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Anyway, mine is called the light in horror Charles Williams and Russell Kirk on hell in the supernatural.

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Journey said hell had been a staple of epic poetry as we all know for thousands of years Homer Virgil Dante Milton just a few of the better known authors have dared to take their readers on an imagined as a tour of the underworld.

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In the 20th century a number of poets, including TS Eliot and Ezra Pound and Derek Walcott attempted to follow in their footsteps. But some of the most convincing descriptions of hell have actually been by novelists such as Charles Williams and Russell

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Kirk.

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Williams, a member of the Inklings has always been one of the group's more overlooked members, and the continued neglect of his verse and the supernatural thriller zero suggests that he's not likely to experience a dramatic increase in popularity, anytime

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soon. But in terms of sheer creativity and audacity he has few peers even among his more famous associates.

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Lydia Browning says quote Williams creates a fantasy world which lowers the distinctions between metaphysical activity and reality where the spiritual planes of one world furtively intersect with our material one Browning is describing the sentence to

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hell here but her words apply equally to almost all of Williams and seven novels.

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Each is infused with a unique blend of activity and reality spiritual and material. His first novel war in heaven was published in 1930 and involves various factions of ordinary humans saints and infernal powers battling for control of the holy grail

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of Christian legend, several scenes involve the use of black magic satanic rituals or psychotropic chemicals, through which certain characters are granted fleeting glimpses of the supernatural.

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With this heady mix of Christian theology and prosecution mysticism war in heaven was an important influence on the ghostly fiction of Russell Kirk and American historian who is best remembered as the author of the conservative mind, but will also run

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a number of short stories and novels that explore some of the same supernatural and eschatological ground. Try to invite Williams, this influence was acknowledged by Kirk and is perhaps most evident in his third and last novel 1979 Lord behold dark, hard

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to get these days. In the weeks leading up to ash wednesday a group of pilgrims gathers in a dilapidated castle in Scotland, and begins to prepare for an infernal ceremony of innocence, which they believe will grab them immortality, in the form of timeless

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moments intersections of the material and transcendent during which the essence or soul becomes quote aware of itself and an eternal state quite outside of time and quote.

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Instead they discover as the characters and William stories often do that there are forces in this world and the next one better left on the lesson.

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Although Williams and Kirk were of different nationalities, religious affiliations and temperaments both frequently expressed what the former refers to as a delight in horror, a curiosity or even attraction to evil that emboldened them to explore the

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darkest corners of how in the supernatural through their fiction.

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Given Kirk's acknowledgment of Williams influence on him it's not surprising that war in heaven and Lord of the hollow dark will contain more than a few narrative informatics similarities, both novels, for instance include scenes during which the character

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see or experience hell, which in keeping with standard Christian doctrine is portrayed as a place of eternal suffering reserved for the irredeemably wicked. In both novels occult rituals serve as a bridge between the physical and spiritual worlds, even

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the rituals themselves are described in similar terms as hedonistic indulgences of greed lust and other vices, which are to be finally sacramentalized by a mystical marriage, and the literal sacrifice of a child, and yet for all their similarities were

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in heaven Lord of the hollow dark are also indelibly shaped by their respective authors worldviews, which are Christian but contains some unusual, perhaps even heretical ideas in Kirk's case.

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So to understand what each author hope to accomplish in these allegorical and elusive texts, one must have a basic familiarity with their beliefs. So I'm going to skip over the, the description of Williams's life here I'm sure that we all are familiar

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with that and go to his, the main ideas that are present in Word heaven given the multiple sources from which he drew inspiration. It's not surprising that Williams would over time come to develop a rich but somewhat idiosyncratic theology.

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Right. Well like I know a lot more about Kirk sign, serene so I don't want to speculate too much about wounds because I'm not.

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But three closely related ideas, especially relevant for readers of war and happen coherence substitution and exchange. Right, the former relates to the unity of all human beings with each other and with God, the unity of the material and transcendent

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that Williams often compared to the relationship between the three parts of the Holy Trinity.

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In is masterful study of Dante, it's the finger of Beatrice is really, it's a wonderful read he writes of the coherence of the Divine persons in each other.

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This is a quote and it has been held the unity of mankind, consistent and Anna logical coherence of men, men with each other and cool coherence gives rise to the related notions of substitution and exchange.

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In the same manner that Christ took up the burden of the cross and died that others might live Williams believe that one of the best lane which is fellow Christians could demonstrate their faith was by helping those in need.

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People at these practice principles into practice through an informal order of the coherence, whose members were encouraged to assist each other as much as possible.

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He also sought to promote his ideas through his fiction, of course, Kirk also emphasized the need for a widespread renewal of faith in his writing style he didn't formally convert to Christianity or to Catholicism, until after his marriage to a net court

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Marsh in 1964.

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So I'm going to skip over this part of the paper just described Kirk's career as a writer of hero Gothic fiction, and he continued to write political and historical works as well.

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In his allegorical third novel ward of the holiday Mark Kirk explores the concept of timeless moments. The phrase he borrowed from Ts Eliot's four quartets and turned into the central component of his own eschatology basically Kirk believed that heaven,

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hell and purgatory are not physical locations but states of being that exists outside time after we die we to cease to be affected or bound by time those in heaven can willingly choose to relive all the happiest moments from their lives and experience

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them again and again.

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Likewise, those in hell are forced to relive eternally all of the most excruciating torments, they have suffered. So he described this policy of timeless moments in several letters and some of his books as well.

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Curse ideas about time will and the potential significance of seemingly trivial incidents reflect the clear influence not only a TS Eliot, but also in perhaps more so, Williams, who deals with many of the same things especially in his final novel.

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All Hallows Eve, but it is in war in heaven. Williams his first novel and Lord of the holiday dark. That one will find the strongest parallels between the fiction of Williamson curve.

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One of the most distinguishing characteristics of both novels is the amount of attention the offers lavish on describing a cult beliefs practices and rituals, so early in war in heaven.

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Gregory persimmons a mild mannered publisher who serves as the sort of main human villain embarks upon a journey through time and space with the help of a special white man, he applies it to his naked body three times chanting unholy spells.

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The third time he marks certain fingers on himself including quote across upon either soul across inverted from brow to foot, and overall his form the Pentagon reversed of magic ankle.

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After lying down upon the bed his soul departs from his body and flies off in search search of Satan, with whom persimmons longs to be joined forever.

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So, so near to his goal persimmons realizes that there's something more that he needs to complete his union or marriage with Satan is.

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jamming the required steps and with the aid of the appointment persimmons is able to travel between the two.

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Now there are other rituals described in war in heaven.

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I just want to focus on the last two in the book.

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In the first one I'm just going to sort of gloss over these persimmons is joined by his two companions. My NASA and the Greek. In the first of these two scenes, they prepare a trap for the good characters by drawing a parallel lines on the floor.

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Okay, that leads to a mystical diagram, and I quote I have charged these barriers with power the Greek explains, and they shall with or whoever comes between them and that's exactly what happens to have the good characters enter those parallel lines from

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another room one is killed immediately. The other is severely wounded right then at the very end of the book. There's the evil characters attempt to summon the spirit of a, of a dead man, and who they intend to link in a mystical marriage to one of the

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good characters.

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Only through the you could you could test, You could test traffic intervention, excuse me, a presser john the long time keeper of the Grail are persimmons and as allies finally defeated.

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Whereas world war in heaven shores a number of diabolique ceremonies, being performed from start to finish, Lord of the dark features only a single ceremony of innocence, for which upon x and is called spend a whole week and careful preparation.

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On the night of Ash Wednesday the pilgrims march to the castle to the chapel dressed in Scarlet robes and chanting blasphemous parodies of the songs in English and Latin.

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What follows is essentially a black masses, Apollo next delivers his sermon and annoys the foreheads of his followers with dirt taken from a graveyard.

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The ceremony of innocence then begins and is supposed to end with the mystical marriage of a ghost, and a former non Marina, as well as the crucifixion of her son Michael baby.

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After Kirks hero Manfred arcane escapes with the intended victims of politics has another of his file were sacrificed instead.

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Despite hit her. It's a, it's a strange book, despite her unquestioning devotion to him. Her death is an. Yeah, necessary part of the ritual to summon the ghost of the late Lord Bell grandma.

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Thank you.

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Connor, like persimmons of politics is meddling with forces he can't possibly understand, let alone control. So Apollo next in Lord in Lord of the holodeck he does succeed in summoning the spirit, but he immediately falls prey to the ghost long festering



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anger and desire for revenge, reflecting the more allegorical nature of Kurt's novel, The descent into hell. And Lord of the dark is, doesn't it doesn't involve a physical journey.

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Instead, the castle in which the characters are interacting. It represents hell becomes hell in a literal sense for a politics and his followers who souls will be trapped there forever.

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Now Kirkman left Williams his first hand experience with the cold groups, but by drawing upon is wide learning in history theology and art he succeeds in depicting them in a realistic manner and I think that the influence of Williams is also evident here.

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For example, both characters in both novels use hallucinatory drugs either as a key ingredient and certain rituals are to enhance their enjoyment of their effects Williams is drugs drug of choice is an appointment which persimmons first attempts of.

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I just described how he gets it he applies the ointment to his body and as I mentioned before, it makes descent into hell smoother and easier for him.

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Ah, now the ointment tends to have a different effect though depending on what you, what you, what what your intentions are your beliefs are, so it's applied to another character later in the novel.

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Oh wait, I get it. I'll get into that later. So, so the first point I want to make between the two novels of similarity is the use of some kind of chemical or appointment in Lord of the hollow dark Apollo next keeps his followers in a chemically induced

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stupor, with the help of a potent drug known as collage z if taken in high enough doses, it can destroy users mind or kill him in lower doses, its effects are somewhat similar to those of Williams disappointment.

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So for example, it's taken by one of the characters, I didn't mention this earlier, but the characters in Lord of the dark are all named after characters from Ts Eliot's poems in place.

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So one of the characters in the novel is named swimming, and Perkins has made him, he's a he's a rapist. So he takes the ointment and that's the first thing that he decides to do after, or excuse me, he takes the drug clumsy and the end it sends them

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into a frenzy of loss where he he decides he's going to go out and attack somebody.

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So, just like, just like Williams is white men it's sort of.

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It's sort of knows what the user wants and and tries to help that person achieve their goals. Right.

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In keeping with traditional views of Satanism and related gnostic ideologies persimmons, and upon experts to their respective followers to reject the Christian emphasis on self denial and sacrifice in favor of a hedonistic embrace advice and pleasure,

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while traveling to help persimmons realizes that he's hungry and thirsty, not for food and drink but in a metaphysical sense.

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Okay. In contrast to the harmony order and beauty of this celestial music heard by one of the good characters the dancing of the damn that persimmons views and Hell is ugly and chaotic.

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And here later under the influence of the ointment one of the other characters Barbara rat straw takes it, and it has a dramatic effect on her she begins to gesture and to sort of dance wildly at one point she even rips off part of her clothing right

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person is watching her and he's delighted recognizing in her movements the outer side of the inner dance he had himself known Apollo next is as determined as anyone in world war in heaven to reject the self imposed restraints of Christian morality.

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As part of this preparations for the ceremony of innocence he encourages his followers to indulge their every whim, via gastronomical or sexual in nature.

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part of his preparations for the ceremony of innocence he encourages his followers to indulge their every whim, via gastronomical or sexual in nature. Several dinners are held during the course of the week at which the people eat, they ingest watered down Colossi and all sorts of food in between mouthfuls of power

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next Hector's him about his unusual theology.

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Okay, the ceremonial innocence culminates with a naked dance in the wings so just like it Williams his novel The, there's a there's a, there's an interesting emphasis on nudity here and and dancing people dancing with wild abandon right the participants

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in Kirk's novel donning masks that reflect their animalistic impulses to which they finally abandon themselves.

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Indeed, but there's still a pattern to it all just like the pattern that persimmons observes of the dancers and how as they learn to their dismayed the same demonic power around which those dancers in Word heaven revolve also holds court in the lore,

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to have some bell grumble lodging, they will no more enjoying meeting the Lord of the world, which is another name for Satan, or the Antichrist used in both novels, then he will then percent as well.

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Despite being Christians it's clear that Williams and Kurt reveled in the mysterious and strange, such as only can only be found in the darker side of the respective fates, hence the almost palpable Glee with which certain doctrines are subverted parodied

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or even blast being a particularly a dramatic example of this the scene in the mystical marriages and attempted child sacrifices, the surface important plot points in both novels.

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So persimmons dissented to Hell is reigned in terms of a marriage, the longing he experiences to remain there, as I said is framed in marital turns. All he needs to complete as union with Satan, and the other Denison's of Hell is the sacrifice of Barbara's

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child.

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He succeeds in winning the trust of the rack sauce who great to place, Adrian at his disposal.

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Before he can be sacrificed persimmons devises a plan to punish. One of the other good characters by a rate by forcing him into a mystical marriage with another man that persimmons have been manipulating whose death is sort of kicks off the plot of novel

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right.

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This is cool. This is the circle of all souls persimmons explains, and I will gather them and marry them as I please I will bring them from this world and from another and I will bind the last with the living till the living itself the last, the penultimate

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chapter of war in heaven is called the marriage of the living and the dead and refers to this intended union between dominant and Patterson, which as I said is prevented by the sudden arrival of presto john Kirk biographer James person observes a similar

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thing in effect in Lord of the hollow dark with Marina and her baby Michael.

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well. Okay, their union represents the coupling of death and life sin and innocence. A subversion of the divinely ordained division between such things, the sacrifice of Michael Meanwhile intended as an obvious parody of Christ's death on the cross,

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apologetics plans to carry to carry the analogy to its blasphemous conclusion by having his followers devour the corpse of the baby, as if it were the bloodline of Holy Communion.

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Compared to Williams Kurtz places more emphasis on the sacrifice than the marriage, part of the two.

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Okay, and just wrapping things up now. All the similarities between world war in heaven and ward of the hollow dark.

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Well,

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I don't know if I agree with that Kirk was pretty.

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Aside from this weird us about time Kirk was actually pretty content to stay within the bounds of traditional orthodoxy in the Catholic Church.

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But as all the similarities between these two novels suggests that he was certainly influenced right by Williams his first novel.

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I hate Kirk even offers a character and learned the hell dark, Ralph Bane who illustrates the concepts of coherence exchange and substitution. Being had appeared in a short story written by Kirk some years before, in which he sacrificed his life to save

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the life of a widow that he just met. Okay, so he substitutes he changes themselves for her. And he dies at the end of that story, he's brought back as a spirit and Lord of the holiday dark posts.

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And once again he's called upon to do the same thing in Lord of the hollow dark. Okay.

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He's in the Lord of the dark in fact he's again killed by a politics is acolytes while attempting to rescue Sweeney, the rapist in the group of surviving pilgrims that escapes from the wing Finally, once he's clear evidence of the selflessness and selflessness

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excuse me and mutual support that are essential features of coherence only by working together by agreeing to bear each other's burdens to Sweeney marine arcane and the rest succeed and making it out alive.

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The death, the death of Apollo next and is called provide us with a glimpse of hell that is every bit as terrifying as that offered by Williams, but like Williams, Kirk chooses to end his supernatural tail on a very different note, and in a very different

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place. So, both novels have happy and despite the. Anyway, that's my paper thank you all for listening to it.

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Thank you.