a goofy grin on my face almost the entire time. this one’s underrated.

## #40

- dagney teaching a science class here on top of being residence director. truly every teacher in this school is expected to do five things.
- dagney notes oliver and ellen are here “temporarily.” so what happens to them after that period of time?
- she also states they’re the top minds in “their respective fields.” i imagine oliver is a physicist. i always headcanoned ellen as a biologist, to complete what set of skills would’ve been needed to “create” the kids.
- incredible compare/contrast of the richmonds and the simons here. loving hug and greeting vs. shaking hands and ian barely saying “dad.”
- the answer’s first paper was on the scientists being brought in- so they were truly breaking scoops!
- hannah states isabel arrived at mga when she was five. ian confirms he didn’t get here until after isabel was gone, but the entire av club knows and dislikes her, so they have all been here for at least three years.
- oliver references niels bohr and max planck, here with correct spelling once again. he also says the same max planck line that headmaster says to akiko in #37, linking her more fully to what’s happening here.
  - i’m...kind of wondering if the misspellings in julie’s time in #6 are on purpose and if julie is an AU timeline now. no that makes things more complicated. i can’t go down this road (or can i)
- hunter is able to open fortunato’s cell door here in a very dreamlike way. even though i think the kids are more astral projecting than dreaming here, it does show that when they’re in this state, they have some increased control over reality- or at least the reality of mga.
- i love the “hell” panel of ian reacting to fortunato. he hates the guy, but whew!
- i’ve spent many years trying to read into ian and oliver’s final conversation here to try to figure out what ian’s exact idea is. for most of oliver’s ramble, i think there’s an interpretation that he’s talking about what ian is going to do to fortunato (in the metaphorical sense)- he even refers to the electron as “he” at one point, and talks about the electron being unobserved, unreal. but the scene ends with ian *refuting* that, and basically explaining that the electron can be “everything”, because if it’s unobserved, it’s any possible thing- so reality is, as oliver puts it, “an undefined, undifferentiated singularity.” as i type this...i think it’s finally clicking? this is the moment where ian’s mind really jogs and he realizes the “unreality” of mga, which he’ll tell akiko about in #50. whatever’s going on with mga, maybe even beyond mga, *is* that undefined singularity, and special people- like ian- can manipulate it to their will in the right circumstances. which is what inspires ian to manipulate things until he gets to the possible world where fortunato isn’t there.
- fortunato’s ability to talk to dream ian here is another sign that this is all astral projection, not necessarily ian only being here in a dream state. then again, fortunato’s the only one

who can perceive akiko...but future jade telling akiko she "has to choose" makes me think that may be because of *akiko*, not fortunato?

- incredible how people visiting an imprisoned fortunato to tell him he's not being rescued is basically a running gag.
- "make things the way they're supposed to be" okay wait on this read i have an entirely different interpretation of this phrase. on first read it's just ian being a jealous bastard, but it evokes old ike in #43 claiming ike was never supposed to exist, and irina in #27 saying none of them were "supposed" to be there. is ian trying to reach into the timeline where the special kids never existed? is that why the cylinder just kills him, because that would mean he would never exist too? and is that part of why ian is going to use the cylinder to do this, because the cylinder is what allowed them to exist in the first place?
- i can't believe ian is going to make fortunato into w.d. gaster.

## #41

- it's me!
- guillaume also having that one photo of camp, none of these kids followed abraham's rules did they
- the stuff with the foster parents here implies abraham has a fairly sizable network of connections who believe in what he's doing on a religious level- like, not just business contacts he's paying off. i wonder how much of this would have been set up with clarkson?
- "you will survive" well, listen,
- gibbs states he argued against the truants being forgiven, so there's another place he disagrees with hodge.
- gibbs says he'll be going on a "sabbatical" after tryouts, so presumably that scene in #39 was in fact ahead in the timeline.
- i like how andres' explanation of towerball here highlights how mga gossip works, with people speculating guillaume would be captain because "hisao" died. this is the student equivalent of internal politics.
- guillaume claims he thinks his plan will work because headmaster doesn't know that jun is jun. i'm not too sure about this! we've seen the extent of his knowledge in #50- i think he probably knows and is just seeing what happens here. basically testing guillaume and jun.
- this fuckin comedy routine of jun playing towerball badly. put some benny hill over this.
- the debut of denise and toby, perhaps my favorite minor characters!
- towerball operates on some sort of offense/defense/special teams setup. toby and denise state they need to pick someone for offense, so presumably they're defensive and special teams players.
- if i remember right, this scene was originally written for teen hisao and guillaume, but portraying them as kids was too genius to change.
- that "we're not supposed to see the face of god" line probably means...something. shows that guillaume's playing with fire here?
- jun says the sacrificial basement has been closed since woodrun for "structural damage"- which is interesting because it confirms the things that happened to the



building during woodrun stayed when the time changed back! i feel like this isn't acknowledged in a lot of our theorizing.

- jun also claims hisao sacrificed himself for both jun and "for all of us." so is jun assuming hisao taking the sacrifice is part of what prevented irina's plan for succeeding? is he right?
- jun also states he was taught the basement was a holy place and that he's heard that abraham also believed that. is it a shrine or something else?

## #42

- dagney in jade's dream will be foreshadowing her greeting to ike in #43 and her speech to casey in #49 when they go to meet the headmaster. jade getting this warning reminds me a lot of akiko in #37 actually, where it feels like she's getting similar warnings about who and what she should pay attention to. in the universe where akiko woke up and jade didn't get kidnapped, they probably could have stopped a lot of what is about to happen.
  - also wondering if this is literally megan- as in, can megan sleepwalk?
- #49 implies dagney is talking about the headmaster here. i've never read too deeply into the "what he would do to us" line, but on this read i'm wondering- is she one the special people? did she survive because she was loyal to headmaster? does that mean she knows some of the kids from way back when?
- megan appearing as her younger self from the camp and saying "everyone will die" gains massive additional context if you consider she's talking about the truants, people she grew up with at camp.
- casey's wearing a marines shirt here akin to dan's in #13- it's probably literally one of his shirts, taken for pajamas.
- hodge does *not* know where jade is and seems to have no idea what is happening. it's interesting how the assumption that the headmaster wouldn't know about jun is untrue, but it does apply to literally everyone else, even hodge.
- this issue is of course another repeat of #3, with this casey and hodge scene mirroring the casey and daramount scene, ike and casey having another talk, and the issue ending on casey playing into the game.
- "while i will admit i was half asleep during the breakfast meeting of the nefarious overlords that run this place, i do not recall hearing about any plans to imprison or kidnap your little freckled friend." this is a lost riverdale line. i'm serious, look up riverdale out of context scenes, they've all got this tenor.
  - have i ever told any of you my secret theory that mg was a genuine influence on riverdale
- hodge says if she wanted to make casey run she would just do it- so could she control casey...? or is she just saying she'd play dirty?
- "i have a good sense of these things" probably a little hodge telepathy again, unless she knows about future jade (plausible).
- lots and lots of interesting things jun says in this scene:
  - he says they could make it like hisao "never died." does he think they can do time travel shenanigans? if i remember right we know from #45 that he doesn't actually know about jade's mom.

- jun also states he believes he can do “special kid” things now because he’s in hisao’s body.
  - jun also confirms the ceremony only needs two people for the minimum, which is interesting because it parallels a lot of the prayer scenes. were akiko and fortunato technically doing a ceremony to jun?
  - and finally: jun knows about the files and even knows how to sneak in and get them.
- yet another classic ike moment of feeling a thing and immediately pretending he didn’t feel that thing, but his attempts are truly getting more and more pathetic. like, no one believes this one.
- the discussion of the tip jar within dreams here feels like it’s setup for a potential season 3 thread, assuming the kids (besides casey) were still on campus.
- the second issue of the answer is already out, and ian *did* write a story on fortunato for it.
- oliver doesn’t know what they’re going to do with him once his time as interim faculty is over.
- the scantron was put back in storage after woodrun, it looks like.
- might have to read into the invisibles issue akiko is reading fortunato here.
- is fortunato being unable to tell akiko what ian said a sign that ian used a variant of the mind control power? i’ve somehow never contemplated that until this read.
  - this will crystalize in #50, but a lot of the thematic center of the ian/akiko/fortunato triangle is the concept of, for lack of a better term, “doing something.” ian will frame his decisions in #50 as realizing he hadn’t done enough and that he has the power to “fix” things, and akiko is with fortunato in the first place because in her coma dream she told jade she wanted to make a move and help people even if it wouldn’t work. whereas fortunato constantly *isn’t* doing things- he doesn’t stop akiko from going to david, doesn’t tell akiko what ian said, etc.
- “he gets...weird.” interested in this implication that ian’s memories and such bubble up from time to time? what was ian up to during the cover family years?
- “i only wish we had more time” ellen, you don’t know the half of it.
- daramount knows about the answer and considers it “a gift” because it makes the kids scared of her.
- this hodge and daramount scene is firing on all cylinders (metaphorical) by the way. “you maimed him!” “i offered to let you help!”
- hodge does assume it’s daramount who kidnapped jade, and daramount openly saying she doesn’t know isn’t believed. wonder what hodge will think about the truth.
- “there is a change coming” we’ll find later that hodge seems to know about and worry about older vanessa’s upcoming actions, or at least something to do with vanessa. how much of the truants’ future does she know?
- isabel refers to her backstory here that we’ll hear more about in #48- that mga killed her parents when they kidnapped her. i’m kind of wondering if isabel was, basically, the beta casey? like, did 11 or 12 year old isabel run for student council president in hopes of gaining power and finding out why her parents died, and then got fully converted by what she learned by meeting headmaster?

- isabel is also clearly peeved when casey interrupts here, and honestly she's kind of right lol. she and casey have been through similar things, but casey still thinks she knows better even though she knows less than isabel.
- casey announces to everyone that she'll kill the headmaster if she wins...and they still let her run! casey does not seem to realize this confirms that the kids are supposed to steer their own lives around here, because she's not immediately silenced.

## #43

- ike dreaming zombie zoe here implies he did in fact see zoe in #38, or at least maybe a fleeting glimpse of her. maybe tell everyone about that, ike!
- ike mentions abraham buying people off and making political contributions. again: what does wow-mo do. besides, uh, kill megan's dad
- ike once again like i'm a very cool guy who doesn't care about any of this and that's why i have a hot date. (with susan dagney to sort books)
  - in all seriousness it's implied dagney just asked him to volunteer in the library without any threat and he said yes. and you're not lonely at all, ike?
- dagney says she and ike had met when he was young. i guess this could be the scene we see in #24, but that's not really meeting- i suspect she met him as a baby or toddler, before things got more sour with abraham and headmaster.
- dagney claims abraham also has ike's dirty mouth. she also says she suspected ike would have been their first student had abraham not decided otherwise.
- dagney is way more committed than most in terms of being a "servant" to the kids- she says if she just gave ike the answers she'd "make a bad situation worse." ike's breakdown in #25 when abraham almost gives him an answer kind of backs that up. in any case, dagney really does believe the kids have to learn things themselves.
- "that brute gibbs" so dagney doesn't like gibbs either. why keep the guy around? to challenge the kids? well, daramount works well with him sometimes.
- a few little things about this ceremony scene with baby ike:
  - these masks and cloaks first showed up in #25; i think they might be very "traditional" for whatever sort of ritual abraham and maybe headmaster are familiar with.
  - abraham says he's not sure this ritual will work "so far from where [ike] belongs." does he mean mga? so this is sort of a reverse of what irina has always said- at this point he believed the kids *should* be at mga?
  - abraham also says this is to make ike remember as much as possible! big giveaway here. so abraham wanted ike to access his abilities easily? more on the consequences of this later in this issue.
- megan is from charleston!
- so the megan situation: she was supposed to be given up for adoption, abraham intervened and got her parents to keep her because that's better for her for supernatural reasons. he also explicitly told the parents she was "special." brett here pushes things too far and claims he dug up some stuff on wow-mo, and gets silenced for it.
  - what i'm curious about is if they intervened before megan was born or not. we learn in #50 that the cylinder selected the kids, so i'm thinking maybe they knew

what people they were dealing with in a lot of cases? maybe they picked megan's family *knowing* they could pay them off? there's some holes there i have to think about (mainly, why do they have to track down some kids)

- akiko's parents might have been in a similar situation, and her dad eventually worked for wow-mo because of it?
- only processing on this read that gibbs is using the phone wire to kill brett. wild.
- the knife abraham uses to kill brett does *not* appear to be That One Knife.
- dagney says ike not throwing up after this first vision means "i apparently haven't lost my touch." so dagney can open someone's eyes without the goo! presumably with help from things like the books, but still. explains what nine meant when she was insulting her in #22.
- dagney says the books detail "a conflict as old as the universe itself" and when she tells ike he wrote the books, she states "how delightful you of all people should ask that." which implies it was *primarily* him, not all the kids. so is this a classic good and evil conflict, or is it more man vs. knowledge? well, probably a little of both.
- when dagney tells ike to "learn a bit more about yourself", he gets oliver and ellen, with oliver watching the screens. this leads into next issue, but i wonder if it's also to further connect oliver and ellen's work with how the kids were created.
- oliver says in the past "we never had more than a few of them at once", "them" meaning special people. again, the implication that they may have studied and experimented on now-dead special people, even before ian and vanessa were born.
- ellen believes abraham is alive, so was not rattled by the "ike murdered his dad" reports.
- dog and old ike reappearing here from #25. interesting how the dog repeats in #38- is that more a symbolic "you will find connections" thing?
- old ike asks his younger self "where have you been?" and when asked why he doesn't remember says "i wish it worked that way." this was a big part of my alternate universe theories, and it's still hard to read it any other way. what i have to think about now is what this, uh, actually means lorewise. if this conflict has been going on for centuries, why is this particular set of people and loop so important?
- "you're a mistake. an aberration. you should've never been allowed to live." been thinking about these lines a lot this read if that wasn't clear by now. and this time reading the issue they finally make some sense! first off, ike remembers because of that ceremony we just saw a couple scenes ago- he acts out because he always remembered a little more than he should, and knows he doesn't "belong" in some way. and i think *none* of the kids belong. i think when mga created them with the cylinder, that made them all "aberrations." unnaturally created, not a natural loop. hence irina's "we do not belong here." they really did play god.
- old ike insists ike needs to find "her" and that "she's the only one that can stop it. the only one that can get through." ike wakes up assuming that's jade, and i think that's right. there's a lot of talk about casey being special, but jade's the one who we know survives to adulthood- maybe that's "getting through." if they'd found jade, in other words, could she have warned casey and prevented her from meeting the headmaster before she was ready?

- "i never really understood that fear until i became a mother." it'll be made pretty clear dagney is talking about headmaster here in #49. so...she's the headmaster's mother? then why don't georgina and lara treat her as their grandmother, why don't people treat her with more respect, etc? why's it a secret, in other words? alternative is that she was not his bio mom but was present at his birth and ended up raising him, which i think is also quite viable.
- according to ike, the party that will be held in #47 is "next week." you may use this for your timelines.

## #44

- there's a timeline error here, listing this first scene as being ten years ago instead of eleven- but clarkson saying she took ian that morning gives us enough context to paper that over.
  - **EDIT 5/18:** i'm a total dumbass, i'm realizing way late why this was changed: if this was eleven years ago, casey wouldn't have been clarkson yet! so this date in #44 is the accurate one.
- i wish the story had brought up vanessa and ian knowing each other as little kids earlier honestly- i think it adds a lot to their characters. it also contextualizes them as "siblings" even beyond the other camp kids.
- "she *is* my daughter." i remember a lot of debate about what this conversation was about when this issue came out. i think oliver and ian's resemblance gives away that they're biologically related, and with all the discussion of relationships between bio parents and children in this book, i think we can assume the same thing for vanessa and ellen. my kneejerk thought? i think oliver and ellen weren't necessarily supposed to create ian and vanessa (respectively) with their own dna, but did anyway for whatever reason- maybe just plain old hubris. they also probably did that without telling mga.
- "well, not exactly" because clarkson *sort of* was sent by mga via hodge...although she's working with abraham.
- ellen's long letter to vanessa is an interesting parallel to hisao's letter to guillaume. vanessa and guillaume will never get these.
- ellen "wasn't at all looking forward to" being reunited with oliver. they have an interesting dynamic, and i'd love to know what the heck the story would do with them in season 3.
- camp is in the process of being built when this happens, but only has ten students. two of them are presumably guillaume and megan. that also implies abraham's efforts are going to rapidly increase over the next few years- i'd say there's at least 30 kids at camp by the time they're 12?
- the radio is a "u.s. military prototype"! interesting specific detail- did she pick this up during those military base flashes we get in #26?
- only ellen and vanessa can see the radio, and others forget immediately if told about it.
- i believe nick straight up confirmed that clarkson is talking about esi when she says she's going to accra. does this imply clarkson met some kids who she didn't send to abraham's camp? did she let some of them stay at home, or did she even take some to mga...?
  - she also says they "just got" another name. do hodge's notes update over time?

- assuming clarkson is still going off of hodge's notes, this means hodge set up the radio...and thus set up a way for older vanessa to communicate with her mother. i guess we can't rule out that clarkson did this herself out of sympathy for ellen, but i also can't rule out hodge setting up things. i think this has interesting implications for how hodge feels about older vanessa- did she *want* her to get a chance to talk to ellen?
- fun character detail here i like: ellen reacts with surprise when clarkson says she'll be a teacher, but in her letter to vanessa she mentions she loves to teach. that gives me the impression her experience at the camp was specifically when she realized she loves working with young kids. very sweet implication.
- the implication of georgina's statement about vanessa "belonging" to mga is that when oliver and ellen were signed on to work on the cylinder project and create ian and vanessa, part of the agreement was that mga would eventually claim ian and vanessa as their own, right? and then clarkson swooped in.
  - this is also one of those things where the wording is kind of "errr" when you bring the character's identities into it, but less blatantly than #35, i think.
- hodge alleges that ellen trusts the camp kids too much, pointing out that hisao sold her out. kind of a bad faith read by hodge, and honestly i think ellen wouldn't blame hisao in the circumstances. she'd do the same for vanessa, probably.
- "or left them by choice" so there were maybe other kids besides guillaume who chose to go to the camp?
- also kind of an error on the radio timeline here- ellen says it hasn't worked for eight years, but it should be seven. if there's a timeline with months written down somewhere in nick's notes this might make sense, though.
- "it doesn't work here. but it will work there." so is this a matter of it working "there" because older vanessa is there and can work it, or is this something to do with mga's weird unreality? how much does clarkson know here, and how much is she saying from what hodge has told her?
- "but only if she takes that radio with her" i guess this also implies that the radio has to get to mga one way or another, so it can get into older vanessa's hands eventually.
- "i've spent more time with your daughter than most any other student at this academy" one of those lines that makes you understand why casey decked hodge in the face twice
- hodge claims to ellen that vanessa's lacking a "killer instinct" that most of their most talented students have, and basically says it's because ellen coddled her too much as justification for keeping ellen and vanessa apart. ellen calls this out, but what i'm curious about is why hodge is saying it. we know she won't want vanessa to do what she does in #49, and implicitly to walk into her own death in #50. was she trying to stave that off?
  - i think the "killer instinct" idea, however, *does* fit older vanessa very much.
- nerd war! that said: ian saying vanessa will want to be on his team is WILD considering what his actual goal is.
  - i frequently wonder what vanessa would have done if she'd found out what ian was actually doing, and whether she could have stopped him. she's probably the closest person to him after akiko.
- vanessa states it's "electromagnetic interference" that prevents everyone from communicating with the outside world- or at least that's what mga claims.

- still trying to figure out what older vanessa's long game is. i'm starting to have ideas. i wonder if the implication of "believing takes practice" has anything to do with her teleportation we see in #49? like, it took her a while to figure out how to get to the radio to call her mom?

## #45

- gibbs has his head bandage off by now, implying he's come back from that trip abroad. so what'd he do there?
- i've joked in the past about toby and denise feeling like lost john allison characters to me and never is that more apparent than "turrible, turrible, turrible." that's a bad machinery line.
- my inclination was right- toby is special teams, denise is defense.
- the rumors about jun and guillaume i was thinking about back in #18 are mentioned here.
- jun's justification for threatening toby being "they are subpar athletes" is so fucking funny lol
- the jade situation is one of my larger points for the "guillaume really is evil but this is what makes him fun" argument. he's helping to keep a girl hostage so he can win a game of sports! and, well, the game of sports has possible supernatural consequences, but still.
- "if he were proven wrong- there could be...consequences." i wonder if this is the good kind of "breaking the rules?" as in, it's a way to defy him without breaking as much as irina did, maybe even inscribed as another way to win a battle?
- guillaume states that jun "can read some of this", meaning the file, but not all. the implication is it's 50% normal and 50% special hodge text.
- in terms of a sacrifice, guillaume says "the criteria, for who that can be is- somewhat narrow" and later states guards don't count. i wonder if this is another rule, or more of a cosmic part of the world? if it's a rule, maybe it's "you can't sacrifice agents of the headmaster?"
- it's interesting to see jade be a little at peace with herself here, saying she isn't trying to die anymore because now she knows she can fight against that. it does feel like we're seeing her gain some self-confidence.
- guillaume states that the details of jade's mom being revived are hidden from almost everyone except hodge and now him.
  - this implies guillaume knows hodge is special and that she's maybe the only one on staff who is?
- when jade asks why guillaume can't do what she did, he says "there are rules. limits." why was jade able to break that rule? is she somehow a little different than the others?
- jade believes something "answered" her when her mom was revived, and it wasn't god.
- this page with jade and her dad talking to mary-beth's doctor is a little oddly placed, so i'm curious about why it's there- i think it's maybe to confirm that something about mary-beth wasn't physically changed, like her brain?
- mary-beth implies clarkson tried to contact her many times through letters and phone calls and then just eventually showed up physically.

- mary-beth appears to work at this restaurant, which adds some extra texture and sadness to jimmy and jade's scene here in #17- they're visiting somewhere their mom spent a lot of time. also potentially adds context to jade's weird vision of her there?
- clarkson states jimmy has had trouble finding work in the area and that the family farm is about to be in foreclosure. none of these are mentioned problems in jade's other flashbacks, which to me implies clarkson fixed things for jade anyway even after mary-beth tried to turn her down.
- mary-beth claims she felt evil on jade when she came back to life- she's opposed to jade, and clarkson, playing god. i think it's interesting how this issue leaves this up to interpretation: is it mary-beth, a religious person, projecting her fear and shock of her daughter's abilities or is there really something evil jade tapped into? i'm inclined to say the former, just because we have no evidence of the latter.
  - but. i'm kind of wondering if we should connect this to akiko's declaration of a god in #37. *is there a devil, then?*
- and now it's time for the the most fucked up thing clarkson has ever done!! [cheering, applause] what impresses me on this read is how casually she does it and how she's clearly justifying it by "protecting" jade- talking about how loyal and good jade is as a person. it's pretty effortless for her. but i think any sane person would know that even if this gets jade away from a neglectful parent, it's only going to hurt her more, maybe even make her blame herself. she can justify it with supernatural reasons all she wants, but she's still deprived jade of a relationship with a parent, and we know how much clarkson cares for those things.
  - i also think it's interesting that she doesn't just mind control her to act like she loves jade again. maybe that wouldn't count...or maybe this is clarkson's genuine impulse, outside of any of hodge's instructions, and it tells us how far down the rabbit hole she is by this point.
- so to put everything about parent interaction we've heard of in this book so far...the best thing for the kids is for their parents to be around and offering them love and stability. the second best thing is for the parents to be straight up dead, though that might trigger a big use of powers early. and the *worst* thing- at least in the opinions of mga and abraham- is for the parents to be present but neglectful/abusive. i suppose we've seen the extreme of that in kseniya, who also has taught irina a lot about the greater state of the world. i imagine the idea here is that a child might react to a neglectful or abusive household by misusing their powers, having them triggered early, or even having their powers entirely suppressed?

## #46

- irina suggests clarkson wouldn't need to eat or sleep if she decided thus, but clarkson isn't sure it works that way.
- irina's birthday was not something to be celebrated :(
- there's something kind of sad and ironic about clarkson and irina's conversation here- it's one of the most sympathetic moments clarkson has with any of the kids, and she even thinks about taking irina on an extended trip. irina, however, interprets this as clarkson just setting up to use her as a pawn. it's irina's psychic awareness and upbringing by her



mother clashing with casey's own internal imbalance between "righteous hero" and "morally ambiguous avenger"

- clarkson has been to cairo before and likes it; she also refers to something happening at the pyramids here.
- irina hating adults moment! in many ways, the kamille bidan of morning glories.
- so this house isn't the one in #10- that house is white and looks more stone than brick. they kind of have similar overall layouts, however- a yard in the middle of the woods with a path cutting through it. this house appears to be built on the hill over mga; i could believe that house in #10 is built, like, down the road on another hill.
- "maybe you're just getting older and slower." "fairly certain that's not the case" that's one immortality point for mr. n, with more to come. which is an interesting contrast to abraham, who *acts* immortal but has referred to being a kid at coney island.
- mr. n refers to dealing with zoe as "unfinished business" and says she's a "shared threat" between irina and mga- "the biggest one, perhaps." this would imply zoe's final goal is something neither irina and mga would approve of? i wonder...if she's okay with the cycle...
- mr. n can't kill zoe under the agreements mga is under- another point for "they can't kill the special kids."
- clarkson states it's not the first time irina has escaped her and abraham- and we know they had her name as early as the flashback that starts #26, four years before this.
- clarkson states irina's location is not in the instructions- and implies that's true of all the kids. so hodge has no exact info, just an idea.
- i genuinely really do like the irina and mr. n dynamic, for the little we get of it. mr. n really knows how to work her up, but to some extent it's just showing her the respect she's never gotten- he doesn't mince words about her capabilities and what she knows, which is the most understanding she's probably gotten in the last six years. curious what the long-term scope of the arc would have been.
- mr. n describes himself as having been a "servant" to the past, godlike versions of the kids. so not special himself, just very skilled.
- "my mother told me i could trust you" which would maybe imply kseniya was mostly running from mga? but i suspect she wanted to teach irina as much as possible, regardless of who came to take her.
- "she found you in the desert and saved you. then she blessed you." likely the shot of clarkson in the desert in #26, but i'm curious of the context. maybe this is related to abraham fucking up in morocco? or maybe his falling out with headmaster? either way, i think it likely led to abraham's decision to break fully with mga...he thought he received a blessing that directed him to the future.
- blue glow on the teleportation is pretty similar to the blue glow from when both jade's mom and jun got brought back to life. interesting.
- mr. n notes that this won't come as easily to irina now when she throws up, which backs up this idea that the kids have more trouble with their powers as they age. actually- it's a big sign that headmaster is powerful when he has no trouble as a middle-aged adult.
- "the petty conflicts of abraham and gibbs" i like to laugh at mr. n's hatred of abraham/gibbs toxic yaoi but in all seriousness, it's interesting how we have a character

here who considers all that stuff a factional distraction from a larger conflict...and how he considers zoe representative of that conflict.

- so speaking of zoe: what's her goal with forming a following in morocco? to me it instantly implies she's willing to go public with her powers, which is really interesting, because it's an idea we've never seen any of the kids pursue before. we've had world governments on the periphery of this story, but not directly involved...so what happens if someone actively tries to get their attention? it implies zoe has larger knowledge she's willing to swing around.
- it'll be really funny if irina looks down that barrel and says "why are walid and caleb here"
- in other news, i have broken 30k words. cool and normal.

## #47

- i don't know what a vagina looks like.
- ike has invited the av club as press, but honestly, with him slinging his arm over hunter and talking to them for a good five minutes, i think he's happy to have them here.
- bonkers lore continuity here- ike talks about the cheerleaders having after-hours exemptions they want to use. those are ones amanda got for them all the way back in #7!
- [hannah voice] andres, if i can not be horny about the cheerleaders, you can not be horny about the cheerleaders
- this panel of ian looking behind himself dramatically complaining about akiko not being here has always been so fucking funny to me. who are you TALKING to
- akiko hasn't been able to figure out a way to leave the school building.
- another interesting, fucked up thing to add to the ian/akiko/fortunato storyline- akiko and fortunato acting as close to official as they can get here, but fortunato is in a position where he keeps urging her to be with ian again for his own safety. i don't think he ever would have believed that ian would hurt her.
- BIG thing i forgot: older vanessa and ellen know about clarkson being casey! implicitly, this is also a thing ellen learned *from older vanessa*. how did vanessa find this out? something to do with the beach maybe?
- older vanessa also implies that without bonding with casey, she never would have gotten to the the spot she's in now.
- "that sets up the chain of events that leads me to going back, to reach out to hodge-" ellen interprets this as "going back in time", but if our "the dead aren't really dead" theories are right, is this "going back to mga?"
- guillaume sorel in a green tank top asking for french music at this party while a girl he has helped keep captive for sports reasons is underground. love him.
- casey tells vanessa she has an idea for someone they could contact but gets interrupted- was that anyone important?
- pamela cut off someone's tongue once for making comments about daramount's ass. incredible.
- hunter canonically using the "junisao" name. again, incredible.

- casey talks about how everyone has lost their homes "but that doesn't mean we can't find a new one!" i imagine this is long-term irony for casey herself being involved in mga, but i wonder if this could be an endgame thing.
- Makayla, you remember that time we took over the dungeon for New Years?
- we'll find out later in the issue that ike set this up, but i do think it's interesting that isabel wouldn't have sold out the party to gribbs and is very nervous when he shows up, knowing she might be blamed by her classmates. the girl knows how to play the political game, and seemingly how to bend the rules in a way that's "allowed."
- irony moment of gribbs saying "i have never been more proud" about the kid who threw the bottle at him, not knowing it's ike.
- jun and guillaume lead casey out of the party here- doing a good job playing the "we are your normal allies who aren't keeping your bestie captive" game.
- "now that was a party." "thanks. i'm sorry it didn't last long enough for you to meet a girl that isn't comatose."
- might be unintentional, but if it's not, fun detail here that ian's glasses look like they were taped back together.
- happy we got this issue before #50. it's a total delight.

## #48

- i just remembered something from this issue out of nowhere and now i have to read it immediately right now.
- this opening flashback is three years ago, while casey was still in 8th grade. probably more like two and half years ago, but understandable.
- kind of wondering what isabel gets out of making casey this mad- she just wants to throw her off, right? but after her big speech this issue, i wonder if she also legit believes casey is a threat to headmaster. she's sort of right there.
- love the two andres cameos this issue (being nervous next to hunter and commentating the towerball game). he's so multitallented...
- it's so funny that the gym has outdated equipment for some reason. you guys this isn't even reality probably. headmaster...just imagine up some new equipment
- isabel mentions abraham here as if he's a known quantity to the average mga student? then again, we know the rumor mill goes fast here.
- did this mix up with the red and blue teams get fixed for the trade? it's actually consistent in the text and colors.
- it's interesting how casey confessing her parents died isn't a larger moment. i guess it's partially to show how much isabel takes the moment from her?
- isabel says she was four when her parents died, which is inconsistent with her showing up to the academy at 5 according to #40- likely just a smallish timeline error, unless there's some mysterious isabel backstory.
- isabel claims her parents were the first two people daramount killed. which is interesting considering georgina would have been...roughly 15-18 at the time? like, she could have been a child herself.
- isabel also says her eyes were opened with the help of headmaster! what exactly happened there?

- older vanessa set up the frequency young vanessa got here. implicitly, she is *not* telling ellen she can teleport to this beach...so why keep that a secret?
- "I know a lot more about this place than you do. And about what brought us here. You see- I think you did, Casey." OKAY. this was the thing that hit me that made me read this issue immediately. one read is that a past version of casey set up the academy, which is generally backed up by various other things in the book. but on this read...i'm also wondering...if clarkson also recruited kids to mga? we know she went to meet esi, for example. what if clarkson also recruited most of the kids at the academy? what if she even helped recruit *isabel*?
- isabel makes it very clear here that she thinks casey is out of options and is about to head into disaster. is this just a hunch based on her knowledge of mga or does she have some inkling of what's to come in the next couple issues?
- "our fantastic spinning friend" sometimes morning glories hits me with real ass lines that sound like they are from our fanfiction
- ian explains irina's insurrection in relation to the cylinder: "in a roundabout way, this thing is how she did it. and how she was undone, in fact." intriguing! what does he mean by a *roundabout* way? did the truants access the cylinder through a method other than the scantron?
  - we know from #22 that they've sacrificed someone before- the priest asks irina who she plans to sacrifice "this time." i...am kind of wondering if it really was brendan. and if so, did irina tell everyone else?
- "how we should've done it the last time, if i'd been listened to." so ian had already argued for a no-sacrifice method of cylinder usage.
- ian states this scantron method was created by "the people who were here before us", but that it previously took a lot of "ritual." this kind of implies the cylinder has been around for a long time, despite being seemingly created by julie. is it sort of...outside of time?
- "the people who were here before us?" "ask me about that again sometime" i am going to kill the comic morning glories.
- what ian is specifically doing here isn't just changing reality so casey wins- he's making it so everyone is *swayed* by casey's speech to vote for her. a bit "cleaner" in terms of cheating.

## #49

- casey fainting is going to be associated with the cylinder, but does this sand vision have anything to do with it as well?
  - i do think it's interesting that this is a physical manifestation- really playing on all the questions about the reality of mga.
- casey saying that they should stop living by mga's rules is juxtaposed over ian using the cylinder- which, considering irina's insurrection, may break some rules.
  - oh wait, did ian forcibly turn on casey's mind control here? so mind control is available again?
- *all* the votes cast post debate are for casey- there's not even room for any plausible deniability.

- dagney implies the children are prone to lying, for some reason.
- "after i win, i plan to be a benevolent ruler. there will be a place for you in my kingdom, however lowly." it's a jokey line, but this is a very interesting thing for ian to say when he's about to bend reality, especially to one of the people he's closest to.
- in all seriousness, i find this ian and vanessa exchange really interesting knowing what's about to happen to them both. ian seems legitimately thoughtful for a moment before oliver interrupts.
- "Susan, you vision."
- dagney implies casey seeing the beach was part of having her eyes opened? it doesn't seem anywhere near a full process, though. some weirdness with her time as clarkson i'm thinking?
- "what i was born for, in fact. to help you face the truth." dagney backstory lore! i think the implication is dagney was born as one of these "servants", although i also think she might be special to some extent herself?
- dagney refers to the headmaster as someone casey has been seeking her whole life- "the one you lost." something to do with headmaster being outside of the cycle and watching everyone else go through it?
- casey immediately guessing the person she's been searching for is jade. caseyjade moment.
- OH NO MY MIDDLE PAGES CAME LOOSE
- guillaume having jun start playing when the clock hits 8:13 implies some sort of cosmic significance to the time that guillaume believes in? like, beyond hunter's weirdness.
- toby and denise jumping for joy together is very cute.
- "you took everything that ever loved me" very dramatic thing to say, guillaume! your foster sister and birth parents could still be alive! oh god what if he knows they're dead
- somehow my dumb ass never realized that all the clocks in this issue say 8:13, not just the time clock for the game.
- "i suspect it's about to get longer" one of many things implying hodge knows what's going on with the truants.
- hodge tries to argue that vanessa can change things here by saying "your future is just like your past- you can change it"- which is basically what vanessa said to her as a kid in #20.
  - more importantly though- hodge seems quite sincere here, but it doesn't seem like vanessa has any context for what she's saying. who *would*, though, is older vanessa. which would explain why hodge also tells vanessa she's sorry...
- cool framing when vanessa says she's gonna begin- she looks through the window and sees her mom being led by a guard down a hall, but she *also* sees through another set of windows on the other side of that hall where the apple trees are.
- oliver states the radio is pinging "hundreds of miles" away. well, that tells us nothing about where the beach is at all.
- dagney is giving casey The Knife here. the specific usage of this knife (multiple knives?) makes me think the headmaster dying via this is a condition of the rules- and probably abraham too?

- mix of old and new flashes here. the aztec priest, revolutionary war soldiers, weird 1800s lady, guys after a shipwreck, the hunter, and the guy getting eaten by lions are all new, i think. i think the guys in suits arguing is probably related to the stabbing guy, and that's clearly the diner we've seen before.
- okay, lots of weird and interesting things in jade's very brief appearance here. first thing: the greenhouse is a ruined mess when jade is there, and doesn't go back to being fixed up until she leaves. is the mess what irina did in #23 or is it related to whatever is has happened in future jade's time? *is this future jade's time?*
- "he needs you in here so that out there-" is this implying that some of the events of #50 wouldn't have happened if casey hadn't won the election and/or gone into the greenhouse? what could she have stopped? or is it something that'll happen afterward?
- when future jade sees the streaks in the sky, she says she has to go and "if he finds me, it's all over." first off- implies whatever she's doing is something the headmaster doesn't approve of and may not know about. two- implies something about the streaks? maybe i should think more about that
- "he's going to try to get you to play by the rules" big, interesting line. it implies casey is at her best *not* playing by them- even though that was apocalyptic for irina. maybe casey is better at manipulating things ie. via the cylinder?
- things change to the lab once future jade leaves, as casey walks deeper into the building. clearly weirdly malleable reality here.
- saying this now even though it probably doesn't mean anything: what's with the triangle symbol on headmaster's outfit?

## #50

- we're here.
- i have cover a which is the most essential cover because toby and denise are on it.
- the description this realtor is giving of the monastery turned mga is pretty accurate- endless basement, preserved library. which establishes mga as a physical location in some way or another.
- benjamin gerhardt mentioned once again; headmaster calls him "a freemason and an idiot" and says he "tried to kill himself three times"
- the realtor also says the sale was "quite the surprise in town"- so this also shows mga, or at least the physical building, is near a real town.
- headmaster states he had wanted to talk to casey but was limited by the rules.
- lots of emphasis on headmaster and casey's relationship here. he insists he could always talk to her past selves even when they were in conflict, "not like so many of us"
- the choices of headmaster lines on the panels of the students when the earthquake starts feel pretty purposeful- but i take the most note in jade's being "unwilling to embrace the truth"
- hodge begging vanessa not to go for one last time. on this read...folks, i think i believe lara hodge. and she 110% knows what is about to happen to vanessa.
- ian is fucking scary this issue even *before* he commits murder. he has no reaction to the earthquake at all.

- fortunato's prayer here is psalm 116 aka "the sorrows of death compassed me"! fortunato's translation is NIV, which uses "the cords of death entangled me"- the version associated with casey/clarkson is KJV. this...could mean nothing.
- interesting how guillaume, despite knowing quite a bit, did not anticipate the earthquake.
- headmaster says he thought the school would "encourage some stability" and would prevent things turning out badly for the students, using examples like being "burned at a stake." a big implication of the stuff he says this issue is that things frequently end disastrously for special people, and he wanted to avoid such things.
- the "couch summoning" the first of our many signs reality is weird this issue.
- "but we checked them, these are all empty-" and older vanessa clearly remembered that and teleported to the beach or somewhere else during that time.
- ellen describes older vanessa as "someone who can end all this"...though we'll quickly learn that older vanessa probably told her a lot of lies or semi-lies.
- jun stating part of what sound like rules to the ceremony: "where two or three are gathered"
  - **edit 8/4:** returning here shockingly late because the visual novel misericorde, of all things, reminded me that this is actually a biblical reference that i missed. it's specifically matthew 18:20, when jesus is talking about handling sin in the church and states "where two or three gather in my name, there am i with them."
- jun is really hung up on the fact that he's in hisao's body and how that should make him special- but as guillaume notes, he can't see everything in jade's file, so that might not have carried over in that way. this is very much a...soul thing? it also could have to do with the fact that i don't think hisao's eyes were opened.
- guillaume notes that jade did her mom's revival "without- anyone else." in other words, not the way one would do a thing like a ceremony.
- The thousand injuries of Fortunato I had borne as I best could, but when he ventured upon insult I vowed revenge! sorry, i forgot to quote this when i read #40.
  - actually, go read the first paragraph of "the cask of amontillado" right now and tell me it doesn't make you think fortunato isn't just named after that story. i don't think he is, but c'mon.
- ian briefly calls abraham a "religious nutjob" here, which is a little sign of how off the deep end he is- i can't even see season 1 ian saying that, even if he doubts abraham.
- i find ian's plans fun to read into in terms of "what the fuck does he plan to do with fortunato exactly." the way he sketches it out is "i'm going to fix everything you did to her. and then, i'm going to give her a better life. one that doesn't have you in it." what precisely would be the consequences of reversing david and akiko meeting?
- ian why a fucking rock. couldn't you just get a knife. it would've been faster. ian.
- akiko wakes up right then and seems to know something is wrong, but it's unclear whether she saw this or not.
- legitimately big implications i've never read into: headmaster describes his goal as "i want to be free. i want- all of us to be free. don't you?" over an image of the streaks in the sky. okay, this implies the headmaster might *also* want to end the cycle, but what are the streaks?
  - also, an interesting compare/contrast to zoe's "all will be free."

- "you've already moved through your past." referring to #32 i believe.
- VERY needed moment of levity here with jade trying to do. i don't know. a mind blast?
- ALL TIMER guillaume moment here where he convinces jade by saying jun is a psycho who's going to kill her but hisao is her friend right? god he's such an asshole. what a character. love him.
- mg chat confirmed this glow on hisao's body was real. so. uh. hm. what does that mean.
- "well, definitely won't save you, seeing as we know how that works." ian what do you mean by this.
- "unfortunately, i don't get to feed you to lions- but stoning was quite popular for a while there, as well-" we've seen a guy being fed to lions *and* a woman being stoned in the time travel flashes. ian seems to remember this.
- headmaster also says he believes that everyone being together at mga could be the key to everyone getting what they want.
- when headmaster stops casey from stabbing him, he says "that's against the rules, i'm afraid." curious as to what the specific rule is- headmaster can't be killed? can't be killed by a student? not in the greenhouse?
- that awkward moment when you find out your mom gave your reincarnated friend a knife to kill you with
- So. older vanessa. on previous reads, my guess as to why she did what she did here was to get vanessa away from hodge- as in, to prevent everything with hodge from happening. on *this* read, assuming everyone in this issue is not quite perma dead but...somewhere else, i'm wondering if she actually did it to ensure vanessa *does* go back and does it. as in, whatever happens to vanessa after this death, it leads to her finding out about clarkson and deciding to go through with all this for a better future. grim as fuck, but could mean older vanessa has righteous goals. i think it's really noteworthy and, again, really grim however that she didn't prepare ellen for this at *all*, and leaves her to assume her daughter just killed her younger self and abandoned her. that, at least, definitely shows she's become a very different person.
- i'm really curious to know what jun's arc was supposed to be from here. he's been operating on murderous rage for a while, but he's horrified when he stabs guillaume- i think likely because he's been raised to see special people as more "worthy", an interesting comparison to guillaume, who was introduced believing the same thing.
- "why don't i see hi-" if the "death is not permanent" theories are true, i believe we have a reason, huh.
- more for ian's plan: "just forget you ever met him. well, it's not really advice, per se"
- "now i get it- that looked bad" is maybe the most batshit out of context panel in morning glories history.
- in response to whether he killed fortunato, ian's response is "technically yes." good lord ian that "technically" could mean a lot of things.
- all right here's ian's big rant that so many theories hinge on. the big quotes here for me are "we are not here. none of this is happening. you and me- we're not even you and me." and "if we really are who they say we are- there are no rules unless we allow them, yeah?"



- the first line implies a bit of an unreality situation with mga, as a lot has pointed to. if dying at mga doesn't mean dying in...Real Life, i guess, it would explain the zoe situation instantly. but i really have to think over these notes to figure out how that precisely would manifest. i *don't* think it's a coincidence that the kids have to fall asleep to enter mga, though.
- and that second line interests me with the mentions of the rules this issue. so much has been discussed about how irina breaking the rules in woodrun could have straight up ended the world. what chaos was ian potentially bringing about with the cylinder? and what happens if everyone stops believing in the rules?
- bringing up ian and akiko trading cute mixtapes right now is *diabolical*.
- like i said before, ian really emphasizes here the center of the ian/akiko/fortunato storyline being "taking action." from his perspective, he can "fix" all of this and he shouldn't have waited. he's the exact opposite of fortunato, who seemingly has the mind control ability and yet never really fights against this happening. thing is, all ian's actions are horror in practice.
- "i was with you the whole time" very curious what ian was doing that led to akiko not being able to see him do this, because these doubles manifest physically.
- and unfortunately i have to keep paying attention to ian because he drops *another* bombshell: "i figured out how to talk to it. that's what they did before, right? before we were born? how we were selected?" so this would imply the special kids were chosen *before birth*, which explains ian and vanessa, as well as abraham knowing about megan as a newborn. but what about the *other* kids? why was finding them such a mess?
- "it belongs to me!" an interesting thing to say when julie, clearly another casey, made the cylinder.
- also really curious what the narrative was gonna do with oliver from this point. he's clearly important to the backstory, but he's just found out he created a son who was a murderous megalomaniac partly due to oliver's own neglect. i think he'd have to look things in the eye, so to speak.
- ian gets ripped to shreds here, but frankly, considering he was okay with killing akiko...i'm wondering if this still means he succeeded. one of my secret problematic mg opinions is that i actually want him to have pulled this off, or at least partially pulled this off, because what would that have *looked* like?
  - i said it as a joke but i really think it would be sick as fuck if fortunato [got this treatment](#).
- headmaster considers the truants to have been "incomplete" and "broken." i think there's a connection to be made here with the "all together, one and all" quote. abraham tried to raise them to be a team, headmaster wants all the kids to work together...but the truants were being pulled apart from the very start when irina made her own plans upon arriving to mga. it makes sense that they're doomed in headmaster's eyes, because they could never completely cohere.
- "now five of them are dead- and for the sixth, something much worse." god forbid we find out what that would be. i can think of nothing good.
- "lara would come running to me" interesting wording because it implies lara could just visit him casually!

- alright. headmaster says daramount didn't kill casey's parents, "not in any true sense", and when she knows who did, she'll understand him. the thought i've had in my head for years now is...i'm wondering if it was clarkson. what if, in the end, clarkson realized what she did was so important to the larger mission that she *had* to give her parents up to make sure casey went back in time?
- headmaster says the students can't admit "the mistake you made" and "instead you turn away from me." irina has talked a bit about the "teachers" making a mistake in the past. i wonder if the headmaster sees it the other way around.
- *all* of these flashes appear to be new. as in, i don't think any of them are obviously related to things we've seen before.
- one last appearance for david and julie. they're both obviously related to casey, so i think it's interesting we get to see them- these flashes are usually way more ambiguous.

**34464 words!** that's a wrap on notes on issues...

but not a wrap on this document. because. i promised you i would solve morning glories.

---

## SECTION 2: I TRY TO SOLVE MORNING GLORIES

**5/22:** okay so it's been a week since i finished. i apologize. i've been sort of calibrating all of this in my head, but i know a lot of it won't come together until i'm actually typing it out. i think i am letting the enormity of the idea overwhelm me. SO i am just going to type stuff out and leave this section kind of messy as i write through things. expect to come in here and see stuff just half-finished and not thought through.

### 2.1: WHAT IS GENERALLY HAPPENING, JUST, OVERALL

hey have you ever seen that episode of ancient aliens where they talk about children who remember their past lives

that episode is about morning glories

okay, in all seriousness, i think i have some idea of the total conflict here or at least how it came about. **tl;dr, morning glory academy is an attempt to bring a bunch of reincarnated "gods" (supernaturally powered people) together in a controlled environment for a likely goal of shaping the world's future and potentially preventing global conflict.** to get more specific...i'll put this in bullets

- dagney states in #43 that this is a conflict “as old as the universe itself.” hard to know how much of that is religious belief, but at the very least this is an ancient recurrence that has been going on for as long as humanity can record it.
- we’re told frequently that “we created our own gods.” i believe at some point in pre-history, some people figured out how to channel these abilities into a select group of people. see all those figures in robes. these superpowered people they created were popularly considered “gods”, especially when they were seen by people unaware of the situation. the people who created these “gods” passed down their knowledge to future generations, who ended up being tasked with finding and guiding the “gods” when possible- as in, being “teachers.”
- reincarnation is real in this world in some form or another. it remains ambiguous whether this is true for everyone or just the special people? either way, this means the “gods” eventually disperse across the world without any knowledge of who they are unless they’re lucky enough to stumble into getting their eyes open and/or run into a teacher or fellow god. we get some occasional bright spots like descartes influencing world philosophy, but this ends badly for them a lot of the time- accused of witchcraft, stoned to death, etc.
  - there’s also an implication that these abilities can be passed down (ie. hodge and her mom). this likely increased the number of “gods” over time. i suspect the only reason we don’t have *more* is, again, the frequent amount of untimely death.
- one of the reasons that the “gods” are so in danger is that realizing their powers and their ability to warp reality can be deeply damaging and traumatizing to themselves, others, and *maybe* reality itself. see ike’s breakdown in #25 for an example. due to this, some of the role of the “teachers” is to bring the “gods” to these realizations more slowly and gradually- hence the myth of the girl in the prison who has to realize she locked herself up, and all the mystery around the academy’s nature in general.
- at some point, the relationship between the “teachers” and “gods” starts to get antagonistic and fragmented- we can see this in the imprisonment of the girls in #3 and the witch trials esque scene in #14. at the very least, it becomes more common for those who were meant to serve the “gods” to instead start trying to control them for power.
- perhaps as a response to this and to the pattern of prosecution, a few of the “gods” start to bounce around an idea of creating a closed system for them to work together and develop their abilities in safety. this is a group that includes (the people who will eventually become) headmaster, casey, ike, hunter, and probably most of the rest of our major cast.
  - (i think it is quite likely the various tortures the kids are put through were not part of the original plan, at least not to this severe extent, and things got warped over time out of “necessity”)
- at some point, maybe over multiple lifetimes, the “gods” start setting up their influence to last into the future in a monastery in upstate new york. (alternatively, they set things up in different places and then these things get supernaturally transferred to the monastery grounds.) some manifestations of this include the library (ike) and the office shrine (hunter); the other shrines may not have been set up by specific people, but were possibly built during this time. the idea is that the monastery can serve as a safe, closed

environment for “gods” and their followers to perfect their abilities and perhaps influence the world positively.

- at some point, this is all forgotten and the monastery becomes abandoned for some time- until the headmaster buys it about ~25-30 years pre-series. if the shrines weren't built beforehand, he builds them at this point.

that part is all the *backstory*, though- the set up to how things got to the actual, *modern* conflict that the series revolves around. in other words: why is *this* recurrence so important compared to past ones? (i probably shouldn't be using the wicdiv terminology here...but it's quite simple and useful) i think part of the confusion about the plot of this series in general is because *this* part of the story is the most ambiguous, even more ambiguous than the big long-term stuff i listed above! part of that is, i think, that a lot of it relies on individual character choices and arcs that we don't know yet. here's my best attempt at putting together what i *can* put together:

- susan dagney, more likely a “teacher” born into knowledge of the cycle but maybe special herself, becomes either the biological or adoptive mother to the headmaster after having been warned that he will do something awful to the special people in the future. despite the warning, she refuses to kill him at birth as planned.
- headmaster grows up into an especially powerful “god” who, via his mother or just via remembering things well in general, has full knowledge of the cycle and a deep desire to reunite his “friends.” his initial primary desire is to set up their old “monastery.”
- abraham is either another “god” or a particularly knowledgeable “teacher” who remembers a lot of things (him talking about coney island in #24 is to me a sign that he's aged normally, but he clearly has a lot of history). he comes in contact with headmaster and other “teachers” early on and either through this knowledge or with his own skills sets up wow-mo, an extremely profitable company that ends up funding what becomes morning glory academy and likely also performs other tasks related to their goals.
- at some point there is a massive, consequential fuckup in the plans that affects the “gods” directly. this is probably the largest hole i have in the “what happened” of all this. whatever it was, it's the massive failure that abraham was involved in that irina references in #27 and #28. i also think that it 1. potentially had consequences on the world and politics somehow (hence the apocalyptic imagery and discussion in many issues) and 2. directly led to the next bullet point:
- at some point, it is decided by headmaster, abraham and others in their inner circle (dagney, gribbs, etc) that they have to do a full reset on all the other “gods” and preferably bring them all up together at the same time. the only way to ensure this is to gather as many special people together as possible and kill them all within the same span of time. these are “the people underground” when hodge was a kid in #20. i do not think this would have been necessary if the previously mentioned fuckup had not happened.
- the method of doing the above involves the cylinder somehow, likely to ensure everyone is born within a certain time span and are thus easier to track down. (“why is the cylinder here when julie hayes hasn't made it yet?” great question.) to figure this out, they bring in physicist oliver simon, who has been researching the supernatural and cracks the theory

on how this could be done. in exchange for his hard work, he and his colleague ellen richmond are given full access to a couple of the “gods” to raise and research. similarly, abraham is allowed to have a son who will be one of these “gods.”

- for whatever reason, not all the reincarnated gods can be chosen or located by the cylinder (this was either another fuckup or that would just be tampering with reality too much). due to this, mga has to spend the next few years tracking down children born during the correct period of time and hope that they’ve picked the right ones.
- in the beginning, abraham is involved heavily in this process and in keeping tabs on some of the children whose identities mga already knows (ie. megan). there may be agreements between him and headmaster, particularly about ike, but he’s initially on mga’s side until something radically shifts with him. this is most likely casey blevins showing up and informing him of what she knows of mga, directed by hodge. he begins building the camp as a direct counterpoint to mga, likely after the mentioned incident where clarkson “found [him] in the desert and saved [him].”
  - i’m less sure about this, but i think at some point, mga likely finds out some of what abraham is doing- likely through gibbs finding out and defecting- and somehow is forced to make a further deal or agreement with him. said deal involves rules relating to abraham, ike, and the camp- rules irina eventually breaks.
- this is kind of out of context with the rest of the machinations going on here, but alongside all of this, the headmaster builds mga with...a loose grip on reality. to put it bluntly, i think there’s a reason the kids have to be put to sleep to enter the school, and it’s not just to hide the weird nuclear bunker entrance. i think the kids at the academy are basically in a bit of a reality bubble, even if it’s just a mental one- like an extension of the astral projection the av club does. due to this, **death is not permanent for the kids who are legitimately “gods” as long as it’s at MGA.** this both explains zoe and also what zoe was killing for in the first place- more on that later.
  - a more radical version of this is maybe that it’s *a/ways* true for the kids, at MGA or otherwise- if they’re “gods”, then they have the ability to remove themselves from “reality” a bit and exist on another plane, making stuff like death irrelevant. i suppose this could explain the jade’s mom situation to some extent. that said, it’d remove an awful lot of stakes, so i’m not sure about that one.
  - one other version of this that might tie together some of the plot is that mga is sort of a set of pocket universes. there’s some implications that future jade and old ike lived a different life than their younger selves, and if mga is some sort of variable bubble of reality that can have a variety of outputs, this would be a lot more explainable. see oliver and ian’s conversation about reality in #40- ian highlights that maybe the electron is “everything” while unseen. maybe there are tons of variable versions of what’s going on in mga? **this is the theory i’m leaning towards**, so it’s going to come up in the rest of this writeup.
- in the end, both abraham and headmaster have goals relating to improving the world’s future and potentially ending the cycle of reincarnation overall. headmaster talks about how he wants everyone “to be free” and abraham also tells georgina he’s going to “end this.” their differences may lie primarily in methods rather than goals.

speaking of which: **the goal**. i'm not as certain about this, but i think it's most likely that the key lies in the original arc words of the book: "for a better future." we get only one look at what appears to be the future in #6, but it was important enough to be in the very first volume of the book. in said issue, we get some hints that war is brewing, and in later issues we get more odd details: the strange military base that casey lived on as a little kid and the multiple shots of soldiers. **i believe that mga (and abraham) believe they're working to stop an inevitable, likely nuclear, conflict that could end humanity.**

i also believe, judging by future jade consistently showing up and seeming to be at least in opposition to the headmaster, that this is doomed to fail- at least via headmaster and abraham's methods. our only hope is that the survivors- future jade, maybe old ike, and anyone else who could've made it- can guide their past selves into changing things for the better.

from here, every mystery is somewhat singular: it's character-based, focused on their own goals or histories. so i should probably explain things that way...

## 2.2: WHAT IS GOING ON WITH THESE CHARACTERS

so, full disclosure: this section is very speculative, despite being about a book that will likely never be continued. along with explaining some of the mysteries surrounding each character, i wanted to think about their roles in the story and thus how their arcs would have gone. in any good story, these things would tie together, after all.

in other words, i'm going to be talking like this book has new issues coming up- it's just the easiest way to write this all out. what an interesting hypothetical universe this would be. you all may use it to imagine the beautiful 100 issue run that exists in your minds.

### 2.2.1: LARA HODGE

you know that image of a cat being grabbed where the caption is just "YOU"? that's how i've felt about lara hodge on this reread. mostly because she's the force behind a *lot* of this book, and you can see her hands in so much of the plot.

let's cut to the chase: i think that lara's motivated by two goals. **1. she knows the scope of what could happen with the future conflict and is working on her own to stop it, and 2. she's sincere about what she says about being on the side of the students, and especially about vanessa.**

the thing that made me write this section first, before the sections on any other character, is that hodge is legitimately responsible- alongside clarkson, who she was guiding- for...*most of this book*. just off the top of my head:

1. casey showing up to abraham implicitly led to the camp being created

2. clarkson brought at least 5/6 of the truants to the camp, leading to basically everything the truants have done since
3. clarkson also became involved in the glories' backstories via killing jade's mom, helping ike escape murder charges, hiding hunter's MRI, etc
4. if my hunch that clarkson may have also gotten kids sent to *the academy* is right, hodge was responsible for that too
5. and technically, sending clarkson back to the past led to david being born.

this is to say nothing of, say, what could have initially been the consequences of injuring older vanessa and taking her prisoner (i imagine mga tried to interrogate her, after all).

i think hodge has two motives for this. for one, on a personal level, i've found that on this read i pretty much believe her in terms of her claiming she's trying to help vanessa. she seems to have to steel herself when going to talk to older vanessa in #32, and she spends #49 and #50 seemingly trying to stop young vanessa from walking into her own death. i think with years of experience behind her, she legitimately regrets what she did to vanessa when she was a kid, and would like to make up for it.

so what precisely happened to make her see the light? well, i didn't really process this until...the day i'm writing this (5/29, i've been slacking), but the key was in front of us the whole time: her "safari outfit." hodge first shows up in this outfit and consistently wears it in #12, #13, #14 and #16, along with when she shows up to mind wipe brendan in #32, but it's never explained. it *does*, however, resemble an outfit that the bald military type clarkson is shown talking to in #26 is wearing. a similar, probably the same, guy shows up during akiko's dance in #37, leading an army.

hodge's office is notably covered in very non-mga things like lollapalooza posters, and she has what looks like a degree on her wall. i think headmaster allowed her to spend some time in her later teens and early twenties- maybe years!- outside of mga, living a "normal" life. and i think one of the things she did out there, and maybe the reason headmaster allowed her out in the first place, was join whatever military organization that bald guy is a part of. hence the outfit- it's her uniform. and while she was out there, lara got the kind of reality check she needed to regret her actions as a kid. we happen to have seen older vanessa on a pretty similar beach to the one we've seen that military guy at, talking to clarkson. if that's where hodge was stationed, i assume interacting with older vanessa again outside of mga would have given her that sort of mental kick in the teeth.

on top of that, hodge could have also gotten important information about the great conflict that her father is trying to stop...and now she doesn't think his plan going to go perfectly. we already know from her taped conversation in #29 that while lara loves her dad, they don't always agree, as the conversation contains her admitting that he was right about things, implying she's disagreed with him. daramount also goes after her for being gone for so long in #14, implying she's gone against mga in some way.

to put it bluntly, i think everything about clarkson is lara setting up an alternative to her dad- making sure abraham's camp is set up and giving the kids different routes toward mga that might prepare them more for what they'll face. she may admit to headmaster in #29 that she didn't do it perfectly, but she nevertheless did it, because she feels mga might fail, and she knows the world is at stake. and hopefully, along the way, she can make good on her promise to herself in #20 that she'd be the *nice* teacher and really make it up to some of these kids. ironically, by doing so, she also ensured the creation of her relationship with vanessa by having vanessa go to abraham's camp and then get sent to mga. her big attempt to fix things also created her largest regret. one could say she...created her own prison!

hey, speaking of which

### 2.2.2: CASEY/CLARKSON

some of why casey is so special has been sketched out for us, and some we have to infer. for one, the headmaster discusses in #50 that the two of them have a past connection; they were friends, once. i suspect some of the hubbub surrounding her is simply that.

the real thing that makes casey so special, though, beyond her fairly good powerset (ie. the mind control), is her connection with the cylinder. almost every time the cylinder's been used, it's needed some sort of interfacing- usually the scantron. when casey uses it in #28/#29, on the other hand, she doesn't need to use anything at all- there's a major cost for her, but what she does works.

we know that the cylinder was created by julie hayes. to cut to the chase: julie is pretty clearly the next casey. maybe not in this timeline, but she's the next casey. #6 is basically constructed for us to draw the parallels as we learn more of casey's history during the rest of season 1. now, that doesn't explain how the cylinder came to exist in the past- i suspect that would be a future plot event (maybe that's one of future jade's goals? more on that shortly). but in any case, the cylinder appears to be able to sense such things, and it allows casey to interact with it in a unique way. i think this makes casey *immensely* useful as an agent for any given cause; implicitly, as long as she knows what to do with the cylinder, she can *alter reality*! it's no wonder abraham seemingly kept her a secret from mga for years.

that really leaves one big mystery about casey, and that's her son. but we have to save that for his own section...if, uh...if i can figure him out. still a big blank for me.

with all that in mind, the final thing to really consider about casey is the direction of her arc. again putting it bluntly, julie's existence implies she's going to die. that said, and i'll discuss this more with jade, there's a strong recurring theme that things might be playing out for the kids differently than it had for their older selves. and there's a lot of paths for casey, especially depending on when and how she finds out about the fact that she is/was danielle clarkson. throughout the book, characters have *constantly* questioned casey's selfishness and true motivations; ike and zoe spent a lot of season 1 doing this. we saw this play out with clarkson,



who is basically willing to throw everything away and even does things that emotionally harm hunter and jade to keep the jig up. but there's also a non-zero chance this plays out with casey, as her younger self. to get back to mga, to face down the headmaster, what exactly is she willing to do?

i'd particularly be concerned with the clarkson factor. i'll talk about this more with ian, but it's a recurring thing in this book that exposing the kids to knowledge beyond what they can handle is a massive danger. casey's stronger than most, but exposing her to "you were your own teacher who sent many of your friends to morning glory academy, and by the way, you have a son and husband, and your son is the school murder ghost"? there's no way that goes well.

this gets compounded, by the way, if some of my speculations about clarkson are correct. how's casey going to feel if she brought some of the kids to mga, not just abraham? how's she going to feel if she was *involved in her parent's deaths*?

### 2.2.3: JADE

jade has been driving me bananas this entire reread. i feel like i've made a lot of sense of morning glories on this run, but "what's up with jade" has to some extent eluded me. i actually think i can make more sense of *future* jade rather than current jade, so let's start there.

future jade has consistently shown up as a sort of assistive figure. she's actually a lot more like a dagny or a hodge than like one of the kids- even older vanessa and clarkson, though clarkson has a mentory side, are figures of action. future jade on the other hand mostly seems like a teacher, guiding julie to mga and then appearing to her younger self, hunter, akiko and casey with plans and advice. she pretty clearly remembers the past lives (see her talking with jade about sideburns guy in #10) and is involved in the larger conflict (knowing irina could end the world, warning casey not to believe headmaster). she's also very much alone. this is most striking in that panel in #37 where she's surrounded by corpses in the theatre- even though we've seen an older ike, he's not around with her, and julie's existence at least implies casey is gone. most importantly, though, there's been some implication that she and the old ike we meet aren't *our* jade and ike. future jade states in #10 that she couldn't be sure of how jade would end up dying and coming to her (she says she planned for jade to drown), and old ike also states that ike needs to tell him what was going on in his time. so: we're dealing with a jade who is maybe not *our* jade, but who knows about the larger conflict and wants to direct our kids to a better possible ending. complicated! and there's some steps to that that i truly think we don't have the info to guess about.

but if there's anything i think we *can* guess about future jade, i think i can summarize it pretty fast. for one, i think things probably went very wrong in her timeline- as in, i think she may have been one of the only survivors of what went wrong at mga. for two, i think her amount of money and power is likely inherited from ike and abraham's company, which would also explain why she could track down julie, who likely used to work for their foundation. (ike not being with her kind of implies he may have died in that timeline and old ike might be from *another* timeline, but

maybe that's thinking too hard...) and finally, i think she's trying to both navigate structural inevitabilities in the timeline while trying to improve things for her friends- *and* trying to stop that inevitable nuclear conflict, which appears to be very near in the future to her time. one of those inevitabilities appears to be the cylinder getting sent back to the past to eventually be used to pick the kids, which likely has to happen with julie's involvement. i think this is why future jade can come up as such a confusing figure; she's working in the ruins of mga and using the cylinder, but she's also clearly on the side of the kids. if she has to balance saving her friends with, say, making sure her friends get born in the first place, some of that makes more sense.

so all of that explains future jade and her goals. what this doesn't explain about jade is *everything else about her*, and that's what still bugs me. jade brought her mother back to life, her mother hated her for it afterwards, and now nine- who can normally sense special kids- thinks she is *not* special quite firmly. abraham also kept her a secret, like he did all of the glories. i certainly think she's a strong candidate for someone who was constantly burned at the stake and such in the past- she's got a witchy vibe- and that would explain ike seeing her die over and over again.

but what's up with her in the *present*? all i can think of is that she gave up some considerable part of herself and her abilities when she revived her mom, and that's why it's not something she can repeat or make sense of. the other angle there is, to put it bluntly, the god factor- jade thinks she was praying to something when she revived her mom, but she doesn't think god answered. i'll also have to talk about this when i discuss akiko and fortunato, but the ambiguity as to whether there is some sort of higher force in this universe remains a big open question here. my inclination is that higher power is just the kids themselves, and i suppose whatever force they tap into- but i have little hard evidence there.

well...maybe. more on that when i talk about the twins. anyway, if you think you have solved jade ellsworth, uh, let me know.

## **2.2.4: ZOE**

if you've read my notes on individual issues up there, you already know that i straight up think i figured out zoe's entire deal on this reread. to cut to the chase: zoe knows that the reality of mga is loose, and death may not be permanent. she starts remembering this, and other stuff about her past lives, around the time she gets to mga, kind of akin to how ian describes remembering things after oliver shows up.

when you look at zoe's murders, they're all basically challenges to mga and to the headmaster. she labels them with "ALL WILL BE FREE" and even kills those two jocks that go after hunter *in the greenhouse*. zoe's aware that she's "freeing" these kids by killing them. to use future jade's chess metaphor, i think their deaths take them "off the chessboard" so to speak; the headmaster can't use them as his pawns anymore. all this excellently parallels zoe's relationship with sarah, where she killed the teacher to protect her- in other words, doing something awful to protect others. that theme is the beautiful juicy core of her character.

the big question is what she's doing *now*. mr. n insists that zoe is a mutual enemy of both mga and irina. if that's the case, the only other character i can see as being that way is abraham- which makes sense, as she and abraham have been "dear friends" in a past life, it seems. that tells us nothing of zoe's goals, though. what i found striking about her being a prophet in morocco is that it's quite *public*, more public than really anything we've seen of the kid's powers. i'm wondering if she's going full rogue and trying to expose the entire situation, something i think would throw everything into absolute chaos, especially with the whole "future nuclear war" thing.

i've also wondered if she's okay with the cycle. she talks about knowing who she is and what she has to do- she seems at peace with it by #19, to some extent. headmaster and abraham have both indicated that they want this conflict to end, just on their own terms. it would be interesting if zoe instead thinks it's inevitable to perpetuate it.

one last thing about zoe is the weirdness around her foster family! we know they're allies of abraham, as he sends her directly to them when she's three years old, and we do know that abraham has a large network of allies that will later end up fostering the truants. but if they're just randos who know abraham, there is no reason to hide their faces. i have two theories, both slightly ridiculous, neither of which i completely believe:

1. it is, somehow, danielle clarkson and tom reed. this would involve them traveling back in time *again*, but we do know that zoe's foster mom is pale and dark haired. this would also, more importantly, potentially explain zoe's knowledge of david and david's weird timeline in general if he had also traveled back.
2. and here is the *weirder* option: it's akiko's family. we know they lived somewhere english-speaking, we know that they seemingly had close contact with abraham because akiko's dad worked for wow-mo, and akiko mentions a sister when clarkson comes to get her. this might be implausible when no other connection has been brought up between them, but it *would* explain their shared knowledge of david if they learned it together, and it would add potential context to akiko's dad saying he "killed his own daughter." (it also gives another plot reason for akiko being in a coma for so long; she wouldn't have heard about zoe "dying.")

### 2.2.5: IKE

ike, much like zoe, made about 50% more sense to me on this reread. we have the shape of his arc a lot more clearly than we do for a lot of the other characters. for one, #43 flat out sketches out why ike is Like That: it's because of abraham's ritual seen in the flashback in that issue. abraham wanted ike to remember as much as possible...and it turns out it just gave him an inherent sense of wrongness about the world. he acted out in response. probably should have read a bit about child development before trying that, abraham.

the future of ike's story has also been seen already. at some point, ike's consciousness is going to travel back in the past, to just after he killed abraham. we know this is possible, in a sense, from clarkson returning in casey's body in #27. from there he'll do a bunch of plot-important

things that we've mostly not seen, as well as the stuff he does in #11 to give himself an alibi for abraham's death and to make sure the company stays with him. as abraham says there, ike's inheritance of the company (wow-mo) and the foundation is most important.

and this is where we can, i *think*, explain why irina wants ike dead so bad. i pitched this up in the notes from #23 and i thought i was forcing it then, but i basically re-realized it the other night and with the entire book in mind, i think it makes more sense. i believe ike funded the cylinder and thus allowed this entire book to happen. we know julie hayes worked for a "greene foundation", and abraham is constantly telling ike not just about wow-mo but a "foundation" as well. i think ike gets out of mga at some point and runs that foundation- allowing the cylinder to be created, and thus then allowing it to end up in the past *to pick the kids in the first place*. this makes ike fundamentally essential to mga as a project occurring, and that would explain a lot about why irina wants him dead- after all, she thinks the kids should have never been at mga at all. "but then if irina killed ike, would that mean this entire book never happened?" correct!- which also probably explains why future jade was so firm about stopping it. more on this in irina's section.

as a sidenote, i think ike's also important because he's the only person who can kill abraham. this was likely some sort of clause in the "rules." this would explain why abraham had to bait ike into killing him in the first place (if he needs ike to inherit the company asap), and why mga seems to find ike somewhat important- they're banking on him taking down his father again, for real.

i imagine ike's relationship with jade will put a spanner into some of these works at some point. at the very least, as mentioned in jade's section, i think she's running at least some of his funded projects in the future.

## 2.2.6: HUNTER

back when mg was releasing, i was a fan of the "hunter is the headmaster" theory. among the reasons for that was that if hunter *wasn't* the headmaster, i had no goddamn idea what his arc was supposed to be. and, well, folks: i still have no idea what his arc is supposed to be! or what's up with him! but, well, i have some guesses.

hunter is definitely linked to the cylinder in some way or another. he's surrounded by a similar blue, cylindrical glow when he uses his abilities, and appears to have a sort of similar ability to...alter reality? set things in a certain way? irina uses him to set up things for jun's sacrifice, and future jade uses him to set things back to normal during woodrun. the most interesting one to me is that when hodge and casey travel 13 years back into the past, hodge states that they shouldn't have traveled that far back, and they "needed hunter," which implies that they could have set how far back they'd go via him, somehow. hunter's sort of a...programmable boy? i don't think he's literally an android, but he's got something going on with his brain (hence the weird MRI), and he can be used to direct reality in a certain way. and messing with his settings has something to do with the number 813, of course.

my wildest theory here is that the cylinder is harnessing hunter's abilities, or some variation of them. i don't think julie would have done that on purpose, but it would explain the link between the imagery around hunter and the cylinder itself. "does this mean casey could use hunter to warp reality too?" *possibly?* there's been a lot of talk about casey's relationships with hunter and jade and how genuine they are- zoe says she thinks casey would someday blame hunter for dragging her down. we already know that she had the results of hunter's MRI hidden when she was clarkson. the one part of hunter's character arc that i'm certain of is that he's Casey's Adorable Useless Love Interest, and that means i could easily see him being incredibly betrayed by her at some point.

beyond that, though...hunter's purpose as a character, if that wasn't obvious, was as an audience surrogate. maybe we all thought too hard about giving him great, cosmic importance beyond that- after all, it seems that everyone thinks of him as a potential tool, instead. i suspect his character arc would be about self-actualizing and processing his potential in relation to that. if everyone wants to use you as a tool, then what choices do you have, and how do you exercise your own strength?

and speaking of the purpose of characters:

## 2.2.7: JUN AND HISAO

hisao, in retrospect, served as our introduction to abraham and the truants- our pathway into that side of the conflict. his relationships with guillaume and his brother allowed us an emotional "in" that made woodrun and the truants' inclusion into the cast work. once jun literally took his place, hisao felt in some ways *done* for me- he was sort of a character who existed for that transition, kind of like how i've discussed how megan exists as an exposition device.

is *what i thought*, until i reread #50. because when jade prays over hisao's body (well, jun's body with hisao in it, bear with me here), jun and guillaume take it as nothing happening...but hisao's body *does* glow. jade did something, or got most of the way into doing something, at least. combine that with the theories that mga isn't quite real and we have a possible explanation: could jade not revive hisao because hisao's *already out there?* so i think we were going to see hisao again, hopefully- likely teaming up with the other dropouts, or maybe gearing up to a very awkward truants reunion. god, my kingdom for some zoe and hisao interactions.

which leaves jun stuck at mga. one thing that was pretty striking about jun on this read for me is that he actually knows more than he gives off- he seems to have a pretty good amount of knowledge about the mga side of the wider conflict, or at least the conflict from gibbs' biased perspective. i also noticed how hung up he is on the idea that he's now "special" because he's in hisao's body...which, judging by guillaume's reactions to that idea, probably isn't true. (the idea that the powers are associated with the mind using them sorta ties in with hunter's weird brain.) i think the most likely character arc for him involves having a lowkey redemption arc and coming to terms with his identity. and maybe heroically dying, if i know this book well enough.

## 2.2.8: IRINA

i came away from this reread sorta thinking we might have underestimated irina. kind of an odd thing to say when we've seen her teleport across continents, i know, but i'm still thinking it. for all her issues, irina is probably the only one of the teenagers with a near-full view of what she can do with her abilities, and there's still multiple things she's done that seem entirely extreme even compared to what her classmates can do. the ones that particularly struck me this time are her appearing in hunter's dream in #19 (her *first appearance!*) and her strange amount of foresight before and during woodrun- the implication she knows what jun will plan to do, that akiko will get caught and put in the basement, etc. i don't really have more evidence that irina has some sort of future foresight, but...it's odd, right? she's a hard character to estimate. her *goals*, too, are hard to estimate.

what i mean by that is that i don't think we have an exact grip on what irina wanted after killing ike during woodrun. she tells the truants that their suffering will be over at that point, and she seems to convey that she wants the reincarnation cycle to end, but that's about it. if my theory in the ike section- that ike is going to end up funding the cylinder and thus allow the kids to be born in the first place- is true, irina executing on that plan could mean altering reality to the point of collapse, hence future jade's intervention and clarkson having to give up her memories to end things. i think we're meant to believe that irina doesn't know what she's doing there, and that she doesn't realize the sheer amount of risk she's playing with. but...i don't know. i mean, to quote an image macro, *does she know?* there's a part of me that thinks she really could have known the risks and either thinks she could deal with it, or even is fine with it. the girl was raised as a bullet pointed in a certain direction. we already know she was blowing up shrines on mga's campus- as in, removing ways that others could learn about time travel and potentially interfere with her plans. i might not put it past her.

headmaster alludes to something "much worse" than death awaiting irina after #50. i think he's somewhat biased there (she did a number on him apparently), but i do think he sees her as someone who's overreached- someone who isn't willing to see the error of her ways and the strength of his position. i have no exact ideas on what he has planned for her, but i think it involves either 1. putting her under his control or 2. entirely getting rid of her beyond just dying in mga, akin to ian's plans for fortunato (that would be worse than just a death!). i'm curious to know how this will go, because while we've seen little of mr. n and he's clearly trying to get irina to play along with him, i can also believe he has legitimate respect for the kids in a similar way to dagney, and i'm curious to know what he'd think.

that said, irina's clearly the most informed of the truants, and i think even if she's on the path to her own self-destruction that she'll still have knowledge and schemes to share before that. there's a number of important things she did in the backstory of the book that still need to be elaborated upon, particularly the past sacrifice she evidently was a part of in the temple shrine (see #22). i...still think that could have been brendan, by the way.

### 2.2.9: VANESSA

i came into this reread with a long-time assumption of mine that older vanessa killed her younger self because she was trying to prevent her from going back in time and meeting with hodge. this is still theoretically possible, especially if you're on board with my "they had to stop irina from killing ike because it would prevent all the kids from being born in the past" line of thought- older vanessa seemingly vanishes after shooting herself.

but after this read, i'm slightly more inclined to say older vanessa shot her younger self in order to ensure she *does* go back in time to talk to hodge. which sounds counterintuitive, but hear me out. if we assume the students who die in mga can reappear alive outside of it, then vanessa is probably out there- and probably still planning to save brendan, her mom and her friends. vanessa and casey's constant parallels, and their seemingly interrupted connection, really stuck out to me on this read. if the two of them reunite eventually, it might be at the weird beach area casey is left at in #50...which also seems to be an area older vanessa has access to. and, if my theories about hodge are right, it's also a place hodge has spent some time. perhaps vanessa uses whatever knowledge she gains there to decide that she *does* have to go back 13 years and temporarily doom herself in order to make sure hodge knows time travel. which, considering hodge is who sent clarkson back and thus brought vanessa and ellen to the camp in the first place, kind of makes sense- even if it's still grim as all hell. but considering all the comparisons between casey and vanessa's arcs, i don't doubt that vanessa is willing to do all of that to save her loved ones, just as casey was.

i think older vanessa *must* believe she can save the people she loves that way. for one, there's brendan, who she promised to save (even if hodge made him forget), but now there's also ellen still in mga and the friends she's made among the glories. i also think that if ian has more ahead of him, vanessa's going to have to find out about it, and she'll likely have involvement and opinions on whatever happens with irina. the wildcard factor here is that older vanessa is pretty cold in comparison to her younger self and has clearly been through the wringer. i'd be curious to see if the two end up at odds. some sorta being inspired by the wholesomeness of your younger self moment.

### 2.2.10: IAN

i talked a bit about the "purpose" of characters in the previous entries. not that i think you need a purpose to introduce a fictional character, but in a book like this, characters being used to introduce different functions of the world is just simple logic.

and oh boy, does this book get its money's worth out of ian. ian's used to introduce multiple pretty important factors to this narrative: 1. oliver simon's lab and the usage of science in creating the kids, 2. the inherent danger in letting the kids know too much about their powers too soon, and 3. the strangeness of the nature of reality at mga and how it can be manipulated with the cylinder. to me, #2 is actually the most directly relevant. this book contains a lot of mystery box ramblings about how the kids have to find answers themselves, but most of that just makes

you want to roll your eyes (when coming from the adults) or is plain confusing (when seeing irina's actions and not being able to understand what she's up to). all of that can be put aside, however, when we get the extremely blunt example of ian realizing the school's reality is malleable and fairly quickly losing his mind and killing his rival and his best friend. it's a bit harder to deny that opening the box can be dangerous when ian's response is to do *that*.

with all that listed out, i think there's an argument to be made that ian has served a narrative purpose and can easily be discarded. if it turned out that the cylinder ripping him apart made him *permanently* dead and left akiko and fortunato fine, i wouldn't be shocked- it's probably the most efficient way to resolve that storyline. i don't know if it's the most emotionally fulfilling, though. i think there's a lot of interesting narrative threads that could be pulled with other characters responding to ian's actions- vanessa and the av club come to mind, and we never see oliver realize that his kid has also committed two murders along with messing with the cylinder. and that's to say nothing of akiko and fortunato, who perhaps both deserve the final word here. so i think i'd rather ian be scrambling around somewhere, perhaps to commit more chaos before we're done with him.

## **2.2.11: AKIKO**

akiko is in a weird position here in that she was straight up in a coma for a full season-plus, basically shifting her outside of the plot until the last possible moment, and that makes her a little hard to place within the story. her issue, #37, is also one of the most difficult to get a hold on for me. i actually find it really juicy and it has a lot of plot relevance stuffed into it- her family's association with abraham, wow-mo, one of our earlier scenes with headmaster, and some future jade lore- but season 2 ends so catastrophically for akiko that it becomes hard to know where to place everything. that and she's a very straightforward girl; unlike many of the other characters, i have no doubt of her alliances and motives.

if there is one big mystery still surrounding akiko, it's her interaction with david. on this reread, i got the pretty strong impression that when akiko got her eyes opened after being captured in #1, she saw an apocalypse-level catastrophe and surmised it would come about if irina's woodrun plan went through. this actually works pretty well with my idea of mga being a sort of unlimited reality bubble, the "undifferentiated singularity" that ian proposes in #40. maybe akiko saw one possibility in that singularity and knew she had to stop it.

i do not know what the future holds for her! obviously she's part of my "if you die in mga you can be alive in other places" theory, but a lot of what is next for her depends on whether or not ian's cylinder plan worked. if it did, she's going to have to realize whatever false reality her former friend has put her in; if it didn't, she's going to emerge immensely screwed up over what happened to her. i also think the mystery of what her father was rambling about before he died is going to be relevant in some way or another; it's going to turn out akiko's sister was killed by mga (or he thinks she was), or he thought akiko had died, or something else (such as my zoe theory). we also need to call back to her statement to future jade that "everyone around me



keeps getting hurt. i try to help them- but i'm always too late." that's foreshadowing for what happens to fortunato in #50, but i can see akiko eventually saving someone in time.

lastly, i think akiko's genuine belief in a capital g God has to come up as relevant at some point. the ending of #37 is still one of the things that baffles me the most in this book, and i truly can't discern how it ties to anything else. maybe it'll end up metaphorical? as in, the kids are all Gods, so they're unknowingly talking about themselves there?

two sidenotes here: future jade's specific guidance to akiko to follow her heart, and directing her to fortunato, was either really good or really bad advice depending on how you see it, and that potentially tells us interesting things about future jade's perspective of akiko and what may have happened in future jade's past. and second...what exactly did akiko do to david when she let him touch her, and why was headmaster disappointed in her for it? that's a david question, though.

## 2.2.12: FORTUNATO

even moreso than akiko, a lot about fortunato is going to depend on whether or not ian's cylinder plan succeeded. i doubt it went off without any hitch, but if ian even 50% succeeded in mission "erase fortunato from existence", then he's in for some weird, intra-reality shit. i've joked that i want fortunato to turn into the next w.d. gaster<sup>1</sup>, but in all seriousness, *if* fortunato is wiped from reality either inside or outside of the mga bubble (i actually think outside is more likely, considering ian seemed to know mga had a liminal reality situation), it's a good excuse to elaborate on some of the physics-warping nonsense the kids can get up to. my theories on david are pretty loose, but i actually think this would be a good way to provide us with some explanation on *his* deal, which certainly seems tied to reality weirdness.

in terms of mysteries to resolve, fortunato has a lot of weird smaller stuff surrounding him, most of which i think isn't worldbuilding relevant but potentially *is* backstory relevant; the fact that his dad is mysteriously unseen and seemed to have known about mga comes to mind, as does fortunato's own allusion to having used his abilities well before clarkson met him. more relevantly, he was irina's original ally at mga and probably has the fullest knowledge of what she was up to both pre-woodrun and during woodrun, although knowing irina there's a solid chance she told him a few half-truths along the way. he was almost certainly involved in whatever the previous sacrifice she did was, and i think it's really likely that his weird dynamic with daramount was encouraged by her in order to keep an eye on her sister.

---

<sup>1</sup> er, i've made this joke about five times and never explained it, so tldr for anyone unfamiliar: in the 2015 videos game UNDERTALE, there's a set of creepypasta scenes you only have like a 1/400 chance to get that spell out the story of a guy named dr. w.d. gaster, who is claimed to be a colleague and maybe even family member of multiple main characters who was then mysteriously erased from existence and everyone's memory. this drove fans batshit until the game's episodic sort-of-sequel DELTARUNE begun releasing a few years later, which has made it pretty clear that gaster was actually always meant to be plot relevant to *that* game. [here's the full explanation](#), if any of this strikes your fancy.

speaking of which, in terms of character arc, fortunato more than any character really highlights the theme of “taking action” in the ian/akiko/fortunato triangle, which i talked about in the notes. ian talks in #50 about how he shouldn’t have waited to act and change reality, and when he acts he causes massive change, but his actions are violent and potentially timeline-breaking; akiko always tries to act and help people, but she’s always too late to prevent damage even when she causes change herself. fortunato’s problem is that he is (and i say this with affection) a *catastrophic* pushover. he seemingly never really fought against irina’s plans for more than a minute, freezes up when akiko sacrifices herself to david, doesn’t object to daramount’s torture until the very last second, and refuses to tell akiko that ian has *threatened to kill him*- the last of which has the worst result, because it leads to ian hurting akiko too. all of which is a hell of a contrast to the implication in #35 that he may have the same mind control power that casey and irina have and had potentially even used it as a kid. the obvious endpoint here, assuming fortunato still even exists, is for him to use that power to cause some sort of massive change...although whether that change is negative or positive depends on where we are in the story.

### **2.2.13: GUILLAUME**

much like ian, guillaume strikes me as a character that could have just been done in #50. i remember a lot of us guessing he would die before the issue released. by the end of that issue, he’s had a pretty full character arc; he went from a guy completely confident in his position in the situation, believing he was superior to the students with less knowledge, to realizing how wrong he was when his actions contribute to hisao’s death and becoming someone who would sacrifice himself for a “normal” girl like jade. of course, if we assume the students who die in mga can be alive elsewhere, that includes him too. i can hear him complaining about how his sacrifice was ruined now!

that said, there’s actually not too much to follow up on with him. we’ve gotten the tease that he chose to live at abraham’s camp when he was three, but while it’d be an interesting flashback, it’s not big info; we’ve seen zoe be weird and psychic at that age already. i do get the general impression that his time at mga made him pretty miserable- and the timeline of truant scheming kind of implies he got his eyes opened while on campus- but i’m not sure that’s important enough to see. guillaume has redeemed himself to us as readers, if we ever even saw him as that evil compared to, say, irina; the person he still needs to make up with is *hisao*, and if they’re both still around, that’s what guillaume needs to resolve.

(...i promise guillaume is actually one of my favorite characters. he just doesn’t have much going on lorewise!)

### **2.2.14: A SHORT SURVEY OF ALMOST EVERYONE ELSE**

this book has a lot of goddamn characters, and i didn’t think every single one needed a section for our purposes. which means we’re gonna speedrun the rest of this shit. here’s a quick summary of what i think’s going on with everyone else:

- i pretty much already explained both **headmaster** and **abraham** in the above section, and actually don't have too much more to say about them, other than noting that abraham's arc seems to eventually take him to the point where he purposefully has to get ike to kill him in #24.
- **dagney**, as mentioned, is presumably either the headmaster's biological or adoptive mother, and is pretty sure she made a mistake by not killing him. that said, now that headmaster knows she gave casey the knife, the woman has given off more death flags than a red shirt in a star trek episode. we'd probably get a flashback issue ending in her death.
- in the tinychat for #50, nick implied that **daramount** would have to react to fortunato's death, so i assume she'd start off season 3 on the back foot, trying to be terrifying to the students again. i can easily see her going off the deep end doing this and it setting up her inevitable death, presumably at casey's hands. i also think she has to find out about irina being her sister at some point, and i can see that really snapping a violin string in her mind. i'm not exactly sure if her not being "special" like her sister is actually supposed to be a big mystery- i think there's something equally resonant in her just rolling the genetic dice badly and not getting any abilities from either of her parents, setting into motion her years of inferiority issues- but see nine below for a potential theory. i assume hodge will give her one last chance to be saved that she doesn't take.
- **gribbs** has the lingering mystery of what he did on his weird overseas trip during season 2. that said, i'm not sure what he did there is as important as whatever worldbuilding details would be conveyed by the trip. i also don't think the reason he left abraham and went to mga is as important to the worldbuilding as much as it is to his character.
- **mr. n.** so this guy's literally just nebuchadnezzar. or at least from ancient sumer, but let's not wimp out. he talks like he's legit immortal, but reincarnated guy is still possible. irina or zoe getting him killed seems likely, but i could see him respecting the kids and sort of helping in certain situations, in a dagney-esque way.
- **nine** has to be named nine for a reason, right? my kneejerk thought is that she was probably the last in a line of early experiments in reincarnating the kids with the cylinder, or in otherwise passing down abilities, hence the number name. oliver was likely involved in these. it *could* explain why hodge was born with abilities and daramount wasn't- the method wasn't perfected until nine (who seems to be about daramount's age) was born.
- **the av club** likely doesn't have major lore associated with them, but i imagine we'd see more of their perspective in season 3 with the cast pared down. in particular, if my speculation that clarkson also had to recruit kids for mga is correct, they could easily be a way to show it- we already know that clarkson met esi. you could also use them to show mga in the years before the truants got there.
- i'd like to restate my belief that **pamela** would somehow find a way to walk out of this book alive and unharmed. i trust in her abilities.
- **isabel** is now shockingly disposable with the election storyline done, but her story of daramount killing her parents and having her eyes opened alongside the headmaster have flashback potential. reluctant ally seems possible.

- **ellen** is in a pretty awful position right now, but will likely at least be able to be the one adult the students can trust. i think she'll also have to keep putting up with **oliver**, who probably is questioning a lot of his life choices. i think the two of them will likely be the ones to tell the kids how they got created by the cylinder, as detailed above. ellen could potentially survive this book for a happy ending with her daughter; oliver seems like the type to finally see the kids as kids and blow himself up heroically in response, or something.
- **megan** deserves one more opportunity to do something cool before this story ends. at the very least, i think jade will remember her and get her freed by or during the endgame. i'll detail this more in the next section, but i still do think her baldness could be special in some way.
- i know i used to have theories on **brendan**, but on this read i didn't find evidence for him being anything but vanessa's dead boyfriend. i do think it's worth noting that he's pretty much confirmed to have not been special...so i wonder if he's exempt from the "dying in mga isn't permanent for special people" idea, and that causes complications for vanessa trying to save him.
- very small, off the wall idea: i've always found future jade's assistant **alicia** showing up in ike's breakdown in #25 odd, and i've kind of wondered if she's a reincarnated character like julie seems to be. considering her placement with the masked figures and generally helpful nature, i'd like to pitch she's one of the teachers- probably dagney.
- this is where i should have a theory on **benjamin**, and i don't. all we know about the guy is that he (or someone with his name) designed the academy centuries ago, headmaster calls him a "freemason and an idiot" who tried to commit suicide thrice, and abraham gets a call from someone with that name in #24 about meeting up with casey. for a second i wondered if it's headmaster himself, and he's chastising one of his past selves with the "idiot" bit- he sort of has that sense of humor- but the phone call about casey doesn't make sense, because that implies he's an ally of hodge and casey/clarkson. my only other thought is of that weird guy who seems to be following the truants as they head to the academy in #21.

now, i love toby and denise, but i doubt they're plot relevant...which means i think this is all of our plot-relevant recurring cast, right?

right?

## 2.2.15: DAVID

*this fucking guy!*

i've revived my oldest remaining twitter account in the process of making this to tease my old friends in the mg fandom, and one thing they've seen me ramble about there is that, frankly, i cannot figure out david. i have a feeling that the tools to realize what his problem is aren't all in the first 50 issues, meaning that we will likely be guessing forever. that said, i told you all i'd

solve morning glories...so i am straight up going to hope something comes to me as i write here (and that's happened to me a number of times doing this, so maybe that's not entirely foolish).

david's one of the most iconic figures in the book, but we actually don't see all that much of him. what we know about him is this:

- david exists at mga and seemingly everyone- teachers, students, etc- know about him.
- he shares a name- and for the sake of occam's razor, most likely *is*- "danielle clarkson" and tom reed's son, who was born a few months before casey blevins goes to morning glory academy.
- multiple versions of him appear at once and he often appears to be in agony. he looks like he may be burned.
- david kills people by putting his hand through the back of their heads. the sole exception is akiko, where he goes through the *front* of her head and puts her into a coma. his *own* reaction to that is unknown.
- most students appear afraid of him. daramount and gribbs, on the other hand, seem to think of him as a nuisance and/or tool.
- gribbs appears to have some mild ability to wrangle him; daramount initially suggests he stop david from killing brendan and he later brings david to abraham.
- in that same scene, gribbs refers to david as abraham's "flesh and blood" and says they have a family resemblance- which is very weird when tom appears to be his dad!
- the truants are well aware of david and what he can do. irina's plan involves sacrificing jun using him; fortunato appears to be able to pray to summon him with akiko's help; and akiko refers to him by name when she tries to sacrifice herself.
- zoe recognizes him when he kills the guard in #5 and also refers to him by name. she instantly panics and leaves when amanda, instructed by daramount, asks "who is david?" in #7.
- david kills brendan while brendan's going over the wallet and calls for vanessa (maybe assuming vanessa is coming up behind him, not david?). he kills the guard in #5 when the guard's about to assault zoe. he kills jun in #23 seemingly because of fortunato and akiko's prayer.
- there's a blonde boy that appears prominently in abraham's picture of the camp kids at age 10 (seen in #24) and in akiko's flashback to her childhood at the camp in #37. this *could* be caleb, but he's never explicitly named, and baby david is a confirmed blonde.

from this we honestly have very little that is coherent, but we *can* decipher a few things. for one: david is a known factor in this universe to those "in the know", and the truants likely found out about how he works via abraham. second, he's somehow blood related to abraham- or at least gribbs thinks so. third, david seems directly involved in the practice of sacrifice at mga, and reacts differently to someone who is confirmed "special" (akiko) than to those who aren't (brendan, the guard). lastly, david appears to have been a normal child once, maybe even one who grew up alongside some of our main characters- but something awful happened to him. if we assume the first page of #1 is the first page of the story because tom and danielle are about

to find out they're going to be parents (which i've assumed for a while now), this implies what happened to david is potentially one of the *inciting events of the story*.

i think i may be able to explain this, at least thematically if not in specific plot events. before that, here's three other, looser and potentially stranger thoughts that could potentially work with my theory or just be extraneous:

1. david does appear to be mga's primary way of sacrificing people, which can allow for tons of useful timey-wimey nonsense. for that reason, it's possible that mga created david's current state (or allowed him to be created) so they'd have a sacrifice mechanism.
2. we technically don't know whether david as we saw him in #23 is from that future time period (like future jade) or if he hopped in time with the students. either way, we don't see him after he touches akiko, and he does seem to react to it. is it possible that this connection with a "special" person was what he was seeking, and afterward he was potentially depowered, erased, etc? if we assume my previous bullet point was true, this could explain one of the reasons headmaster says he and the faculty are disappointed with akiko in #37- she took away an important tool.
3. i do think the narrative wants you to guess that david might be clarkson and abraham's son. we see in #26 that abraham's kind of a flirt with her. but that makes tom's existence as a character very weird and maybe unnecessary, and also i just find it a little skeezy (not that this is a book that won't be skeezy, but still). if david is the blonde boy at the camp, i wonder if abraham faked david being a biological child of his to hide his true identity from mga or others? he would have had to deceive even gribbs, but depending on when he and gribbs had their toxic yaoi divorce, this could work. we already know from little irina in #46 that abraham has legitimate reverence for clarkson; i could see him being willing to do something radical for her kid.

all that said...

here's my only real theory, one that only occurred to me once i wrote this all down (see, it worked). if we assume david's situation is one of the inciting incidents of morning glories, perhaps we can attach it to another mysterious inciting event of the story: the mistake the "teachers" made before the story began, the one irina referred to in #28. something is fundamentally wrong with david on a space-time level. and maybe that's a symptom of whatever necessitated killing every "special" person they could find and trying to bring them up at mga. depending on how long ago this mistake was made, it could even explain how zoe and others have knowledge of david- this could be something they witnessed in a past life.

but how did david end up all the way back there? i don't have an exact theory of this, but i've been trying to think about this book in terms of themes and recurring patterns on this read, and there's one idea i can immediately think of.

casey blevins went back in time to save her parents. what if her son someday tries to do the same thing for her?

and furthermore, i can't help but think of how mangled david looks. he looks *burned*, specifically. and who's always saying she's going to burn this place to the ground?

damn. you're always building your own prison around here.

## **2.3: EVERYTHING ELSE**

let's make this a q&a.

### **What's up with the streaks in the sky?**

here is- providing i didn't miss something in these notes- all the times we see the streaks:

1. jade's dream in #10, where she sees them with future jade outside. future jade has her focus on them, and notably nine does not think jade is "special" for mentioning them.
2. at the end of #25, after hunter uses the shrine and seemingly allows the time change to be reversed. this only seems to happen in future jade and hunter's time.
3. at the end of #49, when casey arrives at the greenhouse and future jade meets her. future jade panics when she sees them and says headmaster can't know she's there.
4. in #50, there's a single panel of them when headmaster tells casey "i want to be free. i want- all of us to be free. don't you?"

it's quite striking how much of this is associated with future jade. which is a thing i *knew*, but you don't process quite how prominent it is until it's laid out like this. hard to tell if that's on purpose or a coincidence.

i once saw someone propose that this is literally what it looks like to outsiders when someone travels through time. the idea that it's literal people is a little cheesy to me, but it's clear that this is likely some sort of time travel indicator. jade sees them when she's traveled through time mentally, hunter and future jade see them when the other students are going back to their time, and casey and future jade see them in the greenhouse when it's shifting from a weird dilapidated area to a normal lab- and future jade takes it as a sign the headmaster is showing up. so, yeah- i think seeing these tells you that someone is hopping through time. the last one there, in #50, is a weird outlier, however. maybe an indicator that the headmaster's plan to be "free" involves time travel, or maybe that casey's past self did some time traveling back when she and headmaster were friends?

i'll also note they only seem to appear on the mga campus, at least so far. maybe it's an indicator specific to the area/reality bubble/etc.

### **What's the deal with that knife?**

ah, the parent murdering knife. much like the previous question, let's list when we've seen it:

1. ike uses it to kill abraham in #24.
2. gibbs also offers it to ike to kill abraham in #24 (and then ike shoots gibbs instead).
3. irina uses it to kill kseniya in #30.
4. dagney gives it to casey to kill headmaster in #49...and headmaster takes it from her in #50, saying "that's against the rules."

there is, *technically*, a way to make this all work on one timeline. let's assume this belongs to kseniya- maybe taken from mga- and irina takes it with her to abraham's camp. maybe she then takes it to mga, and the staff finds and recovers it after her attempted headmaster murder (where she notably seems to have tried to shoot him instead). dagney gives it to casey, headmaster takes it, and then sometime in the future of the book it gets to abraham. then abraham brings it back in time with him and ike kills him with it. possible.

but i think there's a cleaner answer here, one that is so obvious that i'm mad that it didn't occur to me before this read...and it's that i think that there's more than one of these knives. the knife has a distinctive, patterned handle; i think it could potentially have been used to sacrifice rams/humans/whatever in the past lives of our cast, and now has ritual importance. if that's the case, it's plausible to me that many of the "teachers" had their own knives, likely passed down through the ages as a sign of being in the know, so to speak. headmaster, abraham and dagney could thus all have their own, and while kseniya's backstory is very mysterious, if she and headmaster were formal partners (and mr. n having met her implies to me they were), the knife irina uses on her could have been her own as well.

as for its plot importance, the presence of the knife on abraham's desk in #24 is part of why i think abraham intends for ike to kill him there. i suspect it's in the rules that abraham can only be killed with that knife- hence why gibbs also offers it to ike a year later. i wondered if the headmaster needed to be killed with it too, but there's that "against the rules" line. but maybe that's to do with how and where casey is trying to kill him; ie. he can't be killed in the greenhouse/lab? hard to tell without more info.

but speaking of the rules:

### **What are the rules and do we know any of them?**

i actually think we're dealing with two things here. as future jade explains in #27, there are "rules" to the game that everyone is cosmically playing, and irina broke them during woodrun- hence why it was so important to stop her. these are likely things that can be reality-shattering if they're pulled off, and have to do with the general physics of it all.

but i also think there are *agreements*, things that were decided between the parties in the conflict: abraham and headmaster. those agreements, in my opinion, likely didn't come about



until the two of them had whatever conflict that led to abraham breaking off and starting the camp. it's possible that these are reality-altering too- headmaster is basically a reality warper, after all, so i can see him having attached some sort of contingencies to these that would prevent people from taking action. from what i can tell, i think these are...

1. **the academy can't kill any "special" kids outright.** irina notes this during the fire in #22. kids that *don't* turn out to be special, like that kid gibbs murders in #5, are of course exempt. this is also why mr. n has to try to get irina to kill zoe; he notes that he can't do it himself.
2. **headmaster cannot be killed under certain circumstances.** it's slightly unclear what these are, but my strong inclination is that he can't be killed in the greenhouse(/lab). it would explain why he doesn't seem to ever leave it. dagney giving casey that knife also leads me to believe he has to be killed with it (outside the greenhouse). speaking of which:
3. **abraham can only be killed with that one knife, and he can only be killed by his own son.** already talked about this one a lot, but this is the agreement i'm *most* sure of. it explains why he seemingly sets things up for ike to get angry enough to kill him (only ike can take him out), and it explains why the academy keeps trying to get ike to do it again.
4. **ike gets to stay out of mga.** not a big rule, but it's highlighted in #25, when daramount shows up at abraham's camp. abraham talks a lot about protecting ike, and it likely involved this as part of a deal.
5. **the academy can't actively seek out special kids once they get to the camp.** daramount and abraham basically spell this out in #25. this explains why the academy and clarkson always seem to be rushing to pick kids up at the same time- they're trying to beat each other to the punch.
6. **and vice versa: abraham can't send his kids to the academy.** daramount also says in #25 that abraham rendered previous agreements "null and void" when he sent the truants to the academy, meaning that's breaking a rule. which then means:
7. **if any of these agreements are broken, previous decorum can be thrown out the window.** this is also basically outlined in that abraham and daramount conversation in #25; the truants infiltrated the academy and then irina tried to kill headmaster in the greenhouse, and that gave the academy clearance to seek out the camp and take ike despite previous rules. it's likely that some agreements still remain after this (abraham still needing ike to kill him), likely due to some use of headmaster's powers, but at least rules 4-6 are breakable without any sort of physics nonsense.

as for the *rules*, i think they're a bit more nebulous than this, and also more ancient. i don't think we have enough info to pin them down, but future jade's comparison to a game in #27 is probably the best shot we have. the most obvious thing there is that she expects casey to set things back to normal via the cylinder, and when casey does so in #29, irina is seemingly no longer able to use her abilities- meaning that is normally *not* within the ruleset. as that's not a problem for clarkson outside of mga, my suspicion is that mga is supposed to be a low powers, or *no* powers zone. it's possible that this was one of the above agreements, but it's likely it was

around when headmaster founded the place, likely in order to make things safer and less likely to go topsy-turvy for the students as they grew up and realized their past identities. irina didn't give a shit, of course, and things nearly went terribly wrong.

### **What's with the weird entrance to MGA that we see in #12?**

i wish i had a better answer to this one. before #50, there was a real argument to be made that mga might not be "real" in the simulation sense, and obviously i think there's some sort of unreality happening. but the opening page of #50 confirms that mga is a real location- headmaster wouldn't have had to buy the property otherwise, and he talks about it with the realtor in a way that reflects what we've seen on campus. so i do think it's a real place.

my best guess is that if my theory that mga is a bit of a reality bubble is correct, it needs to be sealed in some way and powered by something- and i'd guess that's nuclear power, based on the hazmat suits and the various layers people have to go through. "how did the headmaster get a hold of nuclear power" can be answered as easily as "headmaster knows mind control, and also he used to be pals with abraham who is rich." mga having its own power source would certainly explain how they could be so cut off from the world.

i still don't get why you seemingly have to go underground to get to mga, though. did they carve the entrance out of the taconics or something?? i don't know. you all can send me your theories here, would love to know what you think on this one.

(by the by...i do still wonder if megan's baldness has anything to do with this. i can't help but think she may have tried to escape and walked into the wrong area without a hazmat suit. on the other hand, that might be the single silliest thing i've proposed in this document.)

### **How was this all supposed to end?**

no idea.

but it'd probably be bittersweet.

### **Can I add a question?**

fuck it, why not. feel free to leave any comments here and i'll add them to this document and give you my take on them. no guarantees, but why not, right?

---

today is july 10th (wow. awful pacing here, folks) and i've finished this morning glories reread! if you got to the end of this document, what the fuck is wrong with you. but thank you.

i had a really great time with this, frankly. i don't expect to ever see more of this book, or for there to be more than like twenty people who ever see this document, but it was fun to chew over a book that was a huge influence on me when i was young. i actually feel like i got more out of it thematically this time than i had on previous reads, which was a nice experience to have.

it's still a really flawed and often messy book, and i'm not sure if i'd ever openly recommend it. i mean, it's probably never gonna finish. but for those of us who did read it while it was releasing, i'm happy we had the experience. i suppose our only mission is to spread the ideas we liked here as little weeds into whatever we create ourselves. that's what you do with all entertaining fiction, right?

if god forbid you want to send me a message outside of this document or just enjoyed this, i'm cropoval on bluesky, ninthprime on tumblr, and basically nowhere else. anyway, i've literally been putting off rereads of lazarus and wicdiv since i started this document and lazarus literally came back as i was writing this, so i've got to get on that. goodnight!