

It's hard to believe we're nearly at the end of this series, and I still barely have an idea of what's going on. It's a testament to Spencer's masterful storytelling, of course, but it's also a humbling experience for a semi-professional analyst of fiction. By the same token, it's that much more rewarding when you find your educated guesses are on the right track after all. Bodies can thus be a cerebral rollercoaster ride, disappointing one well-crafted theory and supporting another in the same issue—occasionally at the same time. It's only fair to use myself as an example. Last issue, I was totally, smugly confident that Maplewood was once the preppy Belwood, KYAL member and radical scientist. Commenter AHollister thought otherwise, pointing to Belwood's daughter, Margaret Mae, as the likelier identity for Maplewood.* Well, laugh it up, AHollister; you were right, and I am properly chagrined by my wrongness. At the same time, however, my basic assumption that Maplewood was responsible for the psychologically devastated planet stands. I was even right about the Pulse-Wave being the product of KYAL. It's just that those two parts don't fit together quite the way I imagined. Oh, well. What really matters anyway is the Pulse-Wave was designed "to bring peace to the world," according to Maplewood's mother. How she planned to do that with a device that turned people's brains to mush—"fondue," she said—is unclear, but you suspect she had certain individuals in mind as targets. She's as dismissive of experimenting on humans as Maplewood's appalled. The mother writes them off as terrorists; the daughter demands to know who gets to classify them as such. That question ties neatly into the closest thing Bodies has to an overarching theme: the way humans ostracize and vilify each other. John Bull forces Charles to "see" the problem, and in so doing finally reveals what his and all our other investigators' purpose is supposed to be: "Someone has BROKEN humanity; taken the fragile toy of love and hope and desire that KNOWS we are loved and smashed it to the wall in an idiot child tantrum. Ten million marching elegant, knee-length boots are stomping the FRAGMENTS into a billion grains of crystal DUST. The dust will blow across continents and BLIND us all to love and the world will never see. The German airman has the means to slow their lethal STEP, to trip its progress in the final mile; confess and let the airman live—mend the beautiful, imperfect, WONDROUS toy." Interestingly, Bull considers the Nazi Endlösung as the symptom of a larger calamity, one that "Someone" caused. The German airman who revealed his plan to defect, presumably in a crisis of conscience, represents the one person whose awareness of everyone's humanity isn't crushed by his country's collective malice. That resilience should be preserved, not executed, and Charles is charged with making that call. You'd be worried if it wasn't for the lingering effects of Bull shooting Charles' own eyes directly into his brain, making him see himself in every person he encounters. Charles isn't the only one with a clear mission. Wait—yes he is. Because whatever it is Edmond's supposed to do, it's hardly clear. While Barber's turn on Shahara by order of the Order of Mithras suggests that the cult is up to no good, Edmond's Order is more ambiguous in its motives. Barber's willingness to sleep with Shahara and Ladbroke's to have the entire Order "turn queer in [Edmond's] honour" show that the Order doesn't hate any particular group so much as use such hatred for its own purposes. What those purposes are, the Order keeps mum, even after revealing "Jack the Ripper," a man with tentacles from the torso down,** in a jar. Once again, Charles' surreal experiences with Bull give Winslade the most abstract and thus memorable imagery to work with. Bull loading Charles' eyes into a revolver and shooting them into his brain would be disorienting and strange no matter the artist, but Winslade makes the symbolism of the sequence clear even as it advances the plot by one huge leap. Our other artists do very well for themselves, however, each transitioning their work smoothly to the next level of tension as the story enters its final phase. Some Musings:* I still plan to call her Maplewood, though. More

fun that way.** The male Ursula (of Little Mermaid fame) springs to mind.- Oh, Edmond, you sad romantic. You think one night of sex with a mysterious stranger is love?The post Bodies #7 appeared first on Weekly Comic Book Review.

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