

RAGNAROK

Written by
Thomas S. Evans

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INT. MENTAL WARD - DAY

A mental institution: the sort of place that would have once looked clean and pristine, before decades of bodily fluids, psychotic etchings and scribbles, and slowly ebbing funding washed into the hallways a sort of fundamental dilapidation.

ISAAC (26) - a small, scrawny sort of person - walks down one of these hallways, double-checking on the patients in various cells, taking notes. He looks through one window, where an elderly MAN, hooked up to an oxygen tank and lying on a bed, notices him walk by.

The MAN beckons ISAAC to open the access panel.

ISAAC does so and looks through it at the MAN, who smiles and points at ISAAC.

MAN

The end is coming, you know. Sooner than you think.

EXT. CITY SIDEWALK - DAY

ISAAC is driving home from the mental institution, down a city sidewalk lined with trees.

He approaches a small, dingy video/porno shop, where a gangly, long-haired man - SASUKE (33) - sits on a fold-up chair outside, crushing a cigarette butt into a plate overflowing with older crusty butts as he lights up another one right away.

ISAAC parks his car at a meter and steps out.

SASUKE

Had enough insanity for one day?

ISAAC kneels down besides SASUKE's chair.

ISAAC

There was this old man...he's always been there, but he's never said anything before. Today he just looked at me and said this weird thing.

SASUKE

Oh?

ISAAC

"The end is coming, you know. Sooner than you think." What do you think he's talking about?

SASUKE

I don't know man. Don't you think he's probably talking about himself? You said he's old, right? Probably going to die soon.

ISAAC

Shit...I wonder if I should tell Hildegard...

SASUKE

I can't believe you call her that.

ISAAC

Why not? It's no less weird than calling her 'boss'.

SASUKE

Whatever, man. Don't worry about some old geezer. We're all dead anyway.

ISAAC chuckles awkwardly and shoots Sasuke a nervous look.

INT. ISAAC'S APARTMENT: NIGHT

ISAAC is in his apartment. It is clean, if mildly disorderly - a jacket slung over a chair here, some papers and bills scattered about on a table there.

ISAAC is watching TV, flipping channels. Neverending pandemics, climate change, misinformation and QAnon, NFT millionaires. Everything seems to speak to him of decay and endtimes.

ISAAC settles on a cartoon-and the TV suddenly goes static.

ISAAC gets up and goes over the TV, banging on it a bit, looking behind the box to see if there's a loose cable, when he hears a series of strange sounds from outside.

ISAAC opens the blinds and looks on his windowsill, where he sees a twitching dead bird. He looks up, and sees birds falling out of the sky, smashing into telephone wires, falling dead out of trees.

ISAAC's cellphone rings, vibrating on the table behind him. He pulls back from the window to answer it.

HILDEGAARD

ISAAC? Edmund, the elderly gentleman from B115, has been ringing his buzzer all night. I tried to tell him to wait until tomorrow, but he said he had an 'urgent message' for you. Do you know what this is about?

ISAAC (CONCERNED)

No, I really have no idea...what's the message?

HILDEGAARD

He told me to tell you, "You are starting to see the truth."

ISAAC furrows his brows, closes his eyes.

ISAAC

Hildegard...I think I need to take tomorrow off. I don't have a good excuse, I just, I'm letting you know now I won't be coming in. I'm sorry.

HILDEGAARD

EXCUSE ME? Isaac Medford Myrtle, that is not the way you talk to me. You don't get to deci-

ISAAC hangs up his phone. He walks over to a cabinet and opens it. A bottle of whiskey, mostly unconsumed, lies inside. He pulls it out and pours himself a drink, and walks back over to the window.

EXT. CITY PARK, DAY

ISAAC is trying to enjoy his 'day off', taking a walk, when he sees a bunch of protestors in the park.

A number of riot police appear and begin tear gassing the crowd, restraining them and making arrests.

ISAAC observes for a while. He moves a bit closer to see what they are rioting about.

RIOTER

NO JUSTICE, NO PEACE! THIS COUNTRY
WAS BUILT ON WHITE SUPREMACY!

ISAAC looks on in ambivalence.

ANOTHER RIOTER
 OUR WORLD IS DYING! STOP SELLING OUT
 OUR FUTURES FOR DOOM BUNKERS AND
 SPACE RIDES!

An elderly woman with a tiny dog on a leash sidles up next to ISAAC as he watches and lights up a cigarette.

OLD WOMAN
 Fucking hippies. Hated them in the
 70s, hate them now. You know what
 they're trying to do, you know. New
 World Order, all of that. Trying to
 make us slaves to those commies in
 China and Japan, want us to be damn
 socialists like those fish paste-
 gobbling Swedes.

ISAAC
 Japan is a capitalist nation, they're
 actually one of our closest all-

OLD WOMAN
 Oh, you one of them too? Grow a beard
 and roll yourself some dope, they're
 waiting for you down there.

The old woman walks off.

Isaac watches her leave, then looks back down at the
 protestors. He pulls out a flask and takes a swig, and walks
 down to join the crowd, fist in the air.

INT. MENTAL WARD PLAYROOM - DAY

ISAAC, looking haggard and unkempt, wearing the same clothes
 as the previous day, is in the socializing area of the
 mental institution at lunch. Rather than behaving like an
 orderly, he seems almost more like one of the inmates,
 engaging in their hare-brained theories about the fate of
 the world.

He talks to them about what happened at the rally. About how
 the world is obviously coming to an end. He appears to
 almost be like a cult leader among them, getting them
 excited.

ISAAC whips out the flask again, chugging at it.

Suddenly, a voice bellows out over the PA.

HILDEGAARD
 ISAAC, COME SEE ME IN MY OFFICE
 PLEASE.

ISAAC rolls his eyes and sighs, standing up.

INT. HILDEGAARD'S OFFICE - DAY

ISAAC is seated across Hildegard's desk, which is arranged - grid-like - with all objects perpendicular or parallel to each other. A stack of Post-It notes to one side, the corner of the top Post-It folded at a 45 degree angle to ensure easy grabbing. Every pen situated, just so, in the pen holder. A few favorite pens on the desk radiating out from each side of a notepad on a leather deskpad with the delicacy and precision of silverware at a gourmet French restaurant. A small bowl of sugar-free candies is placed at a far corner of the desk, just out of reach of the visitor's chair, which is bolted to the floor. A variety of 'uplifting motivational posters', smiley faces, and the like frame the hard, wizened face of the woman seated in the chair:
 HILDEGAARD.

HILDEGAARD
 Isaac, I'm concerned about you.

ISAAC shifts uncomfortably in the chair, but tries to make it look like he was straightening his back.

HILDEGAARD
 I know this situation is...abnormal.
 But it doesn't mean you get to act
 differently from any other employee.

ISAAC looks towards the sugar-free candies.

HILDEGAARD (cont'd)
 Normally I would fire anyone who
 pulled the stunt you did yesterday.
 And now, what is all this? The way
 you are talking to the invalids
 simply isn't proper. You didn't even
 wear the correct attire today, which
 baffles me. But drinking? On the job?
 You are truly going too far.

ISAAC
 Invalids? They're rational people!
 Hildegard, stop calling them
 invalids! They-

A flash of anger across Hildegard's face.

HILDEGAARD

DO NOT CALL ME HILDEGAARD. Isaac, you are truly testing my patience. And rational? The invalids? Do I need to keep YOU here for a few days?

ISAAC looks a bit scared, and tries to stand up from the chair. It being bolted, he skids his feet across the floor, and scrambles up.

ISAAC

Are you calling me insane?

HILDEGAARD

I don't know what's going on with you. I don't like not knowing what's going on with you. Yet, I don't think I want to find out.

As HILDEGAARD says these things, ISAAC gets up and starts backing away towards the door.

ISAAC puts his hand on the doorknob.

HILDEGAARD

No. You do not walk out on a conversation with me, young man. You are out of line.

HILDEGAARD pulls open a drawer, containing a large red button. She presses it, and sirens start going off.

ISAAC jiggles the handle. Locked. He looks in terror towards HILDEGAARD.

HILDEGAARD contentedly interlocks her fingers, placing them onto the desk.

Two security personnel emerge from a door on the other side of the office, and approach ISAAC, shaking him to the floor.

ISAAC resists as much as he possibly can, yelling.

HILDEGAARD (CONT'D)

ISAAC

No way. Are you crazy!? LET ME GO!

HILDEGAARD

I truly don't think I am the one who is crazy.

The security personnel look towards Hildegaard.

HILDEGAARD

Do what you must.

A needle is produced by one of the personnel, who squirts a bit of liquid out the top, flicking it to remove air bubbles.

ISAAC looks on in horror.

The man reaches down with the needle, forcibly holding ISAAC's forearm out. He injects ISAAC with the substance.

ISAAC looks towards HILDEGAARD.

ISAAC

MAKE THEM STOP! MOM, MAKE THEM STOP!

HILDEGAARD'S expression remains static.

HILDEGAARD

Don't worry, Isaac. We'll make you healthy again.

The room goes blurry, then dark.

INT. ASYLUM HOLDING BAY - TIME UNCERTAIN

ISAAC awakens to find himself on a cot in a large, bleak room with other inpatients.

Groggily, he tries to get his bearings. He doesn't appear to be familiar with where in the institution he is. Holding his head, he mutters to himself.

ISAAC

There was a place like...this?

ISAAC slides off the cot and walks down a set of stairs where some patients are milling around, watching a TV blaring sports games mounted high on the wall.

None of the inpatients are wearing the white cotton uniforms to which he is accustomed. Everyone appears to just be wearing their normal day clothes.

Suddenly, a voice over the intercom.

INTERCOM VOICE

ATTENTION. LUNCH WILL NOW BE SERVED.
LINE UP IN AN ORDERLY FASHION BY THE
GATE.

ISAAC looks towards where people are getting lined up.

He sees a guard dressed in black with a cart approach the gate. He rushes up to the opening and tries to address the man.

ISAAC

Excuse me, where is this? Am I in the Merrywood Mental Ho-

INTERCOM VOICE

YOU, IN THE WHITE SHIRT. STEP AWAY FROM THE GATE. GO TO THE END OF THE LINE.

ISAAC

What is-

INTERCOM VOICE

IN THE WHITE SHIRT. GO TO THE END OF THE LINE. GO TO THE END OF THE LINE.

ISAAC sees a badge on the guard's chest. He suddenly becomes aware that, in fact, this is a prison.

ISAAC walks to the end of the line. He gets his food, and rushes back to his cot.

ISAAC reaches into his pockets, and finds a pink booking slip. It reads, ".21/.21," and "LOCATION OF ARREST: NORTHFIELD PARK."

INTERCOM VOICE

ISAAC MYRTLE. ISAAC MYRTLE. PLEASE COLLECT YOUR SHEET AND STEP UP TO THE GATE. YOU'RE GOING HOME.

ISAAC walks up to the gate, and is escorted outside by the GUARD.

While checking out, he inquires as to how he ended up there.

GUARD

Oh, yeah, I think you were one of the protestors, right? Looks like you got really drunk and disorderly, they took you in...do you not remember any of it?

ISAAC

What? No, that didn't happen. That can't be right. I was just at work 12 hours ago...

GUARD

Let me see your booking slip. Shit, you blew a .21. You were fucking blitzed. We all have crazy dreams when we're that drunk, man.

ISAAC

Am I still dreaming then?...

GUARD

Don't get all philosophical on me.

The GUARD opens the door for ISAAC, who steps out into a blinding sun.

EXT: SASUKE'S VIDEO STORE - LATER

ISAAC

They're onto me. They're fucking onto me.

SASUKE

Chill out, man...

ISAAC

I was taking a day off, this weird shit was happening to me. I needed some space. I went to some riot or rally I saw in the park. But the shit they were saying...it made perfect sense. Like they knew exactly what was on my mind. And I went down to join them, and then I was working and telling the inmates about it, they actually get it, noone else does, but then Hildegaard drugged me, and I woke up in a prison...I think they let me out in order to track me, they know I'm a subversive force, they... what do you think? What should I do?

SASUKE takes a drag from his cigarette, looking straight ahead.

SASUKE

Maybe you're crazy, man...

ISAAC

Dude, what the hell?

SASUKE

Or maybe you're dead...

ISAAC

Stop.

SASUKE

...and I'm not real...

ISAAC

Dude, stop. Stop talking like that.

SASUKE says nothing, taking a drag of his cigarette and looking off into space.

ISAAC storms off.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

ISAAC is at a bar drinking heavily, and drunkenly telling people about how the world is soon to come to an end. He knows-he's seen the omens.

The other patrons try to keep away from him, as he begins hassling the bartender about his ideas. He asks for another drink.

BARTENDER

We almost never do this at this place, but enough is enough. No more for you. Go home.

ISAAC

Come on! I'm trying to give you information that'll save your fuckin' life, you should be fuckin' grateful, I-

BARTENDER

SECURITY.

A bouncer walks over to where ISAAC is seated, and hustles him out to the sidewalk.

EXT. SIDEWALK IN FRONT OF BAR - NIGHT

ISAAC

YOU FUCKING ASSHOLES! YOU FUCKING ASSHOLES!

ISAAC's screaming attracts the attention of a nearby police officer.

COP
Excuse me, sir, could you step to the
side for a second?

ISAAC sees him and panics.

ISAAC
FUCK! They're tracking me down! YOU
PIGS HAVE NO CHANCE!

ISAAC runs to his car, jumps inside, and fires up the
engine.

The COP speaks into his radio, asking for back-up.

ISAAC drives off in a drunken panic, and after a few blocks,
sirens appear behind him.

ISAAC
Yeah right!

Swerving maniacally through red lights and oncoming traffic,
ISAAC drives randomly through the city trying to shake off
the cops.

ISAAC looks in the rear-view mirror to see how far behind
they are and-

EXT. CITY SIDEWALK - NIGHT

A number of cop cars surround a car, smashed into a
streetlight.

An ambulance pulls up over the scratchy sounds of multiple
police radios.

RADIO
We're on Springfield Avenue, pursuant
to the runaway driver. Chase has come
to a close, driver has crashed into a
streetlamp. No other cars involved.
Driver injuries appear fatal.
Ambulance has just arrived, but
driver vitals are flat. We beli-

FADE TO BLACK