

THE PRISON OF ARNOLD NEIL

by

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**PAGE ONE (5 PANELS)**

1 - ARNOLD NEIL IS STANDING IN FRONT OF HIS BATHROOM MIRROR, STARING AT HIS REFLECTION. HE IS AN EXHAUSTED-LOOKING MAN IN HIS 60S, HIS FACE FULL OF WRINKLES AND DESPERATION.

CAPTION (ARNOLD)

My life is a prison. A prison of  
mediocrity and shame.

2 - FLASHBACK. ARNOLD'S MOTHER, AN OVERWEIGHT AND OVERBEARING WOMAN, BERATES AN EIGHT-YEAR-OLD ARNOLD WHILE HE SITS AT THE DINNER TABLE.

CAPTION (ARNOLD)

And it's been that way for as long  
as I can remember.

MOTHER

You're lazy, Arnold. Keep it up and  
you'll never amount to anything.

ARNOLD

(Placating her)

Yes, mom.

3 - ARNOLD, AGE TWELVE, STANDS IN P.E. CLASS WHILE TWO OTHER BOYS ARE PICKING TEAMS.

BOY 1

But I don't want Arnold on my team.

BOY 2

Well, neither do I.

4 - YEARS LATER, A TWENTY-YEAR-OLD ARNOLD IS GETTING REJECTED BY A GIRL, WHILE HER FRIEND STANDS NEARBY AND LAUGHES.

GIRL

(To Arnold)

Go out with you? Get serious.

FRIEND

Hehe.

5 - ARNOLD, NOW IN HIS 20'S AND MARRIED, SITS AT THE DINNER TABLE WHILE BEING BERATED BY HIS WIFE MARTHA (WHO IS OVERWEIGHT AND OVERBEARING, NOT UNLIKE ARNOLD'S MOTHER).

CAPTION (ARNOLD)

Some people say things get better with time, but for me, they stayed pretty much the same.

WIFE

You need to find a new job, a better one, or you'll never amount to anything.

ARNOLD

(Placating her)

Yes, Martha.

**PAGE TWO (5 PANELS)**

1 - ARNOLD, IN HIS 30'S, IS HOLDING UP HIS NEWBORN BABY DAUGHTER WHILE MARTHA IS IN THE HOSPITAL BED, HAVING JUST GIVEN BIRTH.

CAPTION (ARNOLD)

And while others say children can make life better...

ARNOLD

We did it, Martha.

MARTHA

We? What do you mean, we? I'm the one that did all the work.

2 - ARNOLD, IN HIS MID-FORTIES, IS DEALING WITH HIS 13-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER, WHO HAS JUST PIERCED HER EYEBROW. SHE IS VERY MUCH ANNOYED WITH HER FATHER.

CAPTION (ARNOLD)

They forget to mention the times when they want nothing to do with you.

DAUGHTER

Gosh, dad. It's just a piercing. Don't be so lame.

3 - ARNOLD, NOW IN HIS 50S, WAVES GOODBYE AS HIS DAUGHTER LEAVES IN HER CAR. THE CAR IS FULL OF FURNITURE AND OTHER ITEMS. "OFF TO COLLEGE" IS WRITTEN ON THE BACK WINDOW OF THE CAR.

CAPTION (ARNOLD)  
And even that ends in time.

4 - IN A PANEL THAT ECHOES PAGE 1, PANEL 5, ARNOLD (NOW IN HIS 60S) IS ONCE AGAIN AT THE DINNER TABLE WHILE HIS WIFE NAGS HIM.

CAPTION (ARNOLD)  
Then you're left right back where  
you started.

WIFE  
We need to get the roof fixed  
before the whole house gets  
flooded.

ARNOLD  
(Placating her)  
Yes, Martha.

5 - BACK TO PRESENT DAY. ARNOLD IS STILL STARING AT HIMSELF IN THE MIRROR, BUT NOW HE IS HOLDING UP A RAZOR BLADE.

CAPTION (ARNOLD)  
That's why I've decided to make my  
escape.

**PAGE THREE (5 PANELS)**

1 - CLOSE-UP SHOT OF THE BLADE AS ARNOLD PLACES IT ON HIS WRIST.

CAPTION (ARNOLD)  
Some will call me a coward.

2 - HE PRESSES DOWN. BLOOD STARTS TO RISE.

CAPTION (ARNOLD)  
Others will think I was weak.

3 - BLOOD IS NOW POURING OUT EN MASSE.

CAPTION (ARNOLD)  
But I know what I'll finally be.

4 - CLOSE-UP SHOT OF ARNOLD'S FACE, SMILING.

CAPTION (ARNOLD)  
I'll finally be free.

5 - MATCHCUT TO ARNOLD (PHYSICALLY ONLY 30 YEARS OLD), BUT WITH THE SAME SMILE ON HIS FACE AS IN PANEL 4. A SERIES OF TUBES ARE CONNECTED TO THE TOP OF HIS HEAD.

ROOKIE (O.P.)  
We have another escape attempt,  
sir.

**PAGE FOUR (5 PANELS)**

1 - WIDE SHOT OF THE CONTROL ROOM WHICH SUPERVISES VARIOUS PEOPLE MENTALLY CONNECTED TO A MACHINE.

ROOKIE  
I don't... I can't...

SUPERVISOR  
Calm down, rookie. Just send the  
wife over to find his body, and  
make sure he pulls through.

ROOKIE  
Yes, sir.

2 - THE SUPERVISOR STARES AT THE SCREEN ABOVE ARNOLD'S BODY. IT HAS ARNOLD'S VITAL SIGNS, AND AT THE VERY TOP READS: "CURRENT SIMULATION: MUNDANE 21ST CENTURY LIFE."

SUPERVISOR  
Escape attempts are pretty common  
for this program. It's one of our  
most intense simulations.

3 - TWO-SHOT OF THE SUPERVISOR TALKING TO THE ROOKIE.

SUPERVISOR  
Maybe it's time to take it up a  
notch. Let's have his wife leave  
him for another man. Make sure she  
gets the house in the settlement.

ROOKIE  
Poor bastard.

4 - CLOSE-UP SHOT OF THE SUPERVISOR'S SHOCKED FACE.

SUPERVISOR  
Poor? That's Arnold Neil. The most  
vicious criminal that's ever

SUPERVISOR  
stepped foot in this place. He  
deserves exactly what he got.

5 - EXTERIOR SHOT OF THE BUILDING THEY'RE IN. IN THE  
FOREGROUND IS A SIGN THAT READ: MAXIMUM SECURITY VIRTUAL  
PRISON.

CAPTION (SUPERVISOR)  
A life sentence.

**THE END**