


# If There Be Thorns

*V.C. Andrews*

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**If There Be Thorns** V.C. Andrews

**Out of the ashes of evil Chris and Cathy made such a loving home for their splendid children...**

Fourteen-year-old Jory was so handsome, so gentle. And Bart had such a dazzling imagination for a nine year old.

Then the lights came on in the abandoned house next door. Soon the Old Lady in Black was there, watching their home with prying eyes, guarded by her strange old butler. Soon the shrouded woman had Bart over for cookies and ice cream and asked him to call her "Grandmother."

And soon Bart's transformation began...

A transformation that sprang from "the book of secrets" the gaunt old butler had given him... a transformation fed by the hint of terrible things about his mother and father... a transformation that led him into shocking acts of violence, self-destruction and perversity.

And now while this little boy trembles on the edge of madness, his anguished parents, his helpless brother, an obsessed old woman and the vengeful, powerful butler await the climax to a horror that flowered in an attic long ago, a horror whose thorns are still wet with blood, still tipped with fire....

## If There Be Thorns Details

Date : Published November 28th 1981 by Pocket (first published 1981)

ISBN : 9780671729455

Author : V.C. Andrews

Format : Paperback 374 pages

Genre : Fiction, Horror, Young Adult

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## From Reader Review If There Be Thorns for online ebook

### Inés Izal says

Eramos pocos, y parió la abuela.  
(*Nunca mejor dicho*)

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### Arlette Corona alejandre says

\*3.5\*

Sinceramente no sé como sentirme con respecto al libro.  
De verdad.  
Es oscuro de una manera diferente a los otros dos.  
La familia francamente esta enferma.

Mi único rayito de luz es Jory.  
Cathy yo siempre te voy a apoyar con Chris.  
BART... Bueno.... maldito niño, ojalá te mueras

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### James says

#### **Book Review**

3+ of 5 stars to If There Be Thorns, the third book in the "Dollanganger" series written in 1981 by V.C. Andrews. After the first two books, I didn't think you could keep the thrills and suspense going in this series, mostly because one family can only endure so much torture over the years. Surprisingly, I actually found I liked a large part of this book; however, it was a bit excessive and drawn out at times. The story, told from the perspective of Cathy and Chris' kids, continues the saga of the torture from a wicked grandmother and mother, combining religious beliefs and family values. And it's got a Gothic ending to keep readers enthralled the the concept of "payback's a bitch!"

I love the series because it pushes the envelope. This one explores the theme of adoption, when two half brothers explore and learn who their fathers were and who they thought they were. Cathy and Chris are siblings, yet they are in a relationship and raising two kids. Jory and Bart are examples of good and bad growing up in a loving household, but tortured by the past. When Cathy and Chris' mom re-enters the picture, you know something bad is gonna go down. And it takes one of the boys on a trail of vengeance. Mostly unrealistic, the books take you on a little jaunt into the wild imaginations of a tortured family who have done nothing but brought on their own destruction. Yes, some of them are innocent; some cross a line not really intending to harm anyone else. Others are truly out to instill pain, and some are just ill. Finding the balance among the different family members is good entertainment. There really aren't any lessons in these books... just pure drama!

#### **About Me**

For those new to me or my reviews... here's the scoop: I read A LOT. I write A LOT. And now I blog A

LOT. First the book review goes on Goodreads, and then I send it on over to my WordPress blog at <https://thisismytruthnow.com>, where you'll also find TV & Film reviews, the revealing and introspective 365 Daily Challenge and lots of blogging about places I've visited all over the world. And you can find all my social media profiles to get the details on the who/what/when/where and my pictures. Leave a comment and let me know what you think. Vote in the poll and ratings. Thanks for stopping by. *Note:* All written content is my original creation and copyrighted to me, but the graphics and images were linked from other sites and belong to them. Many thanks to their original creators.

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## Mizuki says

I made a V. C. Andrews' meme jpg today!

(Link: <https://vampirekiki.deviantart.com/ar...>)

Too bad I can't make a colored version.

I always think the Dollanganger series and *My Sweet Audrina* are Ms. Andrews' best works, still I was afraid I wouldn't enjoy *If There Be Thorns* much because the summary makes the story sound so over-the-top melodramatic.

However, I'm delighted to find I enjoy the story, though the story is still quite melodramatic (you can't escape melodramas when you're reading Ms. Andrews' works) but it is a melodrama exercised in a good way, the part I like best is how the brothers react to their parents' scandalous past and secrets after they slowly learn those secrets. 4 stars.

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## Erika Suarez says

Estos libros siguen teniendo la capacidad de trumatizarme. Que locura! Increíble como una mala decisión en el pasado puede afectar a generaciones venideras y peor como las personas viven en engañadas y convencidas de que todo estará bien cuando todo se cae por su propio peso.

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## Alice Lee says

I read through about 70% of this book and finally gave up, feeling my brain starting to daze and hurt, like I was having a mental diarrhea from stuffing my face with too much VC Andrews in too short of a time. Teaches me to read so much garbage.

This book was nowhere near as consuming as the first two. The writing is about the same - bad, but at least not abysmal, and is easy to read. But none of the characters were compelling; I tried and tried to like Bart, since he's the only character that has any hope of capturing my interest and sympathy, but Andrews's treatment of him didn't help at all. His narrative was dry and, honestly, mildly retarded. Anyway, I finally felt my brain starting to vomit and decided I had to quit before my brain cells died of malnourishment. Still I wanted to know what happens; thank god for Wikipedia. For the rest of the series, I simply read the plot

summaries.

That said, a part of me wish I'd read the last book, which focuses on the grandmother - the most interesting character in the first book. I had always suspected that she had a compelling backstory, and it was good to finally know what happened to her.

All in all, the first book was good, the second book was a true page-turner, and the third book failed to keep my interest, as much as I hate to give up a book I was so close to finishing. I don't think I'd read VC Andrews again, but I did really enjoy most of what I read.

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### **Lacie ♥ says**

I adored this book more than I had the previous two. It added another layer to everything, reflecting how the "saints" Cather and Chris were viewed from other people. It showed us how everything looks when you're not looking at it through their perspectives, and I know that this book wouldn't have been as good had Catherine continued to tell it ( not just because it wouldn't make sense then either. )

It explored the subject of childhood sociopathy, and has an overall darker tone than the previous novels do. Animals being slaughtered left and right, mother and daughter being trapped to be lit aflame, an elder man preaching evil to a young boy, and the spiteful "devil's issue" chants returning... This book brings back the glory of the first and much more, I'll go out on a limb here and say this is the closest this series has gotten so far to being a horror story, which I happen to love about it.

Returning to a childhood narration was also great, as we again get to see things through growing, trusting, eyes. We also see the development of a primary antagonist of the first book. This time, she isn't so much of a villain. We get to see the return of Corrine and see her at the kindest we have yet. And eventually, we see her earn forgiveness. I loved her character in this book, despite loathing her in the first, she rises to become the hero her children needed back then.

All in all, I LOVED this book. Now there were plot holes - lots of questions unanswered, lots of threads hanging, and a lot of odd things happening. To name a few -

1. When Chris and Cathy took the kids to visit Marisha, did she never ask about Paul in front of the kids? Certainly she would have asked how their "dad" was doing which would have been odd to ask in front of Chris. She's certainly nosy enough, proven by the former novel as well as just her quick arrival. Doesn't make sense at all.

2. Emma. She was around in the second book and knew very well of who Chris was, but she continues working with them. Is she just stupid? Does she not understand what's going on? Or does she just not care?

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### **Christian Nava says**

**Lo bueno:**

Hay una sensación de progreso en el personaje de Cathy, quien pasa a un papel secundario en esta entrega de la saga (¡Gracias a Dios!); por otra parte, hay uno que otro aspecto redimible en cómo se reflejan las distintas aristas del amor en la narrativa.

**Lo malo:**

Me parece una novela difícil de leer y de ejecución torpe. Los múltiples narradores no ayudaron mucho tampoco. Y bueno, como ya he dicho antes, Cathy es un personaje hermosamente construido, pero terriblemente detestable. De hecho, V.C. Andrews solo pareciera poder generar empatía a través de la miseria. Si los personajes no sufren vejaciones, entonces se caen sus fachas para revelar que son tanto o más terribles que los antagonistas.

**Lo cierto:**

El tercer libro de la Serie *Dollanganger* fue una lucha. Yo procuro terminar las sagas que comienzo, así que llegar a la última página era más un tema de compromiso que interés verdadero. Varios de mis amigos lo disfrutaron, pero yo no lo disfruté. No pienso seguir con esta saga. Como todo lo relacionado con el arte, mi apreciación es subjetiva, pero me parece que es una novela que fracasa en cumplir su cometido. Verdicto... ¡No la recomiendo!

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**W says**

The third book in the Dollanger series. I always promise myself that if there is a series of books, i will read them all, no exception. There is one more book in the series, but i think i will take a break from incest and rape. Virginia Andrews obviously knew how to turn something that is obviously revolting into some kind of love story. No matter how bad your childhood was, no excuse for incest.

Having said that, the book is not too bad. It focuses now on Cathy's children, Jory and Bart, from their point of view. The previous book ended with Cathy and Chris's mother ending up in a mental institution, this is how i would picture her

Poor thing, well deserved for trying to kill her children.

We begin with Bart, the son of Cathy and her mother's second husband Bart Winslow. By getting pregnant with her stepfather, she tries to get revenge on her mother for locking them up in the attic in "Flowers in the attic" But he turns out to be a little monster with no conscience, or just really confused. He tries to ruin and sabotage the family. But i do not entirely blame him. I mean karma is a bitch. He has a strange ailment with his skin, which makes him clumsy, and breaks everything in his path, well, mostly. He may be misunderstood, but at the end of the book, it turns out he is really evil like his great grandfather. I don't know if i should feel sorry for him, but i would stay away from someone like him. He seems confused, and obviously he was influenced a lot by his grandmothers butler/husband. He is awkward and shy, which is more dangerous. maybe "devils issue" LOL. Religion is a big theme here, which i will get to later. He is brainwashed, and repeatedly told how bad his mother and "stepdad" or rather uncle is.

Then there is Julian "Jory" Janus Marquet, the bright, talented older brother of Bart, fathered by Julian Marquet, a famous ballet dancer and Cathy's first husband. He is the darling child of the family, who is a gifted dancer and following in his mother and father's footsteps. He cares for his family and loves his brother. He is the sanest, in my opinion, in this family. He is caring, loving, compassionate. A complete opposite of his brother. This is what he more or less would like in my opinion. Basically just a good person.

The grandmother in black. She is back. Released from the institute, Cathy and Christopher's mother decides to live next to them, she feels remorse and needs redemption from what she has done. Things get tangled when she befriends Bart, her grandson. She takes care of him, and gives him everything he wants. She wants to be forgiven and be part of the family. Eventually there is a confrontation, it does not end well with her.

A very interesting read, i liked it, but the subject of rape and incest needs a break now. I still cant understand how a brother and sister can live a married life, but i guess Virginia wanted us to think, and and debate. But obviously this reminds me of Jerry Springer, sorry. But all in all a good book, with interesting turns.

PS: My first time using pics, will somehow learn how to incorporate GIF Images.....

You learn every day :-)

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## Lori says

"If There Be Thorns" is the third installment in the Dollanganger series and, in my opinion, the weakest link of the saga.

My main problem with the book is not so much the storyline, but the fact that the story is told from the perspectives of fourteen-year-old Jory (Cathy's son with Julian) and nine year-old Bart (Cathy's son with Bart Winslow). While it's easy to sympathize with Jory - - his confusion over finding out his parents' true identities and the true character of his biological father, it is almost impossible to relate to Bart. His character is nothing short of depraved.

When you cannot relate to your narrator, you know you're going to have problems.

Overall, the story is passable. Chris and Cathy are now in their late thirties, some years after leaving South Carolina, at the end of "Petals on the Wind". They live in California, under the guise of a doctor and his wife, raising her two children. One day, the lights in the abandoned mansion "next door" go on and a mysterious woman in black appears. This is where the story seems to go downhill.

It's obvious that the woman is the much hated mother of Chris and Cathy - - and why neither of them figure it out until the end is questionable. Having the character of John Amos Jackson reappear from "Flowers in the Attic" as working for the mystery woman seems just an excuse to bring more lunacy into the story.

Jory seems to be the only grounding in the story, but how much excitement can a fourteen-year-old generate? I think the story might have been better served if it had been told from Cathy and Chris' viewpoints, as the

previous tales were.

I have to give it three stars for the effort and for continuing a beloved series. But compared to the previous two books, it's somewhat of a letdown.

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### ♥ Marlene♥ says

Read this years ago. No decades ago. Back in the days this was a very interesting story. One that you hardly heard of back then. Now it is normal to capture young children and abuse them, there are tons of books you can buy on this subject but back in the days this was really quite exiting and you wanted to know more.

What I do recall is that even back then I did get annoyed sometimes by the writing so this is not a book I want to re read.

By he way I am disgusted by her family That they were so desperate for the money they just pretended to have found tons of books written by the deceased author. (They are all the same old same old) I wonder are they still publishing new books in her name?

She died in 1986!!!!

Nvm see my other reviews. Yes a guy has been written at last 18 series and they pretend it to be her.

From one of the recent books (trash) Bestselling author V.C. Andrews unlocks an adventure of intrigue and temptation that shatters the innocence of a girl in search of the sister she's never known.

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### nesha ~? says

“Por lo visto, los grandes amores eran así; destruían cuando se cruzaba su camino”.

“Tiene que haber oscuridad para que se haga la luz”.

Ok, no sé por qué estos libros me dan siempre ganas de llorar. Te dejan con ganas de leer el próximo.

Bart me tenía en desespero, sin duda ese niño hará más de las suyas...

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### Sezín Koehler says

I didn't think this series could get more disturbing, but it most certainly does. Unlike the first two installments of this tragedy, this volume is told from the point of view of Cathy Dollanganger's two sons, to an eerie effect. We see from the outside how Cathy struggles with the traumas of her childhood and how PTSD has affected her decision-making abilities. It's really heartbreaking.

The other theme of this novel is how family secrets will surface no matter to what lengths people go to hide them. Those secrets are a poison and children are very susceptible to its ingestion -- I actually related a lot to this aspect of the story since I went through a very similar thing in my own life.



Though these books aren't offering me much in the way of inspiration for my novels, I'm absolutely captivated and can't wait for the final two books in the series to arrive. Although, I do also have a morbid sense of dread to finish out this saga. I don't imagine there's a happy ending in any of these characters' futures.

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## **Erin ? \*Proud Book Hoarder\* says**

3.5 stars

**“If we could survive the worst, doesn't it stand to reason we should be able to bear the best?”**

Of course there's tragedy with this series, but there's also something bizarrely beautiful. It's a mesmerizing series, not perfect but hard to get out of once you dig in. It would be a shame to just read *Flowers In The Attic* and not continue the series - even if the original was the best, the sequels feed into each other, making the story richer.

I went back and forth between 3 and 4 stars. Sometimes it was as fascinating as the others, impossible to put down, but other times it felt a little repetitive and some magic was lost through the brother's points of views. While the weakest of the original four, it's still worth reading and makes the garden that much more haunting.

Bart goes from adorable when he pretends to be cowboys and animals, funny when he hates everything, pitiful when he feels like the loner and sore thumb of the family, to obnoxious when he keep repeating his bad behavior, until finally downright creepy - especially that last page with the potent final paragraph.

Jory is the good brother but rather boring. It makes sense he'd be drawn to dance, but he doesn't stand out much otherwise.

Since it's not through Cathy's viewpoint, she and Chris seem a little less real and sympathetic. She came across more of a harpy Chris was rooted to half the time, deranged with a vicious mouth, but the attic lure was intriguing in the beginning. Chris just kind of seems there - I always loved him in the other books but he's kind of a shadow on the wall this time. I didn't sense the depth of their affections as deeply.

I'm trying to place the maid Emma. It seems she may have been in *Petals* or something with how familiar she is with the situation, but I can't place her. The grandmother - dare I say I actually felt bad for the mother in this book. I believe she's finally repentant and realizes how horrible she was. Sometimes the small manipulation comes out, especially talking to Chris, but I felt for her parts of the time. John is sinister, sure, but he's also a cartoon cardboard, bringing to this book more of a cheap feel.

The book doesn't have as much melodrama as some of the others, but it is more unconvincing. The parents should have been more curious about the neighbor after Jory's first slip. They did seem rather oblivious and didn't investigate as they should have. Also, Chris didn't follow up with Bart enough after he knew about the neighbor's real identity. He told her to keep him away, he told Bart to stay away, but Bart still kept going over there and Chris basically ignored it.

The animal stuff was tragic-sad and the hardest thing about the book to stomach.

Even though its length rivals the others, it didn't have a strong enough story to continue this long. Too much repetition with Bart's actions, confusion, and going back and forth to remorseful child and then demented monster-spawn. It grew old after awhile.

The ending was awesome, though. An act of forgiveness and coming clean, the irony of the two trapped together in the end, that act of redemption...and finally to Cathy's viewpoint for the last chapter. The ending was the best part of the book.

Overall, this isn't perfect but it's still enjoyable for a series that can never be rivaled with its pure Gothic tones, tragic family saga storylines, and inventive twists. Definitely one of the most haunting series written.

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## **Melissa says**

I read the VC Andrews Flower in The Attic series as a young teenager. After reading the other reviews I was struck by the fact that so many people had commented that they weren't allowed to read these books or had to hide them from their parents and/or teachers.

I don't remember my mother ever having a problem with me reading these books, in fact, I'm sure she must have purchased them for me. As long as I was reading, she was fine with it. I don't however remember them being quite as scandalous as people are making them out to be. There were certainly some plot twists and turns, and some scandal – but that's what makes them a good / cheap thrill read. Maybe if I'd had to hide them I would have thought they were far more scandalous.

Here's what I remember – Flowers in the Attic was far and away the strongest book in the series, but the fact that the story continued into other books was appealing. I was curious to find out what happened to Chris and Cathy and the evil grandmother. The “creep” factor is what kept the pages turning – the number of times Cathy is raped, the incest, the arsenic poisoning, the escape, etc.

Maybe they are really scandalous and I've just been tainted by real life for the past decade or so. Back then, you just didn't hear about kids bringing guns to school or murdering their parents. Back then Michael Jackson wasn't a child molester, the twin towers were still standing and Bin Laden wasn't a household name. When I consider it like this I think perhaps now would be the time to reread them, and get lost in the escapism that they offer.

But there's another part of me that thinks rereading them now would be a big mistake. It doesn't sound like the writing is all that great – what with overly descriptive paragraphs, and the piles of long flowing golden hair and all. I'm afraid that I'd end up hating them and I'd like to keep VC Andrews as one of my not-so-guilty childhood pleasures. So I'm basing my ratings on what I thought of them back in the early 90's, as an impressionable tween, who's biggest 'real world' problem was getting out of washing the dishes, or passing a math test.

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## Melisa Ramonda says

Como el anterior, ha sido como ver un choque de trenes. Sabes que va al desastre, pero no puedes dejar de mirar. Y sin embargo, no me ha terminado de gustar tanto como el primero, creo que si la autora lo hubiera dejado ahí, era suficiente.

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## Rabbit {Paint me like one of your 19th century gothic heroines!} says

ETA (11/21/16): Buddy Read with Sarah!

ETA (11/23/16): Read Sarah's review here.

My re-read of this book was interesting, and not always in a good way. There were some really hilarious lolzy scenes that were fucked up. (It's VC, so you get what you know is coming). I think the most flawed part of the book was Bart- I mean the kid was a little shit. If they were trying to go for the sympathetic for the villain trope, they should have toned down his character more.

I feel so bad for Cindy, Jory, and Apple, and all the other animals tbh.

Bart, get thee to a hospital. (Honestly why didn't Chris hospitalize him, he's a Dr and should have seen the signs).

^^^^

Sarah and I the whole entire book in our txts. LOL

I (probably) won't be re-reading this one.

~~~~~

[Original review]

Review to come. Wow...

EDIT: This book was cracktastic. I mean we have everything from scheming butler, to a narcissistic personality child. We also have Chris and Cathy still rocking their incest love. Carine showed up because she can't get off this crazy train. I will be reading the next book soon enough. This series is so bad it's awesome.

Can we give this series a round of applause.

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## **Laura Grable says**

I enjoyed this book and its craziness. I think this has been my favorite in the series so far. I like that the narration shifted to the two sons because I found Cathy's perspective pretty annoying in the last book. I found Bart hilarious. I love that he's a total psychopath and no one seems very concerned. He may or may not have killed multiple animals because they didn't love him enough, he constantly stabs at people with his knife, he hobbles around like an old man; he is a whole lot of crazy, but it's fun because you never know what he's gonna do next. Since the mother's story arch seems to be over, I have a feeling the brothers will play heavily in the future books, which I look forward to reading.

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## **Robin says**

I'm going to copy and paste this to all of them!!!! I feel like I have to justify this and all of the other V. C. Andrews books on my list!! I read these when I was young and loved them! My sister and I poured through them- they were obviously trashy for our age (probably the appeal) but mom let us read ANYTHING- as long as we were reading she was ok with it! And that paid off- because both my sister and I still read for pleasure daily. You can't beat it! Hey- and why be a book snob???

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## **Sarah Mac says**

Just remembered that I never wrote a review for this piece of schlock. So...here 'tis.

Meet Jory:

Jory is Cathy's elder son. He's a ballet dancer. He's got a girlfriend. He likes dogs, dancing, & being normal. Jory is a fairly balanced individual, all things considered, which means he's frequently befuddled by the flaming bag of crazy pants that is his family.

Now, meet Bart:

Bart is Cathy's younger son, 9 years old & already a sociopath. He abuses animals, threatens his parents at knifepoint, crawls in the dirt, plays with animal shit, & thinks a toddler is trying to seduce him. (No, I'm not kidding.) Bart is absolutely painful to read about, because somehow we're expected to feel sorry for him. Nope. I've got a soft spot for unreliable narrators, but there is NOTHING sympathetic about his whining creepitude. Bart's narration is like *American Psycho: The Formative Years*.

Approximate reaction to anything Bart says, ever:

The highlight of the book was Cathy's confrontation with her mother & the butler. That was campy, soapy, lolzy gold. The description of her ballet-born kung-fu was brilliant -- you can't find that bizarro randomness anywhere but VC Andrews, & when she's on her game it brings the house down, complete with Charlie's Angels disco music in the background. Freakin' fabulous.

Alas, the 'villains' were lost in the muddle; an evil butler, cougar grandma, & psycho diary lose their luster compared to the immediacy of Bart's unpalatable nastiness. He's a shining example of someone who needs his spoiled, tantrum-flinging ass smacked to the dirt -- yet none of the other characters are capable of recognizing this simple solution except Jory's austere grandmother (who is awesome in her commanding bitchitude). Truly, the only route to a satisfying conclusion involves Bart being punched in the face.

(Peter has correctly labeled you a loser. GTFO.)

This was a buddy read with Rabbit, & I wouldn't have finished it otherwise -- though part of me was hoping Bart would get hit by a bus, so that propelled incredulous interest to the bitter end. But hey. **VICTORY IS OURS! FUCK YOU, BART -- YOU CAN KILL ALL HAPPINESS IN A TWENTY MILE RADIUS, BUT WE SURVIVED!!**

...And then it's revealed that he's back in Book 4.

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