

The Wanderer, Book 1

by

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Chapter 1 – Like Clockwork

PAGE 1

PANEL 1

Medium shot. JASON RHODES (17, shaggy blond hair, green eyes, shirtless, thin) swims through rough waves against the Atlantic Ocean. The stars are out in full force above him.

A bright white light is shining against his face, and in the right wall of the panel we can barely make out the edge of a glowing white sphere. He's reaching for it.

ALANNAH
(Off-panel)
Jason, wait!!

PANEL 2

Jason swimming, but it's going backward. He's getting further from the sphere. We see this through the waves' motions, his stroke progress, etc.

SAM
(Off-panel)
I don't know!

PANEL 3

Same idea. Jason is swimming further back.

ALANNAH
(Off-panel)
Sam, why is he acting like this?!

PAGE 2

PANEL 1

Close up. It's 40 years later, and Jason wakes up in dry sand. He looks terrified, but still 17 years old.

He's also soaking wet.

GUARD #1
(Off-panel)
He's coming to, sir.

PANEL 2

Medium shot. Jason gets up on his hands and knees, and looks off panel in fear. We can't see his full torso, but he is totally naked.

We can also see that there is a major sea wall behind him, with waves crashing just behind it. It's a sunny day out.

BENTLEY
(Off-panel)
Uh-huh. I see that.

GUARD #2
(Off-panel)
All-Father, subject has gained consciousness, over.

GUARD #1
(Off-panel)
Sir, do we engage?

PANEL 3

Wide shot. Jason sits up on his knees and looks toward us/at the shadows before him. He's much more toned, somehow...

In the foreground, we see the shadows of guns facing his direction, and a silhouette in the center, his arms crossed.

We can also see a small but noticeable hole bore in the center of his chest, by the sternum. There are jagged scars sprawling from it across his chest. At the center sits a bright white orb, smaller than a grain of sand (but you know, still visible via glow/comic logic).

PANEL 4

Detail shot on the orb. Same description as above, only now it seems to almost rattle in the perfectly fit chest cavity its bore into Jason.

BENTLEY
(Off-panel)
I wouldn't.

PAGE 3

PANEL 1

Medium shot. Jason hears something over his shoulder and darts his head to the side.

SAM
(Off-panel)
JASON!

PANEL 2

40 years ago. Jason's looking over his shoulder at us, standing by the tip of a jetty.

Wave crash against the jetty, and the stars take up more of the panel than the sea.

Blurred in the background, we see the sphere out in the water.

JASON

Sam...?

PANEL 3

Wide shot. We see a crowd of people gathered on the beach, all of them looking out with a mix of concern and fascination. It looks like a beach party was going on (volleyball net, fire pit, chairs, coolers, etc.).

SAM (18, short, black hair, fit) is starting to make his way across the jetty, a hand outstretched telling Jason to wait. ALANNAH (18, dirty blonde hair, brown eyes) is on the jetty too, behind him.

SAM

Don't go near it, dude!

PANEL 4

Detail shot on Sam's outstretched hand. Now there's a half-smoked joint in it, as if in offering.

SAM

(Off-panel)

STOP!!

PANEL 5

Same shot. Now Jason's hand comes into frame to grab the joint.

SAM

(Off-panel)

Stop hogging it, dude.

PAGE 4PANEL 1

Wide shot. Jason and Sam are in the beach parking lot (earlier), sitting on the gravel against the car. They share a joint.

Jason is wearing a red "WASHINGTON HIGH SWIM TEAM" hoodie, and Sam has a striped gray sweater on. Jason looks confused, and Sam laughs at him.

JASON
Huh...? No, I'm not high.

PANEL 2

Medium shot on Jason. He looks like he doesn't know where he is.

SAM
(Off-panel)
Are you seriously high al—?
(New-bubble)
How did you know I was about to say that?
Maybe I'm high already...

BENTLEY
(Off-panel)
Jason Chodes...

PANEL 3

Medium shot. We're in the present (40 years later). XANDER BENTLEY (tall, stocky, short salt-and-pepper hair, scar on his chin) stands in a suit with a "U.S.B." insignia on the chest pocket.

He looks down at Jason (us) with his hands on his hips and a grin. But it also looks like there are tears in his eyes.

BENTLEY
I was actually starting

PANEL 4

Same shot. 40 years ago. Xander Bentley is standing by a volleyball net in the same position. He's a young jock, with brown hair and the same chin scar.

BENTLEY
to hope you wouldn't show.

PAGE 5

PANEL 1

40 years ago. Jason stands on the beach with Sam beside him, and he still looks lost.

JASON
You're so old...?

PANEL 2

Overhead shot. We see the party on the beach. There's a volleyball game about to start. Bentley has his arms stretched out before him, toward Jason.

BENTLEY
Well kid, it's been 40

PANEL 3

Same shot. Now in the present. The teenagers are replaced with guards, all holding guns. Bentley and Jason are in the same respective positions.

BENTLEY
talking about, Chodes? They give you
shock therapy in juvie?

PANEL 4

Medium shot on half of Jason's face 40 years ago. A volleyball is tossed toward his head and hits it, warping his hair/face to the side.

TEEN #1
(Off-panel)
Think fast!

PANEL 5

Same shot, other half and in the present. On the other side of his head, a black ball of goo (same size as a beach ball) it thrust toward him.

Same kind of stuff that took out Mr. Incredible in the movie.

GUARD #1
(Off-panel)
Orders to neutralize!

PAGE 6PANEL 1

Wide shot. Present. Bentley leaps forward, his arms out, telling all the guards who now shoot their goo guns to cease fire. He looks around angrily.

BENTLEY
Stop, stop, stop!! You're just going to
aggravate him!

PANEL 2

Medium shot. Bentley grabs one of the guards by the straps of his combat vest and barks in his face.

BENTLEY
Do you have any idea what's in his chest?!

PANEL 3

Detail shot. A comms piece in Bentley's ear buzzes with Director Bell's voice.

BELL
(Off-panel/Comms)
Bentley, I gave the order. We don't know what's come out the other side of the Bridge. That may just look like Jason Rhodes.

PANEL 4

Wide shot. We see the thick goo balls coating Jason's body. So it seems...

There are a few grains of sand that start floating up around him.

BENTLEY
(Off-panel)
Sir, it doesn't matter. It's in his chest.

PANEL 5

Detail shot. We see the very, very thin gap between a ball and the side of Jason's head. They aren't touching. In fact, it looks like some force is keeping them at bay.

PAGE 7

NOTE: low-density is shown via light pen marks and wavy/bleeding colors around an affected character/object, as well as features (hair floating/wavy, e.g.). High-density is shown via thick pen marks and sharply defined features, as well as in-world details (hair matted down, e.g.)

PANEL 1

Splash page. Jason sends all the goo balls flying back where they came from, lowering his density significantly and raising theirs.

A ball of goo thankfully covers Jason's genitals as it is sent flying toward the guards.

Jason's features are low-density (light marks and bleeding textures), and his eyes are radiating a deep blue flame.

The guards (and Bentley) duck for cover as the balls are sent flying toward them.

The walls behind Jason crack.

PAGE 8

PANEL 1

Past. Jason raises his arm for a volley on the beach.

PANEL 2

Further past, same angle. Jason is wearing a juvenile detention jumpsuit and swings down a punch on someone else.

PANEL 3

Present, same angle. Jason's open palm juts forward (thereby completing the arm arch from panels 1 and 2) and a guard is seemingly pulled into it. Jason is holding him by the vest.

Now Jason's details are high-density (thick lines/sharp features, hair matted down against his head).

Grains of sand float in the air, glittering.

PAGE 9

PANEL 1

Wide shot. Jason increases his density so much that a crater forms around him. The guard is being tugged down, his clothes tearing off of him, and an intense amount of g's pulling his skin down.

PANEL 2

Wide shot. Other guards come rushing onto the beach, as do drones. They keep their distance but raise their weapons.

Bentley, who has two goo balls entrapping his legs to the ground, leans back to try and stop them.

BENTLEY
Don't engage! Do not—!

PANEL 3

Overhead shot. The crater grows dramatically in size, dragging everyone in the immediate area to the ground, and crashing the drones.

PANEL 4

Medium shot. Bentley is being pressed hard against the ground. He leans into his ear comm, which has cracked and fallen into the sand.

He speaks with a lot of difficulty, like his teeth are clenched.

BENTLEY
Call... her... in...!

PANEL 5

Wide shot. Jason drops the guard to the ground and begins to float into the air.

PAGE 10PANEL 1

Wide shot. From behind, we see Jason stare out at the ocean as he floats above the sea wall. He looks sad, but his eyes still flame.

PANEL 2

Past. Same shot. Jason sits by the sand looking up at the canvas of stars with Alannah. His head is resting on her shoulder, and she's got an arm wrapped around him.

JASON
It's coming.

PANEL 3

Medium shot. Alannah (background) looks over at Jason (foreground, blurred). She looks concerned.

ALANNAH
Are you sure you didn't take something weird before the party, Jason? You've been acting... not you.

PANEL 4

Opposite shot (Jason in background now). His eyes flame blue like in the present and he's naked, but this is obviously a trick of the mind/not really happening. He looks like he's thinking, but he is looking at Alannah.

JASON

It can't be Xander. But he has the scar... Scars aren't genetic, are they?

PANEL 5

Close up. Alannah grabs Jason's face and kisses him, and suddenly he looks like he did then—red hoodie, normal eyes, etc.

His eyes are open in shock. Alannah's are closed.

PAGE 11PANEL 1

Wide shot. Facing the two of them now (not the water) they pull apart. Jason is himself again, albeit in shock.

ALANNAH

Better?

JASON

Um... was that consensual?

PANEL 2

Medium shot. Alannah looks at Jason with concern.

PANEL 3

Medium shot. Jason looks at Alannah with a grin.

PANEL 4

Wide shot. Alannah shoves him on the shoulder.

ALANNAH

You're better, you dick.

JASON

I'm just saying, I might have to contact Officer Clements and let him know.

(New bubble)

Finally, I'm the victim of a crime.

ALANNAH

Shut up!

PANEL 5

Same shot. They both look more serious now. Considering something...

PAGES 12 + 13

PANEL 1

Spread page. Alannah and Jason start heavily making out with each other, falling onto the sand and clattering beer cans as the high school (see Hull High School for reference) sits directly behind them, just beyond on the shore.

PAGE 14

PANEL 1

Wide shot. Sam laughs with some other people, drinking and smoking, as he walks along the sand—unknowingly toward Jason and Alannah.

We can hear/see sounds of... pleasure, taking place at the bottom of the panel/where he's headed.

PANEL 2

Same shot. Sam is a little closer now, and he looks away from the conversation and directly ahead of him. He, and everyone else, get very red in the face.

The noises continue.

PANEL 3

Same shot. Everyone bursts into laughter. It's not necessarily at Jason and Alannah, more at catching them in the act.

PANEL 4

Same shot. Everyone is still laughing, but Sam is making the "shh" gesture and getting everyone to walk back the way they came.

PAGE 15

PANEL 1

Wide shot. Jason and Alannah now lay under a blanket, and Alannah is wearing Jason's hoodie. They look content, and they're cuddling.

A ray of light passes over them.

SAM
(Off-panel)
So... what the hell was that about?

PANEL 2

Wide shot. Alannah covers herself even more with the blanket, revealing Jason is in a pair of boxers only. He looks utterly surprised, and a bit betrayed.

Sam stands there with his phone's flashlight on, lighting them up.

JASON
Yo!

ALANNAH
Sam, you freaking pervert!

SAM
I know I said we weren't together
anymore, J, but you moved in on my girl
kinda fast.

PANEL 3

Medium shot on Jason and Alannah. They're both embarrassed, a little drunk, a little high. But they're not too ashamed of it.

They look up and to the side, at Sam.

JASON
You dated for three months. I wasn't even
gone those three months.

ALANNAH
Also "your girl" can date whoever she
wants.

PANEL 4

Wide shot. Sam sits down next to them, sighing. They all look a little more at ease.

Jason does toss a little sand toward Sam, though.

SAM
Guys, chill. I'm screwing with you.
(New bubble)
You can do whatever you want. I'm just
happy you're back, J.

JASON
Me too. Sucks I have to repeat senior
year, but...

SAM
I won't be far. You can stay at my dorm
whenever.

PAGE 16

PANEL 1

Profile shot. With Sam in the foreground, then Jason, and then Alannah in the back, we see them all stare out at the sea/stars. They look happy.

PANEL 2

Detail shot of the waves crashing against the shore. It's high tide.

SAM
(Off-panel)
Also, not to ruin the vibe... Did you
take something, Jason? Like, before I
picked you up?

PANEL 3

We see the star-scape laid out above the ocean. There's a shooting star passing by. So it seems...

JASON
(Off-panel)
No? Why do you keep asking?

ALANNAH
(Off-panel)
It's not just Sam, Jason. You have been
acting sort of... spacey. Like you're on
something. I've asked you a few times. Do
you not remember?

PAGE 17

PANEL 1

Medium shot on Jason. He looks at Alannah (off-panel) with a soft smile. He's trying to reassure her.

But a blindingly bright, white light comes from the sky, caking him in it.

JASON

I'm here. I'm me. Nothing out of the

PANEL 2

Same shot, only now Jason (still caked in light) is sitting on a bench in a school pool room. Aquamarine tiles line the wall behind him, and he's got a swim cap on.

Jason is the only thing caked in light. The world around him is otherwise normal.

JASON

ordinary.

PANEL 3

Establishing shot. We see the school pool more clearly now. There are two diving board heights, multiple lanes, and students in red and white bathing suits doing laps/diving in.

There are also banners of the school swim meets that were won in the past, and a panther (school mascot) painted on the wall.

Jason sits alone on the bench in the center of the panel.

PANEL 4

Wide shot. We see a female student on the high dive getting ready to jump, but their ankle rolls on the edge of the board.

She cries out, looking shocked and falling at an odd angle. In a series of after-images, we see her fall, hit her head on the lower diving board, and then hit the water.

PANEL 5

Medium shot. Jason stands from the bench. His eyes are flaming blue again, but his swim cap is still on.

ALANNAH

(Off-panel)

I don't know...

PANEL 1

Back on the beach. Wide shot. Jason is standing now, looking out toward the water. He's in a swim cap and speedo, but his eyes are not flaming.

Sam and Alannah are standing beside him, in their normal clothes.

SAM
What was that?!

PANEL 2

Close up on Jason. One eye is flaming blue, and the other is not. He looks concerned, yet determined.

JASON
I have to help her.

PANEL 3

Wide shot. Jason takes off running toward the jetty, and Sam and Alannah take off after him.

The rest of the party, including Xander Bentley, come following down the beach (right of panel).

SAM
What—? Jason!

PANEL 4

Detail shot. As the crash of the "falling star" settles, we see a white sphere floating in the ocean, with waves being drawn to it, breaking around it.

PANEL 5

Detail shot. The white swim cap of the girl who dived is floating in the pool (on her head) while the rest of her is underwater.

PAGE 19PANEL 1

Wide shot. Jason is running across the side of the pool, getting ready to jump in.

People stand all around him/sitting in the water, dressed as normal swim students. But they all talk like the guards in the present day.

STUDENT #1
Density returning to normal, All-Father,.

STUDENT #2
Headquarters looks secure from the exterior. Confirm interior stability?

STUDENT #3
We need to get the kid down before he breaks his damn legs...

STUDENT #4
V.I.P. is *en route*, sir.

STUDENT #5
"Big Gun" is available for drop-in, sir.

PANEL 2

Jason dives into the swimming pool, but he is only in his boxers (beach attire).

PANEL 3

Back on the beach, Sam and Alannah reach the end of the jetty, looking horrified. Jason has already jumped off.

Xander Bentley is running up behind them, shouting.

SAM
Jesus Christ....!

XANDER
Did Chodes just jump in?! He's gonna get himself killed!

PANEL 4

Jason breaches the pool with the girl, and she gasps for air. She's bleeding from her temple.

PANEL 5

Inside the sphere resting on the ocean, we look out toward the beach. Toward Jason, swimming over.

PAGE 20

PANEL 1

Wide shot. Jason lays the girl down on the ground beside the pool. She's surrounded by a puddle, and he holds his hands out gently. He's naked here.

JASON
You okay

PANEL 2

Same shot, different time. Now it's a beetle that Jason's pulled out of another pool, someplace else. It's similarly surrounded by a puddle, albeit smaller. He's in his swim cap and speedo, here.

JASON
little guy?

PANEL 3

Inside the sphere again, watching as Jason gets closer. A three-clawed hand (a la *District 9*) reaches limply toward Jason, still a ways away.

PANEL 4

Alannah grips onto Sam, on the jetty. She's crying. He looks scared. Xander watches with his hands running through his hair in disbelief.

XANDER
Has he lost his mind?!

SAM
I don't know...

PAGE 21

PANEL 1

Splash page. Alannah leans forward, tears streaming down her face, and screams Jason's name. But we don't see any text.

It's a mute page, because...

PAGE 22

PANEL 1

Splash page. 40 years later. We're in the present again, and Jason is floating in the air, his eyes flaming blue, his features low-density. He looks like he just saw a ghost.

As if it came from mid-air, we see...

ALANNAH
JASON!!

PAGE 23PANEL 1

Wide shot. In the distance, in the parking lot above the rocky incline before the shore, we see figures standing before a car with open doors.

It looks like a teenage girl and her mother are there. So is an slim, older man.

We can't make out the finer details.

PANEL 2

Medium shot. Jason's eyes still flame, but it's beginning to fade. He looks hopeful.

JASON

Alannah?

PANEL 3

Fifty-fifty shot. On the lower left, we see the figures a bit more clearly, looking up and to the right at Jason as he floats down toward them—some floating sand still hides his genitals.

The figures are a 58 year-old woman, an 18 year-old girl (with Alannah's exact look, but Sam's hair color), and an older man in a suit, with almost no hair.

PANEL 4

In the foreground (blurred) is Jason's foot, just a few feet above the others. In the background are the three people.

The older woman looks completely in awe, her eyes running with tears. The teenager is shocked, blushing. The old man is stoic.

PANEL 5

Fifty-fifty shot. Jason lands at the teenager's feet and faces her. He looks calm, and his eyes are almost back to normal.

She looks shocked, still.

JASON

Ana, I-I don't... I don't know what's going on. I don't know... I don't know where I am! Please... can we—

ALANNAH

(Off-panel)

Jason!

PAGE 24PANEL 1

Wide shot. The mother, ALANNAH (58, graying blonde hair, plus-sized, wrinkles), is crying, but extends a hand toward Jason.

MAYA (18, black hair, young Alannah's features) crosses her arms and looks away.

DIRECTOR BELL (68, slim, shorter, balding) puts a hand to his comm link and leans his head to the side, whispering into it.

ALANNAH
That's my daughter, Maya. I'm Alannah.

PANEL 2

Close up on Jason. He can't believe it. A nervous smile cracks across half his face.

JASON
W...What?

PANEL 3

Close up on Alannah. The years have been hard on her. She looks devastated. Exhausted. Worn.

PANEL 4

Medium shot on Bentley. He climbs the rock incline to the parking lot and taps his comm link as well.

He's also dusting the sand off his suit.

BENTLEY
Call in the Big Gun. This is the kid.
We're not taking any more chances.

PAGE 25PANEL 1

Wide shot. Jason backs up, his hands out to keep the others at bay (not as an attack, but a normal defensive gesture). He's looking at Maya.

JASON
This isn't... Alannah, come on. Please.

PANEL 2

Medium shot on Maya. She still has her arms crossed, but glances at Jason.

MAYA
You have no idea what you did... asshole.

PANEL 3

Medium shot on Jason. He's glancing around nervously.

ALANNAH
(Off-panel)
Maya!

JASON
(Whispers)
No no no no no no...

PANEL 4

Detail shot. The white orb in his chest is jittering again.

JASON
(Off-panel)
No, this isn't... This is a dream. This
is a bad dream!

PANEL 5

Detail shot. Jason's eyes ignite again, and his features go high-density. He squints them in pain, anger, loss. We see tears burn away at the ducts.

JASON
Wake me up. Wake me up!

PAGE 26PANEL 1

Wide shot. Bentley rushes across the parking lot to shield Alannah and Maya, as Bell leans over to do the same.

Jason begins to crack the asphalt beneath his feet, denting it into the ground.

ALANNAH
Jason—!

PANEL 2

In a gruesome close up on Jason's face, we see the veins sticking out of his forehead, the tendons in his neck stretching, the snot bubbling in his nose and the tears sizzling by his flaming eyes as he screams his lungs out.

His features are so sharp and lines so thick, it looks violent.

JASON

WAKE ME UP!!

PANEL 3

Same shot, but now the intensity is all gone. And, there are two, sharp-nailed, green fingers pressed against Jason's forehead. They're coming from someone else...

PANEL 4

Detail shot. A set of two yellow-and-orange eyes stare at us. The skin around them is green, and the eye slits are vertical. Reptilian in nature.

MALEK

Very well.

PAGE 27PANEL 1

Detail shot on Jason's eye. The flames are immediately extinguished, and we see his usual green iris.

PANEL 2

POV. Jason as a baby, holding up his hands toward two figures whose faces are blocked by a cradle cover. They wave back at him.

MOM

Hi my baby! Hi my baby!

PANEL 3

POV. Jason stands at his great uncle's doorstep, and the old man looks down at him with a sympathetic face.

He has one hand on the back of his neck, while the other signs.

UNCLE VINNY

(Sign language)

Your room is ready. I hope it's like your old room.

PANEL 4

POV. Jason in elementary school, looking across his desk at a young Sam, next to him. Sam smiles.

SAM
Hi! Do you like dinosaurs?

PANEL 5

POV. Jason holding bags of candy at the doorway to a gas station, looking back at the clerk who points at him angrily.

CLERK
Hey!! You have to pay for those!

PAGES 28 + 29PANEL 1

Spread page. In a series of images, we see Jason's life flash before his eyes. From stealing, to getting into fights, to playing video games, to Christmas's and basement parties and skating and swimming and getting arrested and being in juvie.

We also see, more on Page 29 than 28, the events of the night at the beach playing out again. And we see Jason swimming toward the glowing white sphere.

MALEK
(Off-panel)
When you went toward the Bridge, your perception of linear time was warped along with the space you inhabited.
(New bubble)
I'm sure this is very confusing. You've been gone a very, very long time from the linear world.
(New bubble)
And for you, no time at all.
(New bubble)
I'm simply catching you up to speed.

PAGE 30PANEL 1

Same as Page 1, only now we're going in reverse order.

Page 1, Panel 3 here.

MALEK
You're going to need to catch up fairly quickly.

PANEL 2

Page 1, Panel 2

MALEK

I hate to say it, but there's a war going on.

PANEL 3

Page 1, Panel 1.

MALEK

And you, the Wanderer, have been missing for 40 years.

END OF CHAPTER ONE.