

The #1 New York Times
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DC VERTIGO

Volume 2



NEIL GAIMAN

The SANDMAN

The Doll's House

Illustrated by

MIKE DRINGENBERG

MALCOLM JONES III

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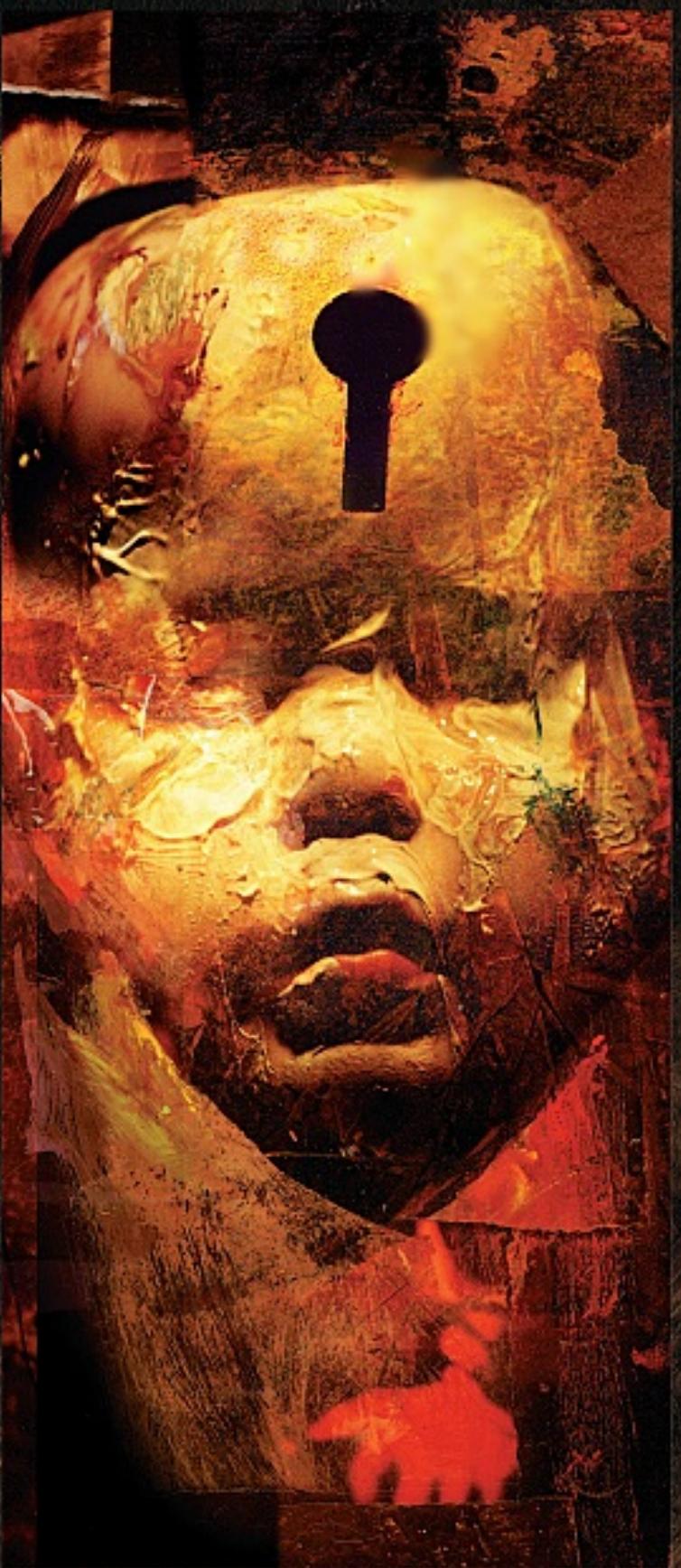
MICHAEL ZULLI

STEVE PARKHOUSE

Introduced by

KELLY SUE DeCONNICK





Dreams and visions are infused into men
for their advantage and instruction.

—Artemidoros at Daldus,
Oneirocritica, second century AD

Dreams are weird and stupid
and they scare me.

—Rose Walker, April 1990





THE *SANDMAN*

THE SANDMAN THE DOLL'S HOUSE

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SANDMAN based on characters created by GAIMAN, KIETH, and DRINGENBERG

Cover design and interior illustrations by DAVE MCKEAN

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INTRODUCTION

We have a lot to talk about, you and me.

I feel I am an interloper here. Can you be both an interloper and a guest? I don't mean to suggest that I trespass. I have been invited. ("Like a vampire," I can't help but think.) But I also do not belong. I mean to say, "I am not required here." And what is required is a necessary conversation in this medium. Comics, to be successful, depend upon strict discipline in execution. You see, for us, space equals time.

"The basic unit of a comic is the page." That is the first lesson in comics school. It is our alphabet.

For the purposes of this exercise, pretend that one 24-page issue is a day. Each page, then, you can think of as an hour, and each panel, a moment. Small panels, seconds. Large panels, minutes. Do you follow? Comics capture time like a photo captures the wings of a hummingbird; we make the unseen visible.

That math is not a formula, of course. I suggest it only for simplicity's sake. Few single-issue stories take place over the course of one day, and even those that do never disperse hours evenly across pages. Writers and artists employ all sorts of techniques to stretch and condense time. We wrestle with it, dance with it. We are like taffy makers, perhaps. Squeezing and pulling and cutting until the consistency satisfies.

Time, once made visible and tangible, is now subject to the laws of the physical world. There are 20 to 24 pages in a modern comic. That is not a lot of space in which to tell a story. It is even less space if you hope to capture a capital-T Truth.

So we come back to this idea of discipline. Subject to the restrictions of physics, everything on the page—everything that occupies time and space in a story—must justify its existence. One simple rule is to say that every moment must either tell us something we need to know about a character or move the plot forward. Preferably both.

The process of refining one's craft could be described as learning first to execute with discipline, and then to hide the tool marks. Ideally, every issue is full to brimming with necessary content, but what isn't there—that which has been excised—is still felt. Just as all action in a comic really takes place in the mind of the reader and in the spaces between panels, what is unseen remains.

We are in the tall grass now, aren't we?

My point—and I swear I have one—is that my presence here goes against my every instinct. I have tried to add value with a little comics theory, but it feels silly at best, and vain at worst. Add value to Everyone's Favorite Comic? You can flap your arms all day, my friend. You will not fly.

But then... everything about this book defies me.

I am a woman firmly rooted in the world. I like rules and agreements and formulas and structures. I am called "Lawful Good" in the language of my people. I do not believe in magic, save for the card game. I do not pray.

Except when I do. "There are no atheists in a foxhole," my grandmother used to say, and when I find myself in times of trouble, I whisper to the universe,

"Help me, help me, help me." And usually, she does. Humans are inconsistent and messy creatures.

For example, there is something contradictory in the way we think about art. We both over- and undervalue it. It's very strange.

On the one hand, we're dismissive. We discourage professional pursuit and code a serious interest as something that should be channeled into a more "responsible" choice. "Art is nice, but it is not necessary," the thinking goes. Art does not feed the people.

That's rubbish, of course. Art is more than food, it's water. Your brain does not know how to function without it. If no one gives it to you, you will find it. So we buy it for ourselves.

Like groceries, we buy stories in bulk, subscribing to streaming services, starting "pull lists," preordering the latest games. Literally billions of dollars are spent. In modern capitalism, attention is money, and private money is love.

The same young artist who was pooh-poohed for his or her interests before they became profitable is, once financially successful, virtually deified. Great Artists are treated as shamans, able to commune with the essential in a way unavailable to the common man.

The resulting history of Great Artists in America is such a catalog of abominable behavior excused in the service of "genius" that we view the gracious artist as a punchline—the Tom Hanks phenomenon.

In defiance of this model, I am adamant about a more socialist view. Art, to my way of thinking, is a commodity, no more or less important than any other. And the artist? A worker among workers. No oracles. No magic here.

Except...this book. And this writer.

Again, all my rules are defied.

I've known Neil Gaiman for 20 years or so. He's a kind man, a generous man, something of a paternal figure, though he's only a decade my senior. He's very British, but in all other ways thoroughly normal. I know a few of his collaborators, too. They seem like nice people. And yet, when I am confronted with the magnitude of this work and the space it takes up in my psyche, it is very difficult for me to maintain my commitment to the idea that there is nothing special about it.

I kick and writhe like a woman possessed, blathering on about comics theory and capitalist art; I'm stalling, fighting to keep the demon in, but still the idea escapes me: there is magic here. In direct defiance of everything I cling to about my profession, it resonates around me as a capital-T Truth. There is magic in these pages.

When I was invited in (like the vampire), I was asked what volumes I might like to introduce. I believe *THE DOLL'S HOUSE* was my third choice, out of three. For one thing, the original deadline was on my birthday. Who wants a deadline on their birthday? (I'm over it now—apologies, dear editor.) And while I remembered the arc fondly—*Fiddler's Green* especially—I didn't have an obvious connection. But *THE DOLL'S HOUSE* was chosen for me, and so I resigned myself. I dug out my annotated edition and reread the volume for the first time in 10 years. For the first time since my children were born.

I relented. I surrendered to the magic, and I swear when I say to you that *THE DOLL'S HOUSE* was chosen for me, I mean it in the sense that the universe—the same universe I pray to with the Beatles—knew that I needed to read this story again, and so she moved to make it so.

The first time I read this book—hell, the second time and the third—I was not a mother. I had not yet experienced that period when, like Lyta, I lived in a strange dream state, my entire identity at the service of another. I had not yet wrestled with competing love and resentment, purpose and emptiness. I'm not suggesting these battles are universal to mothers, but they were mine and they were real and they were terrifying. That period changed me, forced me to grow. It left marks.

We don't know why people dream. The science of it eludes us. (It strikes me suddenly that science, until it's understood, is so often explained as magic.) There are theories, though, and one is that dreams are where we process our experiences. We remix impressions and ideas to understand and to see connections, to invent. Separate from the laws of physics (and of linear time!), in the chaos of dreams our minds find order and a way to move forward.

Revisiting those new-mother years in the warped reflection of these pages was for me, gentle reader, like a waking dream. In it, I found a balm for a wound I didn't remember that I had. And yet, I feel better now. Just like that. Like magic.

And so, I offer you this benediction: enter the pages that follow like a dream. You'll find what you need there. Dream has made this place for you, and in his realm all things are possible. Wave your arms as hard as you can. You will fly.

—Kelly Sue DeConnick

July 2018

Portland, Oregon

FOREWORD

IN THE BEGINNING...

But of course we never see the beginning. We come in in the middle, after the lights have gone down, and try to make sense of the story so far. Whisper to our neighbors "Who's he? Who's she? Have they met each other before?"

We get by.

In this case, let us imagine our neighbor to be tall, robed perhaps in old, monkish garments, his face hidden in the shadows of his cowl. He smells of age and dust, not unpleasantly; and in his hands he holds a book. As he opens the book (leather-bound, undoubtedly, and every word in it traced meticulously by hand) we hear the clink of metal, and realize the book is chained to his wrist.

Never mind. We have seen stranger things in dreams; and fictions are merely frozen dreams, linked images with some semblance of structure. They are not to be trusted, no more than the people who create them.

Are we dreaming?

Possibly.

But the man in the robe is talking. His voice is like the rustling of old parchments in a library, late at night, when the people have gone home and the books begin to read themselves. We strain to listen: the story so far...

"It was not enough that Roderick Burgess was an evil man, but he was a vain one, and presumptuous. He was not content with riches, or with the leadership of the Order of Ancient Mysteries (although the Order was in no wise Ancient, having been founded only sixteen years earlier, at the turn of the century, by Burgess himself); he desired notoriety among his peers, and he craved physical immortality.

"The year was 1916. In the world outside the Great War dragged on, and in 'Fawney Rig,' his Sussex house, Roderick Burgess conceived a plan. He would capture Death, bind the Reaper.

"With an invocation from a stolen grimoire he performed a Rite of Summoning. I suspect he was in truth



surprised when his invocation bore fruit, when a figure took shape in the circle in the basement of his manor house.

"It was not Death.

"The Man in the circle was dressed in black, His head hidden by a helm carved of bone, and glass, and metal. Fires danced in the velvet darkness of His robe; around His neck hung a precious stone, a ruby; and by His side was a leathern pouch, drawn tight at the top by cords.

"Did Burgess know, then, what he had got? Did he guess at the forces that had already weakened Morpheus, the Lord of Dreams; that Burgess's Chant of Summoning had proved the final straw to Someone—Something—already tried almost beyond endurance?

"I doubt it. And if he knew he did not care.

"Burgess stripped the near-lifeless form of clothes and accoutrements, imprisoned his unwilling guest in an airless glass cage inside the circle, and left Him there.

"King Dream was caught and caged.

"The impact of this was felt around the world: children fell asleep and did not wake up. Their lives were cancelled—Unity Kinkaid was one of these, fifteen years old, and lost in a world of dreams. Sleepy Sickness, the disease was called, and many thousands fell victim to it.

"There were four of them who knew the truth about the Man in the cage: Roderick Burgess himself; his young son Alexander; Ruthven Sykes, Burgess's aide; and Ethel Cripps, Burgess's young mistress.

"All Roderick Burgess truly wanted was to live forever.

"In November of 1930 things began to go wrong for him. A scandal eventuated—Burgess was sued by the children of an elderly woman who had left her not-inconsiderable estate to his Order. The court case brought chaos and scandal to the Order of Ancient Mysteries. It was then that Ethel Cripps and Ruthven Sykes absconded together, secretly, taking with them over £200,000. They took other things: a Ruby, a Helmet, a Pouch...

"The lovers fled to San Francisco, where the Helmet was given to a demon. Sykes needed protection, and the demon took the helmet in exchange for an amulet—an eye on a chain. The Amulet kept Sykes safe from anything that could have harmed him, for the next six years. If Ethel Cripps had not left him—and taken with her both the Amulet and the Ruby—it would have protected him for longer.

"Ruthven Sykes's death was messy, and unpleasant, and somewhere Roderick Burgess was smiling.

"Burgess lived another eleven years, and then he died, still raging at his prisoner, still pleading for Life

Eternal. His place was taken by his son, Alexander. Down in the cellar, in a glass cage surrounded by a chalk circle, His skin pale and His eyes burning like distant stars, the Captive waited. He had all the time in the world.

"Alexander Burgess was not the man his father was. In his hands the Order of Ancient Mysteries dried up, withered: the body was dead, but the shadow lived on.

"Over seventy years after the circle had been drawn on the floor of 'Fawney Rig,' it was broken. Morpheus escaped. It was as simple as that. The Endless have time. They can wait. He could have waited until every stone of the house was dust. He had been waiting in the darkness for a human lifetime, and now He was free.

"When He escaped, the people who had fallen asleep all those years before awoke to themselves again—people whose lives had been stolen, torn from childhood to old age with nothing in between.

"In a dream Morpheus summoned Alexander Burgess, and condemned him to Eternal Waking. Listen: as Alex awakes from each dream, heart pounding, cold sweat sticking to his elderly skin, he finds himself in another nightmare, worse than the last. Somewhere, even now, he is lost in his mind, praying that somebody, somehow, will wake him up. And in his dreams every second lasts forever."

The dark figure pauses. We try to make out the features of his face, to tease something definite from the shadows beneath his hood. No use. Perhaps there is nothing under there at all.

"Dream, who is the younger brother of Death, travelled back to his realm. Picture Him, weakened, lacking His tools, returning to His castle.

"Morpheus, Dream—call Him what you will—is not the only entity living—living is, of course, a misprecision—in the Dream Place. There are others. Many others. The lost and the bodiless, archetypes and ghosts and...others. They are His servants, His creatures, while they live in His realm; and He is their Lord.

"He found His castle destroyed, His servants scattered. He began the process of restoration. But to restore He needed things stolen from Him by the Burgesses, many years before.

"The Dream Lord summoned to Him the Fates, the Triple Goddess—Maiden and Mother and Crone—and asked Her what had become of His tools: the Pouch, inexhaustibly filled with the Sands of Dream; the Helmet, His symbol of office in other Realms; the Ruby, which He

had created out of His substance, and into which He had put so much of His power, a long, long time ago."

He hears our unspoken question.

"How long ago?

"Have you ever wondered what the planet Earth dreamed of, in the early days, when it was cooling from a molten state, long before a thin crust had formed on its surface—let alone an atmosphere? It was then. Long ago.

"The Dream Lord had come to rely on the Ruby for even the simplest manipulations of the Dreamworld. Tools can be the subtlest of traps.

"He asked the Hecateae where His tools had gone, and She gave him answers, of a sort.

"The Pouch was lost for years, finally purchased by an Englishman, John Constantine. The Helmet was in Hell, taken there by a demon. The Ruby had passed from Ethel Cripps to her son, John Dee."

A page turns. We have time to wonder, perhaps, where we are. And we wonder what else is written in our neighbor's book. The irrational conviction comes over us that our name is in there—every detail of our life, everything, no matter how petty or discreditable; all our past, all our future.

Do you want to know how you're going to die?

He resumes talking.

"The pouch had been taken from Constantine by an old lover, a woman called Rachel. She had opened it, and had discovered the joys and delights of Dream Sand. It never ran out. It was always there for her. And she lay in bed, eating it, breathing it, rubbing it into her skin, adrift in perfect dreams.

"Rachel no longer ate or slept. But still she dreamed.

"With Constantine's aid, the Dream Lord found the woman, and the Pouch. And, at Constantine's appeal, He granted the shattered thing a dream to take with her into death."

Another page turns. Are the pages made of paper? We find ourselves wondering whether human skin, dried and stretched, would make that same dry rustling, if bound into book form...

"To Hell He travelled then, the Pouch by His side. And in Hell He met Lord Lucifer—once the most beautiful, and the proudest of the angels, now the Lord of the World Below, Master of Lies, Commander of the Triumvirate of Hell.

"The demon that possessed the Helmet was Choronzon, one of Beelzebub's creatures, and the Dream Lord was

forced to battle Choronzon for possession of the Helmet.

"The battle was won. Morpheus regained His helm, earning the enmity of Lucifer for His pains.

"They say we are known by our enemies. If this is so, then Morpheus is to be highly regarded.

"With the Helm regained, the compact was over, and the power of the Amulet that kept Ethel Cripps (now Ethel Dee, and old as sin) alive was withdrawn. She died, and the Amulet passed to her son, John."

Somehow we know her son, without being told. Mad as sea spray, crazy as a coot, the skin of his body stretched tightly over his fleshless bones. John Dee, self-styled Doctor Destiny (but shouldn't that name belong to another? To someone like our neighbor, with his robe, and his book?), dreamless dream maker, last owner of the Dream Lord's Ruby.

"Dee escaped the prison he had been held in for many years, crawled out into the night, seeking the Ruby.

"At the same time, the Dream King sought the jewel. He was not to know that Dee had tampered with its fabric.

"Eventually, in a warehouse that held a treasure trove of lost artifacts, Morpheus found His Ruby again. But He found it warped and changed: instead of focusing and enhancing His energies it began to absorb them.

"It left Him weak and—literally—drained. Dee took the Ruby from the Dream Lord's hand, and set it to destroy the minds of the weak and the sleeping. He amused himself in his own way, while he waited."

We realize we have no desire to know how Dee amused himself.

"Morpheus lay on the cold warehouse floor, helpless and less than fully conscious; He could feel, far away, the disruptions in the dream time, the distortion and the pain. It took Him more than a day to regain any strength.

"And then, incarnate, He walked the mile to where the Ruby waited with its master, whispering its message of pain and madness to the world.

"Morpheus strove with Dee in dreams for control of the Ruby, for mastery. But He strove in vain: the ruby was sapping His essence.

"It is perfectly conceivable that Dee could have drawn all of Morpheus into the jewel and left Him a ghost frozen in crystal, His power all at the madman's disposal. Perfectly conceivable..."

Our neighbor stops reading, raises his head. Under the hood there are only shadows, but we feel that he is looking at us; and perhaps there are no true eyes.

beneath the cowl. This seems strangely as it should be, and it scarcely disturbs us.

"If there is a moral to this part of the story, and I distrust morals in the same way I distrust beginnings, it is simply this: know that with which you deal."

"Dee thought that by destroying the Ruby he was administering the *coup de grâce*. But the Dream Lord is of the Endless, the race that are not Gods (for Gods die, when their believers are gone, but the Endless will be here when the last God has gone beyond the Realm of Death, and into non-existence), and shattering the Ruby did not destroy its Creator."

"Instead it liberated Him. More, perhaps, than that. It freed all the energies He had placed in the Ruby over the eons."

"Lord Morpheus took Dee back to his place of imprisonment, and He left him there."

We are still listening to the story, waiting for some kind of conclusion, when our neighbor closes his book. The cold chains that bind blind Destiny to His book chink quietly.

The story is, of course, far from finished. But we know we will get no more of it from this source and, discomfited, we take our leave. The mists are rising, and it is time to be getting back.

We come in in the middle, watch for a time, leave before the lights go up. If there are no beginnings, then there can be no endings.

We are alone in the darkness. Every answer prompts another question, and things are happening all the time.

That's all you need to know for the time being. Trust me.

"The story so far." Maybe it's all we can ever hope for...

—Neil Gaiman
1989

For Pete Atkins, Mick Vince,
Anne and Kate Bobby.
For no particular reason.

—Neil Gaiman

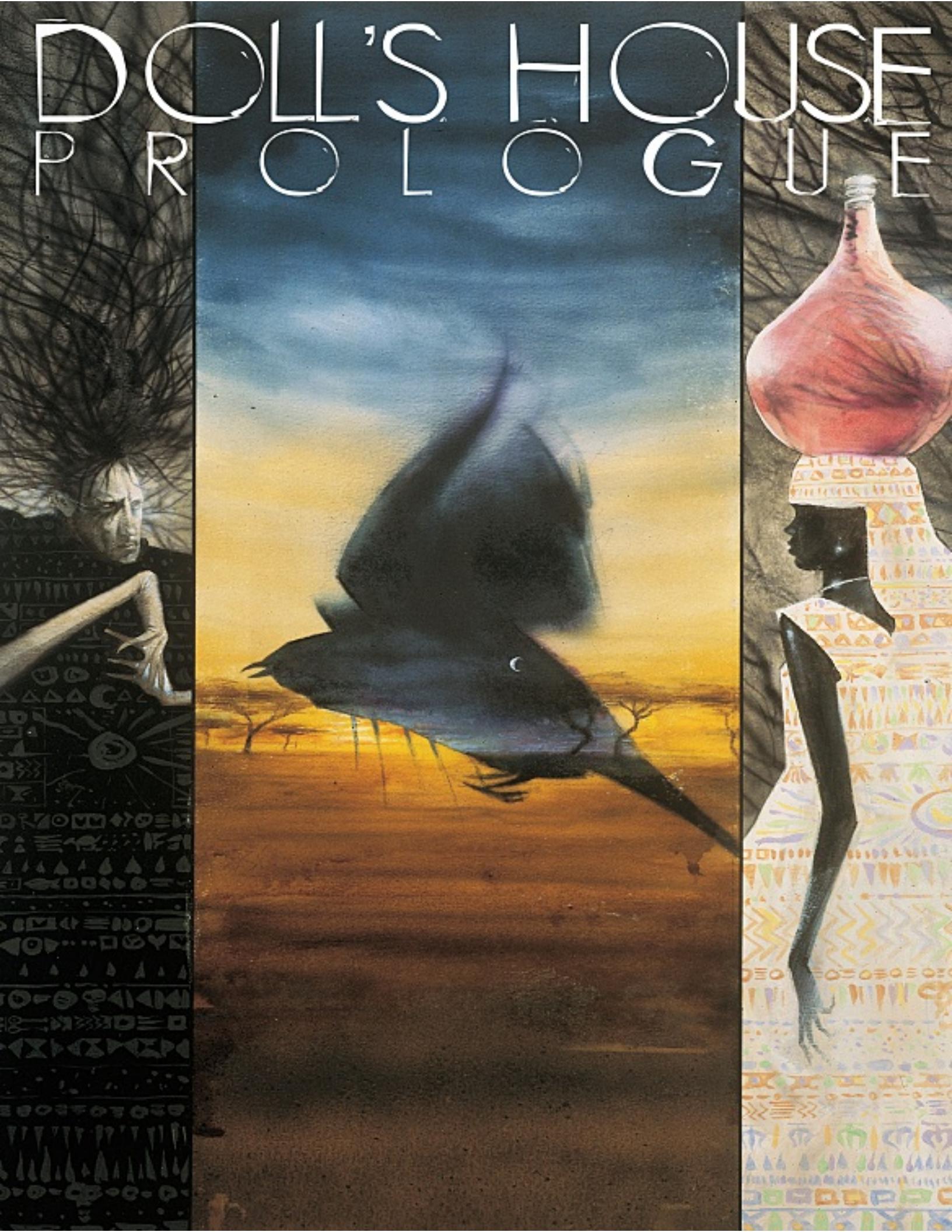
To GiGi, Paula and Eric.
—Mike Dringenberg

To Malcolm Campbell.
—Malcolm Jones III





DOLL'S HOUSE PROLOGUE



TALES IN THE SAND

THERE ARE TALES THAT ARE TOLD MANY TIMES.

SOME TALES YOU TELL CHILDREN, STORIES THAT TELL THEM THE HISTORY OF THE TRIBE, WHAT IS GOOD TO EAT, WHAT IS NOT.
CAUTIONARY TALES.

THERE ARE THE TALES THE WOMEN TELL, IN THE PRIVATE TONGUE MEN CHILDREN ARE NEVER TAUGHT AND OLDER MEN ARE TOO WISE TO LEARN, AND THESE TALES ARE NOT TOLD TO MEN.

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WRITER

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MALCOLM JONES III:
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ZYLONOL:
COLORIST

TODD KLEIN:
LETTERER

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IN
THE



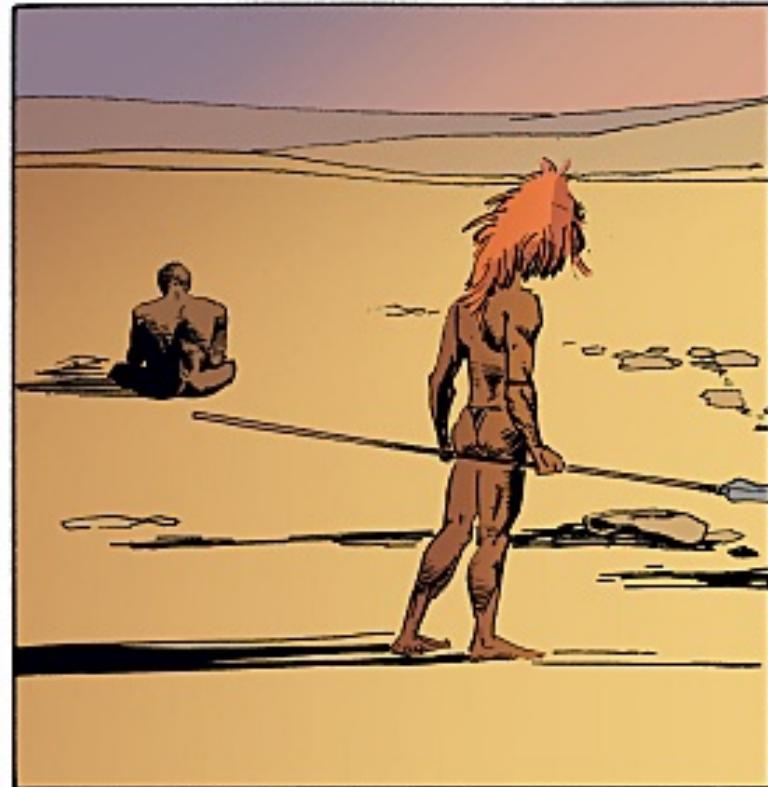
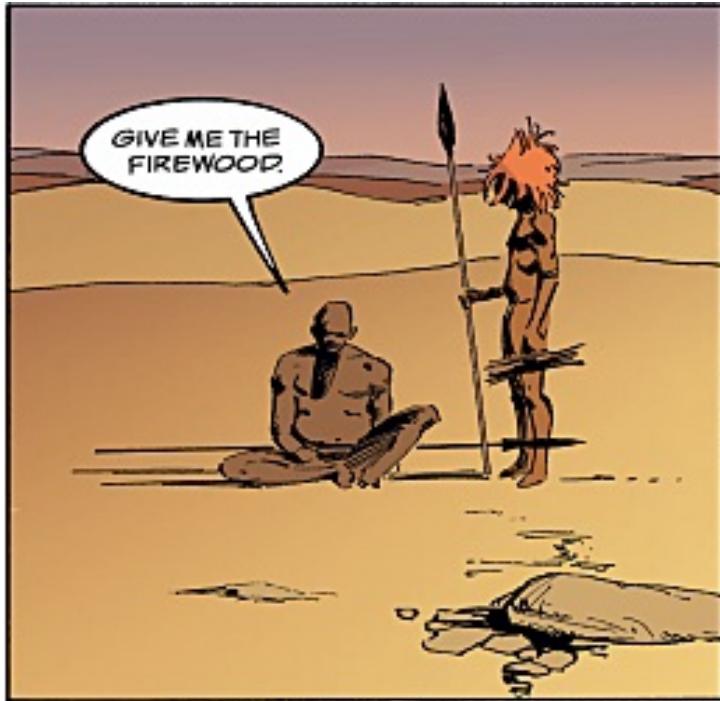
THERE ARE THE TALES THE MEN TELL EACH OTHER, IN THE MEN'S HUT AT NIGHT; CRUDE RAUCOUS TALES, OF THE LIZARD WHO LOST HIS MALE MEMBER, OR OF THE MALABAYO, THE TRICKSTER, WHO SOLD APE DUNG TO KING LION, TELLING HIM IT WAS THE SOUL OF THE MOON.

THERE ARE THE TALES THE WHOLE TRIBE TELL EACH OTHER, AT FESTIVALS, AT FEASTS: THE STORY OF THE ROCK THAT JUMPED? OF HOW FIRE CAME, A THOUSAND OTHERS.

LOW TALES. HIGH TALES. TALES THAT ARE TOLD AND HEARD MANY, MANY TIMES.

ONE TALE IS ONLY EVER TOLD ONCE.





BUT
WHAT IS
IT?



GIVE
IT TO
ME.



THE OLD MAN
TOUCHES THE
GLASS.



HE REMEMBERS, FLEETINGLY, THE TIME HIS MOTHER'S BROTHER TOOK HIM OUT TO THIS PLACE, SENT HIM TO FIND A SIMILAR SHARD...

AND THEN HE BEGINS TO TELL THE TALE.



THIS GLASS WAS ONCE PART OF A CITY. IF YOU LOOK AROUND IN THIS PLACE YOU WILL FIND OTHER SHARDS LIKE IT.

IT IS FORBIDDEN TO TAKE THEM FROM THIS PLACE.

I WILL TELL YOU OF THAT CITY, AND OF HOW IT WAS LOST TO US...

AND ONE DAY, IF YOU LIVE LONG ENOUGH, YOU WILL BRING ONE OTHER OUT HERE, AND TELL HIM THE TALE.

FOR THIS IS THE WAY IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN. EACH OF US HEARS THE TALE ONCE, IN THIS PLACE, AND EACH OF US TELLS THE STORY ONCE IN THIS PLACE...

...IF GRANDMOTHER DEATH SPARES US LONG ENOUGH TO TELL IT...



LISTEN.

THIS PLACE WAS NO DESERT THEN. FERTILE IT WAS, WITH MANY FRUIT TREES, AND FAT, SLOW ANIMALS EVERYWHERE, SO THAT HUNTING WAS EASY.

IF YOU SIMPLY CLOSED YOUR EYES AND THREW YOUR SPEAR, WHY, THERE WOULD BE SOMETHING GOOD TO EAT ON THE END OF IT.

AND IN THIS PLACE, WHERE WE NOW SIT, THERE WAS A CITY.

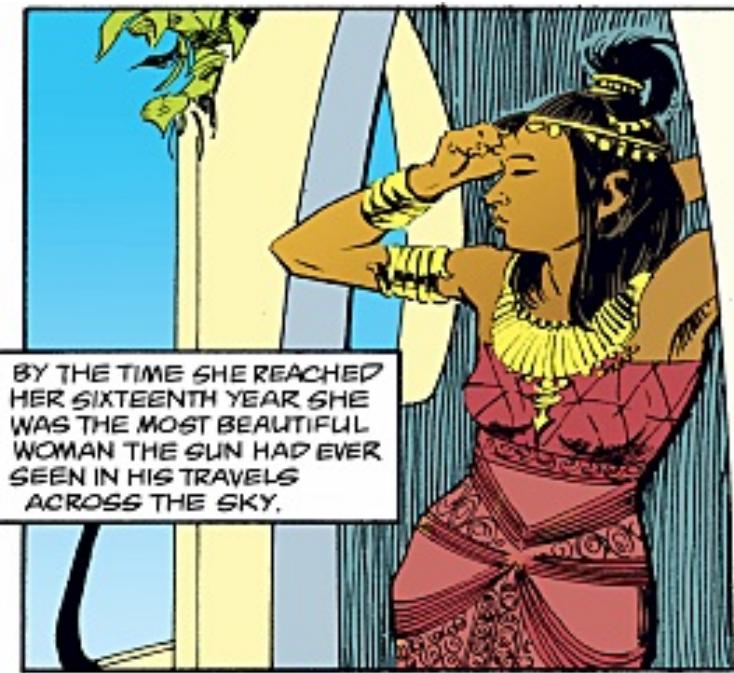
IT WAS A CITY BUILT OF GLASS, A CITY THAT SPREAD OUT FARTHER THAN A MAN COULD WALK IN A DAY. FOR THIS IS THE PLACE THAT THE FIRST PEOPLE BEGAN...

THAT IS OUR SECRET, AND WE NEVER TELL OUTSIDERS, FOR THEY WOULD KILL US IF THEY KNEW.

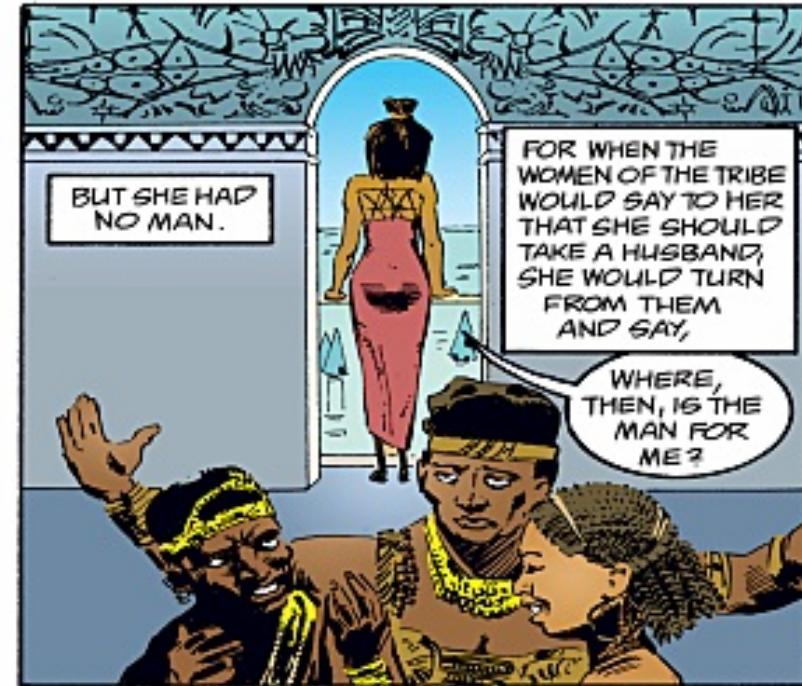
BUT IT IS THE TRUTH.

...AND THE FIRST PEOPLE WERE OF OUR TRIBE.

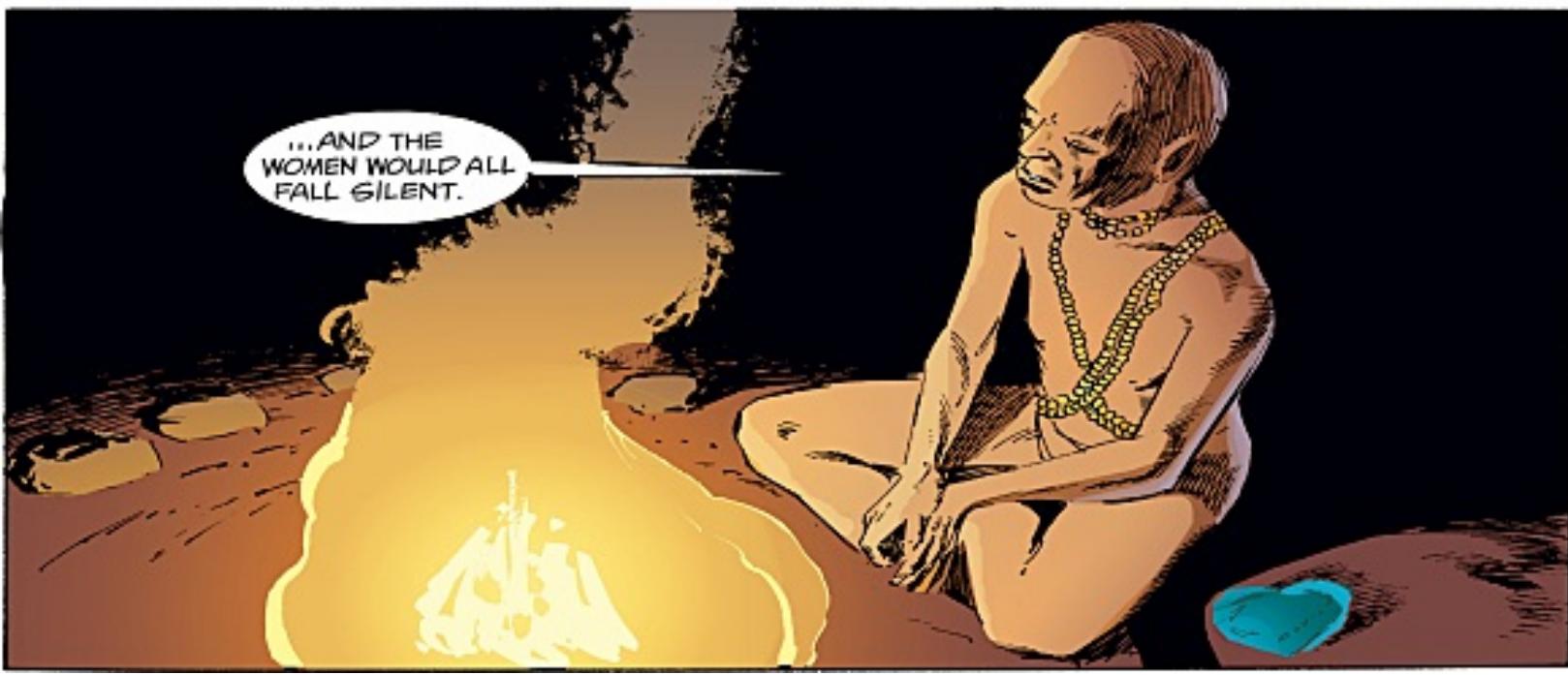
AND IN THAT CITY THERE RULED A QUEEN. SHE WAS CALLED NADA.



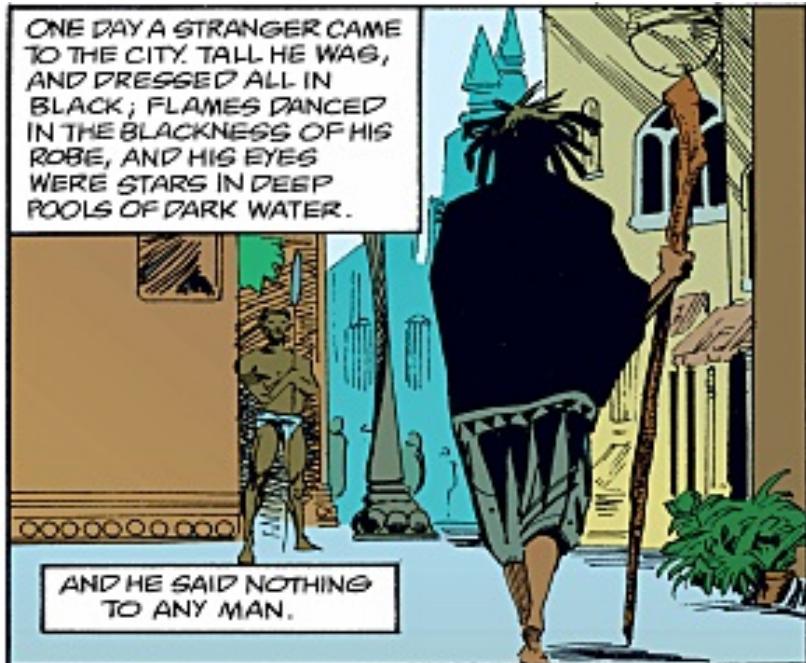
AND SHE RULED WISELY, AND SHE RULED WELL, AND WHEN SHE SAID, DO THIS, THEN IT WAS DONE.



...AND THE WOMEN WOULD ALL FALL SILENT.



ONE DAY A STRANGER CAME TO THE CITY. TALL HE WAS, AND DRESSED ALL IN BLACK; FLAMES DANCED IN THE BLACKNESS OF HIS ROBE, AND HIS EYES WERE STARS IN DEEP POOLS OF DARK WATER.



AND HE SAID NOTHING TO ANY MAN.

BUT THAT NIGHT HE CAME TO THE FOOT OF THE QUEEN'S TOWER (FOR THE HOUSES OF THAT CITY ROSE INTO THE SKY), AND HE LOOKED UP.

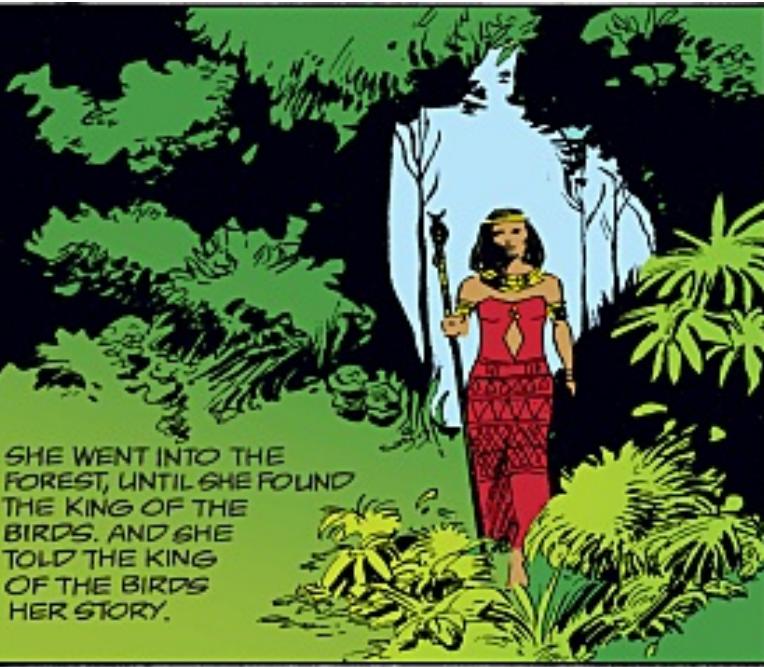


AND NADA LOOKED OUT OF HER WINDOW, AND SHE SAW HIM BELOW HER, AND HER HEART WAS STOLEN AWAY.



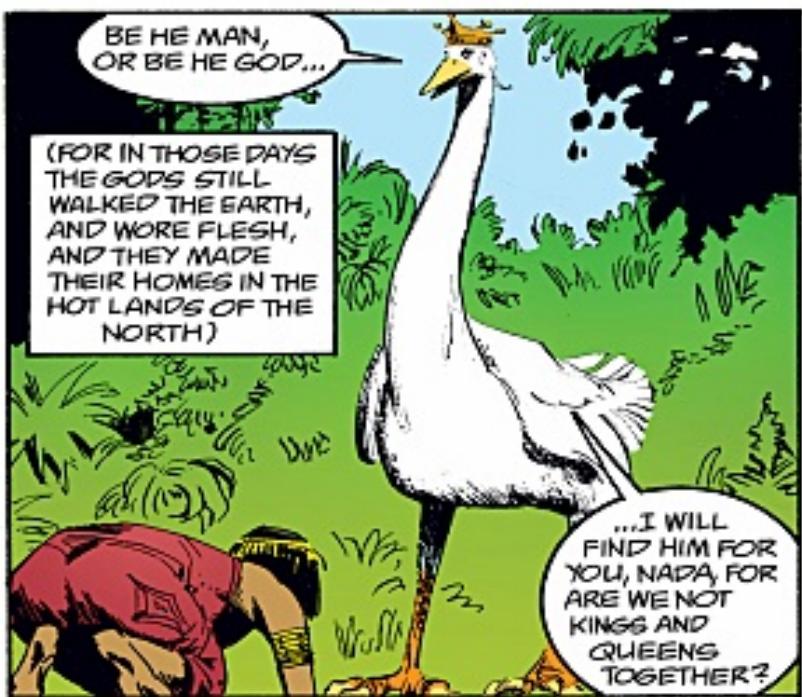
THE QUEEN ORDERED THAT MEN GO OUT AND FIND THE STRANGER. AND THEY HUNTED IN THE FORESTS AND ON THE MOUNTAINS, AND IN THE DESERTS, BUT THEY COULD NOT FIND THE MAN.

AND NADA WEPT INSIDE, FOR SHE KNEW THAT SHE HAD FOUND HER LOVE, AND LOST HIM.



BE HE MAN,
OR BE HE GOD...

(FOR IN THOSE DAYS
THE GODS STILL
WALKED THE EARTH,
AND WORE FLESH,
AND THEY MADE
THEIR HOMES IN THE
HOT LANDS OF THE
NORTH)



AND THE GREAT BIRD
SUMMONED ALL THE
BIRDS OF THE AIR TO
HIS THRONE, AND HE
DEMANDED OF ALL
OF THEM,

HAVE
YOU SEEN THIS
MAN?

AND EACH BIRD SAID "NO", UNTIL
IT SEEMED THAT THERE WERE NO
BIRDS LEFT.

BUT THERE
WAS ONE MORE
BIRD, A WHITE
WEAVERBIRD, SO
TINY THEY HAD
OVERLOOKED
IT.

"LITTLE
WEAVERBIRD," SAID
THE BIRD KING, "HAVE
YOU SEEN THIS
MAN?"



THE LITTLE BIRD NODDED.
SHE HAD SEEN THE MAN,
LATE ONE NIGHT, BENEATH
THE MOON. HE HAD SMILED
AT HER, AND GIVEN HER
GRAIN TO EAT.

THEN HE HAD
VANISHED.



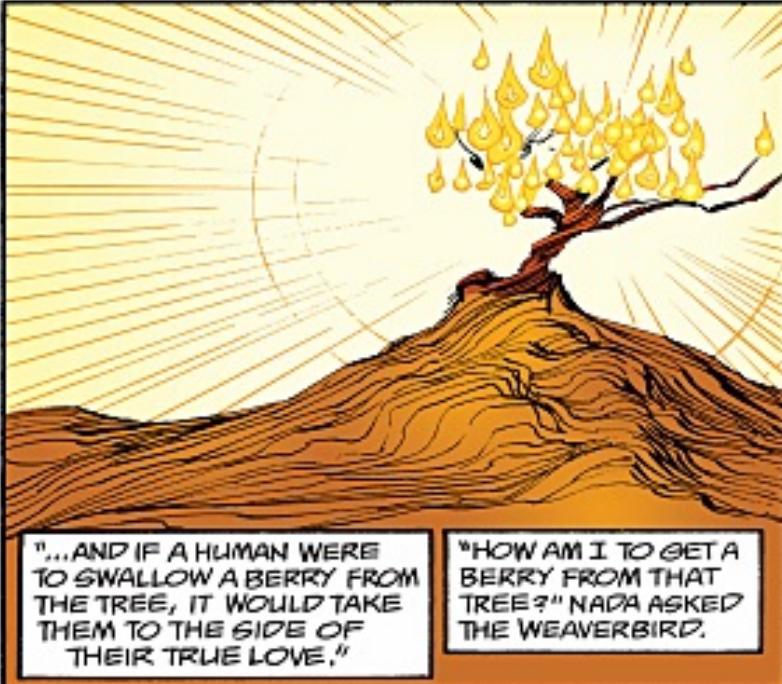
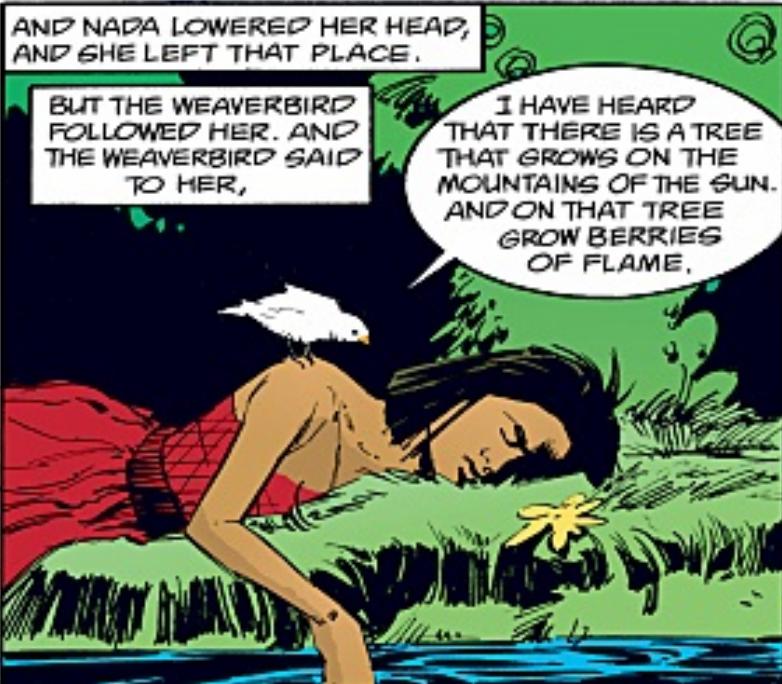
THE BIRD KING
NODDED.



AND NADA LOWERED HER HEAD,
AND SHE LEFT THAT PLACE.

BUT THE WEAVERBIRD
FOLLOWED HER. AND THE WEAVERBIRD SAID
TO HER,

I HAVE HEARD
THAT THERE IS A TREE
THAT GROWS ON THE
MOUNTAINS OF THE SUN.
AND ON THAT TREE
GROW BERRIES
OF FLAME.



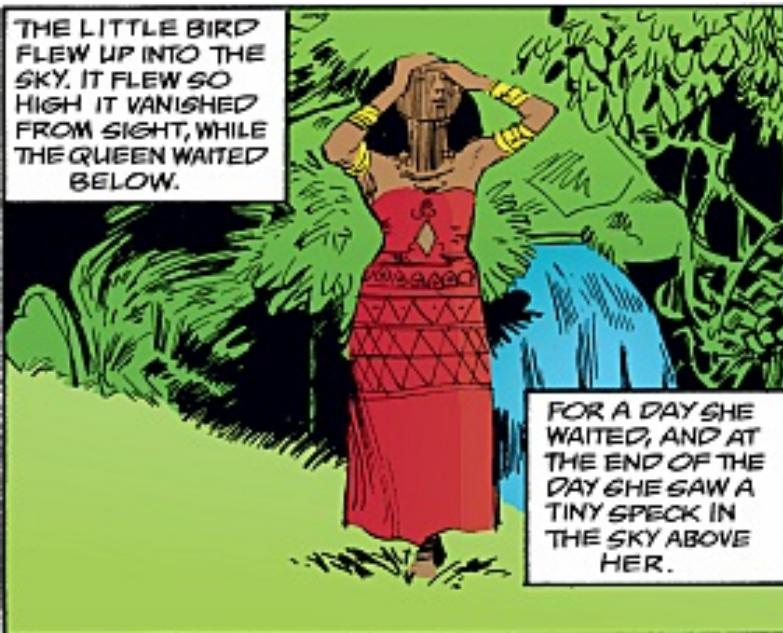
"...AND IF A HUMAN WERE
TO SWALLOW A BERRY FROM
THE TREE, IT WOULD TAKE
THEM TO THE SIDE OF
THEIR TRUE LOVE."

"HOW AM I TO GET A
BERRY FROM THAT
TREE?" NADA ASKED
THE WEAVERBIRD.

...AND THE
LITTLE BIRD SAID,
"I WILL FETCH IT
FOR YOU."



THE LITTLE BIRD FLEW UP INTO THE SKY. IT FLEW SO HIGH IT VANISHED FROM SIGHT, WHILE THE QUEEN WAITED BELOW.



FOR A DAY SHE WAITED, AND AT THE END OF THE DAY SHE SAW A TINY SPECK IN THE SKY ABOVE HER.



IT WAS THE WEAVERBIRD, BUT IT HAD BEEN BURNT A DEEP BROWN BY THE HEAT OF THE SUN, AND IN ITS BEAK IT CARRIED A BERRY FROM THE TREES THAT GROW ON THE MOUNTAINS OF THE SUN.



(THAT IS WHY TO THIS DAY THE WEAVERBIRD IS BROWN.)

THE WEAVERBIRD DROPPED THE FLAMING BERRY OF THE SUN-TREE ON THE GROUND IN FRONT OF NADA, AND THE QUEEN PICKED UP THE WEAVERBIRD, AND SAID TO IT...



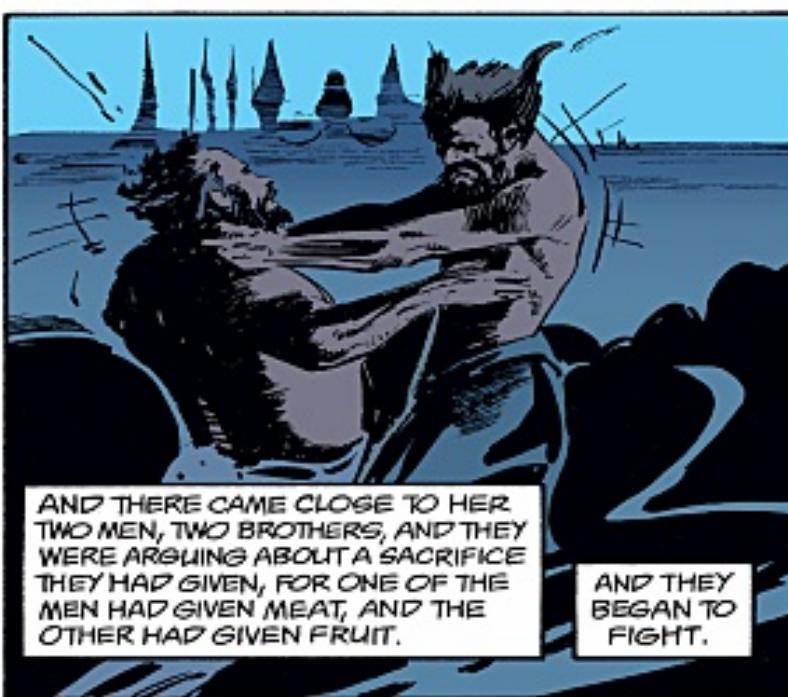
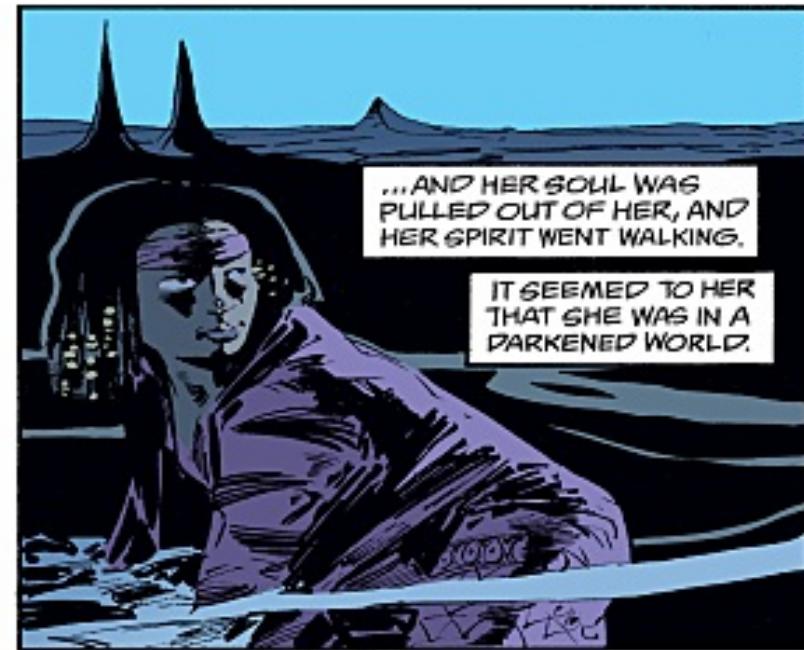
FOR WHAT YOU HAVE DONE, NO ONE OF THIS LAND WILL EVER HARM YOU OR YOUR KIND, LITTLE BIRD.



SO IT IS FORBIDDEN TO EAT WEAVERBIRD FLESH, OR TO HARM A WEAVERBIRD, AND THAT IS WHY WE LET THEM WEAVE THEIR NESTS IN OUR VILLAGES.

AND NADA WENT BACK TO HER PALACE...

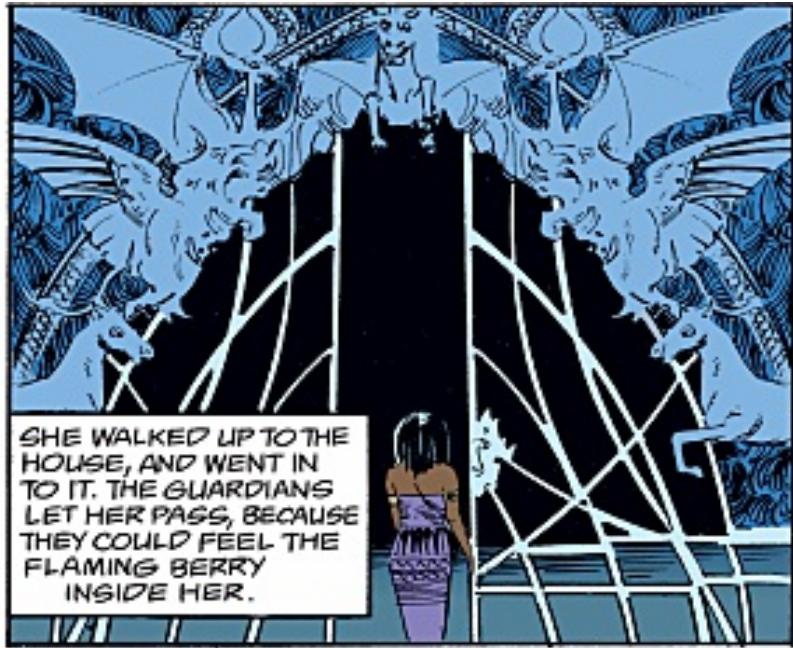
AND SHE WENT TO HER ROOM, AND SHE SWALLOWED THE FIRE-BERRY, THOUGH IT SEARED HER THROAT. AND SHE FELL DOWN, AS IF IN A DEEP SLEEP...



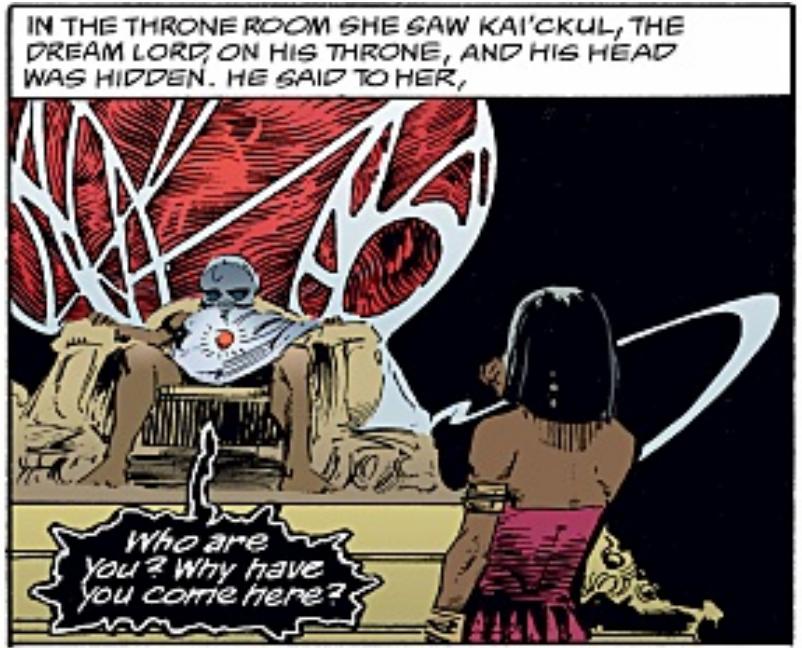
AND THERE CAME CLOSE TO HER TWO MEN, TWO BROTHERS, AND THEY WERE ARGUING ABOUT A SACRIFICE THEY HAD GIVEN, FOR ONE OF THE MEN HAD GIVEN MEAT, AND THE OTHER HAD GIVEN FRUIT.

AND THEY BEGAN TO FIGHT.





SHE WALKED UP TO THE HOUSE, AND WENT IN TO IT. THE GUARDIANS LET HER PASS, BECAUSE THEY COULD FEEL THE FLAMING BERRY INSIDE HER.



Who are you? Why have you come here?



I SEEK A STRANGER, FOR I LOVE HIM. FLAMES DANCE IN THE BLACKNESS OF HIS ROBE, AND HIS EYES ARE STARS IN POOLS OF DEEP WATER.

HE CAME TO MY TOWER ONE NIGHT, AND LOOKED UP AT ME, BUT HE SAID NOTHING.



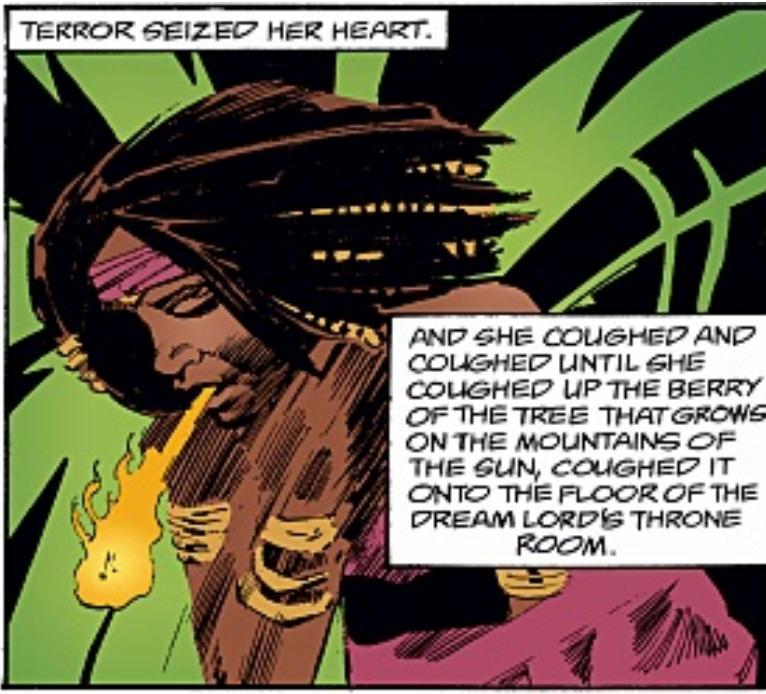
AT THIS, KAI'CKUL REMOVED HIS HELMET, AND SHE SAW BEFORE HER THE STRANGER WHO HAD STOOD BENEATH HER HOUSE IN THE CITY OF GLASS.



AND HER HEART SANK WITHIN HER, FOR SHE HAD CONFESSED HER LOVE TO ONE OF THE ENDLESS, WHO ARE NOT GODS, AND WILL NEVER DIE LIKE GODS.

AND IN THE TWIN STARS OF HIS EYES SHE SAW HE LOVED HER TOO.

TERROR SEIZED HER HEART.



AND SHE COUGHED AND COUGHED UNTIL SHE COUGHED UP THE BERRY OF THE TREE THAT GROWS ON THE MOUNTAINS OF THE SUN, COUGHED IT ONTO THE FLOOR OF THE DREAM LORD'S THRONE ROOM.

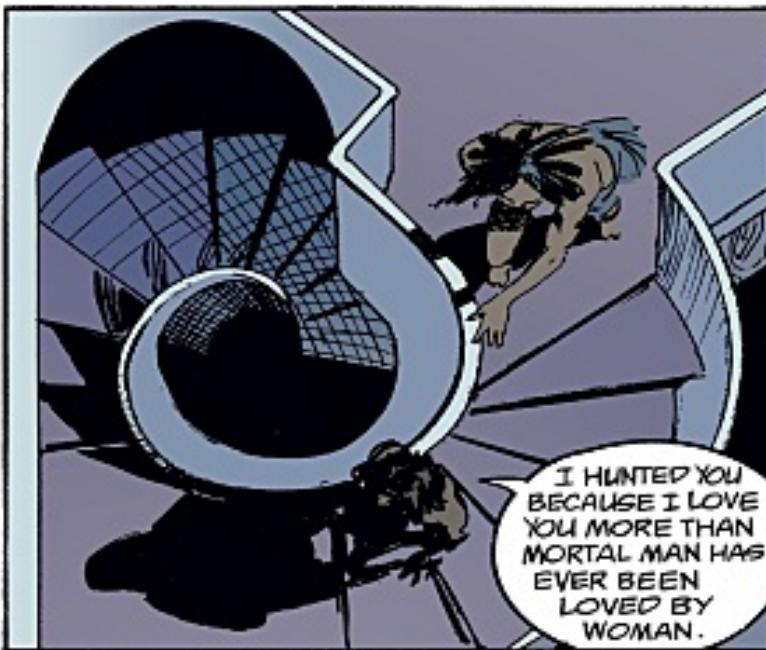
AND SHE AWOKE TO HER OWN ROOM. STANDING BESIDE HER WAS THE DREAMLORD.



Why did you hunt me?

HE ASKED HER.

Why do you flee me?



I HUNTED YOU BECAUSE I LOVE YOU MORE THAN MORTAL MAN HAS EVER BEEN LOVED BY WOMAN.

AND I FLED YOU BECAUSE IT IS NOT GIVEN TO MORTALS TO LOVE THE ENDLESS.

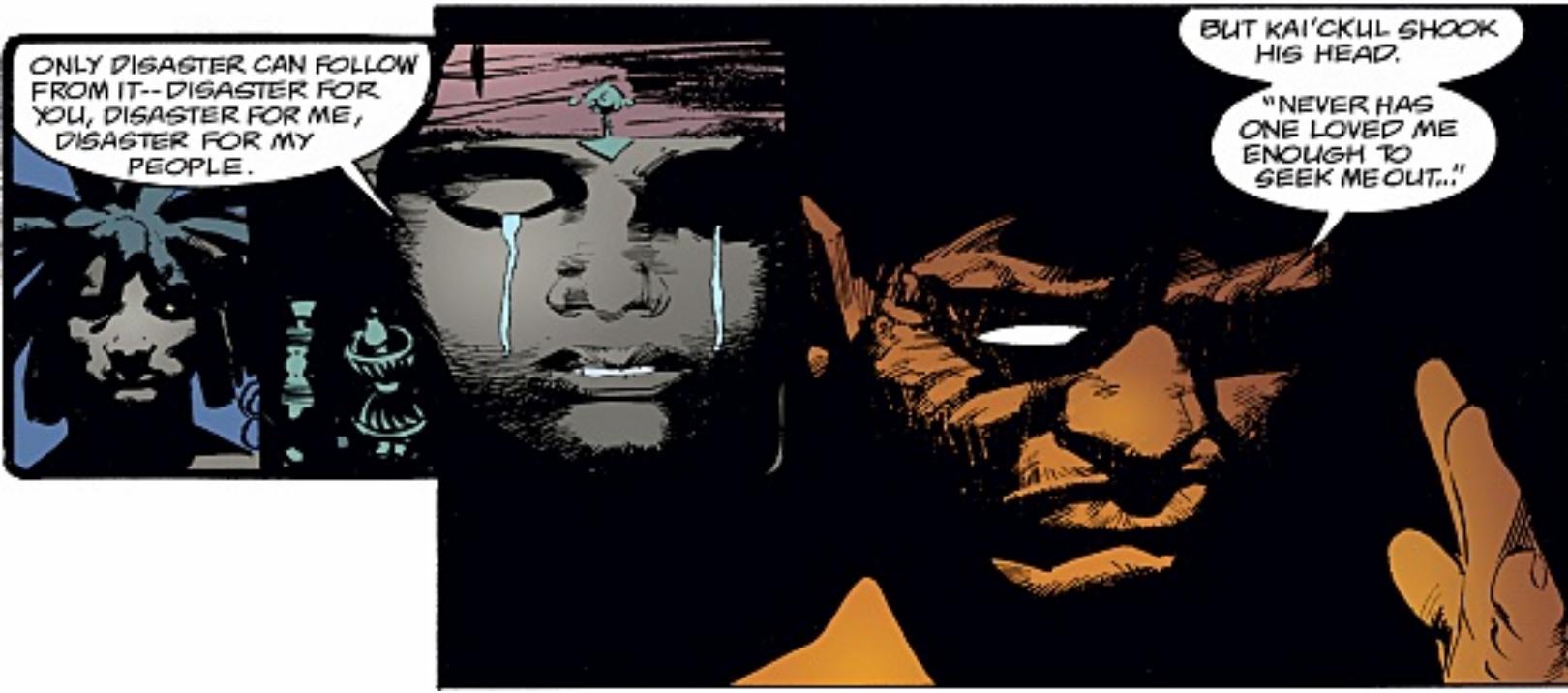


ONLY DISASTER CAN FOLLOW FROM IT--DISASTER FOR YOU, DISASTER FOR ME, DISASTER FOR MY PEOPLE.



BUT KAI'CKUL SHOOK HIS HEAD.

"NEVER HAS ONE LOVED ME ENOUGH TO SEEK ME OUT..."





Never have I seen another woman
I would take for my own. I would
marry you, Nada, and make you
queen of my Dreamworld...



...to rule the dreams
of all that dream by my
side, to be with me forever,
never to die as mankind
knows death.



And this I swear by
the ruby on my chest.



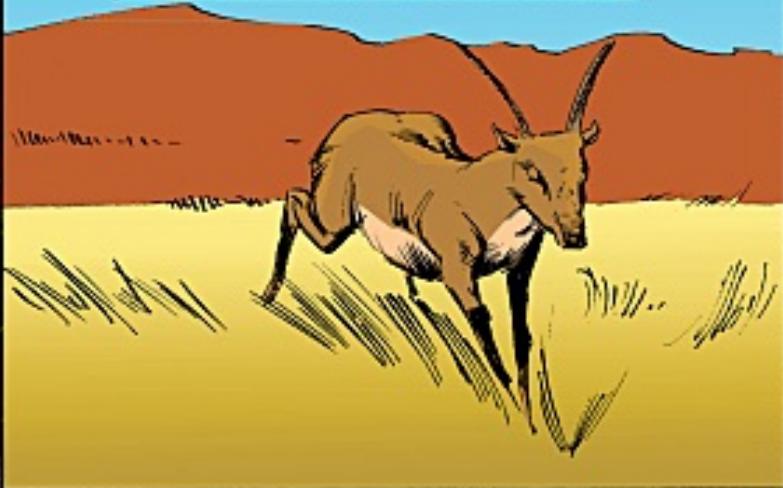
AND AT THIS NADA WAS DEATHLY AFRAID, FOR
THOUGH SHE LOVED HIM, SHE KNEW THIS WAS NOT
MEANT TO BE, AND SHE COULD NOT COUNTENANCE
HIS DESTRUCTION, AND HERS.



FOR LOVE IS
NO PART OF THE DREAM-
WORLD. LOVE BELONGS
TO DESIRE, AND DESIRE
IS ALWAYS CRUEL.



SO NADA TOOK THE FORM OF A GAZELLE AND SHE RAN UNTIL SHE COULD RUN NO MORE.



BUT HE CAME AFTER HER AS A HUNTER, AND SLEW THE GAZELLE.



THEN SHE TOOK ON HER OWN FORM AGAIN AND RAN INTO THE WASTELAND.

STILL HE PURSUED HER. SHE CLIMBED A HIGH MOUNTAIN, BUT STILL HE CAME ON.



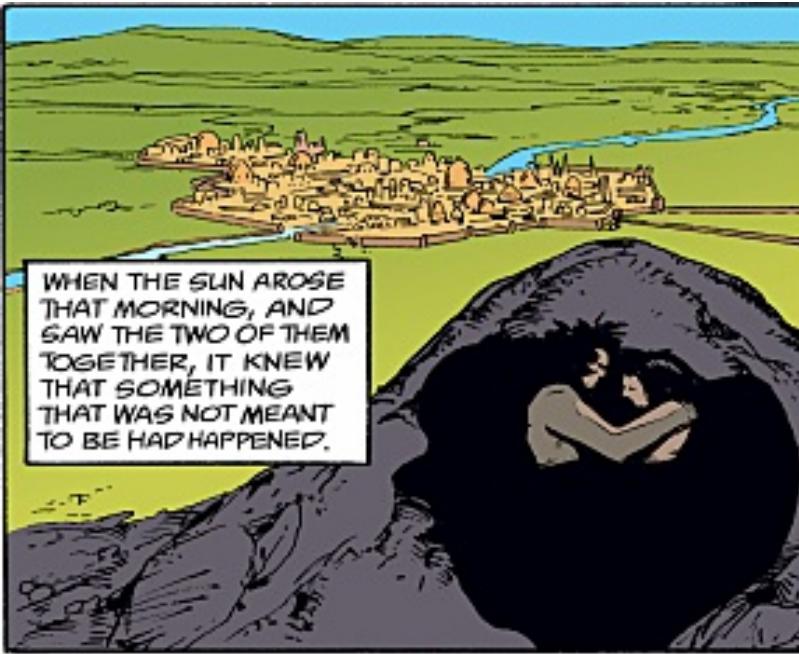
"HE WANTS ME TO BE HIS BRIDE," SHE THOUGHT, "SO IF I GIVE UP MY VIRGINITY HE WILL NOT WANT ME."



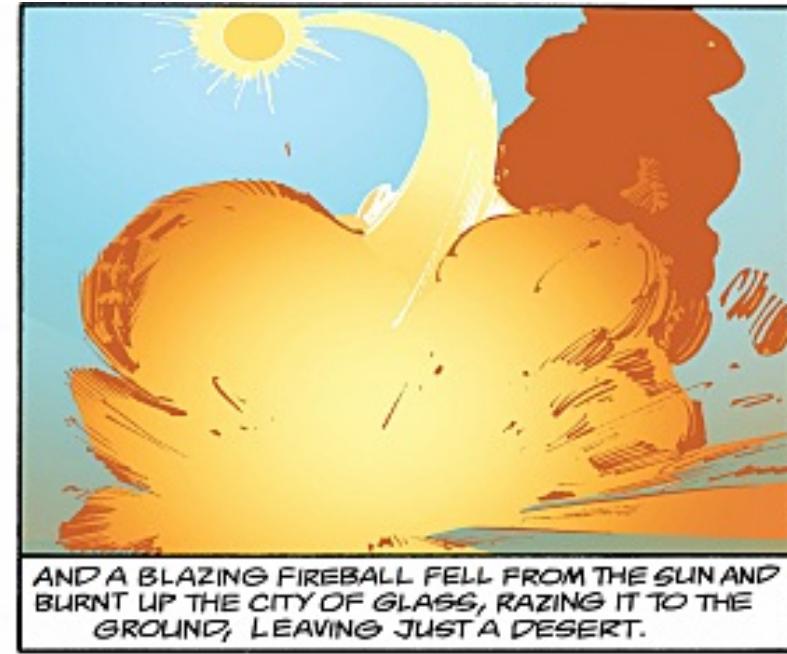
AND SHE TOOK A SHARP ROCK, AND WITH IT SHE TOOK HER MAIDENHEAD...







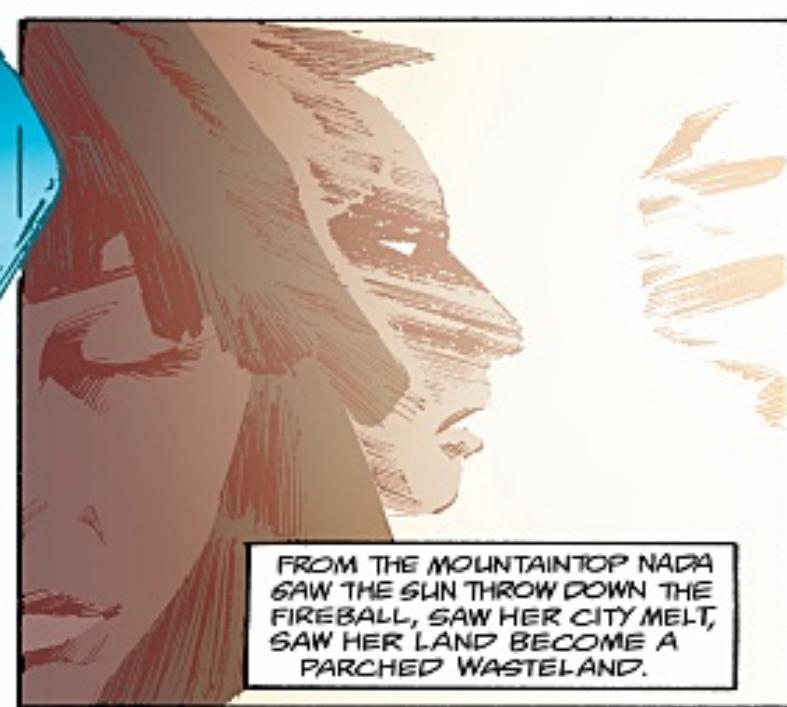
WHEN THE SUN AROSE THAT MORNING, AND SAW THE TWO OF THEM TOGETHER, IT KNEW THAT SOMETHING THAT WAS NOT MEANT TO BE HAD HAPPENED.



AND A BLAZING FIREBALL FELL FROM THE SUN AND BURNT UP THE CITY OF GLASS, RAZING IT TO THE GROUND, LEAVING JUST A DESERT.



--A DESERT STREWN WITH SHARDS OF GLASS, JUST LIKE THIS ONE.



FROM THE MOUNTaintop NADA SAW THE SUN THROW DOWN THE FIREBALL, SAW HER CITY MELT, SAW HER LAND BECOME A PARCHED WASTELAND.



"THIS IS BECAUSE OF WHAT WE DID," SHE SAID TO HIM, "AND WORSE WILL COME IF I STAY BY YOUR SIDE."

AND THEN SHE TOOK THE DREAMLORD,
HER LOVER, BY THE HAND, AS LOVERS DO.

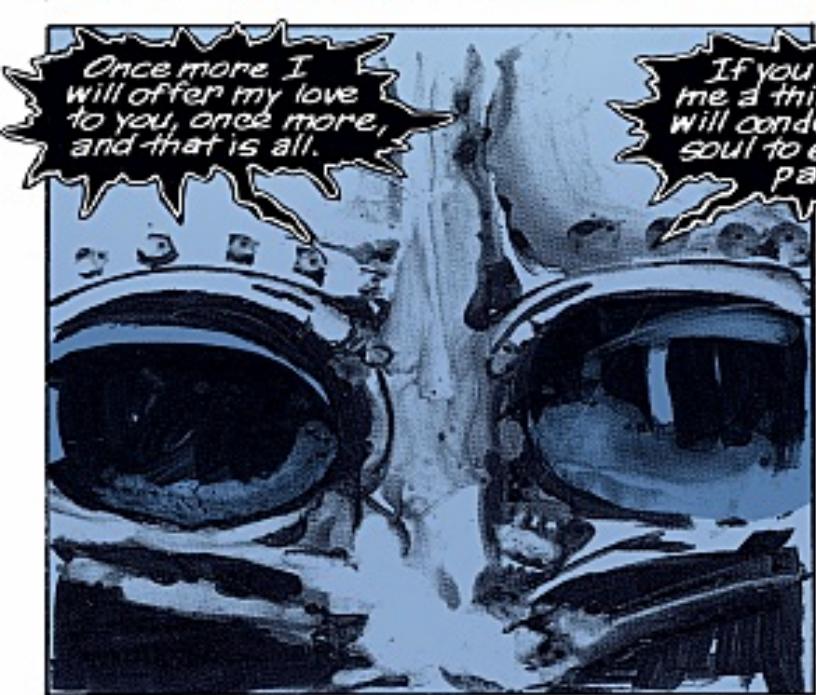
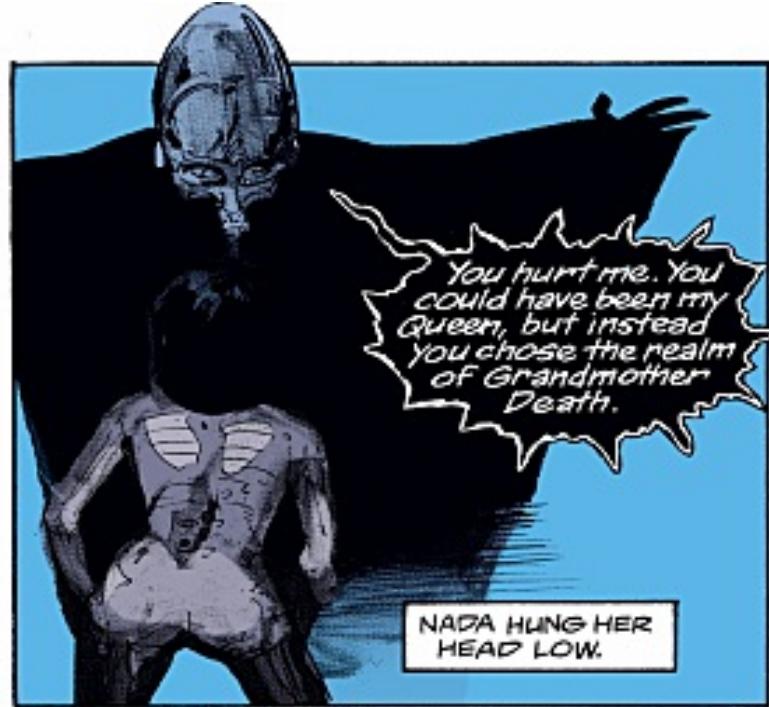
SHE PRESSED
HERSELF TO
HIM.

THEN SHE RELEASED HIS
HAND, AND BEFORE HE
KNEW WHAT SHE WAS
ABOUT, NADA THREW
HERSELF OFF THE
MOUNTaintop, AND HER
BODY WAS DASHED TO
DEATH ON THE ROCKS
BELOW.

AND THIS IS ALSO IN
THE TALE, AND THIS IS
THE WAY MY MOTHER'S
BROTHER TOLD THIS TO
ME, AND HIS FATHER
TOLD IT TO HIM...

...AND BACK
AND BACK THROUGH
UNCOUNTED
GENERATIONS.

AFTER NADA DIED, HER SPIRIT AWOKE TO ITSELF IN THE FOREST ON THE BORDERS OF THE REALM OF DEATH.



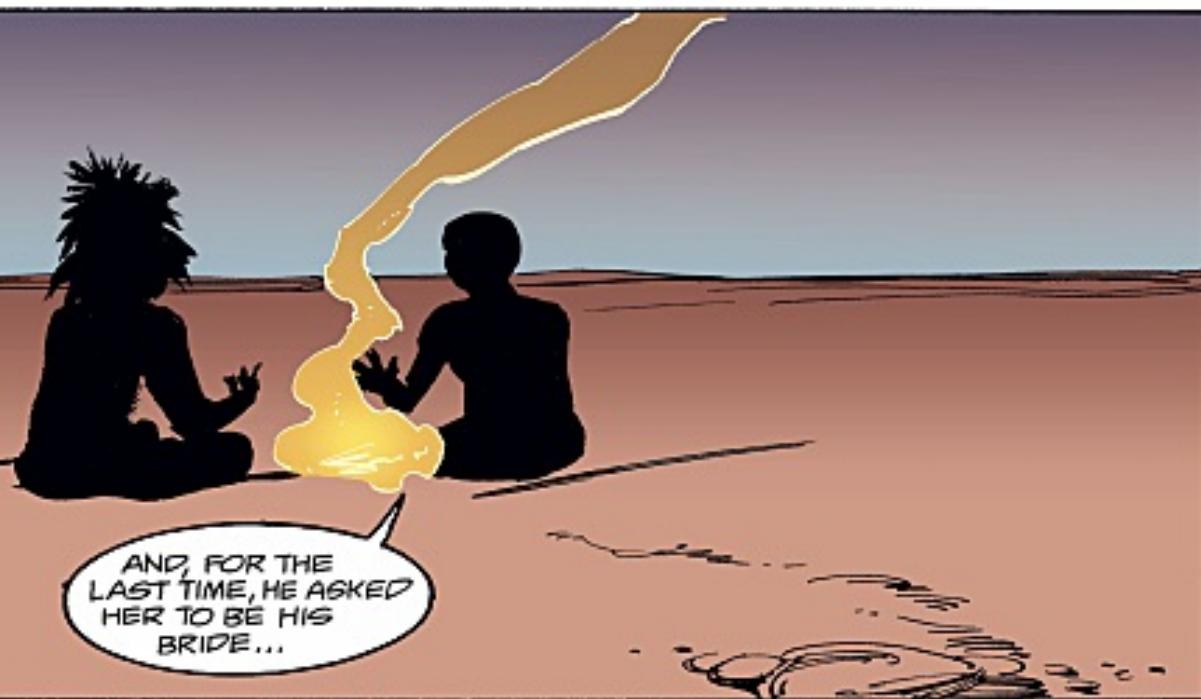


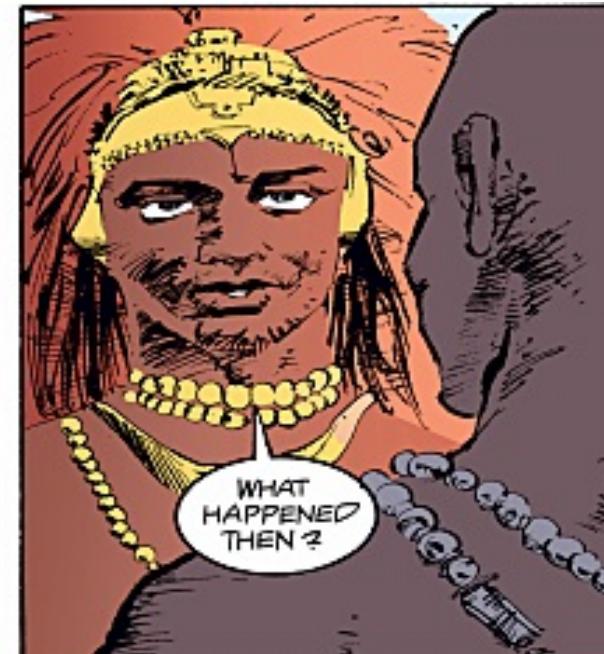
BUT HE
CAUGHT UP
WITH HER.

"PLEASE," SHE
BEGGED HIM.

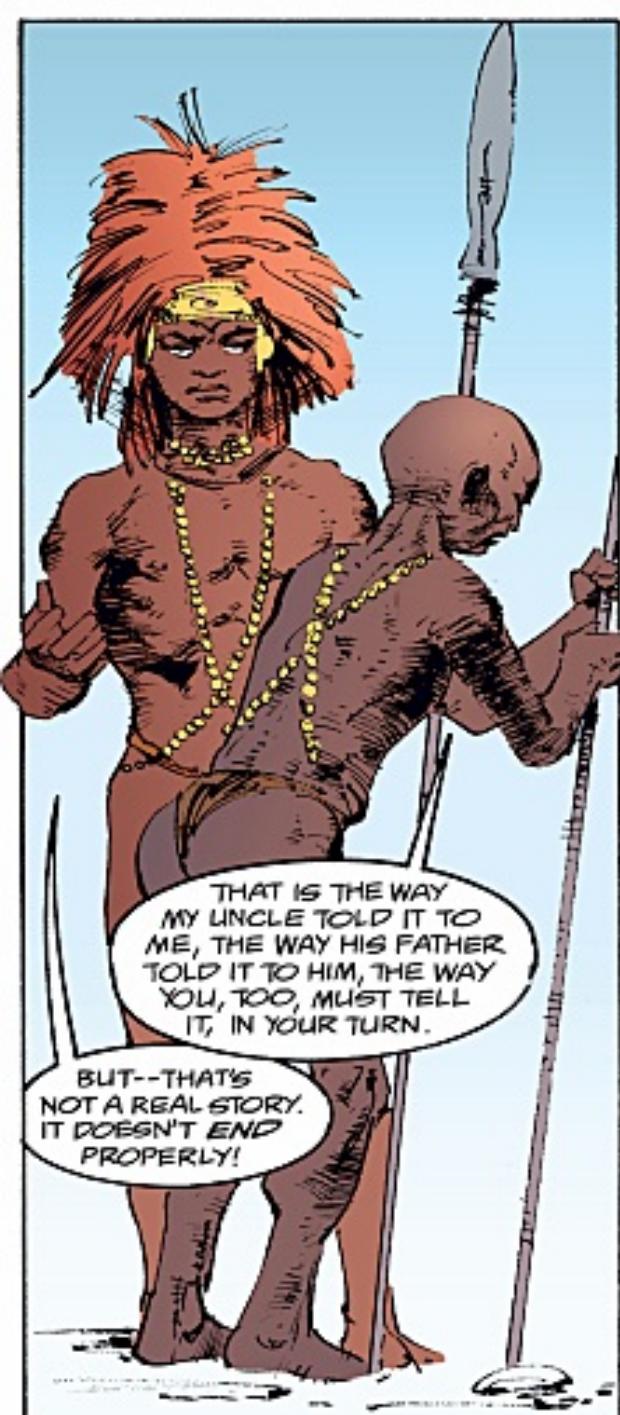
DO NOT ASK ME
AGAIN TO BE
YOUR BRIDE.

FOR IF YOU ASK ME, I
MUST REFUSE YOU AGAIN,
AND IF I DO THAT YOU
WILL CONDEMN ME TO
ETERNAL SUFFERING.





THAT IS THE STORY.
THAT IS ALL THERE
IS.



HERE. TAKE THIS
SHARD OF GLASS, PUT
IT DOWN SOMEWHERE.

PERHAPS YOUR SON,
OR YOUR GRANDSON WILL
FIND IT, WHEN YOU BRING
HIM OUT HERE TO TELL
HIM THE TALE.

THE FIRE HAS
BURNED OUT, AND THE
SUN WILL RISE SOON.
NOW WE MUST MAKE
OUR WAY BACK TO
THE TRIBE.

YOU HAVE LOST
YOUR FORESKIN, AND
YOU HAVE HEARD THE
TALE.

THAT MAKES
YOU TRULY A
MAN.

LET US GO.
THE TALE IS OVER,
AND MY BONES
GROW COLD.

THERE IS ANOTHER VERSION
OF THE TALE.

THAT IS THE TALE THE WOMEN
TELL EACH OTHER, IN THEIR
PRIVATE LANGUAGE THAT THE
MEN-CHILDREN ARE NOT TAUGHT,
AND THAT THE OLD MEN ARE TOO
WISE TO LEARN.

AND IN THAT VERSION OF THE
TALE PERHAPS THINGS
HAPPENED DIFFERENTLY.

BUT THEN, THAT IS A WOMEN'S
TALE, AND IT IS NEVER TOLD
TO MEN.

FIN



DOLL'S HOUSE PART ONE



THE DOLL'S HOUSE

THERE IS ONLY ONE THING
TO SEE IN THE TWILIGHT
REALM OF DESIRE.

IT IS CALLED THE THRESHOLD.
THE FORTRESS OF DESIRE.

DESIRE HAS ALWAYS
LIVED ON THE EDGE.

THE THRESHOLD IS LARGER
THAN YOU CAN EASILY
IMAGINE. IT IS A STATUE
OF DESIRE, HIM-, HER-
OR IT-SELF.

(DESIRE HAS NEVER BEEN
SATISFIED WITH JUST ONE
SEX. OR JUST ONE OF
ANYTHING -- EXCEPTING ONLY
PERHAPS THE THRESHOLD
ITSELF.)

THE THRESHOLD IS A
PORTRAIT OF DESIRE,
COMPLETE IN ALL DETAILS,
BUILT FROM THE FANCY OF
DESIRE OUT OF BLOOD,
AND FLESH, AND BONE,
AND SKIN.

AND, LIKE EVERY TRUE
CITADEL SINCE TIME
BEGAN, THE THRESHOLD
IS INHABITED.

NEIL GAIMAN,
WRITER

MIKE DRINGENBERG &
MALCOLM JONES III,
ARTISTS

ZYLONOL,
COLORIST

TODD KLEIN,
LETTERER

ART YOUNG,
ASSOC. EDITOR

KAREN BERGER,
EDITOR

THERE IS ONLY ONE OCCUPANT, AT THIS TIME.

DESIRE OF THE ENDLESS.

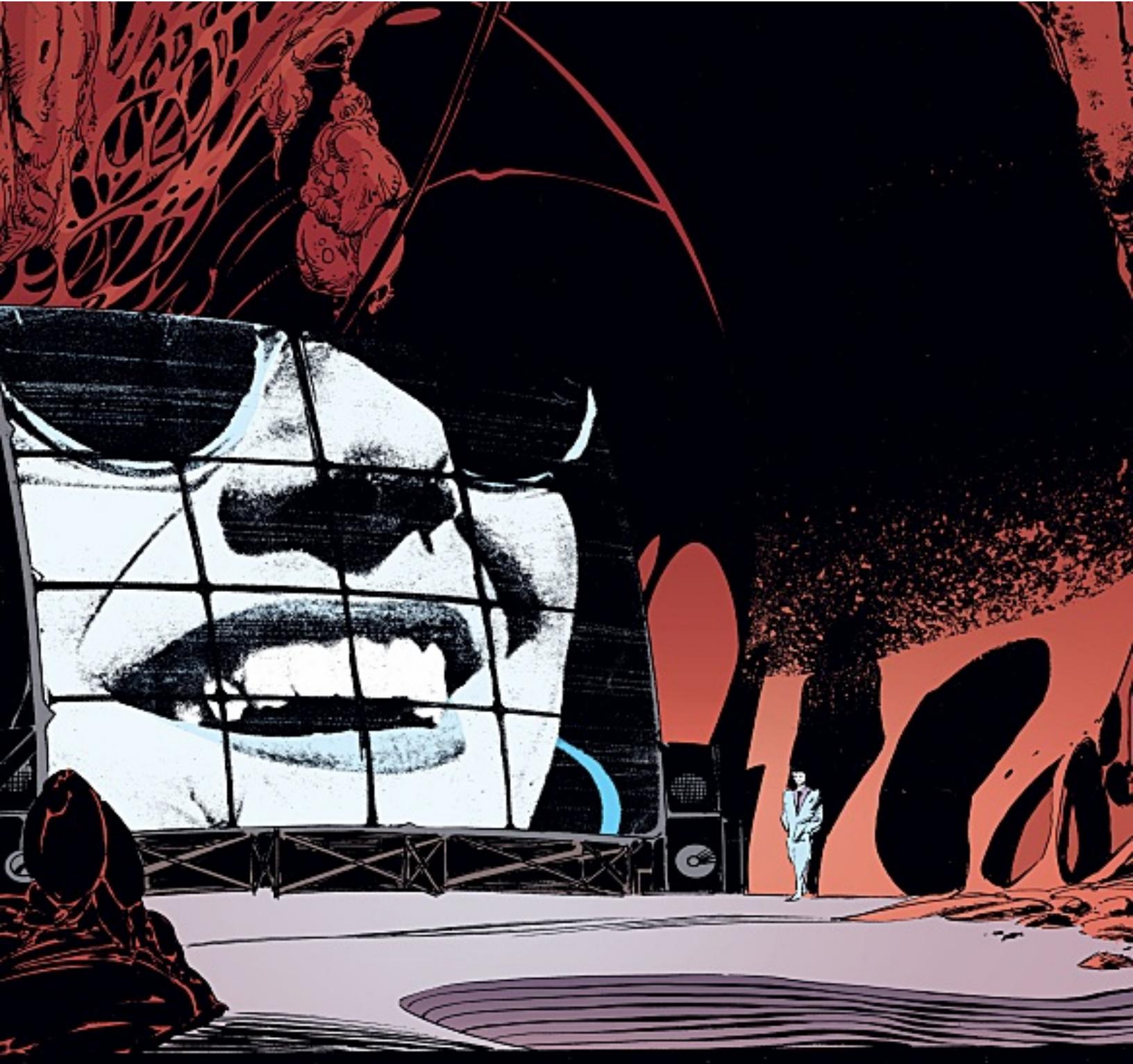
THE THRESHOLD IS FAR TOO LARGE FOR JUST ONE PERSON.

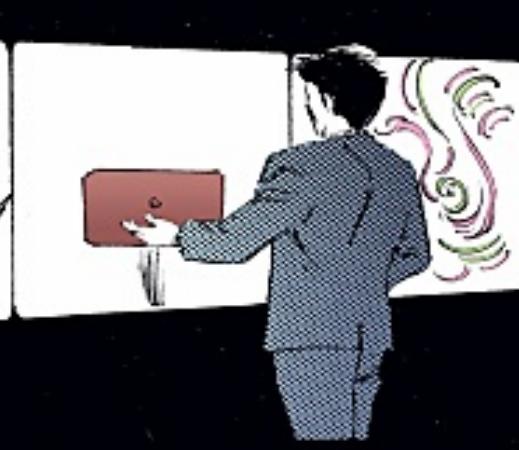
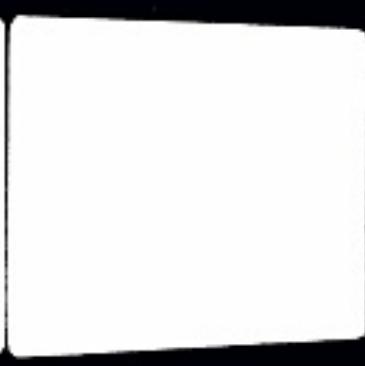
IT CONTAINS TWO EARDRUMS LARGER THAN A DOZEN MARBLE BALLROOMS.

AND EMPTY, ECHOING VEINS, LIKE TUNNELS. YOU WILL WALK THEM UNTIL YOU GROW OLD AND DIE WITHOUT ONCE RETRACING YOUR STEPS.

GIVEN DESIRE'S TEMPERAMENT, HOWEVER, THERE WAS ONLY ONE PLACE IN THE CATHEDRAL OF ITS BODY TO MAKE ITS HOME.

DESIRE LIVES IN THE HEART.







MOM WOKE ME UP WHEN WE WERE COMING IN FOR A LANDING. MY LEGS WERE CRAMPED AND I FELT GENERALLY SHITTY.

WAKE UP, ROSE. HONEY, WE'RE ALMOST THERE, FASTEN YOUR SEAT BELT.

ROSE? WAKE UP.

MM... MOM...?

I HAD SUCH A WEIRD DREAM. THERE WAS THIS HUGE, FAT BRITISH GUY, AND THESE WOMEN, AND WE WERE LIVING IN THIS HOUSE...

YOU WERE IN THE DREAM...

AND I FOUND JED AGAIN...

MOM WASN'T INTERESTED IN DREAMS, BACK THEN.

ROSE, JUST FASTEN YOUR SEATBELT.

THIS AIRPORT, GATWICK, IS IT NEAR LONDON?

HOW SHOULD I KNOW?

GACK! TASTES LIKE SOMETHING DIED IN MY MOUTH A COUPLE HOURS BACK...

YEAH? I GOT SOME BREATH FRESHENER SOMEWHERE IN MY BAG.

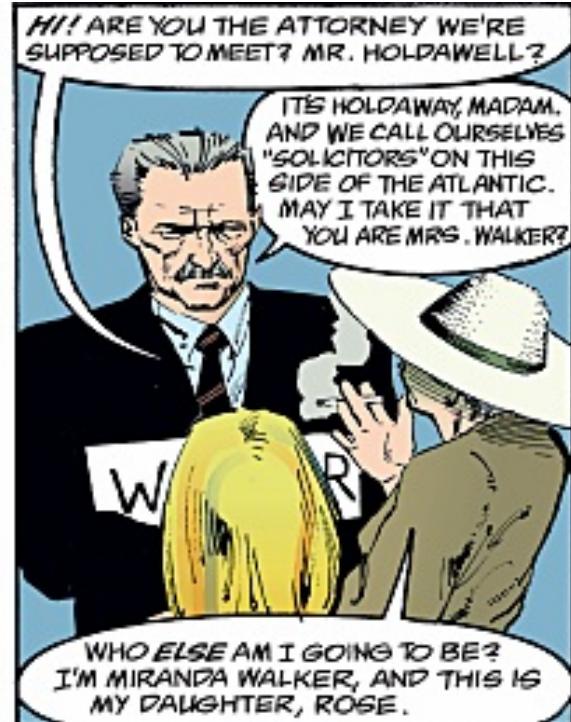
IT'S SO GREEN! LOOK AT THOSE FIELDS! OUR FIRST TIME IN ENGLAND...

IT'S NOT YOUR FIRST TIME, MOM. YOU WERE BORN HERE.

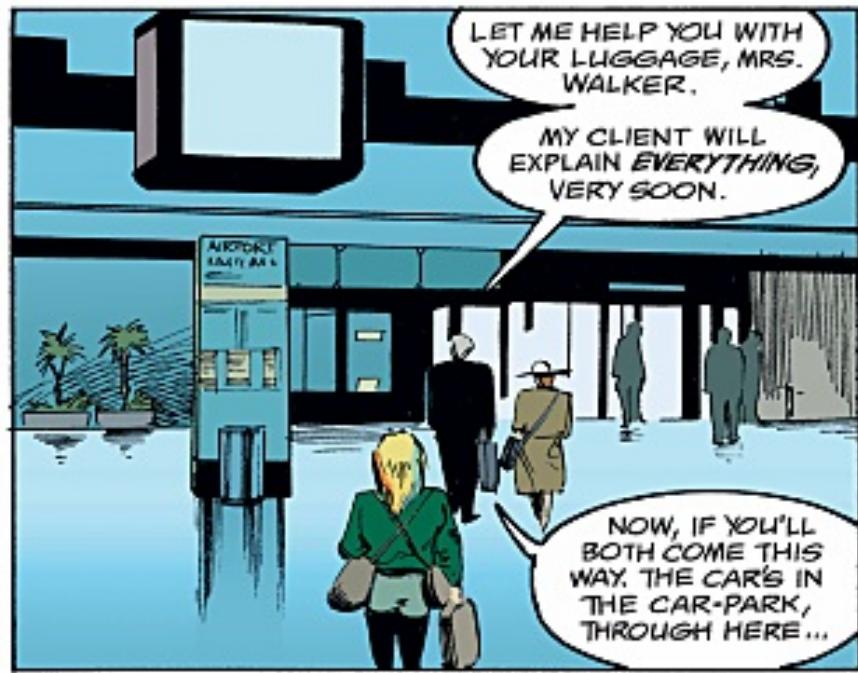
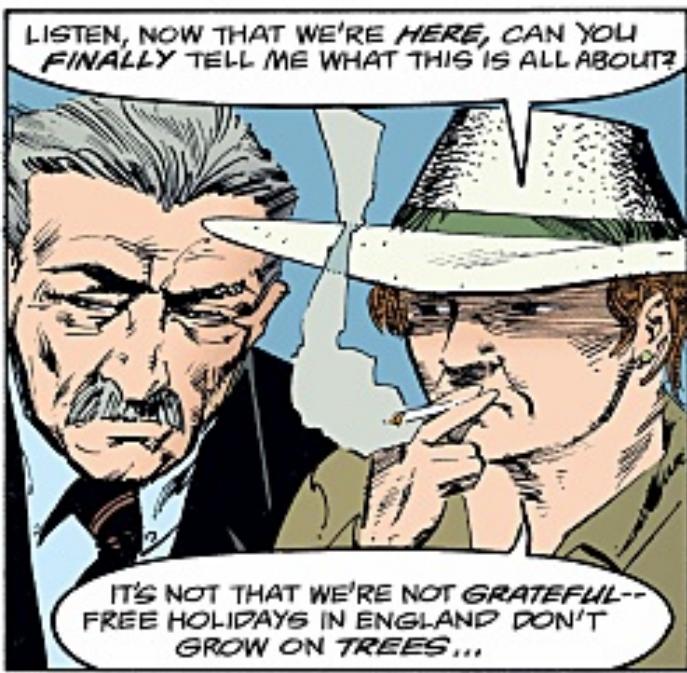
THAT WAS A LONG TIME AGO, HON. I WAS JUST A TINY KID WHEN MOM AND POP WENT TO THE STATES.

I DON'T REMEMBER.

IT TOOK ABOUT AN HOUR FOR US TO GET OUR BAGS AND CLEAR CUSTOMS.



HE WAS LIKE SOMETHING FROM MASTERPIECE THEATER. I COULD TELL MOM WAS IMPRESSED. I WASN'T.

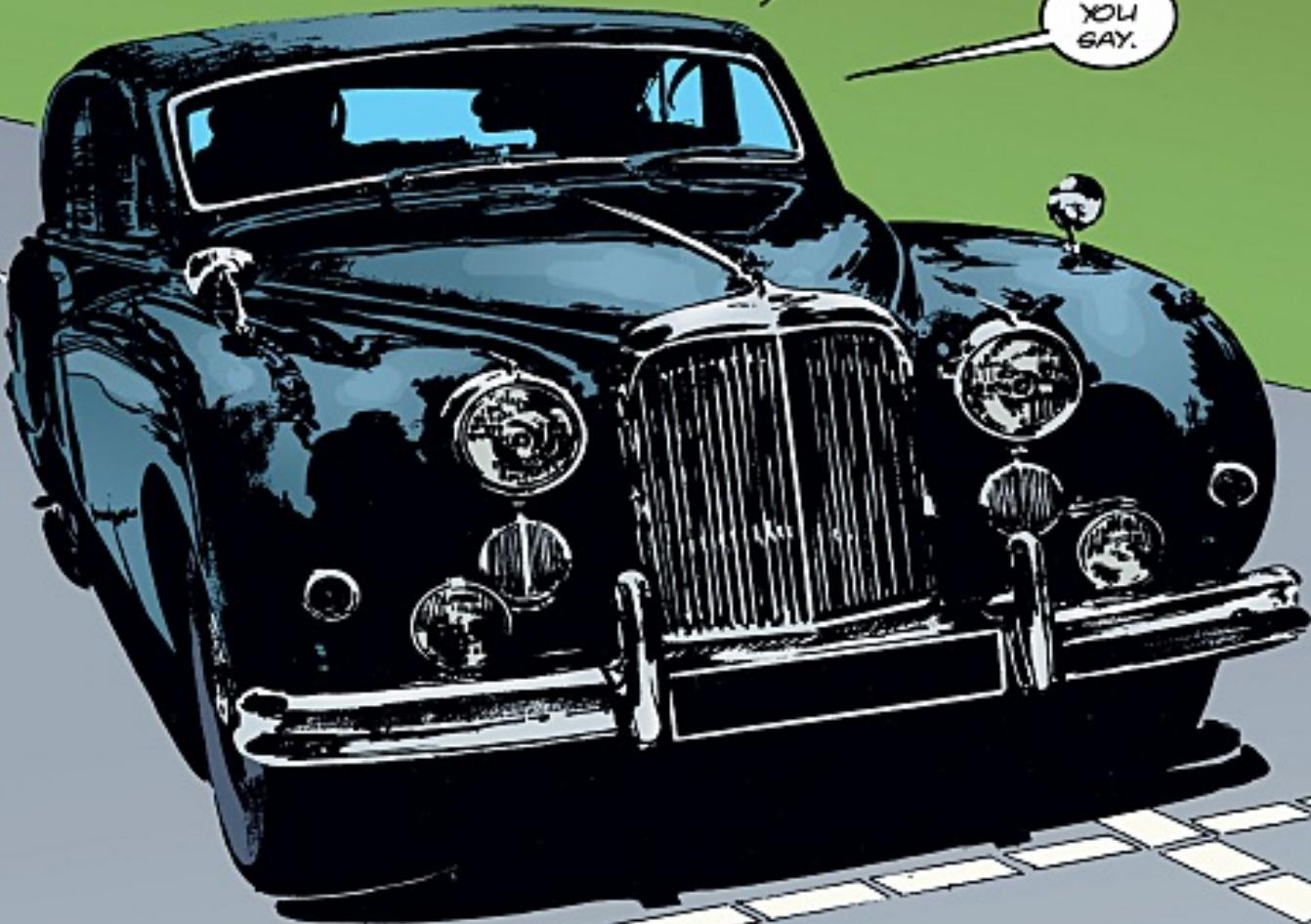


IT'S NOT THAT WE'RE NOT GRATEFUL-- FREE HOLIDAYS IN ENGLAND DON'T GROW ON TREES...

FIVE MINUTES OUTSIDE THE AIRPORT
AND WE WERE DRIVING THROUGH THE
BRITISH COUNTRYSIDE. I WAS
UNDERWHELMED, BUT MOM SEEMED
TO LIKE IT.

WOW. IT'S ALL SO
GREEN. MUST BE ALL
THE RAIN, HUH?

AS
YOU
SAY.



SO WHEN DO
WE MEET OUR
MYSTERIOUS
BENEFATOR
THEN, MR.
HOLDAWAY?

MY CLIENT LIVES
ABOUT TWENTY MINUTES
FROM HERE.

HE MUST BE VERY
RICH. TO FLY US ALL THE
WAY OVER HERE FOR
TWO WEEKS.

YES, YES,
SHE IS.

I WAS SO
EXCITED WHEN I GOT
YOUR LETTER! I PHONED
ROSE, AND I SAID,
ROSE, WE'RE GOING
TO ENGLAND!

SHE THOUGHT IT
WAS SOME KIND OF
PRACTICAL JOKE AT
FIRST--ISN'T THAT
RIGHT, ROSE?

ROSE?

SHE?
OH...

FALLEN ASLEEP
AGAIN...

ABEL... IF I
WANTED SILLY
TITTLE-TATTLE AND
HEDGE GOSSIP ABOUT
SWIRLING THINGS, I
I WOULD HAVE ASKED
YOU FOR IT.

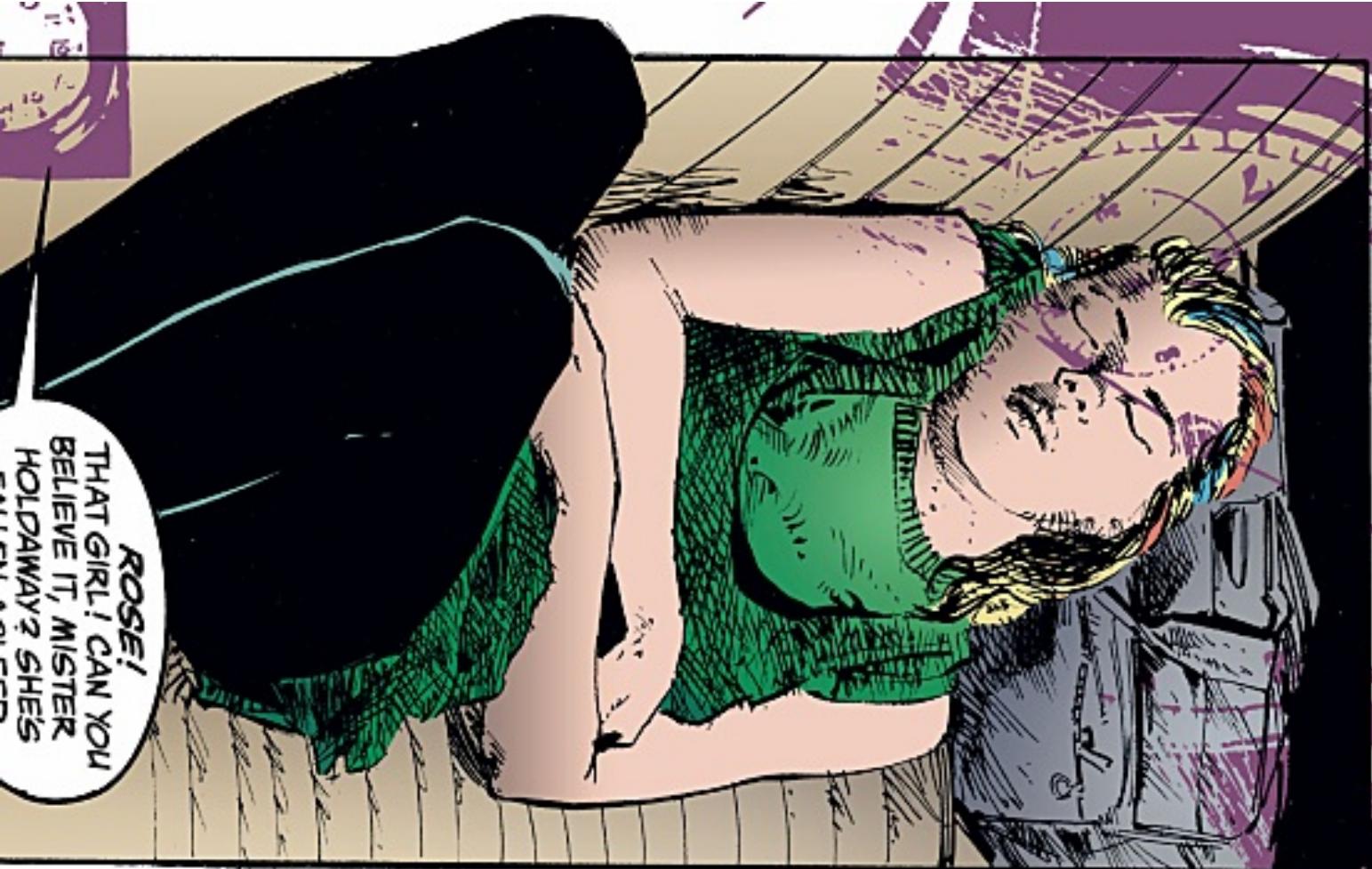
ALL I WANT IS
A LIST OF THE ENTITIES
THAT RESIDE HERE.

WHUWELL, HMM, IF YOU
PUH-PUT IT LIKE THAT,
THERE'S ME... AND, UHH,
THERE'S THE HOUSE ITSELF,
MM, OF COURSE, AND THE
B-BOTTLE IMP.

AND THERE'S
PUH-PROBABLY SOMETHING IN THE
UNSPEAKABLY NASTY IN THE
SUB-BUNBASEMENT, UH, MMM,
BUHBUT I, AHH, DON'T
EVER GO DOWN
THERE...

meep?

AH, OH MY, UH,
OH DEAR, I, AAH,
SEEM INADVERTENTLY
TO HAVE OMITTED
MY FUHFRIEND...
IT'S CALLED
GOLDIE.



THAT'S BETTER. SO... YOU,
ABEL, --CHECK; THE HOUSE OF
SECRETS--CHECK; BOTTLE IMP--
CHECK; SOMETHING NASTY IN THE
BASEMENT--CHECK; AND A BABY GARGOYLE
NAMED GOLDIE. HMM--A NEW ADDITION, EH?

THANK YOU, ABEL. EVERYTHING
SEEMS TO BE IN ORDER.

AND, UH, DON'T GO
SPREADING FOOLISH RUMORS,
EH?

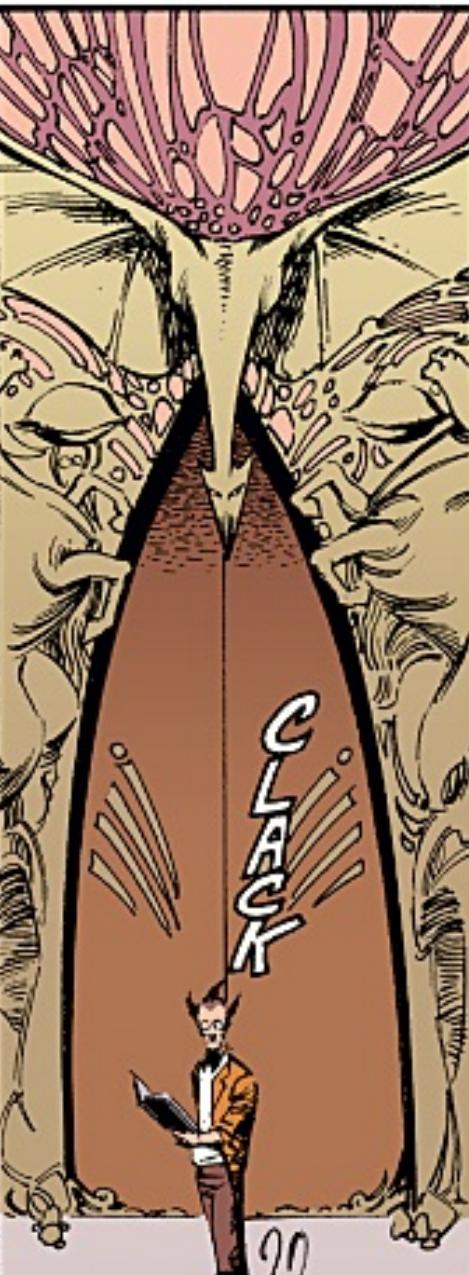
YES,
THANK YOU
AS WELL,
GOLDIE.

merk.

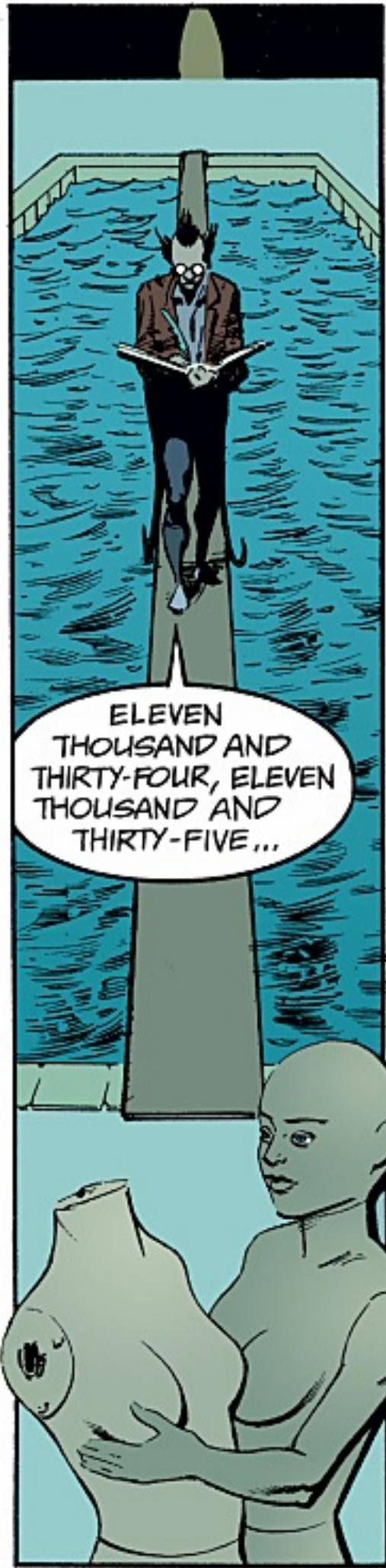


ELEVEN THOUSAND AND
TWO, ELEVEN THOUSAND
AND THREE...

CLICK



ELEVEN
THOUSAND AND
SEVENTEEN,
ELEVEN
THOUSAND AND
EIGHTEEN...



ELEVEN
THOUSAND AND
THIRTY-FOUR, ELEVEN
THOUSAND AND
THIRTY-FIVE...





"BRUTE AND GLOB, OF YOUR PALACE STAFF, SIRE, THEY VANISHED A FEW DECADES AGO--AS I SUPPOSED, TO THE FRINGES OF THE DREAMING. BUT THEY AREN'T ANYWHERE TO BE FOUND..."

"I NEVER TRUSTED THEM, MY LORD."

"It was not in their natures to be trustworthy, Lucien. Who else is missing?"

"WELL...THE CORINTHIAN."

"I see. That could well be bad news. The Corinthian is not the... most social...of nightmares."

"And the fourth?"

"FIDO NOT NOW"

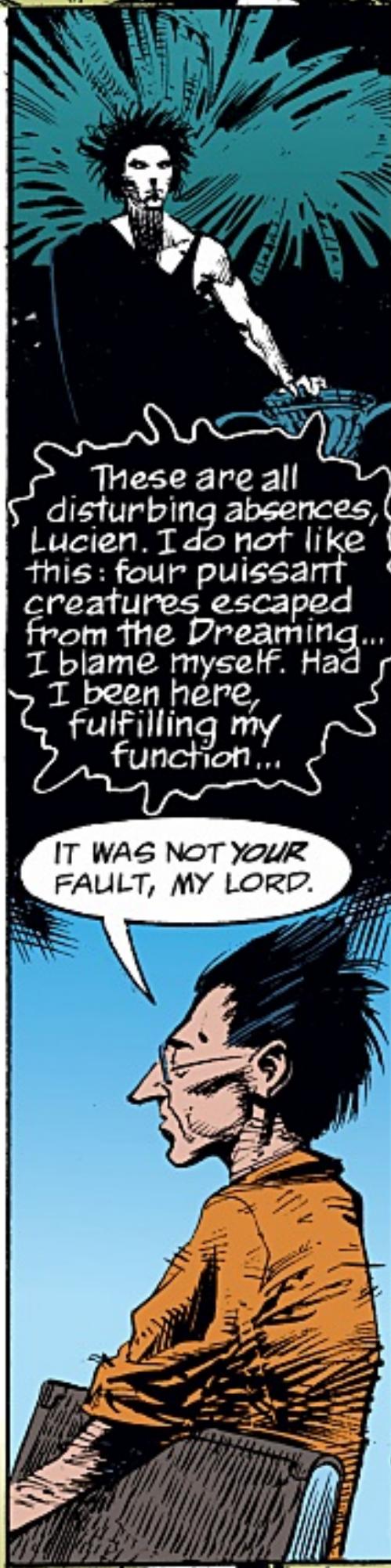
"Fido
That
Luci
Vava
dom

"PLER'S GREEN. HE'S
IN THE DREAMWORLD.
HERE. I CHECKED TWICE."

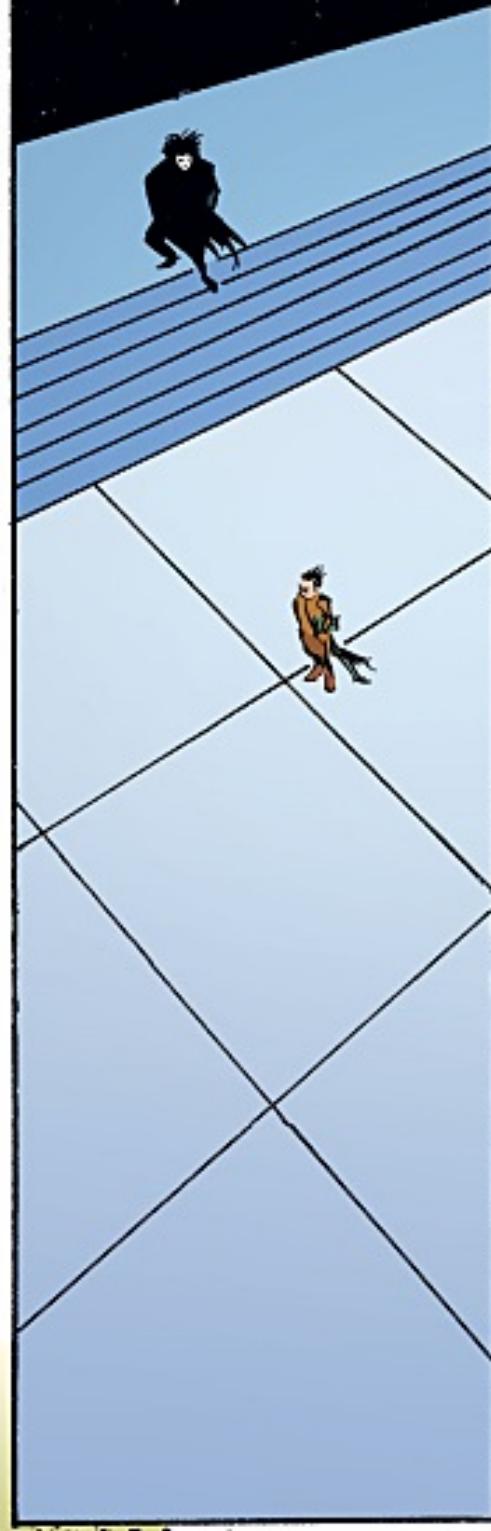


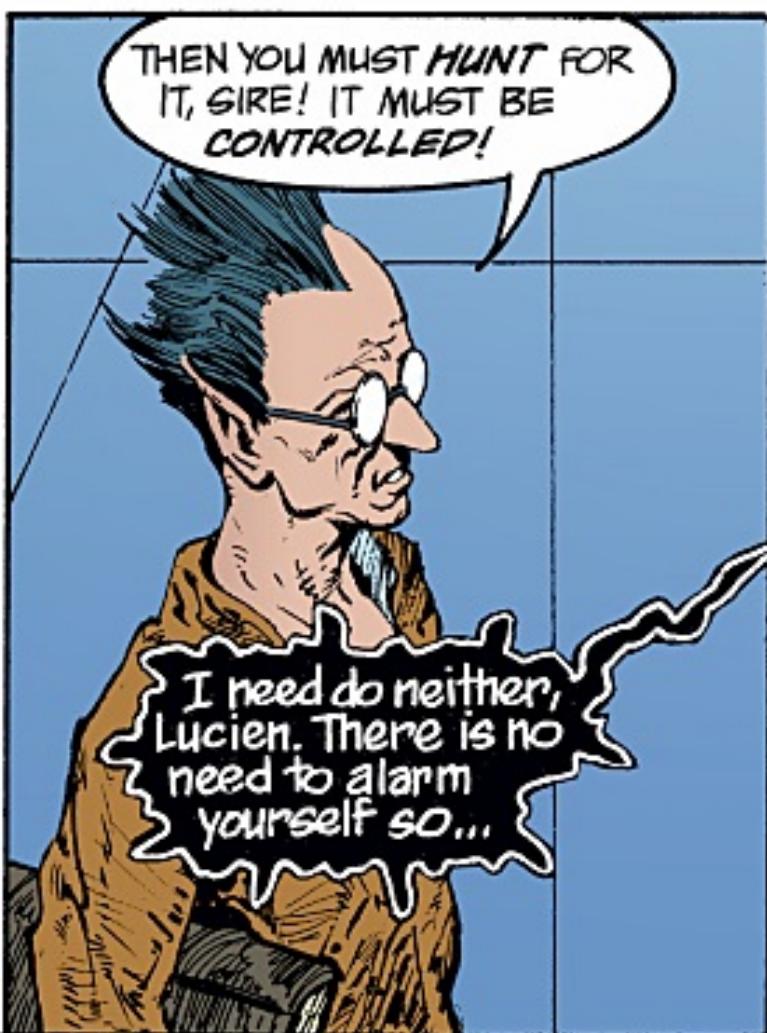
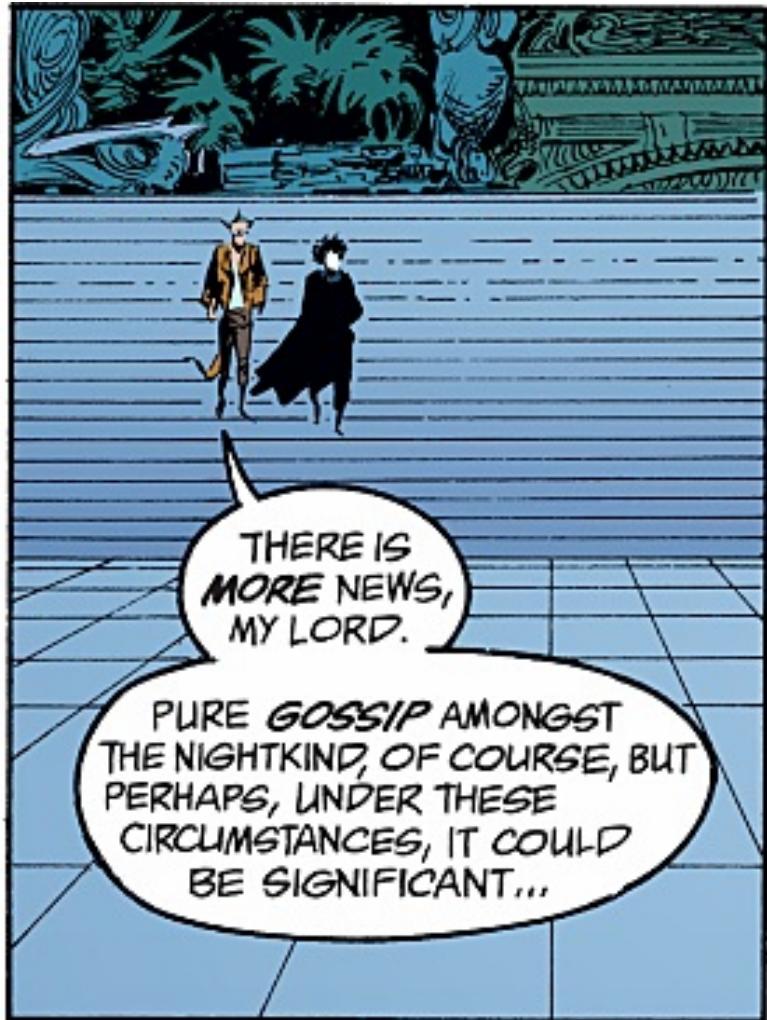
"Fowler's Green is missing?
is passing strange,
en. He is, after all,
sour of his own
nion. And always so...
reliable."

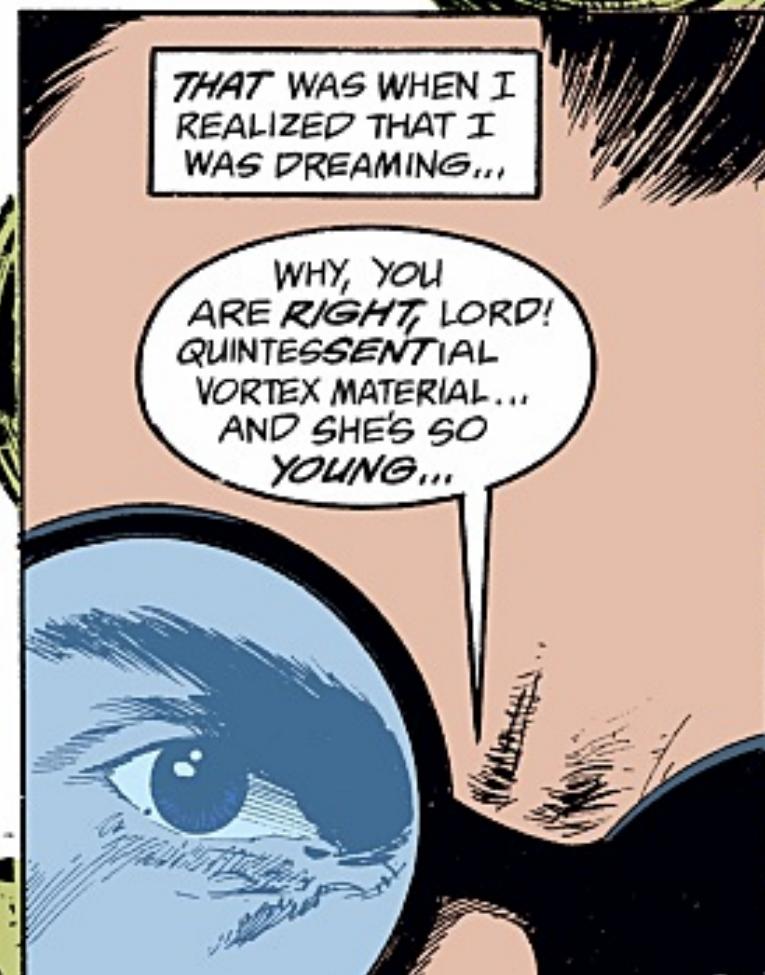
"I KNOW, LORD."

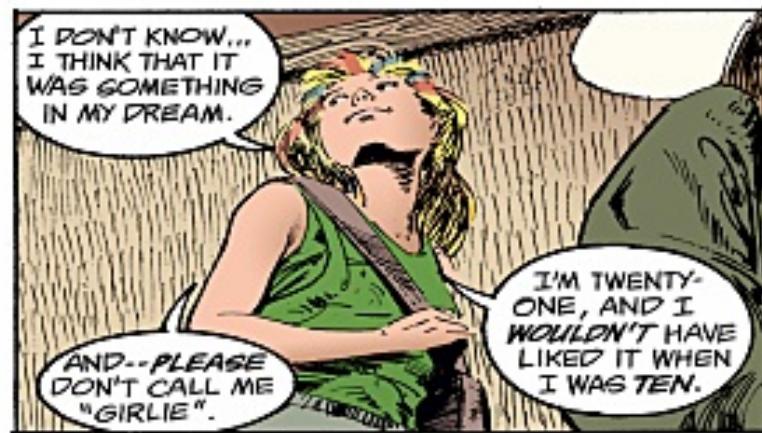
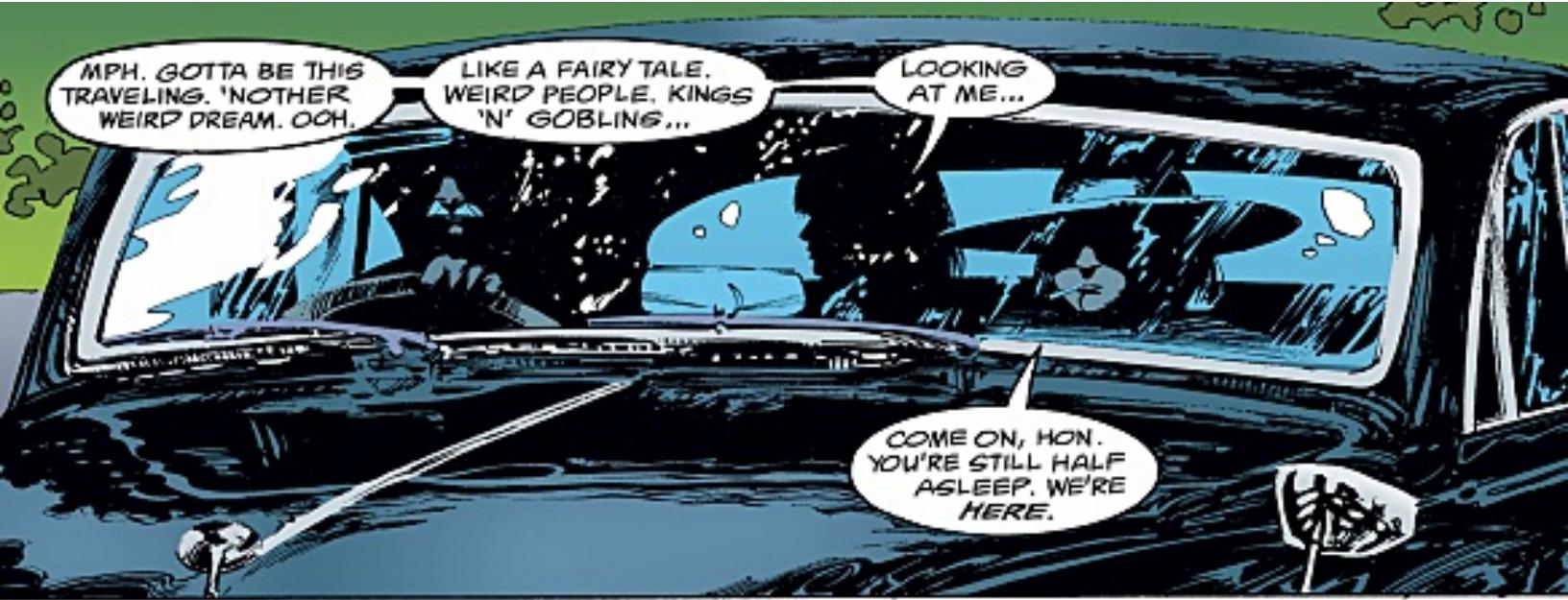


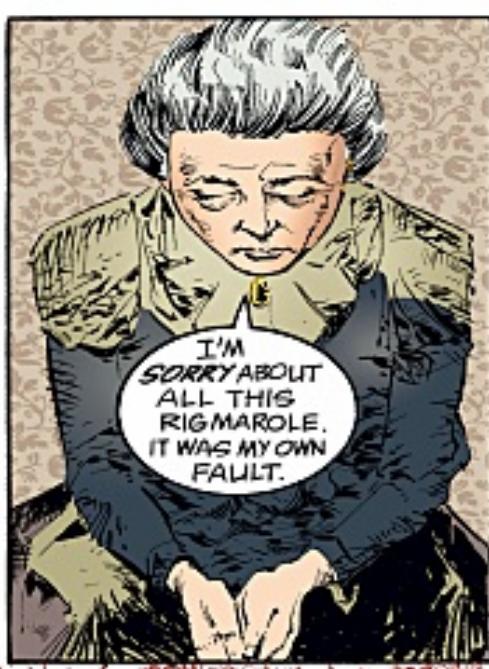
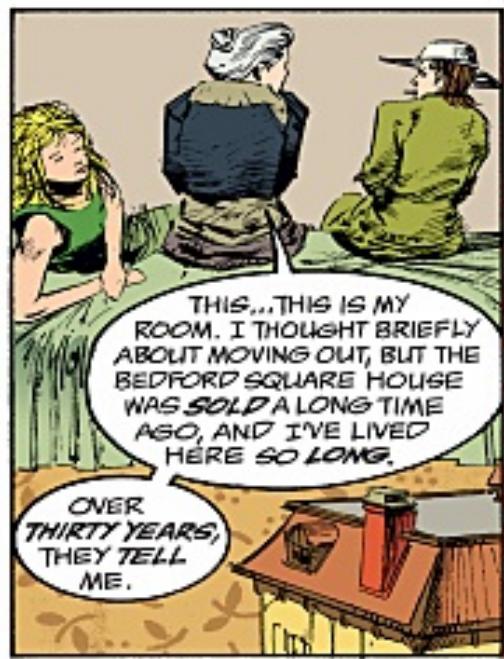
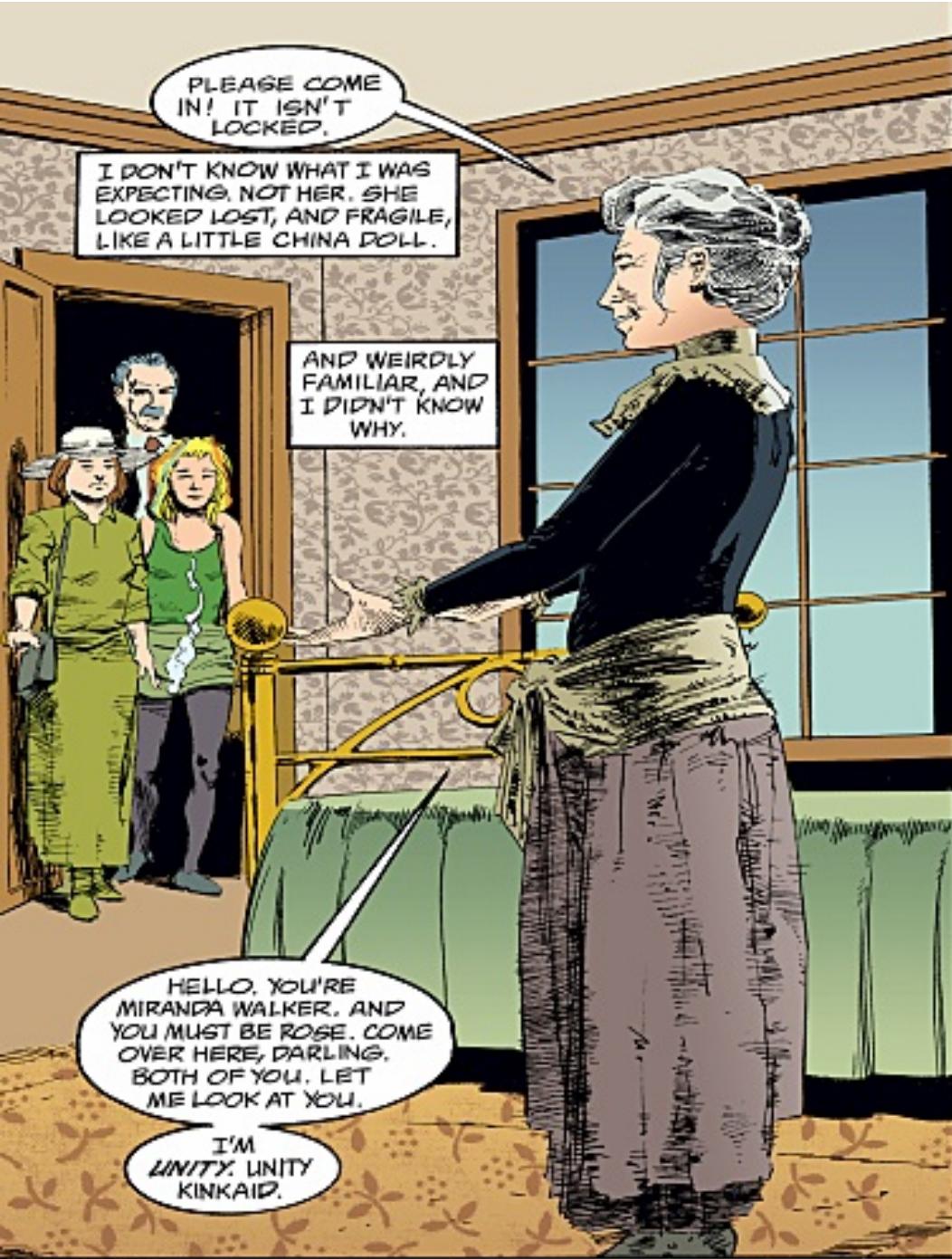
No? Then WHOSE?

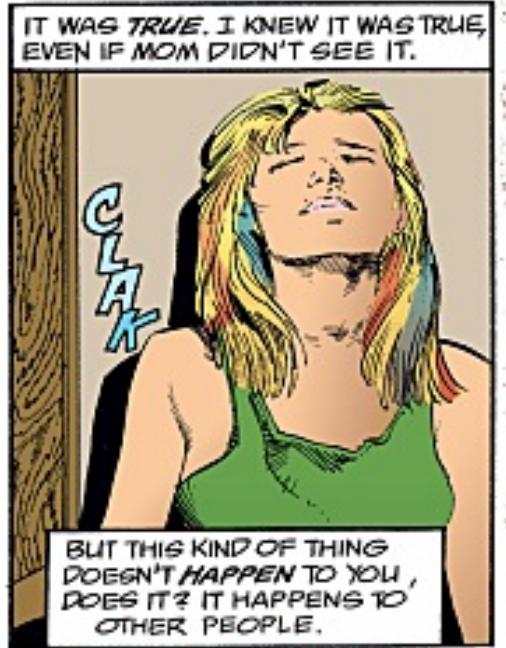
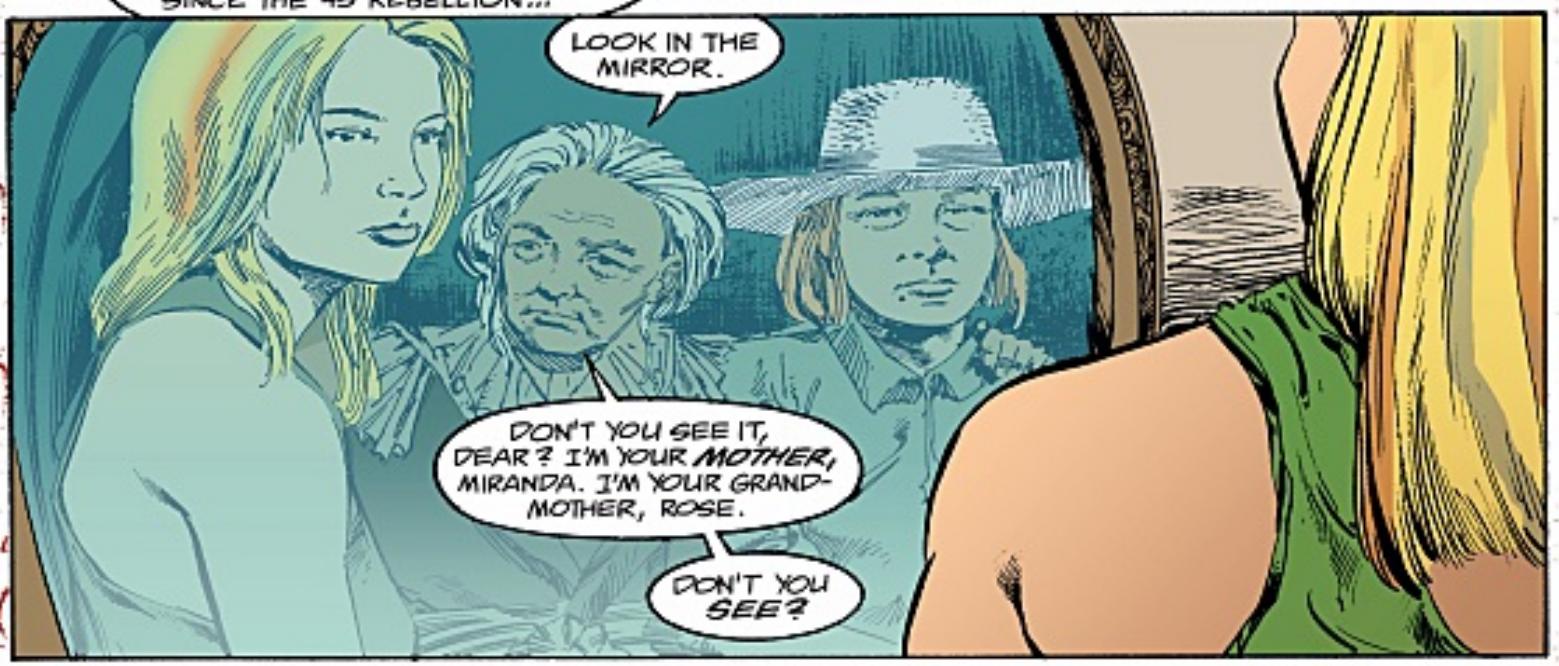
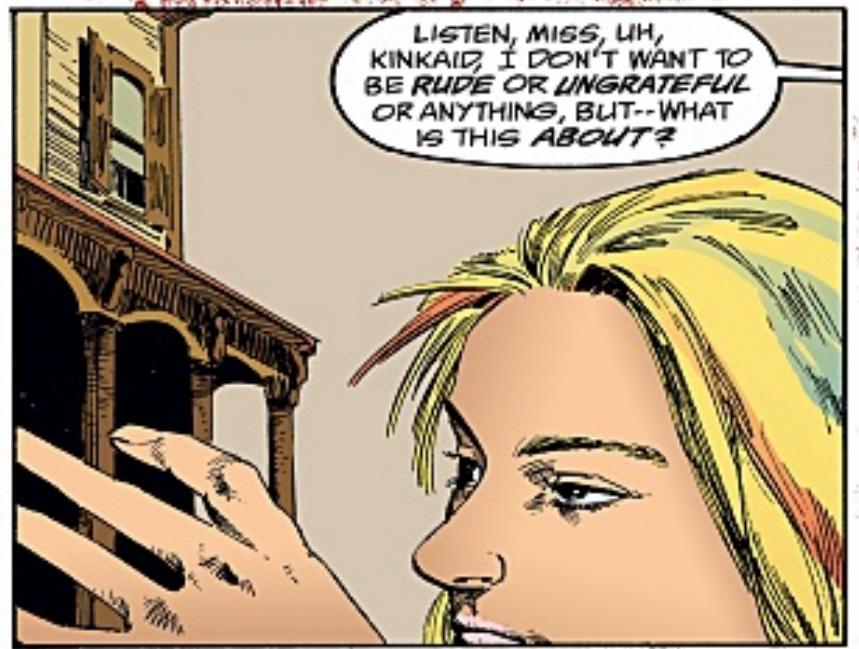












SO MUCH WAS
HAPPENING SO FAST.

I WISHED I COULD REMEMBER MY DREAM.
THERE WAS A MAN IN BLACK... NO, NOT BLACK.
HE LOOKED LIKE HE WAS DRESSED IN
THE NIGHT...

PSST!



HELLO, ROSE WALKER.

WHO'S THERE? DO I KNOW YOU?

YOU'RE AT A CROSSROADS, ROSE.

HEE! YOU'VE LEARNED SO MUCH TODAY, CHILD!

YOUR WHOLE FAMILY, MY BUTTERFLY, TOGETHER FOR THE FIRST TIME... EXCEPT FOR YOUR BROTHER, OF COURSE.

JED? YOU KNOW ABOUT JED? WHO ARE YOU?

NAMES, NAMES, NAMES... EACH NAME IS BUT A SINGLE ASPECT OF THE WHOLE.

PROTECT ME? FROM WHAT?

BE SATISFIED WITH THE TRINITY YOU HAVE. F'R EXAMPLE, YOU WOULDN'T WANT TO MEET US AS THE KINDLY ONES. WE CAN ONLY CAUTION YOU, SISTER. WE CAN'T PROTECT YOU.

FROM LIFE, MY POSY, MY POPPET, AND FROM MORE THAN LIFE.

FROM THE THINGS THAT HOVER BEYOND LIFE, THRASHING THEIR SELFS AGAINST IT, TRYING TO GET IN...

DAUGHTER, BEWARE DREAMS AND HOUSES.

"WHO ARE YOU? YOUR VOICE KEEPS CHANGING. HOW MANY OF YOU ARE THERE?"

"HEE! I AM ONE, AND THREE, AND MANY... BUT THAT WAS THE WRONG QUESTION, CHILD!"

"HEE! NOW YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO FIND IT ALL OUT ON YOUR OWN."

"AFRAID WE CAN'T DO ANY MORE AT THIS TIME. A BITCH, HUH?"

"I DON'T GET ANY OF THIS. WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? WHAT IS THIS ROOM? I-- I'M TURNING ON THE LIGHT."

KLIK

"GOOD LUCK,
MY SPARROW. MY DAUGHTER..."

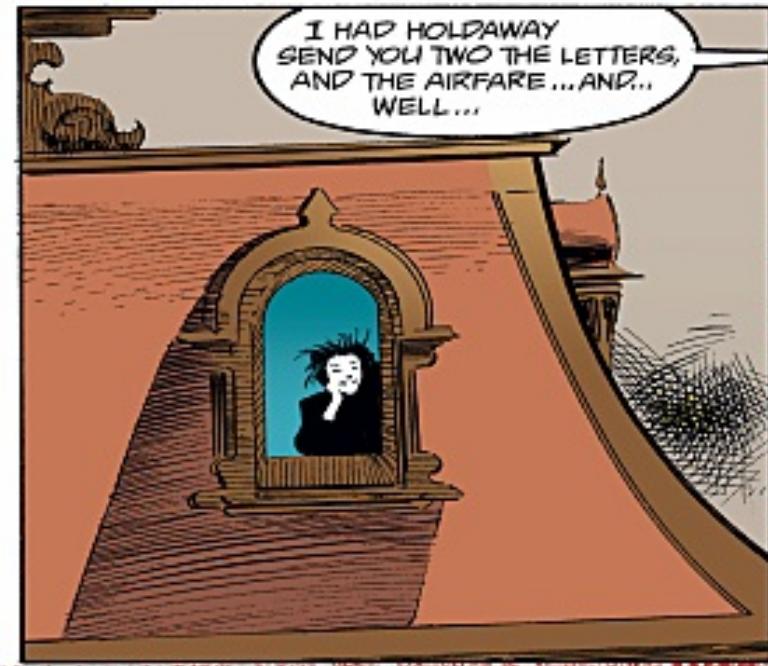
"HAD YOU ASKED THE RIGHT QUESTION I COULD HAVE WARNED YOU AGAINST THE CORINTHIAN, TOLD YOU OF JED, AND OF MORPHEUS..."

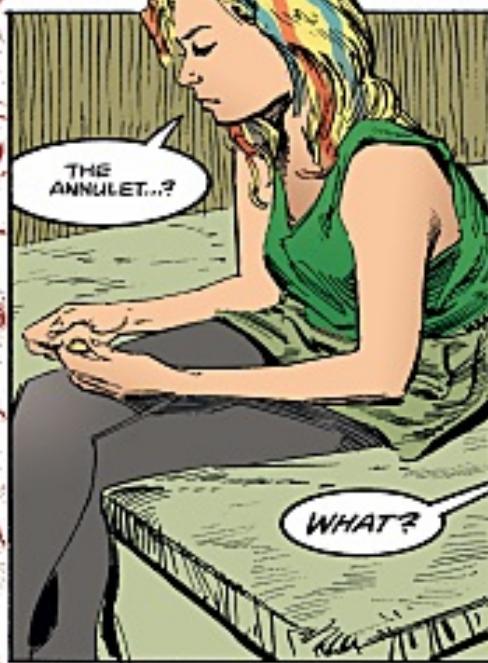
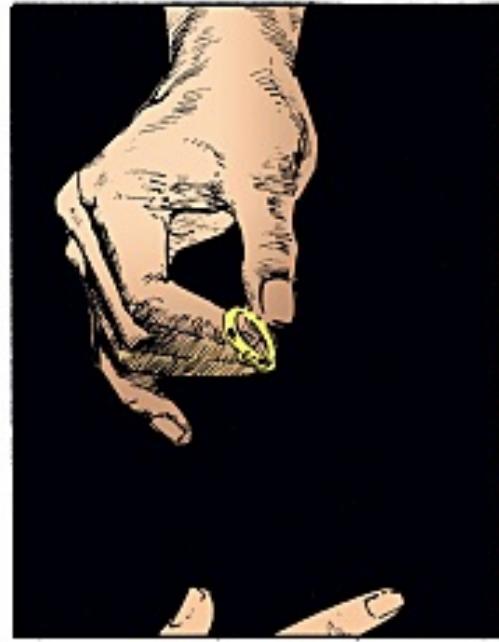
"...SISTER..."

"HUH?"

"...CHILD..."





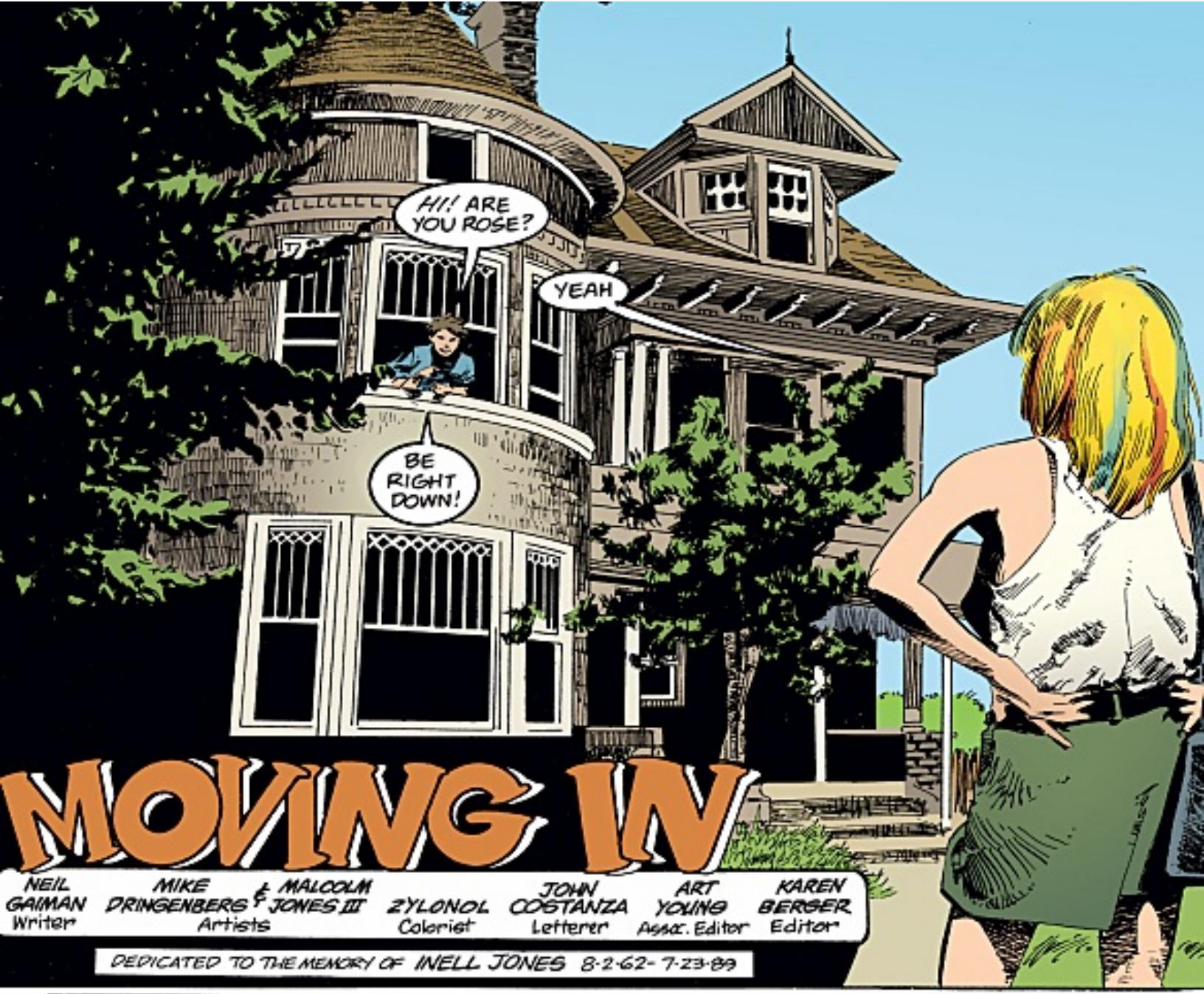




DOLL'S HOUSE

PART TWO





NEIL GAIMAN & MIKE DRINGENBERG
Writer Artists

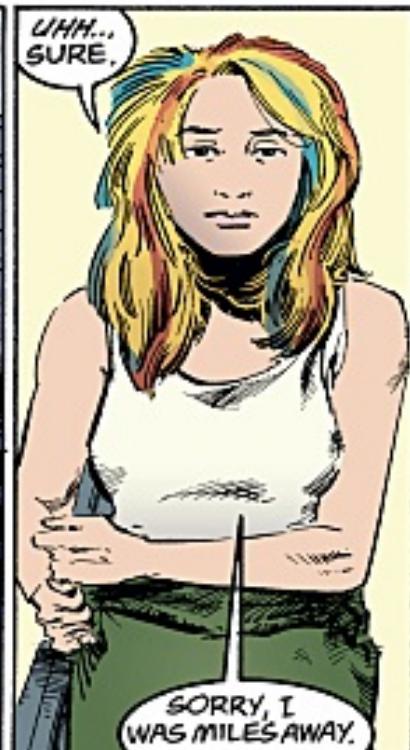
MALCOLM JONES III
Colorist

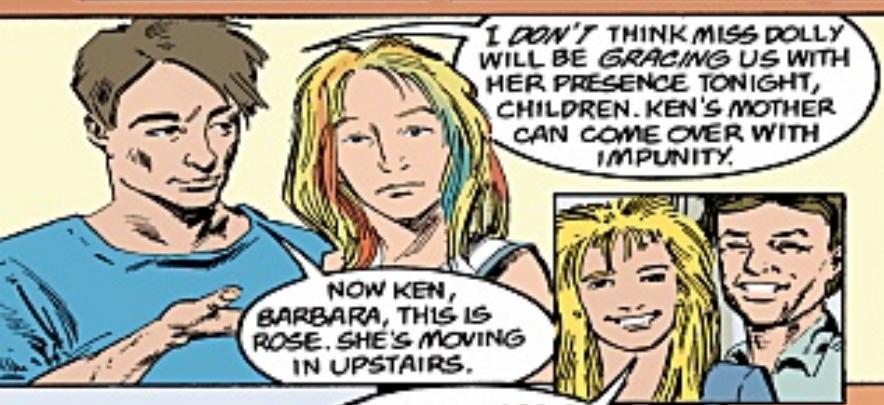
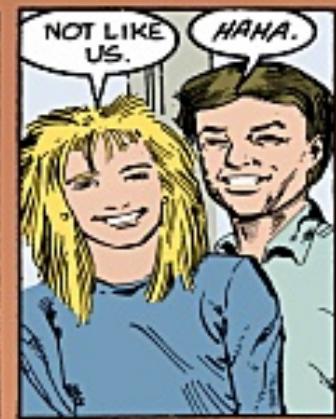
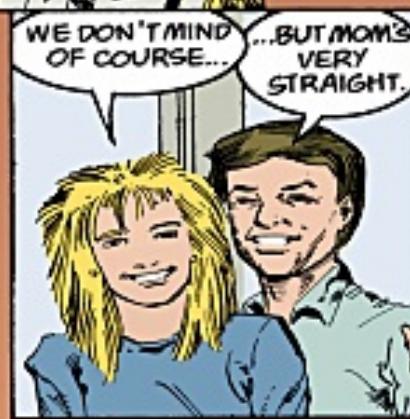
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ART YOUNG
Assoc. Editor

KAREN BERGER
Editor

DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF INELL JONES 8-2-62-7-23-89





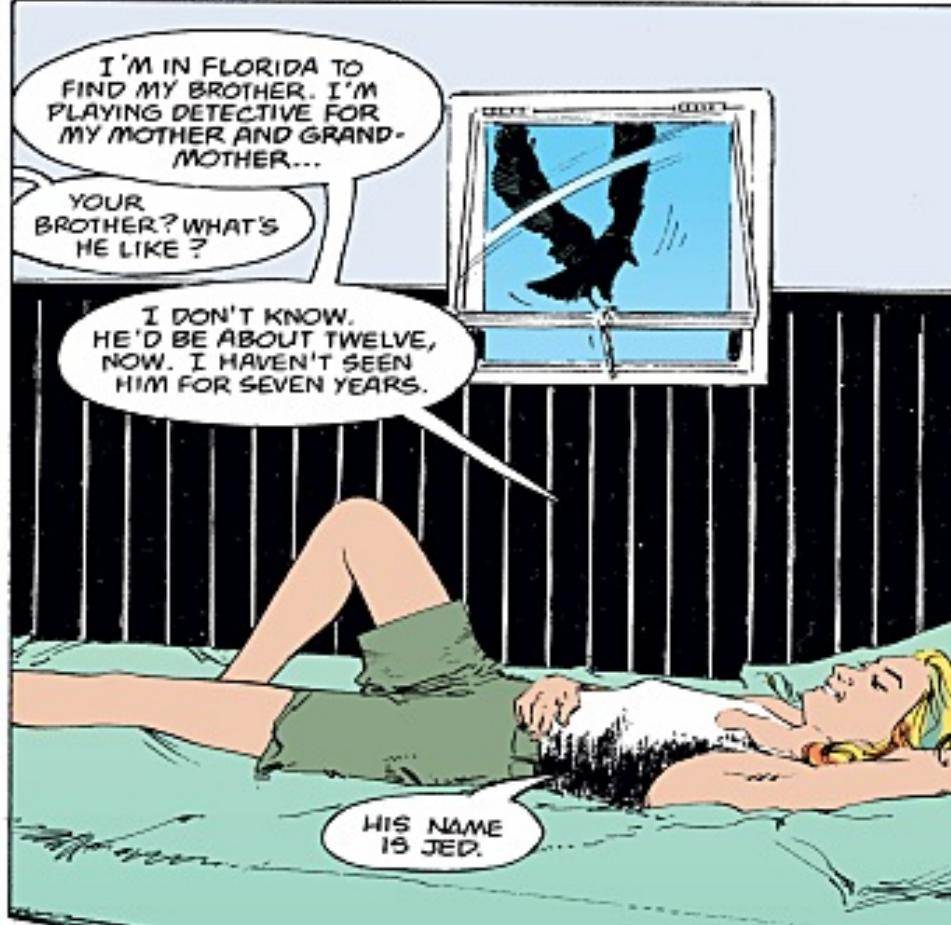
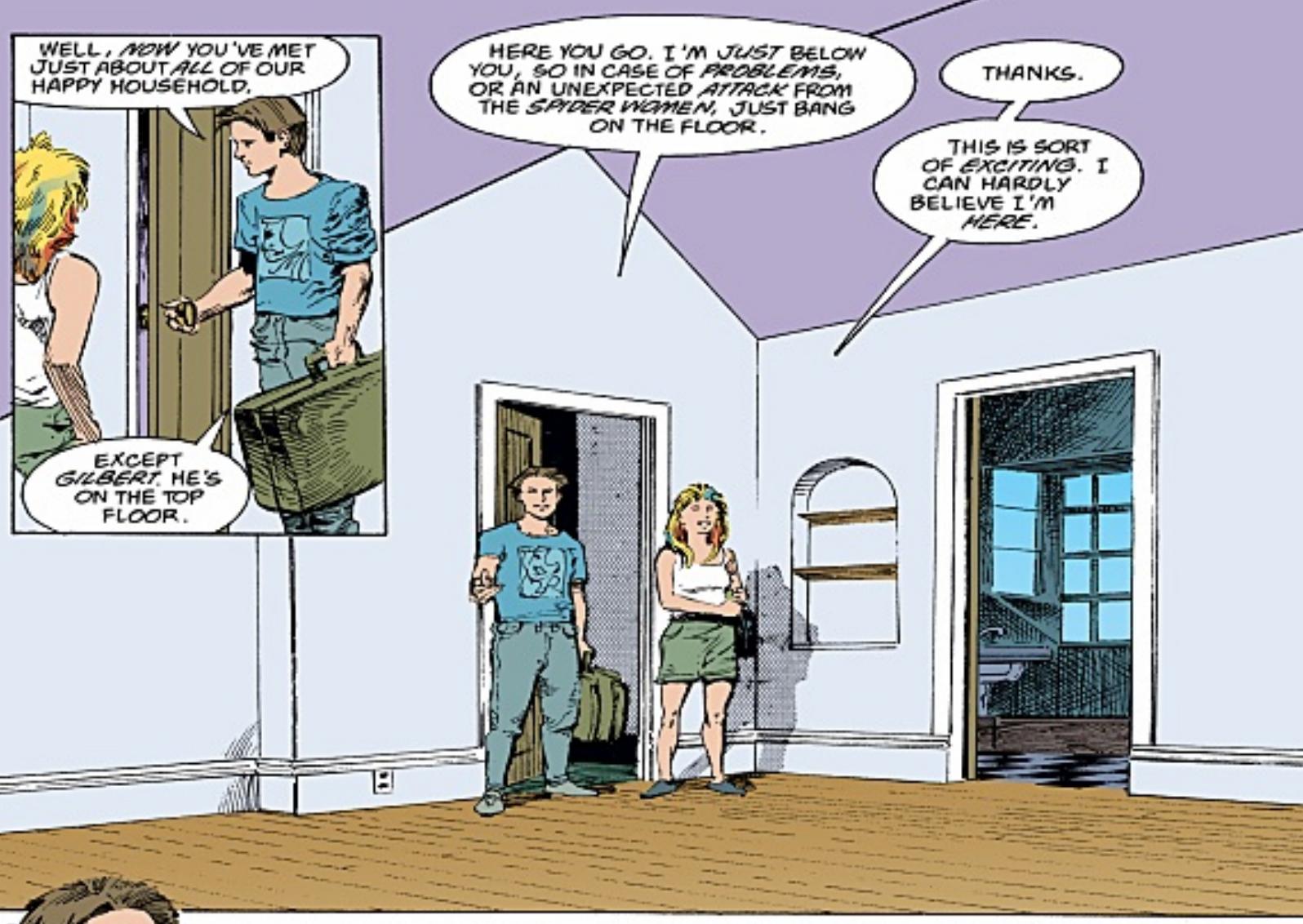
WELL, NOW YOU'VE MET
JUST ABOUT ALL OF OUR
HAPPY HOUSEHOLD.

EXCEPT
GILBERT. HE'S
ON THE TOP
FLOOR.

HERE YOU GO. I'M JUST BELOW
YOU, SO IN CASE OF PROBLEMS,
OR AN UNEXPECTED ATTACK FROM
THE SPIDER WOMEN, JUST BANG
ON THE FLOOR.

THANKS.

THIS IS SORT
OF EXCITING. I
CAN HARDLY
BELIEVE I'M
HERE.



IN THE LAND OF MARVELOUS DREAMS



JED BITES THE INSIDE
OF HIS CHEEK TO KEEP
FROM SOBING ALOUD.

HE WHIMPERS,
NERVOUSLY, DEEP
IN HIS THROAT.

THE FLOOR IS UNCOM-
FORTABLE, AND HIS
BLADDER ACHES.

JED EXTENDS AN ARM TO THE
WALL, WALKS CAREFULLY THROUGH
THE DARK TO THE CORNER OF THE
BASEMENT.

HE URINATES IN THE
CORNER.

THE SMELL THAT RISES
FROM THE HOLE MAKES
HIM GAG.

THEN HE CURLS UP ON THE
DAMP DIRT FLOOR, UNDER
HIS RAGGED BLANKET,
AND, FOR A FEW MORE
FLEETING HOURS...

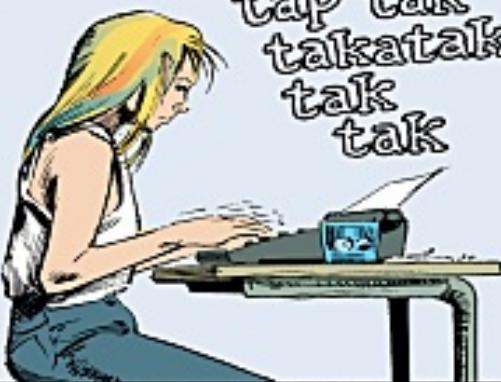
...JED ESCAPES.

I FELL ON
THE TOP OF
BRUTE'S
BALLOON!

NOW, JED, LYTA AND I
WILL FLY DOWN TO MY
DREAM DOME. AND THOSE
SCAMPS BRUTE AND GLOB
MUST GO BACK TO THEIR
CELLS.



tap tak
takatak
tak
tak



Dear Mom,

Hi -- well, I've been here a couple of days so far. Hope you and Grandma Unity are fine.

I'm staying in the house Unity's people found near Cape Canaveral. It's sort of weird here. I mean, I keep feeling like I've strayed into a remake of The Addams Family.

The house (and my room) is great, but the other tenants...



Okay, get this, Mom (and Grandmom). Downstairs are a couple called Ken and Barbie -- they're normal. Terrifyingly, appallingly normal -- like they've gone through normal and come out the other side. The Stepford Yuppies.



Right; the room across the hall contains the Spider Women, Zelda and Chantal. I don't know their last name.

Nobody seems to know if they're mother and daughter, sisters, lovers, business partners, or what. They dress in white and collect dead spiders. Chantal says they have over 24,000. Zelda never says anything.



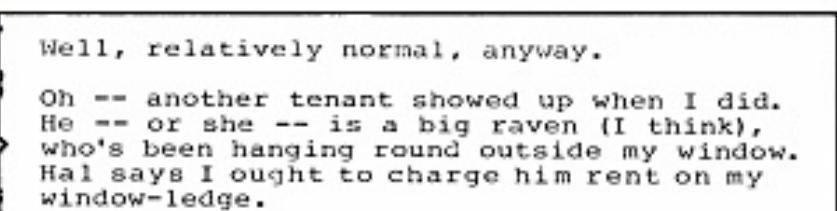
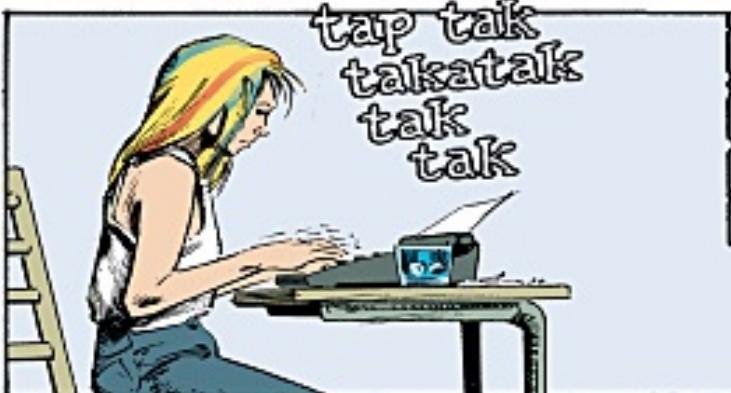
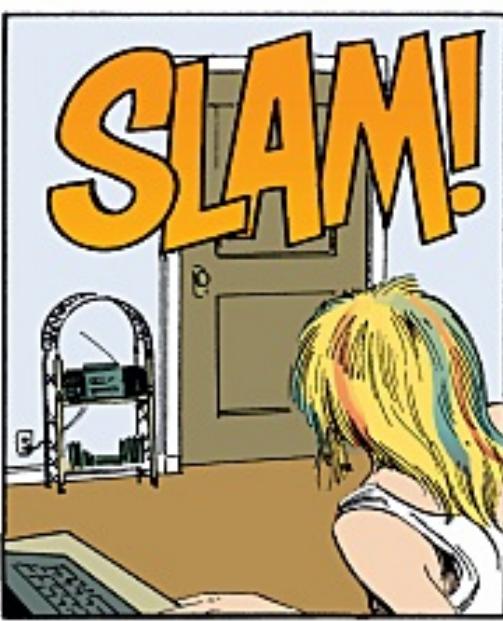
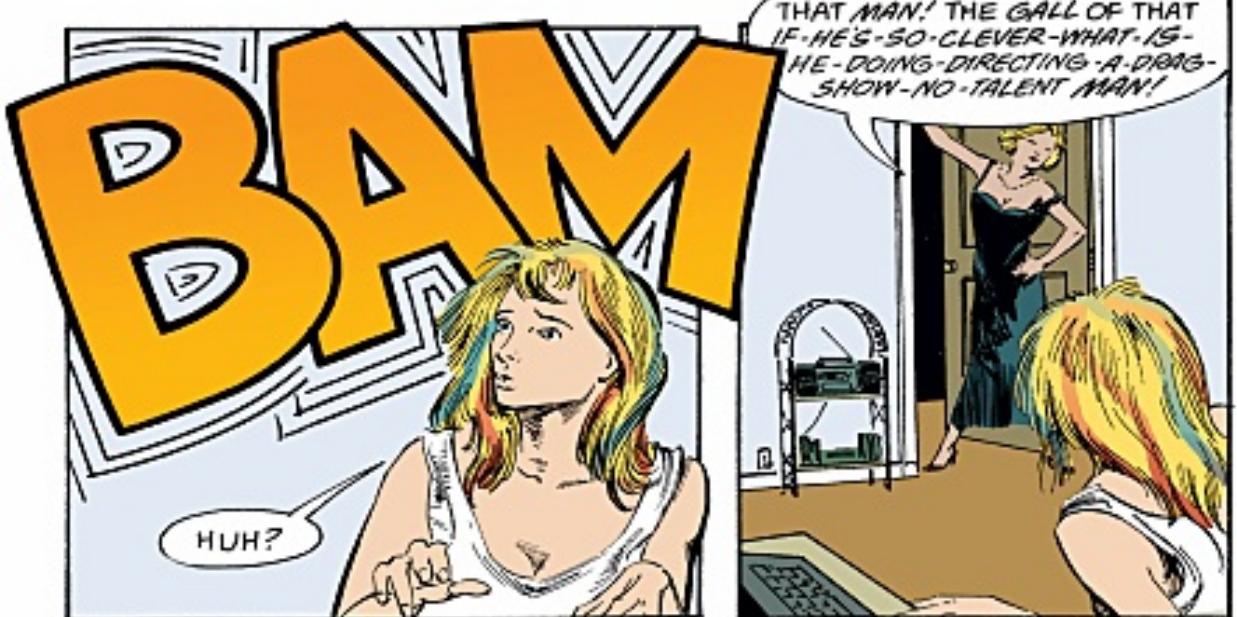
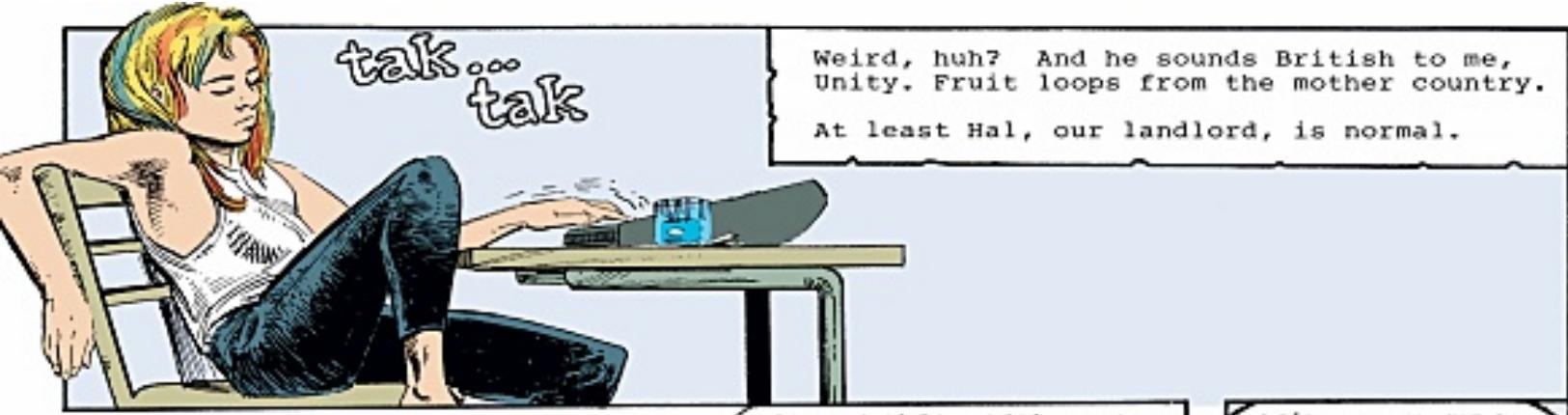
I only hope that their spiders are all dead. If I find a spider in my bath, I'm not going to check its catalogue number before screaming discreetly and flushing it down the john.

Upstairs is Gilbert.



Gilbert, as far as I can tell, is a disembodied presence who haunts the attic room. I've heard his voice, booming down the stairwell. Never seen him, though.

(What he was saying was that he wanted Hal to bring him a six-foot-long pencil, since he was going to stay in bed for a week, and wished to draw on the ceiling.)





tika
tika
tip
tak

Yesterday I went out to the lighthouse on Dolphin Island. I spent this morning in the courthouse, going through the county records. This is what I got:



When Dad died (and why couldn't anyone have let us know? I mean, I would have liked the option to refuse to go to his funeral) --



Jed definitely went to live with our Grandfather -- my Father's father, Ezra Paulsen, lighthouse-keeper, on the island.



Grandfather (wish I'd met him; he sounds like a nice old guy. Looked like Santa Claus in oilskins in the photo) looked after Jed. But Grandpa drowned, about four years back.

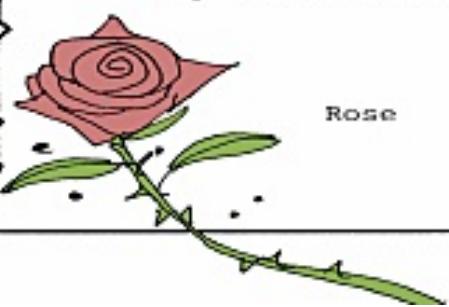
He was 82. So where's Jed? Don't know. Yet.



And that's all I've got so far.

I'll keep looking.

All my love to both of you.





UH. SOMETIMES I
CAN FEEL YOU THERE
IN THE BACK OF MY
HEAD.

IT'S REALLY
GOING TO TAKE ME
A LONG TIME TO GET
USED TO ALL THIS.

SO, UH, WHAT
ARE YOU DOING DOWN
HERE ON THE SHORE?

I am creating a new
nightmare. I have not
yet given it a name. Do
you have anything new
to report?

NOTHING YET. ROSE IS
STILL TRYING TO FIND
HER LITTLE BROTHER,
BOSS.

I MEAN
SIRE.

I doubt that anything
connected with a vortex
is coincidental, Matthew.
I wish to know more
about her brother. Get
me a picture of the
boy.

"I must see
him to find
him."



DON'T
TOUCH.
ME.

AHH,
KITTY'S GOT
A TEMPER

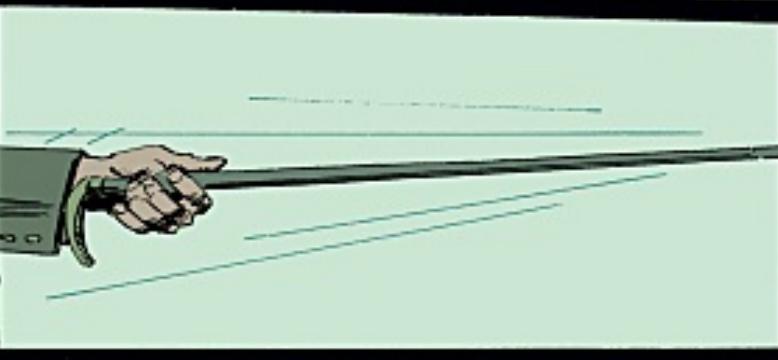


GENTLEMEN, IT WOULD
SEEM TO ME THAT THE
YOUNG LADY DESIRES
TO RETAIN BOTH HER
PURSE AND HONOR.

AW SHIT!



RUN!



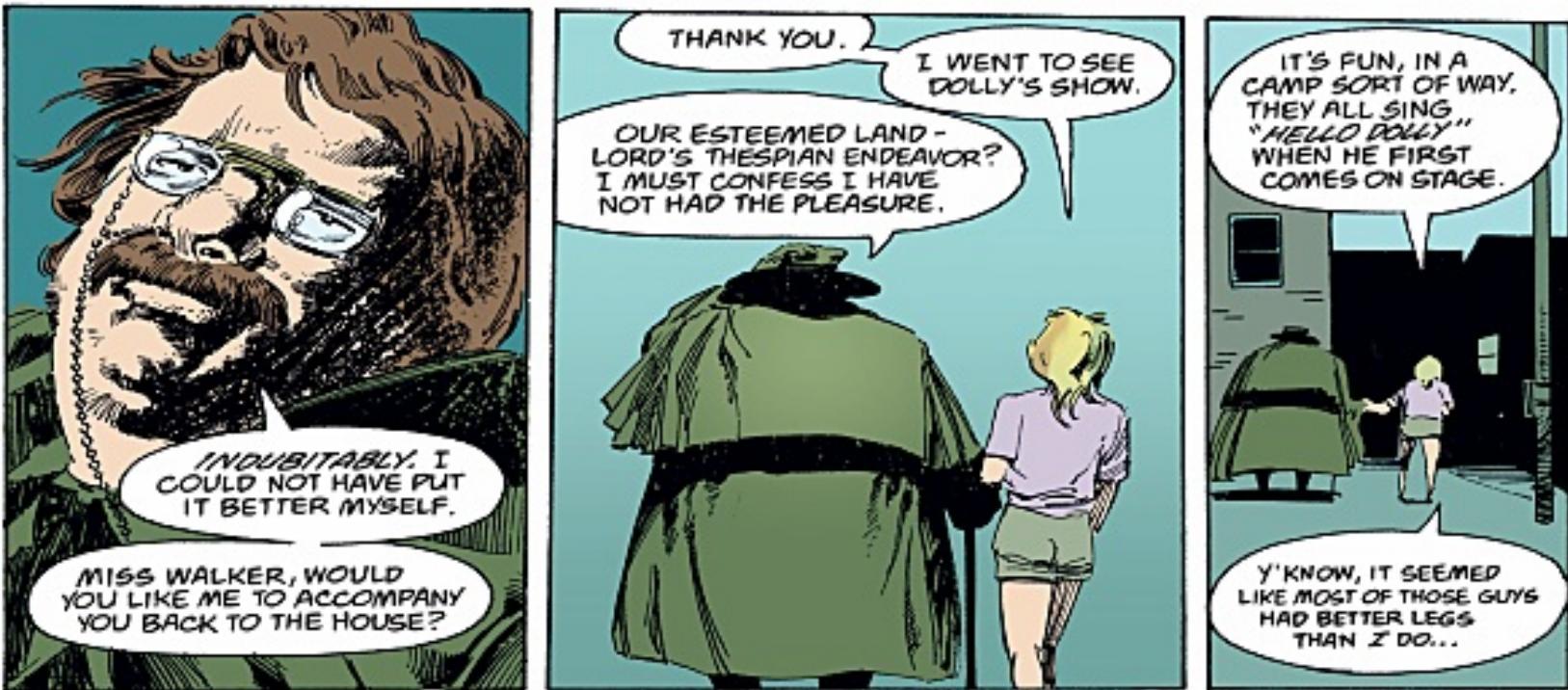
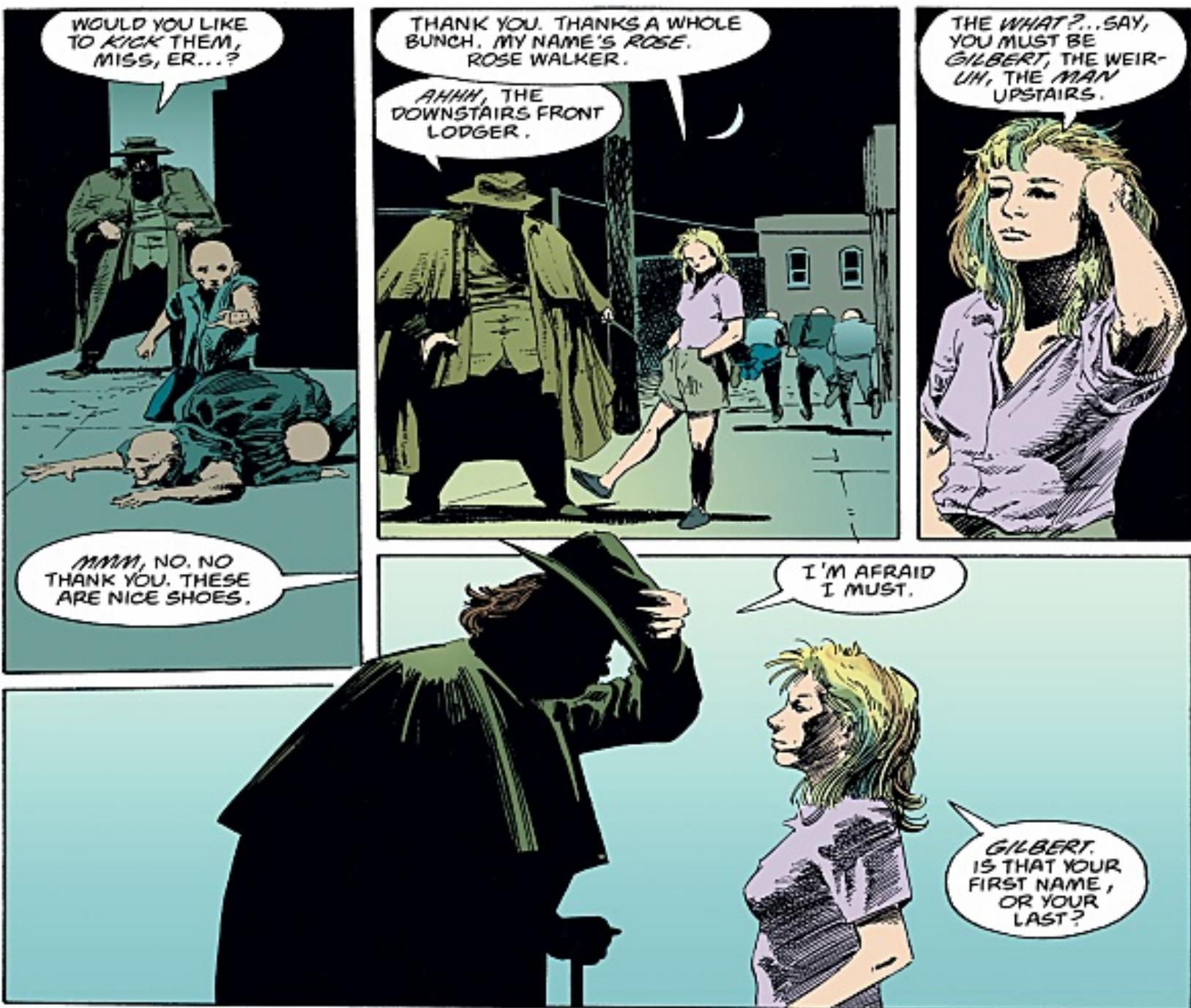
TRIP

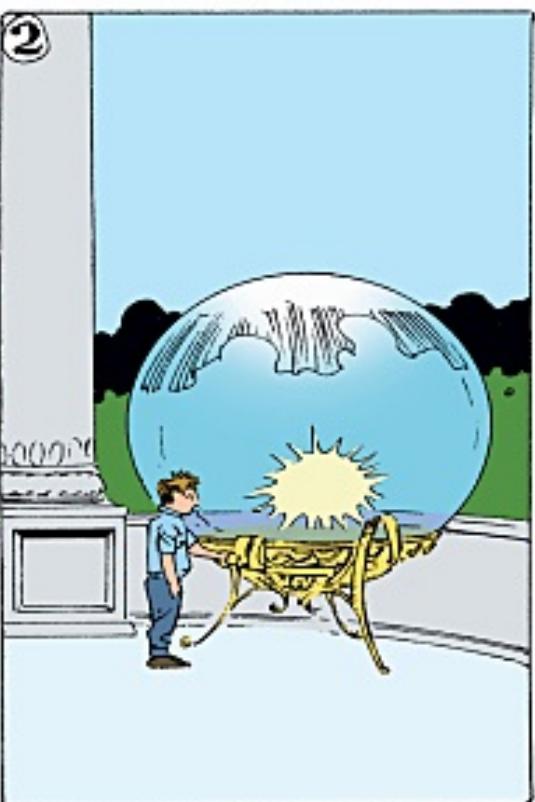


YOU'LL
EXCUSE ME IF
I INTRUDE?

WHAK!







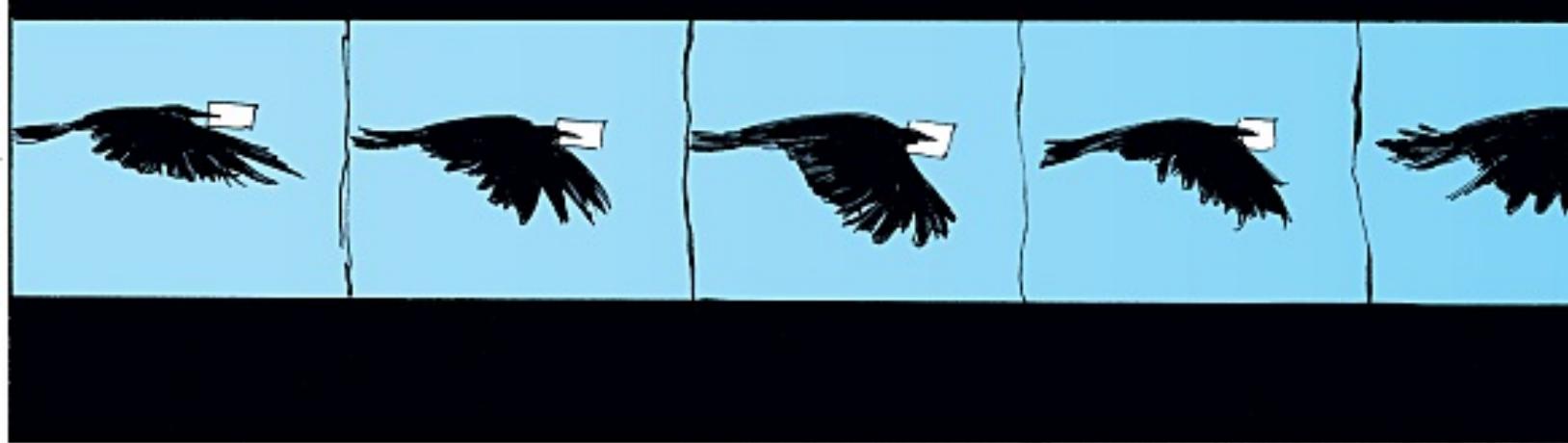


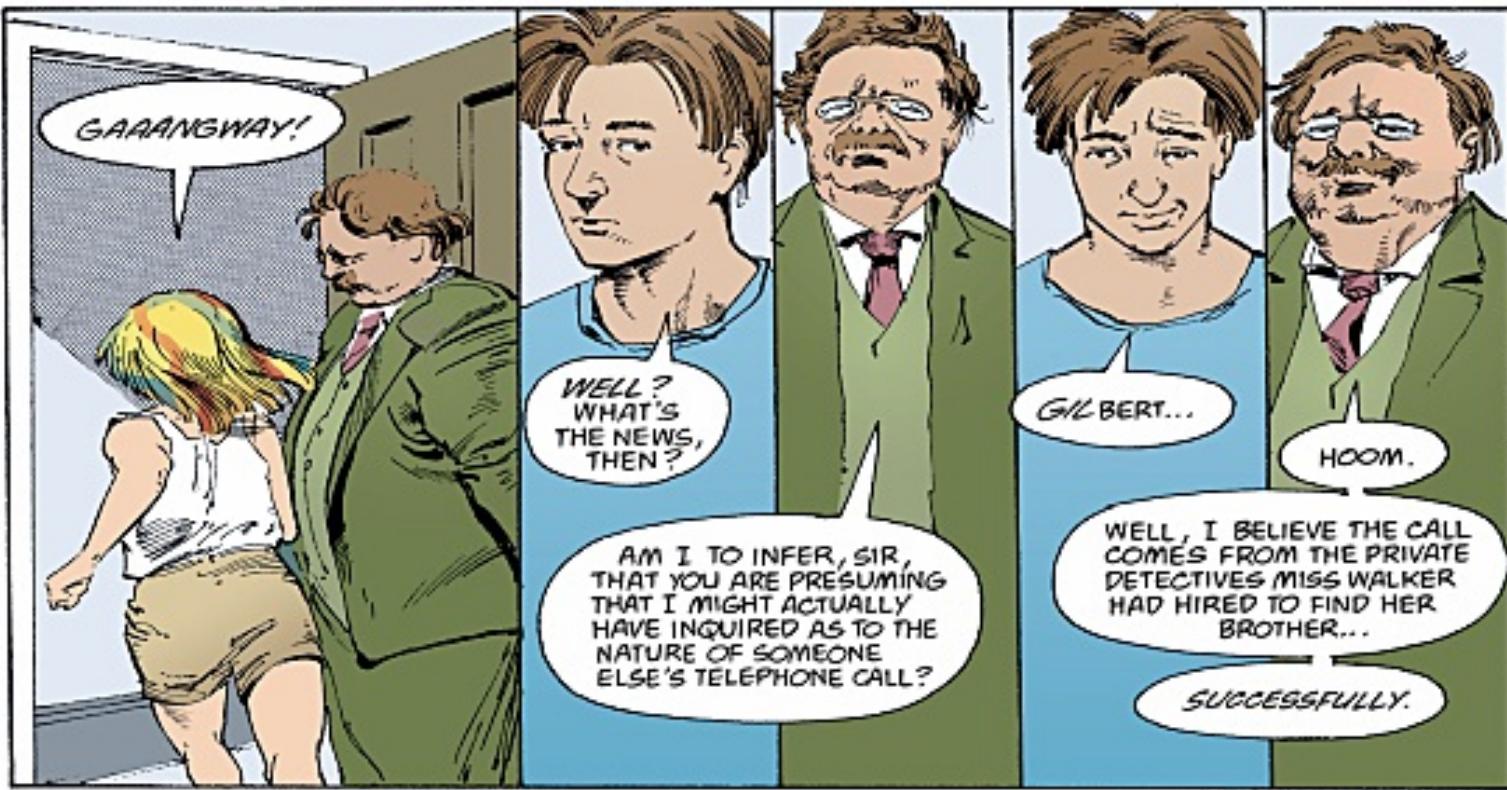
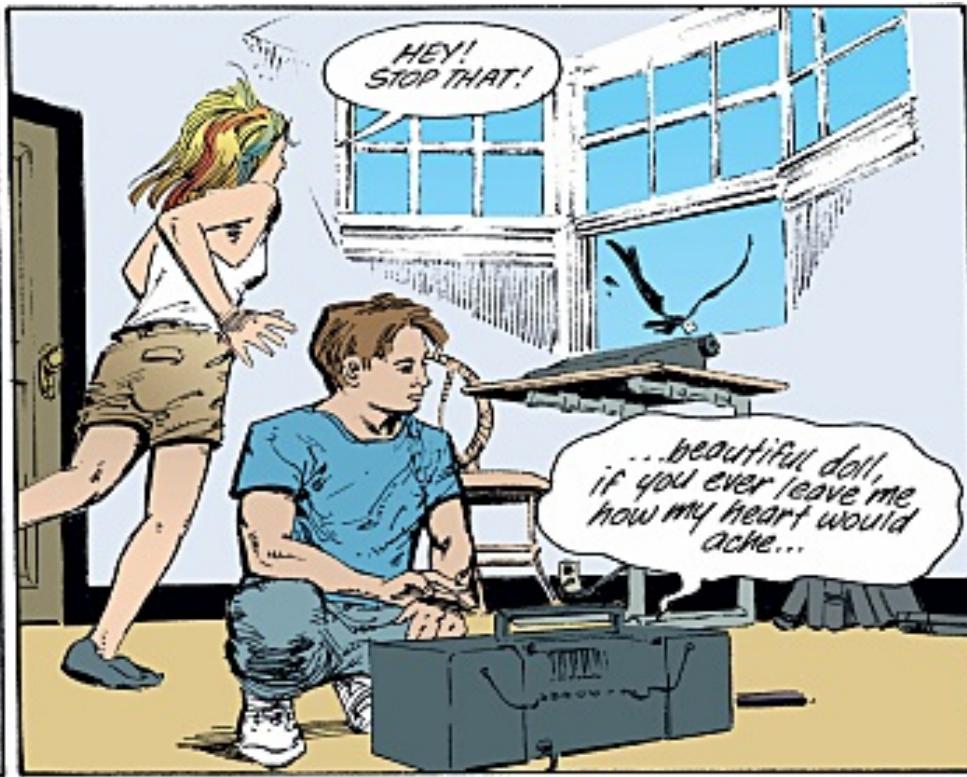
STUPID GODDAMN
RAT. STUPID - MNG-
G-GODDAMN - MNG-
S-STUPID - MNG...

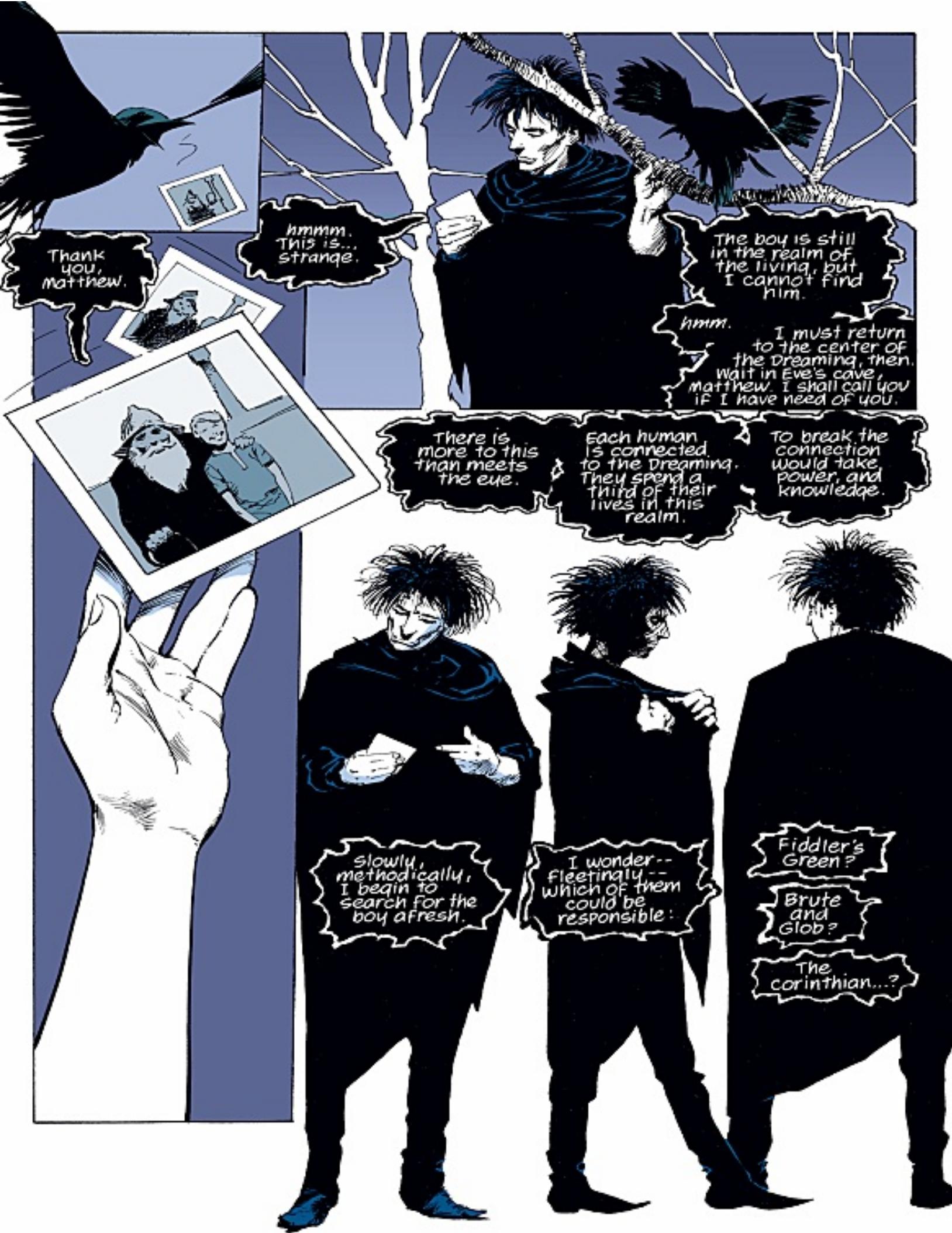
OH GOD.

OH GOD.









THE YELLOWHAMMER
MOTEL, BIRMINGHAM,
ALABAMA.

HELLO. IS THIS
"NIMROD"?

I'M JUST A
FRIEND. ONE OF
YOUR FELLOW
COLLECTORS.

I'VE HEARD ON THE
GRAPEVINE ABOUT SOME
KIND OF GET-TOGETHER...?

FOR PEOPLE WHO
SHARE OUR SPECIALIZED
INTERESTS.

UH HUH.

THE CORINTHIAN

I DON'T NEED TO WRITE
IT DOWN. I DON'T FORGET
THINGS, SHOOT.

OKAY, THAT'S
THIS WEEKEND,
THEN?

I'LL BE FREE.
SO WHERE
EXACTLY?

GEORGIA, HUH?
NICE STATE.

SURE I KNOW THAT
TOWN. I KNOW AMERICA
LIKE THE BACK OF MY
HAND.

I'M PART OF
THE AMERICAN
DREAM.

SHUMF SCHROMP
SCHOMF

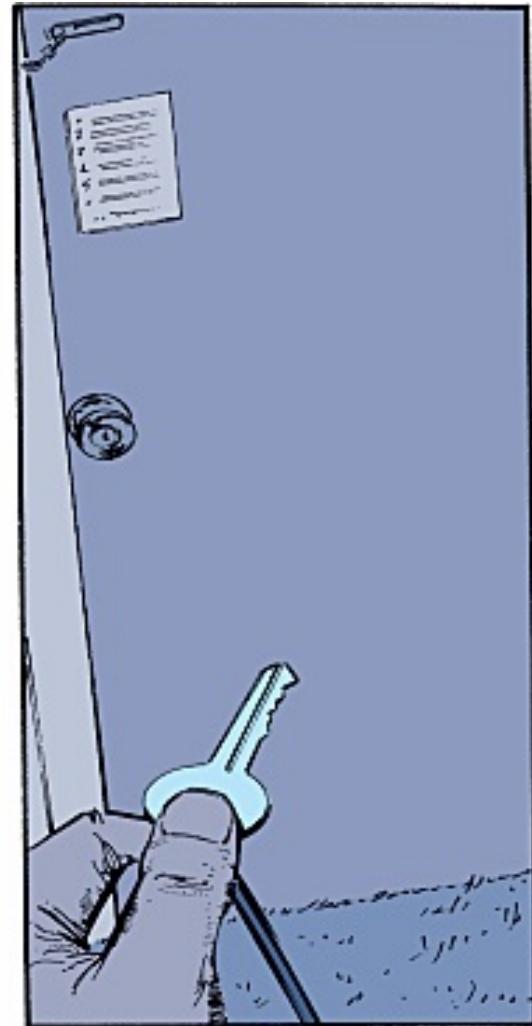
A NAME TO REGISTER
UNDER? PUT ME DOWN
AS THE CORINTHIAN.

WELL, THAT'S
VERY KIND OF
YOU TO SAY
SO. I ADMIRE
YOUR WORK
AS WELL.

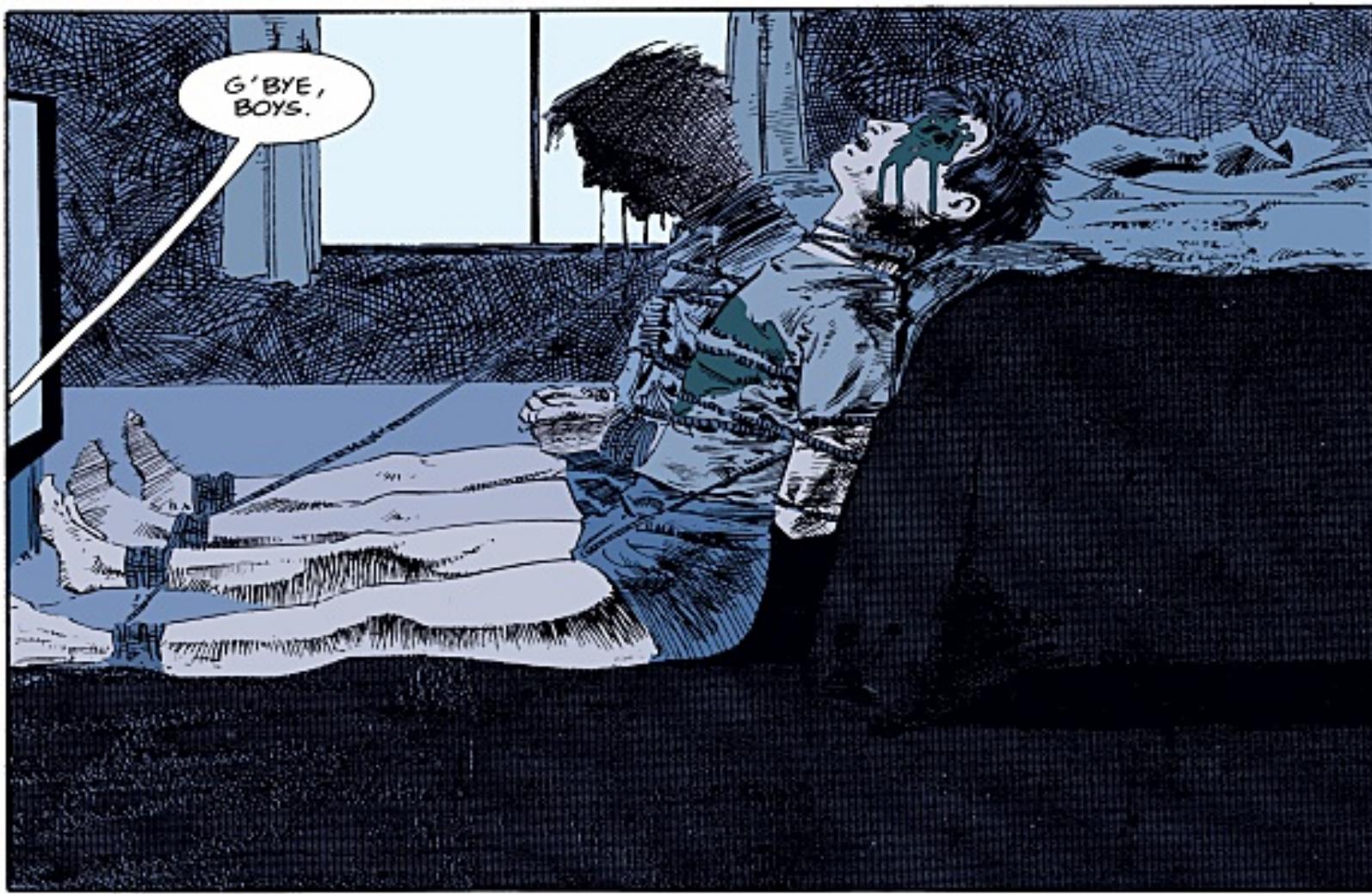
IT'LL BE GOOD
TO MEET SOME
KINDRED SPIRITS.

INDEED.

NO - NO,
THANK
YOU.



G'BYE,
BOYS.



WELL, I'LL BE BACK ON MONDAY, HAL. I'VE RENTED A WRECK FOR THE DRIVE DOWN THERE.

I'VE LEFT MY STUFF UP IN THE ROOM.

OH, NO PROBLEM, HONEY.

AND I'M SURE I CAN FIND SOMEWHERE FOR YOUR BROTHER TO STAY, WHEN YOU TWO GET BACK.

THANKS. YOU'RE TERRIFIC. SEEN GILBERT ANYWHERE? I WANTED TO SAY GOODBYE.

NOT SINCE THIS MORNING. NOW TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF. THERE ARE SOME CRAZY PEOPLE OUT THERE.

I WILL.

AND KEEP PRACTICING THE DANCE STEPS I SHOWED YOU.

I WILL.
BYE!
GILBERT!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

I INTEND TO ACCOMPANY YOU ON YOUR TRAVELS, MISS WALKER. I BELIEVE AMERICA IS A VERY LARGE AND EXCITABLE PLACE, AND A YOUNG WOMAN TRAVELING ALONE COULD GET INTO ALL SORTS OF SCRAPES.

WITNESS THE OTHER NIGHT.

I AM HERE IN MY ROLE AS AMATEUR KNIGHT ERRANT. I HAVE BROUGHT MY SWORD-STICK, AND AN ANCIENT, BUT SERVICEABLE, REVOLVER.

SHALL WE BE OFF?

OHHHH... NO.

NO. NO. NO.
NO. ABSOLUTELY NOT.

NO WAY!

HE'S APPARENTLY OUT ON A FARM,
WITH SOME RELATIVES--MY LATE
FATHER'S COUSIN CLARICE AND HER
HUSBAND. LITTLE FARM IN
UPSTATE GEORGIA.



THE PRIVATE DETECTIVES
FINALLY TRACED HIM
THROUGH GEORGIA STATE
RECORDS.

...MY LITTLE BROTHER.
I HAVEN'T SEEN HIM
SINCE MY PARENTS
SPLIT UP.

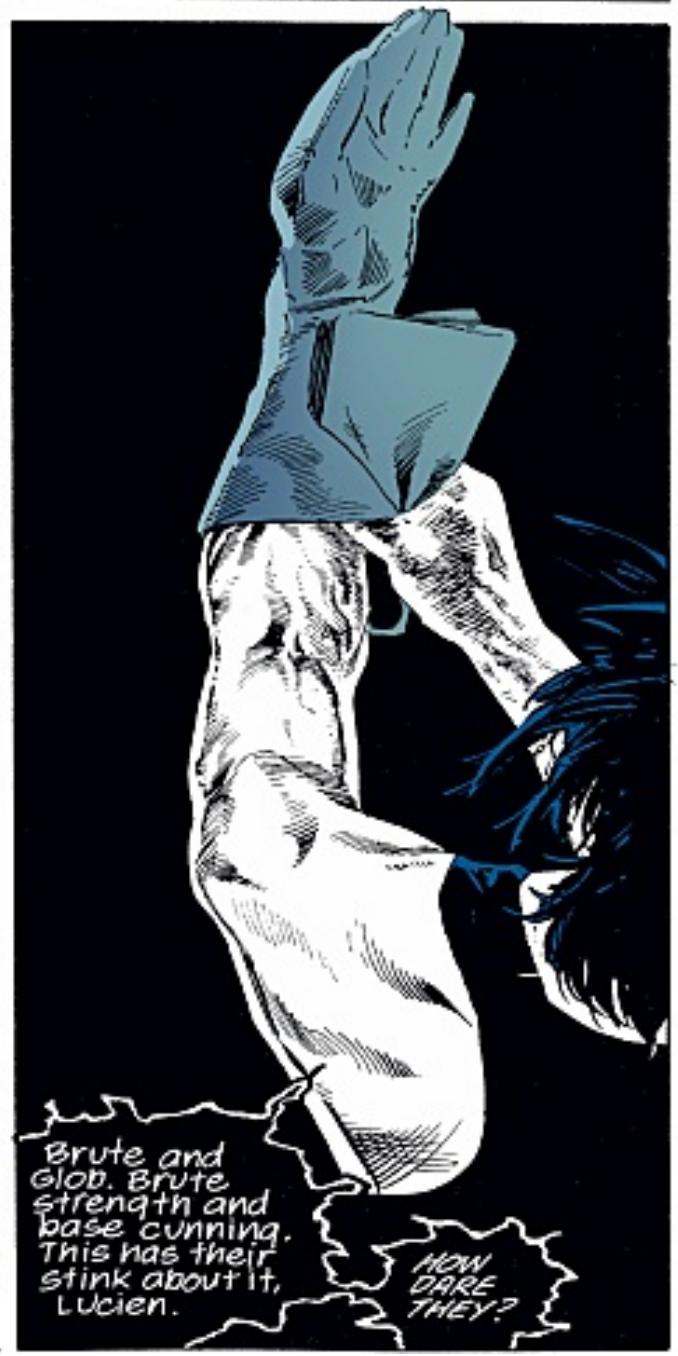
ANYWAY, THESE
FARMERS ARE
CLAIMING \$800 A
MONTH FOR HIM,
FROM THE STATE.

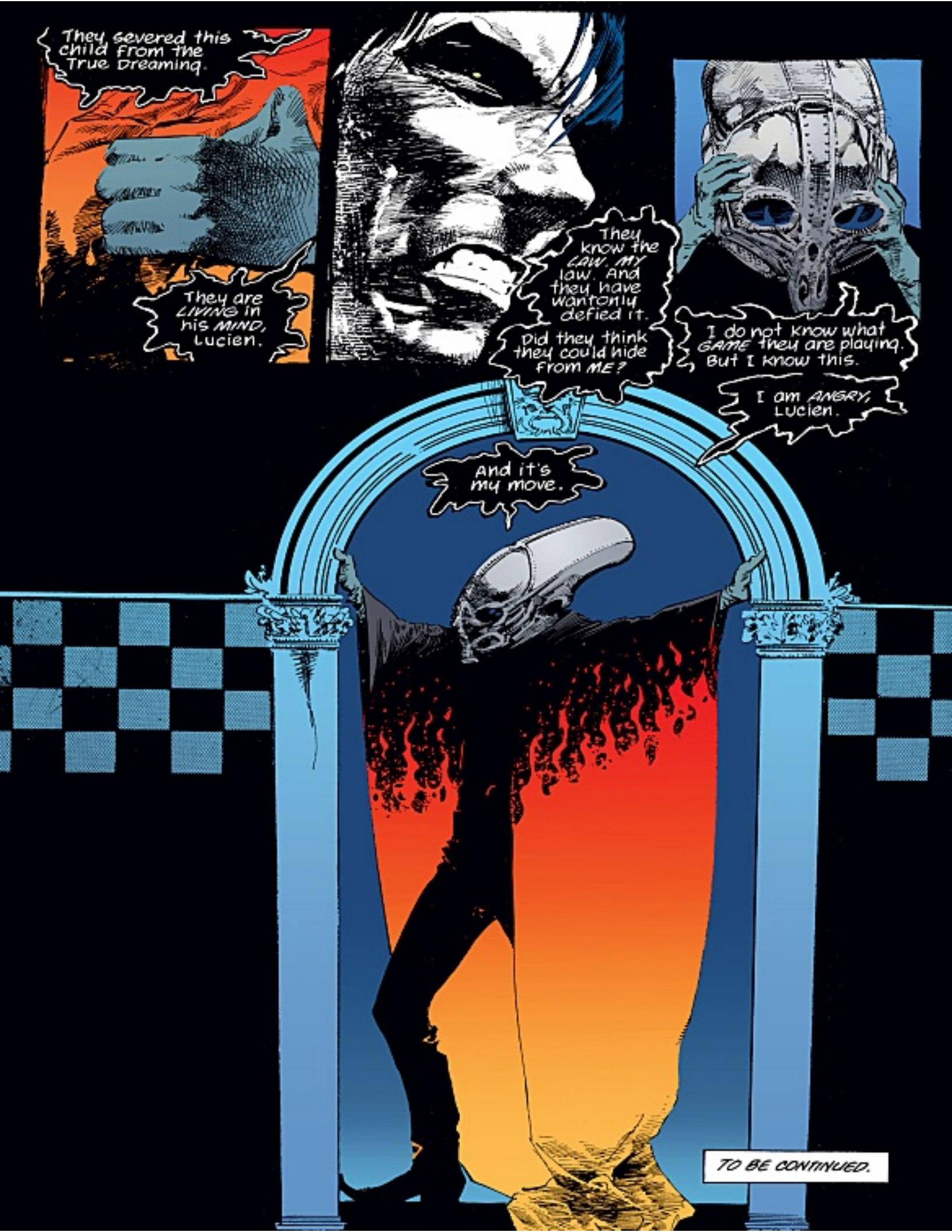


SO AT LEAST THEY'LL
BE TAKING GOOD
CARE OF HIM.

"WON'T HE BE
PLEASED TO
SEE US..."







They severed this
child from the
True Dreaming.

They are
LIVING in
his MIND,
Lucien.

They
know the
LAW, MY
law. And
they have
wantonly
defied it.

Did they think
they could hide
FROM ME?

I do not know what
GAME they are playing.
But I know this.

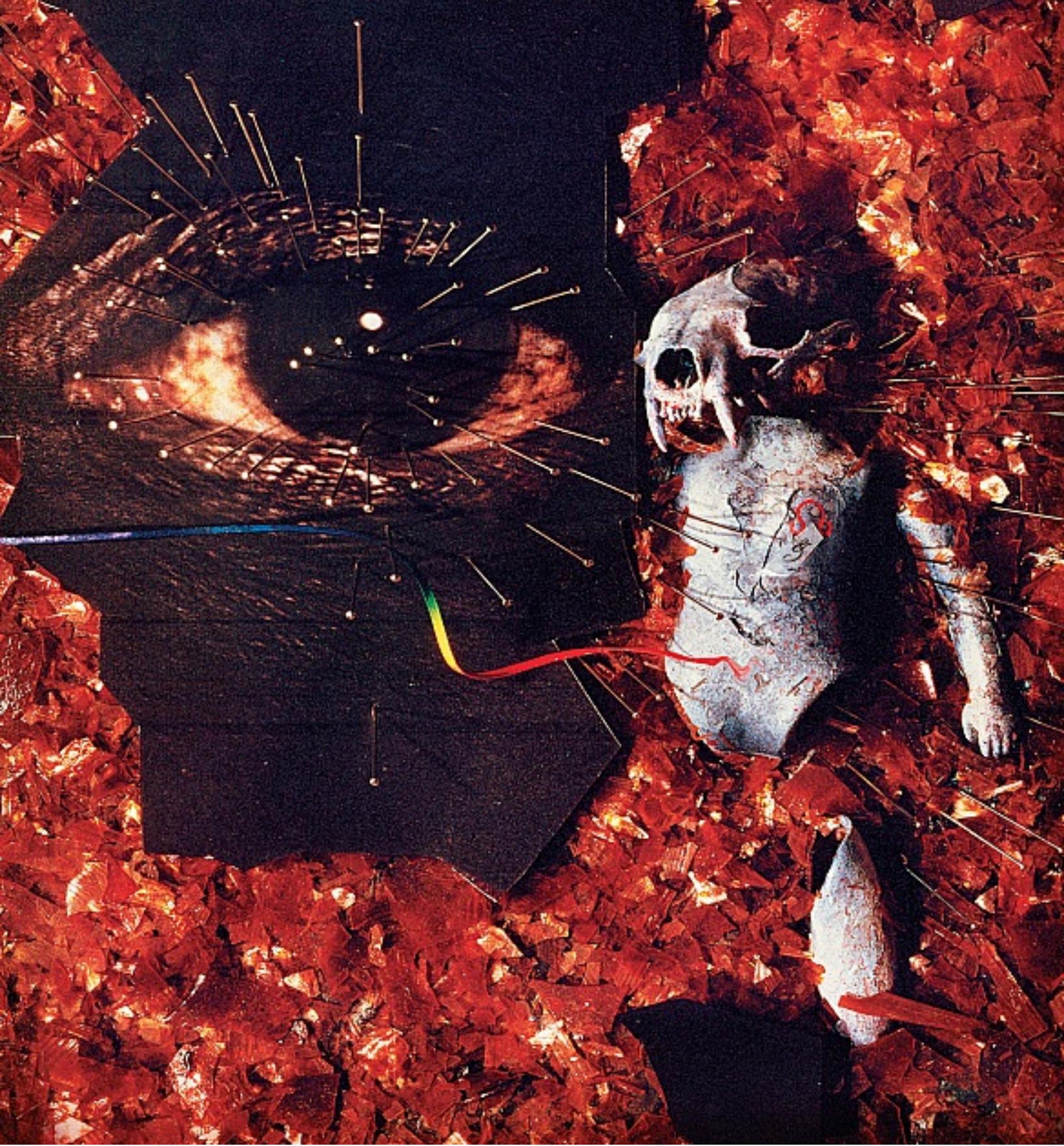
I am ANGRY,
Lucien.

And it's
my move.

TO BE CONTINUED.

DOLL'S HOUSE

PART THREE



LYTA IS RUDELY PULLED FROM HER REVERIE BY THE ALARM, WHICH ECHOES AND CLANGS THROUGH THE DREAM DOME.

SHE TRIES TO REMEMBER WHAT SHE WAS THINKING ABOUT, AND, FAILING, RESOLVES TO GO AND TALK TO HER HUSBAND.

HELL KNOW.

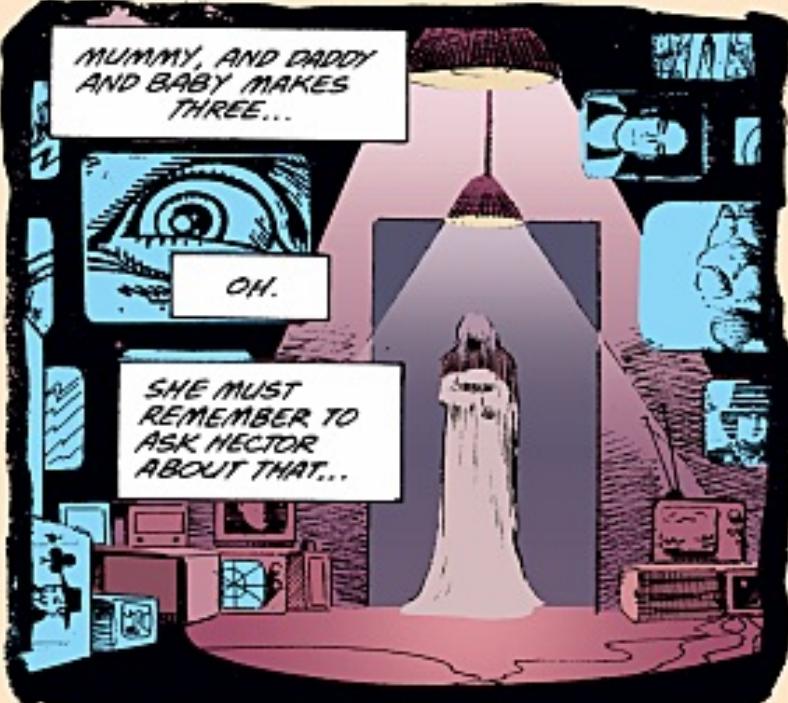
HECTOR KNOWS EVERYTHING.



AROUND HER THE ALARM SYSTEM WHOOPS AND SIRENS. ANOTHER EMERGENCY.

HECTOR SEEMS TO WORK SO MUCH THESE DAYS. AND THEY NO LONGER MAKE LOVE.

SHE CAN'T BLAME HIM, OF COURSE.



SHE WOULDN'T WELCOME HIS ADVANCES IF HE MADE THEM. NOT IN HER DELICATE CONDITION.

MUMMY, AND DADDY AND BABY MAKES THREE...

OH.

SHE MUST REMEMBER TO ASK HECTOR ABOUT THAT...

STILL, WHEN THE CHILD IS BORN, THINGS WILL BE DIFFERENT, WON'T THEY?



I'M SORRY, HECTOR, I WAS THINKING... THINKING ABOUT SOMETHING. I'M SORRY...

LISTEN, YOU TWO -- THAT THING'LL BE HERE SOON, SO GET ME ANY FILES ON IT WE HAVE.

HECK! WE WERE DUE TO TAKE LITTLE JED TO THE CIRCUS IN THE STARS TONIGHT.

IF IT TAKES MORE THAN A COUPLE OF HOURS TO THRASH THIS CRITTER WE'LL HAVE TO PUT THAT OFF UNTIL TOMORROW NIGHT...

OKAY, BOSS.

GOT IT.

COME ON, MRS. SANDMAN, I'LL WALK YOU BACK TO OUR QUARTERS.

UH, HECTOR...

YOU WON'T BE IN ANY DANGER, WILL YOU?

HONEY, YOU'RE TALKING TO THE MAN WHO RESCUED THE TOOTH FAIRY FROM THE JOVIAN FISH-MEN, WHO STOPPED THE BIG BAD WOLF FROM HUFFING DOWN THE CHRYSLER BUILDING...

NOBODY EVER BEATS THE SANDMAN.

EVERYTHING is going to be just FINE.

DARLING... HOW LONG HAVE WE BEEN LIVING IN THE DREAM DOME?

MUST BE A COUPLE OF YEARS BY NOW, HON. WHY?

WELL, IT JUST SEEMED TO ME LIKE, MAYBE I OUGHT TO HAVE MADE A BABY BY NOW.

YOU KNOW, YOU COULD JUST HAVE SOMETHING THERE, BABYCakes. HMM.



YOU KNOW, PRECIOUS, I'LL BET THAT THE STORK DOESN'T KNOW HOW TO GET TO THE DREAM DOME. HE'S PROBABLY GOT OUR LITTLE BUNDLE OF JOY IN ITS WHITE COTTON DIAPER, RIGHT NOW.

OH.



I WAS ABOUT SIX MONTHS PREGNANT WHEN WE GOT HERE...



WELL, IT JUST SEEMED TO ME LIKE, MAYBE I OUGHT TO HAVE MADE A BABY BY NOW.

I'LL TELL BRUTE AND GLOB ABOUT IT. THEY'LL KNOW HOW TO GET A MESSAGE TO THAT OL' STORK. YOU'LL SEE.

I'LL TALK TO THEM RIGHT AFTER I'VE BEATEN THE NIGHTMARE MONSTER.



BE CAREFUL.



LYTA LIVES IN A PRETTY HOUSE, WITH HER HUSBAND, THEIR TWO SERVANTS, AND A THOUSAND THOUSAND SCREENS.



PLAYING HOUSE

NEIL GAIMAN • CHRIS BACHALO • MALCOLM JONES • ZYTHON • JOHN COSTARICA ART YOUNG • KAREN BERGER
Writer Guest penciller inker colorist letterer assoc. editor editor



HECTOR IS THE SANDMAN. WITH HIS TWO ASSISTANTS, BRUTE AND GLOB, HE GIVES ALL THE CHILDREN IN THE WORLD WONDERFUL DREAMS.



THE ONLY CHILD LYTA HAS ACTUALLY MET IN THE DREAM-WORLD IS CALLED JED.

JED COMES TO VISIT THEM ALL THE TIME.

NOBODY ELSE.

IN HER DREAM HOUSE, IN HER PRETTY DRESSES, LYTA DOESN'T THINK ABOUT ANYTHING MUCH ANY MORE.

BUT SOMETIMES...

SOMETIMES SHE ALMOST WONDERS WHY.

NOW YOU LISSEN UP, YA LITTLE ANIMAL, AN YOU LISSEN GOOD, NOW.



NEXT WEEK, SOMEONE'S GOING TO COME FROM THE WELFARE DEPARTMENT TO SEE HOW YOU'RE DOIN'!

SEE IF THEY'RE GETTIN' THEIR MONEY'S WORTH OUTTA YA.

SO WE'RE GONNA CLEAN YA UP, AND BRING YA UP OUTTA THE CELLAR. AND YOU'RE GONNA SHOW HER BARNABY JUNIOR'S ROOM AND MAKE OUT IT'S YOURS,

AND TELL HER HOW WELL WE FEED YOU AND ALL.

AND NONE OF YOUR LYING OR CARRYING ON, BOY.

FEEL THIS?
HUH? DO YA?

OOG.

WELL, YOU SAY ANYTHING TO THIS WELFARE SNOOPER ABOUT THE CELLAR, OR ANYTHING GOES ON IN THIS HOUSE...

AND I'M GONNA WIRE YOUR HANDS TO THE PIPES DOWN THERE, AND PROCEED TO BREAK EVERY BONE IN YOUR BODY.

ONE BY
ONE
BY
ONE.

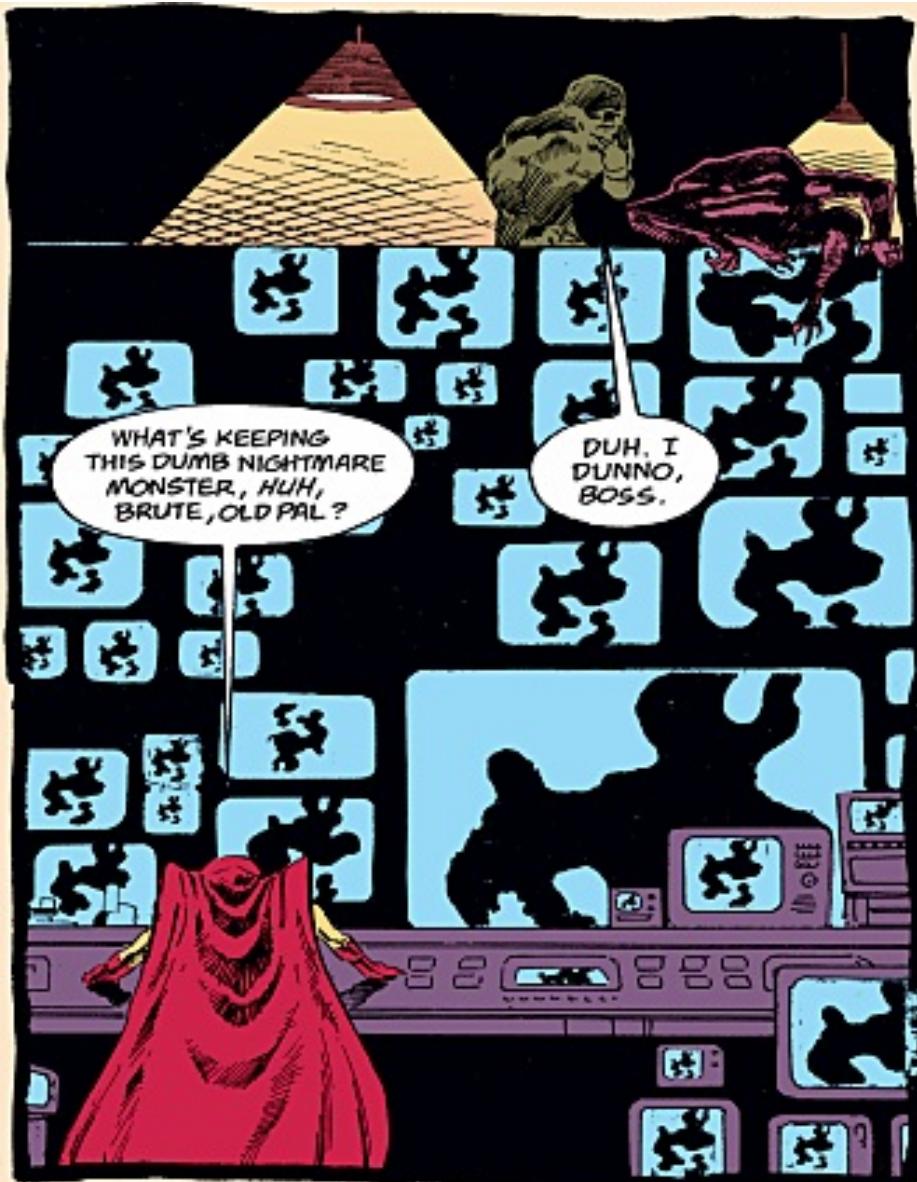
NOW,
GIT!

CLARICE AND BARNABY RECEIVE \$800 A MONTH FROM THE STATE FOR JED. THREE YEARS AGO HE RAN AWAY.

SINCE THEN HE'S BEEN LOCKED IN THE BASEMENT.

BARNABY AND CLARICE SEE IT AS PROTECTING THEIR INVESTMENT. THEY KNOW IT'S IMPORTANT TO KEEP JED SAFE...

THEY JUST COULDN'T TELL YOU WHY.

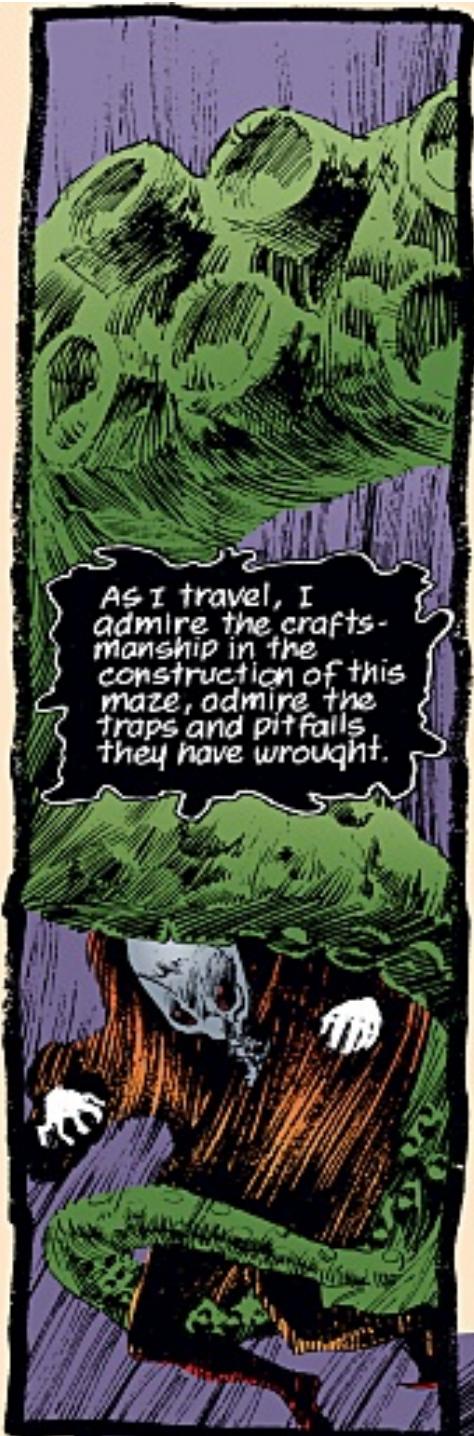




I am coming through
the barriers you have
erected in this mind.

I am coming, though
the way be arduous
and strange.

Nothing will
stop me.



As I travel, I
admire the crafts-
manship in the
construction of this
maze, admire the
traps and pitfalls
they have wrought.



You have
learned well,
my servants.



To force the child to
construct these
barriers inside its mind,
in its effort to escape
the physical world; to
build an island of dream
alone and untouched by
the true Dreaming...

This takes skill.

My admiration
does not lessen
my anger.



I am
dream.

I am
coming.

LIVING IN A DREAM HOUSE, WITH
A DREAM HUSBAND AND...

LYTA LOSES HER TRAIN OF
THOUGHT, AND COMMENCES
ABSENTLY TO BRUSH HER
HAIR.

IS THIS WHAT
SHE WANTS?

IS THIS WHAT
SHE WANTED?

SHE ALWAYS WANTED TO BE WITH
HECTOR, EVEN WHEN THEY WERE
CHILDREN, WHEN SHE WAS A
STRONG RICH KID AND HE WAS A
HERO BRAT...

BUT SHE MUST HAVE WANTED
MORE THAN THAT.

MUSTN'T SHE?

BUT HECTOR'S DREAMS CAME
FIRST. THEY ALWAYS DID. LYTA
AND HECTOR DID SO MUCH
TOGETHER...

THEY CAME OUT OF
THE CLOSET ON THE
COSTUME STUFF
TOGETHER. WHEN
THEY WERE AT
UCLA.

WHY DID SHE DO THAT?
BECOME A CHEAP COPY
OF HER VANISHED MOTHER?

IT ALL SEEMS LIKE A
DREAM NOW. SO HARD
TO HOLD ON TO. NOTHING'S
TANGIBLE ANYMORE.

WELL, TO BE
FAIR, HE WAS
DEAD...

AND SHE WAS PREGNANT
WITH HIS CHILD.

THERE WERE THE
NIGHTMARE TIMES
WHEN SHE THOUGHT
HECTOR WAS DEAD.

BUT BRUTE AND GLOB HAD
CAUGHT HIS SOUL IN THE DREAM
DOME, MADE HIM THE SANDMAN,
THE PROTECTOR OF DREAMS...

AND, AFTER THE WEDDING, SHE
CAME TO LIVE IN
THIS HOUSE.

AND SHE WAS
VERY HAPPY.
THEY WERE ALL
SO VERY, VERY
HAPPY.

HI, BABE. JUST CALLING IN TO SAY I'M OFF TO FIGHT THE NIGHTMARE MONSTER. BRUTE AND GLOB ARE GOING TO EJECT ME THROUGH THE DREAM CHUTE NOW.

THAT'S NICE, DEAR.
HAVE A GOOD TIME.

FESTERING SCABS! PLUS AND POX AND PUKE ON IT ALL!
WE CAME SO DAMNED CLOSE! JUST A FEW MORE YEARS.

NOW WHAT?

IT WOULD HAVE WORKED.

NO.

NO, IT WOULD NEVER HAVE WORKED. BUT IT WAS FUN TO TRY.

SO...

DO WE SIT AND WATCH OUR OLD BOSS PULL THE BOZO'S HEAD OFF...?

OR SHALL WE FIND SOMEPLACE TO LOSE OURSELVES, AND START THE WHOLE THING OVER AGAIN?

SOMEWHERE IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE, DODGE COUNTY,
GEORGIA: ROSE WALKER.

WE'LL NEVER GET THIS
THING STARTED AGAIN
TONIGHT, GILBERT.

IT WAS YOU WHO CHOSE TO RENT
A WRECK, MISS WALKER.

**YOU SAID YOU
WOULDN'T MENTION
THAT AGAIN.**

MY APOLOGIES,
MISS WALKER.

WE MIGHT AS WELL WALK. IT
CAN'T BE TOO FAR TO A MOTEL.

WHAT WAS THAT, THEN?
TEN MILES? FIFTEEN?

PERHAPS A MILE
AND A HALF, MISS
WALKER.

YOU'RE NO FUN,
GILBERT. ANYWAY,
WITH OUR LUCK
THEY'LL BE ALL
BOOKED UP.

WELL, I'M AFRAID
WE ARE KINDA BOOKED
UP, LITTLE LADY.

THIS CONVENTION, THEY'VE
BOOKED THE WHOLE PLACE
THROUGH THE WEEKEND.

I MEAN, I GOT EMPTY
ROOMS, SINCE MOSTA THEM
DON'T GET HERE TILL
TOMORROW MORNING, BUT...

COOK, WE'LL
BE OUT FIRST
THING
TOMORROW.
PROMISE.

AND WE WON'T
GET IN THE WAY
OF YOUR CEREAL
GROWERS, OR EATERS,
WHATEVER.

YOU'RE BOTH ON THE THIRD FLOOR.
311 AND 312. I REALLY SHOULDN'T
BE DOING THIS.

HONEST.

I KNOW. AND I CAN'T
THANK YOU ENOUGH.
NEITHER CAN COUSIN
GILBERT.

"COUSIN GILBERT?"

"C'MON, GILBERT. LIGHTEN UP... SO WHAT DO YOU THINK CEREAL FANS ARE INTO, HUH? MAYBE THEY COLLECT THOSE LITTLE PLASTIC FIGURINES, AND OLD CAPTAIN CRUNCH WHISTLES..." 

GUEST LIST

The Bon Gart
Brother Club
The California Widow
The Cadymen
Christians
Cincinnati Poster
(Cincinnati, Kentucky)
The Cowgirls (Oregon)
The D.V.E.S.
Dad's Uncle
The Dog Daddies
The Egg Farmers
The Fisherman
The Fleischer

ATLANTA, GEORGIA. THE CORINTHIAN.

HEY! YOU
IN THE
SHADES!

WORD ON THE STREET
IS YOU'RE LOOKIN' FER
A LITTLE ROUGH TRADE
AN' EASY
ACTION.
ZAT SO?

COULD
BE.

DON'T JERK US AROUND, GUY. ME
AN' DOUGIE, HERE, WE MIGHT BE
INTERESTED IN A THREESOME.

IF THE
PRICE WUZ
RIGHT.

I HAVE
MONEY.

THAT IS SUCH
GOOD NEWS, MAN.
GOOD NEWS FOR
US, ANYWAY.

TAKE HIM,
DOUGIE!

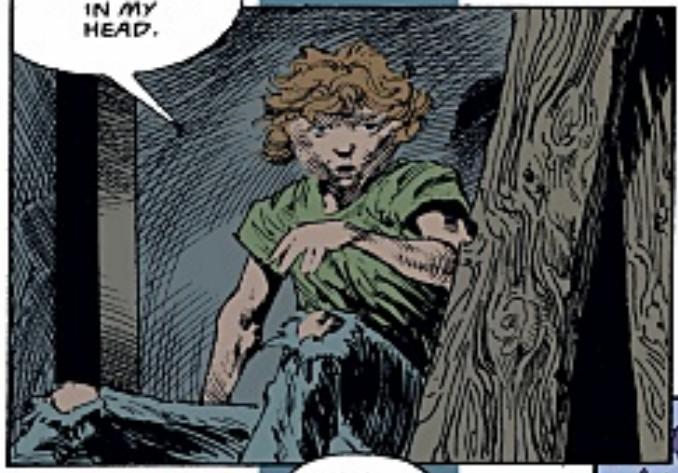
SMACK

AAAGH!
JEEZUS!

ASSHOLE! I'M GONNA
RIP OUT YOUR EYES
FOR THAT!











I CAN FEEL
THEM, HIDING IN
THAT PLACE.
GET OUT OF
MY WAY.



MONSTER,
YOU SHALL
NEVER GET
PAST ME.

AND
WHO ARE
YOU...?



I AM THE SANDMAN,
GUARDIAN OF THE DREAMS OF
MEN, PROTECTOR AGAINST WICKED
NIGHTMARES, LORD OF THE DREAM
DOME, AND FRIEND OF CHILDREN
EVERYWHERE!



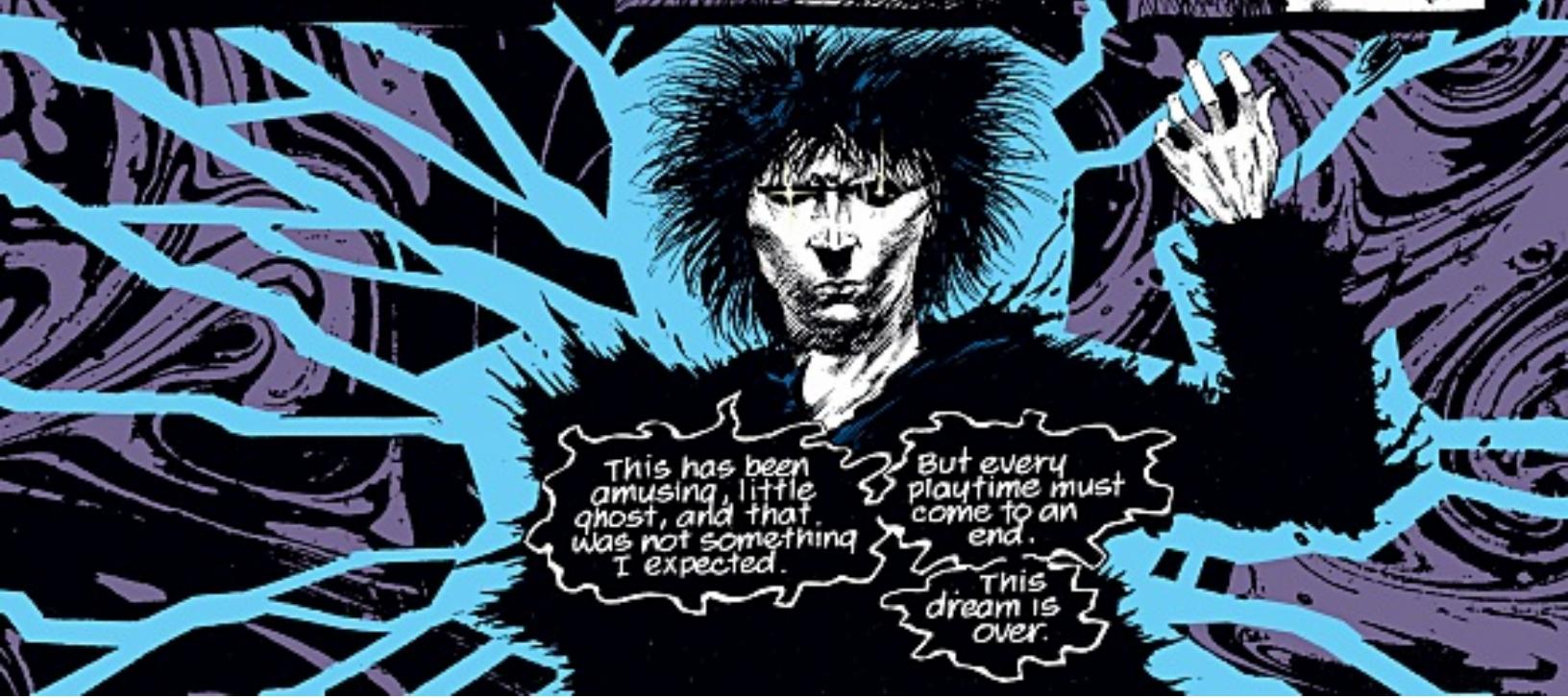
YOU
ARE
WHAT?

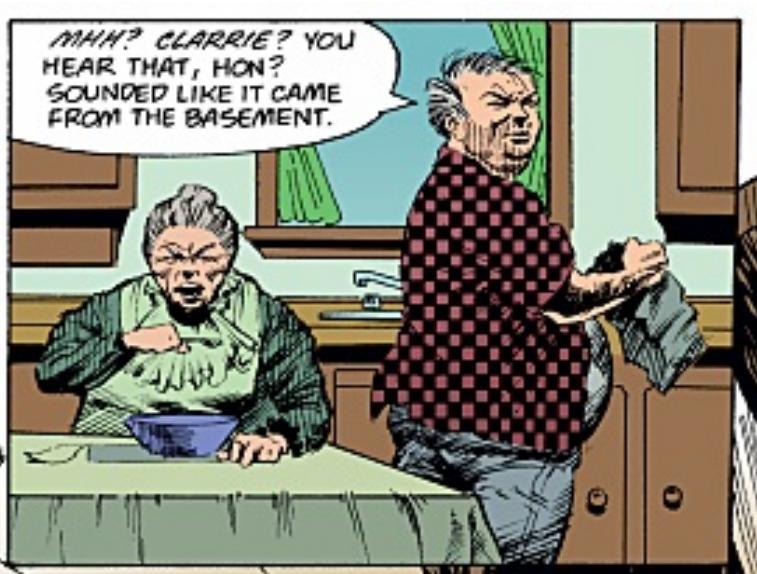


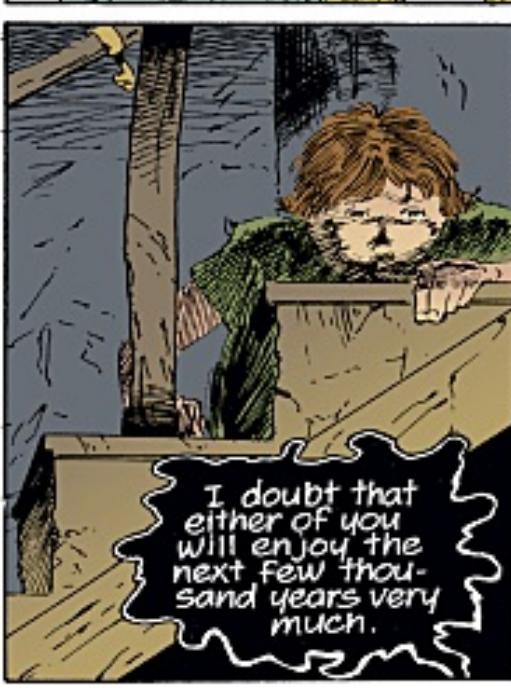
HRRR.
HRR.



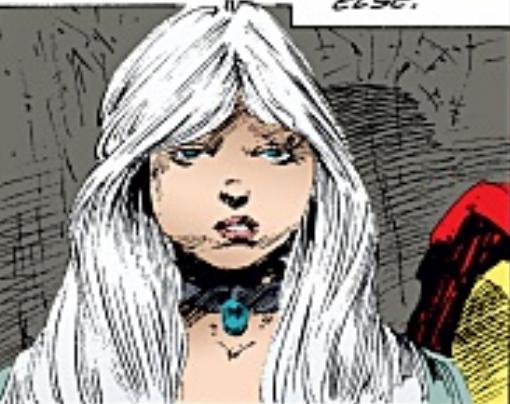
HRRRAAH.







EVERYTHING SEEMS VERY DISTANT
AND FAR AWAY, LIKE PERHAPS
IT'S HAPPENING TO SOMEONE
ELSE.



THIS CAN'T BE REAL!
NOT THIS DARK CELLAR,
ACRID TOILET-SMELL ON
THE STALE AIR.

MAYBE
SHE'S
DREAM-
ING.

NO! NOT THE
DARKNESS!
PLEASE, LORD!

IT WAS ALL IN FUN!
WE MEANT NOTHING
BY IT! PLEASE?

NOT THE
DARKNESS!

There That
takes care of
them, for now.
Hmm.
Little
ghost. Do
you have
a name?



SURE, FELLA. I'M
HECTOR HALL, AND THIS
IS MY WIFE, LYTA.
SHORT FOR
HIPPOLYTA.

I DON'T KNOW
WHAT THIS IS
ALL ABOUT
BUT...

It is Unseemly
for the dead to
walk the earth,
Hector Hall.

CHRIST...

MY FU

You belong with the
dead, Little ghost. Go
to the place appointed
for you.

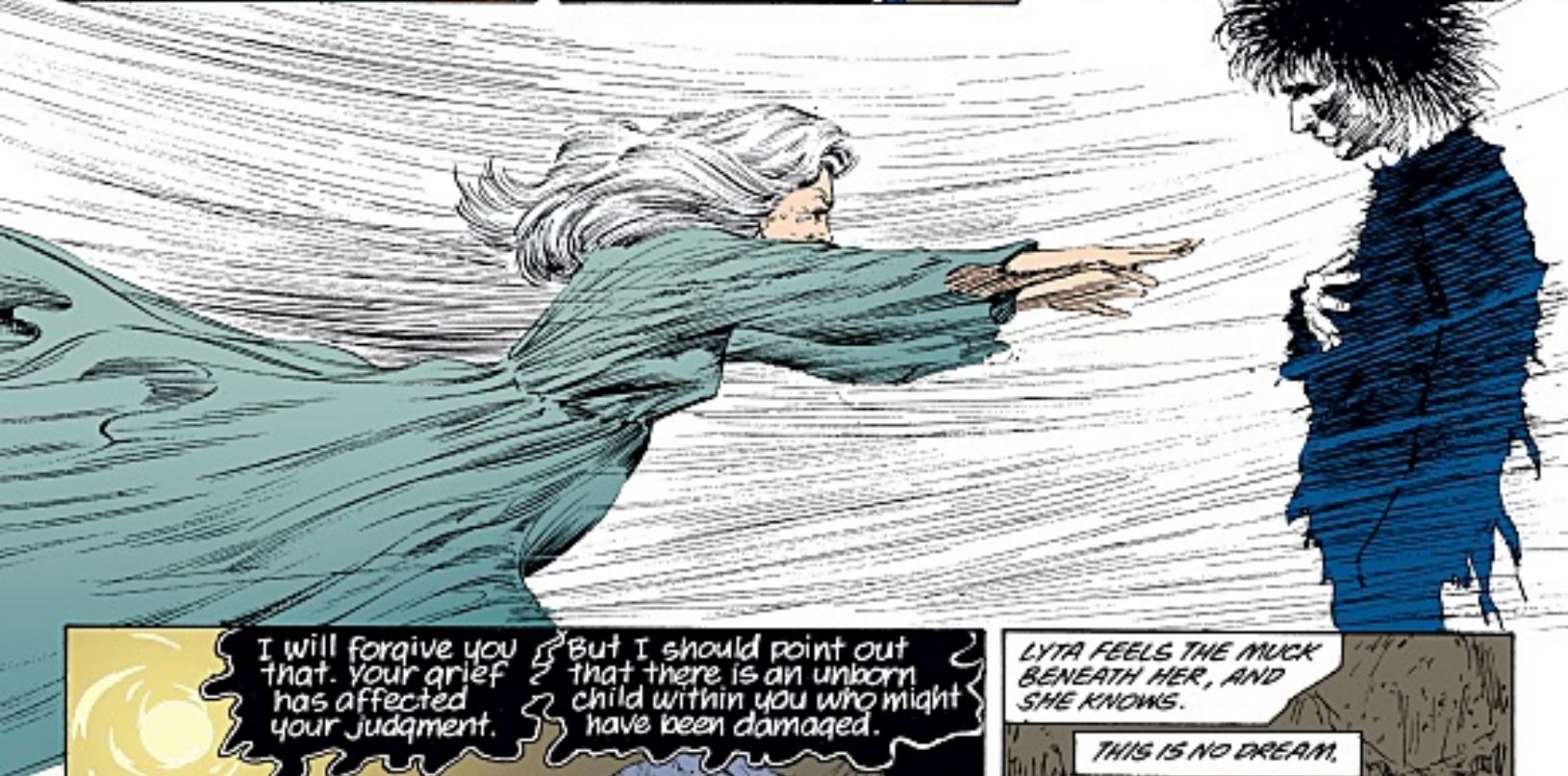
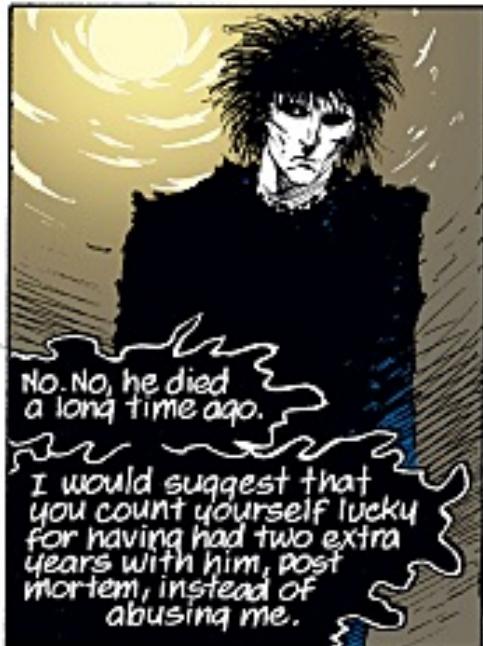
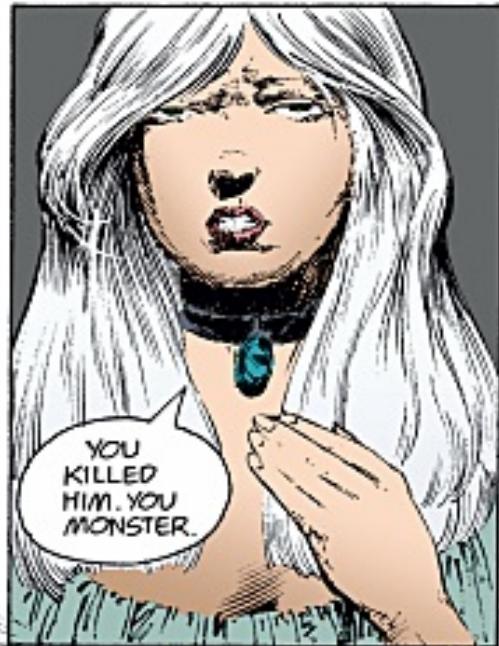
HUH? NOW,
LISTEN,
BUSTER--

LYTA!

NO. STOP
HIM. FOR
GOD'S
SAKE...

I
LOVE
YOU...

HECTOR?



SO. WHAT ARE
YOU GOING
TO DO TO ME?

Nothing.

NOTHING?
YOU KILLED HECTOR.
YOU DESTROYED OUR
HOME. YOU'VE RUINED MY
LIFE.

YOU
CALL THAT
NOTHING?

Exactly.
Nothing.

You are free to go. I almost
forgot. The child--
a new life,
Hippolyta Hall.

Oh. I almost
forgot. The child--
the child you have
carried so long in
dreams. That
child is mine.

Take good care of it.
One day I will come
for it.

BUT, BUT, YOU
CAN'T, MY BABY...

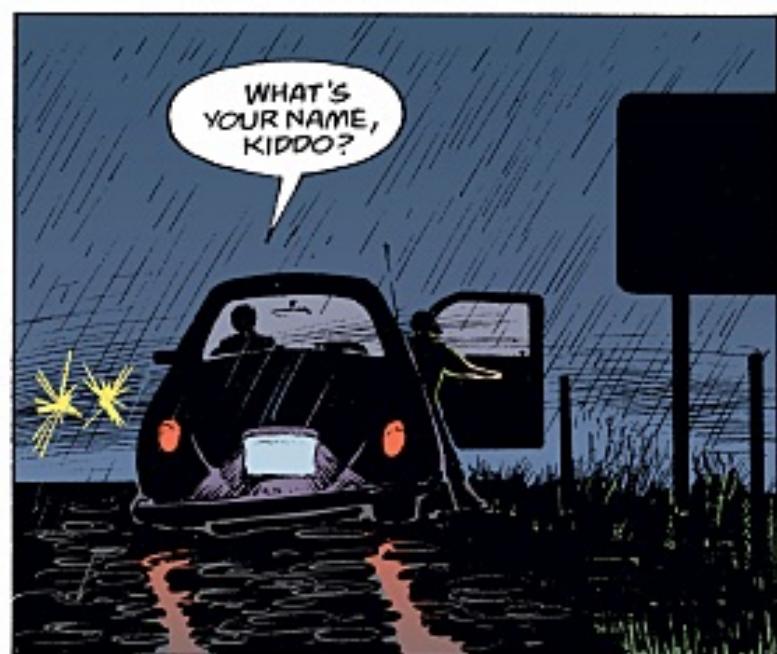
I have a prior
engagement. I am
afraid. I can
discuss this no
further.

YOU TAKE MY
CHILD OVER MY DEAD
BODY, YOU SPOOKY
BASTARD...

OVER MY
DEAD BODY.

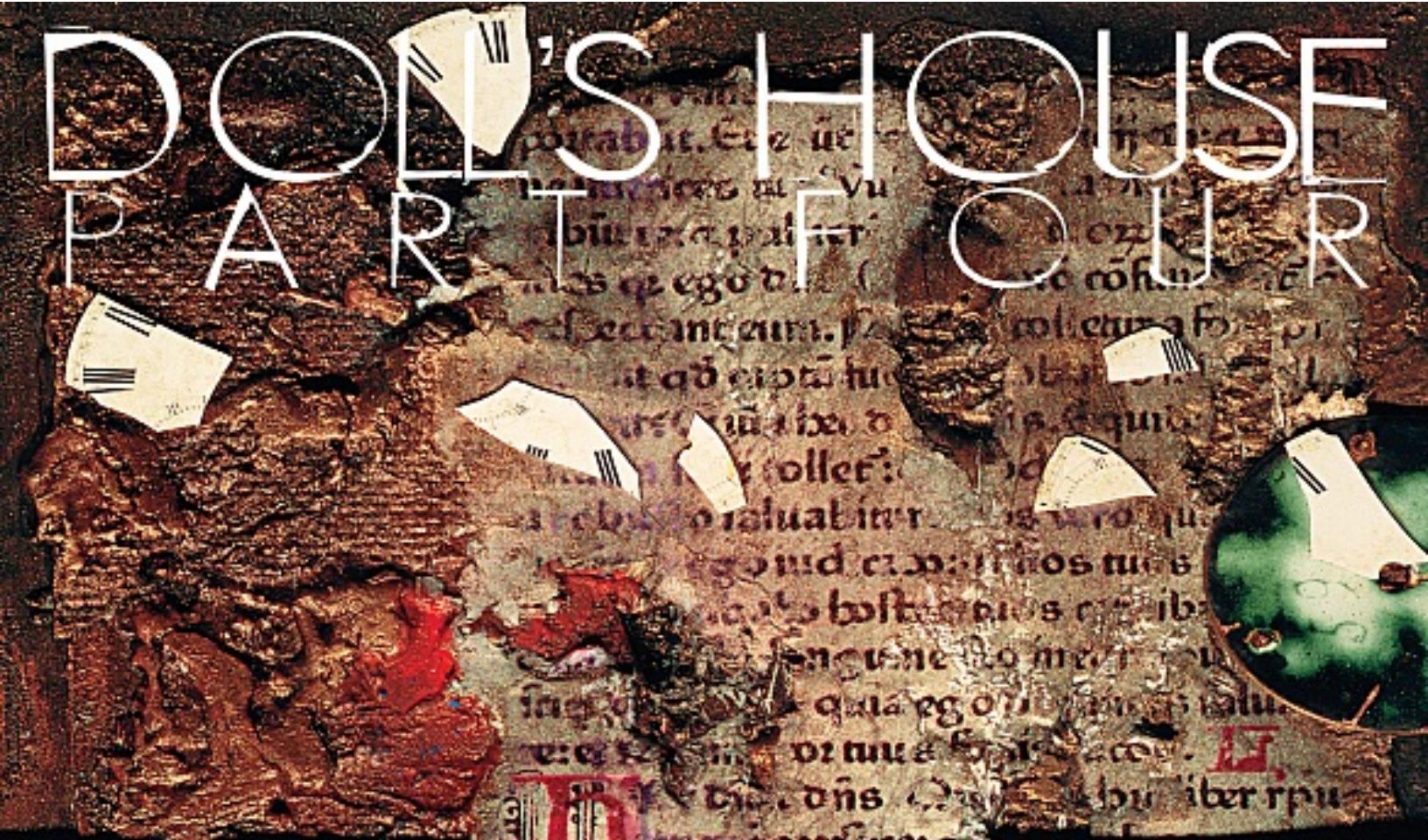
I will
see you
again,
Hippolyta.

until
then.
Fare
well.



NEXT:
THE PRIOR ENGAGEMENT

DON'S HOUSE PART II



"MEN OF GOOD FORTUNE"

GAIMAN WRITER

ZULLI PENCILS

PARKHOUSE INKS

KLEIN LETTERS

ZYLONOL COLORS

YOUNG ASSOC.EDITOR

BERGER EDITOR

--THIRD POLL
TAX IN THREE YEARS,
WHAT ELSE COULD
WE HAVE DONE?

ALL I'M GAYING
IS WHEN BALL AND
TYLER WERE KILLED;
THE SPIRIT OF THE
WORKING MAN DIED
WITH THEM.

PENNY ALE AND
COLD BACON. PENNY
ALE AND COLD BACON.
I WOULD HAVE GOOD
HOT MEAT AND
FRENCH WINE.

--WAR, PLAGUE,
AND TWO BLOODY
POPES, FIGHTING LIKE
WEASELS IN HEAT. THE
END OF THE WORLD
IS SOON, YOU MARK
ME.

...MURDER, NOR
RAPE. WE NEED A RETURN
TO LAW, AND TO ORDER.
THE KING SHOULD ACT
AGAINST THESE
BANDITS.

...Very well. But I still
do not see what purpose
this will serve.

--LOOK, I'VE SEEN DEATH. I LOST
HALF MY VILLAGE TO THE BLACK DEATH.
I FOUGHT UNDER BUCKINGHAM IN
BURGLUNDY, AND YOU KNOW WHAT A
PIG'S EAR THAT WAS.

WELL, AT LEAST
I GET OUT AND
MEET THEM.

I JUST THINK
MAYBE IT WOULD BE
GOOD FOR YOU TO SEE
THEM ON THEIR TERMS,
INSTEAD OF YOURS.

IT'S NOT
LIKE I DON'T
KNOW WHAT
DEATH IS.

A PENNY ALE FOR ME, AND
ANOTHER FOR MY BROTHER,
AN' IT PLEASE YOU.

CERTAINLY,
LADY.

GEOFFREY, I SEE NO GREAT WRONG IN
WRITING IN THE *LANGUE DES TRAVAILLISTES*
RATHER THAN *LA BELLE FRANÇAIS*, BUT
ENGLISH HAS ITS OWN FORMS OF
VERSE.

PIERS PLOWMAN.
THAT'S WHAT PEOPLE
WANT. NOT FILTHY TALES
IN RHYME ABOUT
PILGRIMS.

BUT I ENJOY
RHYMING, EDMUND.
AND I ENJOY TAVERN
TALES TOLD OF
AN EVENING.

...UP HER DRESS,
AND SHE SAYS, "ARE
YOU HUNTING FOR
RABBITS AGAIN,
FRIAR?"

Y'ARE A FOOL, HOB. DEATH COMES TO EVERY
MAN. THIRTY YEARS, IF HE ESCAPE THE PLAGUE,
OR THE FLUX, OR THE FRENCH. SIXTY YEARS,
WITH FORTUNE, AND IF GOD IS WILLING.

THEN THEY PLUT
YOU IN THE GROUND,
TO AWAIT THE DAY
OF JUDGEMENT.

THERE YOU GO--
PROVES MY POINT. ALL
I'M SAYING IS THIS,

NOBODY
HAS TO DIE.

THE ONLY REASON PEOPLE DIE, IS BECAUSE EVERYONE DOES IT. YOU ALL JUST GO ALONG WITH IT.

IT'S RUBBISH, DEATH.
IT'S STUPID. I DON'T WANT NOTHING TO DO WITH IT.

A delegation of faerie came to me, last night. They are talking about abandoning this plane for ever.

I MEAN, WHAT'S IT GOOD FOR, EH?

THINK ABOUT IT.

I MADE MY MIND UP ARSE DEEP IN BURGUNDY MUD. 'HOB GADLING,' I TOLD MYSELF, EVERY MAN AND WOMAN DIES, THEY SAY--"



--EXCEPT THE WANDERING JEW, AHASUERUS, WHO DENIED OUR LORD.

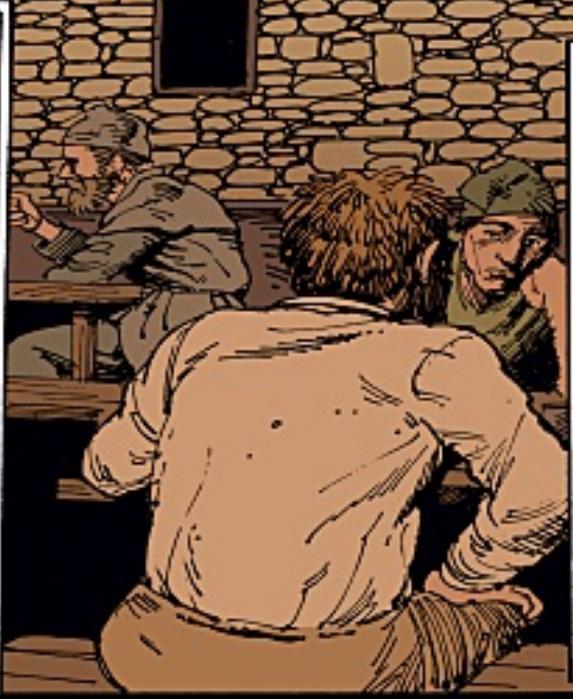
YEAH. FAIR ENOUGH. EVERYONE DIES, I THOUGHT (EXCEPT FOR MAYBE THE WANDERING JEW), BUT WHY THE HELL SHOULD I? I MIGHT GET LUCKY.

THERE'S ALWAYS A FIRST TIME.

NO, IT'S RUBBISH, DEATH IS. I MEAN, THERE'S SO MUCH TO DO. SO MANY THINGS TO SEE. PEOPLE TO DRINK WITH. WOMEN TO SWIVE.

YOU LOT MAY DIE. I EXPECT YOU WILL, 'COS YOU'RE STUPID. NOT ME, THOUGH.

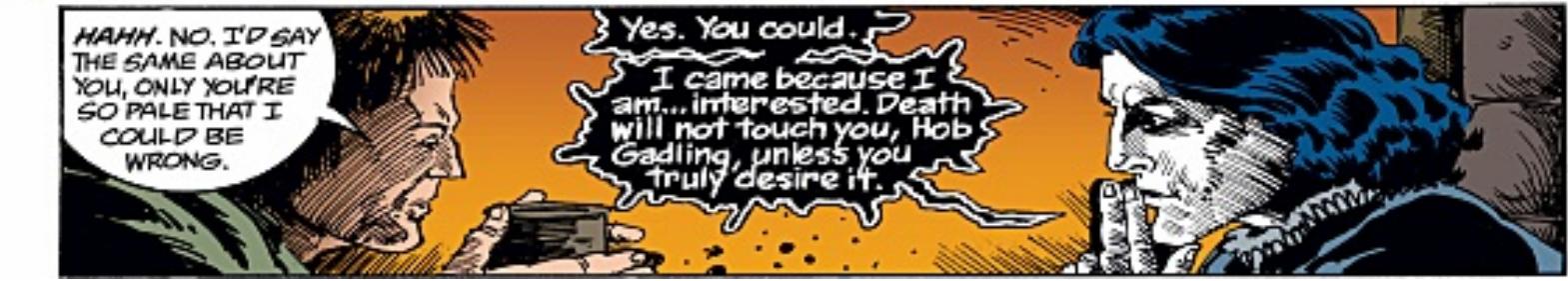




GEOFFREY,
FOR A DIPLOMAT,
TU JUGES MAL
LA NATURE
HUMAINE.

THE ENGLISH WERE
BORN TO HUNT SPITTARD
AND STAG. IF THEY TAKE
THAT AWAY FROM US, 'TWILL
BE "JOHN BALL HAS
RUNGEN YOUR BELL"
ONCE MORE.





YEAH. LIKE I SAID. IT'S JUST PEOPLE GOING ALONG WITH IT.

I'LL TELL YOU, THOUGH. IT'S ALL CHANGING.

In what way?



HEAR THAT? NOW WE HAVE CHIMBLIES THEY COMPLAIN OF RHEUMES, CATARRHS, THEY SNEEZE AND GROAN.

WHEN WE HAD HONEST BRAZIERS OUR HEADS DID NEVER ACHE. THE SMOKE WAS GOOD HARDENING FOR THE TIMBERS OF THE HOUSES AND GOOD MEDICINE FOR THE MAN AND HIS FAMILY.



OLD IDIOT!

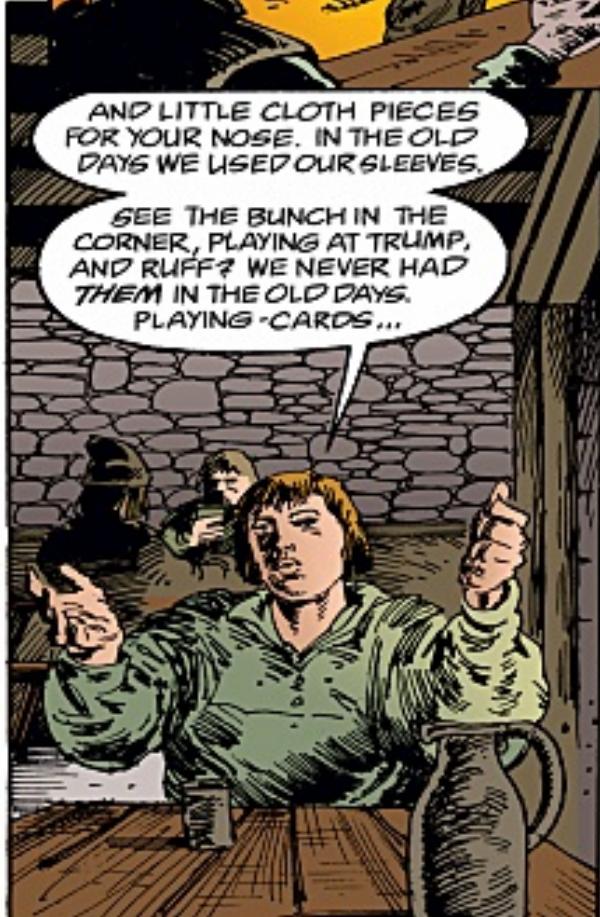
I'LL TELL YOU, CHIMNEYS IS BRILLIANT. NOT HAVING YOUR EYES WATERING ALL THE TIME. NOT FREEZING FROM THE HOLES IN THE WALL.

AND LITTLE CLOTH PIECES FOR YOUR NOSE. IN THE OLD DAYS WE USED OUR SLEEVES.

SEE THE BUNCH IN THE CORNER, PLAYING AT TRUMP, AND RUFF? WE NEVER HAD THEM IN THE OLD DAYS. PLAYING -CARDS...

Most impressive. What WILL you people think of next?

SOMETHING TO GET RID OF FLEAS, WITH ANY LUCK.



So what have you been doing
for the last hundred years?

SAME TRADE AS BEFORE.
SOLDIERING, MAINLY. A LITTLE
BANDITRY HERE AND THERE,
IF I COULDN'T FIND WHAT
YOU'D EXACTLY CALL
A WAR...

I WAS PLEASED WHEN THE FIGHTING
CAME TO ENGLAND. SAVES GOING
ALL THE WAY TO FRANCE... SOME-
TIMES I'VE FOUGHT FOR YORK,
SOMETIMES FOR LANCASTER.

THAT'S BEEN QUIET FOR A FEW
YEARS NOW, SINCE RICHMOND GOT
IN. KING HENRY AS IS. BUT IT'LL START
UP AGAIN SOON, YOU'LL SEE.

AND IN THE MEANTIME, I'VE STARTED
IN A TRADE. WORKING WITH A FRIEND
OF MINE.

IT WON'T
LAST.

BUT IT'S A NEW TRADE. IT'S CALLED
PRINTING. DON'T NEED TO BE A GUILD
MEMBER-- NOT YET. NEVER BE A
REAL DEMAND FOR IT, MIND YOU.
HARD WORK.

BUT BEATS
THE HELL OUT OF
ROTTING TO MAGGOTS
IN THE GROUND,
EH?

"So you still want
to live?"

"OH YES."

"A hundred
years, then?"

"OH YES."







SWEET KIT. THE PLAY I GAVE
YOU. DID YOU READ...?



"HUNG BE THE HEAVENS
WITH BLACK, YIELD
DAY TO NIGHT! COMETS
IMPORTING CHANGE OF TIMES AND
STATES, BRANDISH YOUR CRYSTAL
TRESSES IN THE SKY, AND WITH
THEM SCOURGE THE BAD,
REVOLTING STARS."





Are you
Will Shaxbend?

AYE, SIR.
HAVE WE
MET?

We have. But men
forget, in waking
hours.

I heard your talk,
Will. Would you write
great plays? Create new
dreams to spur the
minds of men? Is that
your will?

IT
IS.

Then let
us talk.

WHITE
BREAD.

I WOULD HAVE KILLED
FOR WHITE BREAD, TWO
HUNDRED YEARS BACK.

COME TO THINK
OF IT, I DID, A COUPLE
OF TIMES.

EVERYTHING TO
LIVE FOR. AND NOWHERE
TO GO BUT UP.

HMMPH. DO NOT BE SO FREE IN ASSIGNING PLAGUES, FIRES OR FLOODS TO THE JUDGEMENT OF THE LORD, FOR OUR KING.

... MAKE MORE FROM THEIR POOR ROLE THAN THEY WOULD FOR HONEST WORK. I TELL YOU, SIR, MEN WITHOUT JOBS SELDOM DRINK OTHER THAN THE STRONGEST ALE-HOUSE BEER, OR EAT ANY BREAD MADE WITH THE FINEST WHEAT FLOUR.

CAN I HELP YOU, SIR?

No, thank you. I am waiting for someone.

GET AWAY, YOU FUDDLED JUG-BITER!

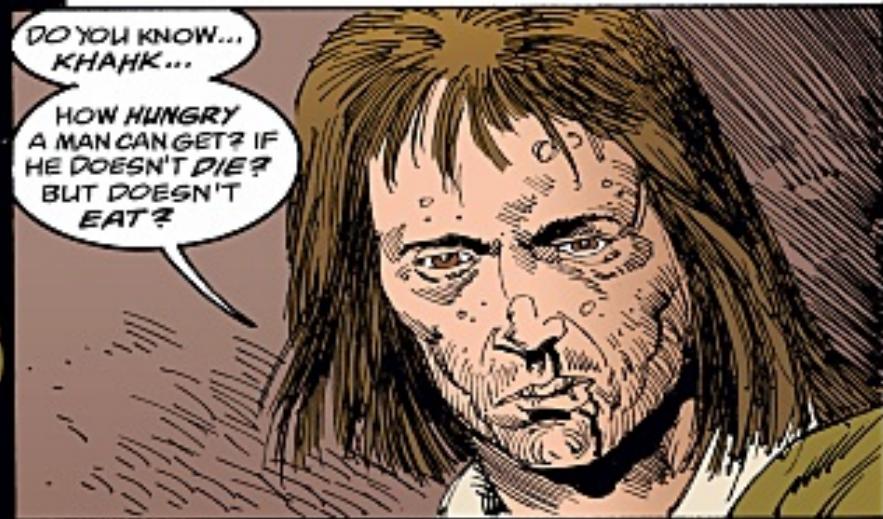
THIS TAVERN'S FOR GENTRY AND DECENT FOLK. YOU GET BACK TO THE STEWS WITH THE REST OF THE FILTH!

YER FACKIN' DUNGWITS! GERRAH TAMEWAY!

UHN.

Let him be.

He is my guest.

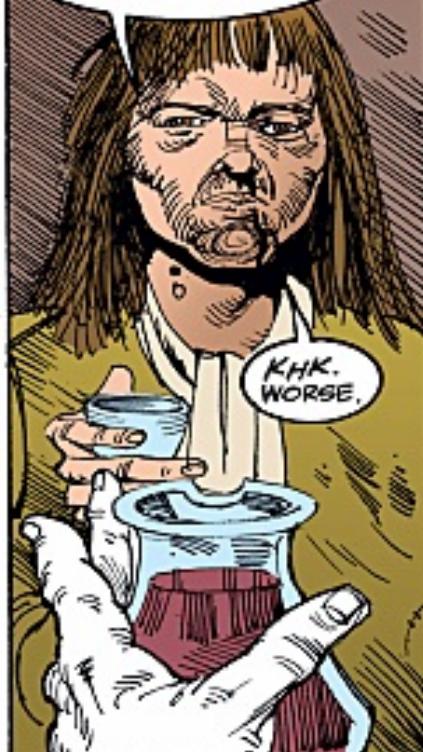


SHE DIED IN CHILDBIRTH. ELEANOR.
I DON'T REMEMBER WHAT SHE
LOOKED LIKE ANY MORE. I
PAWNED HER PORTRAIT FIFTY
YEARS SINCE...

ROBYN DIED IN A TAVERN
BRAWL WHEN HE WAS TWENTY.
I DIDN'T GO OUT MUCH
AFTER THAT.

THEY TRIED TO DROWN ME AS
A WITCH. I'D LIVED THERE
FOR FORTY YEARS.
OVERCONFIDENT...

I GOT OUT WITH MY
SKIN. LITTLE MORE. AND
THEN IT GOT WORSE, AND
WORSE, AND...





"IT'S A LIVING."



"FUNNY THING IS, I SORT OF STARTED IT ALL. I MEAN, IT WAS ME THAT FLUNDED JACK HAWKINS, WHAT, TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO, NOW..."

"You take pride in treating your fellow humans as less than animals?"



"WONDERFUL SYSTEM, REALLY. WE TAKE ENGLISH COTTON GOODS TO AFRICA, GET A CARGO OF NEGROES, PACK 'EM IN LIKE SARDINES, SAME BOAT TAKES 'EM ACROSS THE ATLANTIC, COMES BACK WITH RAW COTTON, TOBACCO AND SUGAR."

"I HEARD SOMETHING FUNNY, THE OTHER WEEK."



"LIKE I SAID, IT'S A LIVING."



"BLOKE SAID TO ME, HE SAID, 'IF ONLY THE FRENCH NOBLES HAD PLAYED CRICKET WITH THEIR MEN, THE WAY WE DO, THEY'D NEVER HAVE HAD THIS TROUBLE.'



"FIRST THE COLONIES, NOW FRANCE. YOU ASK ME, THIS COUNTRY'LL BE NEXT FOR A REVOLUTION. I BEEN SALTING MONEY AWAY ALL OVER THE WORLD."

"ODD'S LIFE -- FIRST SIGN OF TROUBLE I'LL BE OUT OF HERE LIKE THAT."



I SAW KING LEAR YESTERDAY.
MRS. SIDDONS AS GONERIL. THE
IDIOTS HAD GIVEN IT A
HAPPY ENDING.

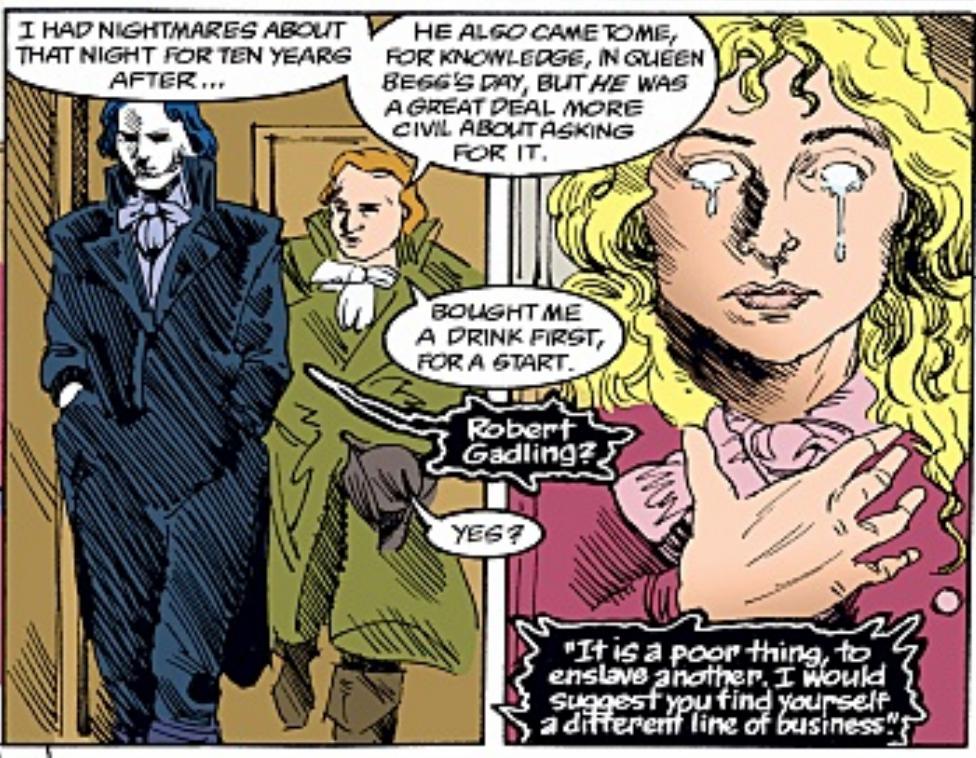
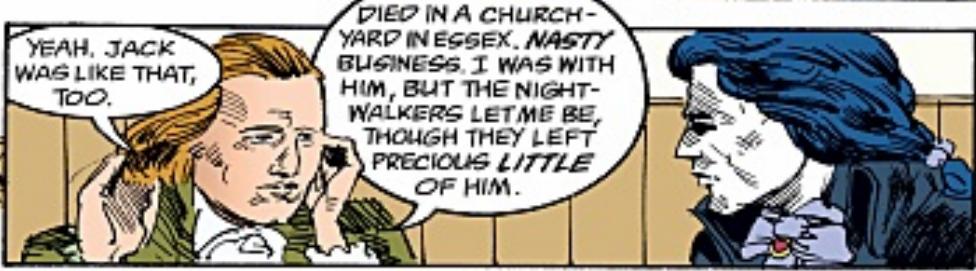
That will not last. The Great
Stories will always return to
their original forms.



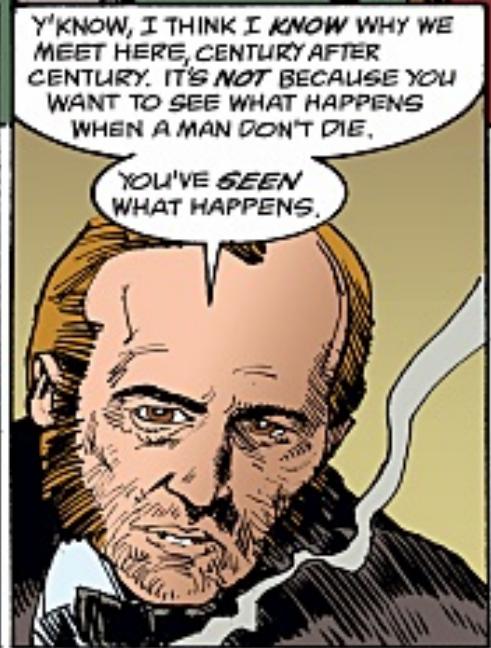
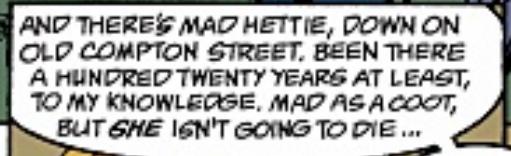
THAT LAD, WILL SHAKESPEARE. YOU
DID SOME KIND OF DEAL WITH
HIM, DIDN'T YOU?

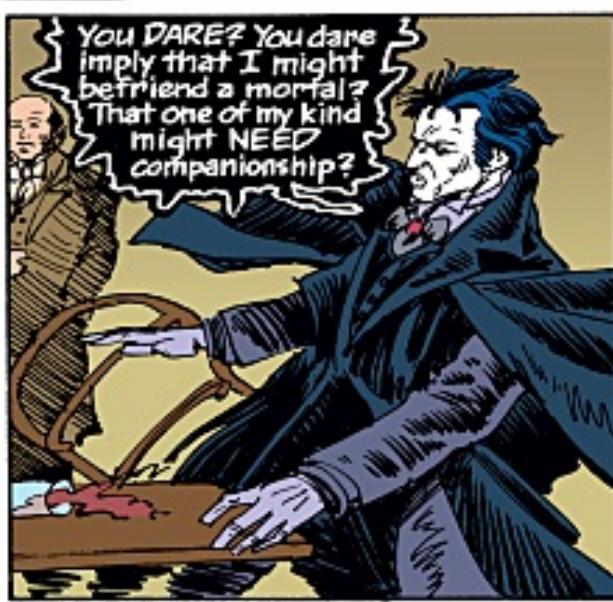
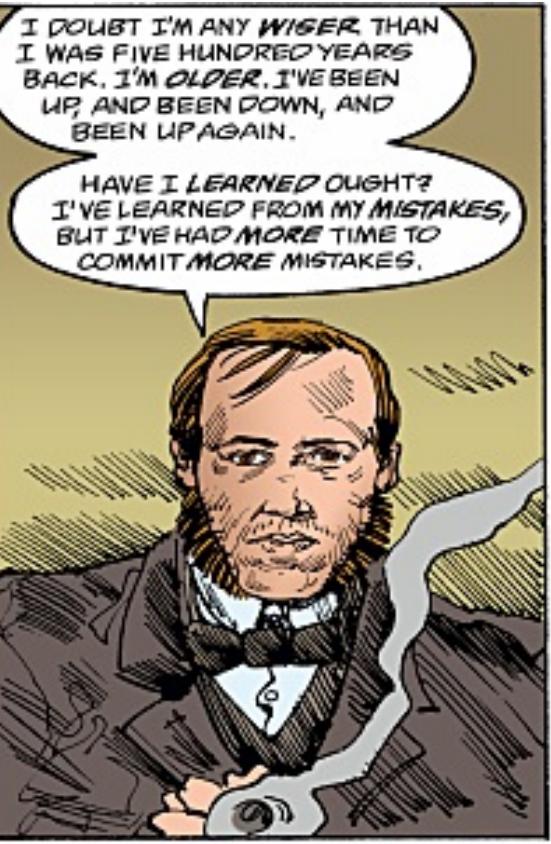


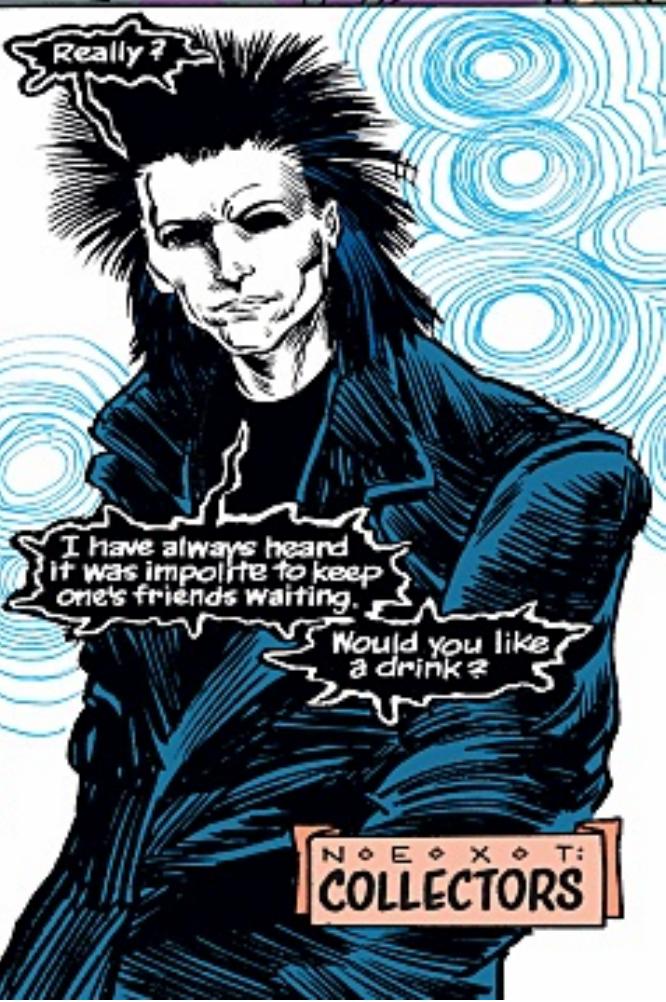
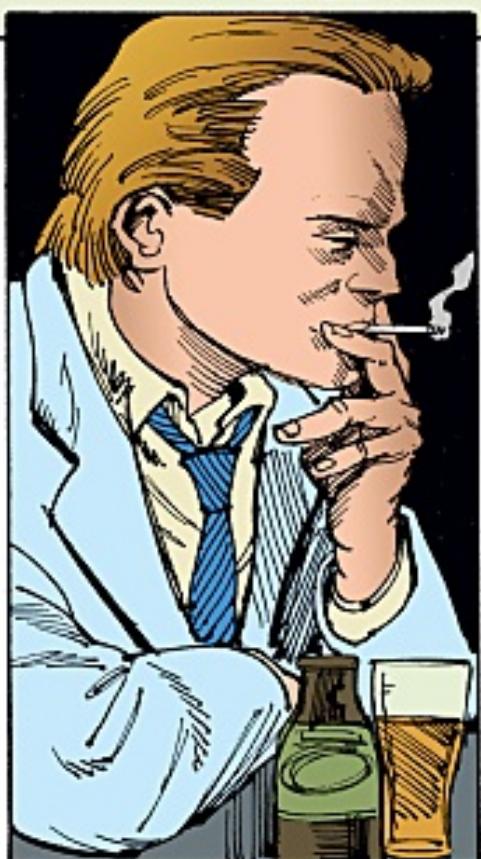












NO E X O T:
COLLECTORS

DOLLS' HOUSE

PART FIVE



IT SEEMED LIKE THE LATE AUTUMN WIND BLEW THEM IN THAT NIGHT, SPINNING AND DIZZYING FROM THE FOUR CORNERS OF THE WORLD.

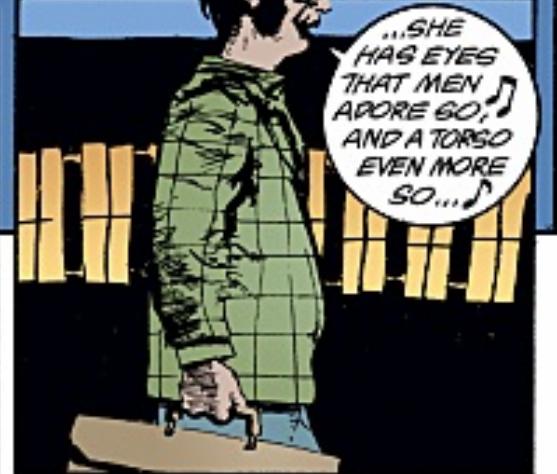
WELCOME CEREAL CONVENTION



IT WAS A BITCH WIND, KNIFE-SHARP AND CUTTING, AND IT BLEW BAD AND COLD.



AND THEY CAME WITH IT, SCURRYING AND SKITTERING, LIKE YELLOW LEAVES AND OLD NEWSPAPERS, FROM A THOUSAND PLACES AND FROM NOWHERE AT ALL.



THEY CAME IN THEIR SUITS AND THEIR TEE SHIRTS, CARRYING RUCKSACKS AND BRIEFCASES AND SUITCASES AND PLASTIC BAGS, MUTTERING AND HUMMING AND SILENT AS THE NIGHT.



IT SEEMED LIKE THE BITTER FALL WIND BROUGHT THEM THERE.



ON ARRIVAL THEY EYE EACH OTHER WARILY,
STRIKE UP CAUTIOUS CONVERSATIONS.

SOME ARE ALREADY ACQUAINTED, AND THEY
FORM INSTANT KNOTS AND WHORLS IN THE
BAR AND THE LOBBY, WAITING TO CHECK IN,
OR FOR THE RESTAURANT TO OPEN.

MAN, I BEEN
TRAVELLING FOR
FIVE DAYS NOW. THE
JOURNEY WAS A
REAL KILLER.
BELIEVE ME.

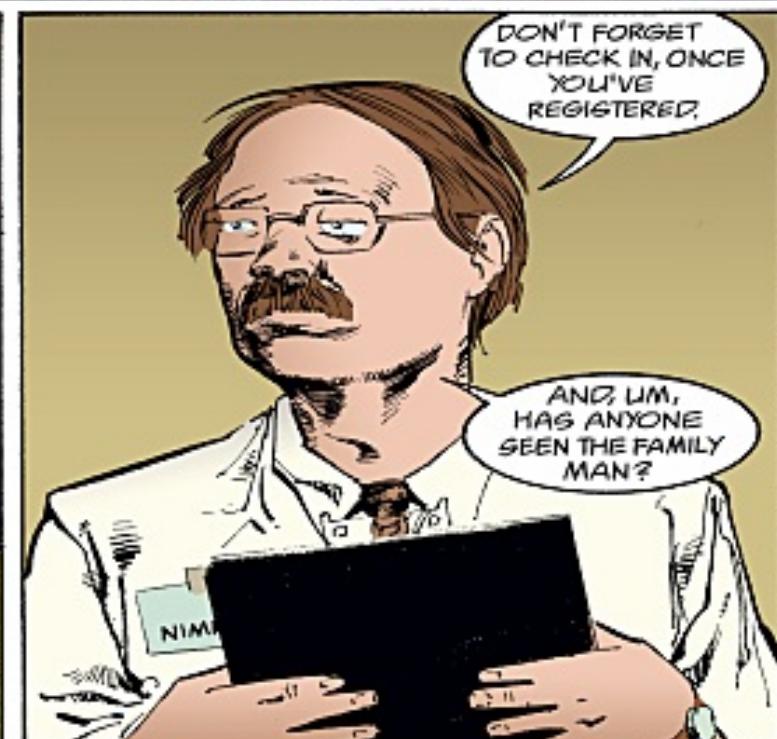
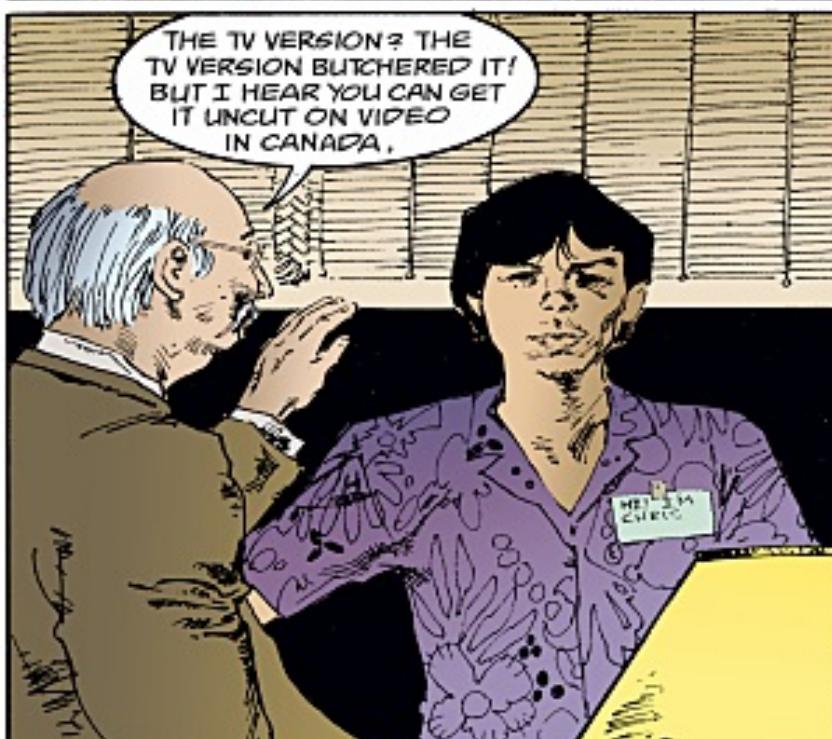
HATE THESE LITTLE
HICK TOWNS. WOULDN'T BE
SEEN DEAD HERE, IF IT
WASN'T FOR THE
CONVENTION.

...THAT'S JUST WHAT
THEY'LL DO. ONE OF THESE
DAYS THESE BOOTS ARE
GOING TO WALK ALL OVER
YOU. SSS

TELL YOU, I COULD
MURDER A STEAK, A
GOOD, BLOODY
STEAK.

SO THAT
WAS WHEN
HARRY KILLED
THE LIGHTS.
I COULD'A
DIED.

THEY DO
THIS CHOCOLATE
FUDGE WHIP THAT IS
JUST TO DIE FOR.



I NEED TO
SPEAK TO THE
MANAGER.

THAT'S ME,
BUB.

WE'VE TALKED
ON THE PHONE. I AM
MR. NIMROD, THE CONVENTION
ORGANIZER. I JUST WANTED
TO CHECK THAT EVERYTHING
WAS GOING ACCORDING
TO PLAN.

OKAY, WELL, THE CONVENTION
HALL IS SET UP. I'LL NEED TO
CHECK WITH YOU ABOUT THE
BANQUET, THE KITCHEN WILL
NEED EXACT NUMBERS.

"WAALL, I'M AFRAID WE
STILL HAVE TWO GUESTS
HERE.

"THEY WERE MEANT TO LEAVE THIS
MORNING. SHE WAS ON HER WAY TO
VISIT HER BROTHER, TELEPHONED
AHEAD THIS MORNING, AND THE
POLICE ANSWERED. THE PO-LICE."

SOMETHING HAD HAPPENED
TO HER PEOPLE, AND THE POLICE
REQUESTED THAT SHE STAYED
WHERE SHE WAS, IN CASE
THEY NEED HER.

THE SHERIFF SPOKE TO
ME, AND I EXPLAINED ABOUT THE
CONVENTION, BUT HE SAID THEY
STAY ON HERE. I DON'T WANT
TROUBLE WITH THE LAW, BUB.

I SEE. HMM. PLEASE
ENSURE THAT THEY STAY OUT
OF CONVENTION AREAS,
THEN.

I DID ALREADY. THEY'VE
SAID THEY'LL KEEP THEMSELVES
TO THEIR ROOMS.

IN A PERFECT WORLD, ROSE WALKER
WOULD BE SITTING IN THE CAR WITH HER
BROTHER, JED, NEXT TO HER. GILBERT
WOULD BE IN THE BACK.

THEY'D BE DRIVING BACK
TO THE ROOMS ROSE RENTED,
THEN SHE AND JEP WOULD
FLY BACK TO BOSTON.



PERFECT WORLD.



JED. ROSE. MOM.
TOGETHER ...

SHE HASN'T SEEN JED FOR SEVEN
YEARS. SHE WAS FOURTEEN. HE
WAS FIVE.

PERFECT.



SHE HAD WONDERED IF THEY'D
RECOGNIZE EACH OTHER. SHE
WAS SO PROUD OF HERSELF FOR
TRACKING HIM DOWN.

ONE PHONE CALL. THAT'S ALL
IT TOOK AND IT ALL CAME
TUMBLING DOWN.

SHE PHONED AHEAD
LET THEM KNOW SHE
WAS COMING.

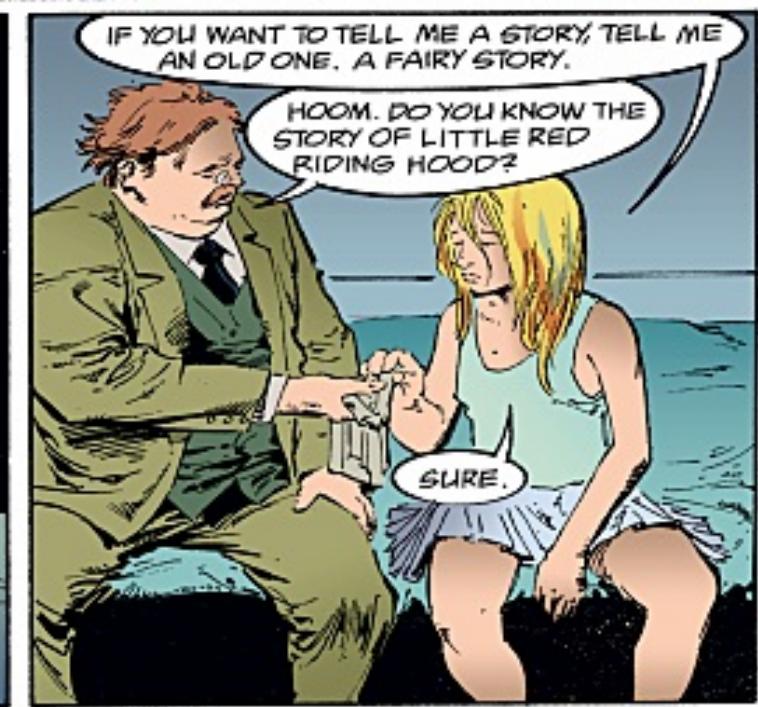
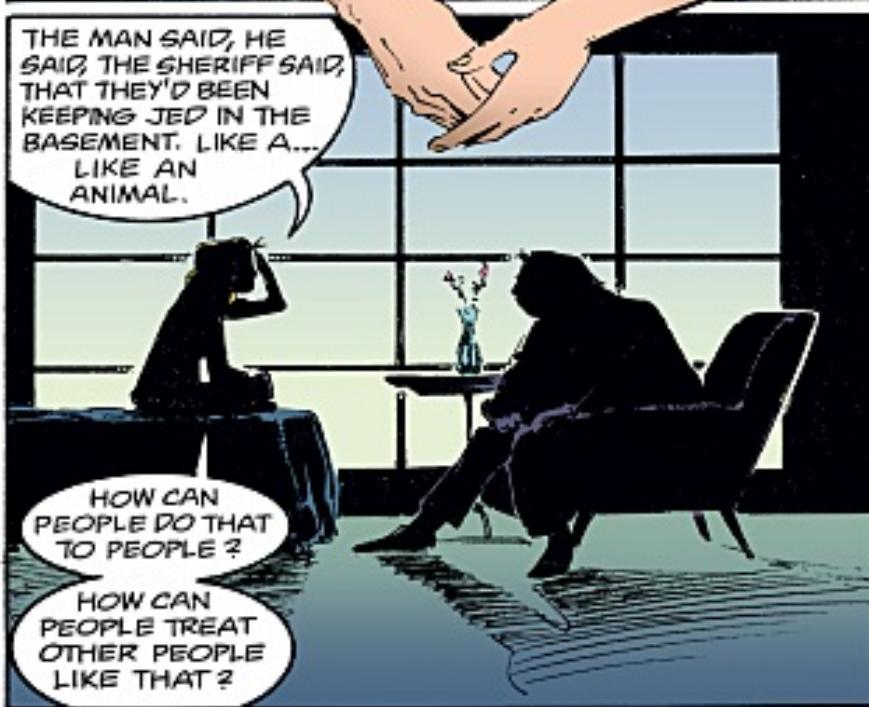
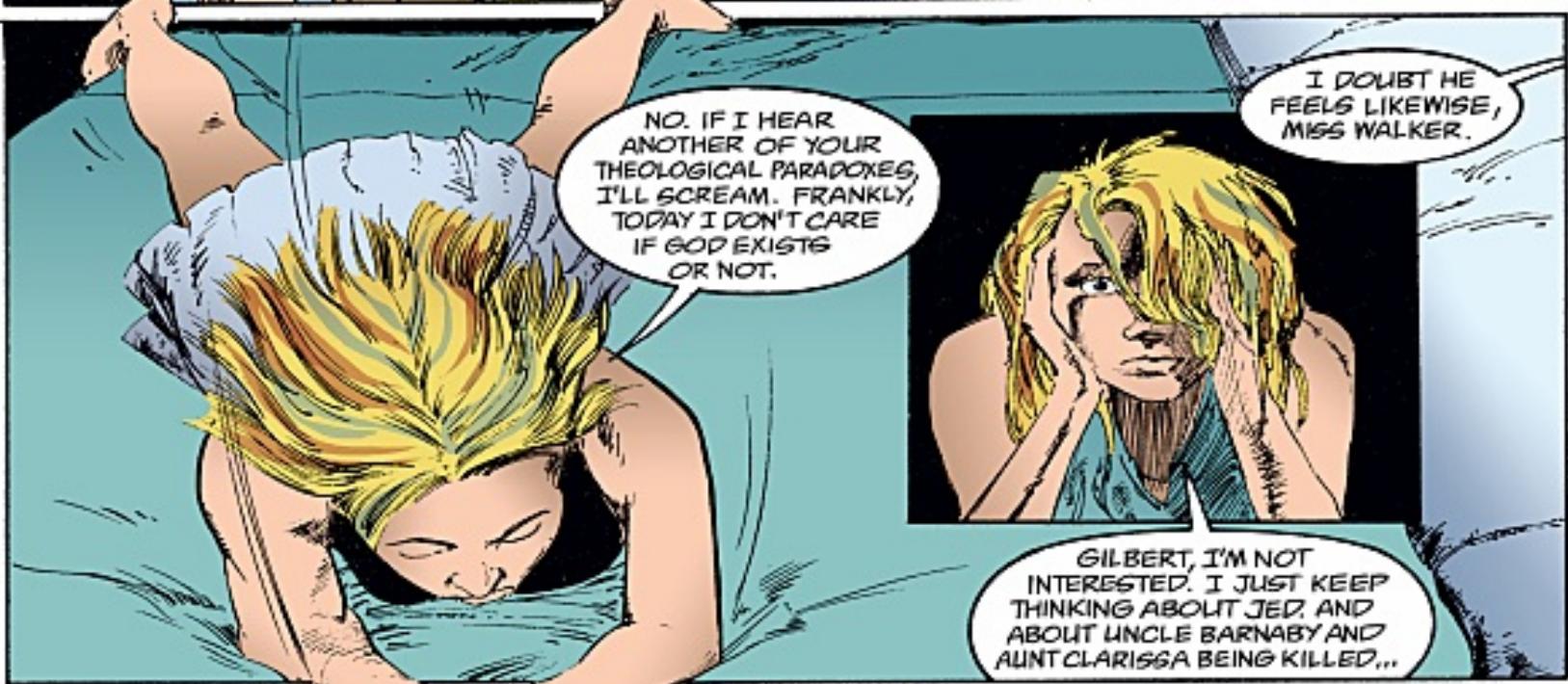
THE POLICE ANSWERED.

PERFECT IT WOULD HAVE BEEN
PERFECT IT WOULD HAVE BEEN --

PERFECT.

KNOCK
KNOCK







THE RED HOOD WAS AN
INVENTION OF CHARLES PERRAULT,
WHO TIDIED UP THE FOLK TALES
OF FRANCE FOR POPULAR
CONSUMPTION IN THE EIGHTEENTH
CENTURY. OTHER CHANGES --
SUCH AS THE HAPPY ENDING,
ARE LATER ADDITIONS.

I WILL TELL YOU AN
ORIGINAL VERSION.



A LITTLE GIRL WAS TOLD TO BRING BREAD AND
MILK TO HER GRANDMOTHER. AS SHE WAS
WALKING THROUGH THE WOOD, A WOLF CAME
UP TO HER AND ASKED HER WHERE SHE WAS
GOING.
"TO GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE."



THE WOLF RAN OFF AND ARRIVED
FIRST AT THE HOUSE. HE KILLED
THE GRANDMOTHER, POURED HER
BLOOD INTO A BOTTLE AND
SLICED HER FLESH ONTO A PLATE.
THEN HE GOT INTO HER NIGHTCLOTHES
AND WAITED IN THE BED.



KNOCK KNOCK.
"COME IN, MY DEAR."
"I'VE BROUGHT YOU SOME BREAD
AND MILK, GRANDMOTHER."

"HAVE SOMETHING YOURSELF,
MY DARLING, THERE IS MEAT AND
WINE IN THE PANTRY."

THE LITTLE GIRL ATE WHAT
WAS OFFERED,



AND AS SHE DID, A LITTLE CAT SAID;
"SLUT! TO EAT THE FLESH AND
DRINK THE BLOOD OF YOUR GRAND-
MOTHER!"

THEN THE WOLF SAID, "UNDRESS,
AND GET INTO BED WITH ME."

"WHERE SHALL I PUT MY SKIRT?"

"THROW IT ON THE FIRE; YOU
WON'T NEED IT ANY MORE."



"OH GRANDMOTHER, WHAT BIG TEETH YOU HAVE."



"THEY ARE FOR EATING YOU, MY DEAR."

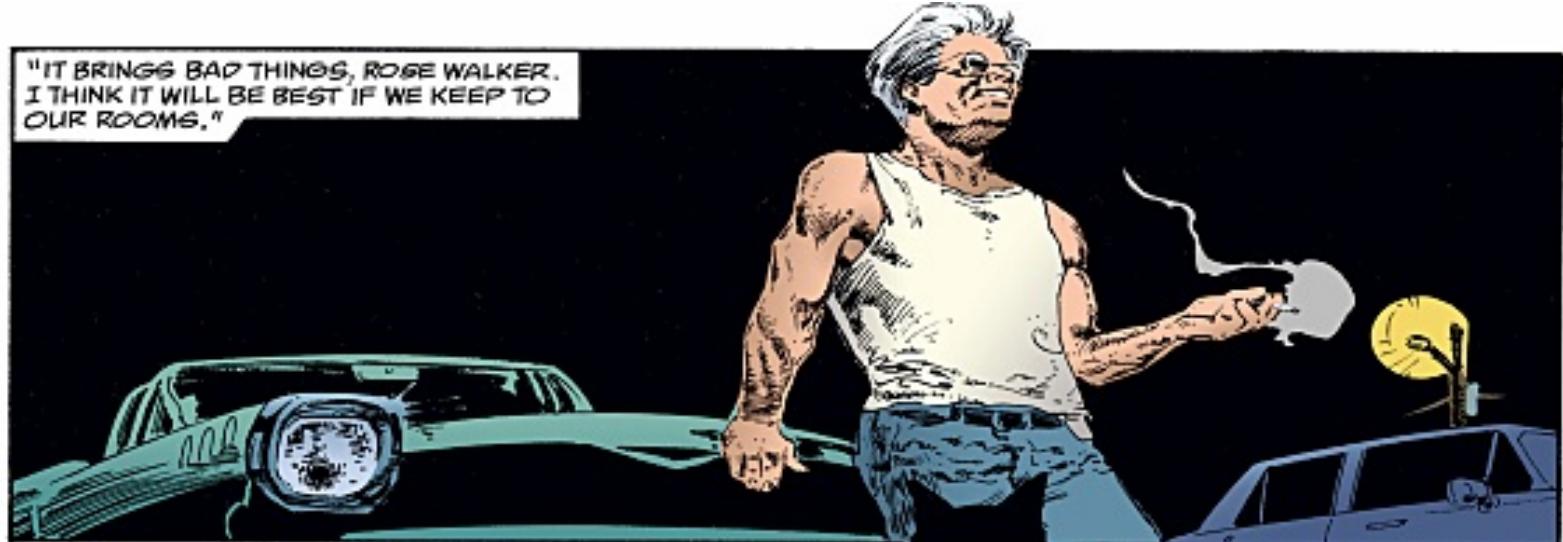


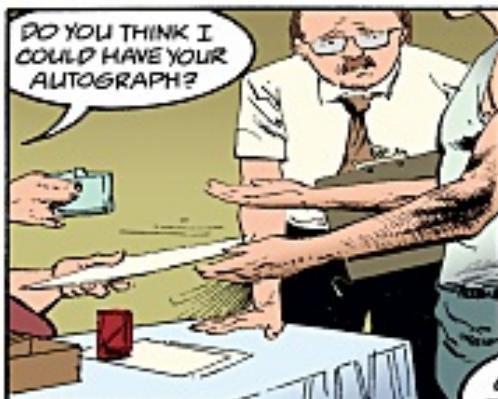
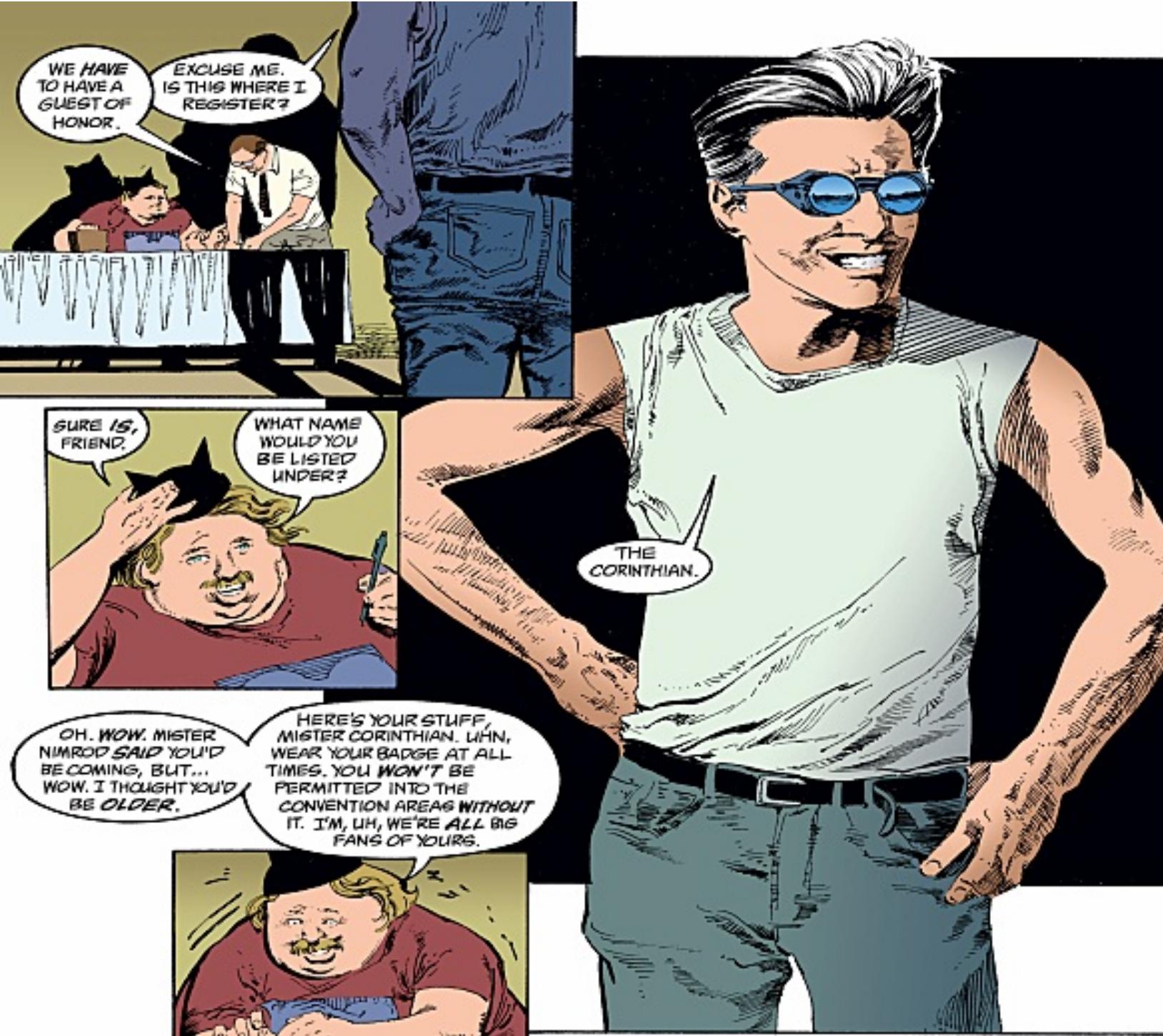
GILBERT--THAT'S HORRIBLE.

AND HE ATE HER.



"IT BRINGS BAD THINGS, ROSE WALKER.
I THINK IT WILL BE BEST IF WE KEEP TO
OUR ROOMS."







COLLECTORS

NEIL GAIMAN, writer * MIKE DRINGENBERG, penciller * MALCOLM JONES III, inker
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KAREN BERGER, editor



HE DIDN'T THINK
THERE WOULD BE SO
MANY OF THEM.

NIMROD, A MIGHTY HUNTER BEFORE THE LORD, WHO
HAS CERTAINLY BY NOW SHOWN EVERYBODY THAT HE'S
NOT AFRAID OF ANYTHING, CERTAINLY NOT BLOOD,
DEFINITELY NOT WOMEN, IS...



YOU HAVE A SHACK OUT
IN VERMONT THAT NO ONE
KNOWS ABOUT, WITH FOUR
FULL CHEST FREEZERS
(AND ISN'T IT TIME TO BUY
A FIFTH?) AND...

HELLO.

THE JOKE. TELL
THEM THE JOKE.

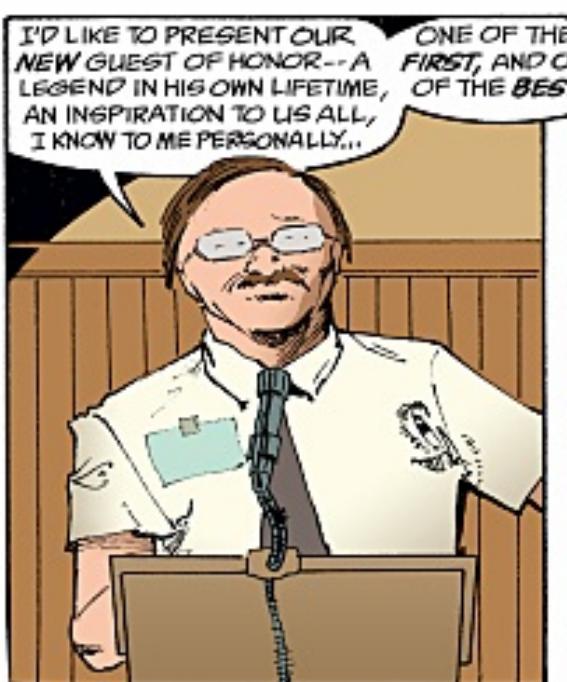
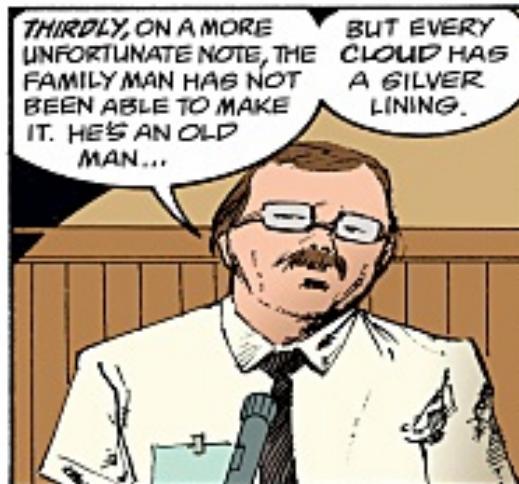
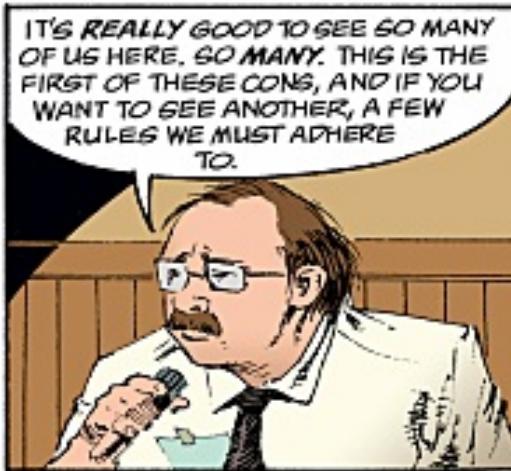
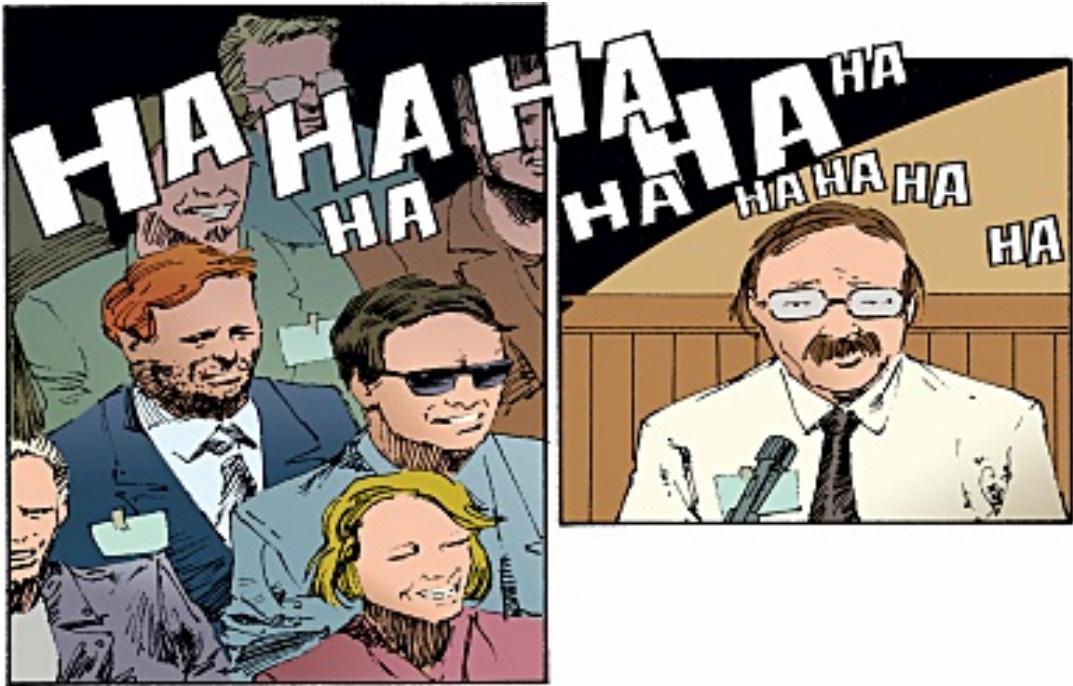
I, UH, HEARD A STORY
RECENTLY I THOUGHT MIGHT
AMUSE YOU. IT SEEMS THAT THE
TELEPHONE RANG IN A POLICE
STATION. THE DUTY COP ANSWERS AND
A WOMAN'S VOICE SAYS, "HELP--
I'VE BEEN REAPED!"

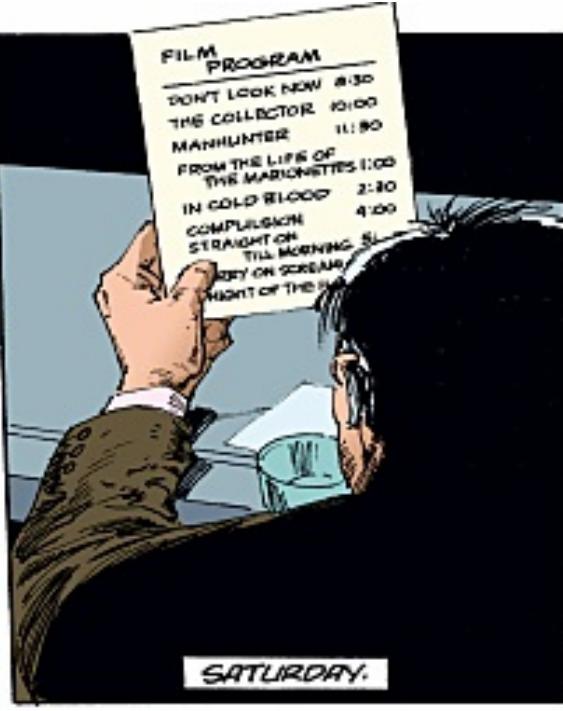
HE SAYS, "DON'T
YOU MEAN
RAPED?"

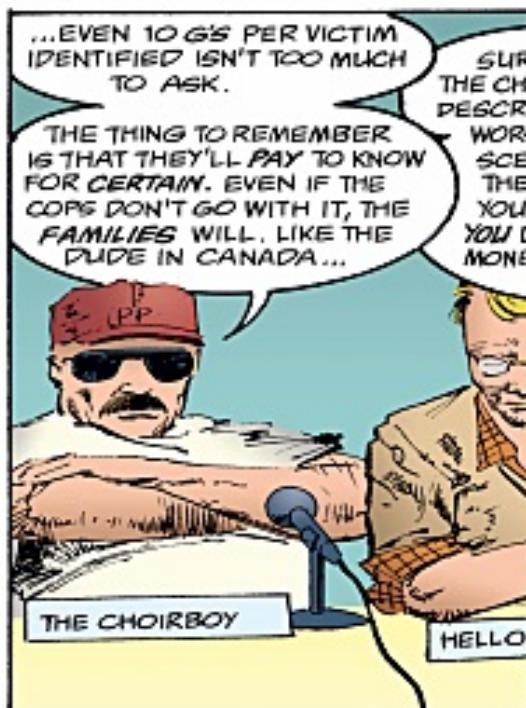
"NO,"
SHE
SAYS.

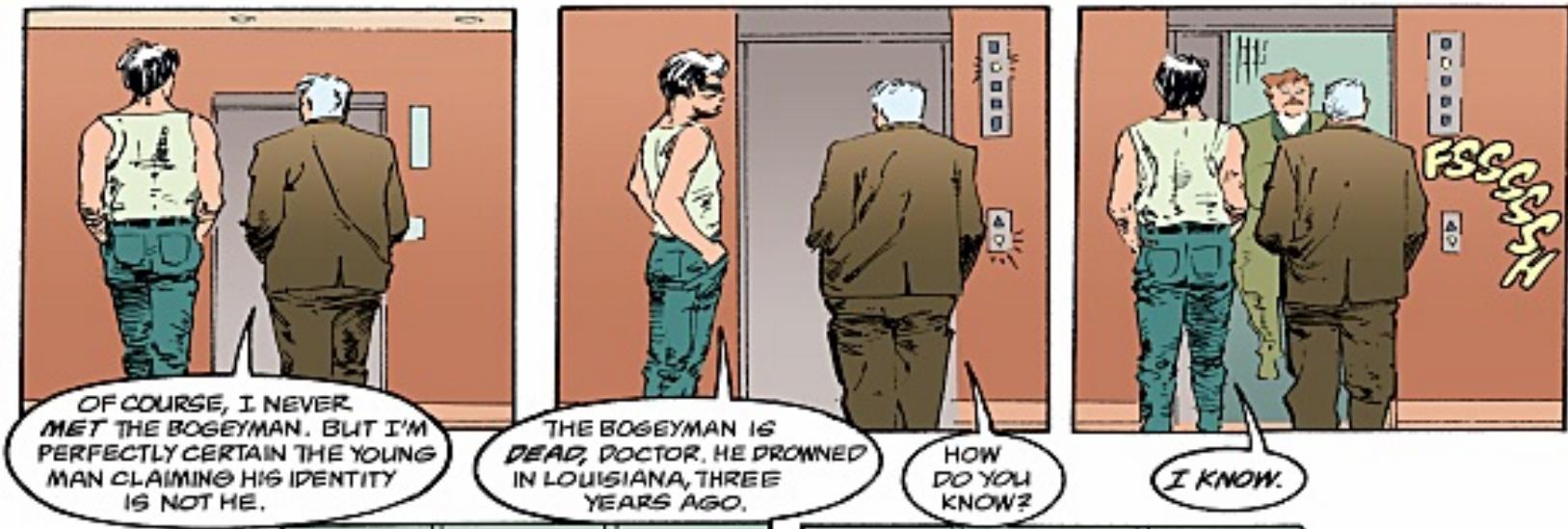
"HE USED A
SCYTHE."

LAUGH YOU BASTARDS LAUGH AT
MY JOKE LAUGH OR I'LL ...









THE BOGEYMAN IS
DEAD, DOCTOR. HE DROWNED
IN LOUISIANA, THREE
YEARS AGO.

HOW
DO YOU
KNOW?

I KNOW.



WE NEED TO
DEAL WITH THIS.
IMMEDIATELY.

HEY, SOME
OF THESE CEREAL
NUTS ARE KIND
OF CUTE.

GILBERT?
ARE YOU
OKAY?





I AM A MERCIFUL GOD AND A JUST GOD,
FOR I RELEASE MEN AND WOMEN AND CHILDREN
FROM THE SUFFERING AND TORMENT OF THEIR
LIVES, AND I GIVE THEM A NEW LIFE IN
MY HEAVEN...

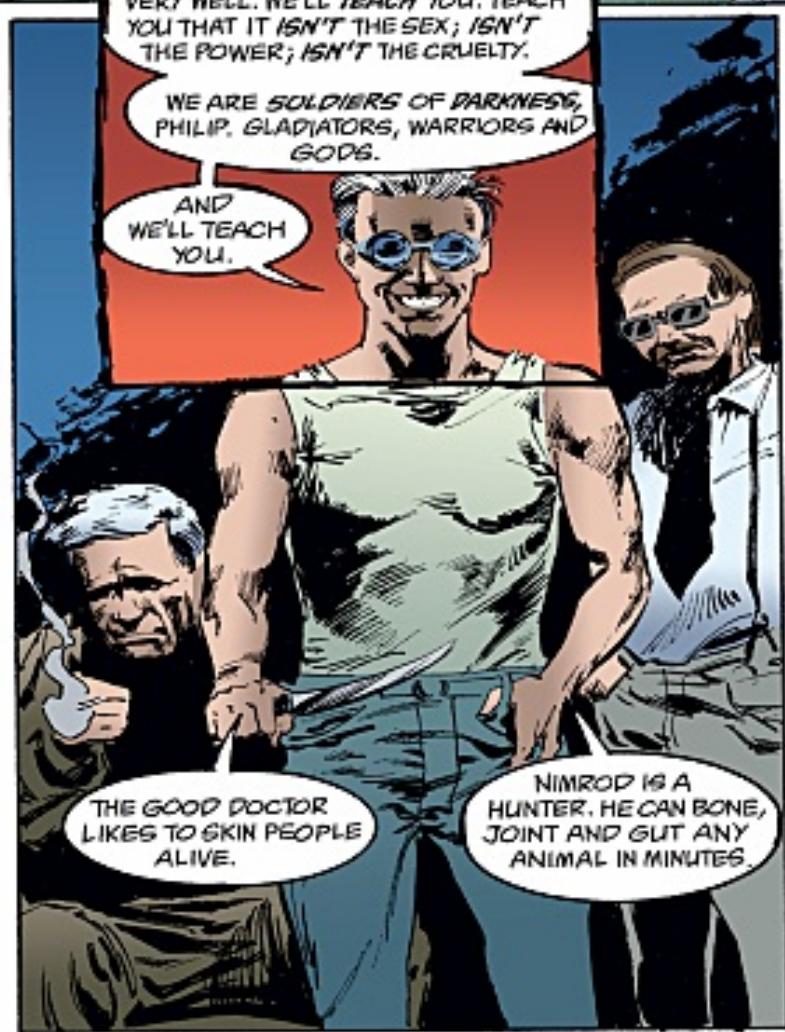
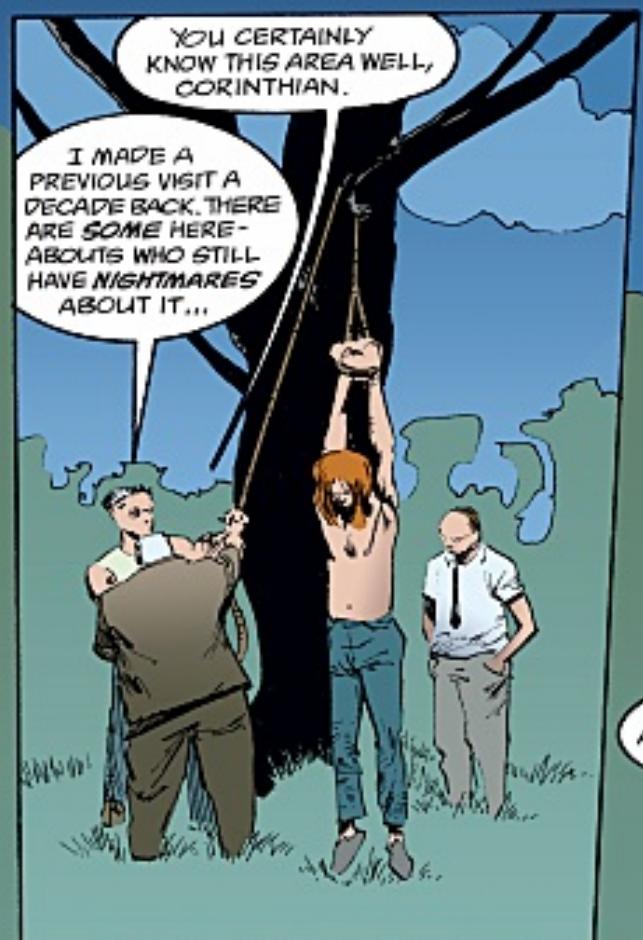
AS A BORN AGAIN CHRISTIAN I
WANT TO DISASSOCIATE MYSELF
FROM THIS MADMAN.

I DO THE BIDDING
OF THE LORD. I WASH
THEIR ROBES AND MAKE
THEM WHITE IN THE BLOOD
OF THE LAMB.
WITH MY HAMMER.
WITH MY LOVE.

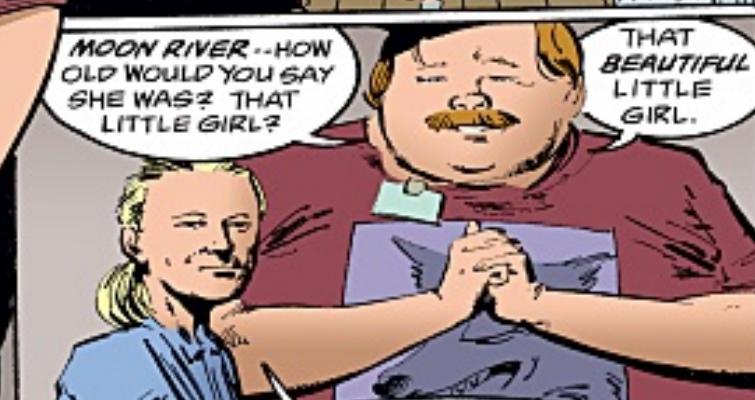
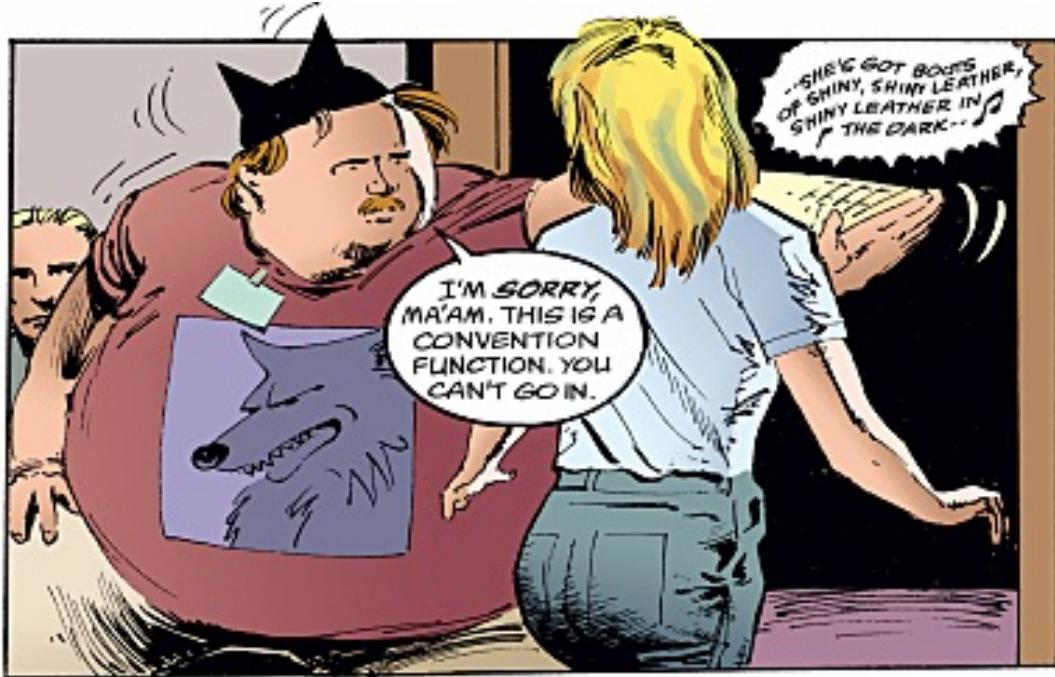
BOGEYMAN, CAN WE TALK?
IN YOUR HOTEL ROOM?













THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT PREOPERATIVE TRANSEXUALS THAT MAKES THE CONNOISSEUR UNCOMFORTABLE. SOMETHING BRITTLE AND BRIGHT IN THE BACK OF THEIR EYES.

HE LOVES THEM.

BUT HE ALWAYS FEELS THEY'RE LAUGHING AT HIM.

HE'S ONLY EVER FOUND EIGHT THAT HE'S BEEN ABLE TO TALK TO.

REALLY TALK TO.



BUSINESS. THE WEATHER. NOTHING IMPORTANT. JUST THINGS. STUFF.

WILD THING! YOU MAKE MY HEART SING! YOU MAKE EVERYTHING GROOVY...



GILBERT?
GOOD MORNING.

I DON'T
KNOW ABOUT
YOU, BUT I COULD
MURDER A
GRAPEFRUIT.

C'MON, GILBERT.
FOOD, GILBERT.

YOU KNOW.
BREAKFAST.

GILBERT?

10:30 AM. PANEL DISCUSSION. "WE ARE WHAT WE ARE."

THEY SAY THE FUNDAMENTAL ACT OF HUMANITY IS NOT TO KILL.

BULL, THE FUNDAMENTAL ACT OF HUMANITY IS TO KILL. THEY ARE SHEEP AND CATTLE. BUT WE KNOW THE TRUTH. WE'RE ALIVE.



12:30 PM. PANEL DISCUSSION. "WOMEN IN SERIAL KILLING."

I TELL YOU, I'M SICK AND TIRED OF WOMEN IN OUR LINE BEING STEREOTYPED AS BLACK WIDOWS OR KILLER NURSES.

I'M A SERIAL KILLER, AND A WOMAN, AND I'M PROUD OF IT.



3:30 PM. PANEL DISCUSSION. "THERE IS NO SANITY CLAUSE."

UHH, LOOK, AS A PRACTICING PSYCHIATRIST, I, UH, WELL, LOOK, NONE OF YOU, UH, WELL, THERE IS NO MORE EVIDENCE OF MENTAL ABNORMALITY AMONGST US PEOPLE THAN AMONGST, UH, THEM.

LESS, MAYBE.



4:30 PM.

FUN LAND, GUEST OF HONOR SPEECH IN TEN MINUTES.

PSYCHO-KILLER

CANDY MAN



SO WHAT WERE YOU SAYING? HOW YOU GOT STARTED?

YES, SIR.

PUSSIES?

WHEN I WAS A KID. CUTTING THEIR HEADS OFF WITH MY POCKET KNIFE.

THEN, WHEN I GOT OLDER, PUSSIES DIDN'T DO IT FOR ME ANY MORE.



"I USED TO GET MYSELF OFF. I'D RESIST THE URGE FOR WEEKS, THEN IT'D GET TOO STRONG FOR ME, AND I'D GO OUT AND BUY A SKIN MAG, IN ANOTHER CITY, WHERE NO ONE KNEW ME.

"I'D TAKE IT INTO A JOHN, LOCK MYSELF IN, AND DO IT TO MYSELF UNTIL I COULDN'T DO IT ANY MORE. THEN I'D HATE MYSELF, I'D RIP UP THE MAGAZINE INTO SHREDS.

"AND THE URGE WOULD GO AWAY FOR A WHILE.

"I COULDN'T GET OVER IT. ALL THESE WOMEN IN THE WORLD... AND UNDER THEIR CLOTHES EACH AND EVERY ONE OF THEM WAS NAKED, YOU KNOW...

"AND THEN IT GOT MORE VIOLENT. I'D FANTASIZE STUFF... I'D REHEARSE IT, IN MY MIND. EVEN IN REALITY.

"I USED TO FOLLOW WOMEN AROUND, WITH A KNIFE IN MY POCKET, AND A LENGTH OF WIRE, JUST TO SEE HOW IT FELT.

"THEN I DID IT.

"THE REAL THING.

"THE URGE BUILT UP, AND I COULDN'T HANDLE IT ANY OTHER WAY.

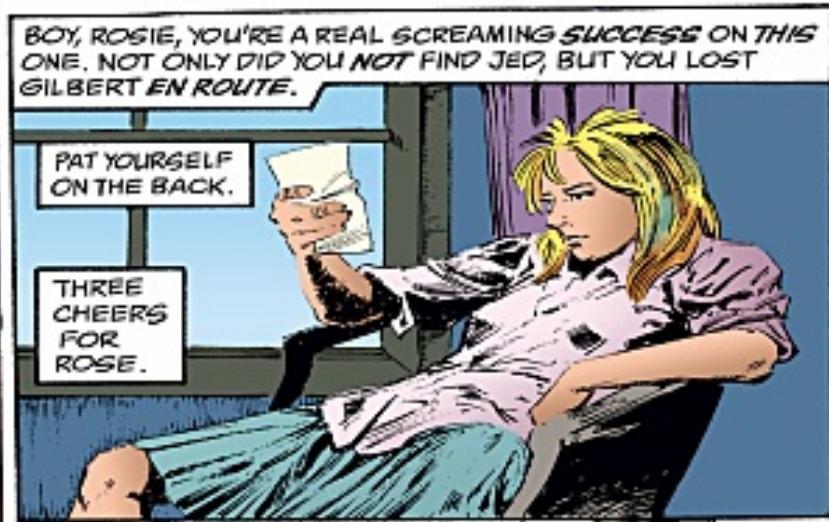
"MAN, I KNOW IT'S NOT NORMAL FOR A MAN TO GO OUT AND DISMEMBER A WOMAN JUST BECAUSE HE WANTS TO HAVE SEX WITH HER.

"EMOTIONALLY, I DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH LONGER I CAN HANDLE IT.

"BUT THE URGE BUILDS UP IN ME, AND I DO IT TO THEM. AND WHEN I'M FINISHED, AND THE URGE IS SATISFIED, I RIP THEM TO SHREDS.

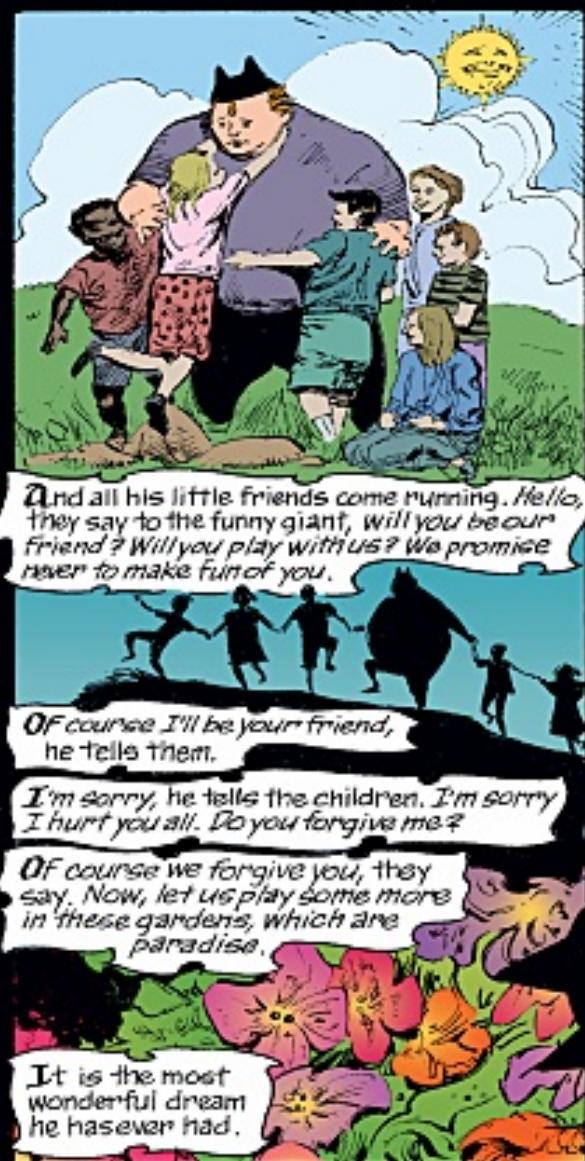
"LIKE I DID WITH THE SKIN MAGAZINES.

"LIKE I DID WITH THE PUSSIES."









YOU KNOW, I DON'T USUALLY SPEAK IN PUBLIC. BUT THE OPPORTUNITY OF TALKING TO ALL OF YOU IS JUST TOO GOOD TO PASS UP.

WE ARE THE AMERICAN DREAMERS, DRIVING DOWN THE HOLY ROAD TO TRUE KNOWLEDGE THAT'S PAVED WITH BLOOD AND GOLD.

WE DON'T DO IT TO MAKE A LIVING. WE DON'T DO IT FOR REVENGE.

BECUSE YOU ARE SPECIAL PEOPLE. VERY SPECIAL PEOPLE.

AND ACROSS THE LENGTH AND BREADTH OF THIS FAIR COUNTRY, WE ARE KILLING PEOPLE.

WE DON'T KILL PEOPLE ANONYMOUSLY--POISONING THEIR ASPIRIN, PUTTING SHARDS OF GLASS IN BABY FOOD.

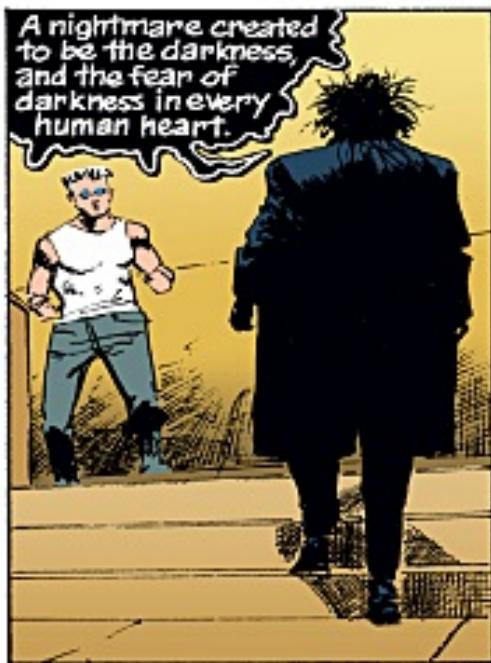
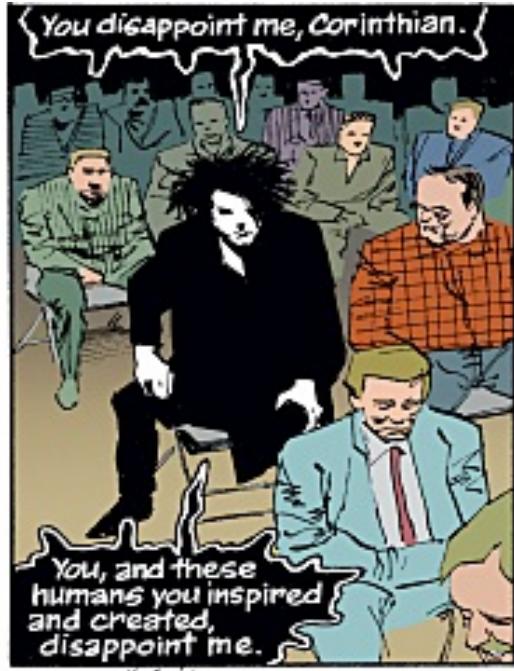
WE DON'T CARRY GUNS INTO BURGER JOINTS AND BLASTAWAY UNTIL A SWAT TEAM SPATTERS OUR BRAINS ALL OVER THE FRENCH FRIES.

WE DO NOT MURDER FOR A PROFIT. WE DO NOT MURDER FOR GOVERNMENTS, OR FOR HIRE.

WE KILL TO KILL.

WE ARE ENTREPRENEURS IN AN EXPANDING FIELD.

UH...



SO WHAT NOW? DO YOU EXPECT ME

TO SUBMIT QUIETLY?
TO RETURN TO THE DREAMING
TO SCAR THEIR SLEEPING MINDS?

NEVER AGAIN TO KNOW
THE DELIGHTS OF A SWEET
BOY'S EYE AS IT POPS
BETWEEN MY TEETH?

IS THAT IT?

No. That's not it.

THEN LET US FIGHT, DREAM LORD. PUT ON YOUR HELM.

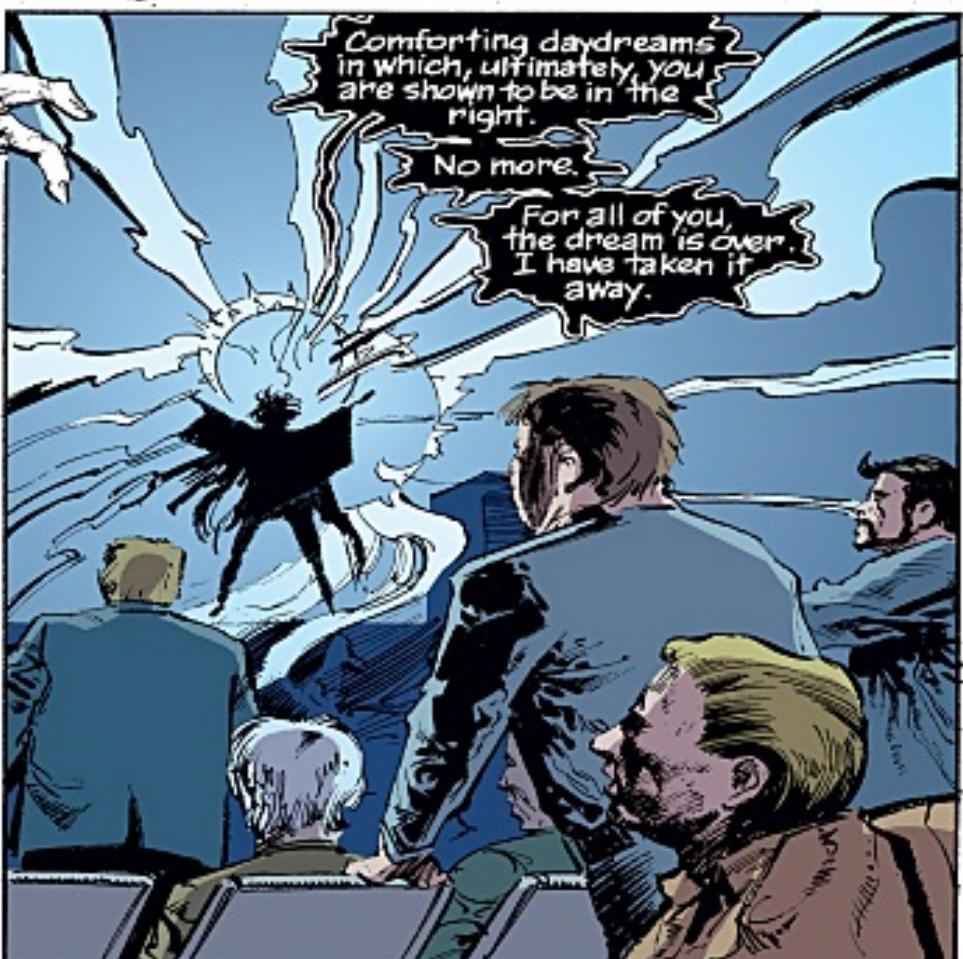
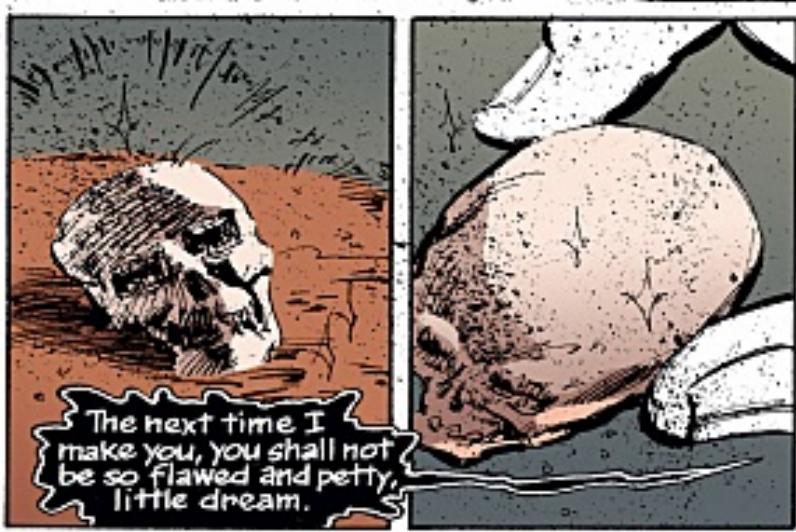
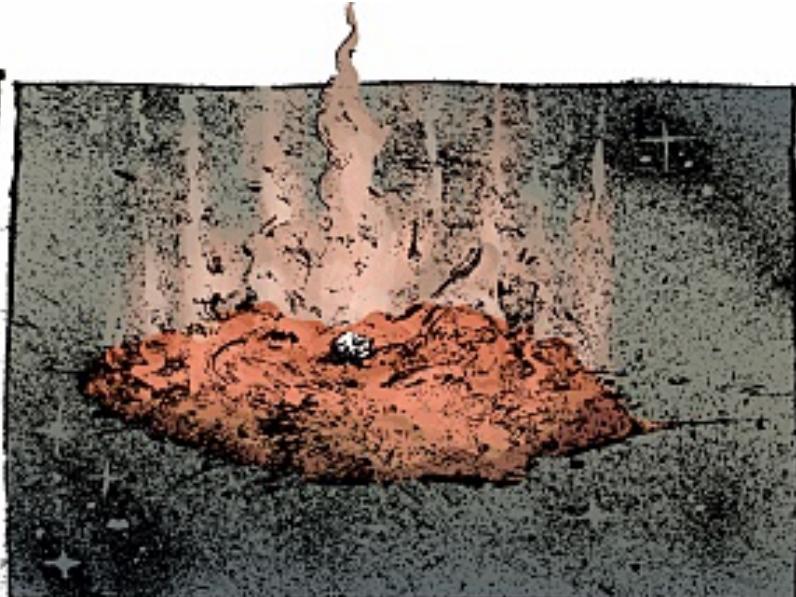
No, Corinthian. We shall not fight. And you shall not go back to the Dreaming.

LET ME SHOW YOU THE ARTS OF PAIN AND WAR I HAVE LEARNED ON THIS EARTH...

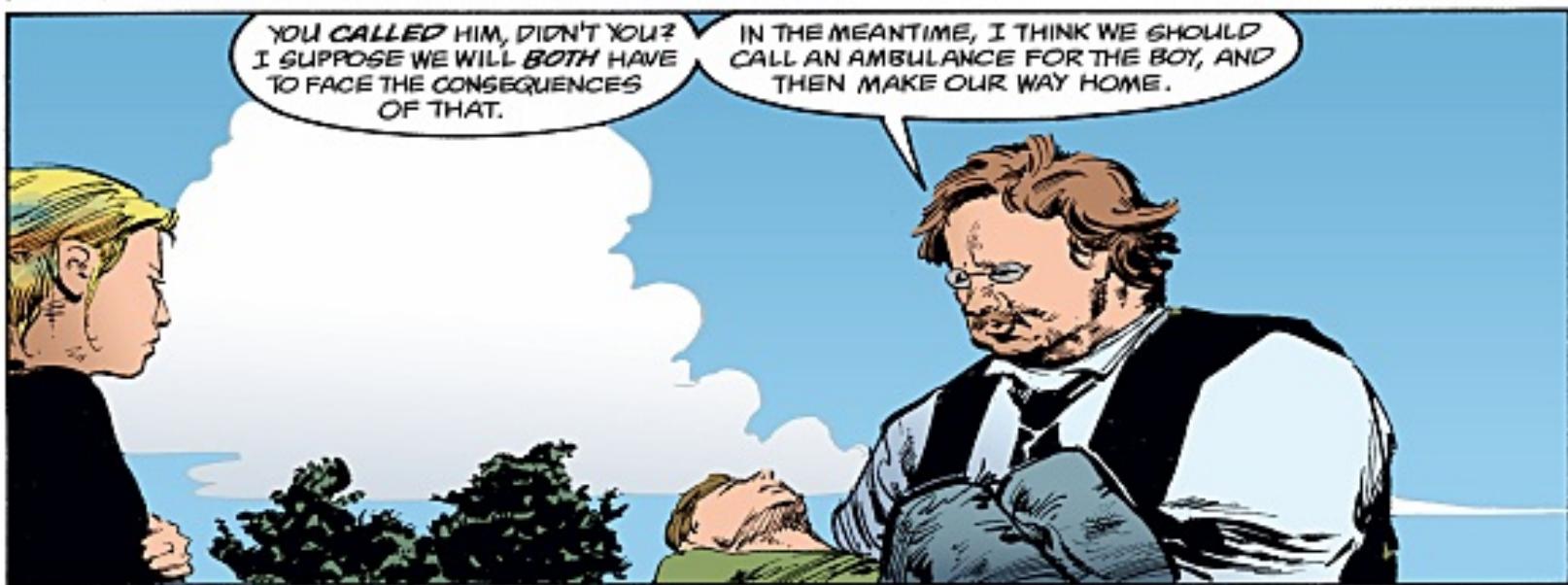
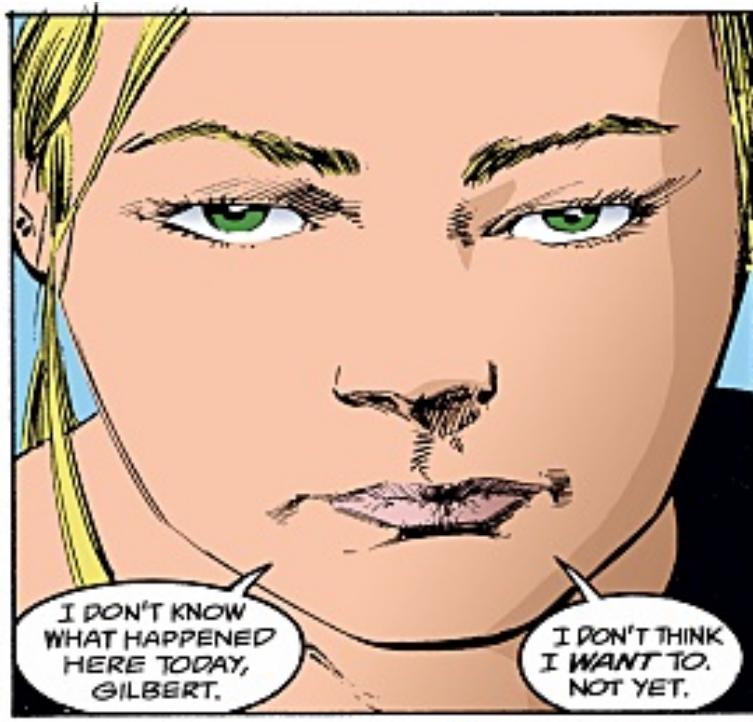
As I do uncreate you now.

It is my fault, I am afraid. I created you poorly, then.

NO...







THE FIRST WIND OF WINTER BLEW FROM THE NORTH, AND IT HAD ICE AND RIME ON ITS BREATH.

WELCOME CEREAL CONVENTION

IT WAS DIRTY AND SHARP AND IT CUT LIKE A RAZOR, AND IF IT TOUCHED YOU, YOU COULD WASH AND WASH UNTIL YOUR SKIN WAS TATTERED AND BLOODYED, BUT YOU'D NEVER BE CLEAN AGAIN.

IT SCATTERED THEM INTO THE NIGHT, THE QUIET ONES WITH DEATH IN THEIR EYES.

BUT THEY LEFT MORE TENTATIVELY THAN THEY HAD COME, AS IF THEY HAD SEEN SOMETHING UNHOLY INSIDE THEMSELVES; SOMETHING THEY WOULD NEVER BE ABLE TO FORGET.

AND THEY LEFT, SLOWLY, ONE BY ONE, WITH RELUCTANCE, LEAVING THE SAFETY OF THE LIGHT FOR THE CHILL CERTAINTIES OF THE DARKNESS.



IT SEEMED LIKE THE NIGHT SUCKED THEM UP, TOOK THEM INTO ITS DARK HEART.

IT SEEMED LIKE THE DARKNESS SWALLOWED THEM...

PERHAPS IT DID.



DOLL'S HOUSE

PART SIX

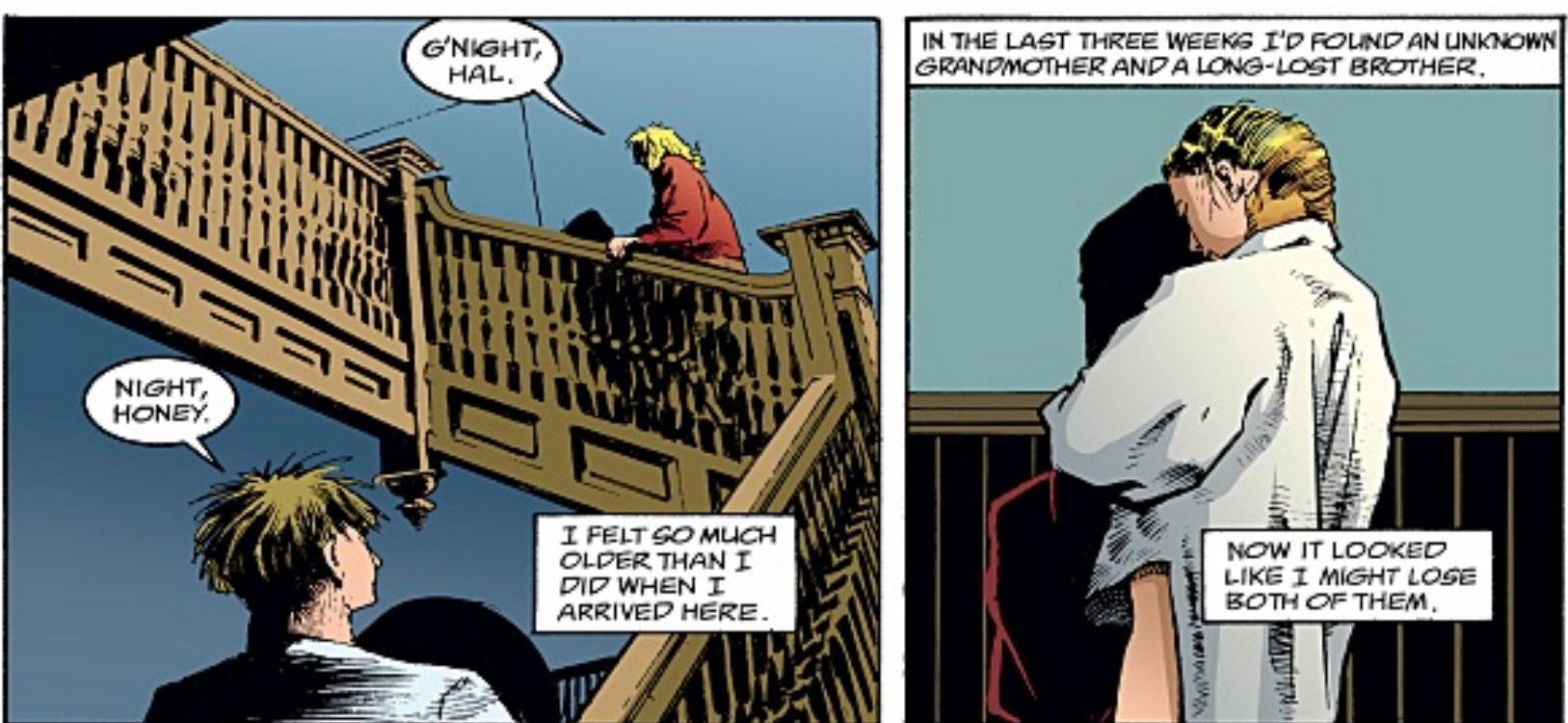
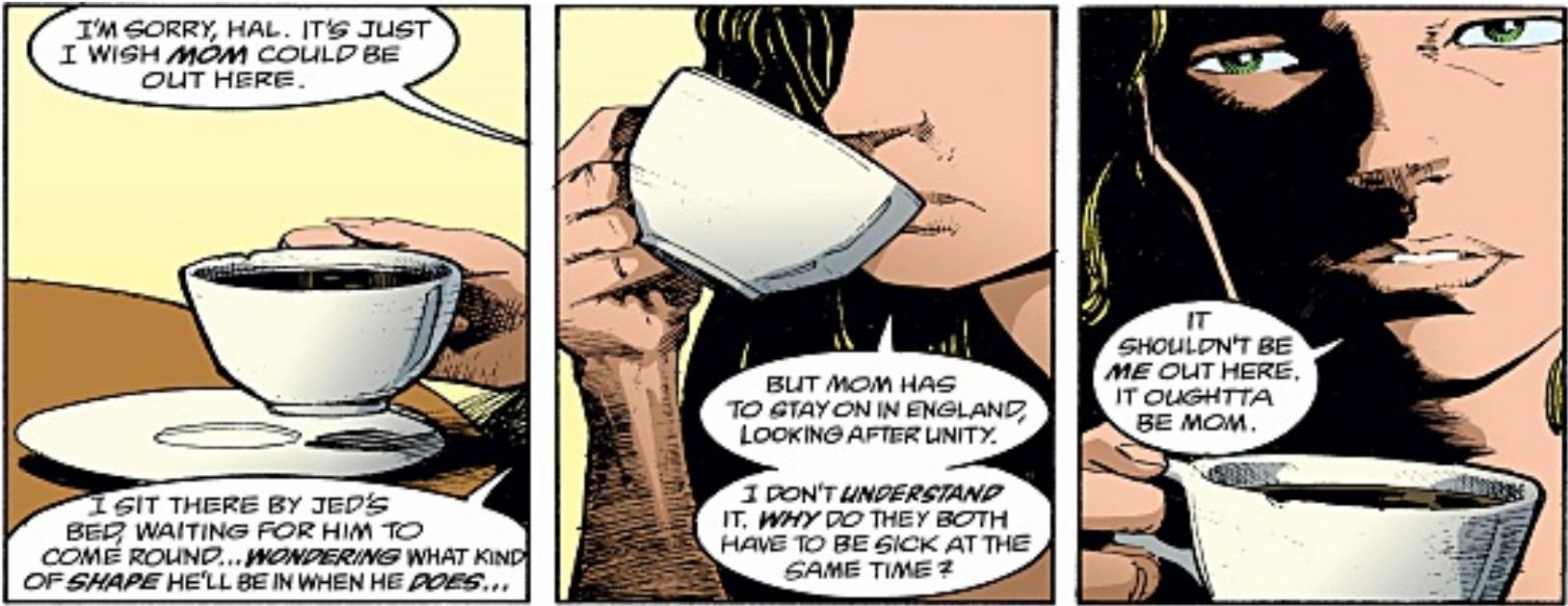


INTO THE NIGHT

NEIL GAIMAN, writer • MIKE DRINGENBERG, penciller
MALCOLM JONES III, inker • ZYLONOL, colorist
TODD KLEIN, letterer • ART YOUNG, assoc. editor
KAREN BERGER, editor
THANKS TO SAM KIETH







*** * * * * TALKING talkING

MONey boy aR LISTENing 2ME?



meBbe
100 tHou

mEBBE talk talkING MONEY BOY



gOt
2
HANDit
2
U
bOY...

meBBEE 100 tHou
MEbbe more...



talK
in
G
MONey boy



aR
U
LISTENing 2ME?

?

BARBIE DREAMS.

...I can hardly believe that we are here at last, at the Arch of the Porpentine.

Our journey has indeed been long, Miss Barbara; and many's the worthy companion we have found and lost along the way.

The Porpentine is more than that, Lady, as you know in your soul of souls.

So many good lives lost, Martin Cenbones. And because of what?

A confection of spun silver and rose quartz. Was it just for this?

Remember, if the Porpentine is destroyed by the Cuckoo, then the Hierogram will be lost to the world forever.

I will not fear the Disciples of the Cuckoo, Martin Cenbones, as long as you walk by my side.

And I will never leave you on your quest, my lady. Not while I live, not ever...

CHANTAL DREAMS.

CHANTAL
IS HAVING A
RELATIONSHIP
WITH A
SENTENCE.
JUST ONE OF
THOSE
THINGS.
A CHANCE
MEETING
THAT GREW INTO
SOMETHING
IMPORTANT
FOR BOTH OF THEM

They like the same things.
She took it to a party. They were a
big hit. The perfect couple.

Everybody knows about
her and the sentence.

• CHANTAL AND ZELDA SLEEPING •

ZELDA DREAMS.

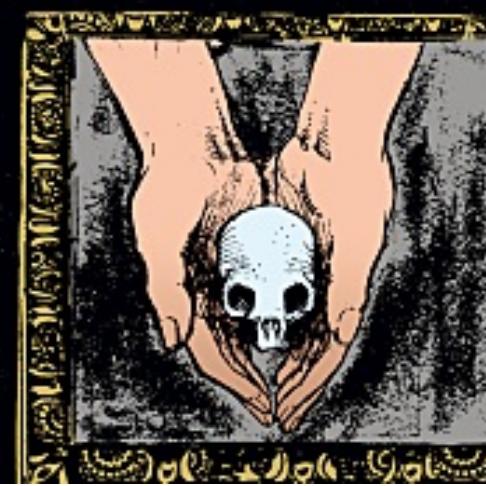
MOMMY AND DADDY TOLD ME
TO GO AWAY SO HERE I AM IN
THE OLD BONE ORCHARD NO
BODY UNDERSTANDS ME
NO BODY CARES NO BODY
ELSE UNDERSTANDS IT THE
BEAUTY OF THE LOST
NECROPOLIS IS THE CHARNEL
CHARM

WITH MELMOTH WE WALK
THE CORRIDORS OF TRANTO

AND CHANTAL SAYS I'M GOING TO
TAKE OFF MY VEIL ZELDA AND OH
GOD I KNOW IT'S GOING TO BE MY MOM
SAVING OH GOD ZEE YOU'RE SICK
LISTEN ROBERT DO YOU KNOW WHAT I FOUND
IN HER ROOM YOUR DAUGHTER'S DISGUSTING

OH BUT CHANTAL COMES
ALONG AND SHOWS ME
SHE IS MY SOUL SISTER
ME AND HER TRUE
GOTHIC HEROINES
SECRET BRIDES OF THE
FACELESS SLAVES OF
THE FORBIDDEN HOUSE
OF THE NAMELESS
NIGHT OF THE CASTLE
OF DREAD DESIRE

THAT'S US



The sentence spent most of last year in Czechoslovakian for political reasons. But it was recently translated back into English.

In order to stop the sentence being deported, Chantal has arranged to have it read into the Library of Congress.

However—



...when the time comes she discovers that she can no longer read.

She has no idea what the sentence is about.

Despondent and joyless, Chantal begins to cry.



AND I'LL JUST STARRY STAMMERING AND SHE'LL MAKE FUN OF ME HEY LIL' MORON D'YOU BELIEVE IN GODZILLA

LET IT BE CHANTAL NOT MY MOM NOT MY MOM PLEASE GOD PLEASE GOD



THANK YOU GOD.
OH THANK YOU.



NOW THE LITTLE GIRL ZELDA STARTS LAUGHING
THE LITTLE GIRL LAUGHS
LAUGHS
AND
LAUGHS...



HAL DREAMS.



GO TO SLEEP,
ROSE WALKER.

WIND UP
THE DAY,
LET IT GO.

"HELLO? ROSE? IT'S MOM.
LISTEN, HONEY, UNITY'S HAD
SOME KIND OF STROKE. SHE'S
ALMOST NINETY. I CAN'T
LEAVE HER. NOT NOW..."

"NOT
NOW..."

"NOT
NOW..."

PUT THE DAY AWAY IN ITS PLACE, ROSE.
FORGET THE WEIRD THINGS THAT HAVE
HAPPENED IN THE LAST FEW WEEKS.

"I'M SORRY, MISS WALKER. HONESTLY,
IT COULD GO EITHER WAY. ON ONE
LEVEL, IT'S ASTOUNDING YOUR
BROTHER IS STILL ALIVE. BUT THEN,
HE'S YOUNG. GO HOME. WE'LL CALL
YOU IF THERE'S ANY CHANGE..."

"ANY
CHANGE..."

"ANY
CHANGE..."

YOU DON'T
NEED THEM.

FORGET THE BIG-BAD-
WOLF-MAN WHO HURT YOU,
AND WHO WANTED TO
HURT YOU WORSE.

FORGET THE PALE
STRANGER...

(WAS HE REALLY THERE AT ALL?
WHEN YOU TRY TO REMEMBER
HIM HE FADES AND SHIMMERS
UNTIL HE SEEMS
LITTLE MORE THAN THE ECHO
OF A DREAM...)

YOU'RE TIRED, ROSE.
WRAP UP THE DAY.



SINKING, SLOWLY, DOWNWARD AND INWARD, ENTER A WORLD WHERE EVERYTHING'S GOING TO BE JUST FINE.

UNITY WILL BE FINE.

JED WILL BE FINE.

YOU'RE SO TIRED...

JUST LET GO.



SHARP AND TUGGING: A BRIEF THOUGHT, AND YOU WONDER, WHERE'S GILBERT?

YOU HAVEN'T SEEN HIM FOR ALMOST A WEEK, NOW. NOT SINCE THE TWO OF YOU GOT BACK TO FLORIDA WITH JED, HALF-STARVED AND DEHYDRATED AND SCABBED AND...



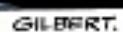
LET IT GO.

(GILBERT?)

IT'LL STILL BE THERE TOMORROW.

AND SLEEP.

AND DREAM...



GILBERT.



So it begins, once... Nonetheless, there is something more. The first vortex of this era.

about this one--this time--that I do not understand.

WROARRKK?



KEN DREAMS.

Cummon BiG. bOY..
Doo it 2ME\$



uh(!) yesz.
uh. NO. uh. uh..



Do IT!
DO NT Doo it.
KENNY. KENNY.



BARBIE DREAMS.

GRUNFF

This place makes me uneasy, Princess. If the Cuckoo's forces mean to attack us directly, they must do it before we reach the Brightly-Shining Sea.

I understand.

Caution,
Princess
Barbara.

What manner of thing,
Martin Lenbones? The
Cuckoo? The Hieromancer?
Colonel Knowledge?

None of those.
Something is happening,
My Princess. Listen...

I scent
strangeness
in the air.

YuhGotta jusdoit
OhGOD ohmyGOD

CHANTAL DREAMS...

Not quite in nightmare, but far from comfortable, Chantal is held like a crashed computer in an infinitely regressing loop of story.

It was a dark and stormy night. And the skipper said to the mate, "Mate, tell me a story..."

And this was the story he told:

It was a dark and stormy night. And the skipper said to the mate, "Mate, tell me a story." And this is the story he told:

It was a dark and stormy night--

skipper said--

Story, and this is the story he--

Dark and stormy night--

And stormy--

night--

story--

ZELDA DREAMS.

ZELDA KNOWS CHANTAL WANTS HER TO TELL A STORY AND SHE SAYS--

In September of the Year 1911, a post-chaise drew up before the door of Aswarby Hall, in the heart of Lincolnshire.



Ding-Dong-Ding

The little boy who jumped out as soon as it had stopped looked around him with the keenest curiosity during the short interval--



--between the ringing of the bell and the opening of the hall door.

DING
DONG

DING



AND HAI SEES ROBERT AGAIN. NOT ROBERT AS HE PROVED HIMSELF TO BE-- CALLOW, SELF-CENTERED, DISHONEST...



...ASKED TO DESCRIBE THIS WHOLE BEAUTIFUL THING...



...IF I WERE A BELL
I'D GO DING DONG-



DING DONG DING
DONG DING.

ROSE DREAMS.

SHE KNOWS SHE'S DREAMING.

SHE'S NEVER HAD A DREAM LIKE THIS BEFORE.

EVERYTHING SEEKS SO REAL, SO VIVID; MORE TRUE AND MORE VITAL THAN THE WAKING WORLD.

HER SENSE OF IDENTITY HAS NEVER BEEN SO CERTAIN.

SHE CAN FEEL HER SLEEPING BODY ON THE BED BELOW HER.

IT'S NO PART OF HER, THE ESSENTIAL HER, THE TRUE ROSE.

THEIR TUNE IS PLAYING IN THE BACKGROUND.

FALTERINGLY,
SHE EXTENDS HER PERCEPTIONS...

SHE CAN FEEL THEM.

CHANTAL, DREAMING INTRICATE, SELF-REFERENTIAL LOOPS, TRYING TO REVEAL NOTHING OF HERSELF TO HERSELF.

ZELDA, STILL FIGHTING OLD BATTLES, THE LITTLE GIRL LOST IN THE WOMAN WHOSE HEART SHE SHARES.

KEN'S CHURNING WORLD OF MONEY AND SEX AND POWER.

HAL'S ENDLESS QUEST FOR IDENTITY AND LOVE.

ALL OF THEM SEEKING A PLACE TO BELONG. ALL OF THEM SEEKING A PLACE TO BE SAFE.

AND SHE SEES HOW SIMPLE IT ALL IS.

SEES HOW THIN AND FRAGILE THE WALLS THAT DIVIDE THEM TRULY ARE.

SEES HOW SIMPLE IT WOULD BE TO SHATTER THEM.

SHE REACHES OUT HER MIND, AND NUDGES.

AND THE WALLS...





THE WALLS COME
TUMBLING DOWN.



AND BEYOND...

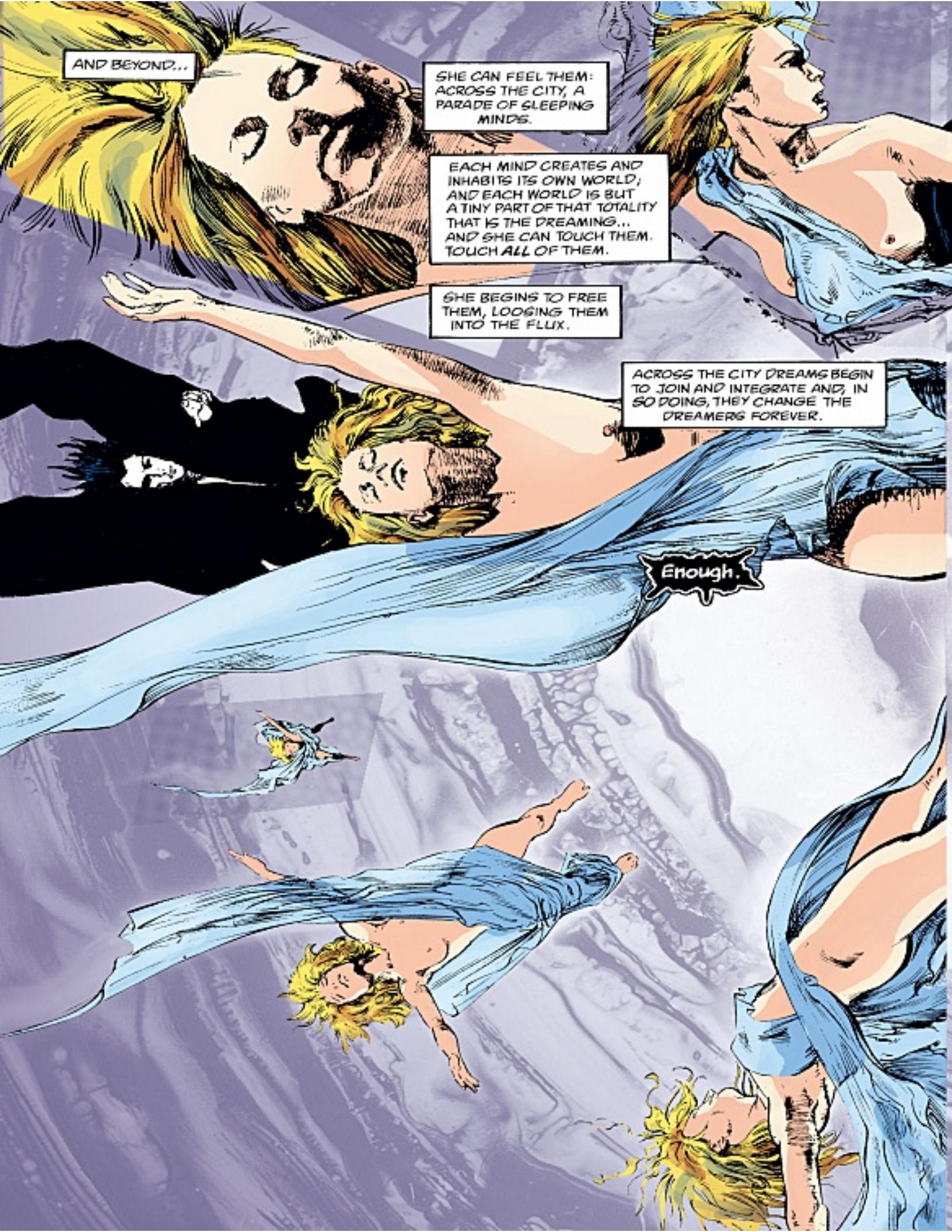
SHE CAN FEEL THEM:
ACROSS THE CITY, A
PARADE OF SLEEPING
MINDS.

EACH MIND CREATES AND
INHABITS ITS OWN WORLD;
AND EACH WORLD IS BUT
A TINY PART OF THAT TOTALITY
THAT IS THE DREAMING...
AND SHE CAN TOUCH THEM.
TOUCH ALL OF THEM.

SHE BEGINS TO FREE
THEM, LOOSING THEM
INTO THE FLUX.

ACROSS THE CITY DREAMS BEGIN
TO JOIN AND INTEGRATE AND, IN
SO DOING, THEY CHANGE THE
DREAMERS FOREVER.

Enough.



AND ROSE (STILL DREAMING, YET NEVER SO AWAKE) UNDERSTANDS, ELATED, THAT THIS IS ONLY THE BEGINNING...

THERE ARE SO MANY DREAMERS. SO MANY.

Enough.

ROSE'S PERCEPTIONS EXTEND, SO MANY NEW THINGS.

THE BRUTAL, TOWERING DREAMS OF THE VERY YOUNG; THE FINE TRACERY OF LACE MEMORIES OF THE VERY OLD.

AND THE OTHERS. ALL THE OTHERS. AND IT WOULD BE SO SIMPLE TO CREATE ONE HUGE DREAM...

ENOUGH!

UH...

WHAT HAPPENED?

You caused a great deal of damage. Nothing I cannot repair. Not at this stage, anyway.

I am the lord of this realm, Rose Walker. And I think the time has come for us to talk.

KEN WOKE, TROUBLED AND HORNY. HE PRESSED CLOSE TO BARBIE, WAS SURPRISED TO FIND THAT SHE WAS CRYING.

SHE COULDN'T TELL HIM WHAT SHE WAS CRYING ABOUT. SHE CLAIMED SHE DIDN'T KNOW.

HE SAID THINGS TO HER THEN, IN THE DARKNESS, THAT HE WOULD LATER REGRET.

CHANTAL AND ZELDA WOKE, SCARED AND LONELY.

THEY DIDN'T TALK. THEY HELP EACH OTHER IN THE DARKNESS, LIKE SISTERS, UNTIL THE DAWN.

HAL WOKE WITH A FEELING OF DREAD IN THE PIT OF HIS STOMACH. THROUGH THE THIN WALL HE COULD HEAR KEN'S VOICE, TOO LOW TO MAKE OUT ANY WORDS.

AND THEN HE TOOK HIS FLASHLIGHT AND WALKED, AS QUIETLY AS HE COULD, UP THE CREAKY WOODEN STAIRS.

FOR A WHILE, HE SAT IN THE DARKENED ROOM.

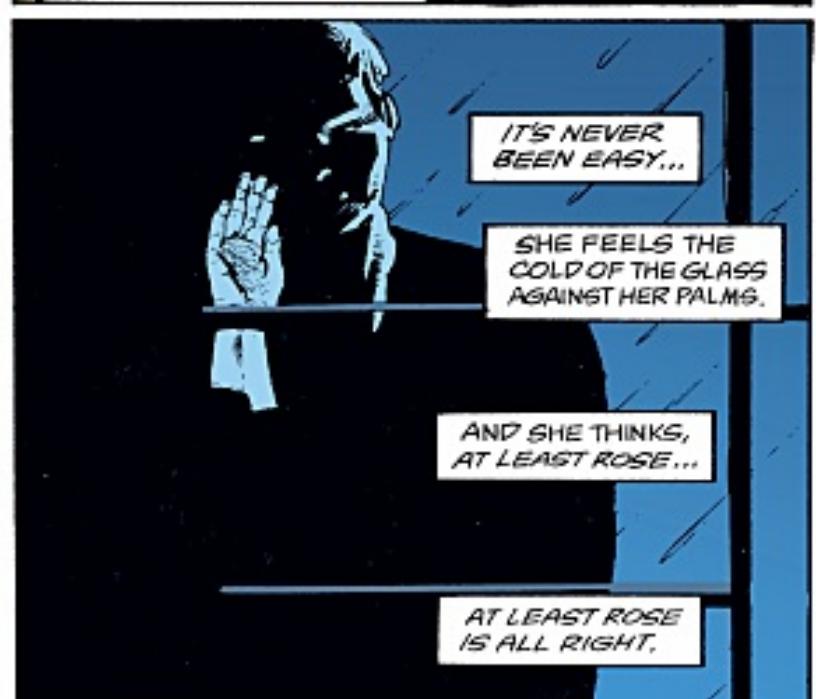
ROSE? ROSE? ARE YOU AWAKE?

ROSE?

NO.

SHE WAS GONE.

AND SOMEHOW HAL WASN'T AT ALL SURPRISED.





THIS--THIS IS ALL SO BIZARRE, BUT IT'S JUST A DREAM, ISN'T IT?

After a fashion.



SAY, WHOEVER YOU ARE, DO YOU KNOW WHAT FREUD SAID ABOUT DREAMS OF FLYING?

IT MEANS YOU'RE REALLY DREAMING ABOUT HAVING SEX.

I'VE NEVER HAD A FLYING DREAM BEFORE. WHEE!



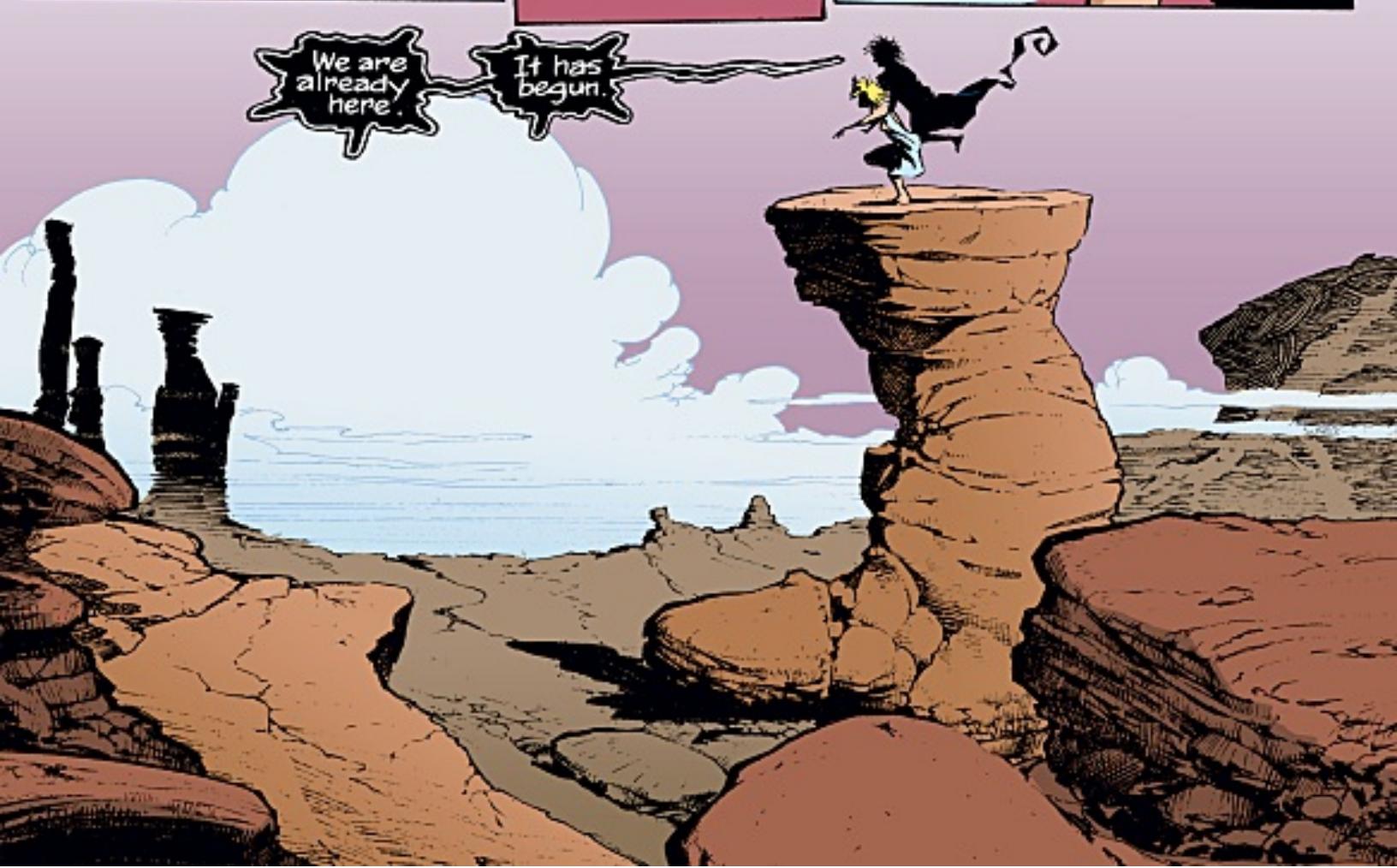
Indeed?

Tell me, then, what does it mean when you dream about having sex?



UH...

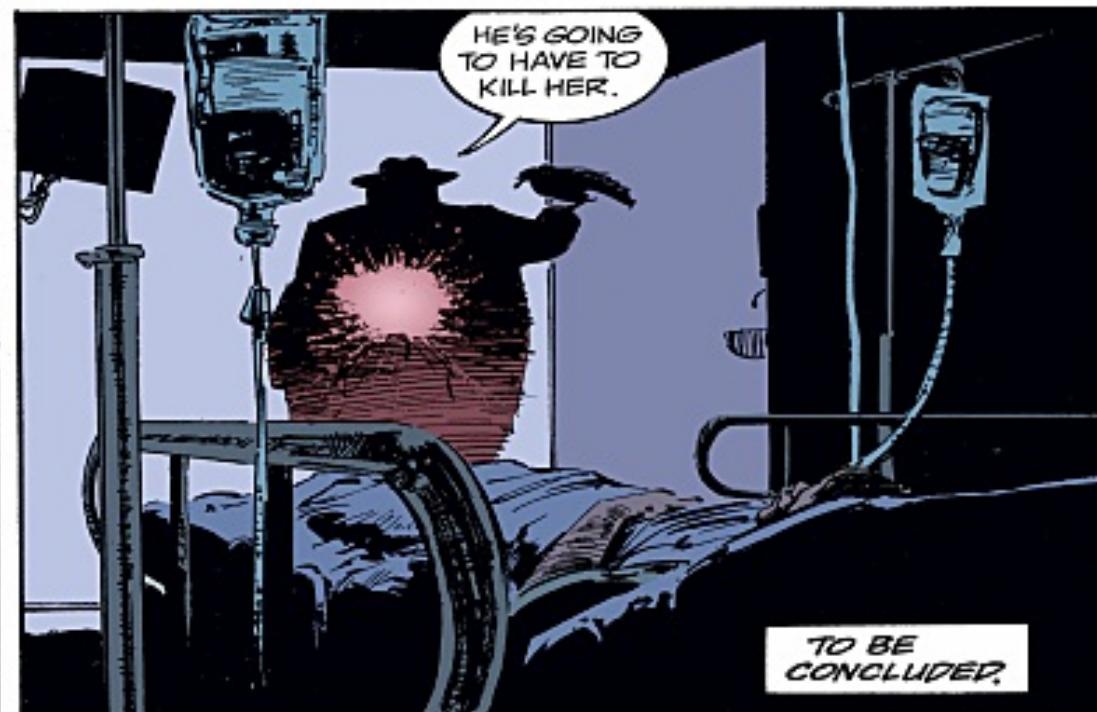
WHERE ARE WE GOING?



We are already here

It has begun.





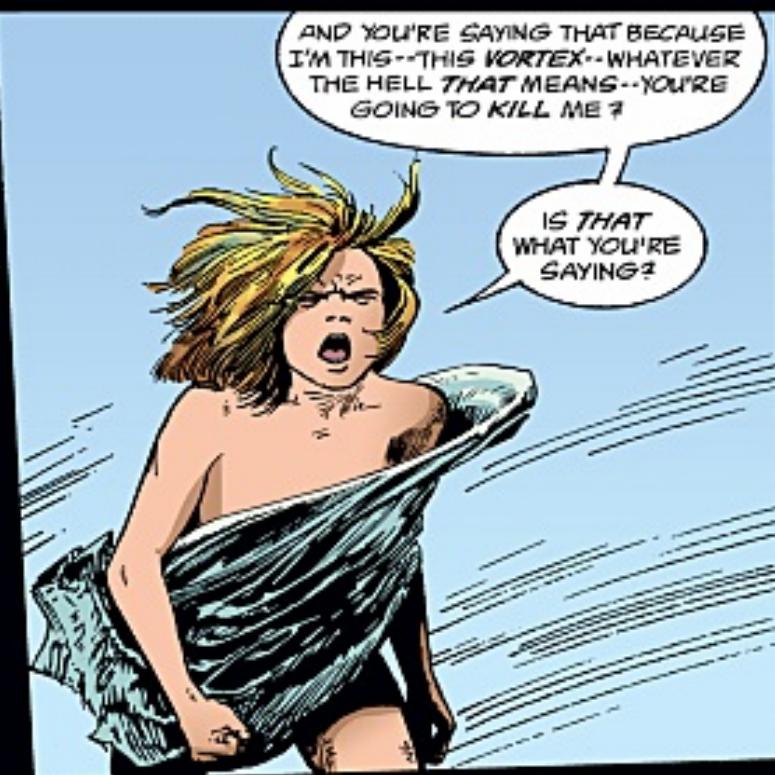
DOLL'S HOUSE

PART SEVEN



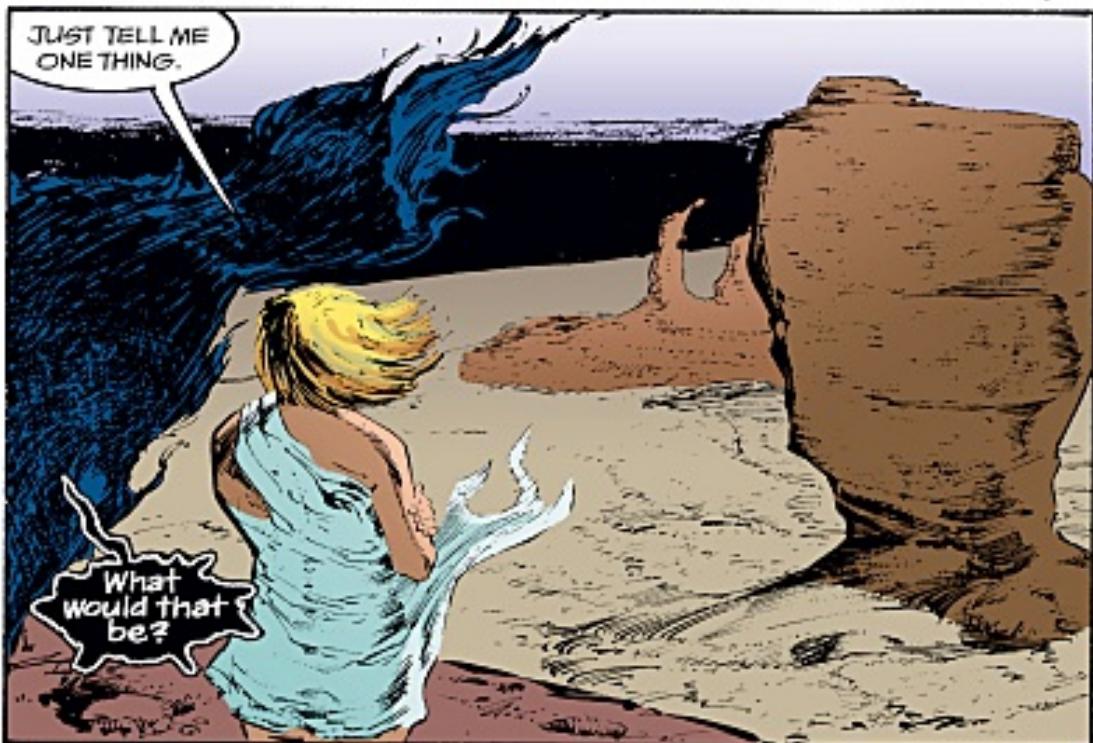
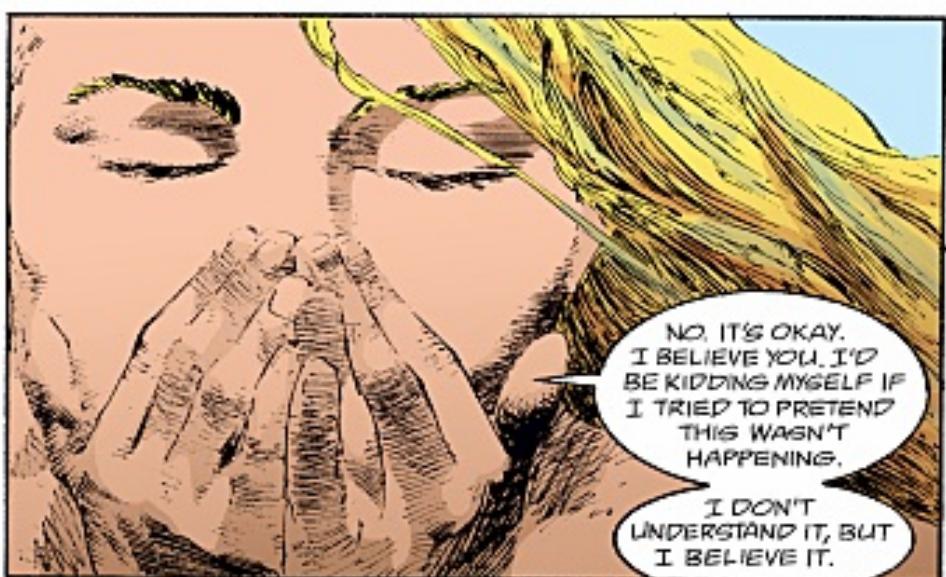


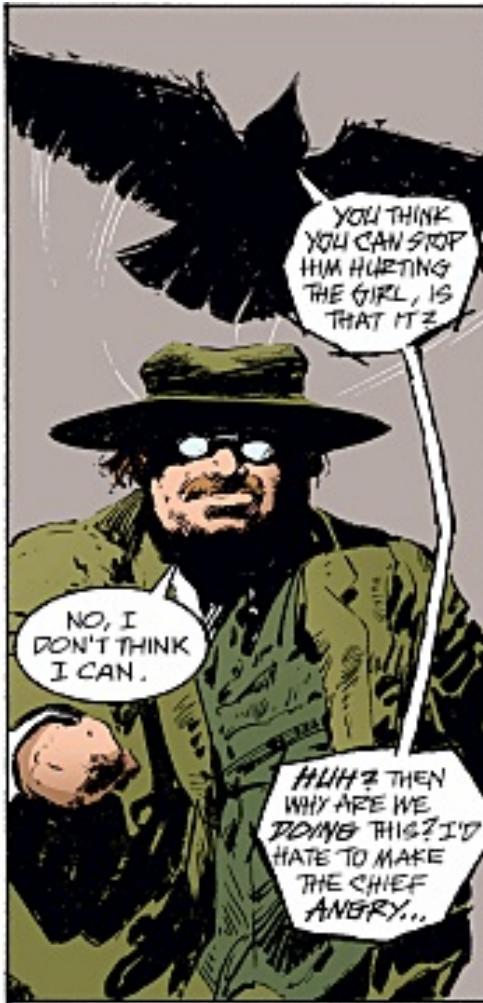
NEIL GAIMAN, WRITER • MIKE DRINGENBERG & MALCOLM JONES III, ARTISTS
ZYLONOL, COLORIST • TODD KLEIN, LETTERER • TOM PEYER, ASST. EDITOR
KAREN BERGER, EDITOR • CREATED BY GAIMAN, KIETH & DRINGENBERG

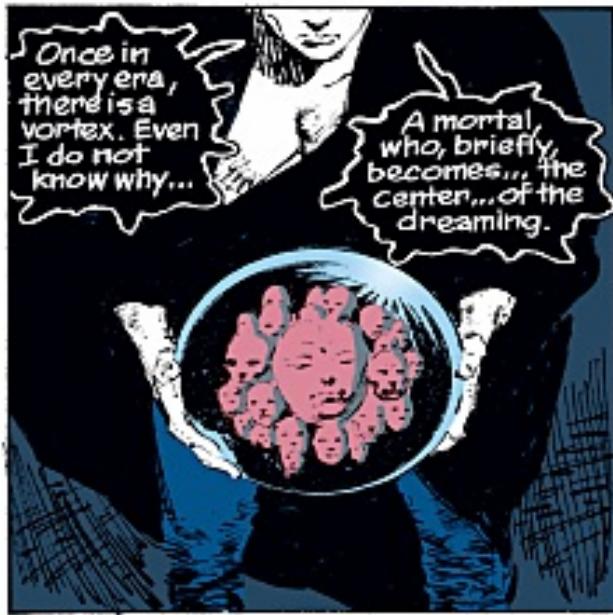


LOST HEARTS



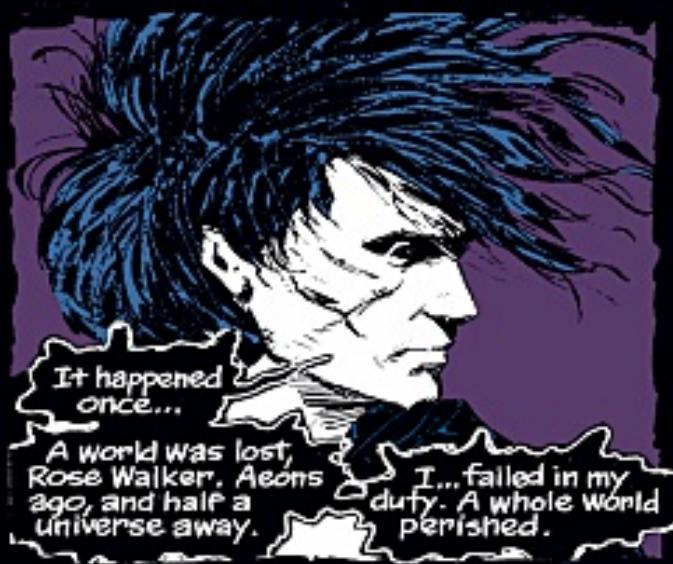






Until all the dreams are one. Then the vortex collapses in upon itself.

And then it is gone. It takes the minds of the dreamers with it; it damages the Dreaming beyond repair.



BUT--BUT IF YOU'RE LIKE THE KING OF THIS WHOLE PLACE, CAN'T YOU JUST, I DON'T KNOW, MAGIC WHATEVER THIS IS OUT OF ME?

I DON'T KNOW. JUST STOP IT HAPPENING...

I am the Lord of this Realm, and my wishes are paramount. But I am not omnipotent.

You could stay here in the dreamworld. Some mortals are given that option. My raven, Matthew, was once a mortal man.

You are of the living, Rose Walker, and you are a vortex. Only when the vortex is dead is the Dreaming safe.

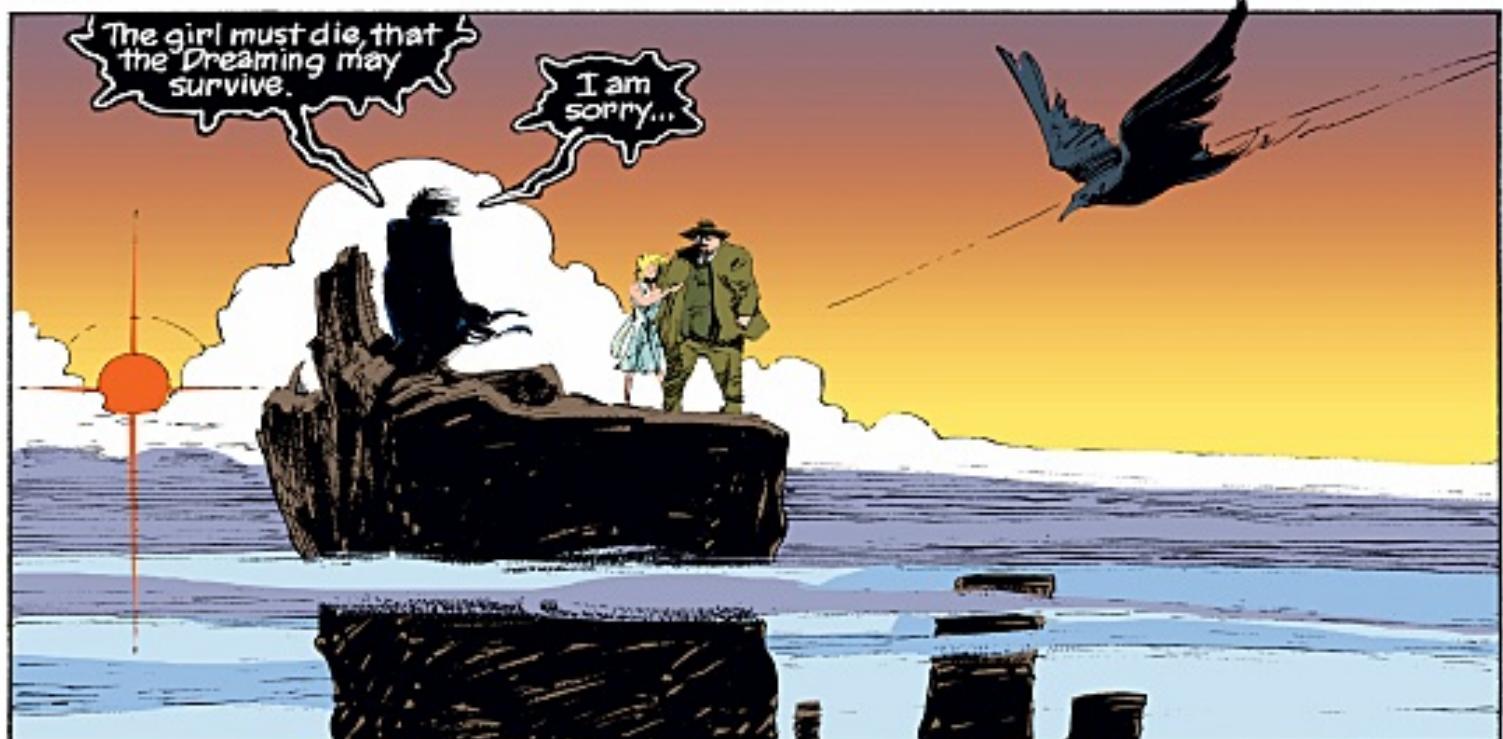
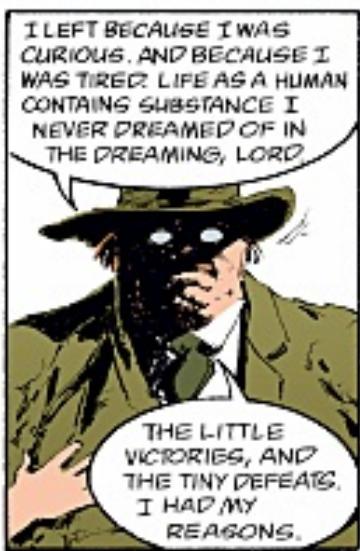
Death is not always a bad thing, Rose...

I DON'T WANT TO DIE.

I... I am sorry, Rose.

HOOH!
ROSE WALKER!
ARE YOU THERE?

GILBERT!



"I'M SORRY,
MIRANDA..."

DON'T THINK
ABOUT IT, UNITY.
MOTHER.

EVERYTHING'S
GOING TO BE
JUST FINE.

"I DON'T THINK I'VE BEEN A...
VERY GOOD MOTHER..."



UNITY KINKAID FINDS IT HARDER AND HARDER TO STAY ALIVE.

LIFE IS SO...

UNITY HEARS A VOICE, HER OWN VOICE, AND IT WHISPERS TO HER IN THE DARKNESS.

THE VOICE WHISPERS TO HER OF HER LIFE BEFORE THE LONG SLEEP. WHISPERS CHILDHOOD DREAMS OF A TALL, DARK MAN, WHOSE EYES DANCED LIKE TWIN STARS IN HER HEAD.

WHISPERS THE TRUTH.

AND THEN SHE GIVES IN TO SLEEP, HER BREATH SHALLOW AND HALT, DYING, IN A WORLD SHE FINALLY UNDERSTANDS...

UNITY DREAMS.

GILBERT?

LISTEN, ISN'T
THERE ANYTHING
WE CAN DO TO
STOP HIM?



No. No, there is nothing he can do.
Fiddler's Green -- I cannot find it in my heart to punish you for leaving. Not now.

UH, SAY, MISS WALKER. TAKE IT FROM ME--DEATH ISN'T THAT BAD. YOU GET USED TO IT. I DID.

Say goodbye

However, it is time to take up your appointed position once again.

I WASN'T HAVING MUCH OF A LIFE, MIND YOU.

I MUST APOLOGIZE TO YOU, MISS WALKER. APOLOGIZE FOR NOT BEING A VERY GOOD HUMAN BEING.

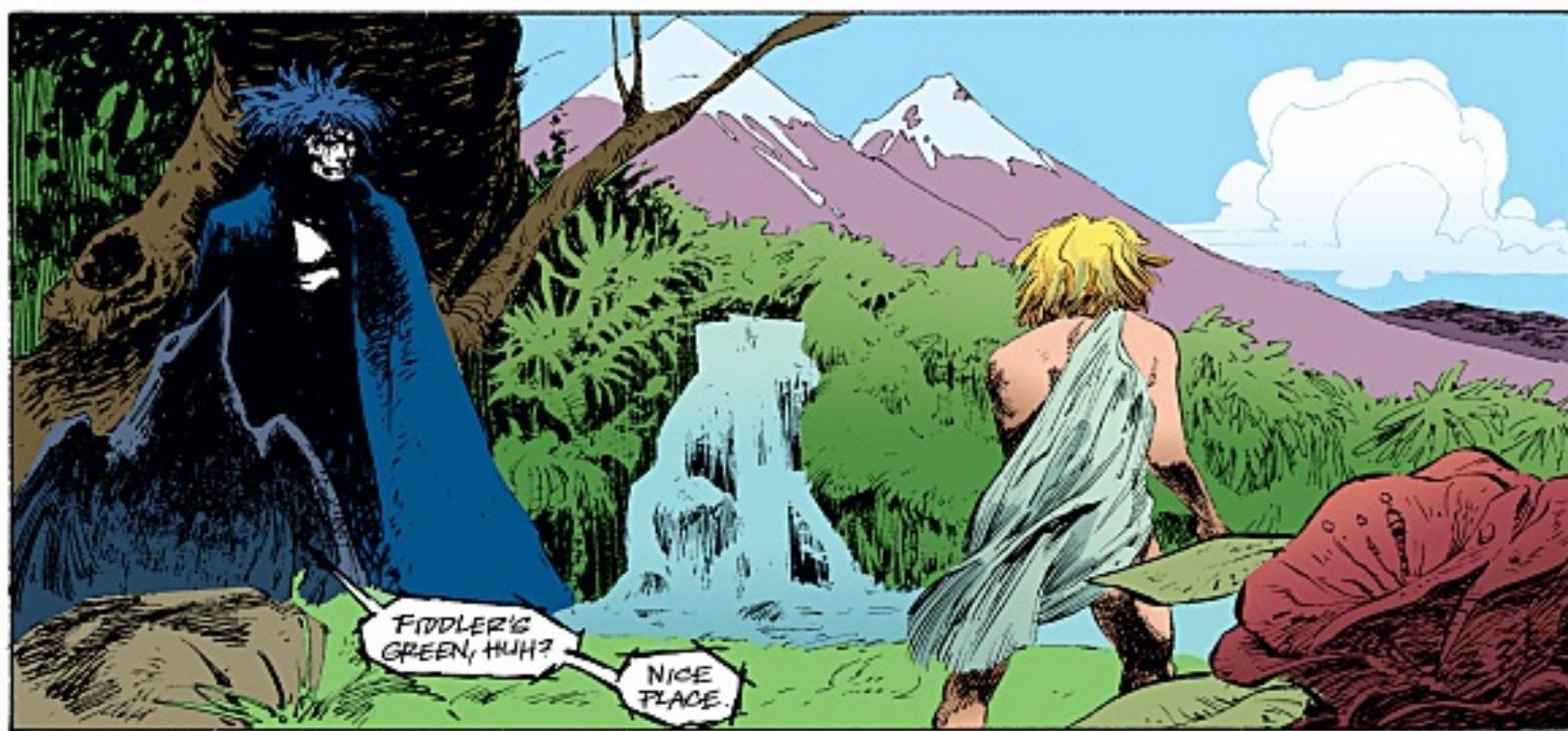
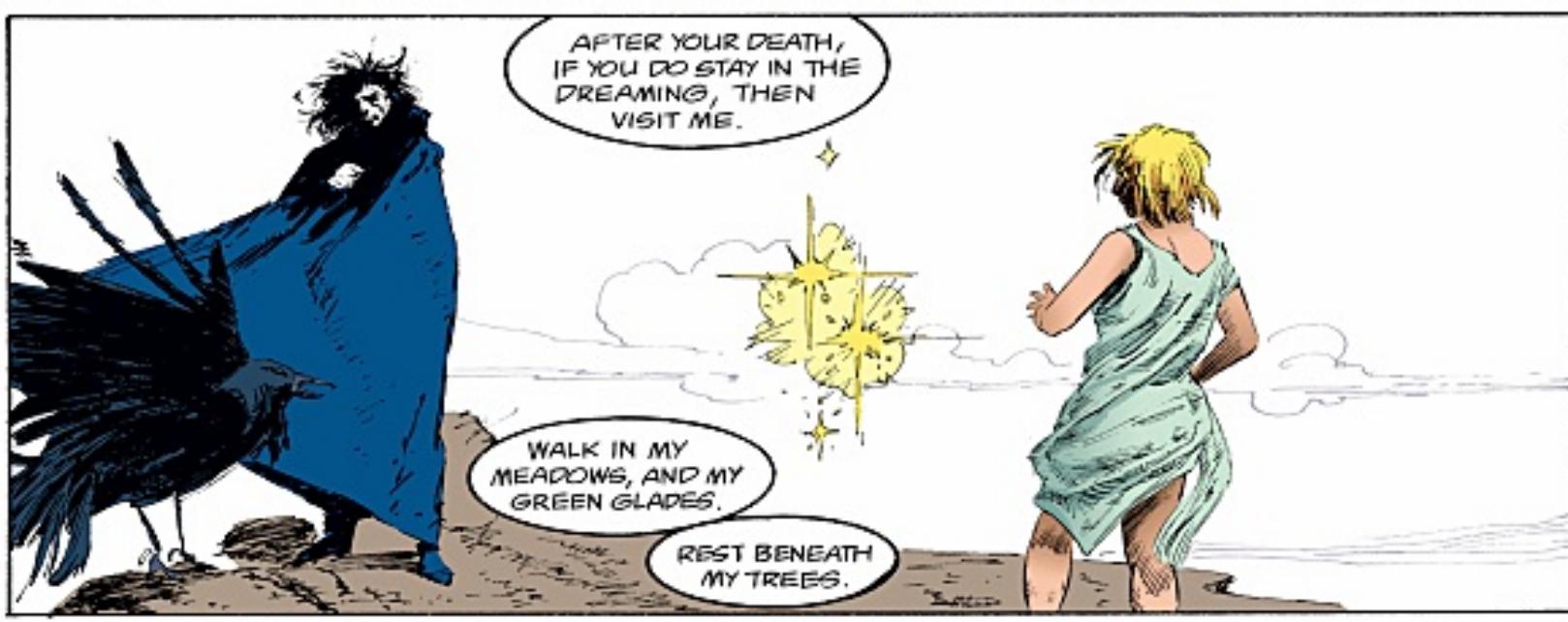
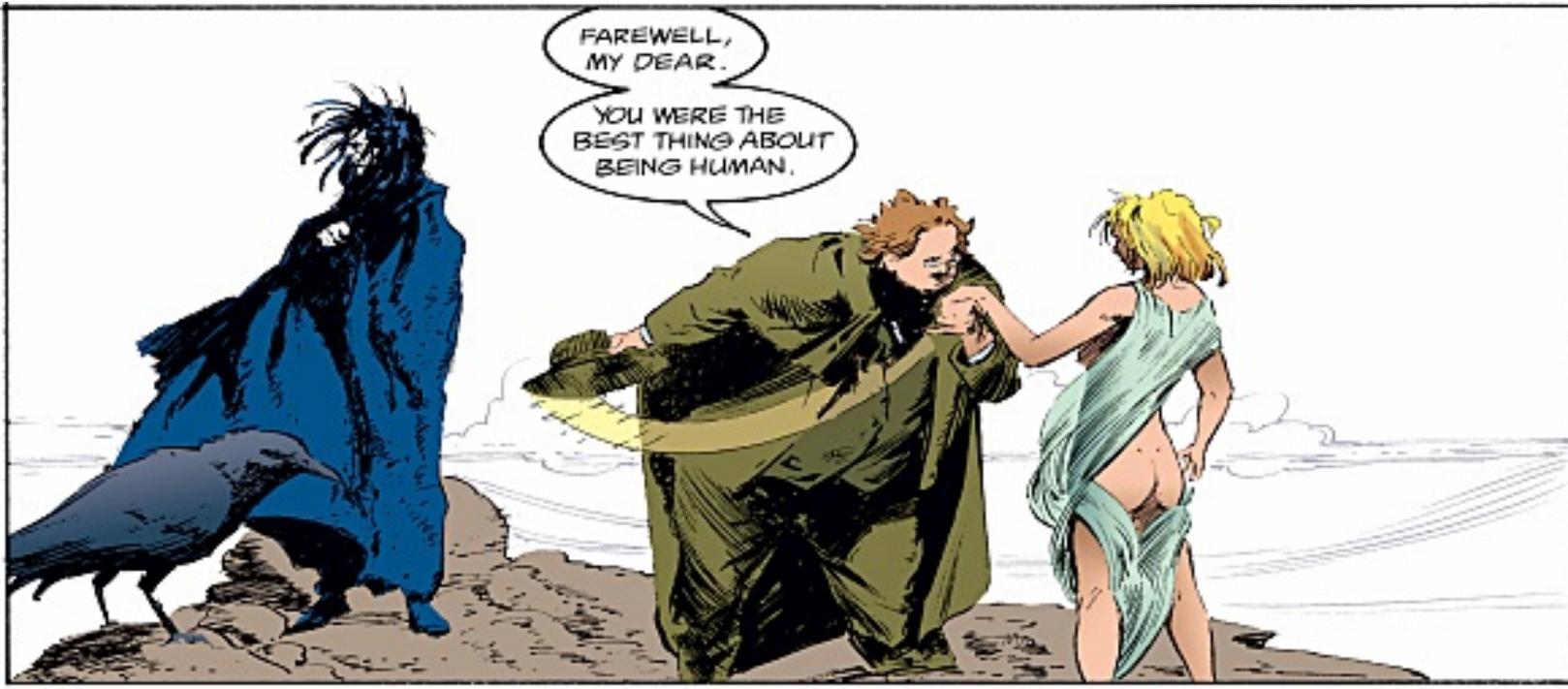
NOT EVEN A VERY GOOD COPY OF A HUMAN, PERHAPS I SHOULD SAY.

AND NOW, WHEN YOU NEED ME MOST, IT SEEMS I HAVE FAILED YOU.

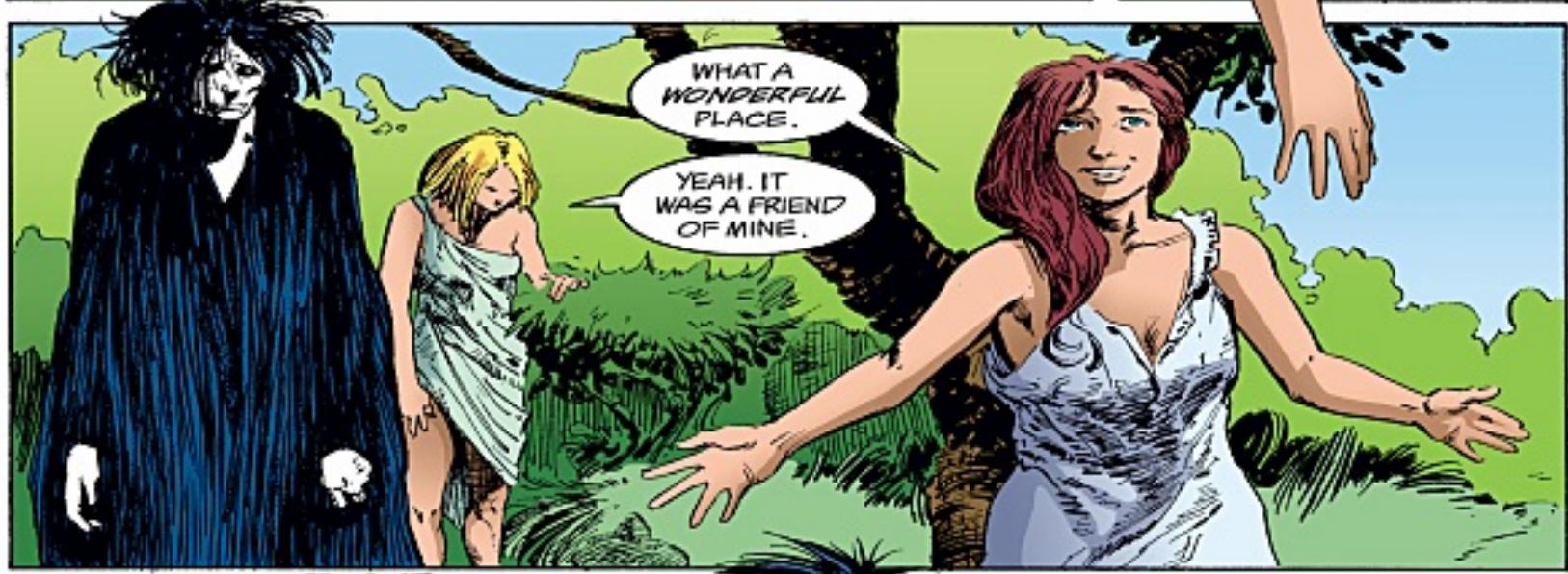
JUST SHUT UP AND SAY GOOD-BYE, GILBERT, OR I'M GOING TO START CRYING...

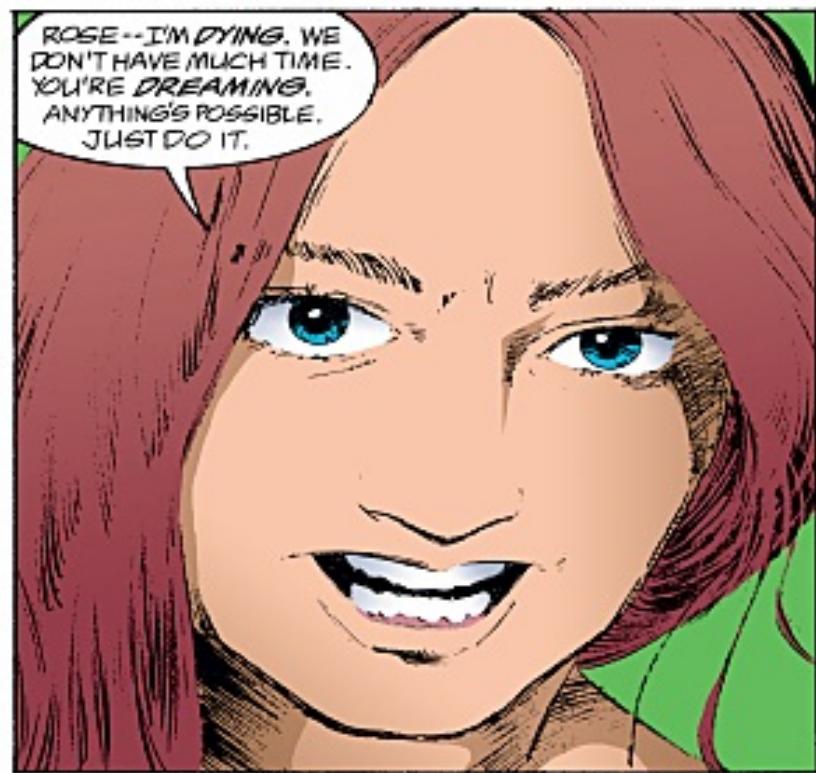
...AND I'M NOT GOING TO GIVE HIM THAT SATISFACTION.

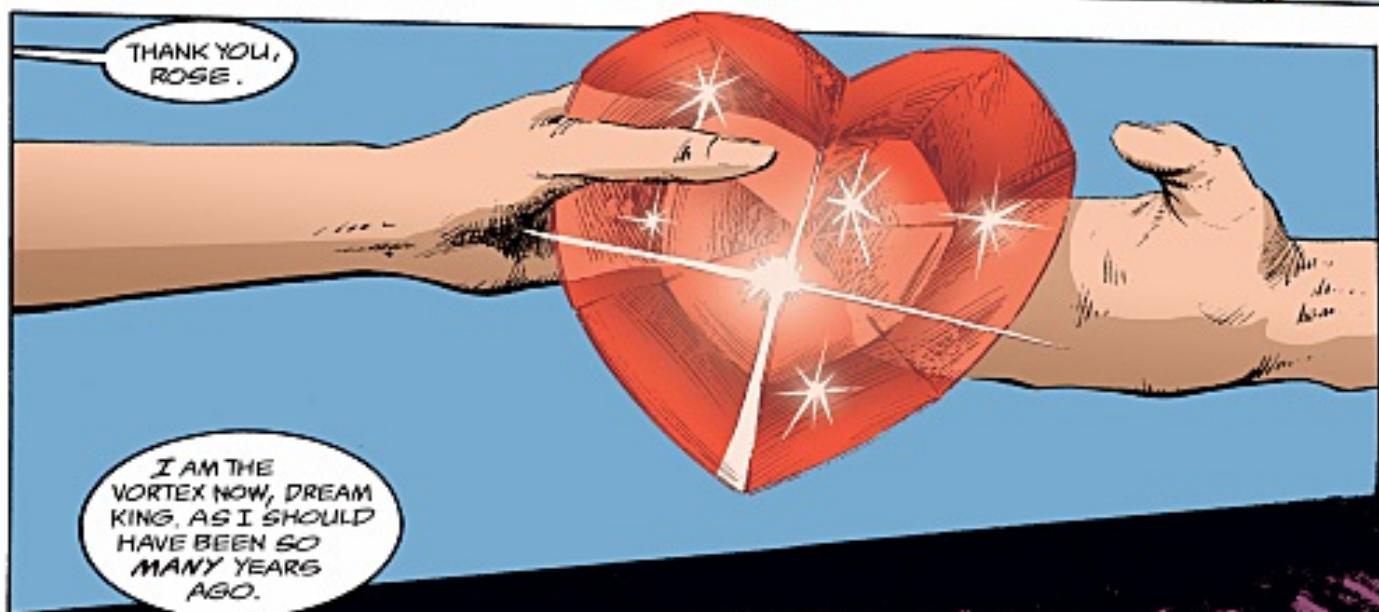
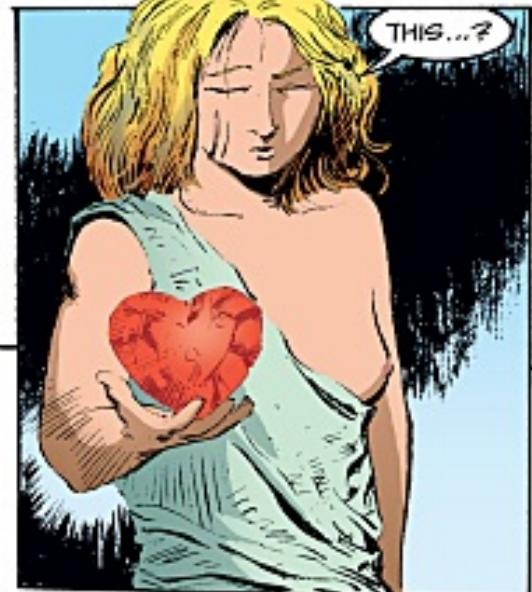
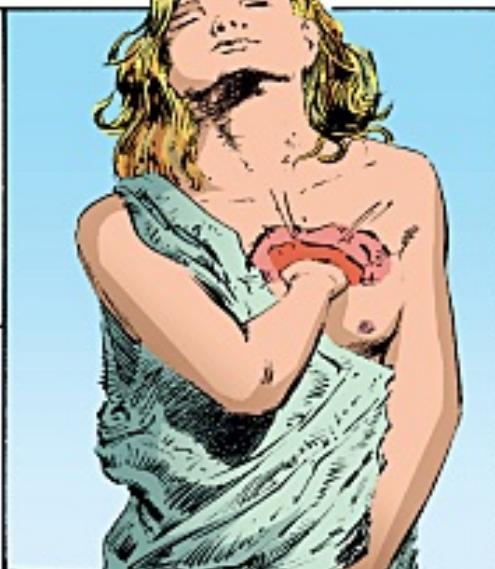
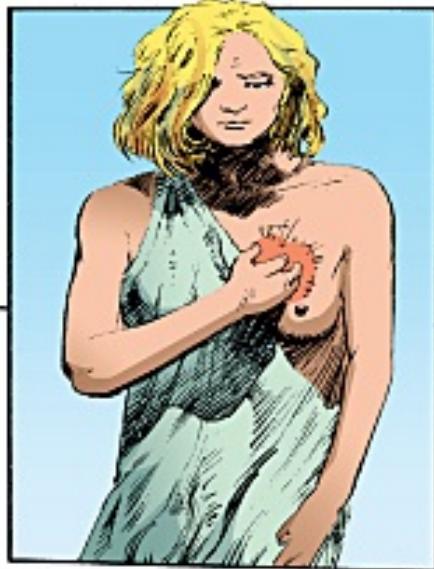








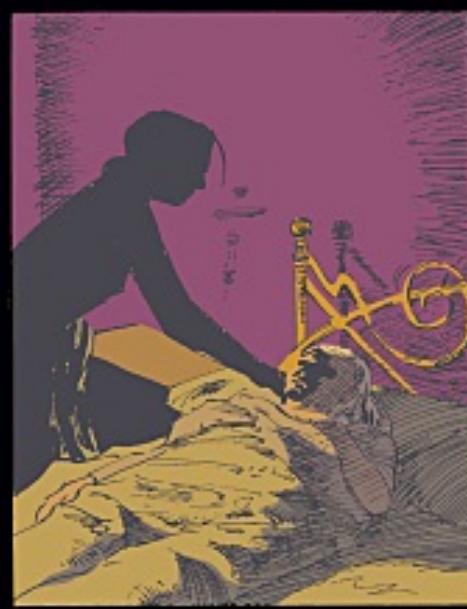
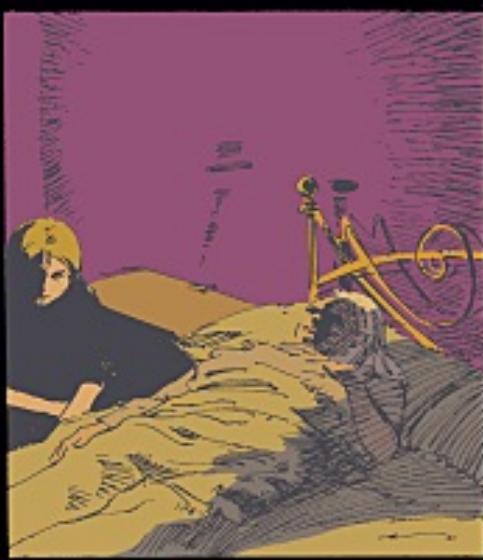




I AM THE
VORTEX NOW, DREAM
KING, AS I SHOULD
HAVE BEEN SO
MANY YEARS
AGO.

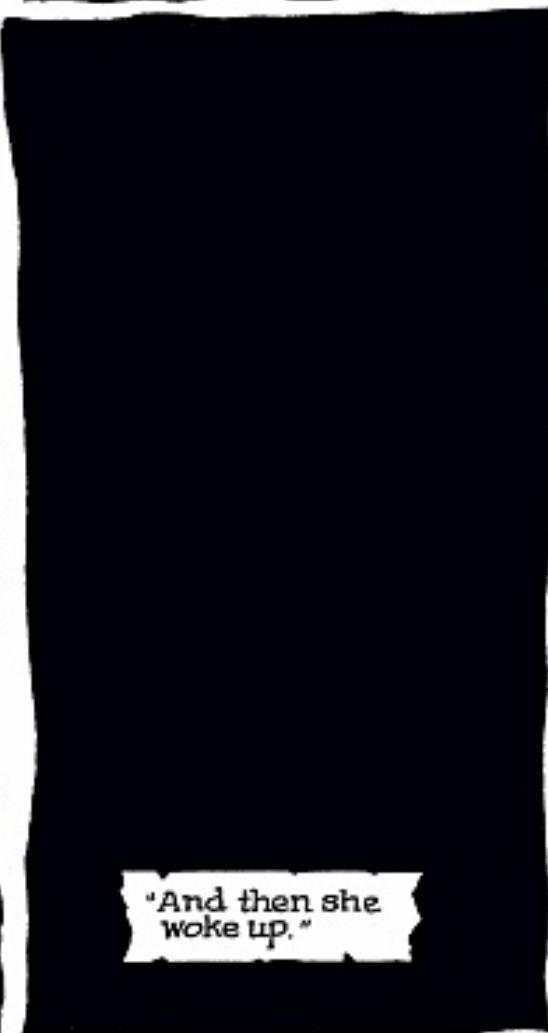
I AM THE
VORTEX, AND
I AM--

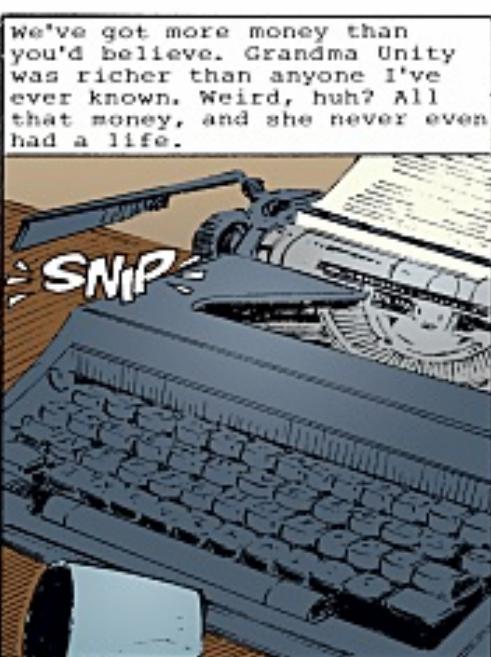
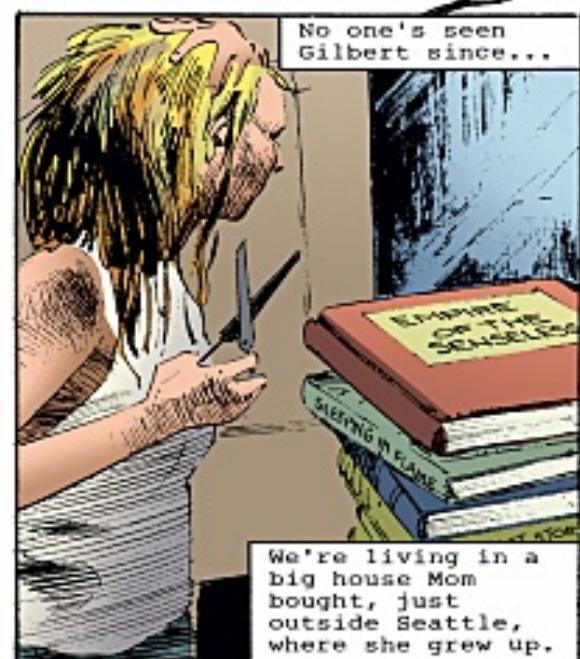
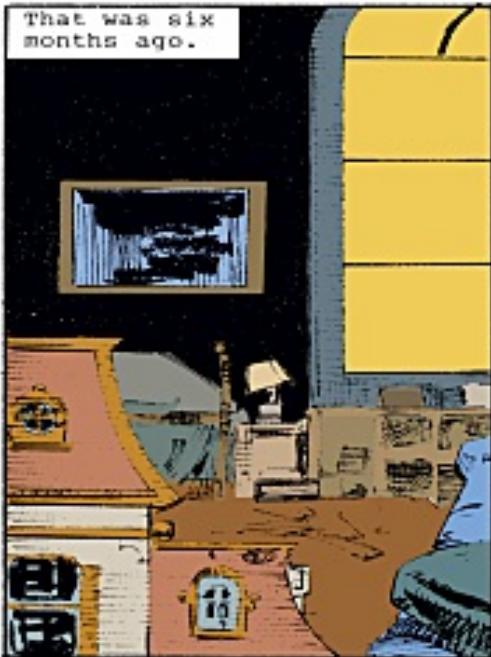




I DON'T
UNDERSTAND THIS.
I'M SORRY.

ARE YOU
STILL GOING TO
KILL ME?







I've been reading, playing records, sometimes just sitting, staring into space. Writing this diary, or whatever it is.

Thinking.



A year ago my best friend died. Her name was Judy. She was killed -- or perhaps she killed herself -- in some kind of massacre, in a small-town diner.



She phoned me on the day she died -- she'd just split up with her girlfriend, Donna, and she was in rough shape.

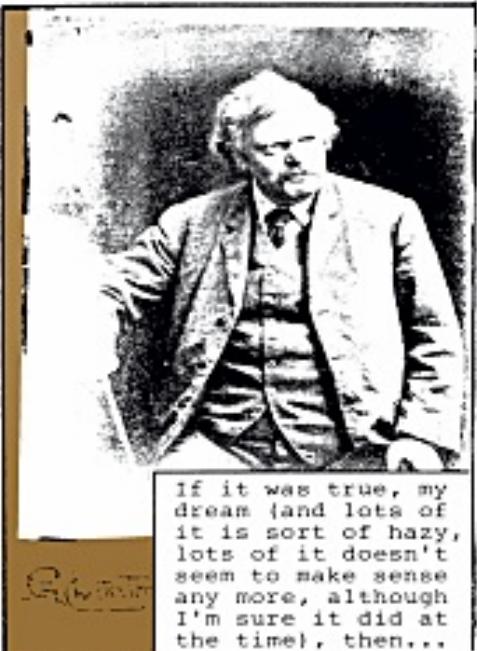
I think about Judy a lot.



Not any more.



Six months ago I had a really weird dream. That was the night that Unity died, and Jed got better.



If it was true, my dream (and lots of it is sort of hazy, lots of it doesn't seem to make sense any more, although I'm sure it did at the time), then...



then...

SIX SLAIN IN DINER OF DEATH RIDDLE



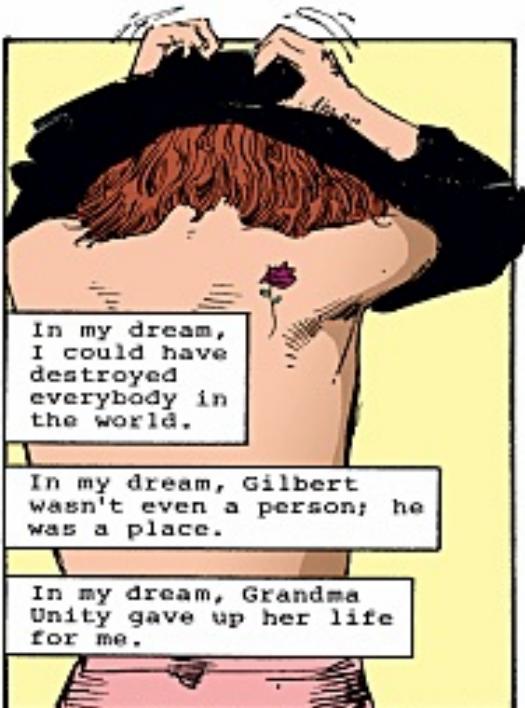
Then nothing makes any sense.

If my dream was true, then everything we know, everything we think we know is a lie.

It means the world's about as solid and as reliable as a layer of scum on the top of a well of black water which goes down forever, and there are things in the depths that I don't even want to think about.



It means more than that.



In my dream, I could have destroyed everybody in the world.

In my dream, Gilbert wasn't even a person; he was a place.

In my dream, Grandma Unity gave up her life for me.



Dreams are weird and stupid and they scare me. I haven't slept properly for six months now.

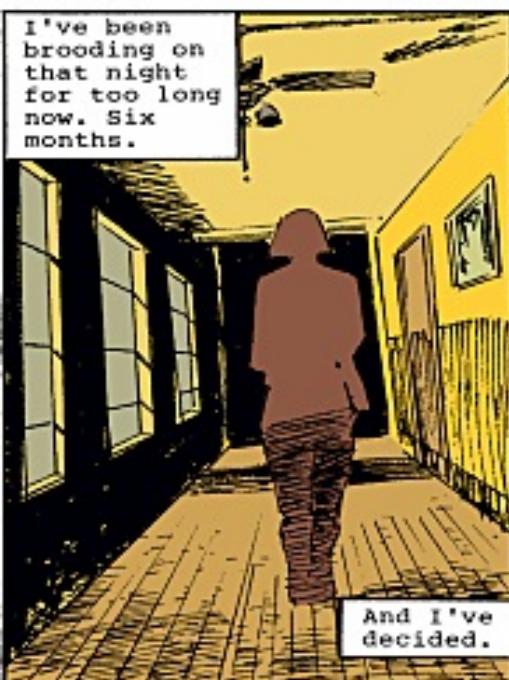
It means that we're just dolls. We don't have a clue what's really going down, we just kid ourselves that we're in control of our lives while a paper's thickness away things that would drive us mad if we thought about them for too long play with us, and move us around from room to room, and put us away at night when they're tired, or bored.



That's my story.

Okay.

It's even got a happy ending: Jed and Rose and their mother were finally reunited, and they all lived together in a big old house.



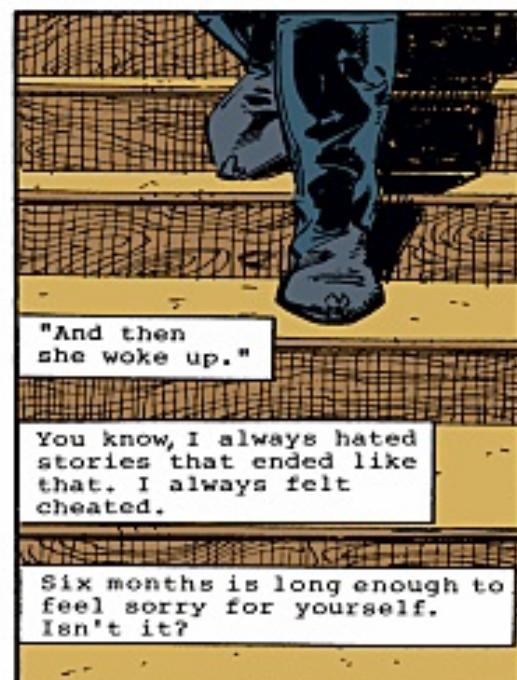
I've been brooding on that night for too long now. Six months.

And I've decided.



My dream. My weird dream. It was just a dream.

That's all. Just a dream.

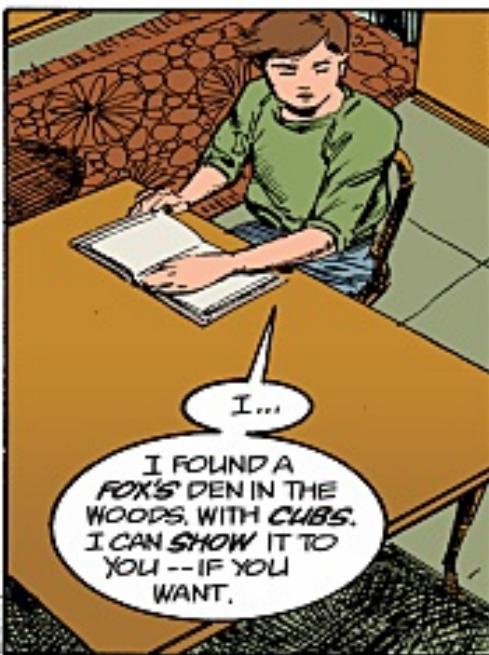


"And then she woke up."

You know, I always hated stories that ended like that. I always felt cheated.

Six months is long enough to feel sorry for yourself. Isn't it?

You can't feel cheated forever.





...CHAMBERS.

IT'S, UM, LOVELY
TO SEE YOU. CAN I
GET YOU ANYTHING
YOU DESIRE?

My sibling, I
require nothing
from you, save
some answers.

I have been
thinking about certain
events of the last year.
And I have arrived at
some unpleasant
conclusions.

Unity Kinkaid should
have been the dream
vortex of this era.
Yet she wasn't.

This is unprecedented
in my experience.

ARE YOU ACCUSING ME
OF INTERFERING IN
FINOTHER MEMBER OF THE
FAMILY'S DOMAIN?

The vortex was
instead transmitted
along her genetic line
to her grand-daughter,
Rose Walker.

Someone has been
meddling in my
affairs, Desire.
And this has your
stink about it.

Obviously that is
exactly what I am
doing. And I am accusing
you of more than that.

Desire--Who was Rose's
grandfather? Who fathered
her mother on sleeping
Unity, fifty years ago?

No. No, you
covered your
tracks remark-
ably well.

...WAS I THAT
OBVIOUS?

What did you truly
intend, Desire?

Was I to take the
life of one of our
blood, with all that
would entail? Or
was it more devious
than that?

DOES IT
MATTER, BIG
BROTHER?
IT DIDN'T
WORK.



AND DESIRE WALKS THE CHAMBERS OF ITS HEART.

IT WALKS THE THRESHOLD, ITS CITADEL AND ITS PROTECTION; AND DESIRE WONDERS:

HUMAN BEINGS ARE THE CREATURES OF DESIRE. THEY TWIST AND BEND AS I REQUIRE IT.

POOR DREAM...

I REALLY GOT UNDER HIS SKIN THIS TIME.

WHAT DID HE MEAN? THAT WE ARE THEIR TOYS?

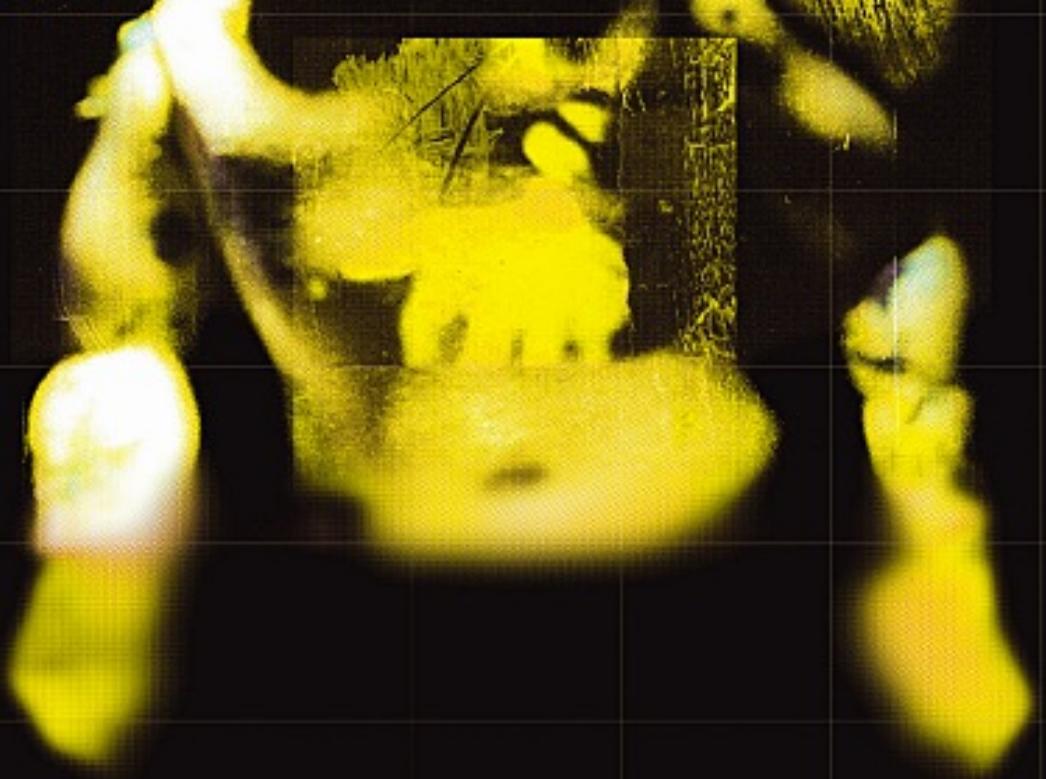
IF I THOUGHT OTHERWISE, I WOULD CRACK, LIKE DELIRIUM; OR I WOULD ABANDON MY REALM, LIKE OUR LOST BROTHER.

AND DESIRE SMILES, AND FORGETS, FOR DESIRE IS A CREATURE OF THE MOMENT.

AND DESIRE WALKS THE ENDLESS PATHWAYS OF ITS BODY, CERTAIN THAT HE, OR SHE, OR IT, IS IN SOLE AND ONLY CONTROL OF ITS DESTINY.

THE ONLY INHABITANT OF THE TWILIGHT REALM OF DESIRE; AND IT FEELS NOTHING LIKE A DOLL.

NOTHING LIKE A DOLL AT ALL.



Never apologize, never explain.

It's not a bad two-rule maxim for life, all things considered, but it's not very helpful when it comes to writing afterwords for books. After all, the only reason people read afterwords is for some kind of explanation of what they've read if they haven't understood it, or for some kind of apology if they have.

So no explanations, no apologies. Instead, a few words of thanks and gratitude to the rest of the SANDMAN clan: thanks to Mike Dringenberg, who so beautifully turned so many ideas into people; thanks to Malcolm Jones, unsung hero of the pen, brush and deadline; thanks to our guests Michael Zulli, Chris Bachalo and Steve Parkhouse, for lending their skills and unique vision to the story; heartfelt thanks to editor Karen Berger for being an embodied litany of the virtues (particularly patience, faith and hope); to Dave McKean for clear-sightedness, magical covers and friendship; and lastly, grateful thanks to Todd Klein, letterer's letterer, who adds so much more to the whole than just the words.

Thanks are also due to (deep breath): Alan Moore; Clive Barker; Jack Kirby; Joe Simon; Michael Fleisher and Roy Thomas; Winsor McCay; Persephone Longueville; Roz Kaveney; Mitzi and Sugar from Madame Jo-Jo's; Mary Gentle; Mikal Gilmore; Aimee and Jessie Horsting; Dave McKean and I would like to thank the cover photo models—Catherine Peters, Claire Haythornthwaite, Neil Jones and some other guy.

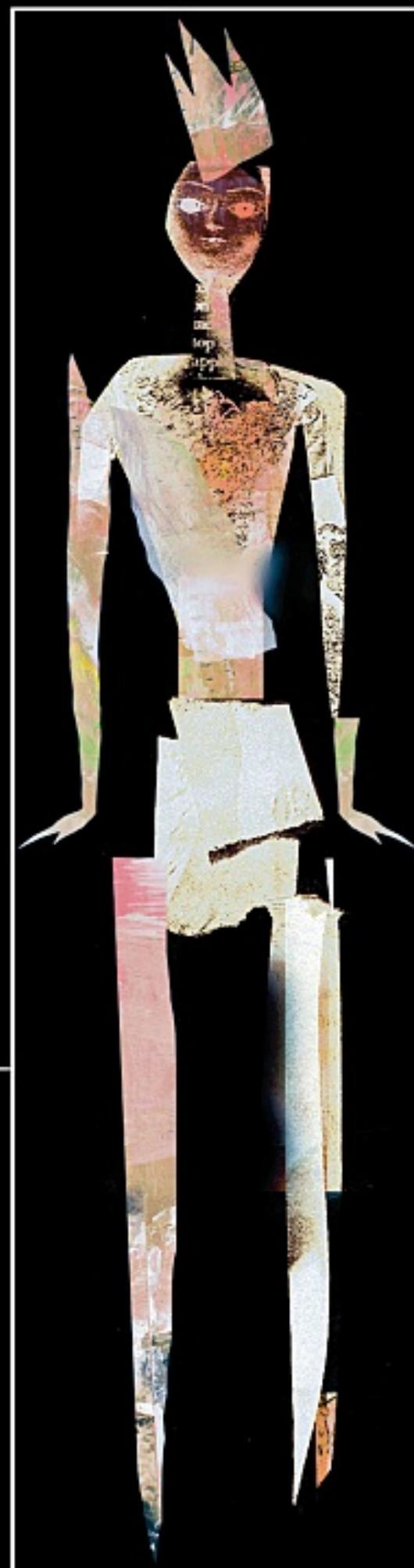
And everyone who helped make the dream breathe...

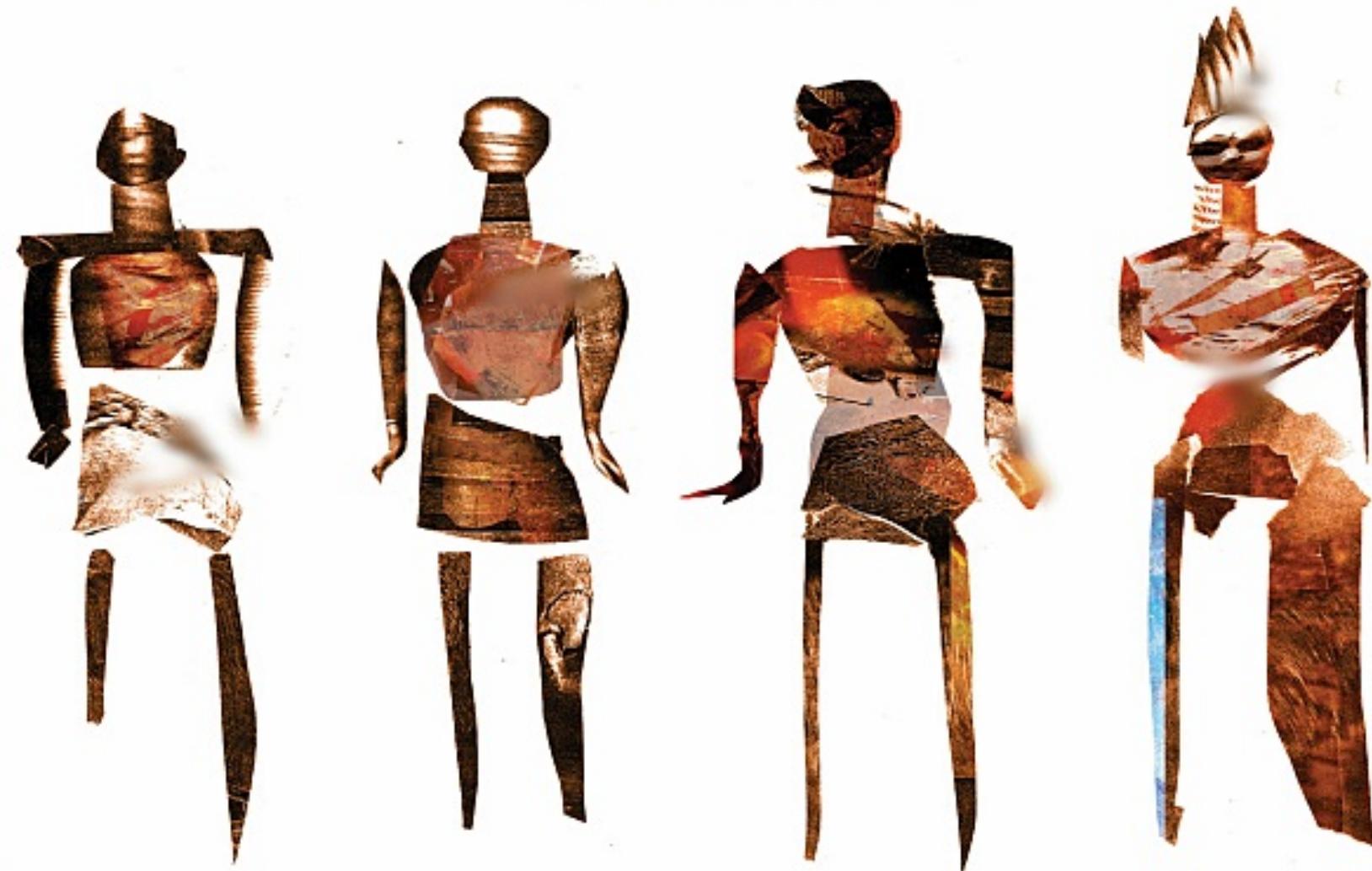
—Neil Gaiman
England, April 1990

Mike Dringenberg would like to thank GiGi, Shawn S., Yann and Ivy, Bilbo, Pam, Victoria, Roland, Chandra, Sam Kieth and A. Rimbaud. Special thanks to Cinnamon (wherever she is), the model for Death.

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BIOGRAPHIES

NEIL GAIMAN is the creator and writer of the internationally acclaimed comics masterpiece **THE SANDMAN**, which was the first comic book to receive mainstream literary recognition when issue #19 ("A Midsummer Night's Dream") won the World Fantasy Award for Short Fiction in 1991. His most recent installment in the series, **THE SANDMAN: OVERTURE**, won the Hugo Award for Best Graphic Fiction in 2016.

He is also a *New York Times* best-selling author of books, short stories, films and graphic novels for all ages. Some of his most notable titles include *American Gods*, for which he received the Hugo, Nebula, Bram Stoker and Locus awards; *The Graveyard Book*, which was the first book to ever win both the Newbery and Carnegie medals; and *The Ocean at the End of the Lane*, which was named Book of the Year in 2013 by the UK's National Book Awards. His most recent title, *Morse Mythology*, is a retelling of the stories of the Norse gods and giants from the *Prose and Poetic Eddas*, and he is currently adapting *Good Omens*, the novel he co-wrote with Sir Terry Pratchett, into a six-part television series with the BBC and Amazon Studios.

In addition to his work on the page and screen, Gaiman is a professor in the arts at Bard College. He has four children and is married to the writer and performer Amanda Palmer.

MICHAEL DRINGENBERG was born in France and grew up in Germany before emigrating to America in the early 1970s. He studied illustration and graphic design at the University of Utah and began illustrating books and comics before leaving college. He met Neil Gaiman in 1988 and with him co-created the hugely popular and critically successful series **THE SANDMAN**. Dringenberg's work as an illustrator continues, focusing on book jackets and, more recently, CD covers, exploring the relationship of sound and vision. He still likes cats and rain.

MALCOLM JONES III attended the High School of Art and Design and the Pratt Institute in New York City before making his comics debut in the pages of DC's **YOUNG ALL-STARS**. In addition to his celebrated work on **THE SANDMAN**, Jones contributed work to many other titles from both DC and Marvel, including **BATMAN**, **THE QUESTION QUARTERLY**, *Dracula* and *Spider-Man*. He died in 1995.

CHRIS BACHALO is internationally recognized as one of the most popular artists in the comics industry. His body of work covers a wide spectrum of genres, ranging from the critically acclaimed series **THE SANDMAN**, **DEATH: THE HIGH COST OF LIVING** and **SHADE, THE CHANGING MAN** for DC to *The Amazing Spider-Man*, *The Uncanny X-Men* and the quirky pop favorite *Generation X*—which he co-created with writer Scott Lobdell—for Marvel. He is also responsible for the creator-owned properties **THE WITCHING HOUR** (with writer Jeph Loeb) and **STEAMPUNK** (with writer Joe Kelly), published by Vertigo and WildStorm respectively. Bachalo was born in Portage La Prairie in the western Canadian province of Manitoba, and he currently resides in southern California. He can also be found virtually at chrisbachalo.net.

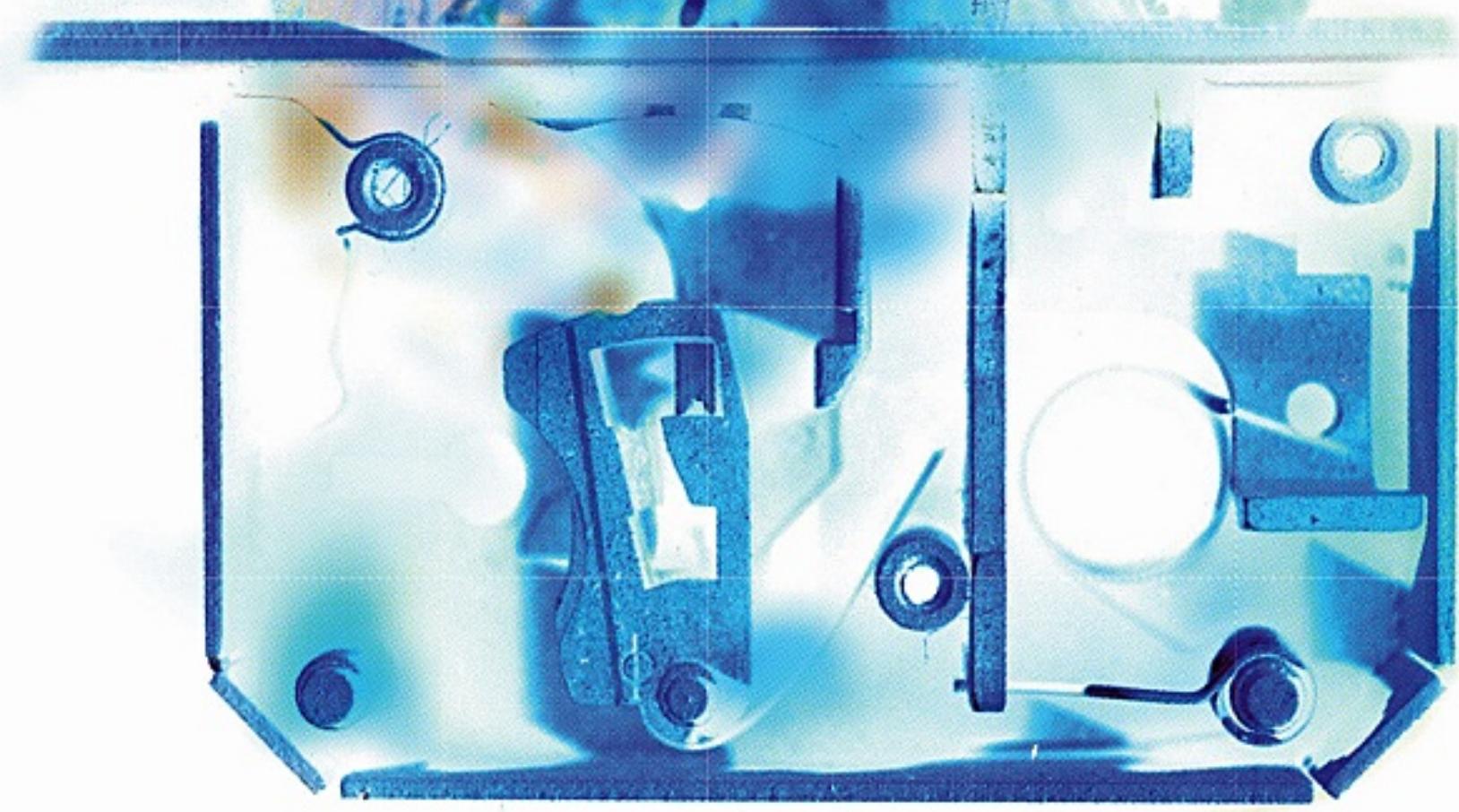
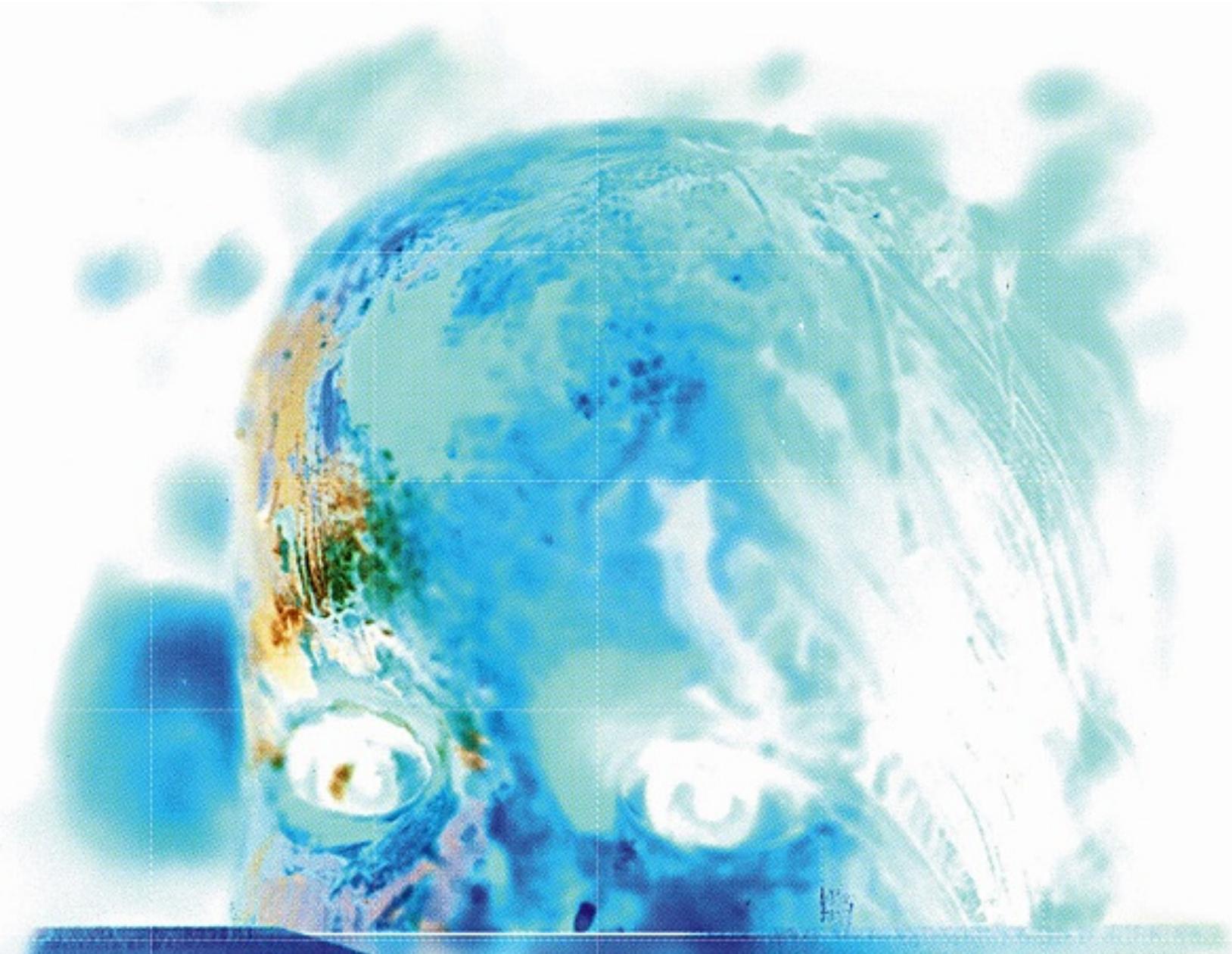
MICHAEL ZULLI The mysterious Mr. Zed lives in splendid seclusion on the great prairie. He paints from the heart. Blue heelers, bull terriers, wild turkeys, deer and wood ducks visit often. The Princess of Scotland sells his work. He's learning to be really free.

STEVE PARKHOUSE is a British man. He lives in Britland on the border between the known world and Scotland. Sometimes he crosses the danger zone, across the Roman Wall and into the heart of strangeness. He shops, and then returns to his esoteric practices. He no longer inks. He has been known to write and illustrate his own stories, but that's a secret that must never be divulged. He is almost well-known in his native parts but avoids looking into the eyes of the English. He has ancient roots and a romantic past that he can never quite remember.

DAVE McKEAN has illustrated over 80 books and graphic novels, including *Signal to Noise*, *The Wolves in the Walls*, *Coraline* and *The Graveyard Book*, all written by Neil Gaiman, *The Magic of Reality* by Richard Dawkins, *The Fat Duck Cookbook* by Heston Blumenthal and *What's Welsh for Zen* by John Cale. He has written and illustrated the multi-award-winning *Cages*, *Pictures That Tick 1* and *2* and *Black Dog: The Dreams of Paul Nash*. He has also directed several short films and three features: *MirrorMask*, *The Gospel of Us* with Michael Sheen and *Luna*, which premiered at the Toronto Film Festival in 2014. He lives on the Isle of Oxney in Kent, UK.

ZYLONOL Veteran colorist Lee Loughridge's Zylonol Studio is one of the industry's leading coloring houses, providing work for such titles as **FABLES**, **V: THE LAST MAN** and **HELLBLAZER**, among many others. Located in Newport Beach, California, Zylonol has had its hand in the comics scene for over 20 years now.

TODD KLEIN One of the industry's most versatile and accomplished letterers, Todd Klein has been lettering comics since 1977 and has won numerous Eisner and Harvey awards for his work. A highlight of his career has been working with Neil Gaiman on nearly all the original issues of **THE SANDMAN**, as well as **BLACK ORCHID**, **DEATH: THE HIGH COST OF LIVING**, **DEATH: THE TIME OF YOUR LIFE** and **THE BOOKS OF MAGIC**.



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