

DC VERTIGO

The #1 New York Times
Best-Selling Author

Volume I

30th
ANNIVERSARY EDITION

NEIL GAIMAN

The SANDMAN

Preludes & Nocturnes

Illustrated by

SAM KIETH

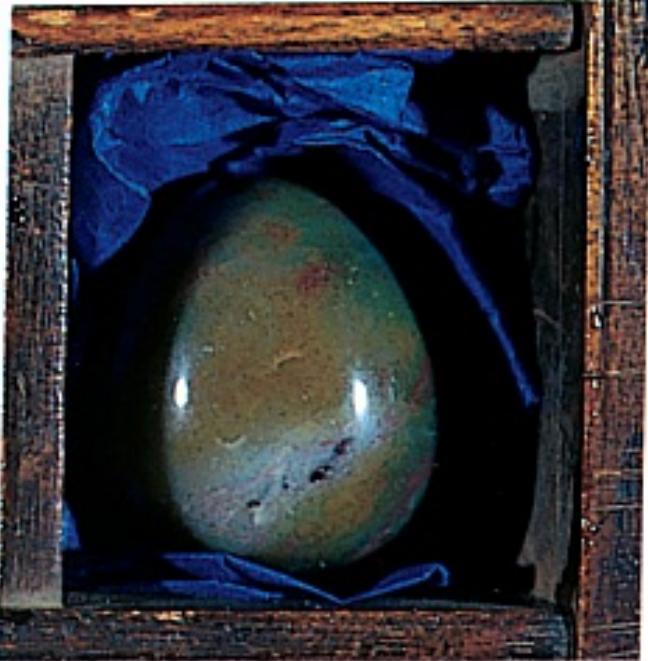
MIKE DRINGENBERG

MALCOLM JONES III

Introduced by

PATRICK ROTHFUSS





"But where shall wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding? Man knoweth not the price thereof; neither is it found in the land of the living.. for the price of wisdom is above rubies."

—*The Book of Job,*
chapter 28, verses 12, 13, 18

"D is for lots of things."

—John Dee, All Fools' Day, 1989





THE
SANDMAN
THE SANDMAN PRELUDES & NOCTURNES

NEIL GAIMAN writer

SAM KIETH MIKE DRINGENBERG MALCOLM JONES III artists

DANIEL VOZZO colorist

TODD KLEIN letterer

DAVE McKEAN cover art and original series covers

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

Cover design and interior illustrations by DAVE McKEAN.

THE SANDMAN VOL. I: PRELUDES & NOCTURNES

50TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

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INTRODUCTION

I'll admit, I'm at a bit of a loss as to what to do here.

If you've already read *THE SANDMAN*, what can I tell you that you don't already know, deep in the secret corners of your heart? You know this story is lovely and brilliant and sweet and strange. You know it is beautiful and deep and wry and wondrous. You know

If you've already read this book, you know nothing I can say is as good as what waits for you ahead.

So go. Stop reading this and go.

If you haven't read this book, and are, perhaps, standing in a bookstore or a comics shop, wondering if it's worth your time, what I can say to convince you? Should I wax rhapsodic? Get lyrical and grandiose? Reference some of the story's funnier jokes so I seem more clever than I really am?

No. I love this book too much. I don't want to spoil its secrets or steal its thunder.

So let me tell you the simple truth. No hyperbole. *THE SANDMAN* changed my life.

It's not often you get to say that and mean it. But it's true.

If that's not enough to convince you...I guess all that's left is for me to tell you a story or two. Because that's what I do.

Stories are important, after all...

I came to comics late in life. I can't tell you why. I was a voracious reader as a kid, going through pretty much

every picture book in the local library until I finally started chapter books around age nine. Then I read a novel or two a day until I finished high school.

Even as I slouched through college, comics simply weren't on my radar. Didn't occur to me to read them. Didn't occur to me that they might be worth reading. I had a couple thousand fantasy and sci-fi novels under my belt, and my classes were exposing me to Shakespeare and Chaucer, Sanskrit theater and the Harlem Renaissance poets. I read Roethke and Frost and Brooks and Baldwin.

But comics? That was like...Garfield, right? And superheroes? I didn't spare any thought for them, and when I did, I assumed they were (and I'm ashamed to write this now) silly bullshit for kids.

I was well into my twenties when, at a weekend-long party, I sat down in a quiet corner and idly picked up a copy of *THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS*. I read the whole thing straight through, completely lost in it, deaf to the riot and welter around me.

Hours later I hunted down the person who had brought the book. I shook it at them, angry and incredulous, demanding: "Is it all as good as this?"

"Oh, no," he said sadly. "But some of it is close."

First he gave me *WATCHMEN*, and it floored me despite the fact that I didn't know superhero mythology from a hole in the ground.

Next came *THE SANDMAN*. And it was unlike any story I'd ever read. In any genre. In any medium. I remember thinking, "Can you do this? Can you have

Odin and angels and faeries and witches and...just everything? All at once? In the same story? Is this allowed?"

It lit me up inside. I wouldn't shut up about it. I'd give it to people and say, "You have to read this! It's like Shakespeare!"

I blush a little now, remembering that. It's not the best comparison. It's just that back then, Shakespeare was the best thing I'd ever read.

The truth is, Shakespeare wishes he wrote something this good.

But let's back up a bit. I'd prefer to be fully honest here. I didn't feel that way about *SANDMAN* immediately. Not right out of the gate.

I read this first graphic novel and liked it well enough. *PRELUDES & NOCTURNES* is lovely. It introduces the world, the characters, there's a nice little plot. Tension. Mystery. Hero's journey. Mythic underpinning. Descent to the underworld. Vengeance. Recovery of self. Got my RDA of all manner of awesome here. Cool.

Then I kept reading, and the storytelling got looser. But I was still happy. Shakespeare shows up. I dig that. And there's faerie tales. And...What? Are we in Africa now? Wait, is someone telling a story about a story inside a story? Okay. That's cool. I guess this series is more like a bunch of different stories? But they're all interesting, so who really cares if they don't really have much to do with one another...

Then I kept reading, and there was a little plotline. And a new character or two. And...and...hold on. Wait. Does all this fit together? Has it all fit together from the beginning?

Has everything been leading to an ending?
Oh. Oh lord. I never knew a story could be like this.

I reread this series in grad school, and it comforted me at a time when I desperately needed comfort. The next semester I used a section of it during the single, brief, shining semester I got to teach ancient literature.

THE SANDMAN changed the way that I thought about stories. It taught me that a plot can be gentle and meandering without being broken. It showed me the delight of a wandering way, of the seemingly innocuous stray detail. It showed me the power of melancholy. It showed me that a story about stories is not just possible, but appealing.

THE SANDMAN broadened my horizons. There were gay characters. Trans characters. Queer characters. And for the most part, it really wasn't that big a deal for the people in the story. Nobody really seemed to care that much. For a small-town boy from Wisconsin in the '90s, that was important. I didn't have much of that in my life, and I was a better person for being exposed to it.

About four years ago I reread the series again and was surprised at how much I had remembered and forgotten. It made me cry. It always makes me cry, though not when anything tragic happens, and never because I am sad.

I've played the oldest game with my children (from issue #4): if I come to them and say, "I am a wolf, strong-jawed, fierce hunter," they will easily counter with something like, "I am a snake, poison-biting." They are naturals at it, though their tactics are occasionally unorthodox, as my elder son (age eight) likes to become a giant squid, and my younger (four) insists that he can have rocket boots.

I have bought, at my best count, nine complete copies of the series, most of them as gifts. Some because I could not bear to go without reading the story again. And a few simply because they were beautiful...

I reread the series again, just now, before writing this introduction. And the story unfolded inside me like a flower. I know so much more about comics than I did 20 years ago, and I marvel at the craft displayed on these pages. There is so much story, so easy, so clear, so clean, so wonderful...

And I read these stories, and I cry, and I cannot for the life of me tell you why...

What you're holding here is something special. *THE SANDMAN* is, in my opinion, the finest comic book ever written.

If you've read it before, welcome back. Welcome home. Trust me when I say that there are still surprises here for you to find.

If you're here for the first time...? Oh, sweet human child, come play. I envy your first steps along this winding way. One piece of advice: do stray. Taste the fruit. Oh, trust me. Stay.

—Patrick Rothfuss

July 2018

FOREWORD

SANDMAN never lived up to my initial expectations. If it had, it wouldn't be the benchmark series it is today. Instead, it turned into something I never imagined: one of the best comics works ever produced.

Now, don't get me wrong. It's not that I didn't think the series had potential. The initial proposal is long gone, but my hazy memory recalls interesting characters, an intriguing, imaginative atmosphere and some hints at future storylines. It was evident that Neil Gaiman was a good "Idea man," but whether he could execute those concepts was another story.

Back in 1987, Neil was a new writer to comics who had submitted a short SWAMP THING story to me a couple of years earlier. Journalism was his background and, like a good reporter, he hounded me every few months about that Swamp Thing tale. It wasn't until we first met in London during my first scouting mission for British talent that I realized that this was the same persistent but polite British guy who'd been bugging me all this time. It was at that meeting that Neil pitched the BLACK ORCHID miniseries, a SANDMAN series and a series featuring John Constantine, among a host of others. The Sandman was already spoken for in the Justice Society of America, and Constantine was on his way to being developed by Jamie Delano. It was decided that BLACK ORCHID made the most sense for us to see a proper proposal. Soon after we accepted Neil's final proposal, he and the silent, young and formidably talented Dave McKean began work.

BLACK ORCHID was the second comics work that Neil had done. Like his first work, *Violent Cases*, it was technically solid but maybe, in a way, too precise. The craft was there, but there was a distance to Neil's writing that kept me from getting emotionally involved with the characters. However, there was enough of a spark in his work that we wanted to see if it would ignite with another project. That project would turn out to be a new Sandman series starring an entirely new character.



I've edited many start-up titles in my time, and *THE SANDMAN*, like most others, went through its share of birth and growth pains. In rereading the first storyline of the series, I was struck by a dichotomy. On the one hand, the first seven issues were a simple quest tale about the once-captive ruler of the dreamworld, featuring known DC characters and their haunts in known roles. Revenge, battle, quest fulfilled. Conventional stuff? Perhaps. On the other hand, the opening story also introduced a mysterious and powerful yet harebrained bunch of occultists and hangers-on, a bizarre "sleeping sickness" that affected seemingly random people—in an ambitious tale that took these characters through several decades of strange and tumultuous changes. Conventional stuff? Not at all. Still, in the hands of a different writer, the seeds that were planted in this fertile story ground could have borne a B-level fantasy/horror title.

As the series branched out in unexpected directions, *THE SANDMAN* developed into one of the most atypical books in comics. For me, the turning point was issue #8, "The Sound of Her Wings." It wasn't just the appearance of the adorable and ultimately pragmatic Death trying to cheer up her morose younger brother. Nor was it the fact that the too-familiar faces of DC characters were nowhere in sight. It was the element of humanity and interpersonal relationships that started coming through in Neil's work. Ironically enough, the catalyst for this emotional resonance was a character that traditionally represents the antithesis of all this.

The artists on *PRELUDES & NOCTURNES*—Sam Kieth, Mike Dringenberg and Malcolm Jones III—provided the right atmosphere for Morpheus' haunting origin story. Like Neil, they were relatively new to comics and were evolving their own distinctive styles. Sam did wonderful portrayals of Cain and Abel, and his visceral renditions of Hell and its gruesome inhabitants were truly horrifying. Mike, most notably, created the perky goth visual for Death, and his interpretation of Morpheus is probably one of the best ever done. Malcolm's illustrative line work brought a cohesive and definitive look to the overall series.

The covers for this first storyline (and all future ones) were illustrated, constructed and assembled by Dave McKean. An extraordinarily gifted artist at the ripe old age of 22, Dave was fresh out of art school when he worked on *BLACK ORCHID*. He's been most innovative on the *SANDMAN* covers, experimenting in different

styles and techniques since the early portrait covers, complete with odd artifacts tucked away in the frames. Conceptually, Dave has been breaking with convention from the start. I still vividly remember his talking me into the idea of not having Sandman on every cover. (Believe me, it was a big deal back then.)

This first volume of the *SANDMAN* series is very much a work in progress; that of a talented writer who eventually honed and refined his skills and progressively developed his initial concept—a series about dreams: personal, nocturnal and imaginary—and expanded it in ways that produced some classically modern and unforgettable stories.

Those stories to come—collected in *THE DOLL'S HOUSE*, *SEASON OF MISTS*, *A GAME OF YOU*, *FABLES AND REFLECTIONS*, *BRIEF LIVES*, *WORLDS' END*, *THE KINDLY ONES* and *THE WAKE*—represent a wealth of narrative riches. There are the many tales that revolve around Morpheus—his dysfunctional pantheonic family the Endless, his lovers, his enemies, his kingdom and his personal and far-reaching conflicts—though there are also a great number of tales where the Sandman is featured as a cameo player, or even sometimes not at all. It is in these stories (some of my favorites: "Soft Places," "Ramadan," "A Tale of Two Cities" and "Cerements"), where Neil's love of mythology, historical figures and classical literature is woven into his own personal dream lore.

Like the landmark series before it—*THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS*, *WATCHMEN* and *V FOR VENDETTA*—*THE SANDMAN*'s appeal has transcended the traditional comic market. And there's good reason for that. Ultimately, Neil Gaiman loves to tell stories, and the stories he tells are timeless, resonant and universal. His work on *THE SANDMAN* appeals to people from different walks of life, attracting a constellation of readers who normally don't inhabit the same literary orbit. *THE SANDMAN* also has a disproportionate number of women who read the series, probably the most of any mainstream comic. In a medium that is still widely occupied by males, that in itself is a major achievement.

THE SANDMAN's popularity and success helped me to make an argument for forming a new imprint in 1992. I'd wanted to create a separate line of comics that would provide a place for the provocative and personal visions of comics' best talent. *THE SANDMAN*, along with a number of other highly regarded titles, formed the core of DC's newly formed Vertigo imprint. *THE SANDMAN*'s draw and reach both inside and outside



of the comics market played an integral part in Vertigo's positioning and image.

I knew early on that Neil had an ending for *THE SANDMAN* in sight, and as much as I would've loved for him to stay on indefinitely, it makes the only sense in the world to have a writer complete his work and see it through to its end, especially on a book that has achieved what it has. In the six years since its publication, *THE SANDMAN* has won more industry awards than any other comics series. It can also claim to its credit a World Fantasy Award for best short story ("A Midsummer Night's Dream") and an impressive list of quotes and introductions that includes Norman Mailer, Stephen King and Tori Amos.

Neil's strength at creating singular and compelling characters is no more evident than in the Endless, who have proved to be just as popular as the Dream King himself. Each of the Endless will have their story told, which Neil and Chris Bachalo began with *DEATH: THE HIGH COST OF LIVING* and continued in *DEATH: THE TIME OF YOUR LIFE*. Soon after the end of *THE SANDMAN*, its influence would be felt in *THE DREAMING*, a new monthly title that didn't feature Morpheus or his siblings but highlighted many of the supernatural and horror characters that Neil used in *THE SANDMAN*. Just as important, it left room for writers to explore and create new dreaming territory, denizens and dreamers alike.

It's been a poignant and strange feeling, writing this foreword to the first volume of the *SANDMAN* stories, now that the monthly series is winding down to its conclusion. It's interesting seeing the end of this complex and masterful epic saga while reexamining its more simple beginnings. Yet the foundation was strong in those early tales, firmly rooting the series and lining it with a potential that would sprout rich and fantastic worlds—a potential that took seed and blossomed into a phenomenon.

As I said in my opening, I never expected *THE SANDMAN* to become the landmark series that it has. But if there's anything to learn from one's expectations, it is that it's wonderful to be more than pleasantly surprised.

See you in your dreams.

—Karen Berger
Founder, Vertigo
January 1995



For Dave Dickson: oldest friend.

—Neil Gaiman

To my wife Kathy, my pal Tim, and to everyone in jail.

—Sam Kieth

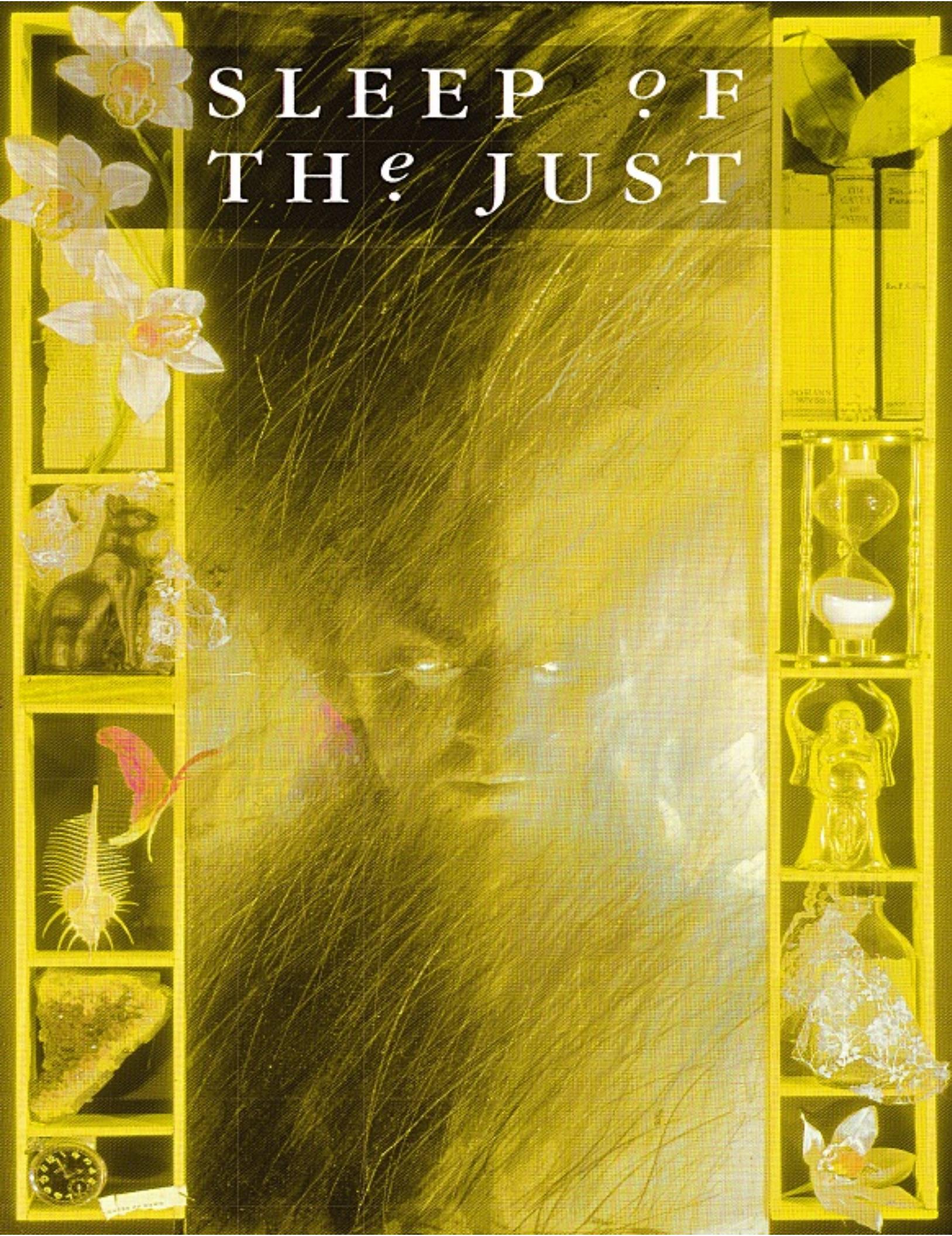
To friends and lovers. To Sam, Malcolm and Neil; may your talents never dim. You made working on this book an indescribable pleasure. To Karen, Tom and Art (without whom this book would not have been possible), thanks for the time and your super-human patience. Special thanks to Beth, Matte, Sigal, the incomparable Barbara Brandt (a.k.a. Victoria), Rachel, Sean F., Shawn S., Mimi, Gigi, Heather, Yann, Brantski, Mai Li, Bernie Wrightson (for Cain and Abel) and, as ever, to Cinnamon.

—Mike Dringenberg

To Little Malcolm.

—Malcolm Jones III

SLEEP ? F T H e J U S T







JUNE 10TH, 1916.

TORONTO, CANADA. ELLIE MARSTEN LISTENS TO HER BED TIME STORY.

...SAID TWEEDLEDUM,
"WHEN YOU'RE ONLY ONE OF
THE THINGS IN HIS DREAM."

SHE KNOWS IT IS ONLY
MEANT TO ENTERTAIN HER.

"YOU KNOW
VERY WELL YOU'RE
NOT REAL."

CAROUSEL
THE LOOKING
GLASS

IT TERRIFIES HER..

KINGSTON, JAMAICA.
IN HIS FATHER'S INN
DANIEL BLUSTAMONTE
SLEEPS. THE SHOUTS
AND SONGS OF
DRUNKEN ADULTS DO
NOT SHAKE HIS
SLUMBER.

HE DREAMS OF A CASTLE
IN THE AIR. ABOVE THE
BLUE MOUNTAINS.

A CASTLE MADE OF CLOUDS.

VERDUN, FRANCE. STEFAN WASSERMAN
GOES OVER THE TOP AGAIN TONIGHT.
AS SOON AS IT'S DARK, HE NEVER
DREAMED IT WOULD BE LIKE THIS.
NOBODY TOLD HIM.

HE LIED ABOUT HIS AGE
TO ENLIST. HE'S ALMOST 14.

LONDON, ENGLAND. UNITY KINKAID
TOSSES BETWEEN LINEN SHEETS.
SHE DREAMS OF A TALL, DARK
MAN. HIS EYES BURN LIKE TWIN
STARS IN HER HEAD.

SHE MUTTERS AND WHIMPERES;
LOST IN A WORLD BEYOND HER
UNDERSTANDING, UNITY DREAMS.

WYCH CROSS, ENGLAND.
RODERICK BURGESS'S
WAKING DREAMS ARE OF
THE POWER AND THE GLORY.

AND OF DEATH, OF COURSE.

ESPECIALLY DEATH.

IT'S MIDNIGHT.
IT'S TIME.



TIME. AH... NO
ONE HAS EVEN ATTEMPTED
WHAT WE WILL ACHIEVE
TONIGHT, ALEX. TO
SUMMON AND IMPRISON
DEATH...

THIS WILL BE
A TRIUMPH FOR
THE ORDER, EH,
ALEX?

YES,
FATHER.

FATHER?

...MAGUS

AFTER TONIGHT
I'D LIKE TO SEE ALEISTER
AND HIS FRIENDS TRY
TO MAKE FUN OF ME!

THEY WILL
MAKE NO MORE
JOKES, ALEX, WHEN
DEATH IS AT MY
COMMAND...

AND I HAVE THE
MAGDALENE GRIMOIRE.
POOR PROFESSOR
HATHAWAY... EVEN IF WE
FAIL TONIGHT, MY SON,
HATHAWAY GAVE
US THE BOOK.

HE'LL BE IN OUR
SWAY FOREVER. THE
ROYAL MUSEUM WILL BE
OURS TO PLUNDER.

POOR
OLD FOOL...

EVERYTHING IS READY
FOR THE CEREMONY,
MAGUS.

GOOD.

TO YOUR
PLACES,
THEN...

LET US
BEGIN.

I GIVE YOU
COIN I MADE FROM
A STONE.

I GIVE YOU
A SONG I STOLE
FROM THE
DIRT.

I GIVE YOU A CLAW I
RIPPED FROM A RAT. I GIVE
YOU A NAME, AND THE NAME
IS LOST. I GIVE YOU THE
BLOOD...

...FROM OUT
OF MY VEIN, AND A
FEATHER I PULLED
FROM AN ANGEL'S
WING.

I GIVE YOU A KNIFE
FROM UNDER THE HILLS. AND
A STICK THAT I STUCK THROUGH
A DEAD MAN'S EYE.

THE WORDS OF THE SPELL
TOLL INSIDE HIS HEAD.
BURGESS REALIZES THAT
HE COULDN'T STOP NOW.
NOT EVEN IF HE WANTED
TO...

I CALL YOU
WITH NAMES,
OH MY LORD,
OH MY LORD.

I SUMMON
WITH POISON AND
SUMMON WITH PAIN.
I OPEN THE WAY
AND I OPEN THE
GATES.

COME.
COME.
COME.
COME.
COME.

I SUMMON YOU IN THE NAMES
OF THE OLD LORDS,

NAMTAR. ALLATU.
MORAX. NABERILUS.
KLESH. VEVAR.
MAYMON.

WE SUMMON.

COME.
COME.
COME.
COME.
COME.
COME.

ASHEMA-DEVA
CALLS YOU.
MABORYM
CALLS YOU.
HORVENDILE
CALLS YOU.

"FROM THE DARK THEY CALL YOU... INTO
THE DARK THEY CALL YOU."



COIN AND
SONG, KNIFE
AND STICK...

"CLAW AND NAME,
BLOOD AND FEATHER."

HERE IN THE
DARKNESS...

"HERE IN THE
DARKNESS..."

HERE IN THE
DARKNESS...

HERE IN THE
DARKNESS...

"WE SUMMON YOU,
TOGETHER."

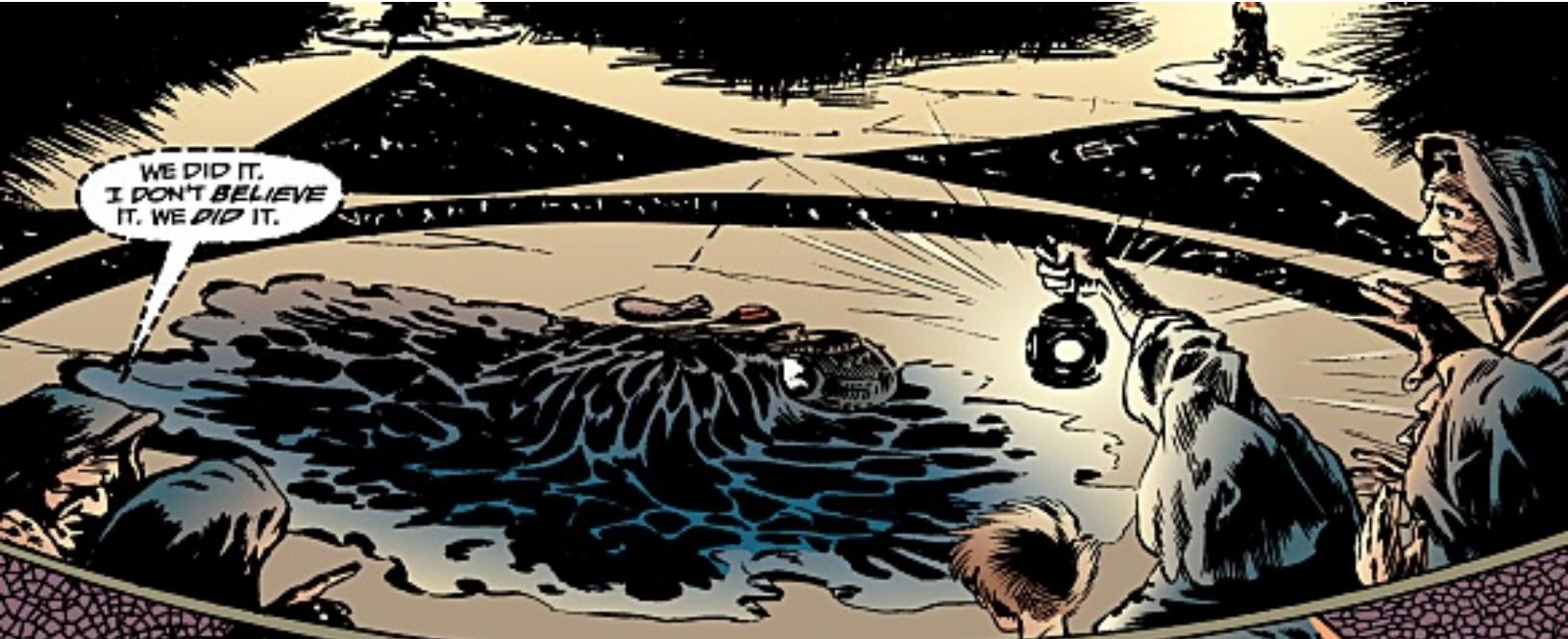
HERE IN THE
DARKNESS...

"COME!"



NEIL GAIMAN
STORY
SAM KIETH &
MIKE
DRINGENBERG
ARTISTS
TODD KLEIN
LETTERS
DANIEL VOZZO
COLORS
ART YOUNG
ASST. EDITOR
KAREN BERGER
EDITOR

WE DID IT.
I DON'T BELIEVE
IT. WE DID IT.



NO. WE
FAILED.

THIS ISN'T DEATH.
DAMN IT TO HELL.



...I THINK -- AT THE END OF THE
DAY-- THIS WILL HAVE BEEN A VERY
PROFITABLE EVENING'S WORK."



HER FATHER CARRIED
HER TO HER BED.



STEFAN'S CASE IS NEW
TO THE DOCTORS. THEY
THOUGHT THEY'D SEEN
EVERY FORM OF SHELL-
SHOCK.



IT'S SAD.
STEFAN WASSERMAN WENT
OVER THE TOP.

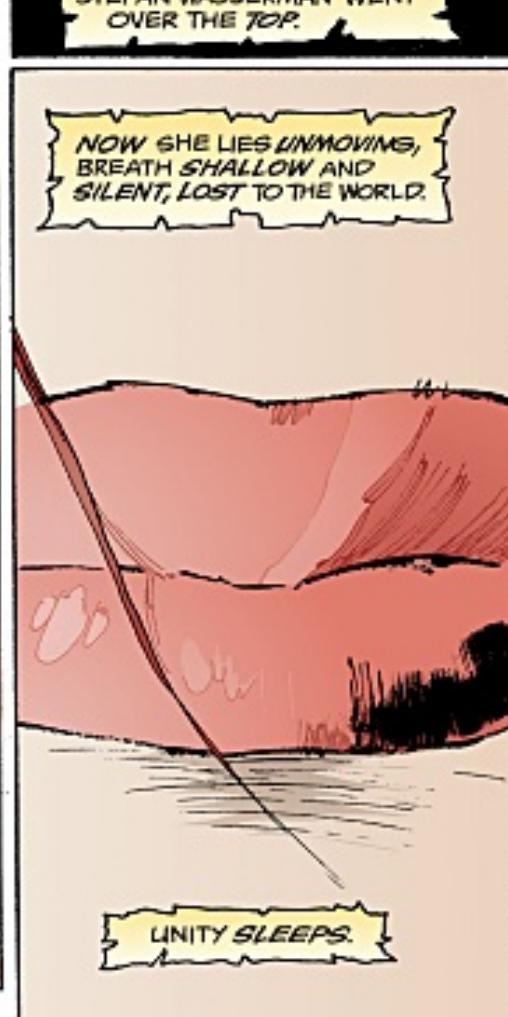


SHE NOW SLEEPS FOR ALMOST
TWENTY HOURS A DAY.



HOW LONG CAN A BOY GO
WITHOUT SLEEPING? WHEN
DO THE NIGHTMARES SNEAK
OUT INTO THE DAYLIGHT?

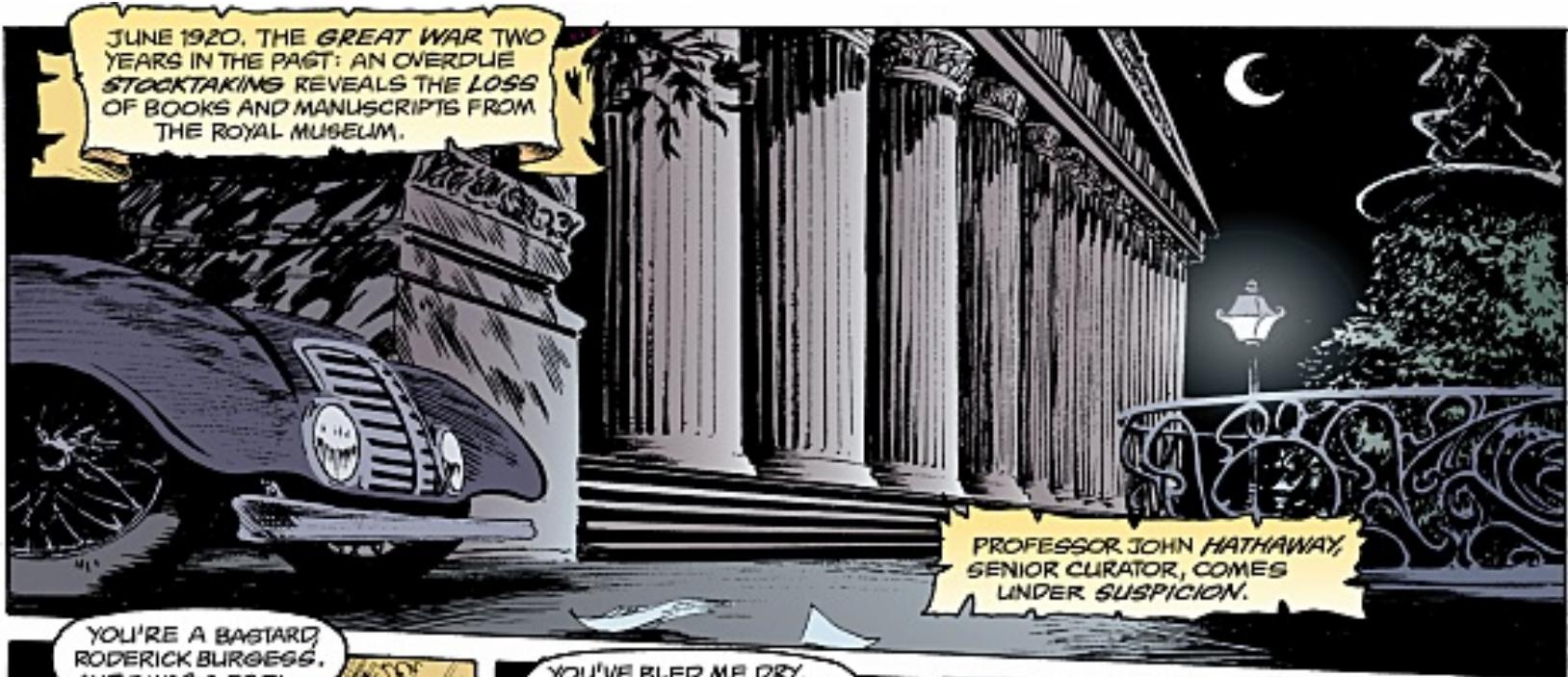
SHE USED TO DREAM; TO
SHIFT IN HER SLEEP,
MUTTERING AND SIGHING,
LOCKED IN HALF-REMEMBERED
FANTASIES...



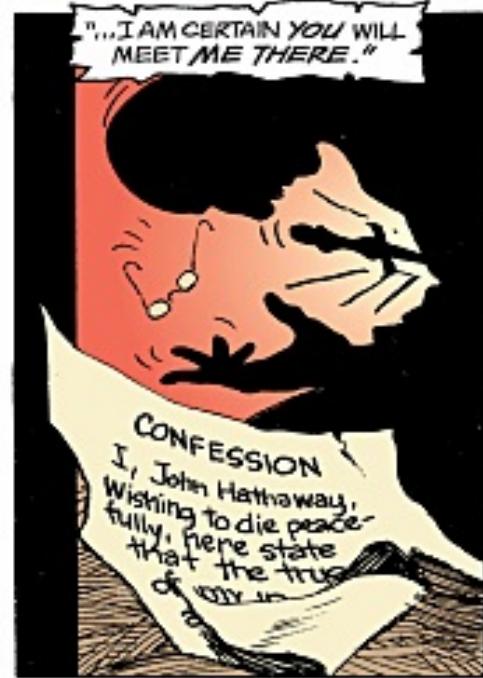
UNITY SLEEPS.



JUNE 1920. THE GREAT WAR TWO YEARS IN THE PAST: AN OVERDUE STOCKTAKING REVEALS THE LOSS OF BOOKS AND MANUSCRIPTS FROM THE ROYAL MUSEUM.



PROFESSOR JOHN HATHAWAY,
SENIOR CURATOR, COMES
UNDER SUSPICION.



PROFESSOR HATHAWAY'S USE OF A MUSEUM ARTIFACT IN HIS SUICIDE CONFIRMED SPECULATION THAT HE WAS MENTALLY UNBALANCED.

NO SUICIDE NOTE WAS FOUND.

CURATOR'S MYSTERY SUICIDE POLICE BAFFLED

KENSINGTON CH.
ALDWYCH

THE PUMP HO...

DEWE'S

SOUTHERN
LONDON WHITE

1

B2271

AT THE INQUEST, ACCUSATIONS WERE MADE LINKING HATHAWAY TO RODERICK BURGESS -- "THE LORD MAGUS" -- AND HIS ORDER OF ANCIENT MYSTERIES.

NOTHING COULD BE PROVEN.

THE SELF-STYLED "DAEMON KING" REFUSED TO COMMENT.

THE DAILY MAIL

SCANDAL ROCKS OCCULT COMMUNITY
"DAEMON KING" CLEARED
DUE TO LACK OF EVIDENCE

The figure who was alleged to be at the centre of the scandal involving the bizarre suicide of museum curator John Hathaway is Roderick Burgess, born Morris Burgess in Wrocklesby in Preston, Lancashire in 1872. During the turn of the century, Mr. Burgess used his considerable inherited industrial wealth to set up his mystical organisation, The Order of Ancient Mysteries, based in "Fowey Row," a Sussex Movie House.

In 1916 Mr. Burgess announced waters in Bath, proving himself as the greatest magician of his day. Whatever the truth of what occurred in Wych Cross in 1916—and it is doubtful anyone will ever know for sure—no one is certain it was a significant turning point for Burgess and his Order of Ancient Mysteries. Mr. Burgess' efforts to win converts in the early years of the century were, by the late 1920s, by the cube



TRAGEDIES OF SLEEPY SICKNESS

WRAPPED MINDS AND BROKEN BODIES

Since The Daily Mail published the story of Mr. F. W. More, of Manchester, who died of his daughter's

THE "SLEEPY SICKNESS", AS IT WAS CALLED, CONTINUED TO SPREAD. PEOPLE FELL ASLEEP, AND DID NOT WAKE UP...

THEY LIVED THEIR LIVES LIKE SLEEPWALKERS; EATING IF FED, SOMETIMES TALKING NONSENSE, DREAM-STUFF...

PSYCHIC RESIDUE FROM THE WORLD WAR, SOME SUSPECTED. OTHERS, DOCTORS AND SCIENTISTS, MORE SENSIBLY ATTRIBUTED IT TO A VIRUS.

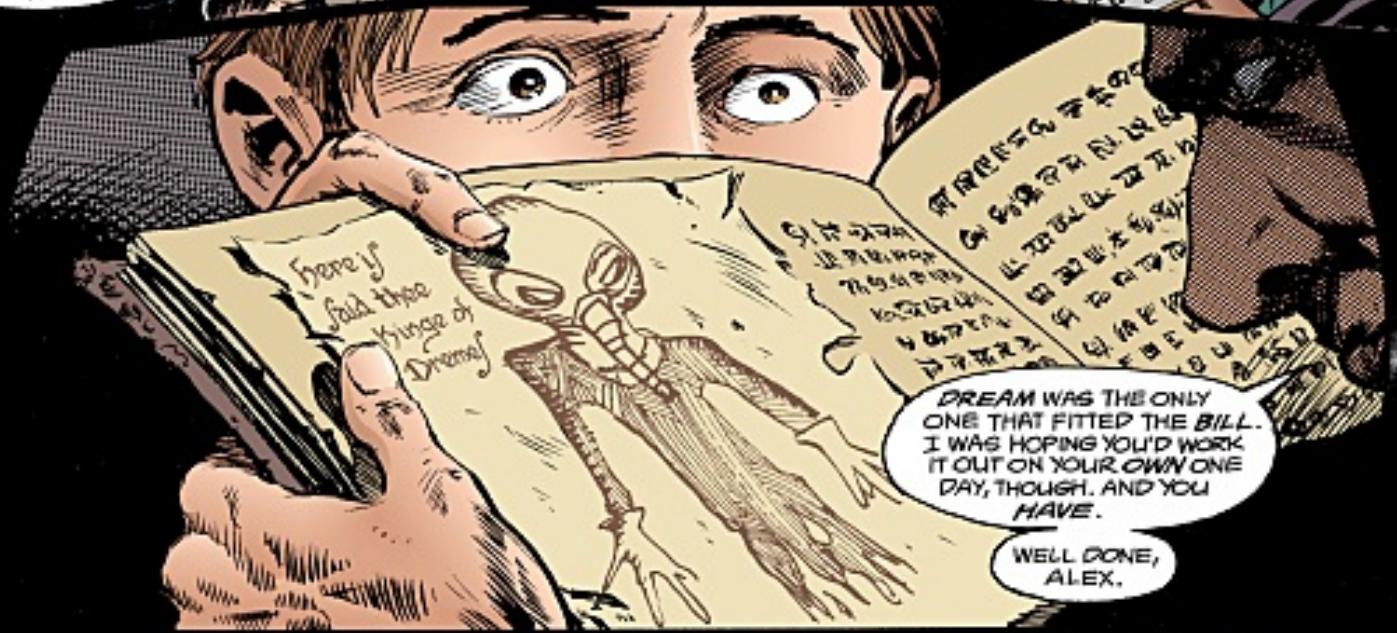
UNABLE TO SLEEP, STEFAN WASSERMAN KILLED HIMSELF A YEAR AFTER HIS DISCHARGE FROM THE ARMY.

STEFAN WASSERMAN 1902-1918

HE WAS SIXTEEN.

AUGUST,
1926.

BUGGER AND
BLAST HIM!



NOVEMBER,
1930.

A SCHISM BRINGS
CHAOS TO THE ORDER.

RUTHVEN GYKES, SECOND-IN-
COMMAND OF THE ORDER OF
ANCIENT MYSTERIES, DISAPPEARS...

...IN COMPANY WITH ETHEL CRIPPS,
THE MAGLIS'S MISTRESS

THEY TAKE WITH THEM MANY OF
THE ORDER'S TREASURES, AND
OVER £200,000 IN CASH.

MAGICAL WAR IS DECLARED.

SAN FRANCISCO.
DECEMBER, 1930.

I BEG
PROTECTION,
LORD.

PERHAPS
THIS HELMET
SIRE?

THISSS AMULET WILL
MAKES SSAFE FROM
ANYESZINGGGGS...

PROTECTIONS COMES
DEAR, MORTAL. THE
THINGSZ YOU OFFERS
ISSS PALTRY TRIFLES...

HAVE YOU
NOZZING
ELLSSE...?

AAAHH, YESSSSSSSS.
FOR THISSS I WOULD
GIVE YOU WHAT YOU
AKS... SSSZO SPLENDID...

WYCH CROSS, ENGLAND.

AS THIS BLOOD IS SHED,
SO SPILLS YOUR BLOOD,
RUTHVEN SYKES, ADEPT
OF THE 33RD, WHOSE SECRET
NAME IS ARARITA...

TRAITOR AND
OATH-BREAKER.

PURRRRR



JULY 1939. ELLIE MARSTEN IS IN A CHARITY WARD. SHE'S STILL ASLEEP. SHE HAS WOKEN TWICE IN THE LAST DECADE...

EACH TIME SHE CRIED FOR HER MOTHER, SHE STILL THINKS SHE IS EIGHT.

DANIEL BUSTAMONTE WAS ONE OF THE LAST PEOPLE TO SUCCLUMB TO SLEEPY SICKNESS, END OF 1926. HE'S NOW BEEN ASLEEP FOR THIRTEEN YEARS.

UNITY KINKAID WAS RAPED SEVEN YEARS AGO. SHE GAVE BIRTH TO A BABY GIRL.

THE SCANDAL WAS HUSHED UP.

HIS WIFE AND CHILDREN MISS HIM.

THE BABY WAS ADOPTED. UNITY NEVER KNEW. SHE'D SLEPT THROUGH THE WHOLE THING.

HE PUTS EVIL PEOPLE TO SLEEP WITH GAS, THEN SPRINKLES SAND ON THEM, LEAVES THEM FOR THE POLICE TO FIND IN THE MORNING...

HE DOESN'T DREAM ABOUT THE MAN IN THE STRANGE HELMET ANYMORE. NO MORE BURNING EYES.

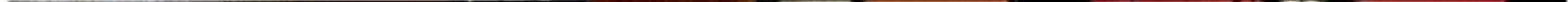
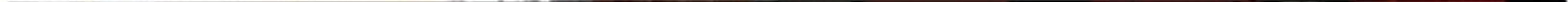
EVERYTHING'S ALL RIGHT.

THE IDEA CAME TO HIM IN HIS SLEEP.

THE UNIVERSE KNOWS SOMEONE IS MISSING, AND SLOWLY IT ATTEMPTS TO REPLACE HIM.

WESLEY DODDS'S NIGHTMARES HAVE STOPPED SINCE HE STARTED GOING OUT AT NIGHT.

WESLEY DODDS SLEEPS THE SLEEP OF THE JUST.



1955.

FREDERICK BORGES
1893-1947
NOT DEAD,
ONLY SLEEPING

ELLIE MARSTEN IS DIAGNOSED AS SUFFERING FROM ENCEPHALITIS LETHARGICA. SHE NOW WAKES FOUR OR FIVE TIMES A YEAR...

DANIEL BLISTAMONTE IS AWAKE MUCH OF THE TIME. HE DOESN'T SPEAK, THOUGH.

THE SUPERSTITIOUS SAY HE IS ZOMBIE, A WALKING DEAD MAN.

SHE WANTS SOMEONE TO READ HER A STORY.

WHEN HER PARENTS DIED, THE FAMILY EXECUTORS HAD LUNITY KINKAID PUT INTO A NURSING HOME.

IF HE SPOKE HE MIGHT AGREE WITH THEM. SOMETHING DIED INSIDE HIM A LONG TIME AGO.

THEY HAVE TO EXPLAIN WHERE SHE IS TO HER EVERY TIME SHE WAKES. SHE NEVER REMEMBERS...

AROUND HER THE ELDERLY WAIT FOR DEATH, AS THEY'D WAIT FOR AN OLD FRIEND.

A CASTLE MADE OF CLOUDS.

KILLING TIME.

"ALEX, DARLING, I STILL
DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY
YOU KEEP HIM DOWN THERE..."

"WHAT ELSE CAN I DO?"

BUT WHAT IF THE
POLICE FOUND OUT?
IT'S KIDNAPPING!

DON'T BE FOOLISH,
PAUL. I'VE TOLD YOU...

HE'S BEEN DOWN
THERE FOR FORTY YEARS,
WITHOUT EATING,
WITHOUT...SLEEPING.

I DON'T
THINK HE CAN
EVEN BREATHE
IN THAT GLASS
CASE.

HE'S A BEING OF
LINKABLE POWER.
SO WHAT DO I DO?

SAY, "SORRY-- IT WAS ALL
FATHER'S FAULT. LOOK ME
UP THE NEXT TIME YOU'RE
INCARCERATED ON THE
PHYSICAL PLANE"?

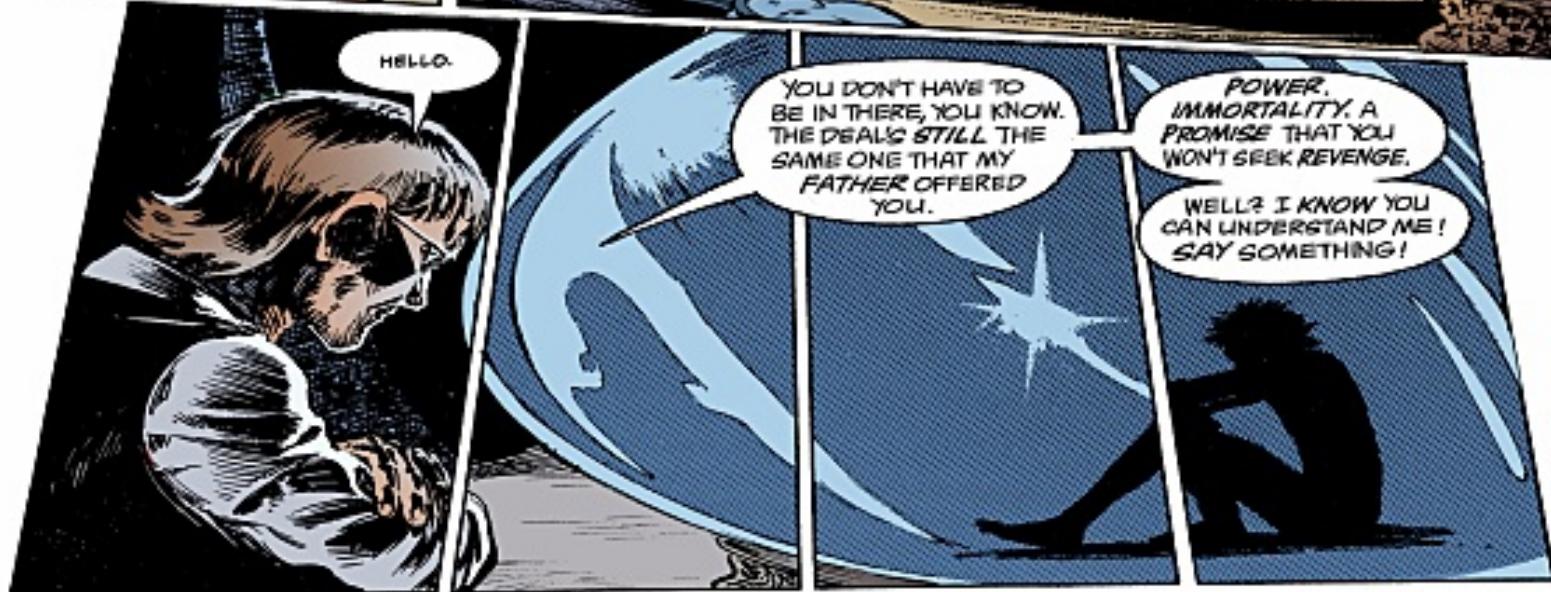
IF YOU SAY SO. YOU'VE BEEN
AROUND A LOT LONGER THAN I
HAVE. FANCY A GAME OF
TENNIS?

THE ORDER ISN'T
JUST A WAY TO MAKE MONEY
AND GET LAID, PAUL. SOME
OF IT'S FOR REAL.

I'VE SEEN STUFF
YOU'D NEVER BELIEVE. THINGS
THAT STILL SCARE ME.
NIGHTMARE THINGS.

WE'RE SAFER JUST LEAVING
HIM DOWN THERE. I'LL BE DEAD
LONG BEFORE HE EVER GETS OUT.
IT'LL BE SOMEBODY ELSE'S PROBLEM.

"NOT NOW. SORRY.
I'M TOO TIRED."



1968. THEY COME TO HIM SEEKING ENLIGHTENMENT. ALEXANDER BURGESS TELLS THEM OF KUNDALINI YOGA, TANTRIC SEX, ASTRAL TRAVEL ...

NOTHING IMPORTANT.

HE FORBIDS THEM TO USE PSYCHEDELICS IN THE HOUSE, WORRIED THAT THE WAKING DREAMS COULD SOMEHOW EMPOWER HIS PRISONER.

MOVED TO A HOSPITAL SPECIALIZING IN ENCEPHALITIS CASES, ELLIE CONTINUES TO SLEEP. THERE ARE MANY THERE LIKE HER. PEOPLE FOR WHOM THE SANDS OF TIME STOPPED FLOWING, SOMETIME HALF A CENTURY EARLIER.

HE WON'T LET THEM CALL HIM "MAGUS" TO HIS FACE. IT'S ALEX. ALWAYS ALEX.

THE NURSING HOME STAFF PRETEND THAT UNITY IS AWAKE. THEY WHEEL HER FROM ROOM TO ROOM WITH THE OTHER PATIENTS.

ASLEEP, SHE WATCHES TELEVISION.

ASLEEP, SHE RELAXES IN THE SUN.

DANIEL SLEEPWALKS UNSPEAKING THROUGH HIS WORLD.

HE MOVES SLOWLY, LIKE A MAN WADING THROUGH QUICKSAND.

THERE ARE TWO GUARDS IN HIS ROOM AT ALL TIMES. COFFEE AND AMPHETAMINES ARE FREELY AVAILABLE. THE GUARDS NEVER SLEEP ON DUTY.

DO YOU WANT
TO GO HOME?
DO YOU WANT
TO GO HOME?

1970.

THE YOUNG PEOPLE
HAVE DRIFTED AWAY.

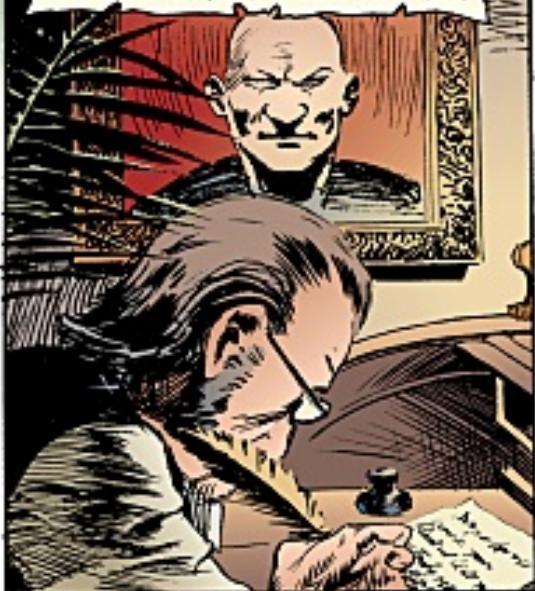
ALEX HANDS OVER THE REINS OF ORGANIZATION TO PAUL MCGUIRE, HIS LONGTIME PERSONAL ASSISTANT.



HE SEES THE ORDER OF ANCIENT MYSTERIES AS AN EFFICIENT METHOD OF PARTING THE CREDULOUS FROM THEIR CASH.

PAUL DOESN'T BELIEVE IN MAGIC.

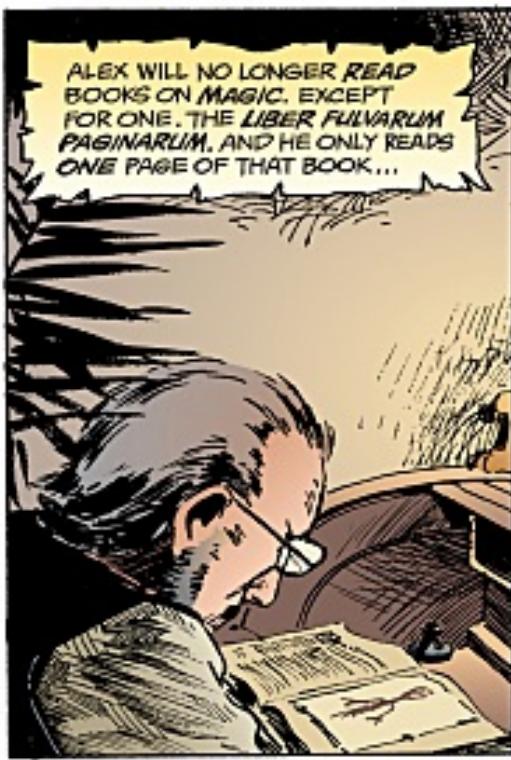
ALEX SPENDS MOST OF HIS TIME IN HIS STUDY. HE WROTE A MEMOIR ABOUT HIS FATHER; WRITES LETTERS TO NEWSPAPERS DEFENDING HIS FATHER'S REPUTATION; IS EDITING A VOLUME OF HIS FATHER'S LETTERS.



ONE NIGHT HE SLASHED HIS FATHER'S PORTRAIT WITH A KNIFE.

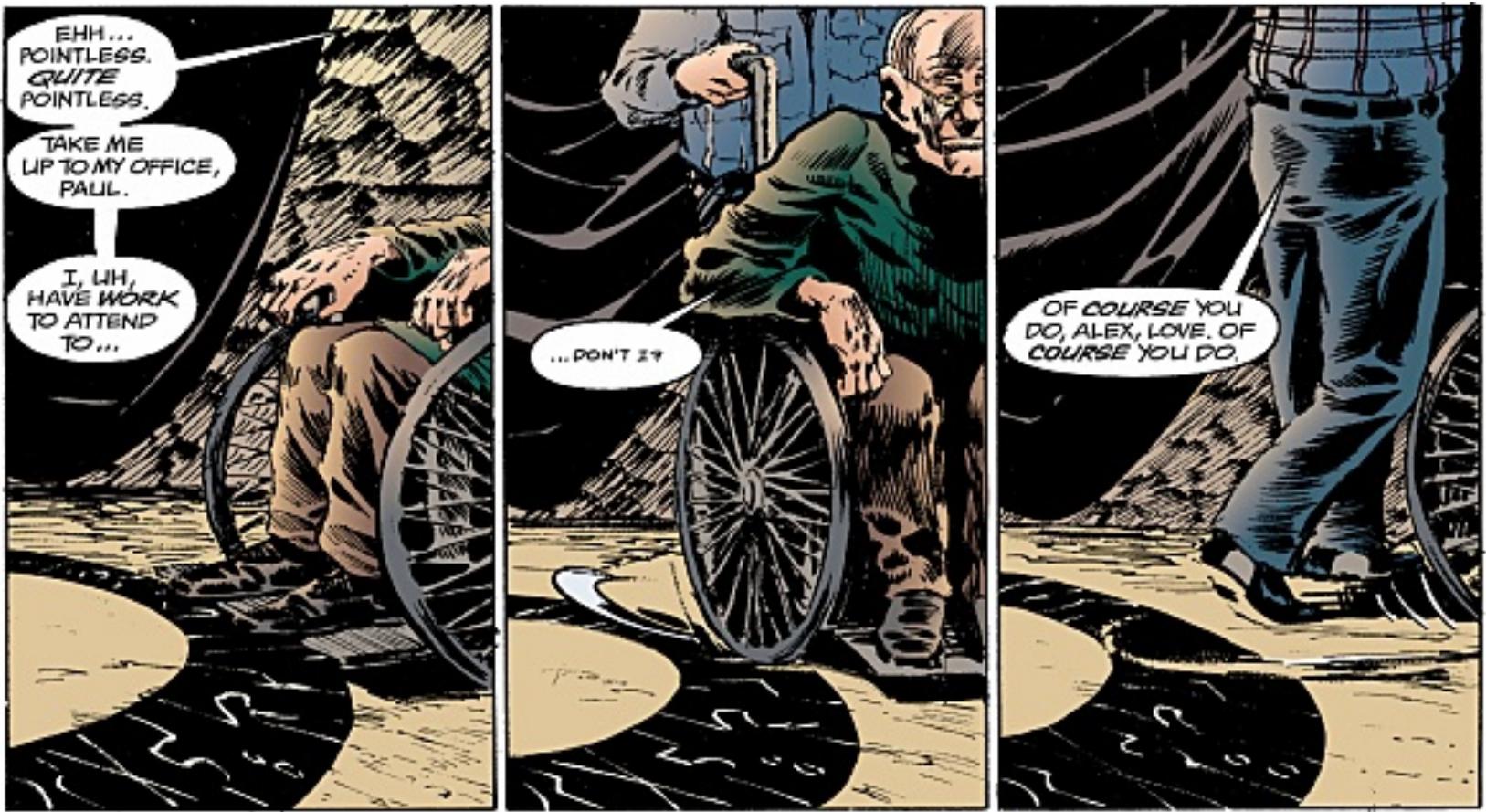


ALEX WILL NO LONGER READ BOOKS ON MAGIC, EXCEPT FOR ONE. THE *LIBER FILVARUM PAGINARUM*, AND HE ONLY READS ONE PAGE OF THAT BOOK...



AND OVER...





I DUNNO. I ONCE MET THIS BLONDE BUYING A CHOC ICE...

HE'S THINKING ABOUT HIS HOLIDAY...

AND THEN THE SPANISH BEACH BECOMES A TROPICAL PARADISE...

It begins.

ERNIE SEES ANY CONVERSATION AS AN INVITATION TO CONCOCT TALES ABOUT HIS SEXUAL PROWESS. FREDERICK NO LONGER LISTENS.

Straight out of a Holiday Brochure.

SUN... SEA...

...SAND...

...AND SURF...
...AND...
...AND...

THUD

--LH! CHRIST!
WHAT WAS THAT?

LOOK
AT HIM.

YOU DON'T
THINK HE'S
DEAD?

I DUNNO WHAT TO THINK.
WHAT THE HELL DO WE DO NOW?

THEY WON'T THINK IT'S OUR
FAULT, WILL THEY? WE DIDN'T
DO NOTHING!

WAIT HERE--I'LL
GET MCGUIRE!

DEAD. I BET
HE'S DEAD.

HOW LONG'S HE
BEEN LIKE THIS?

LINH. I SUPPOSE... I
SUPPOSE WE OUGHT TO
TAKE A LOOK AT HIM.

HE'S NEVER DONE
ANYTHING LIKE THIS
BEFORE...

HELL...





Home.

It feels so
good to be
back...

Weakened, I clutch
a passing dream...
First, food...

I left a monarch.
Yet I return
naked, alone...

Hungry.

IN MORT NOTKIN'S RECURRING
DREAM, HE GOES TO THIS
SWELL PARTY, BUT HE'S
DRESSED AS A CLOWN...

HE THOUGHT IT WAS
A COSTUME PARTY.

HE DIDN'T KNOW.

EVERYONE LAUGHS AT
HIM: MARILYN, ELVIS,
EVEN THE DUKE...

WEIRD! THAT'S THE FIRST TIME
A NAKED MAN HAS EVER TURNED
UP TO RAID THE BUFFET.

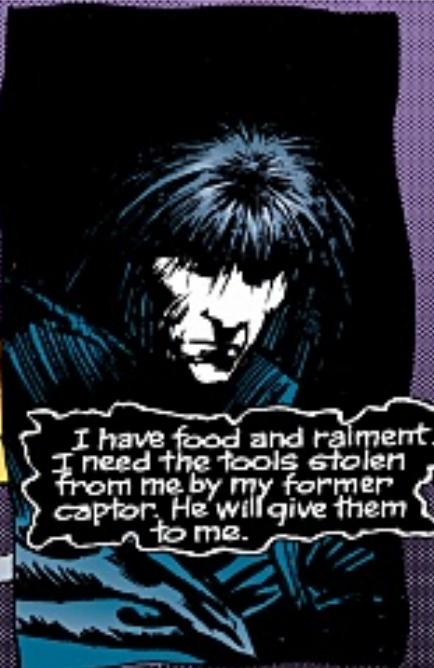
DREAMS, GO
FIGURE THEM.

My first food
in seventy years...
I'm so hungry I
don't even TASTE
it.

First, food;

then
clothing...

THEN RON AND NANCY TURN
UP, AND MORT'S BACK ON
FAMILIAR GROUND.



AND ALL OVER THE WORLD, THEY BEGAN TO WAKE UP.

"...WHY, YOU'RE ONLY A SORT OF THING IN HIS DREAM!"

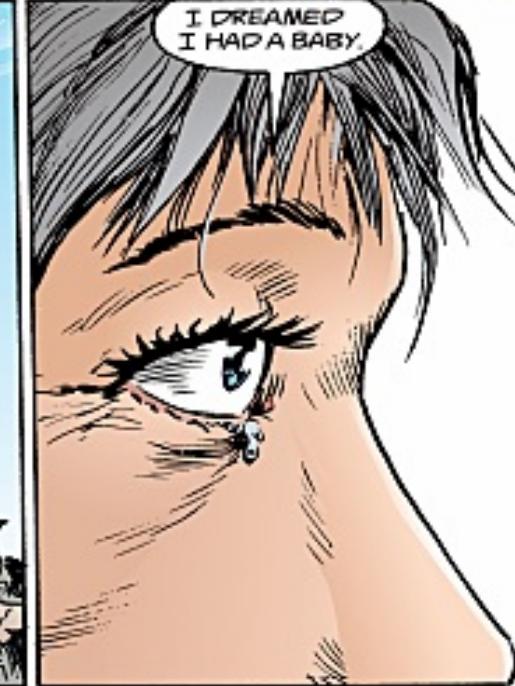
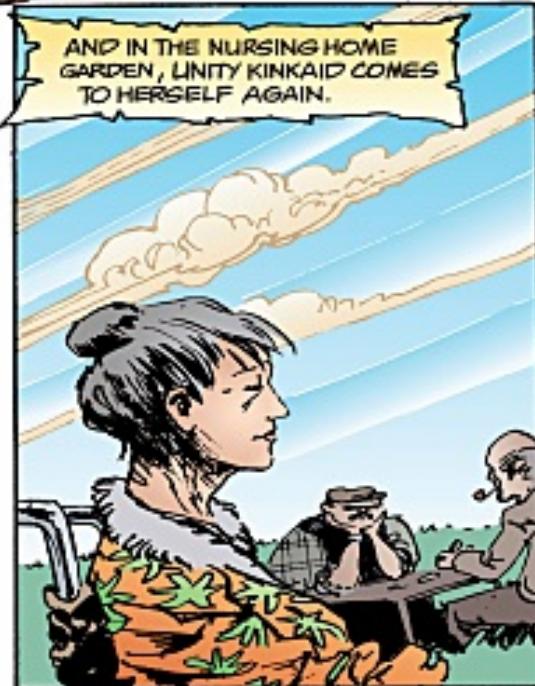
"IF THAT THERE KING WAS TO WAKE," ADDED TWEEPLEDUM, "YOU'D GO OUT..."

"BANG!"

"JUST LIKE A CANDLE!"

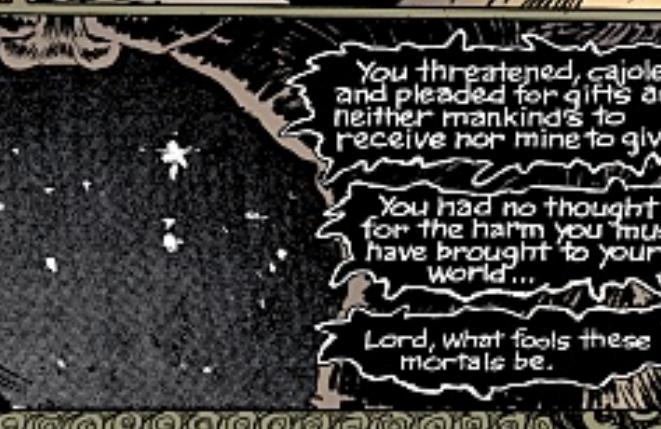
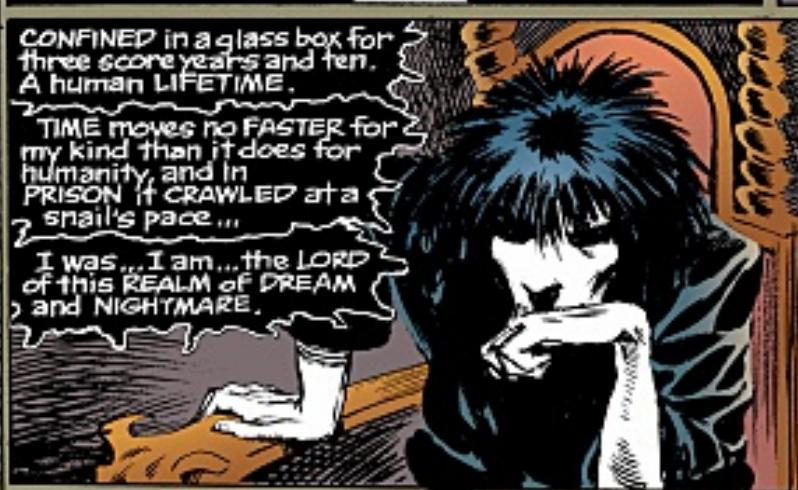


AND IN THE NURSING HOME GARDEN, LUNITY KINKAID COMES TO HERSELF AGAIN.











WE DIDN'T WANT YOU. IT WAS ALL A MISTAKE. WE WEREN'T TRYING TO CAPTURE YOU.

WE WANTED TO CAPTURE DEATH.

...that instead you snared Death's younger BROTHER...

You'll never know how LUCKY you were.

Where are my TOOLS?

...SORRY?

A POUCH, a HELM, a RUBY. Your people STOLE them from me. Where ARE they?

I DON'T KNOW... THAT WAS PART OF THE STUFF SYKES PINCHED, FIFTY YEARS AGO. WE NEVER SAW ANY OF IT AGAIN...

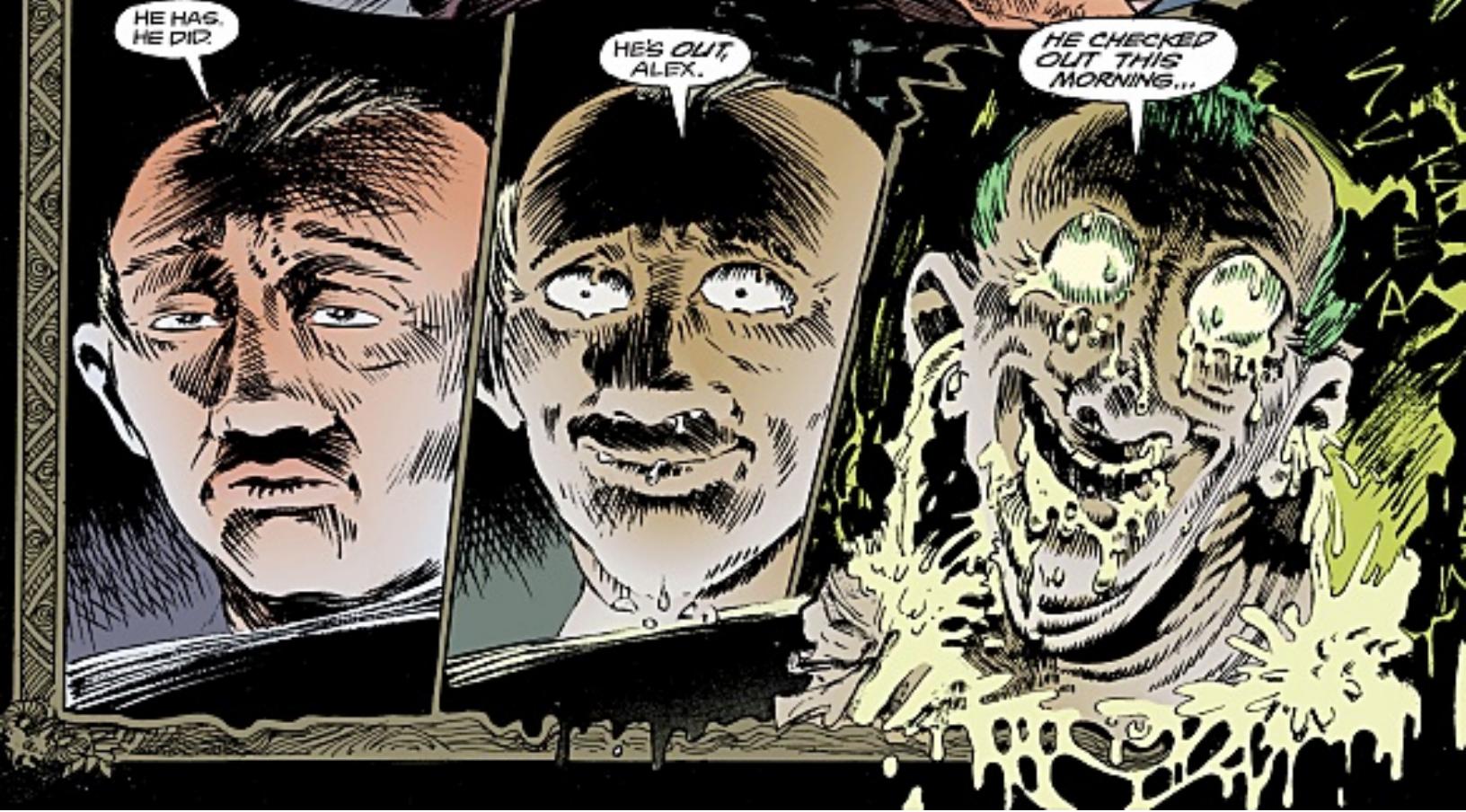
I SEE.

So. Your PUNISHMENT, then. I will grant you a GIFT...

To reward you for your years of HOSPITALITY.

I give you this...

ETERNAL WAKING.





KEEP
AWAY FROM
ME!

NOW, THEN, MISTER,
BURGESS. CALM DOWN. YOU'VE
HAD A BAD DREAM, THAT'S ALL.
NO POINT GETTING ALL WORKED
UP ABOUT IT.

GOD, OH GOD. IT WAS TER--
TERRIFYING. SO REAL. HA-HA HAVE
YOU EVER HAD ONE OF THOSE
DREAMS, YOU KNOW...

...WHERE YOU THINK
YOU'VE WOKEN UP, BUT YOU
HAVEN'T? IT'S JUST PART OF
THE NIGHTMARE AND YOU'RE
STILL IN IT...

I CAN'T SAY I HAVE,
DEAR, BUT YOU KNOW
WHAT?

BTHUMP!

...I THINK YOU'RE
GOING TO BE HAVING QUITE
A LOT OF THEM FROM
NOW ON.

HAWHA-HA-HA...

It was more tiring than I had expected. But he will never return to the life he knew.

His is the nightmare everlasting...

Eternal Waking...

HOW LONG HAS HE BEEN LIKE THIS?

HE'S ONLY BEEN ASLEEP A FEW MINUTES, IF THAT'S WHAT YOU MEAN. FUNNY--HE'S NORMALLY SUCH A LIGHT SLEEPER.

SHH... NO, NO... NO... PLEASE... UFF... SHH... TM...

And I have stoked him fear...

ALEX? ALEX, IT'S ME, PAUL. COME ON, ALEX. COME ON, OLD FELLOW.

ME AND NURSE EDMUND...

...WE'RE HERE. IT'S ALL RIGHT. SO WAKE UP.

PLEASE WAKE UP.

"PLEASE...?"



IMPERFECT HOSTS



DON'T BE A MORONIC LUMP OF BLUBBERING, QUAKING, PATHETIC LARD! OPEN THE BOX! UNWRAP IT!

UH, B-BUT IT ISN'T MY BIRTHDAY...

OF COURSE IT ISN'T YOUR BIRTHDAY, POWDERBRAIN! YOU DON'T HAVE A BIRTHDAY!

UHH... NO.
I, UH... DON'T,
DO I?

NOW, WHY WOULD I GIVE YOU AN EXPLODING PRESENT?

WHAT KIND OF A BROTHER WOULD I BE IF I DID THAT?

MY KIND OF B-BROTHER.

THE, UH, THE KIND WHO KILLS ME WHENEVER HE'S, UH... MAD AT ME, OR BORED, OR JUST IN A LOUSY M-MOOD.

HEHH. LET'S LET FRATERNAL BYGONES BE BYGONES, EH, PUDGY? NOW...

YOU, UH, P-PROMISE IT ISN'T GOING TO, HMM, EXPLODE? PROMISE?

JUST OPEN YOUR BLASTED PRESENT!

WHAT WAS THAT?

BDUNK THOK! THOK!

I, UH, I THINK IT'S SOMEONE AT THE DOOR. WELL, SOMETHING AT THE DOOR, ANYWAY...





IMPERFECT HOSTS

NEIL GAIMAN: WRITER
SAM KIETH: ARTISTS
MIKE DRINGENBERG
TODD KLEIN: LETTERER
DANIEL VOZZO: COLORIST
ART YOUNG: ASST. EDITOR
KAREN BERGER: EDITOR

I awake in the DARKNESS, too weak even to summon a LIGHT.

The air is musty, tired, OLD; it smells of lost dreams and rotten fabric.

Where AM I?

HELLO ?
M-MY LORD?

I'M ABEL, MY LORD, FROM THE , HMM, FIRST STORY. THE, ER, VICTIM.

...yes, I do remember you. I'm sorry. It's been SO LONG. Where are we?

THIS IS MY B-BROTHER'S HOUSE OF MYSTERY.

GREGORY, UHM -- THAT'S CAIN'S GARGOYLE -- HMM, HE BROUGHT YOU HERE. HE FOUND YOU IN THE, UH, SHIFTING ZONES.

Yes, I was on my way to the castle.

I-UH-I- UH-I'LL TELL CAIN YOU'RE AWAKE.

HE'S. UHMM, MADE YOU SOME FOOD.

I lay in the bed, feeling WEAKER than I have for eons.

REMEMBERING,

It was a DARK
and STORMY
NIGHTMARE...

Before my IMPRISONMENT,
I knew, the journey would
have meant NOTHING to me.

I WOULD NOT
even have
NEEDED to
TRAVEL.

BUT WEAKENED and
EXHAUSTED, I
stumbled through
the FRINGES of
the DREAMTIME...

The dream I
used to bind Burgess
in eternal waking used
up the last of my
strength...

And I
was far too
WEAK.

I do not know
how long I
remained there.

I had to reach the GATES
of HORN and IVORY... to
reach my castle...

But the way was HARD.

And then... I was here.

AHEM!

GOOD EVENING, YOUR HIGHNESS, PRINCE MORPHEUS...

I'VE MADE YOU SOME FOOD.

YOU ARE CAIN, AREN'T YOU?

OR I WAS.

THINGS HAVE BEEN STRANGE SINCE YOU'VE BEEN GONE.

WE'LL SOON HAVE YOU BACK ON YOUR FEET AGAIN.

THAT'S ME, YER WORSHIP, PURVEYOR OF PENNY DREADFULS, SHILLING SHOCKERS, BLOOD AND THUNDERS AND FUST-RATE NIGHTMARES.

Anything I CREATED?

ANYTHING OF YOURS...? I WOULDN'T THINK SO...NO... NO...

YES YOU DO! UHHH BOTH OF US DO. OUR LETTERS OF, HMM, COMMISSION. REMEMBER?

Fetch me these letters. Fetch me ANYTHING of mine.

YOU...BUTTON BURSTER! YOU LOW-DOWN, SPYING, PEEKING, PRYING, BUTTERFINGERED--

THEY, UH, THEY, UH, HAVE HIS SIGNATURE ON THEM. HE MUH-MADE THEM.

I, UH, HAVE M-MINE ON ME, SIRE. AND CAIN HAS HIS, TOO.



I release something I
CREATED before the dawn of
TIME; re-absorb that fragment
of MYSELF I placed inside it...



Now, CAIN.
Your turn.

HERE.
TUH-TAKE
IT.



"UHHH, MU-MY LORD, UH,
IF IT'S NOT A-UHH, F-FOOLISH
QUESTION ... HMMH HMM, UH..."

"WHAT MY BRAIN-DEAD BROTHER
IS SO SPECTACULARLY FAILING
TO ENLUCIATE IS THIS:

"WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN
FOR SO LONG, LORD?
WHAT WERE YOU DOING?"

"WHERE have I BEEN?..."







BEXOND outside my dreamworld there is INFINITE dust, infinite dark.

And the DREAMWORLD is infinite, although it is bounded on every side.

The way to the CENTER is a slow spiral. One passes the houses of mystery and secrets -- old WAY STATIONS on the frontiers of NIGHTMARE --

From THERE one charts a course NIGHTWARD until one reaches the GATES of HORN and IVORY. I carved them MYSELF when the world was YOUNGER, and ORDER was NEEDED.

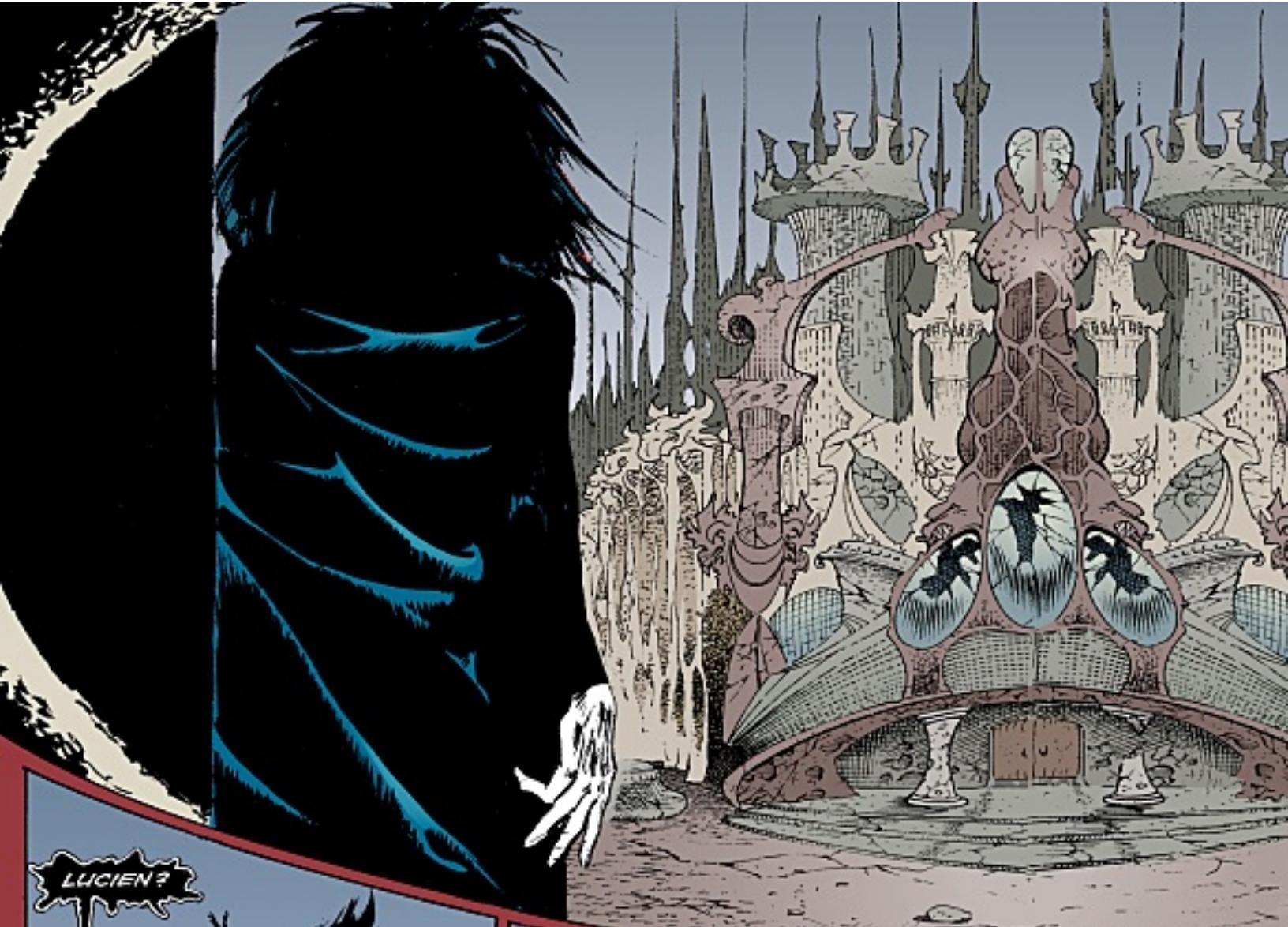
I HASTEN to the GATES.

The DREAMS that pass through the gates of IVORY are LIES, FIGMENTS, and DECEPTIONS. The OTHER admits the TRUTH. NO ONE guards the horned gate anymore. I remember the way of OLD.

Once through it I can SEE my CASTLE.

Through it I will be able to see ...

... My Home ...





BREAKS YOUR
HEART, MY LORD,
DOESN'T IT?

WHAT HAPPENED?
YOU ARE THE INCARNATION
OF THIS DREAMTIME,
LORD.

THE PROCESS
WAS SLOW AT FIRST,
MY LORD. THINGS IN THE
DREAMWORLD BEGAN TO
TRANSMUTE. I WAS
AWARE OF IT IN MY
LIBRARY...



AND WITH YOU
GONE, THE PLACE BEGAN
TO DECAY, BEGAN TO
CRUMBLE...



SLOWLY,
THE WORDS
BEGAN TO
FADE.

SOME TIME
AFTER YOU VANISHED,
MY BOOKS BECAME
BOUND VOLUMES OF
BLANK PAPER; THE NEXT
DAY THE WHOLE
LIBRARY WAS
GONE.

I NEVER
FOUND IT
AGAIN...

IT'S BEEN A
STRANGE CENTURY
FOR ALL OF US,
MY LORD.

"THE RAVEN WOMAN HAS
DECAYED BADLY."

MANY OF THE PALACE
SERVANTS DISPERSED
BACK INTO THE DREAM
STUFF THAT FORMED
THEM...

BRUTE AND
GLOB VANISHED TWO-
SCORE YEARS AGO.

I DO
NOT KNOW
WHERE.

"THE WEIRDNESS HAS
BEEN GETTING WORSE."

UH, AN
EGG...?

UH, CLUH-CAIN,
IT, UH, SOMETHING'S,
UH... THE EGG...

IT... IT'S
BEAUTIFUL!

SOMETHING HAS GONE
SO WRONG. AND IT'S BEEN GETTING
SLOWLY STRANGER... I'VE TRIED NOT
TO... DO IT TO YOU, SO MUCH.

IT'S NOT
JUST ANY EGG,
YOU UNDERSTAND.

"THE FASHION THING HAS BEEN MANY THINGS; FLAPPER... MOD... PUNK... SHE WAS A 'MAD MADONNA WITCH' FOR A WHILE."

BLOOD AND PERIER, GODDAMNIT!

"LAST TIME I SAW HER SHE WAS THE 'MAD YUPPIE WITCH.' BUT THAT WAS A YEAR AGO."

I HAVE ENOUNTERED Cain and Abel ALREADY.

YES, THOSE TWO... DISTURB ME. I MEAN, THEY'VE ALWAYS BEEN WEIRD.

AH.

BUT SINCE YOU'VE BEEN GONE...

HURRM. I, MM, I THINK I'LL CALL HIM... IRVING.

YOU... CAN'T CALL IT IRVING.

NAMES FOR GARGOYLES ALWAYS BEGIN WITH A "G."

B-B-BUT I, UH, LIKE IRVING!

I-UH- NO. NO, PLEASE. CAIN.

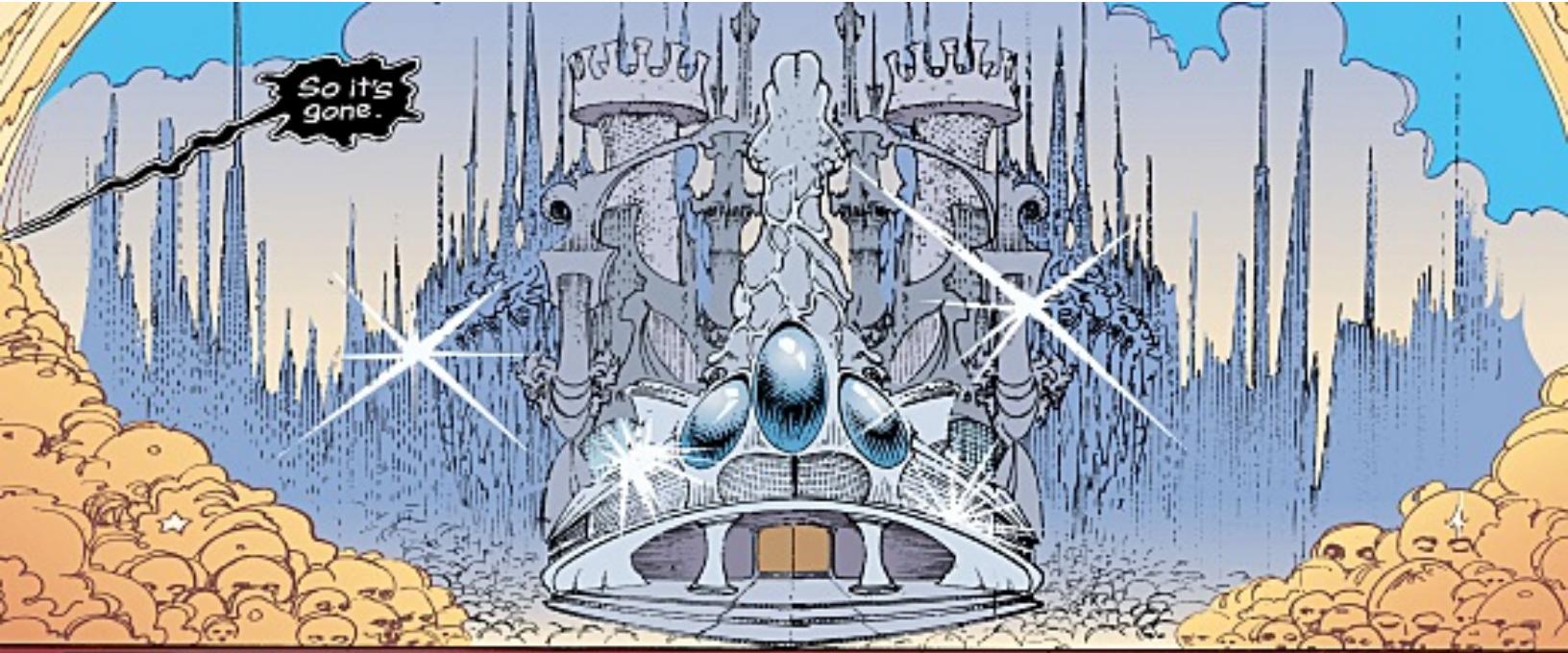
IRVING??

LIKE GAZPACHO--
ORGORMAGON--
OR GLADSTONE--OR
GANYMED--OR--
OR--pfah!

STOP IT, CAIN,
PLEASE.

NO!

BRWK?



YES. Yes... I
WILL call them.

The DREAMWORLD, the
DREAMTIME, the UNCONSCIOUS--
call it what you WILL -- is as
much part of ME as I am part
of IT.

Leave me,
Lucien.

And for the first time
since my RETURN, for the
first time in 70 years, I
REACH out my substance...

...and I SHAPE
the WORLD...

The CROSSROADS comes
from a Cambodian farmer, from
his dreams of a new OX CART.

The GALLows comes
from a young Japanese
MOVIE BUFF, her head
ROILING from a surfeit
of old Hammer horror
films...

The HONEY, the
SNAKES, the
CRESCENT MOON,
all these are easy
to find.

A BLACK SHE-LAMB is
more difficult, but one
DANCES in the dreams of
a child in ADELAIDE,
Australia. I take it to
set the SCENE...

Still the set is incomplete.
CLOTHO, LACHESIS and
ATROPOS would come for
LESS than this, but I need
a BOON, and the THREE
are fickle...

Dully the church bells
ECHO and CLANG in
the lonely darkness.
TWELVE times...

DONG DONG DONG
DONG DONG
DONG DONS
DONG DONG
DONG DONG

THERE.

It's MIDNIGHT.

The
WITCHING
Hour.

And they
COME.

The ONE
who IS
THREE.

The WE who
are THEY.

The
HECATEAE...





D.W.
EP.



WITCH QUEEN, you know
of my imprisonment, of my
TRAVAIL of the TIME that was
STOLEN from me--

THEY HAVE
STOLEN TIME FROM
YOU? WHAT OF THAT?
YOU HAVE ALL THE
TIME THERE EVER
WAS!

SQUEEK

When I
established this
REALM I created
TOOLS to administer
it. My tools are
LOST.

I need
HELP.
HELP? HEEE--
LISTEN TO HIM! DID
YOU HELP US
AGAINST CIRCE?

B.R.P.

It doesn't matter. This
is MY realm. It has LAWS.
OLD laws. And the BEINGS
in the world conform
to the laws.

Just as you
THREE obey your
OWN laws. Could
one of you exist
apart from the
other TWO?

I need
THREE ANSWERS.
You are bound
by the LAWS
to give me
them.

AYE, ME
DEARIE. ONE
ANSWER THEN.
ONE ANSWER
FROM EACH OF
US.

"MAIDEN, there was a
POUCH of SAND. It was
stolen from me."

"I SEE. Then your
question, ALL-MOTHER?
My HELM -- what
happened to it?"

"CRONE. A Final question
for you. My STONE, my
DREAMSTONE, my RUBY
MOONSTONE. Who has
THAT now?"



"AN ENGLISHMAN,
JOHN CONSTANTINE.
HE WAS THE LAST TO
PURCHASE YOUR
POUCH."

"He has it STILL?"

"ONE QUESTION, ONE
ANSWER. THE RULES,
MY LORD."



"HEE! YOUR GEM PASSED
THROUGH A MOTHER TO A
SON WHO TAPPED ITS DREAM
MAGICKS FOR HIS OWN ENDS..."

"...TIL IT--AND HIS DREAMS--
WERE TAKEN AWAY FROM HIM,
BY THE SUPERHUMANS."

"ASK THE LEAGUE OF
JUSTICE ABOUT ITS
PRESENT WHEREABOUTS."



"But where--? No,
one answer only
I know..."

"Thank you,
weird sisters!"

HA-HA HAHAHAA!
DID YOU HEAR THAT,
MY SISTER-SELF?

OOO HOO HOHOH HOOO!
"THANK YOU," HE SAYS! YOU
DON'T THANK THE FATES,
DREAMKIN!

AHAHAHAHAHAHA!
HEEEE! WE HAVEN'T
HELPED YOU!

YOUR TROUBLES
ARE ONLY JUST
BEGINNING!



Exhaustion BITES at my
soul. I have answers of
a SORT.

This will be an
UPHILL quest...

HE FEELS SPLINTERED VERTEBRAE
GRIND AS HE CLIMBS, EVEN THE
PAIN FEELS BETTER THAN THE
COLD OF DEATH.

ABEL HAD BEEN DEAD
FOR A COUPLE OF HOURS
NOW.

BUT HE WAS
STARTING TO
FEEL BETTER.

UHNN.

IT'S A LONG WAY BACK UP.







DREAM A LITTLE DREAM OF ME



ONE, TWO,
THREE, FOUR...

HER NIPPLES ARE HARD AND
DARK AND SHRUNKEN ON
BREASTS LIKE EMPTY POUCHES.

HER HAIR COMES OUT IN
CLUMPS WHEN SHE MOVES.
SHE TRIES NOT TO MOVE
TOO MUCH.

HER SKIN IS FLAKING,
INFECTED AND INFAMED.
BEDSORES COVER HER
BACK AND LEGS.

TWENTY-EIGHT.
TWENTY-NINE.
THIRTY...

RADIO 1



LIKE THE PAIN GOES AWAY. LIKE
EVERYTHING GOES AWAY WHEN
THE DREAMS COME.

...SHE FEELS REALITY
EBBING BACK.

DELAY THE
PLEASURE.

DELAY THE
DREAMS.

IT'S OK. IT
GOES AWAY.

WILL SHE DISSOLVE IT IN HER
MOUTH? BREATHE IT? RUB
IT INTO HER SKIN?

SIXTY-FIVE.
SIXTY-SIX...

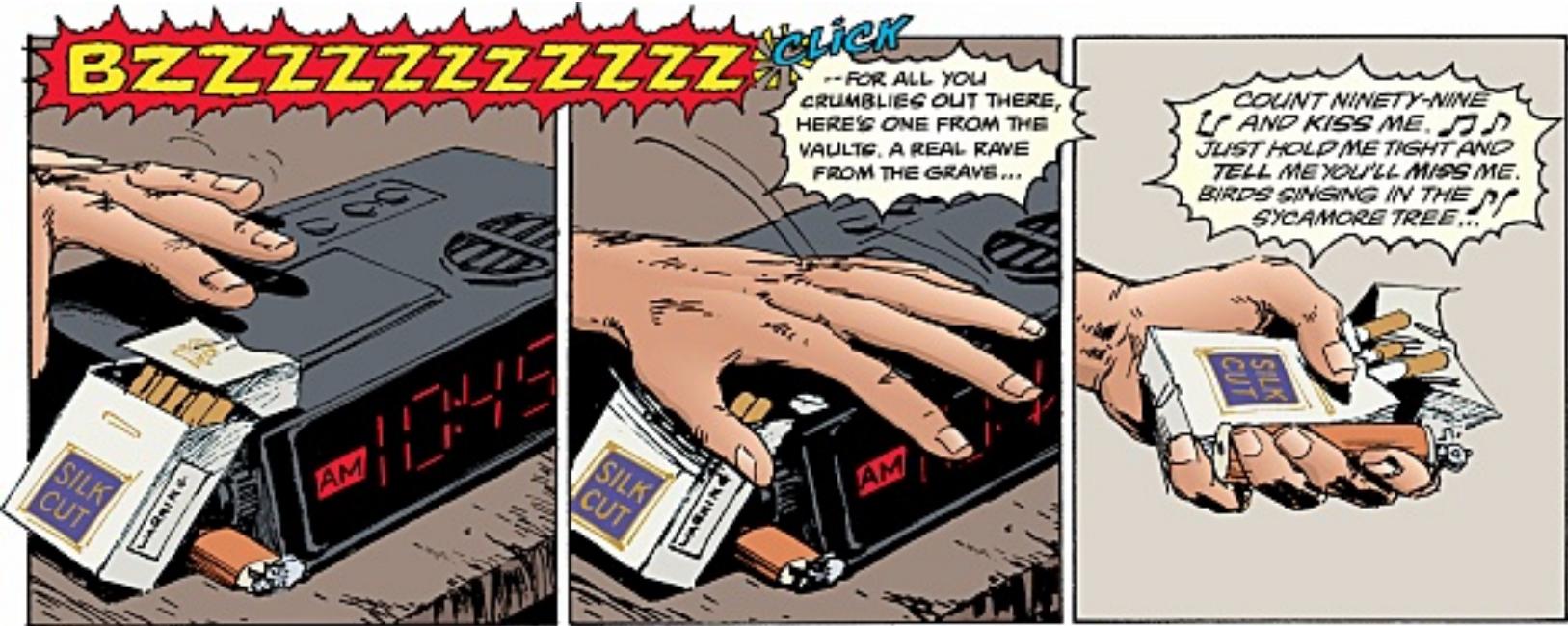
SHE'LL
WAIT.

SHE'S COUNTING
TO A HUNDRED.

NINETY-SIX. NINETY-SEVEN.
NINETY-EIGHT...

IT DOESN'T
MATTER.





...DREAM A LITTLE DREAM OF ME.



HAVE YOU EVER HAD ONE OF THOSE DAYS WHEN SOMETHING JUST SEEMS TO BE TRYING TO TELL YOU SOMEBODY?

THERE WAS A SMELL OF MAGIC SOMEWHERE, LIKE THE BLUE-SPARKS SMELL OF OZONE AT A FUNFAIR.

I'D JUST HAD THIS NIGHTMARE.



THESE THINGS WITH FACES LIKE APPENDECTOMY SCARS WERE CROCHETING MY INTESTINES INTO BODY BAGS FOR THE BLIND AND DEAD.



MORNING,
LEIGH.

GIVE US A
CHEESEBURGER
AND TWO MUGS
OF COFFEE. IT'S
GOING TO BE A
LONG DAY.

AND GIVE US
SOME FIVE PENCE
PIECES FOR THE
JUKEBOX...

ED

Easy Diner

WHAT ARE YOU
PUTTING ON?

SWEET DREAMS
OF YOU... EVERY
N-I-N-GHT I
GO THROUGH...

YOU GOTTA
LEARN TO PRESS
THE RIGHT
BUTTONS,
JOHN.

...THE WHO-OLE NIGHT /
THROUGH INSTEAD OF HAVING
SWEET DREAMS ALL
ABOUT YOU...

"I HEARD IT THROUGH
THE GRAPEVINE" USED TO
SING IT WITH MUCOUS MEMBRANE
AGES AGO. PRACTICALLY MY
THEME SONG...

SOMEBODY
TRYING TO TELL
YOU SOMETHING?
YUP.

WHUMP WHUMP

I THINK IT'S
YOUR GIRLFRIEND,
OUTSIDE. HEHE.

JESUS!
MAD
HETTIE...



HE LEFT THE PORSCHE HALF A MILE BACK DOWN THE ROAD. HOPES IT WON'T GET STOLEN. THERE ARE SOME REAL THIEVES AROUND THESE DAYS.

THEY CALL THEMSELVES CREEPERS. IT'S A SPORT. BREAKING INTO PEOPLE'S HOUSES WHILE THEY'RE STILL AT HOME.

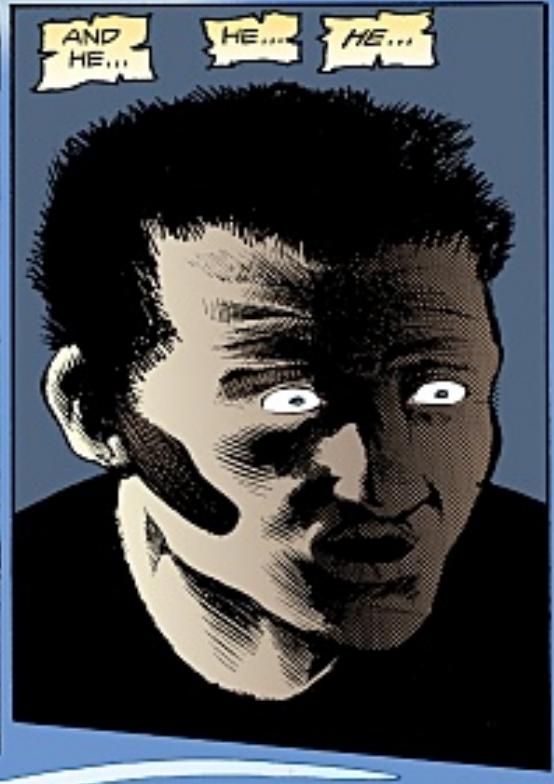


DURING THE DAY HE'S AN INVESTMENT COUNSELOR.



CHECKBOOKS. CREDIT CARDS. CDS. VIDEO TAPES.

HE THINKS OF IT AS HIS CONTRIBUTION TO THE FREE MARKET ECONOMY.



HE MUST BE DREAMING.

HE CAN FEEL THE WARM TIGHTNESS OF HER SKIN; THE SCENT OF SEX IS HEAVY IN THE AIR.

HER LIPS TASTE OF ROSES AND PASSION, AND SHE HOLDS HIM LIKE HER LIFE DEPENDS ON IT.

THIS IS TOO GOOD.

TOO GOOD
TO BE TRUE.

HE'S HITTING A HUNDRED
AND FIFTY IN THE
LAMBORGHINI OF
HIS DREAMS.

EVERYBODY'S GREEN WITH
ENVY. THE ACCELERATION
GOES ON FOREVER.

JESUS.

HE'S DYING FOR THEM
AND THEY LOVE HIM.

HE'S PURE AND PERFECT
AND HE'S DYING FOR THEIR SINS.

HE CAN SEE HIS PARENTS, HIS
BOSS, HIS LOVERS IN THE
CROWD BELOW HIM.

THEY'RE SORRY NOW. SORRY THEY
TREATED HIM SO BADLY. BECAUSE
HE'S THE SON.

LAST SON OF A
DEAD PLANET.

STRONGEST
MAN IN THE
WORLD.

HE CAN DO
ANYTHING.

ANYTHING.

ABSOLUTELY
ANYTHING.

FOR THE NEXT FEW DAYS I KEEP MEANING TO INVESTIGATE THIS SANDMAN STUFF. I JUST NEVER QUITE GET ROUND TO IT.

MY OWN RESEARCHES KEEP ME BUSY ENOUGH.

OOOO-OOOH... SWEET DREAMS ARE MADE-OF-THIS... WHO AM I TO DISAGREE?...

ONE THING I'VE LEARNED. YOU CAN KNOW ANYTHING. IT'S ALL THERE. YOU JUST HAVE TO FIND IT.



...TO CALL MY OWN... I WANT A DREAM LOVER, SO I DON'T HAVE TO DREAM ALONE...

DREAMS ARE LIKE ANGELS... THEY KEEP BAD AT BAY... / / /

I DREAM A MESS OF LEY-LINES AND LEPTONS, PLASMA FIELDS AND TURF GIANTS.

THEN THE DREAMS GET SCARY AND BAD.



IT WAS ON THE THIRD DAY THAT HE CAUGHT UP WITH ME.



=KLIK=

John Constantine, I presume.





We have been looking for two hours, Constantine. Patience Wears thin.

I do not believe it is here.

If it were here, I would be able to feel it.

WE'VE STILL GOT A LOAD OF STUFF TO GO THROUGH YET, BOSS.

KEEP SMILING. IT'LL TURN UP.

HOW DID YOU LOSE THIS POUCH, ANYWAY?

It was stolen from me. By a man called Burgess.

THE OLD "DAEMON KING" HIMSELF, EH?

BRUJARIA
THE PLANT ELEMENTAL
CRISIS
AMERICAN GOTHIC
LIVERPOOL
TIBET

YOU MUST BE OLDER THAN YOU LOOK.

DAMN!

I DON'T KNOW WHY I HANG ON TO ALL THIS STUFF.

IF THERE WAS A FIRE IT'D BE LIKE MY WHOLE LIFE WAS GOING UP IN FLAMES...

OH.
JESUS.
OH JESUS.
BLOODY HELL.

UH, BOSS. I THINK I KNOW WHERE YOUR POUCH IS.

'ERE, JOHN, CAN WE
STOP AT A SERVICE STATION?
I'M PARCHED. I TOOK OFF
WITHOUT ME TEA.'

No.

YOU HEARD THE MAN,
CHAS, OLD MATE. SORRY.
I AIN'T NO MARK FOR
THE VENUS OF THE
HARSELL...

I KNOW I OWE
YOU, JOHN. BUT THIS
IS PUSHING IT.

Drive
us, Mister
Chas. You
WILL be
rewarded.

UH, IT'S JUST
CHAS, MISTER...
UH...

YOU
DON'T CALL
HIM.

HIS KIND
JUST TURN UP
OUT OF THE BLUE.
THEY CALL
YOU.

JOHN? WHAT
DO I CALL HIM?

EVERYONE SHUTS UP, AND CHAS
JOLTS US UP THE MOTORWAY, OUR
VISITOR MELTS INTO THE BACK
SEAT SHADOWS.

AND I
REMEMBER
RACHEL.

AMAZING RACHEL.

JUNKIE RACHEL.

WE WERE LIVING
TOGETHER IN A HIGH-
RISE FLAT IN EAST
CROYDON. I WENT TO
ALASKA FOR SIX
MONTHS, OVER THE
LUPUS AFFAIR.

WHEN I GOT BACK SHE WAS GONE,
ALONG WITH ME STEREO, THE TELLY,
ME SILVER SURFERS--ANY OLD
JUNK SHE COULD CONVERT TO MONEY.

AND SHE'D LONG SINCE
CONVERTED THE MONEY
INTO JUNK.

STUPID BITCH.

SOMETIMES
I STILL MISS
HER.

EITHER OF
YOU GENTS MIND
IF I PUT ON THE
RADIO? NOT

I WISH I'D REALIZED
THAT SHE'D NICKED THE
POUCH AS WELL, THOUGH.

THE CANDY-
COLORED CLOWN THEY
CALL THE SANDMAN...
TIP-TOES THROUGH MY
ROOM EVERY NIGHT...
JUST TO SPINKLE
STAR DUST... □

"CANDY-
COLORED CLOWN"?
YEAH, RIGHT.

RIGHT.
THIS IS IT. "THE
BRAMBLES."



RACHEL WAS ALWAYS PLAYING WITH THE POUCH. KEPT GOING ON AT ME TO TRY TO OPEN IT.

SHE'D ASK ME, WHAT'S THE POINT OF HAVING SOMETHING MAGIC IF YOU DON'T USE IT?

I KNEW THE ANSWER. BUT I KNEW SHE'D NEVER UNDERSTAND.

WELL, THERE'S NO ANSWER. AND IT'S LOCKED, BOLTED AND ALARMED.

LET'S GO ROUND THE BACK, WE CAN SMASH A WINDOW, GET IN THAT WAY...

We go in by the FRONT door.

IT SMELLS STRANGE. PART OF IT REMINDS ME OF THE MONTH I WORKED FOR AN UNDERTAKER; ALL FLESH AND FORMALDEHYDE.

'SWEIRD: SMELLS ARE A HOTLINE TO MEMORY.

NAW, I'LL STICK AROUND. I'M INTRIGUED.

ANYWAY, I WAS FOND OF RACHEL ONCE. SHE WAS, YOU KNOW, THE GIRL OF MY DREAMS.

Constantine...

This place is not SAFE for you.

Things are free in this house that should NOT be loose on Earth.

You must not stay here.

FOR A WHILE.



MOVIES. OLD DARK HOUSE.
HORRIBLE MENACE ON THE
LOOSE. "LET'S SPLIT UP."
MUFFLED SCREAMS IN
DARKNESS...

LH... WE'LL
STICK TOGETHER,
WON'T WE?

OF COURSE.

UNTHINKING, I REACH
FOR THE LIGHT SWITCH...

YECHH.

CHRIST.
THERE'S SOME
THING ON THE
WALLS.

SOMETHING
WET.

AND.

AND.

AND I CAN SEE THE
CLOUDS. THEY LOOK
KIND OF SOLID. AND
THE GROUND BELOW
THEM.

THAT LOOKS REALLY
SOLID. IT'S A LONG
WAY TO FALL.

AND I'M
FALLING.

HOW DID I
GET HERE?

I DON'T WANT
TO DIE. I DON'T
WANT TO FALL.

MEMORY FILLS IN:
THE PLANE ON
FIRE; I JUMPED...?

I WAS THE PILOT?
NO, A PASSENGER,
THEN?

I TELL MYSELF IT'S
NOT THE FALL. FALLING
DOESN'T HURT...

...IT'S WHEN
YOU STOP.

CONSTANTINE!

YAAAAAH

John
You're HERE.

UH.

...SO
REAL.

YOU WERE
THERE, TOO.

A DREAM.
IT WAS ONLY A
DREAM.

It is
NEVER "only
a dream."
John Constantine.
HERE less than
some other
places...

More
light.

JEEESUS.

WHAT
IS THIS
STUFF?

BUT IT-
IT'S STILL
ALIVE.

That's
right.

A human
body. What's left
of it. Your woman's
father, I would
surmise.

I FEEL SICK. I CAN FEEL
THE HOT DOG AND COFFEE
I GRABBED FOR DINNER
TRYING TO FIGHT THEIR
WAY BACK UP FOR AIR ...

HOW?

The
Pouch.







THE
BAG? MY
BAG, BUT
IT'S NOT
MY BAG...

IT
HURTS...

YOU CAN'T
LEAVE HER LIKE
THIS.

Why NOT?
Her metabolism
is obviously DESTROYED.
The sand was the ONLY
thing keeping her
ALIVE. She will die
soon.

Pain-
fully, I
would
imagine.

...SEE THE
SUN SET IN THE
HAND OF THE
MAN...

I SAID
YOU CAN'T
BLOODY LEAVE
HER LIKE
THIS!

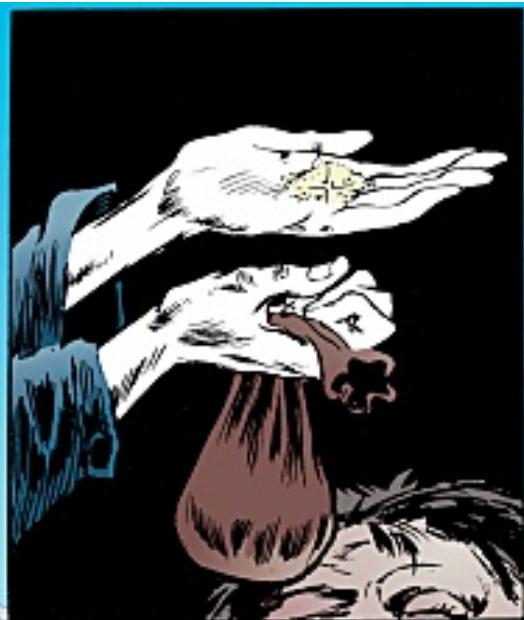
OUU. NN.
OUGH.

Very well,
Constantine.
Go outside.

BUT--
YEAH. ALL
RIGHT.

RACHEL.

SWEET
DREAMS,
LOVE.



AND SHE KNOWS
HE'S WAITING
FOR HER.

JOHN.

HULLO,
LOVE.

'S BEEN A
LONG TIME.

THE VEIL TEARS, AND SHE FEELS
THE FLESH FLOW BACK ONTO
HER BONES AGAIN.



DID YOU
MISS ME,
THEN?

NAH.

BASTARD.
LOVE YOU.

I KNOW.

IT'S THE BEST OF ALL
POSSIBLE WORLDS.







NEXT:
GOING TO HELL



A H ? P E IN H e L L

THE ARK OF TRUTH
Who has his hand upon
THESE OTHERS WHO
ARE DANGEROUS
HANGING FROM THE COAL-BLACK
JAWS? See how
WHO IS LARGE OF LIMB
BUT NOT CONSCIENT
AND MIGHTY MURK
SEEN IN THE WHOLE EX-
ISTENCE.

AT HIS COMMAND
FOUND THE NEMO
TO BE A FINE
FISH, AND
HE SPENT
HIS LIFE
WITH BREATHING
WE HOUST DEPART FROM THIS GREAT WICKEDNESS

For the hundredth time
since I regained it, I reach
into the pouch and I touch
the sand.

I sift it through
my fingers.

Feel each
grain of it.
inexhaustible.
Endless.

Like myself, like the few
others of my kind. ENDLESS.

Tonight I
feel alone.

I have always been
solitary, but here on
the nightward shores
of dream, loneliness
washes over me in waves,
lapping and pulling at
my spirit.

I watched him even then
as he fell, his face
undefeated, his eyes
still proud.

It is time for me
to walk the abyss.
Time to reclaim
my OWN.

I sprinkle sand into the waters
of night. The grains burn as
they fall, reminding me of another
in times long passed away.

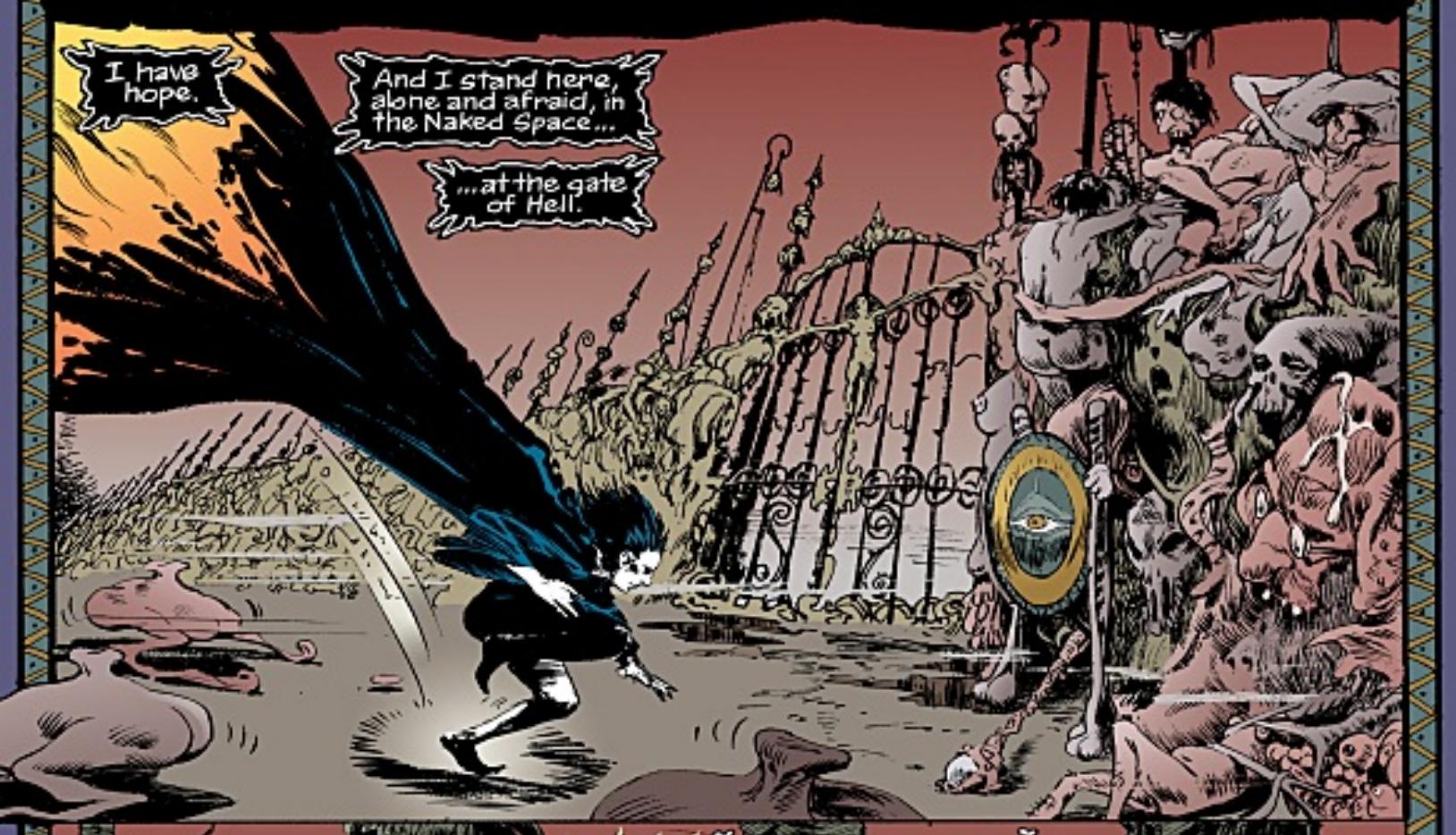
I must talk to
the Morningstar.

I do not have
high hopes for
the meeting.



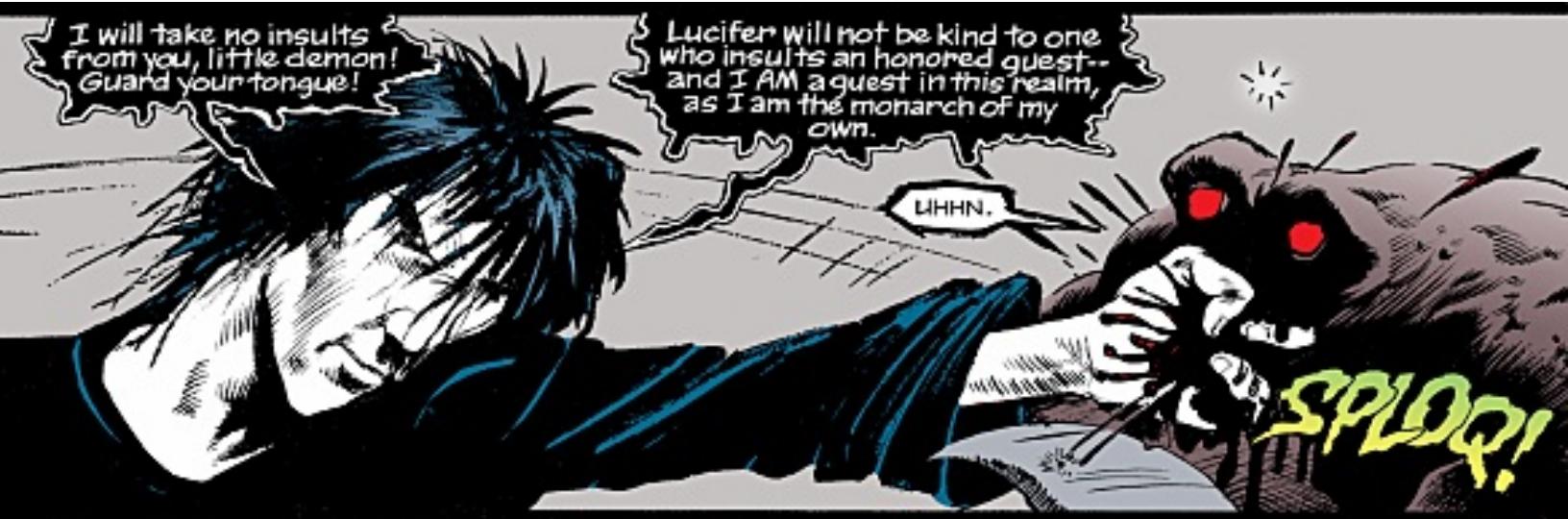
HOPES IN

NEIL GAIMAN SAM KIETH & MIKE DRINGENBERG DANIEL VOZZO TODD KLEIN ART YOUNG KAREN BERGER
WRITER ARTISTS COLORIST LETTERER ASSC.EDITOR EDITOR
WRIITER ARTISTS COLORIST LETTERER ASSC.EDITOR EDITOR



DOORNNNGG





Etrigan. Yes. Merlin's demon. The half-man. I remember you. So you're a rhymen now? You've risen in hell's hierarchy, I see.

THIS WAY.



THINGS CHANGE.

TO RISE AMONG THE FALLEN? STRANGE AND TRUE. BUT AS THINGS CHANGE, LORD, THEY TRANSMUTE AS WELL...

AND IF I'VE CHANGED, O KING, THEN WHAT OF YOU?

I have been... absent... for some time. But changed...?

...ALL TOO MUCH. SANDRA KNEW EVERYTHING, AND THE PAPERS. SO I HAD TO, PILLS, PLASTIC BAGS.

HAD TO GET OUT. NEEDED A BREAK. HURTING, HURTING.

The Wood of suicides has changed since my last visit to hell. I remember it as a tiny grove.



Perhaps.



HURTING HURTING HURTING
HURT / HURTING HURT HURT
/ HURTING

Now it resembles a forest.

Hell is changing.

Never trust a demon. He has a hundred motives for anything he does... Ninety-nine of them, at least, are malevolent.

KAI'KUL! DREAMLORD! I HOPE ONE DAY YOU WOULD COME TO ME! FREE ME, MY LOVE! PLEASE?

I greet you, Nada. It... pains me to see you like this.

Etrigan...

"Etrigan, WHY did you bring me here?"

KAI'KUL! FREE ME, LORD! YOU ORDERED ME CONFINED HERE! YOUR FORGIVENESS CAN FREE ME!

I IMPLORE YOU...

UPON YOUR
RIGHT ARE SOULS,
ENTOMBED, TO
PITY, AN UGLY
SIGHT...

DON'T
YOU LOVE
ME?

It has
been ten
thousand years,
Nada.
...yes. I
still love
you.

"But I have
not yet
forgiven you."

NOW,
ONWARD TO
THE CITY!
HAHAHA
HAHA!



We do not talk for the rest of the journey to Dis, the hellcity.

Lucifer's palace. It, too, has changed. It echoes with loss and pain. The last time I came to this place it was as an honored guest, an envoy from my own kingdom.

This time I lack power. I lack my symbols of office.

But I am still DREAM, and the doors of the palace open as we arrive.

We travel to the summit, past vasty halls that echo of screams and grunts and sighs and dust.

Up stairs that run with sweet blood. At the top of his mansion he Waits for us, alone.

Greetings to you, Lucifer Morningstar.



BZZT

AH, IF IT WERE
ONLY THAT EASY.
THINGS HAVE CHANGED
IN HELL SINCE YOU WERE
LAST HERE...

Things have
changed?
What are you
trying to tell
me, Lucifer
Morningstar?

That you no longer
rule hell? That the
demons no longer
follow your rule?

Things do
not change that
much, proud
one.

AH, BUT
THEY DO,
MIMORPHEUS.

LUCIFER IS ZZ
INDEED NO LONGER
SOLE MONARCH
OVR THE NEZZER
REGIONZZZ...

THIS IS
OUR CO-MONARCH,
BEELZEBUB, THE
LORD OF FLIES.

We have
met. So you
spoke the truth,
Proud Lord of
Lies. Hell is now
a duumvirate.

BBBUT NO.
IT'SZZZ A
TRIUMMMVIRATE.

AAZAZEL
WILL JOIN US SHORELY.
HE IS THE THIRD LORD
OF HELL.

SOME YEARS AGO
THE DARK, THE SHADOW
CREATURE, CAME FORTH
TO CHALLENGE HEAVEN.
THE EPISODE ENDED IN...
PERHAPS A SCALEMADAE.

BUT THE CIVIL
WAR IN HELL THAT
ENSUED TIPPED THE
PRECARIOUS BALANCE
OF POWER.

WE RULE IN
COLLISION NOW,
AAZAZEL, BEELZEBUB
AND I.

THREE KINGS IN
DARKNESS. I AM AZAZEL.
WELL COME, DREAM KING.

Hell, a triumvirate-z
Things change indeed.

Very well. I
seek a demon, who
has stolen my helm
of office. I wish
it back.

I do
not know
the demon's
name.

WHICH DEMON,
Zzen? NAME IT AND
WE WILL BBBBRING
IT HERE.

THERE ARE MORE
THAN A MILLION DEMONS,
AFTER ALL.

Then let
us summon all
of them to tell,
and meet them
on the vasty
plains of HELL!



THERE,
NOW, DREAM
KING ...

TELL
US ...

WHICH
DEMON HAS YOUR
HELMET?



I look at the demons. Some I recognize from nightmares. Others have passed through the dreamworld in the past. But there are so many...

One of you has my helm; my mask of pure dream. I crafted it myself, from the bones of a dead god. It is one of my tools...

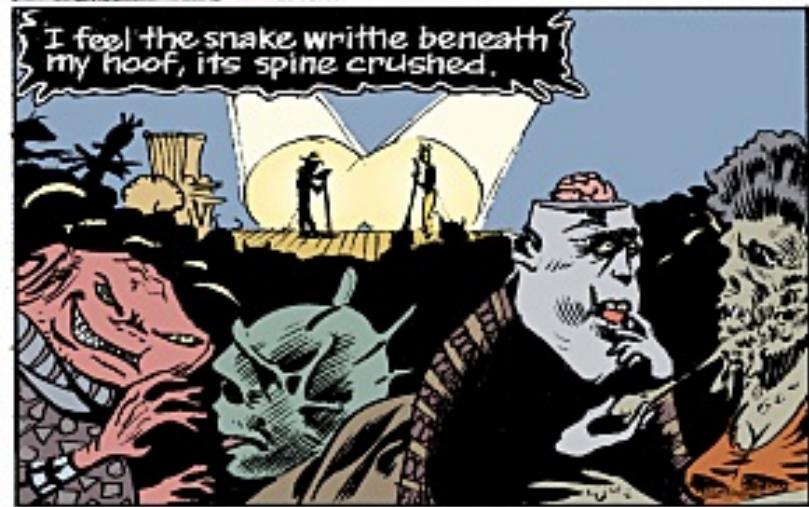
Ah.

















BBZ, HERE,
DREAM MASTER.
THISZ ISZ YOUR
HELMET. YOU
HAVE WON IT
FAIRLY.
TAKE
IT.



I thank you.
The kings of Hell
are honorable. I
will remember
this.



HONORABLE?
YOU JOKER, SURELY.

LOOK
AROUND YOU,
MORPHEUS.



THE MILLION
LORDS OF HELL STAND
ARRAYED ABOUT
YOU.



TELL US
WHY WE SHOULD
LET YOU LEAVE?



HELMET OR NO,
YOU HAVE NO POWER
HERE--WHAT POWER
HAVE DREAMS IN
HELL?

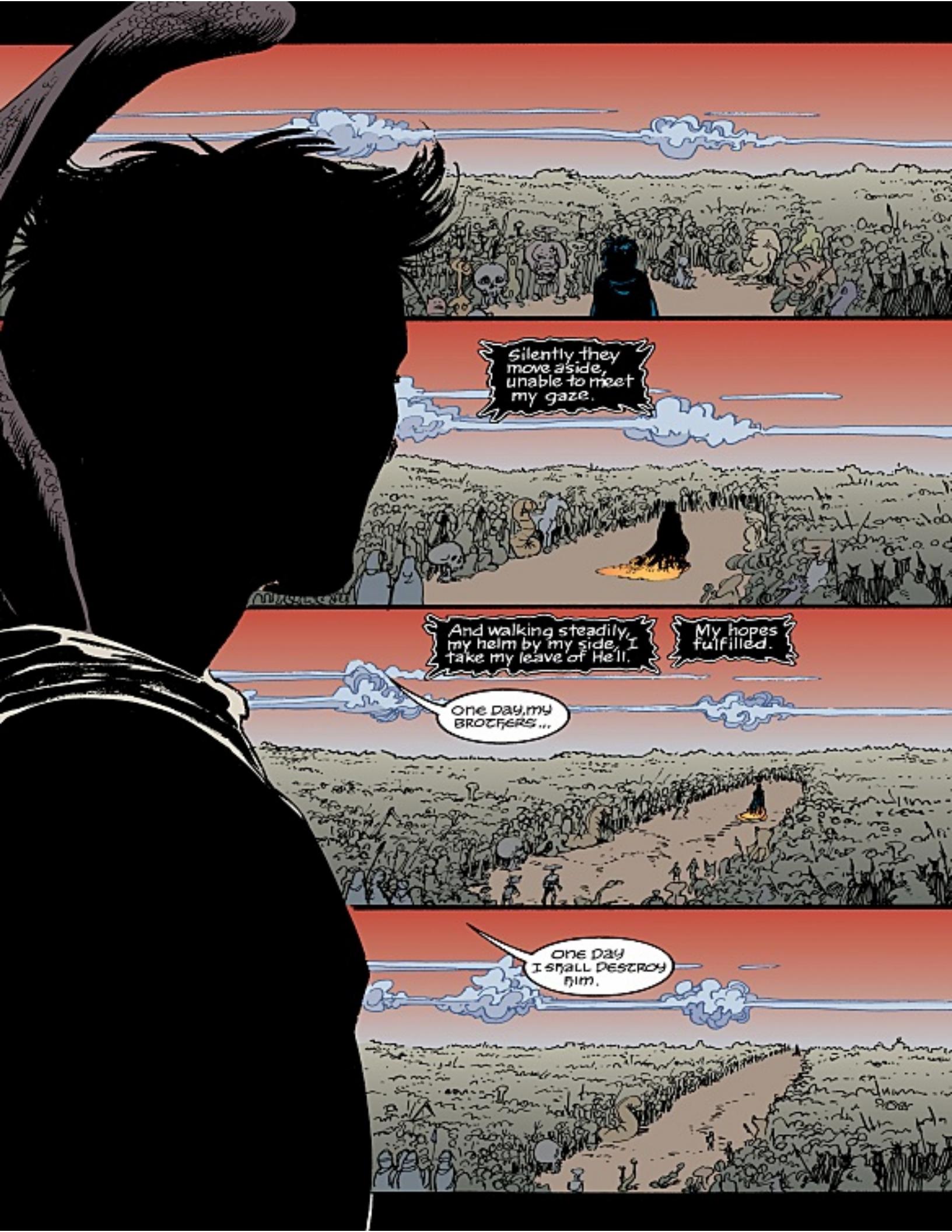
You say I have
no power? Perhaps
you speak truly...

Ask
yourselves,
all of you...

What power
would HELL have
if those here
imprisoned were
NOT able to DREAM
of HEAVEN?

But--you
say that DREAMS
have no power
here?

Tell me,
Lucifer
Morningstar...



Silently they
move aside,
unable to meet
my gaze.

And walking steadily,
my helm by my side, I
take my leave of Hell.

My hopes
fulfilled.

One day, my
BROTHERS...

One day
I shall DESTROY
him.

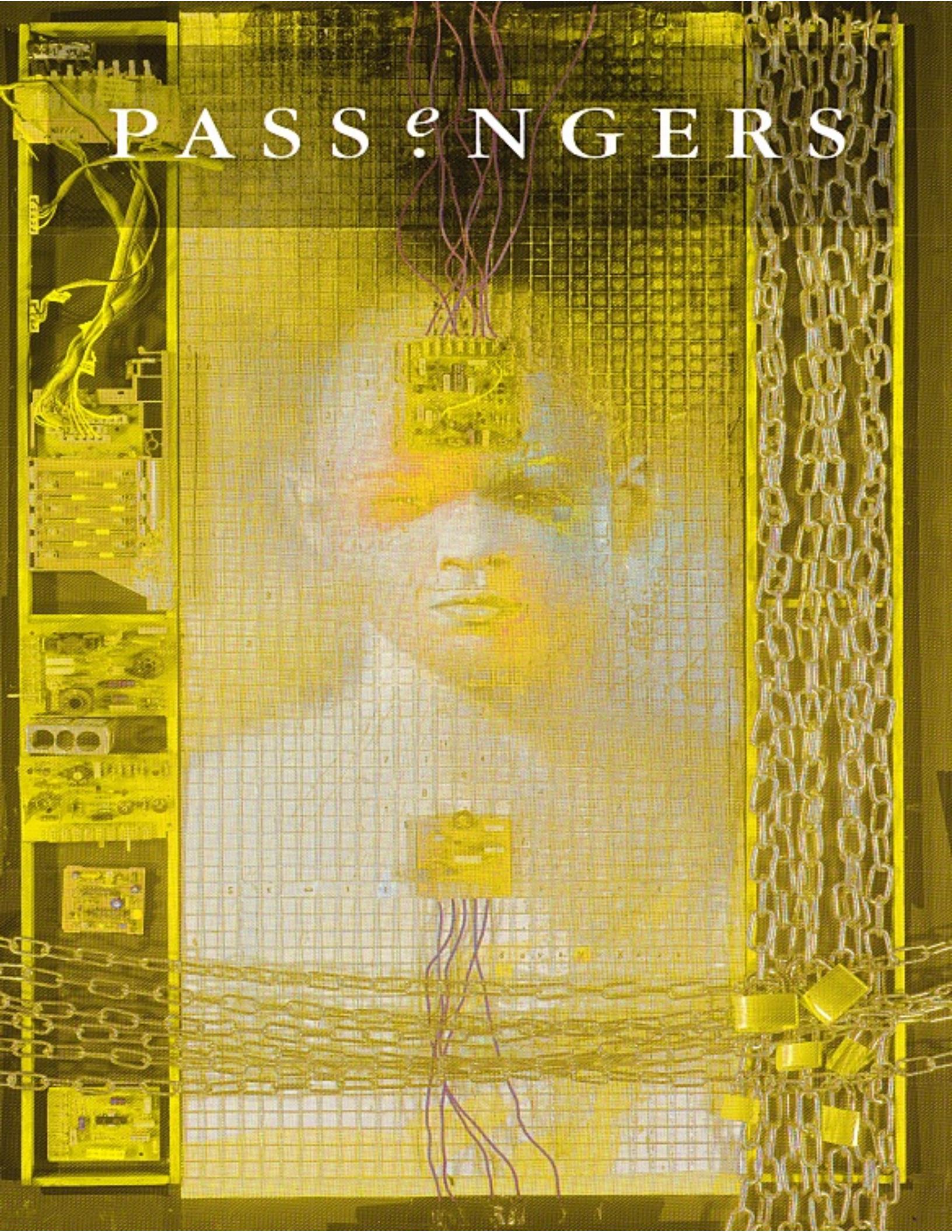
EPILOGUE



NEXT: MONSTERS & MIRACLES



PASS e N G E R S



AND NOW IT'S 2:15 AM,
APRIL 1ST, AND THE "FUNERAL
MARCH FOR A MARIONETTE"
TELLS US THAT ALFRED HITCHCOCK
PRESENTS ANOTHER TWISTY
TALE FOR ALL YOU LATE NIGHT
GOTHAM VIEWERS...

I POM-DA-
POPOPA-POM-
DA-POM...♪

...POM-POMETTY,
POM POM-POM...





SURPRISE!
IT'S ONLY ME!

NOW--DON'T TELL
ANYBODY ELSE ABOUT
THIS! THERE'S NOTHING
LIKE A GOOD HANGING
TO SCARE PEOPLE
WITLESS...

YOU'RE THE DOCTOR, AREN'T YOU? SOME PEOPLE ARE AFRAID
OF DOCTORS. IT'S CALLED IATROPHOBIA. DR. DESTINY. AREN'T
YOU MEANT TO BE LOCKED UP DOWNSTAIRS?

SSHH. YOU MUSTN'T
TELL ANYONE. I'M
ESCAPING. MY MOTHER
DIED.

SHE GAVE ME HER AMULET.
IT KEEPS PEOPLE SAFE FROM
THINGS. SHE TOLD ME THAT.
SHE GAVE ME MY RUBY TOO,
BUT NOW SHE'S DEAD.

SHALL I TELL YOU WHAT I'M
GOING TO DO?

I'LL STICK OUT
MY TONGUE, AND I'LL
BE WHITE AS A SHEET,
AND THEY'LL ALL
LOOK UP AT ME AND
THEN I'LL GO
"APRIL FOOL!"

FEAR OF PAIN
IS ALGOPHOBIA. I
DON'T KNOW WHAT
FEAR OF HANGING
IS CALLED.

I'M GOING TO GET THE RUBY
BACK. THE MAT. THE MAT. THE
MAT-ER-I-OP-TI-KON. AND THEN
I'LL DRIVE EVERYBODY IN THE
WHOLE WIDE WORLD MAD, AND
THEN THEY'LL MAKE ME KING.

IT SOUNDS SCARY. HAVE A NICE
TIME. AND YOU MUST PROMISE--
WHEN YOU GET BACK--TO TELL
ME ALL ABOUT IT.

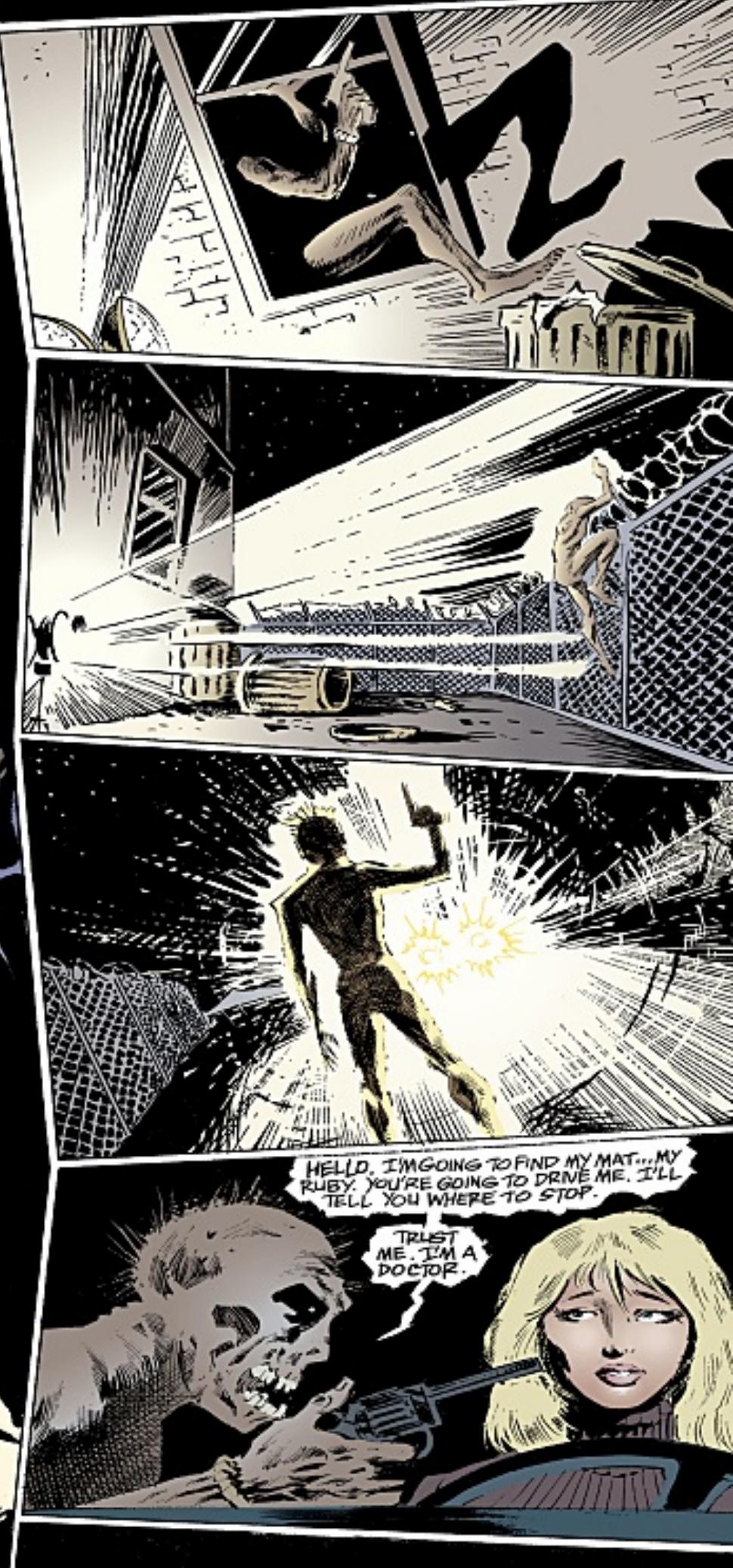
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND. I'M
GOING TO RULE THE WORLD.
OR DESTROY IT.

I'M NOT
COMING
BACK.

BUT WE ALWAYS COME BACK HERE,
IT'S SO SCARY OUTSIDE. IF YOU SEE
THE JOKER, TELL HIM TO HURRY
BACK. IT ISN'T APRIL FOOL'S DAY
WITHOUT HIS LITTLE JOKES...

YES
YES...

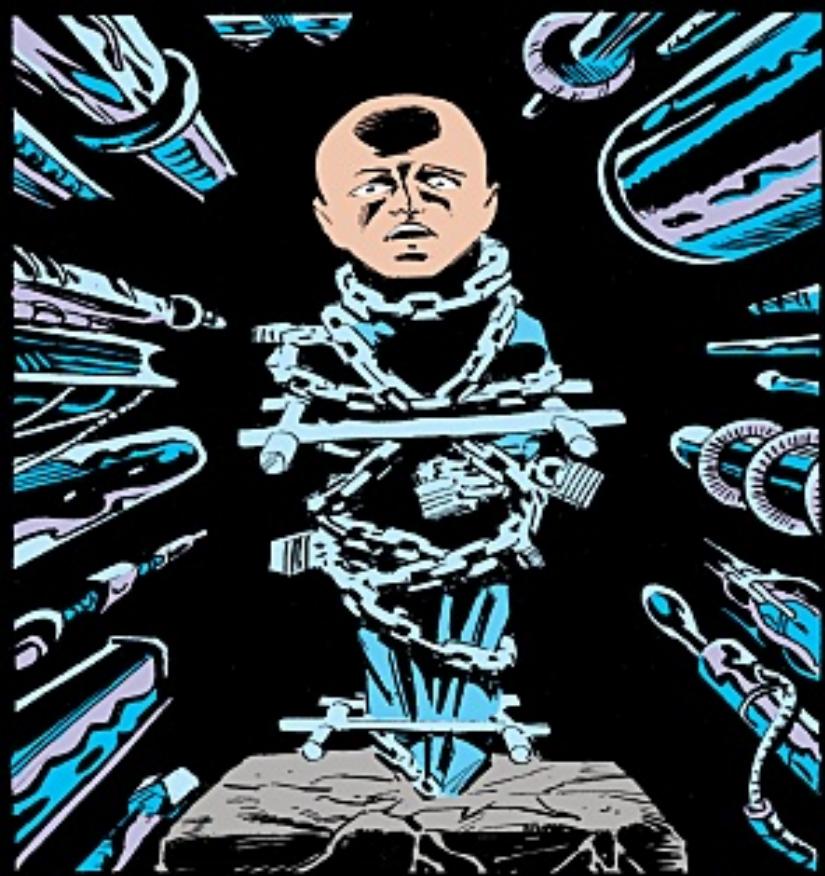
BUT I'M DOING
MY BEST. I LEFT
ANOTHER NEXT DOOR.





I FLEE PAST GREYBORDERS, DOWN THE DARKLING ROAD TO LONGSHADOWS. I SKIRT THE FIRE PITS, AND LOSE MYSELF IN THE HEART OF THE ARMAGHETTO. IT DOESN'T MATTER WHERE I GO. ALL ROADS LEAD BACK TO GRANNY.

GRANNY LOVES ME, SO SHE HAS THEM BIND ME IN CHAINS, ENCASE MY FEET IN CONCRETE.





I LEAVE THE COFFIN BEHIND ME.



I SIDESTEP THE KNIVES, LEAP THROUGH THE FLAMES.



THE BOMB EXPLODES; BUT I AM NOT WHERE I WAS.



THE FLOOR VANISHES. I DO NOT FALL INTO THE ACID PIT.



I REACH THE WOMB, THE EXIT. THE BOX.

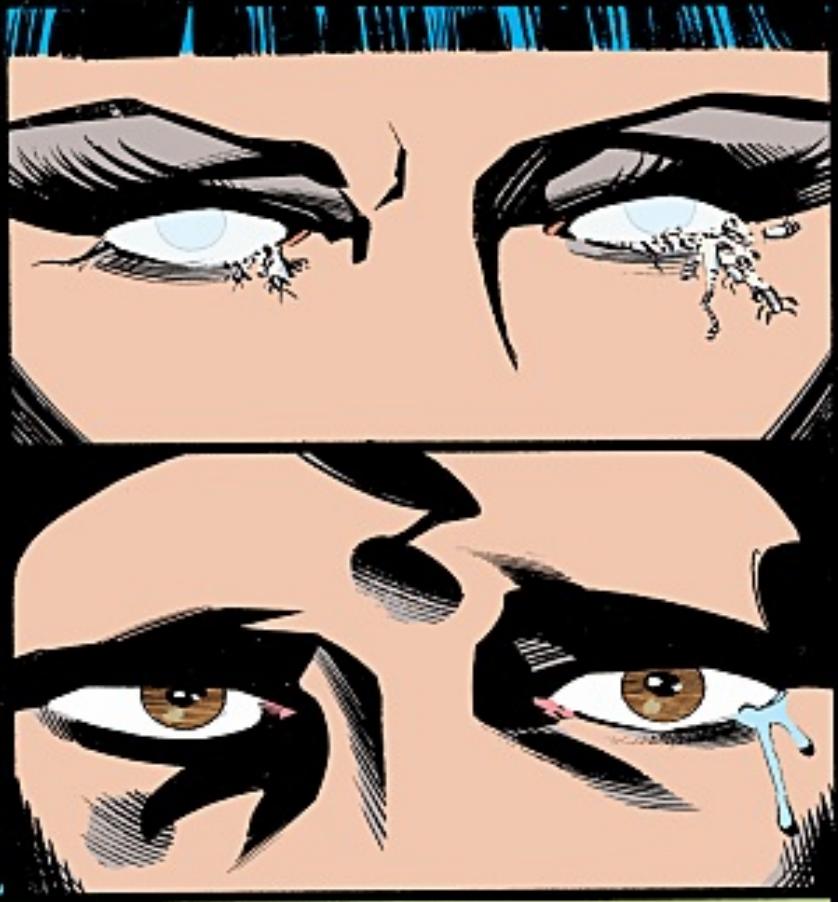
IT'S THE LAST TRAP-- SOMEHOW I KNOW THAT. THE LAST EXIT. ALL I HAVE TO DO IS TYPE MY NAME. (MY REAL NAME. MY TRUE NAME.) AND THE DOOR WILL OPEN AND I WILL BE SCOTT FREE.

ZEP AND BRANDO AND WELDUN HANG IN WARNING, LOWLIES WHO NEVER ESCAPED THE ARMAGHETTO, THE BLACK BLOOD OF A BYGONE DECADE CRUSTED ON THEIR NECKS.

YOUR NAME, THEY SAY. TELL US YOUR NAME AND WE'LL LET YOU GO.



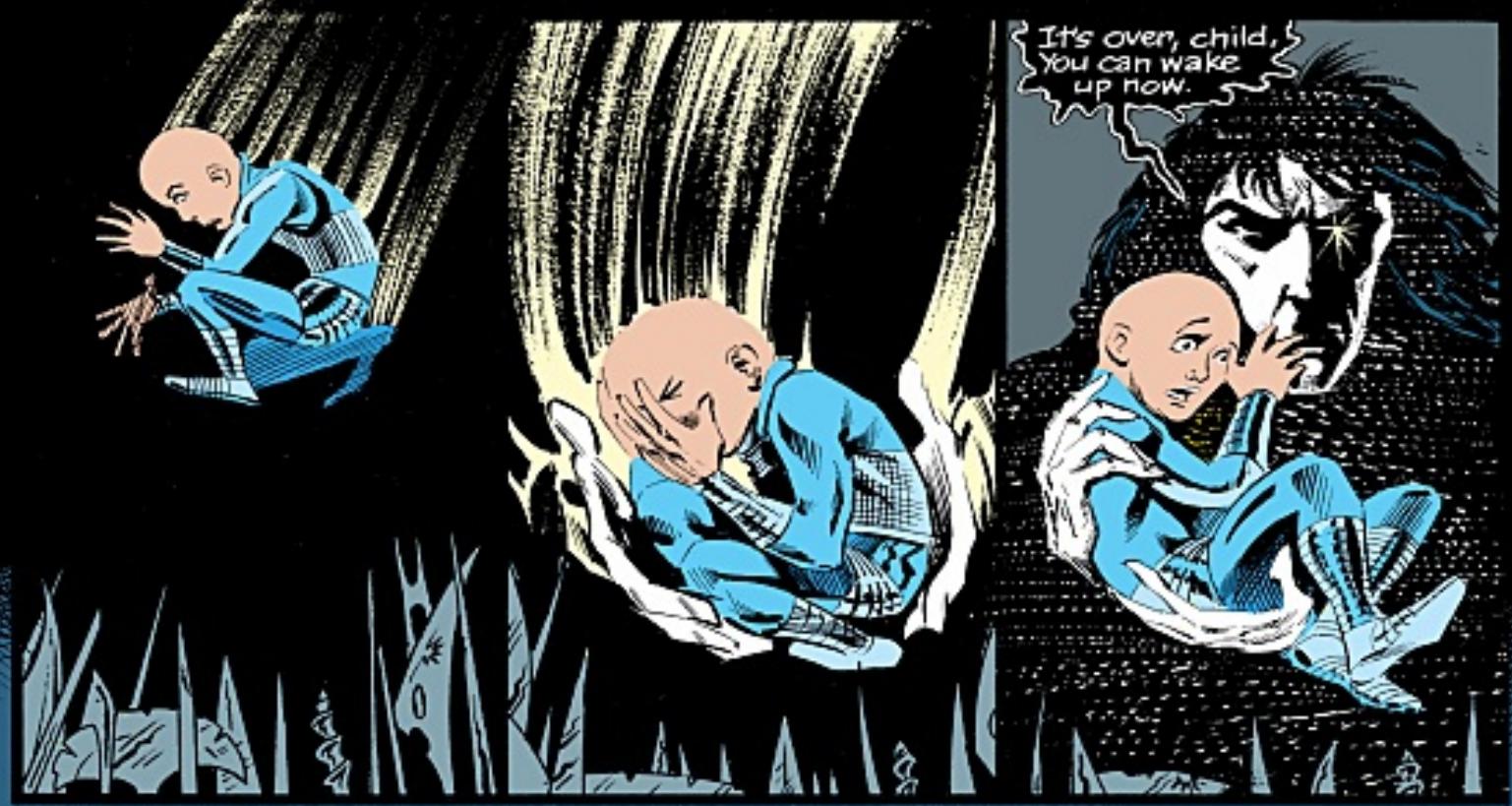
AURALIE HANGS THERE. SWEET AURALIE, MY FIRST LOVE, HER FEET BURNED AWAY AND HER EYES CHURNING WITH MAGGOTS, WHAT DO I CALL YOU? SHE ASKS ME. NOT SCOTT FREE. SCOTT FREE WAS JUST GRANNY'S JOKE.

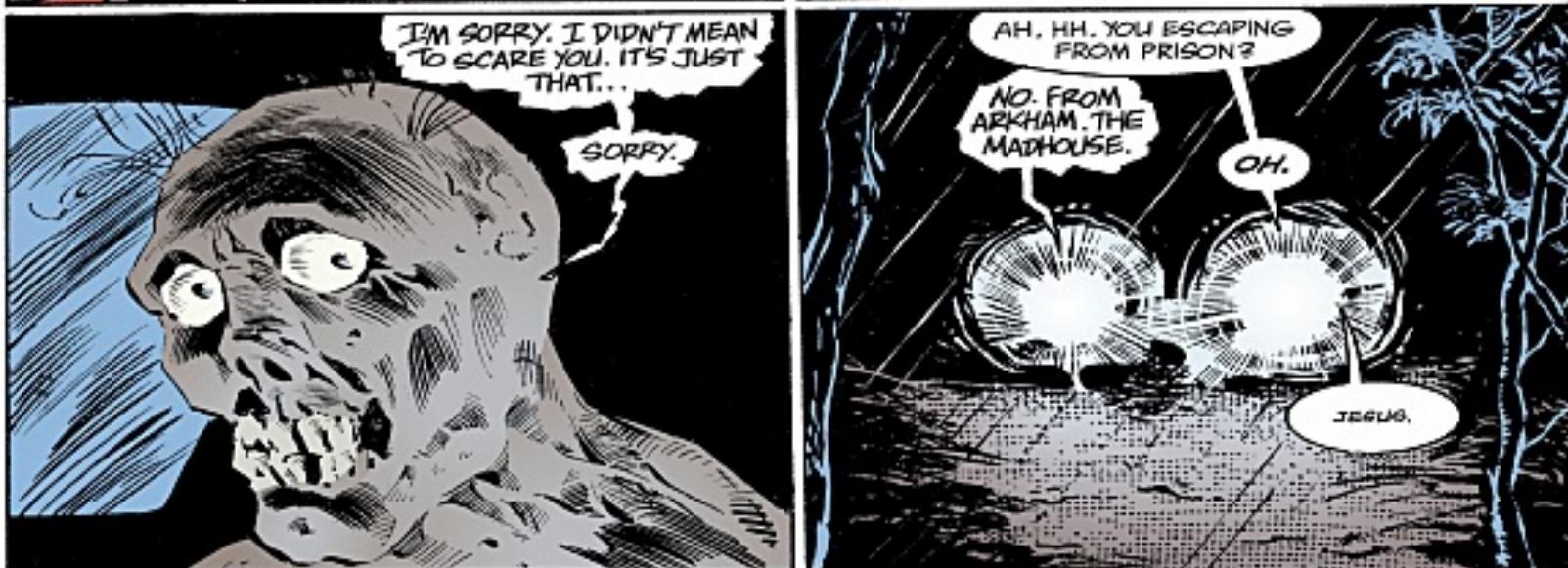


WHAT'S YOUR NAME, MY LOVE?

I DON'T KNOW.

I'M GOING TO DIE.





MY MOTHER DIED LAST WEEK. SHE WAS VERY OLD. THAT WAS WHEN I KNEW I HAD TO GET AWAY FROM THAT PLACE.

SAY, WHY AREN'T YOU, Y'KNOW, WEARING ANYTHING?

AREN'T YOU COLD?

THEY TOOK MY CLOTHES AWAY. THEY WERE SCARED I WOULD KILL MYSELF. HANG MYSELF WITH A SHIRT, PERHAPS.

OH, I'M SORRY.

YES, VERY COLD.

WELL...

THERE'S AN OLD COAT OF HARRY'S--MY HUSBAND IS--IN THE BACK. WHY DON'T YOU PUT IT ON? YOU MUST BE FREEZING.

A COAT? THAT'S VERY NICE OF YOU. I'D LIKE TO WEAR A COAT.

THANK YOU.

PASSENGERS

NEIL GAIMAN,
WRITER
SAM KIETH &
MALCOLM JONES III
ARTISTS
DANIEL VOZZO,
COLORS
TODD KLEIN,
LETTERS
ART YOUNG,
ASST. EDITOR,
KAREN BERGER,
EDITOR.
MR. MIRACLE
CREATED BY
JACK KIRBY

OK, I'VE SEARCHED THE OLD JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA FILES, AND I THINK WE'VE FOUND IT.

SHOULD BE UP ON THE SCREENS ANY SECOND.



THERE YOU GO. TAKEN FROM SOME PSYCHO CALLING HIMSELF "DOCTOR DESTINY." HE WAS USING IT TO AFFECT PEOPLE'S DREAMS -- MAKE NIGHTMARES REAL, THAT KIND OF THING.

IT WAS KEPT IN THE TROPHY ROOM ON THE SATELLITE.



COULD HAVE BEEN DESTROYED, COULD HAVE BEEN MOVED TO THE DETROIT FORTRESS, OR THE SECRET SANCTUARY, OR...

YEAH... IS THIS KIND OF THING GOING TO HAPPEN EVERY TIME I STAY HERE OVERNIGHT? DON'T ANSWER THAT...

LEMMIE SEE. BATMAN? NOPE, IT'S 3:30 AM. HE'LL BE AT WORK...

WHO ELSE WAS IN THE OLD JLA...?



NOT A CLUE.

Somebody must know.

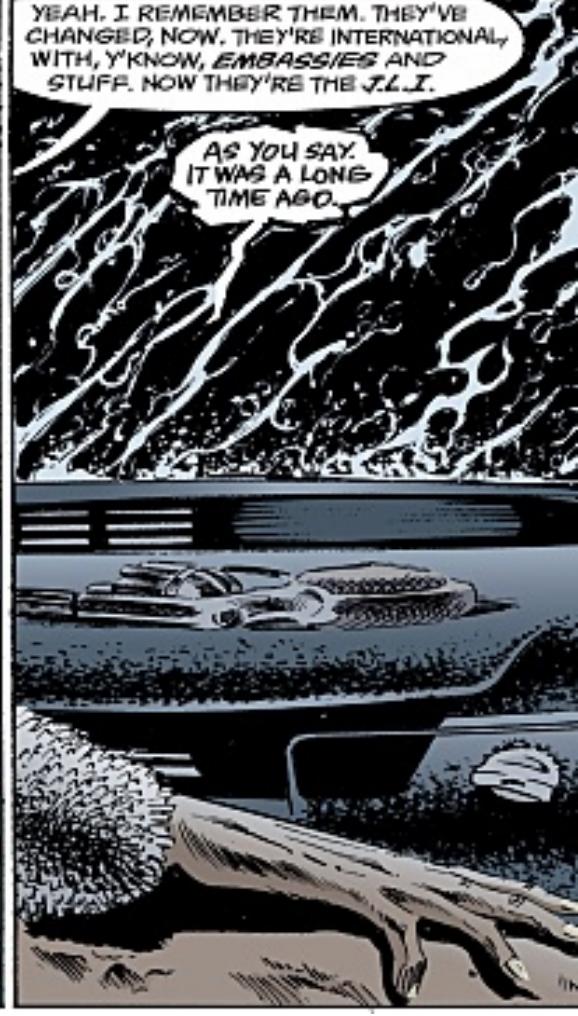
GOT IT!

HMM. LET'S GO WAKE HIM UP.



WHO ELSE WAS IN THE OLD JLA...?







I seek a ruby, last Martian. It was known to your kind as D'orilar, the Stone of Binding. It was taken from a human, kept as a souvenir: where is it now?

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE OLD JLA'S TROPHIES, JOHN?

Where?

A WAREHOUSE. UPSTATE GOTHAM. LITTLE TOWN CALLED MAYHEW. I CAN GET YOU THE EXACT ADDRESS...

THAT STUFF? IT'S IN STORAGE. I THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE KIND OF NICE TO PUT IT ON DISPLAY SOMEWHERE, BUT IT'S KIND OF HOKEY...

There is no need. I thank you, last Martian. If you wish, you may dream of the City of Focative Mirrors...

I thank you both. I hope you find your name, Scott Free. Goodnight.

WHO WAS THAT?

AN OLD GOD. A VERY OLD GOD. COME, SCOTT FREE; LET US HIT THE KITCHEN. I HAVE A SECRET STASH OF OREOS OF WHICH YOU ARE WELCOME TO PARTAKE.

...MOTHER SAID, IF YOU ARE GOING TO BE A CRIMINAL, JOHN, YOU ARE NOT GOING TO BRING SHAME ON THE FAMILY NAME. I HAD TO CHANGE IT. I CALLED MYSELF DESTINY. DEE IS FOR DESTINY...

NOW MOTHER'S DEAD IT DOESN'T MATTER ANY MORE. NOW I CAN BE DEE AGAIN. DEE IS FOR LOTS OF THINGS. DEATH. DUST. DARKNESS. DEMONS...

YEAH. WELL, SPEAKING AS A MOTHER OF TWO LITTLE GIRLS, JOHN, IF EITHER OF THEM ANNOUNCED THEY WANTED TO BE MASTER CRIMINALS I'D TELL THEM TO CHANGE THEIR NAMES.

...MAKE A CHANGE FROM TELLING AIMEE AND JESSIE TO TIDY UP THEIR ROOMS, I SUPPOSE.

I DIDN'T SAY YOU WERE, JOHN.

I KNOW. NOT YOU. THE OTHERS. SCIENTISTS. I'M AN HERMETIC PHILOSOPHER. AND A SCIENTIST, TOO. TRULY.

IF I WASN'T A SCIENTIST I COULDN'T HAVE DONE WHAT I DID TO THE RUBY.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT DREAMS ARE MADE OF, ROSEMARY KELLY?

MADE OF? THEY'RE JUST DREAMS...

NO. THEY AREN'T. PEOPLE THINK DREAMS AREN'T REAL BECAUSE THEY AREN'T MADE OF MATTER, OF PARTICLES. DREAMS ARE REAL. BUT THEY ARE MADE OF VIEWPOINTS, OF IMAGES, OF MEMORIES AND PUNS AND LOST HOPES...

THE RUBY SEEMS TO TURN THEM INTO MATTER. IT FORCES THEM TO TRANSLATE THEMSELVES INTO FORMS WE CAN RECOGNIZE IN THIS WORLD.

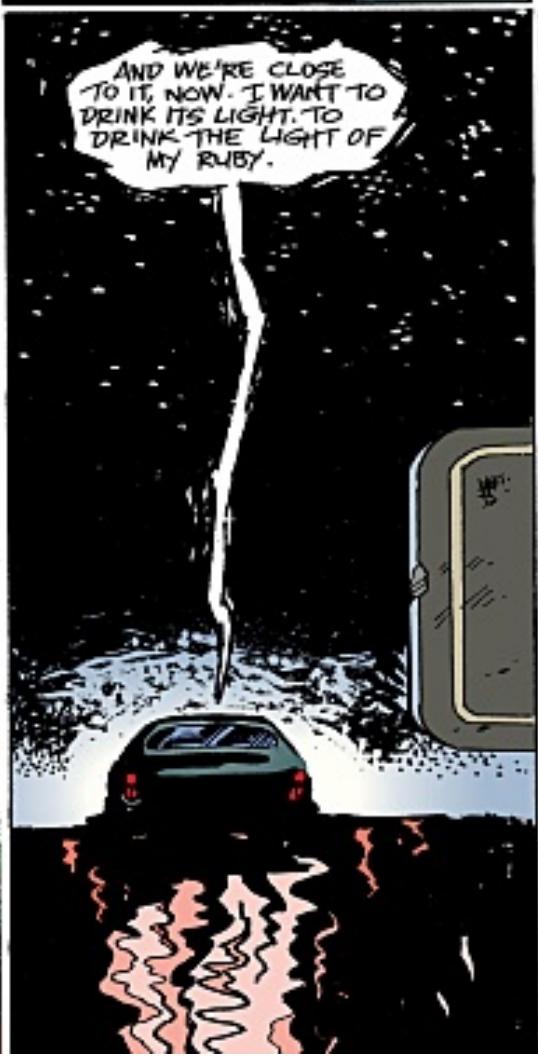
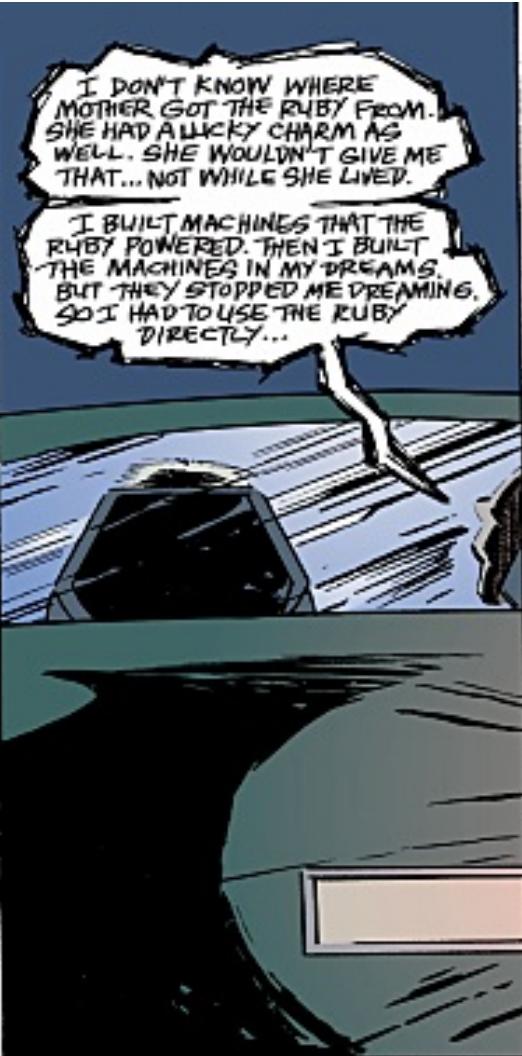
IT ALSO CONTROLS DREAMS IN THEIR RAW STATE. YOUR DREAMS. ANYBODY'S DREAMS.

I DON'T KNOW WHERE MOTHER GOT THE RUBY FROM. SHE HAD A LUCKY CHARM AS WELL. SHE WOULDN'T GIVE ME THAT... NOT WHILE SHE LIVED.

I BUILT MACHINES THAT THE RUBY POWERED. THEN I BUILT THE MACHINES IN MY DREAMS. BUT THEY STOPPED ME DREAMING. SO I HAD TO USE THE RUBY DIRECTLY...

I CODED CIRCUITY INTO ITS CLASP. I CHANGED ITS RESONANCE; I IRRADIATED IT; I FORCED FLAMES; I ISOLATED IT FROM ITS ORIGINAL POWER SOURCE, WHATEVER--OR WHOEVER-- THAT WAS.

I MADE IT MORE REAL. I... CHANGED IT.



I am a passenger.
I am moving through
your dreams. I am
riding in your dreams.

I ride on dragonback
from Manhattan; the
dragon is made of riveted
iron and smells of cotton
candy.

I travel briefly by bus: in
the back the dreamer copulates
desperately, not noticing his
autonomous passenger. I sit
at the front and talk to the
driver.

Approaching the state of
Delaware, the dreamer is a
small dog, dreaming impatiently
of a past life long forgotten,
when he sailed tall ships across
uncharted seas.

The salt spray of
the ocean stings
my face.

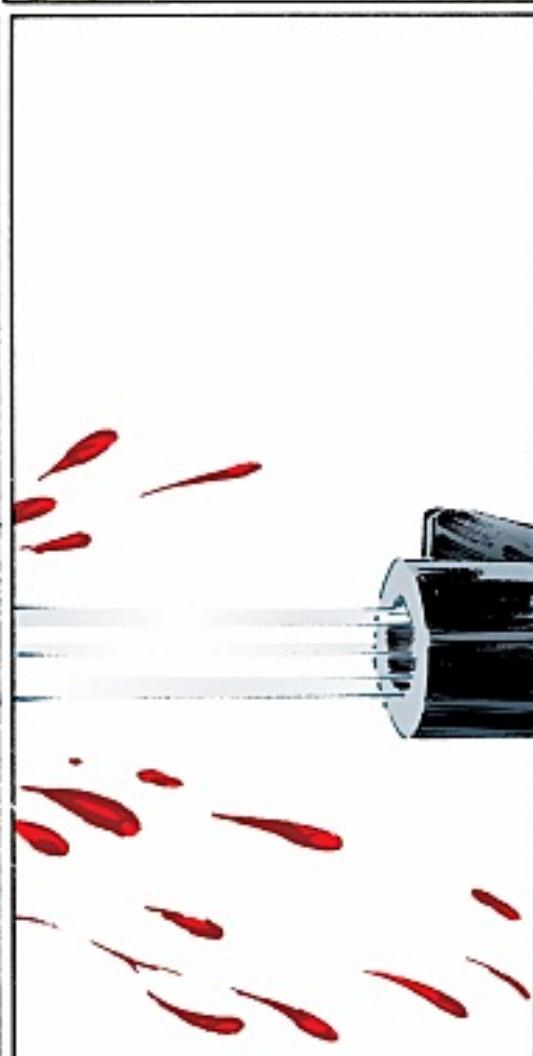
I am moving through
dreams, pulling toward
Mayhew, feeling for
the jewel.

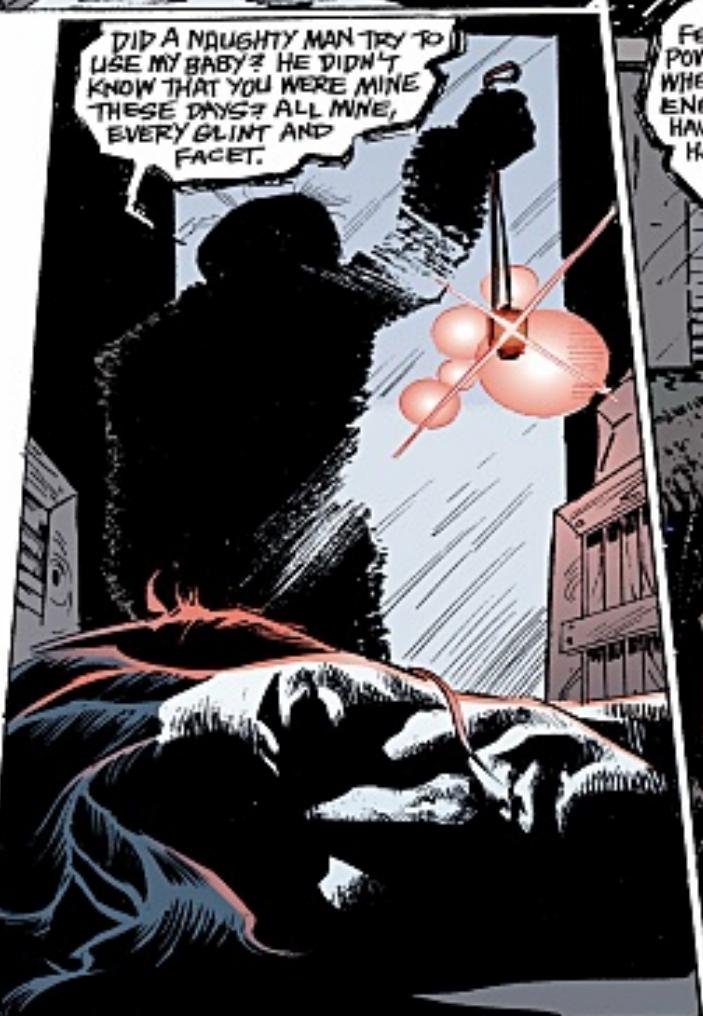
Through your dreams, my
sleeping children. You had
a passenger, and you
never knew.

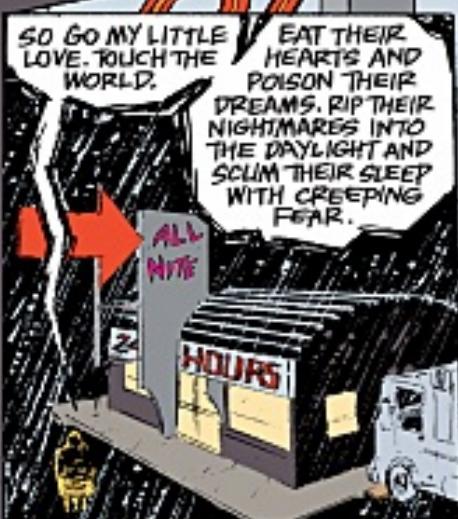








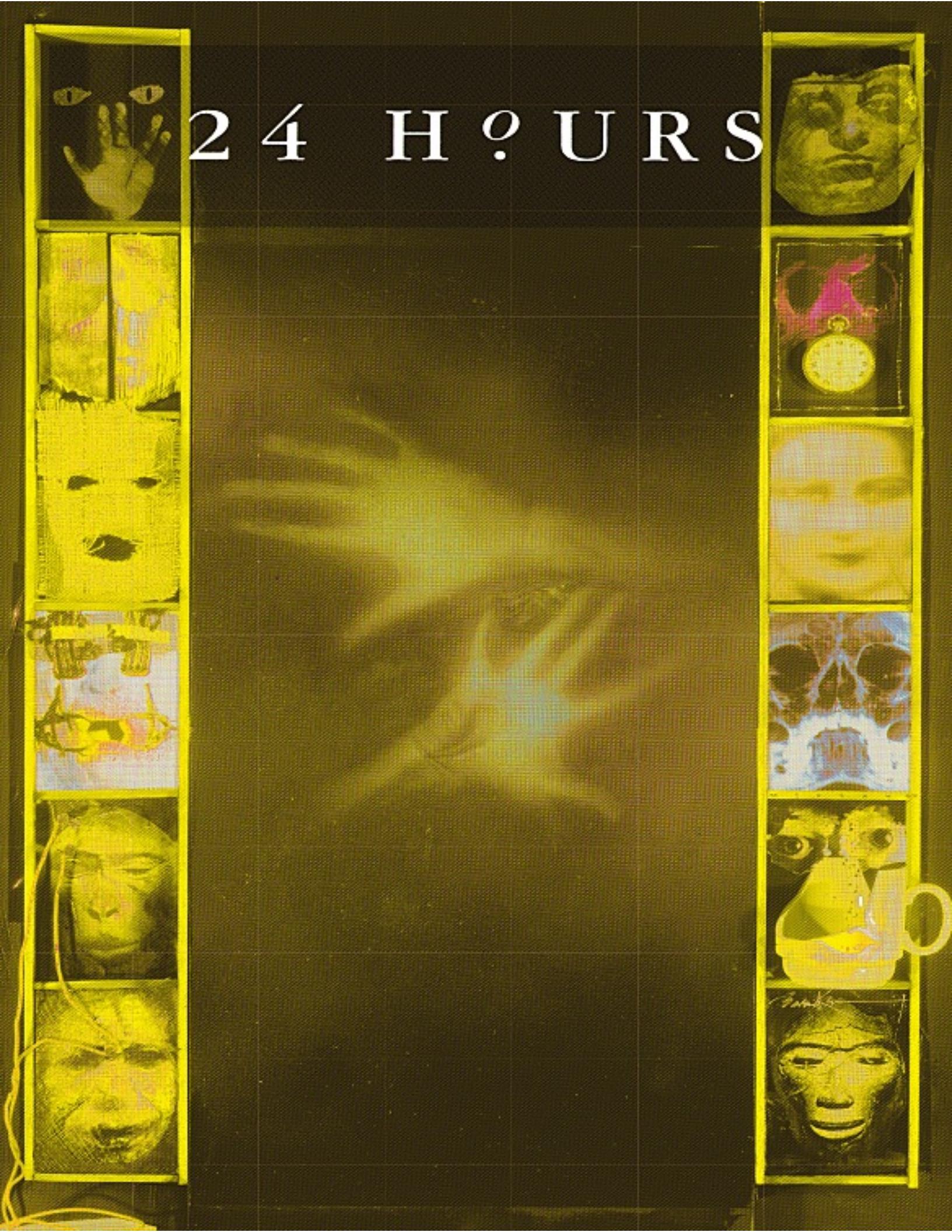




NEXT: WAITING FOR THE
END OF THE WORLD...



24 HOURS



HOUR 1: THE FLIES
WALKED INTO THE WEB.

ALL NITE DINER

HOURS

NEIL
GAIMAN,
WRITER

MIKE
DRINGENBERG
& MALCOLM
JONES III,
ARTISTS &
SPECIAL
THANKS
TO
DOM CAROLA

DANIEL
VOZZO,
COLORIST

TODD
KLEIN,
LETTERS

ART YOUNG, ASST. EDITOR
KAREN BERGER, EDITOR



BETTE-- CAN I HAVE A
COFFEE REFILL? AND A
TUNA ON RYE?

SURE,
HON.

ON HER DAYS OFF, AFTER SHE'S
TIDIED THE HOUSE, BETTE
MUNROE WRITES STORIES.

SHE WRITES THEM IN LONGHAND
ON YELLOW LEGAL PADS.



SOMETIMES SHE WRITES ABOUT
HER EX-HUSBAND, BERNARD, AND
ABOUT HER SON, BERNARD JR.,
WHO WENT OFF TO COLLEGE
AND NEVER CAME BACK TO HER.



SHE MAKES THESE STORIES
END HAPPILY.

MOST OF HER STORIES,
HOWEVER, ARE ABOUT
HER CUSTOMERS.



THEY LOOK AT HER AND THEY
JUST SEE A WAITRESS; THEY DON'T
KNOW SHE'S NURSING A SECRET.

A SECRET THAT KEEPS HER ACHING
CALF-MUSCLES AND HER COFFEE-
SCALDED FINGERS AND HER WEARI-
NESS FROM DRAGGING HER DOWN...

IT'S HER SECRET.

SHE'S NEVER SHOWN ANYONE HER STORIES.

COMING RIGHT UP!

ONE TUNA ON RYE ...

ONE DAY SHE KNOWS SHE'LL PACKAGE THE PADS UP, BIND THEM IN BROWN PAPER, SEND THEM TO DEAR ABBY, OR EARL WILSON, OR JACKIE COLLINS.

AND A COFFEE. THERE.

"BUT YOU'RE A WRITER," JOHNNY CARSON WILL SAY TO HER, "HOW DO YOU KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE A WAITRESS?"

SHE'LL SMILE.

SHE WON'T TELL HIM.

IT'LL BE HER SECRET.

THEY'LL READ THEM, AND THEY'LL PUBLISH THEM AND EVERYONE WILL MARVEL AT HER DEPICTION OF HAPPY, HAPPY SMALL-TOWN LIFE.

BETTE -- I'M GOING TO USE THE BATHROOM. IF DONNA COMES BY, TELL HER TO WAIT, OK?

SHE ALREADY KNOWS JUDY'S STORY.

PEOPLE THINK BETTE TALKS TO THEM SO EASILY BECAUSE SHE'S A WAITRESS, THEY DON'T REALIZE SHE'S A WRITER GATHERING MATERIAL.

SURE, JUDY.

SHE ISN'T SMALL-MINDED; A WRITER CAN'T AFFORD TO BE. WHAT THOSE GIRLS DO IS A SIN AGAINST GOD, AND UNNATURAL, BUT STILL ...

BETTE FEELS SORRY FOR THEM. IN HER STORIES SHE'S ALREADY MARRIED BOTH OFF THEM OFF TO FINE YOUNG MEN.



MA'M? MA'M, COULD I TROUBLE YOU FOR MORE COFFEE OVER HERE, IF YOU PLEASE?



IT'S NOT YET ELEVEN. YOU'VE STILL GOT AN HOUR TO KILL.



THE YOUNG MAN, NOW. HE'D SPOKEN TO HER EASY AS ANYTHING, JUST AS IF HE WAS REALLY TALKING TO A WAITRESS.

TELL THEM YOU'RE A WRITER AND THEY SHUT UP TIGHTER THAN CLAMS.

HE'S GOING FOR AN INTERVIEW WITH THAT BIG CHEMICAL WORKS. MAYBE TONIGHT SHE'LL WRITE A STORY ABOUT HIM.



HE'LL GET THE JOB.

MARRY THE BOSS' DAUGHTER.

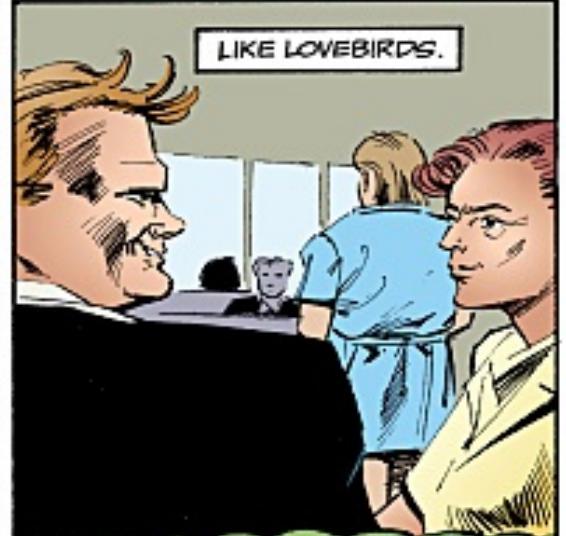
HII I'M BETTE

CHEESEBURGER, BLACK COFFEE, PLEASE, BETTE. YOU, KATE?

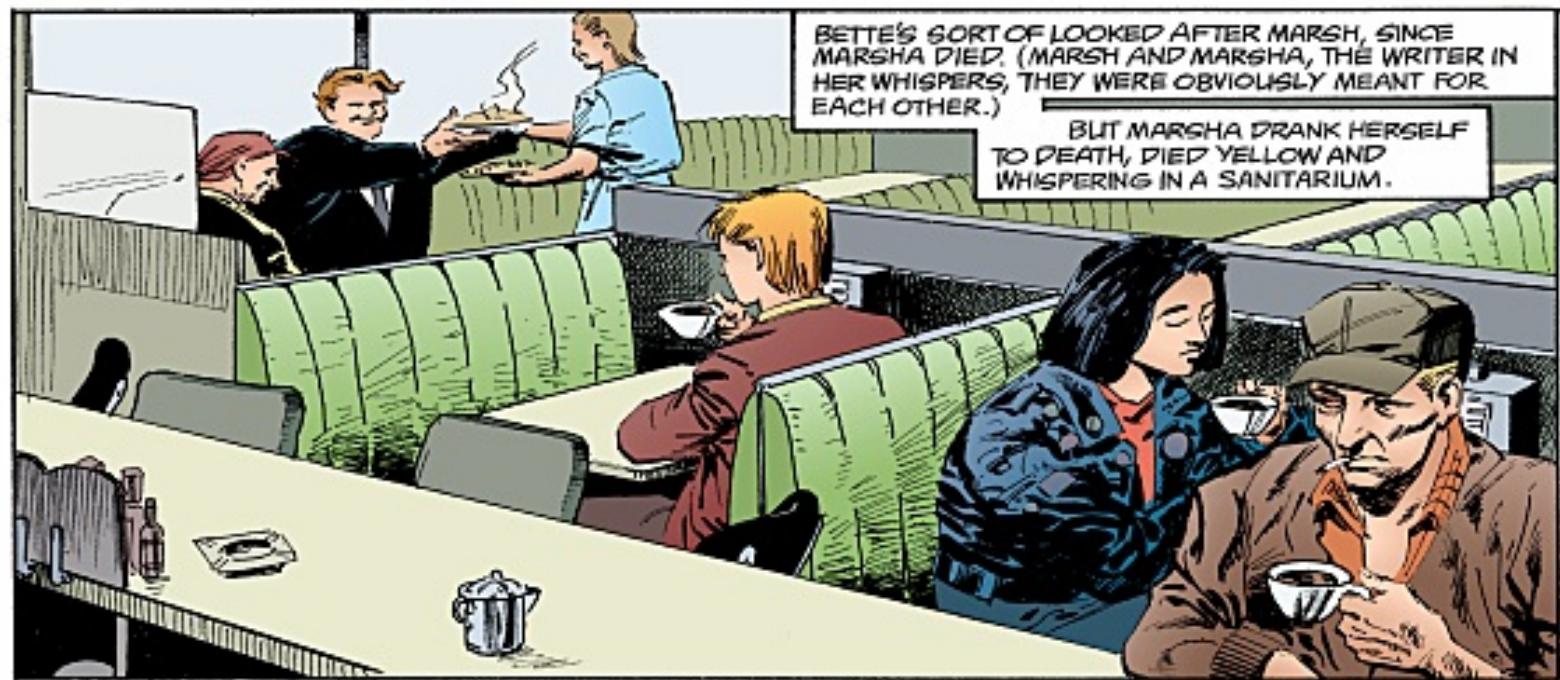
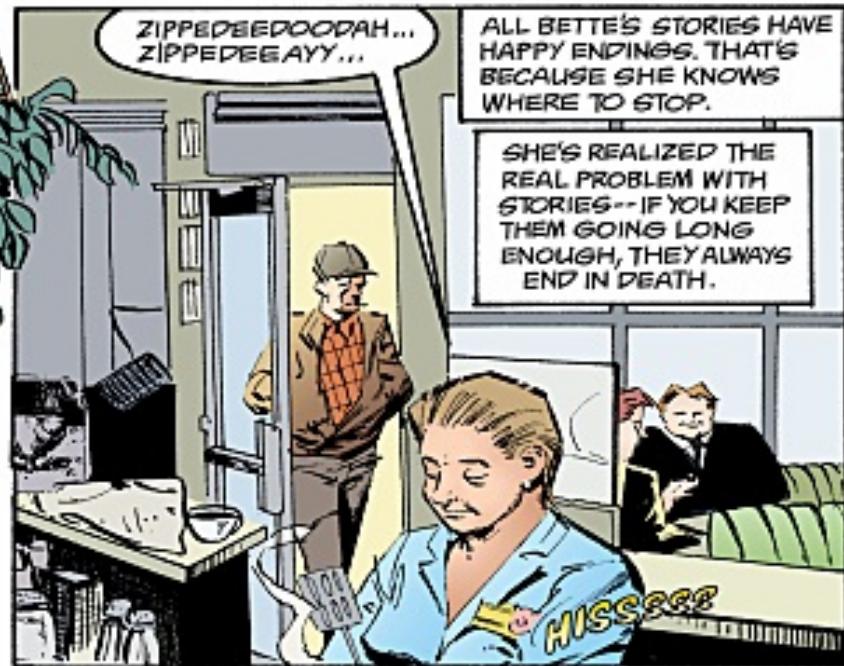


NOW, THAT COUPLE, THE FLETCHERS. TOWN TALK HAD IT HE'D MARRIED HER FOR HER MONEY, BUT BETTE COULD SEE THEY DOTTED ON EACH OTHER.

I'LL HAVE A SALAD, LOW CAL DRESSING, AND A SANKA WITH LOW-FAT MILK, IF YOU HAVE IT.



TAKE ONE LOVEBIRD AWAY, THE OTHER HANKERS AND DIES.





THEY WEREN'T JUST
CUSTOMERS.

THEY WERE
RAW MATERIAL.

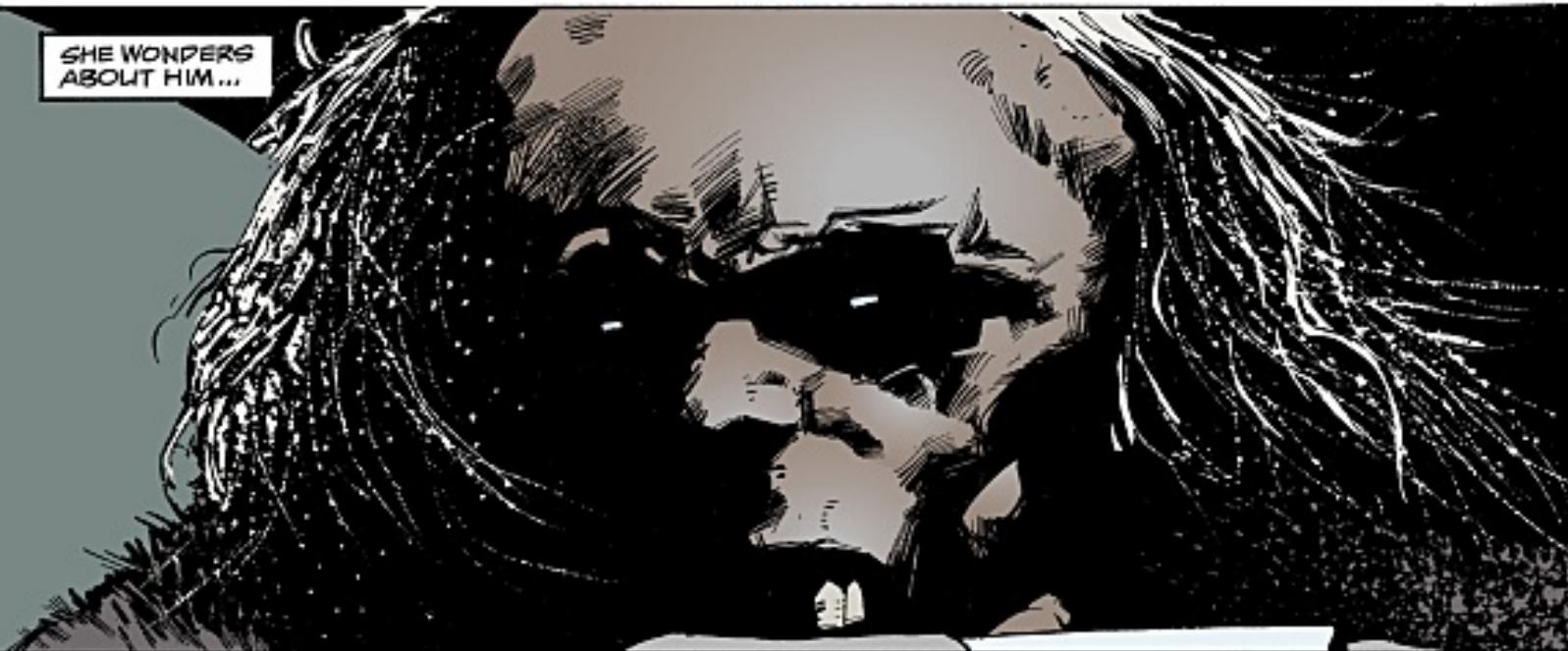


EVEN THE QUIET LITTLE STRANGER
IN THE CORNER SEAT.

HE'D BEEN HERE SINCE SHE CAME
ON SHIFT THIS MORNING, NURSING
COFFEE AFTER COFFEE, HARDLY
DRINKING AT ALL, JUST WATCHING
THEM COOL, AWAY IN A DREAM-
WORLD OF HIS OWN...



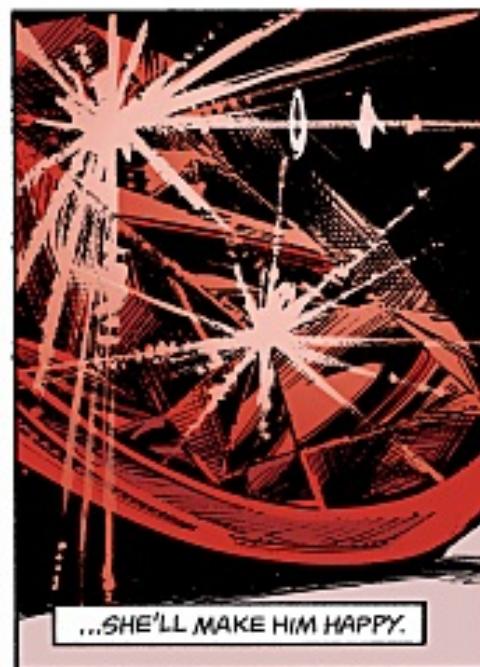
SHE WONDERS
ABOUT HIM...



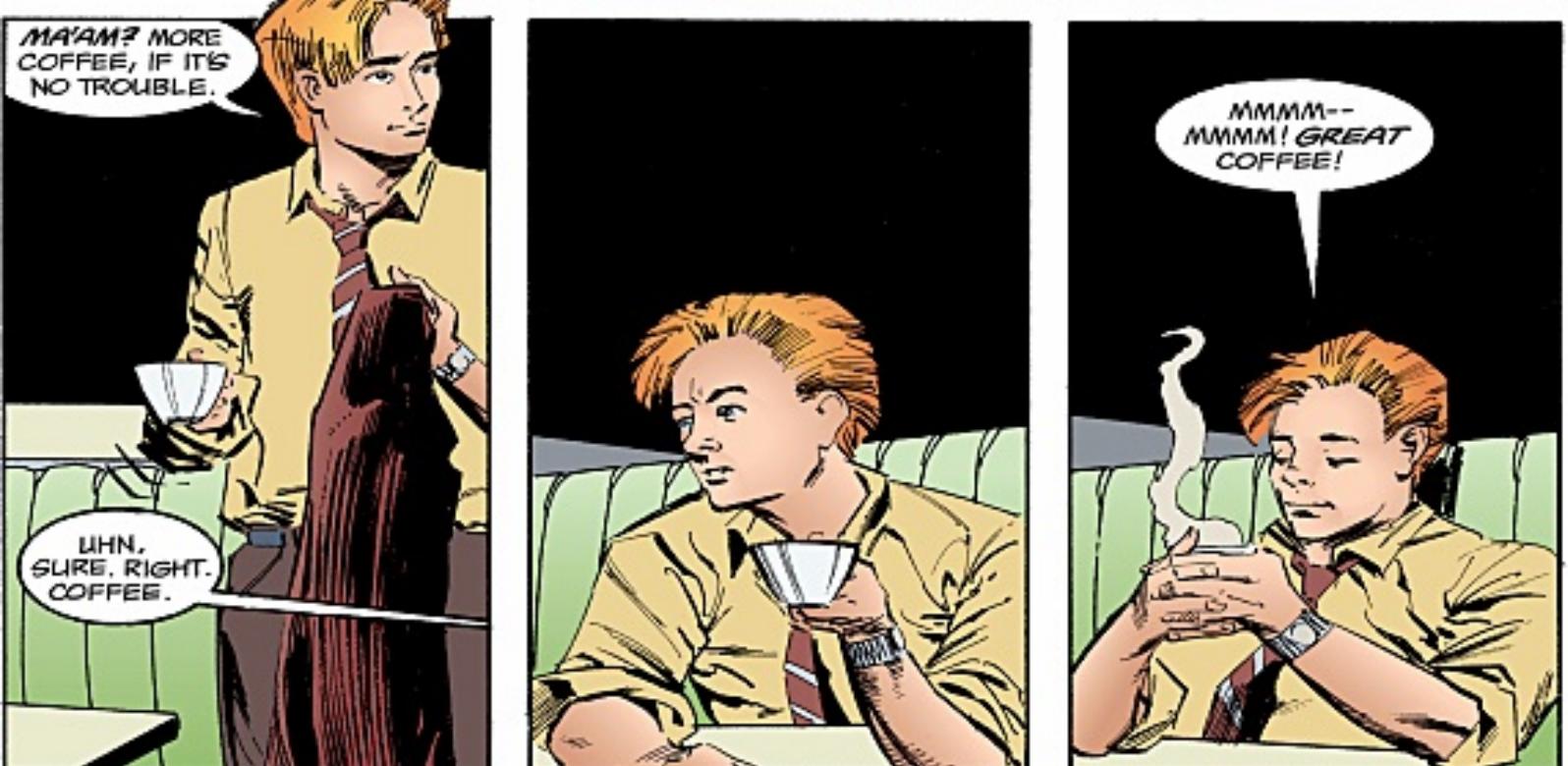
SHE'LL TALK TO HIM WHEN THINGS
GET QUIETER, DRAW HIM OUT, THEN
TONIGHT, WHEN MARSH HAS
CLIMBED IN HIS TRUCK AND
HEADED BACK UPSTATE, SHE'LL
WRITE A STORY ABOUT HIM.



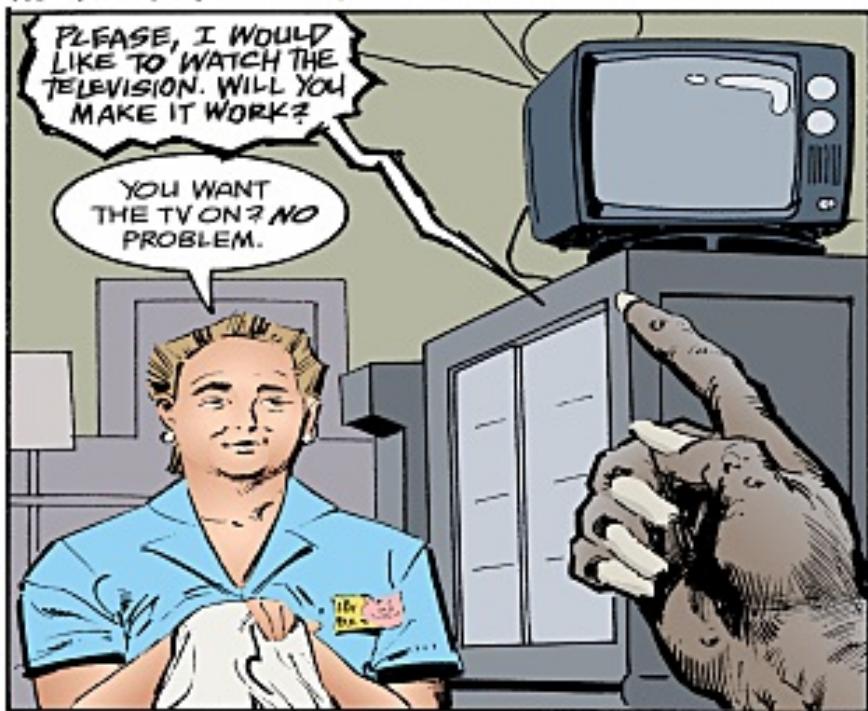
AND IN HER
STORY...



...SHE'LL MAKE HIM HAPPY.



HOUR 3: AFTERNOON SOAP OPERA





**HOUR 4: HE WATCHED
TELEVISION.**

LOOK EVERYONE--
IT'S DINO!

YAYYYY! □



HEY KIDS, DINO THE DINOSAUR IS TRYING TO TELL ME SOMETHING.



SEE, DINO! I DIDN'T
KNOW IT WAS TERRY
PTERANOPON'S BIRTHDAY
TODAY. SHOULD WE BAKE
HIM A CAKE?



AND YOU WANT TO
TELL ME SOMETHING ELSE,
DO YOU DINO?

...WE'RE GOING TO DIE.
DINO SAYS WE'RE ALL GOING
TO DIE. DINO TOLD ME. HE
SAYS WE SHOULD SLASH
OUR WRISTS NOW...



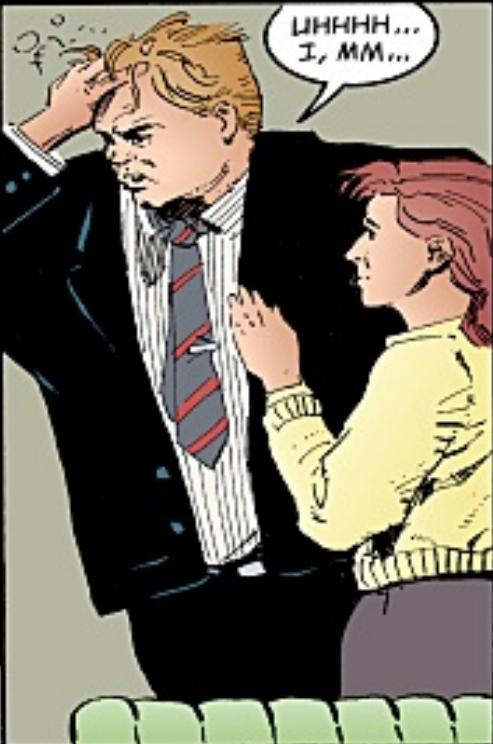
... AND REMEMBER TO
SLASH DOWN THE WRIST,
BOYS AND GIRLS, NOT
ACROSS THE WRIST...



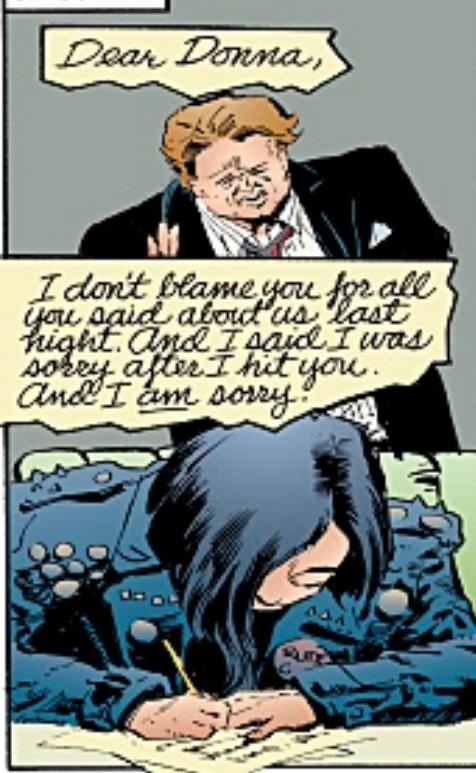
**PLEASE
STAND BY**
WE ARE EXPERIENCING
TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES



HOUR 5: THE FLIES GET RESTLESS,



HOUR 6:



HOUR 7: HE MAKES THEM FEEL GOOD. HE MAKES THEIR DREAMS COME TRUE. GIVES THEM WHAT THEY WANT.



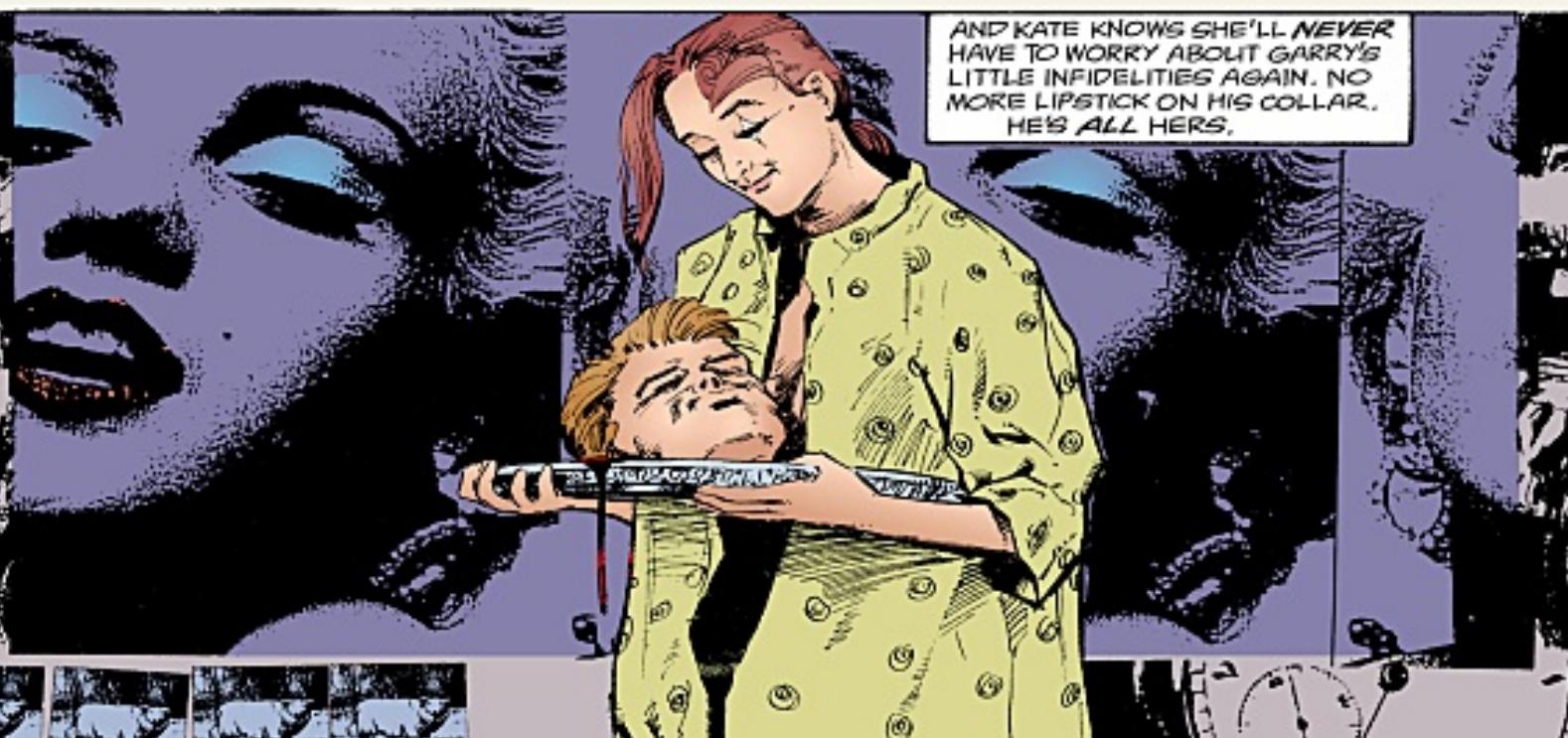
AND MARK SAYS, LET'S DO LUNCH. HAVE YOUR PEOPLE CALL MY PEOPLE. MONEY. MONEY.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

AND GARRY'S HAVING A \$20 HOOKER IN THE CONVERTIBLE. THEN HE'LL BEAT HER UP, THROW HER OUT OF THE CAR, DRIVE OFF. HE GETS SUCH A KICK OUT OF DOING THAT...



AND KATE KNOWS SHE'LL NEVER HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT GARRY'S LITTLE INFIDELITIES AGAIN. NO MORE LIPSTICK ON HIS COLLAR. HE'S ALL HERS.



HOUR 8: HE MOVES AMONG THEM, EXPERIENCING THEIR LITTLE PLEASURES, THEIR MINOR JOYS.



HOUR 9: CONFLICT, HE DECIDES, REVEALS CHARACTER.

...FILTHY DYKE BITCH!

LIGHT!

HOUR 10: THEY LOVE HIM.

DEEE...

DEEEE...

DEEEE...

DEEE...WE LOVE YOU, DEEE...

BEAUTIFUL. YOU'RE SO BEAUTIFUL.

HOUR 11: HE CATCHES UP ON THE NEWS.

...NIGHTMARES, SLEEPLESSNESS AND INSANITY REPORTED EARLIER ON LOCAL NEWS IS SHAPING UP TO BE A PLANET-WIDE PHENOMENON.

REPORTS HAVE ALREADY COME IN FROM ASIA AND EUROPE OF...OF ACCIDENTS AND DISASTERS, F-FROM PEOPLE FALLING ASLEEP ON F-FREWAYS, PLANES CRASHING, BOTCHED SURGERY...

HERE WITH A F-FULL REPORT IS MARY GENTIAN. MARY?

LEADING FUNDAMENTALISTS HAVE ALREADY BEGIN TO PROCLAIM THE ARMAGEDDON.

INTERNATIONALLY, PEOPLE CAN'T SLEEP. OR THEY HAVE NIGHTMARES. AND ANYBODY EVEN MARGINALLY MENTALLY UNBALANCED IS GOING OVER THE EDGE.

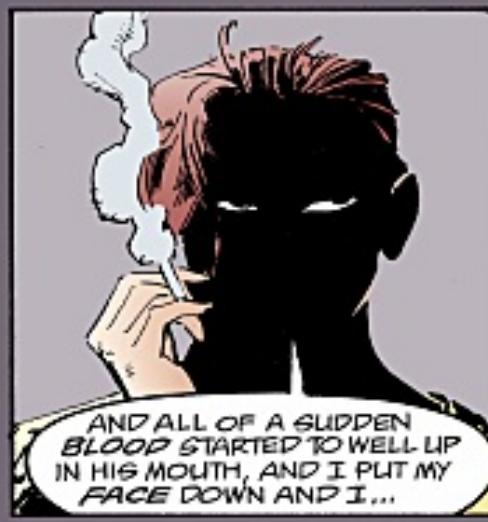
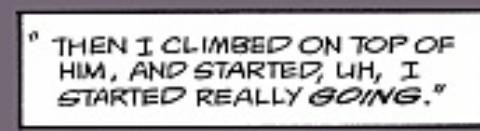
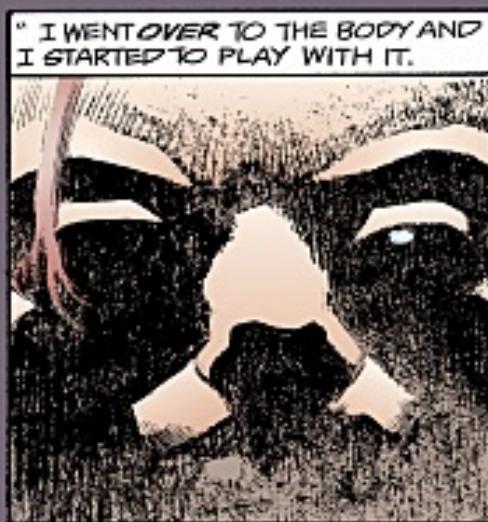
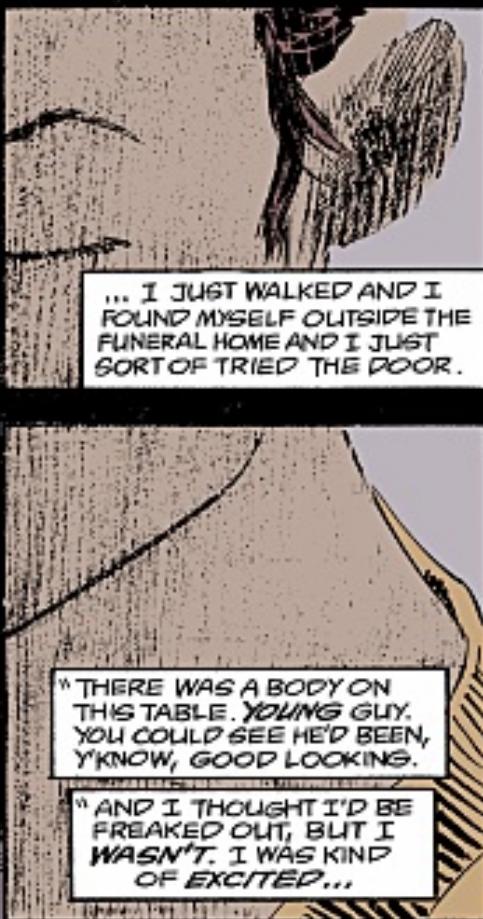
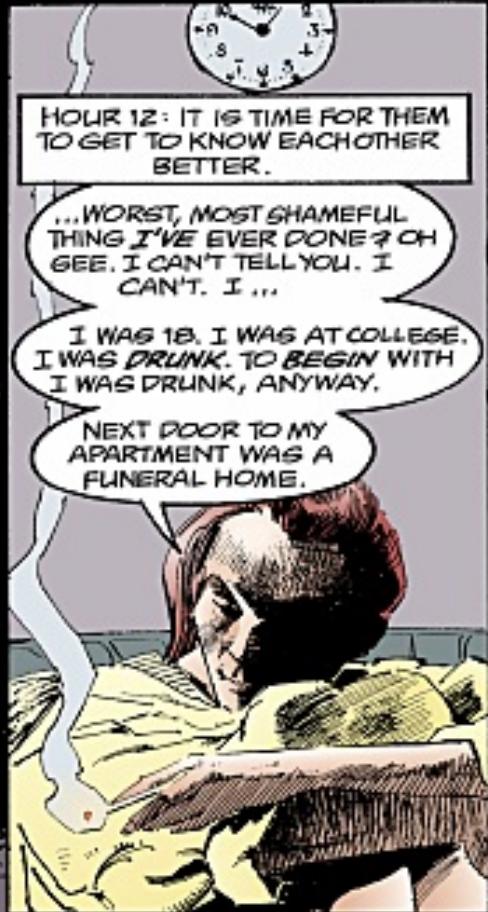


NO INTERNATIONAL SUPERHEROES WERE AVAILABLE FOR COMMENT, SO I SPOKE TO HERSCHEL OF LOCAL SUPER TEAM "THE AMAZING HERSCHEL AND BETTY":

HI, UH...AM I ON? IS THIS WORKING? YEAH...?

WELL, ME AND BETTY, WE FIGURE IT'S PROBABLY RAYS.

AND FINALLY, IN BALTIMORE, A WOMAN CLAIMS SHE'S TAUGHT HER DUCK TO TAP-DANCE. MORE ON THAT AFTER THE BREAK.



HOUR 13: THEY GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER INTIMATELY...

THEIR HOUSE IS A MU-SE-U-M

WHEN PEOPLE COME TO SEE 'EM

THEY REALLY ARE A SCREE-U-M

AH.
AH.

YESSS.
OHH YESSSS,
MNN.

EEEEE.
MMMM.
EEEEE.
JESUS.

OH DO
IT. NOW.
DO IT.

THE
ADAMS
FAMILY

THE ADDAMS
FAMILY.

BASTARD.
HH. ALL OF YOU.
HHH. ARE.
ALL. AHHH.
SUCH. ALL. HHH.
BASTARD...

YES. NOW.
YESSSS.

AH.
AH.
AH.
AH.
AH.
AH.
AHHHH
HHHHH...

NEAT.



CHIPS
LAW
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Bob
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BRI



KEEP COMING WALKING KNOCKING TAKING A LOOK
TAKING A LOOK
KNOCKING TAKING ON MY CLUCKING ELECTRIC DREAMS OF T.V. SCREENS FRIENDS OF CHIPS + CHEESE THAT
WANTS THAT DOWN IN KNOCKING TAKING ON MY CLUCKING ELECTRIC DREAMS OF T.V. SCREENS FRIENDS OF CHIPS + CHEESE THAT

HOUR 14 : MIDNIGHT, AND HE CONSULTED ORACLES.



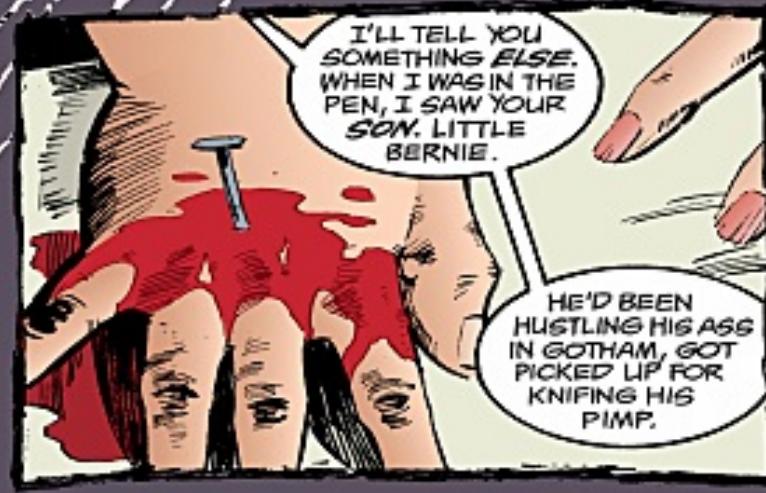


HOUR 16: PARTY GAMES.

MURDER IN
THE DARK...

AAAAHH!

He-he-he-he-hee!



HOUR 18: HE
BRINGS OUT
THE BEAST
IN THEM.

THE FEMALES, NERVOUS OF THE
COMING CONFLICT, HUDDLE
TOGETHER FOR COMFORT.

THE PACK LEADER
IS SPOILING FOR
A FIGHT.

THE OLD MALE GNAWS AT ITS
TRAPPED FRONT LEG. IT HAS
FOLLOWED THE PACK AT A
DISTANCE FOR YEARS,
HUNTING FOR SCRAPS.

THEY
GROWL.

THE YOUNG MALE
ADVANCES. SOON
THE FEMALES
WILL BE ALL HIS.

THE PACK LEADER
PAUSES, THEN SPRINGS.

EVEN A MAN WHO IS PURE IN
HEART AND SAYS HIS PRAYERS
EACH NIGHT...

RRR OOO AW RRR

RRRR



RRRRRRRoowRRRAA

THE PACK LEADER'S TEETH ARE STRONG AND SHARP. HE IS A GOOD LEADER. THE CHALLENGE HAS BEEN MET.

THE SMELL OF BLOOD IS HEAVY ON THE AIR.

AAAAOOOOOOOOOO

THE VICTORY, LIKE THE BLOOD, IS SWEET.

HOUR 19: HE LIES TO THEM.

"...TO PROVE IT'S SAFE, I'LL HAVE THE GREEN SIDE, YOU HAVE THE RED HALF."

TRUSTING THE WICKED QUEEN, SNOW WHITE TOOK A BITE FROM THE ROSY RED APPLE, AND INSTANTLY FELL DOWN AS IF SHE WERE DEAD.

AH.

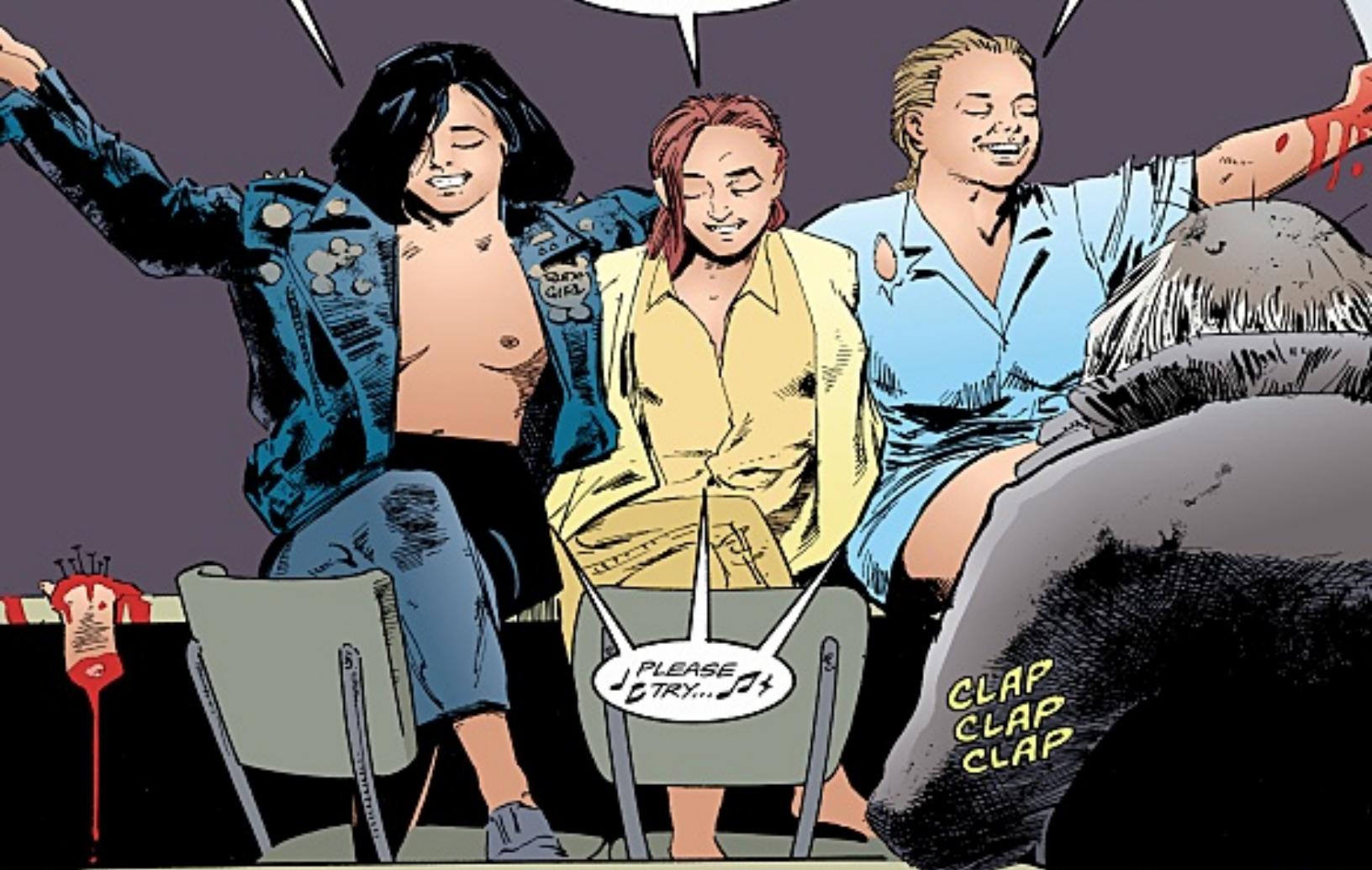
BUT SHE'S NOT REALLY DEAD, IS SHE, DOCTOR DEE? IS SHE...?

HOUR 20: IT WAS TIME FOR ENTERTAINMENT.

EVEN WHEN THE DARKEST
CLOUDS ARE IN THE SKY...

YOU MUSTN'T CRY
AND YOU MUSTN'T
SIGH... J J J

SPREAD A LITTLE
HAPPINESS AS YOU
GO BY... J J # J



HOUR 21: HE SHOWS THEM THE
DELIGHTS OF BELIEF.

AHN, AH, GOD.

I CAN SEE
IT! SWEET
LORD...

I CAN
SEE THE
GLORY!



HOUR 22.

Please, thank you
for saving me!



HOUR 23.

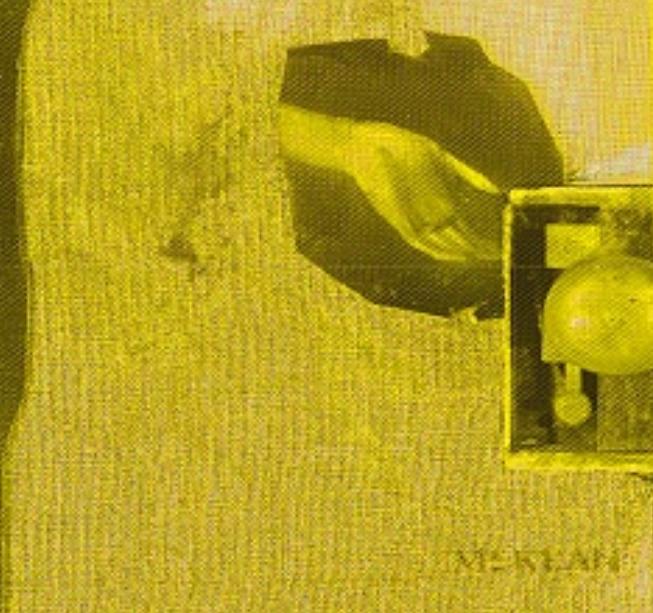


HOUR 24.





SOUND AND FURY



LISTEN: YOU
CAN HEAR THE
SCREAMING.

HAROLD SMITH PROWL'S
THE DOGS' HOME, A
TIRE IRON CLUTCHED
IN HIS BLOODY FIST.

THREE CHILDREN ARE
TRAPPED IN AN ELEVATOR
WITH BOBBY-JOE McCANN.

MALIDE CARILLON
SCREAMS WITH
LAUGHTER AS THE
FLAME DEVOURS
THE GERIATRIC
WARD.

LISTEN.

GASOLINE

LISTEN:

YOU CAN HEAR SOBING.

ON THE FREEWAY HELPLESS WEEPING COMES FROM THE CRASH-SCULPTURE OF TWISTED, BLISTERED METAL, BURNING RUBBER, SHATTERED GLASS.

IN THE STREETS OF NEW YORK, A GROUP OF FUNDAMENTALISTS KNOW THAT THIS IS THE ARMAGEDDON; AND THEY ARE STILL HERE, TRAPPED ON THE EARTH.

BEREFT OF THE RAPTURE THEY WEEP FOR THEIR ABANDONMENT BY A SUDDENLY DISTANT GOD.

LISTEN TO THE ANGUISH OF A WORLD IN WHICH THE BAD THINGS ARE COMING OUT OF THE DARK PLACES.

LISTEN TO A WORLD IN PAIN.

IN THE RADIO ROOM NAN FOWLER KNOWS SHE HAS NO MORE AMBULANCES TO SEND, AND THE CALLS JUST WON'T STOP COMING IN...

LISTEN.

YOU CAN HEAR IT.

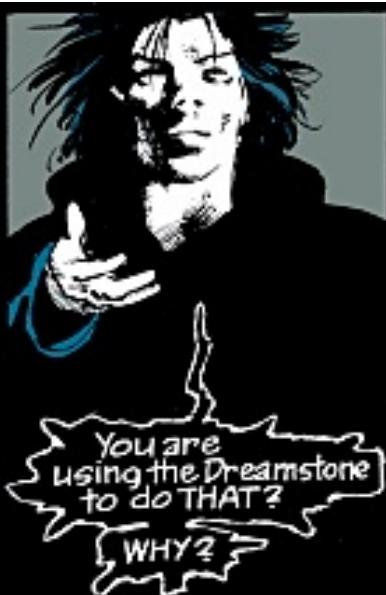
LISTEN.

S O U N D



AND F U R Y

NEIL GAIMAN, WRITER * MIKE DRINGENBERG AND
MALCOLM JONES III, ARTISTS * DANIEL VOZZO, COLORIST
TODD KLEIN, LETTERER * ART YOUNG, ASSOC. EDITOR
KAREN BERGER, EDITOR





If you reverse what
you have done to the jewel
--then let me use its
energies to repair the
damage you have done
to the world...

It stole more when
I tried to use it.

YOURS? OHHH.
YOUR SOUL IS THE
FIRE IN THE HEART
OF MY JEWEL...



Kill me ?

With the power of my own ruby ? Perhaps he could. It has absorbed too much of my soul-stuff already...

I see. If you would fight me, mortal, you will not take me unprepared.



And you shall not do it here.



If you would
steal a dreamlord's
power...

...then you shall do
it in the dreamlord's
realm.

In
DREAMS.

COWARD!

COWARDY COWARDY CUSTARD
STICK YOUR HEAD IN THE MUSTARD
BREAK YOU. SUCK YOU UP.
SPIT YOU OUT.
BASTARD.

NOW, BELOVED.
FOLLOW HIM...TAKE
ME INTO DREAMS,
MY DARLING. DO
YOU HEAR ME?

NOW!

LISTEN:

TO THE SOUNDS BARBARA WONG MAKES AS SHE SLICES THE PRETTY PICTURES OUT OF HER FLESH.



TO THE NOISE JOEY CAMPBELL MAKES AS THE OVEN CLEANER CONSUMES HIS FACE, BURNS OUT HIS EYES; TO THE HAPPY LAUGHTER OF THE LITTLE CHILDREN.



GENESEE
HOTEL

LISTEN TO THE RUSHING RIVERS OF BLOOD,
FLOWING DOWNWARDS
IN A WARM TORRENT.



OF THE HELPLESS.

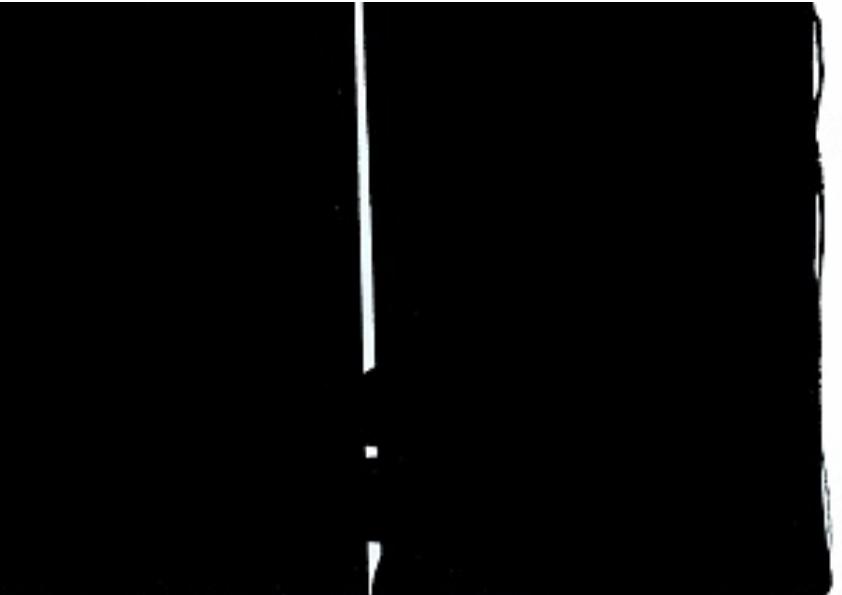
OF THE MAD.



LISTEN,

YOU CAN HEAR IT.





NO, THAT'S NOT IT AT ALL.
IT DOESN'T MEAN ANYTHING.
NOTHING MORE THAN THIS:

YOU HAD A
DREAM ABOUT RAPING
YOUR MOTHER.

A TALE TOLD BY AN
IDIOT, FULL OF SOUND
AND FURY, SIGNIFYING
NOTHING.

YOU HAD WHAT? JOHNNY
DEE, I WISH TO GOD I'D
STRANGLED YOU AT BIRTH!

DON'T SAY THAT,
MAMMA. IT WAS ONLY
A DREAM. I DIDN'T
REALLY MEAN IT.

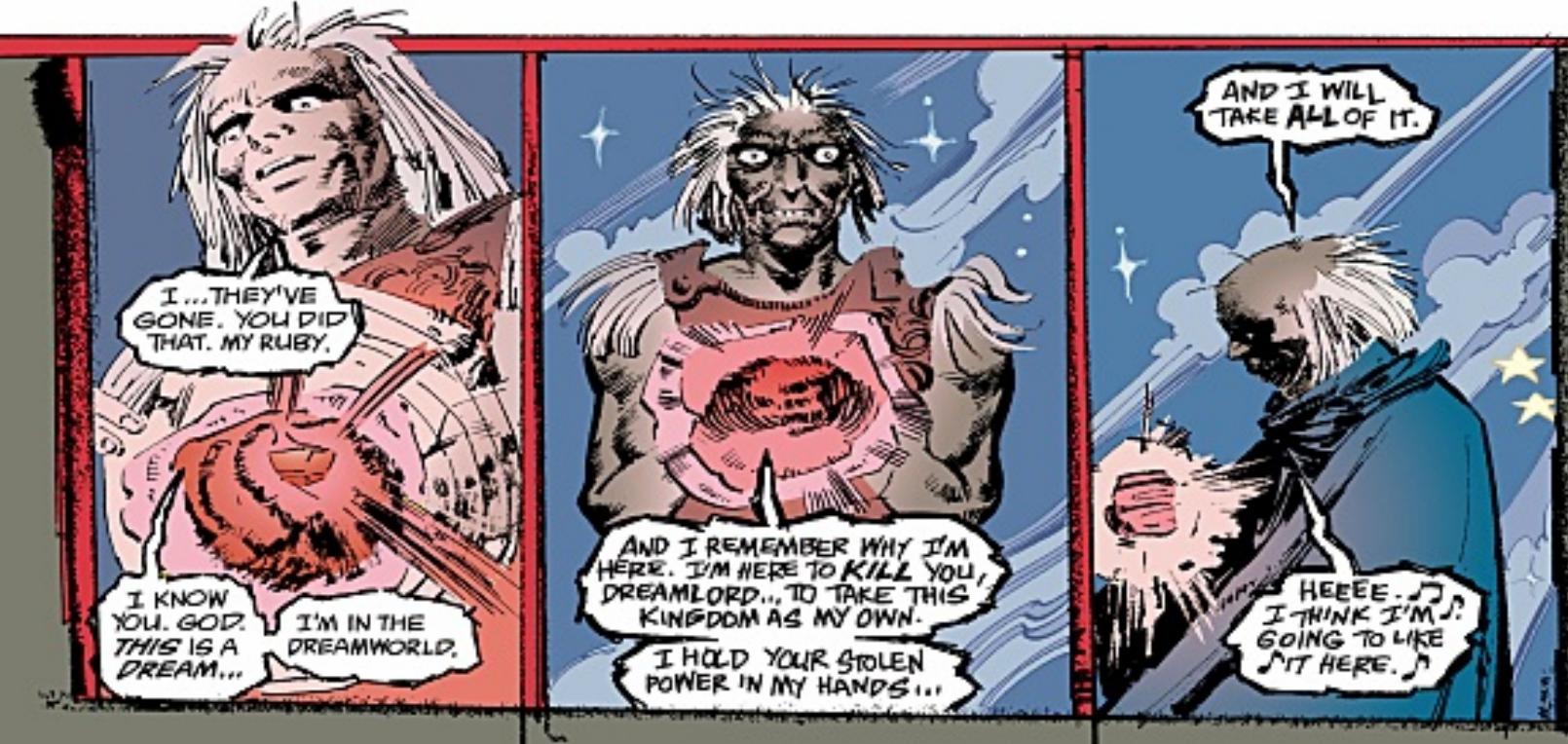
CAESAR.
BEWARE THE IDEAS
OF MARCH!

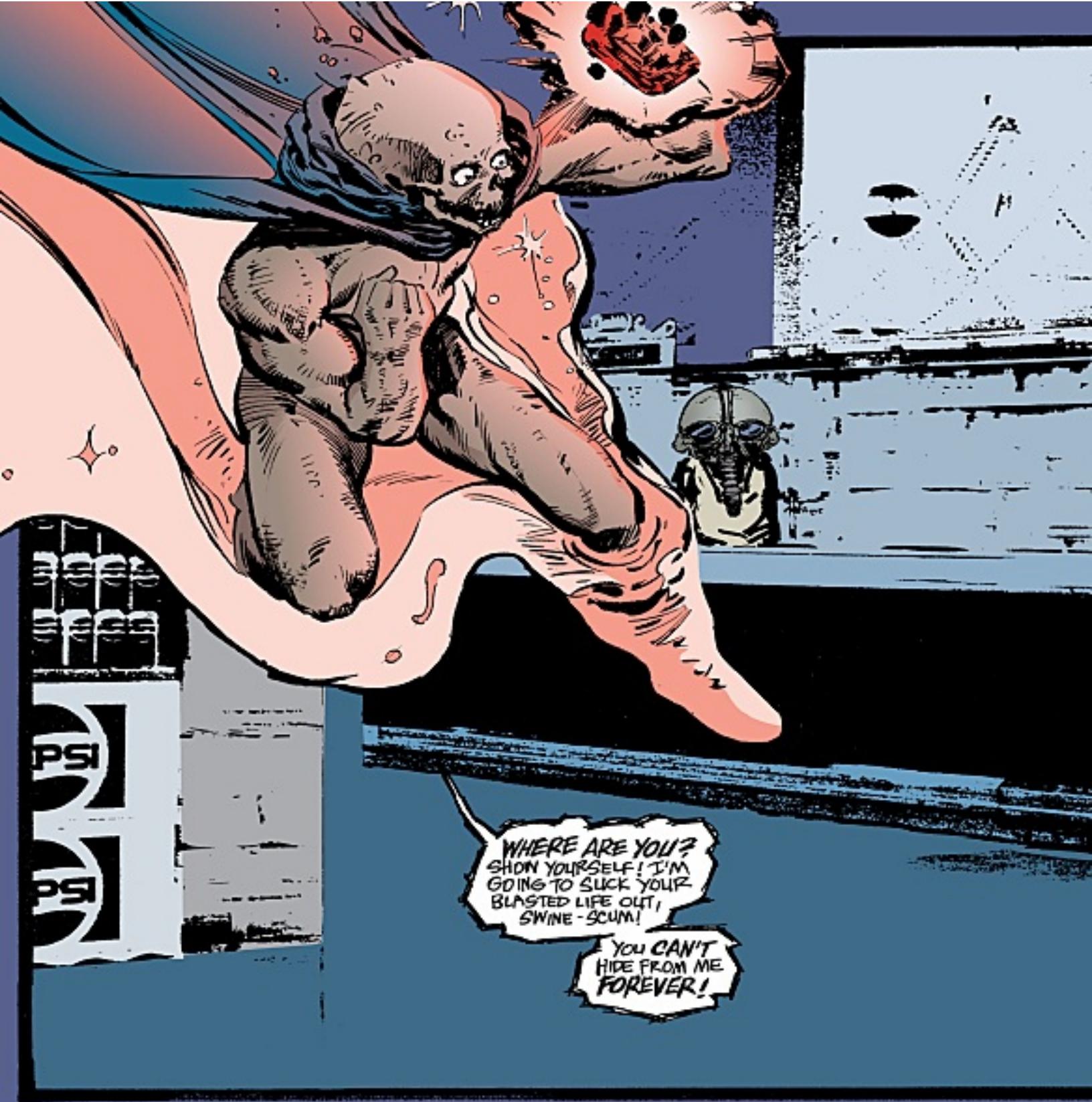
NO! IT'S NOT
THAT! WHAT IS
IT?

BEWARE
THE MARCH
OF IDEAS?

NO...

CAESAR...





5108



AND A HUNDRED
MILLION SLEEPERS
STIRRED UNEASILY
IN THEIR SLUMBER.



CAN YOU SEE
ME, STINKARD
LORD OF PIGS
AND MIRE?

LOOK!

CAN YOU SEE
ME USING YOUR
POWER TO RIP
YOUR RASTAG
DREAMWORLD
APART?

CAN YOU
SEE ME?



AND THE SLEEPING ALL OVER
THE WORLD SCREAMED AND
WHIMPERED AND MOANED. THEY
THRASHED AND CALLED OUT, AS
IF CAUGHT IN THE DARKEST OF
NIGHTMARES...

AND IN DREAMS JOHN
DEE SPEWED HIS HATE
AND LAUGHTER ONTO
THE EMERALD WINDS.

EVE STARES OUT FROM HER CAVE AT THE ERUPTING DREAM-SCAPE. HER RAVEN CAWS UNKINDLY AT THE HAVOC.

COME TO ME, YOU RAG-SHAS LORD OF NOWHERE-AT-ALL!

THE QUAKES AND LIGHTS SEND THE KEEPERS OF THE STORIES SCURRYING FOR COVER. THEIR MONSTERS HIDE WITH THEM, UNDER THE BED.

WATCH ME! I'LL RUPTURE YOUR RAMSHACKLE LAND AND PISS IN THE RUINS!

COME TO ME, YOU SPINELESS, SPITTLE-ARSED, POXY-PALE WANKER!

IN THE GARDEN OF FORKING WAYS, DESTINY FINDS HIMSELF (PERHAPS FOR THE FIRST TIME) HESITANT TO TURN TO THE NEXT PAGE IN HIS BOOK...

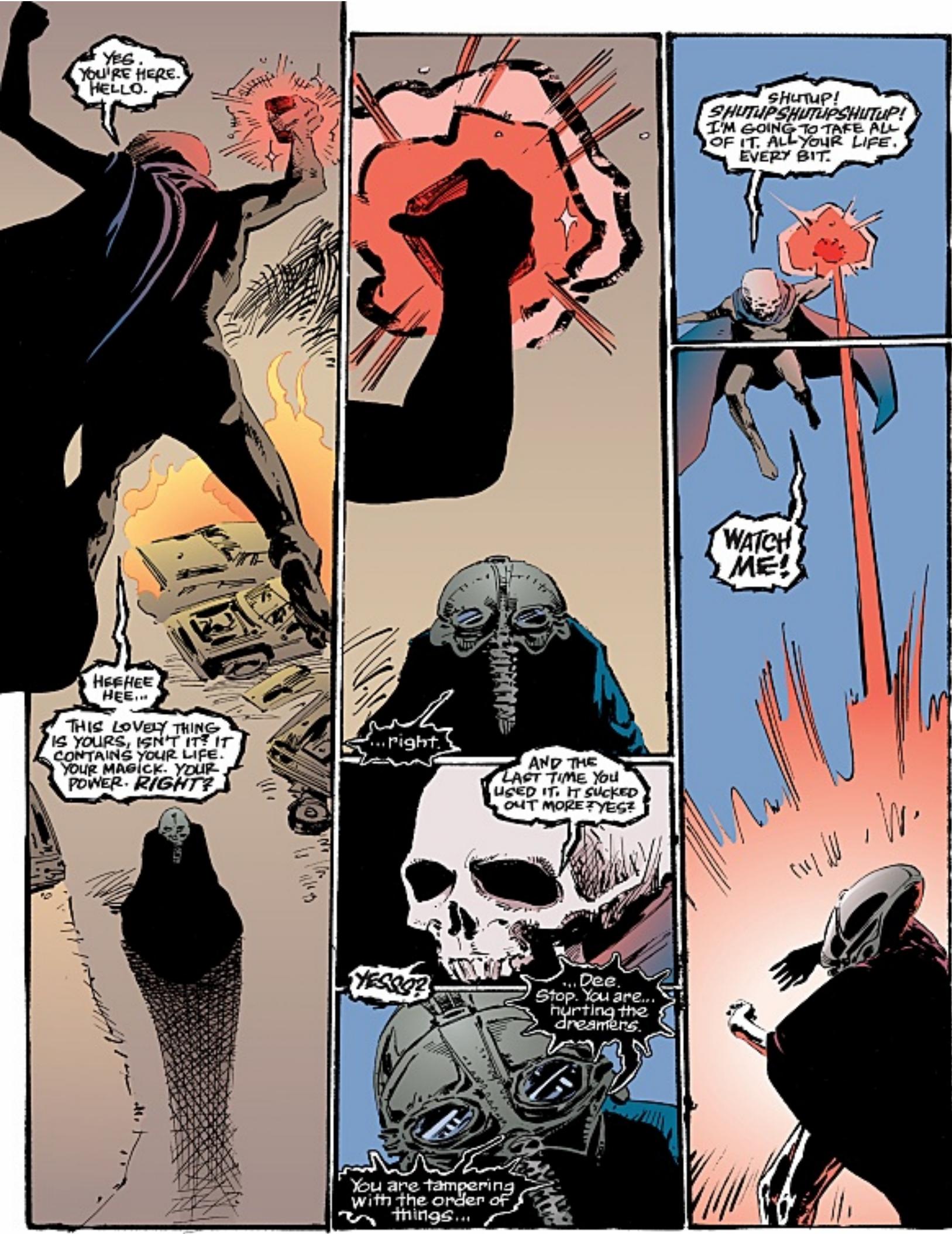
OMHHHHH. THIS IS SO GODD.

MOTHER... IF YOU COULD ONLY SEE ME NOW.

STOP!

Enough!
I am Here.
Deel! Desist!

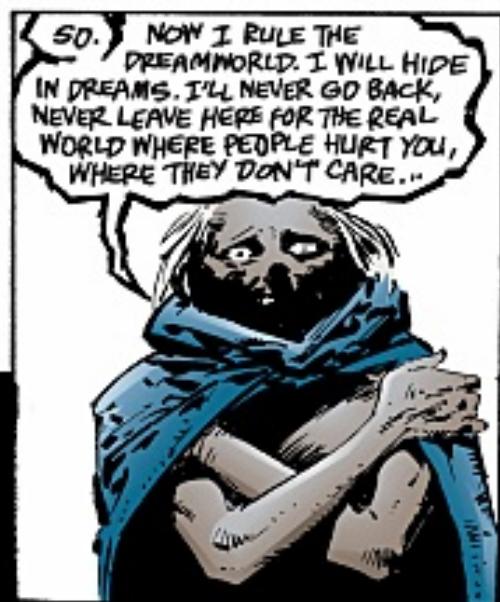
WATCH ME,
DREAM-PUKER! DO
YOU WANT TO KNOW
WHAT I'LL DO
NEXT?





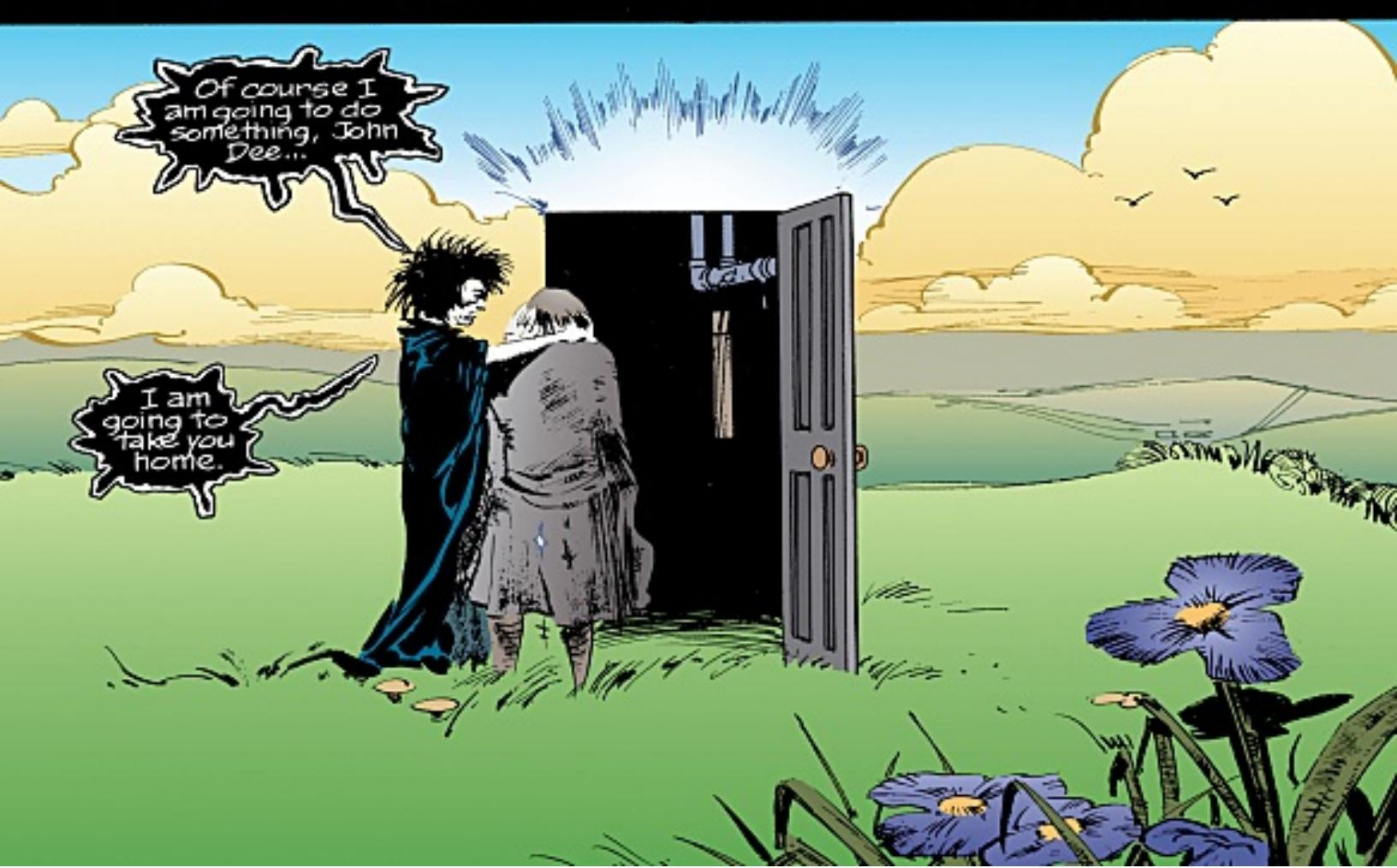
WHOOOMPH!





Thank you,
John Dee.









AS FAST AS THEY DAWNED,
THE CRAZY TIMES ARE OVER.

NAN FOWLER IS ASLEEP
ON HER DESK. SHE IS
BREATHING SLOWLY,
DEEPLY.



AND THE PATIENTS BROUGHT IN
THAT DAY, CUT AND SMASHED
AND BROKEN, ALL SLEEP LIKE
ANGELS, NEEDING NO MORPHINE.

THEY BREATHE
IN, OUT, IN, OUT,
IN UNBROKEN
AND QUIET
RHYTHM.



AND IN BEDLAM JOHN DEE
SLEEPS WITHOUT DREAMING,
BUT HIS SLEEP IS SOUND
AND RESTFUL.

THE ONLY NOISE IS THE
GENTLE, EVEN CADENCE
OF PEOPLE ASLEEP.
IN, OUT, IN, OUT.

LISTEN.

YOU CAN HEAR IT.

ARKHAM
ASYLVM

NEXT:
**A DEATH
IN THE
FAMILY**

SILENCE WASHES LIKE A RIVER
OVER ARKHAM. NO SOUNDS OF
SCREAMING, NO SOBBING, NO
NOISES OF PAIN OR MADNESS.

JUST PEACE.

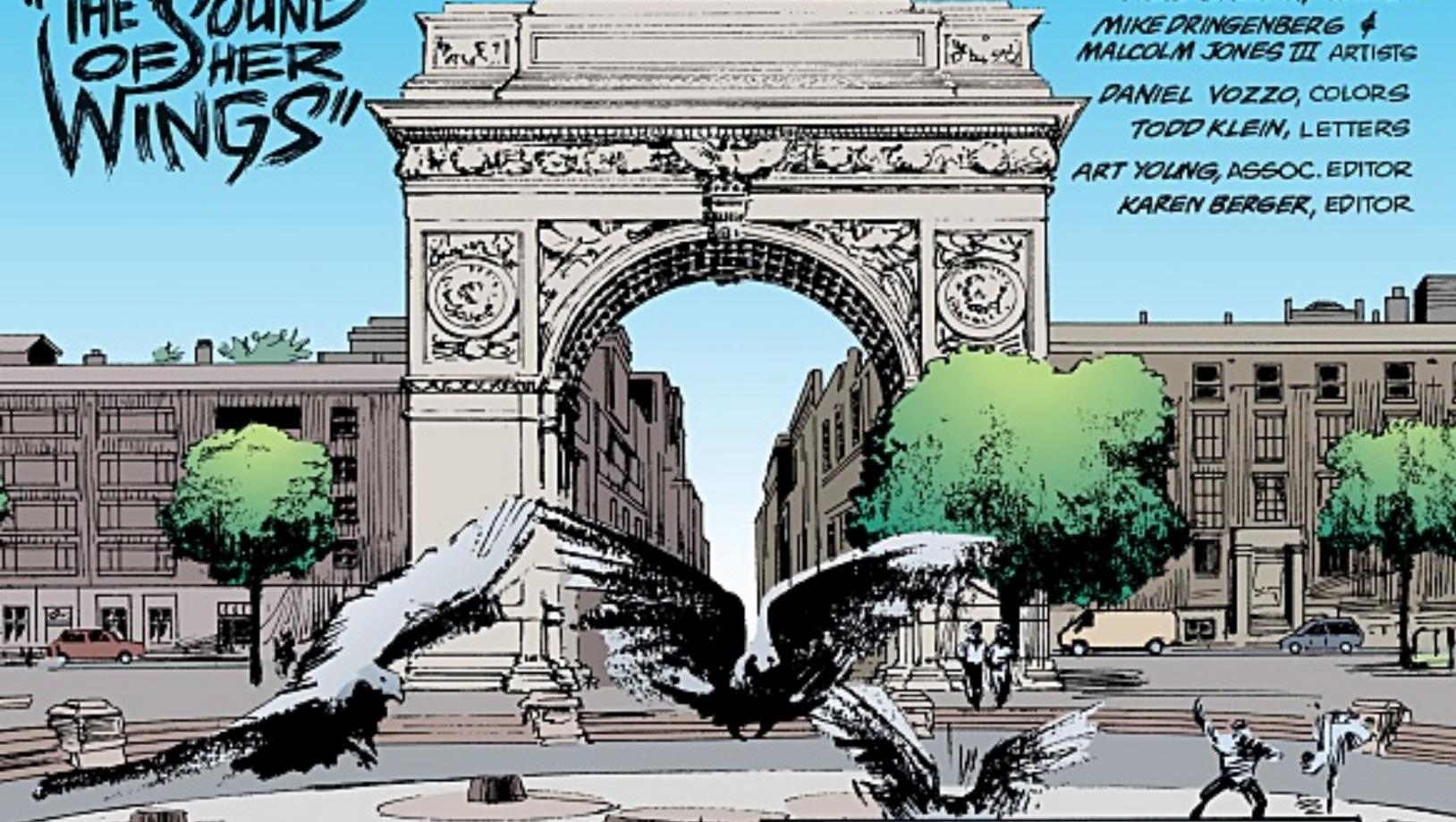


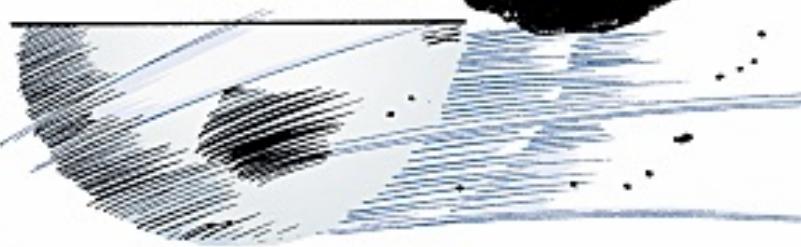
THE SOUND OF HER WINGS

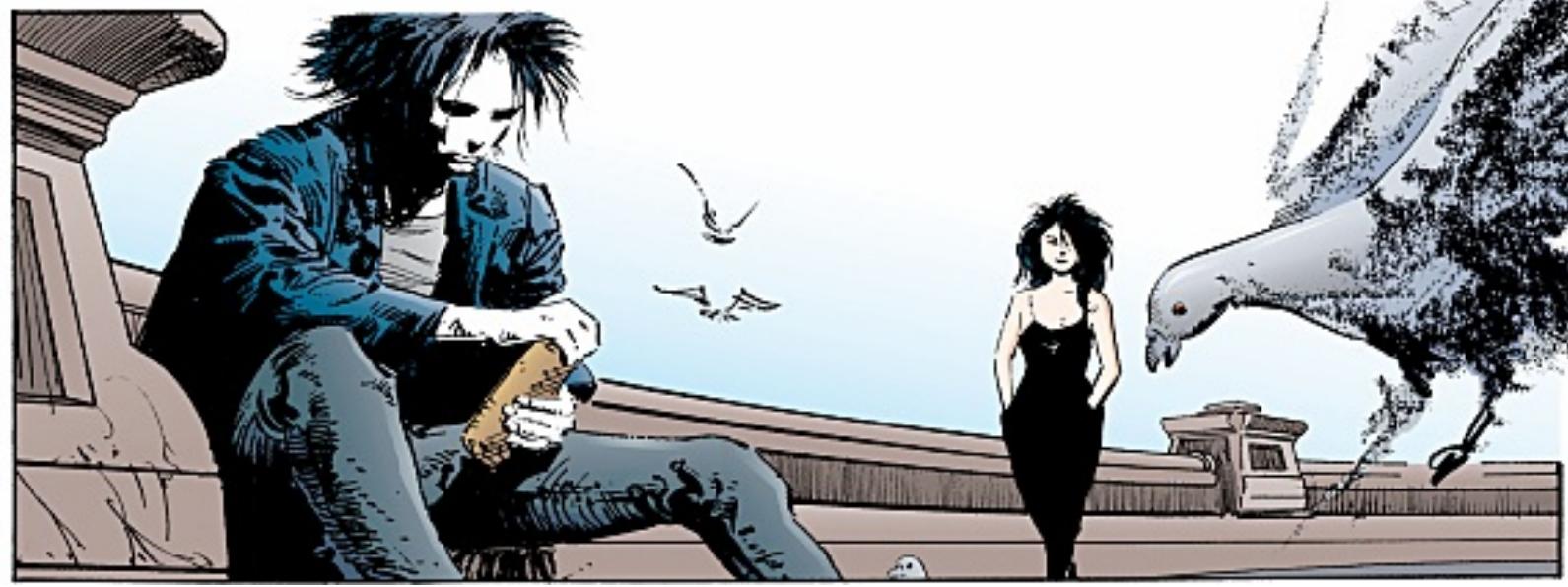
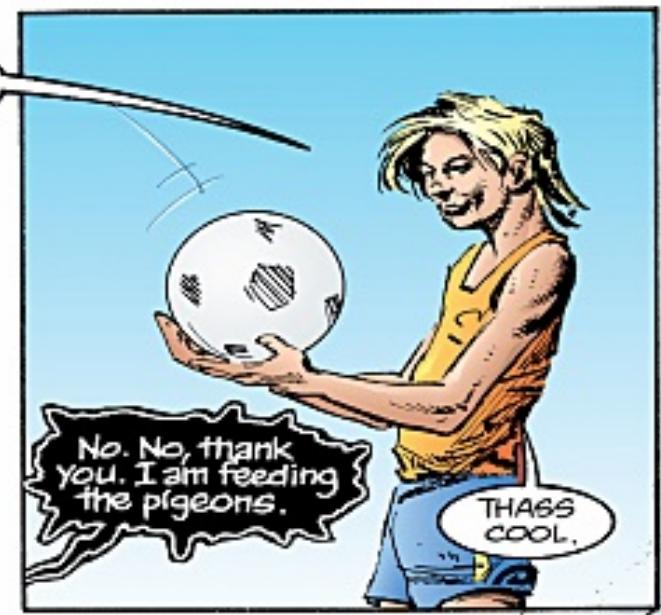
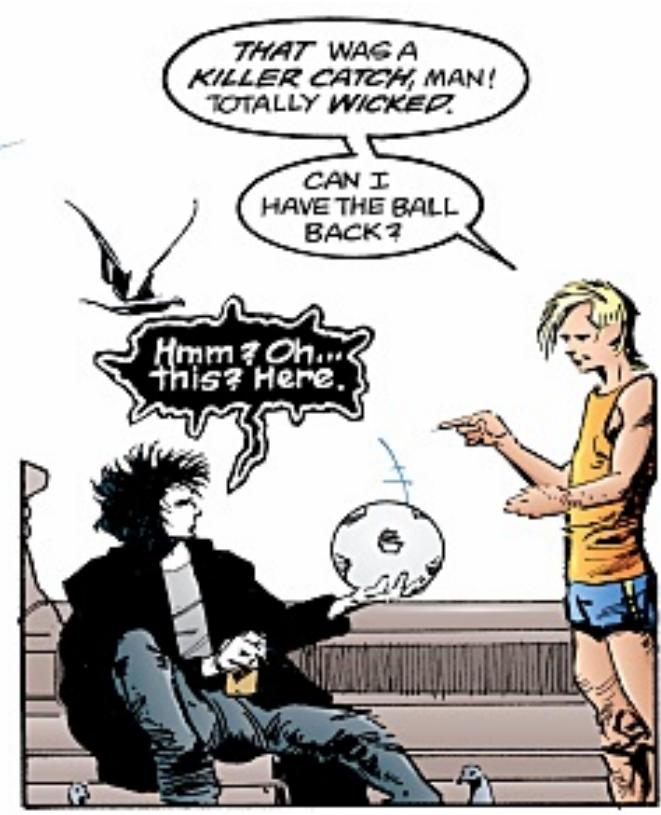
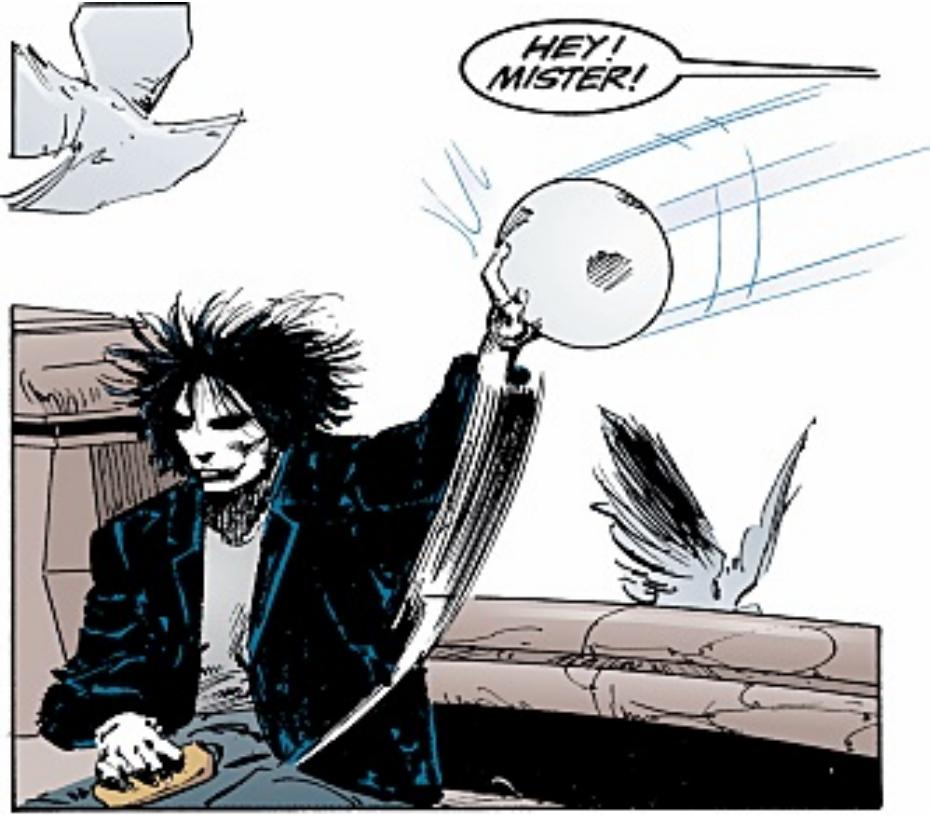


"THE SOUND OF HER WINGS"

NEIL GAIMAN, WRITER
MIKE DRINGENBERG &
MALCOLM JONES III ARTISTS
DANIEL VOZZO, COLORS
TODD KLEIN, LETTERS
ART YOUNG, ASSOC. EDITOR
KAREN BERGER, EDITOR









I LOVE THAT MOVIE.
YOU EVER SEE IT?



No.



THERE'S THIS GUY
WHO'S UTERLY A
BANKER, AND HE
DOESN'T HAVE TIME
FOR HIS FAMILY, OR
FOR LIVING, OR
ANYTHING.

AND MARY POPPINS,
SHE COMES DOWN FROM
THE CLOUDS, AND SHE
SHOWS HIM WHAT'S
IMPORTANT.

FUN. FLYING KITES,
ALL THAT STUFF.



SUPERCALIFRAGILISTICEXPIALIDOCIOUS!



SUPER-CALI-FRAGIL-ISTIC-EXPI-ALI-DOCIOUS.
UTTERLY FANTABULOUS WORD, HUH? IT MEANS,
Y'KNOW, GREAT.

WONDERFUL

GINCHY.
GNARLY.

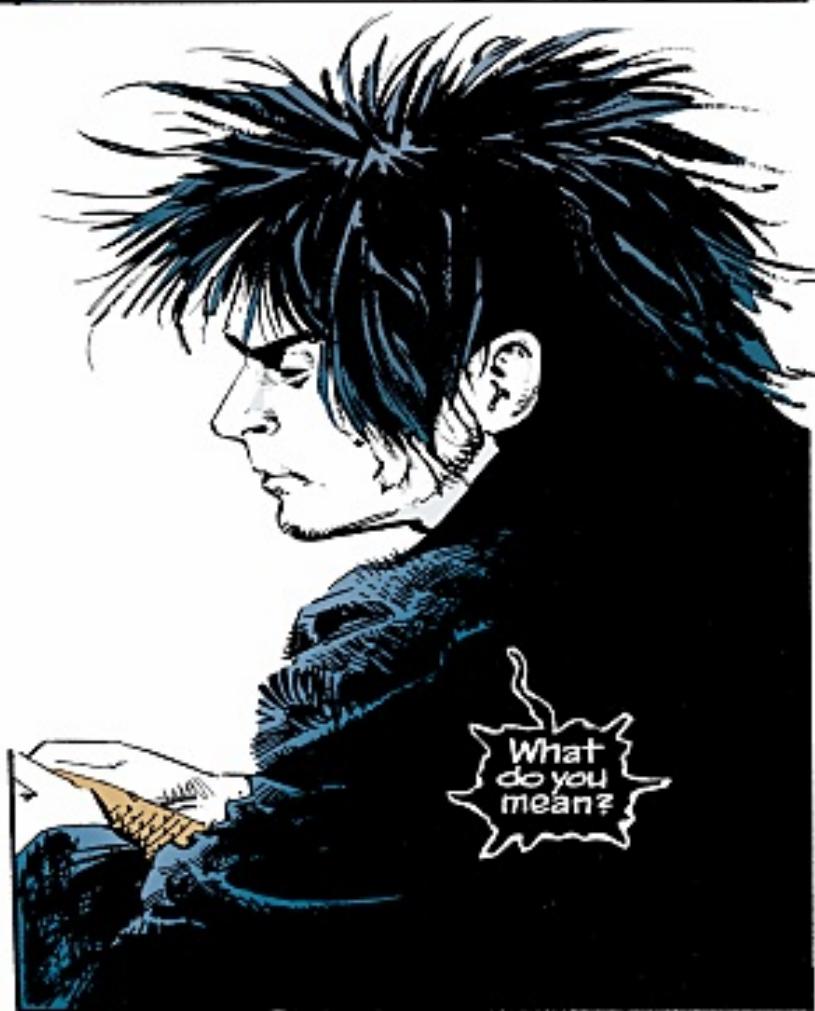


WOOGA-WOOGA-
WOOGA! VROOOOM!
YIIIIIII!!

AH

IT'S A CUTE MOVIE.
MAYBE NOT EVERYBODY'S
THING, BUT, Y'KNOW...





No... perhaps it isn't.

I don't know what's wrong. But you're right, something is...the matter.



When they captured me, imprisoned in their box, I had just one thought: Revenge.

By the time I freed myself, my original captor had gone the way of mortals, and I took my vengeance on his son.

It felt... fine, I suppose.



But it didn't feel as-- satisfying-- as I had expected.

In the interim, my dreamworld had fallen apart. I needed my tools, long since stolen and scattered.

One by one I found them.



The pouch was relatively easy.

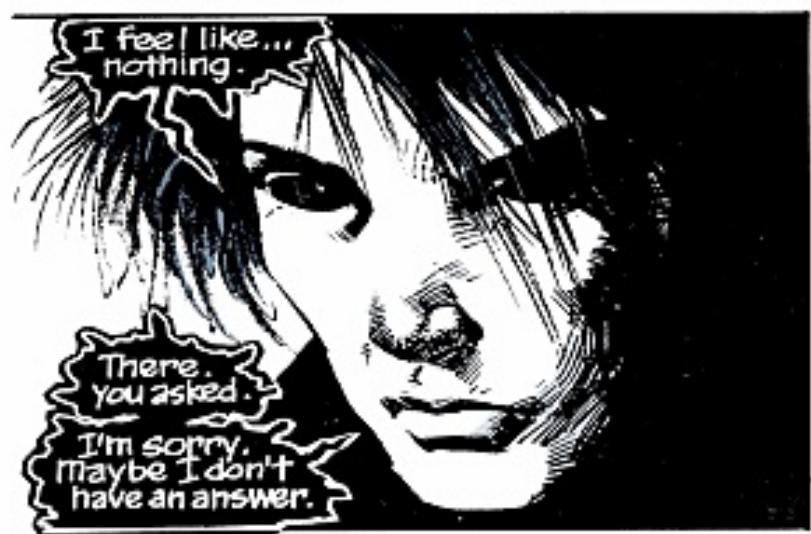
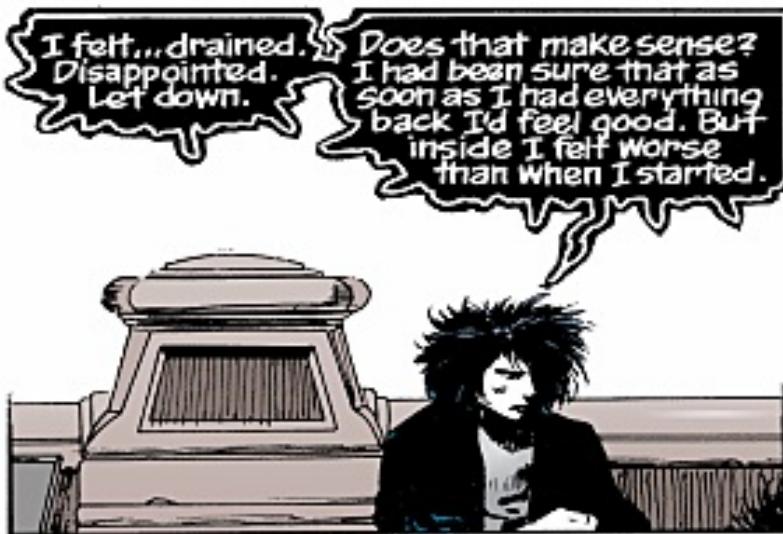
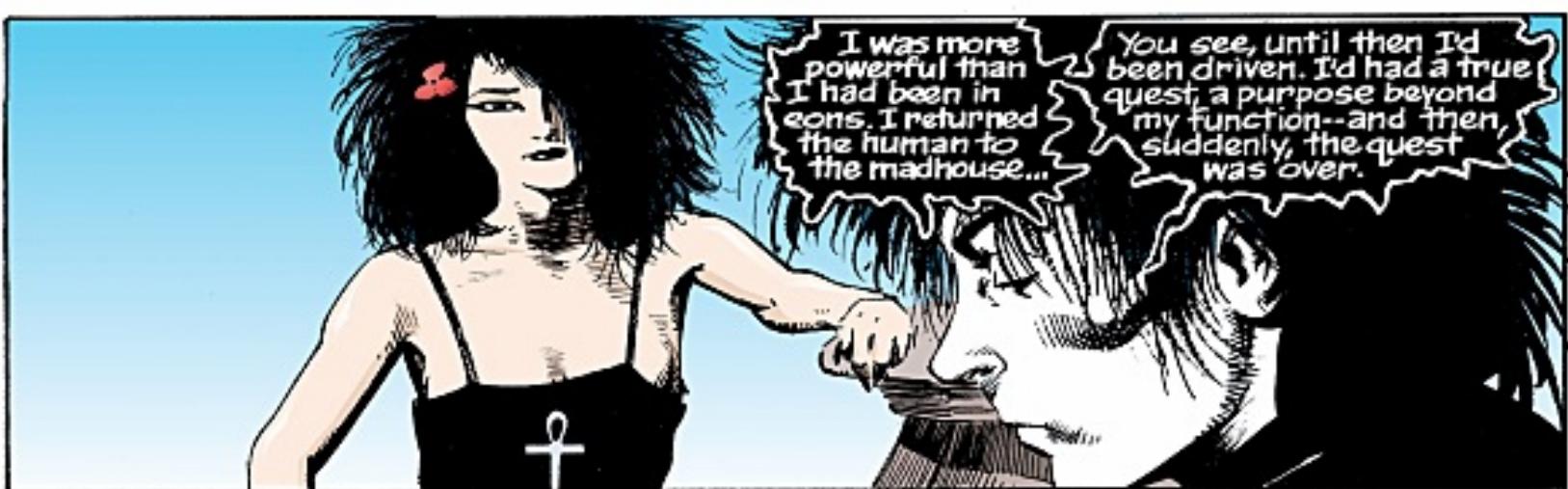
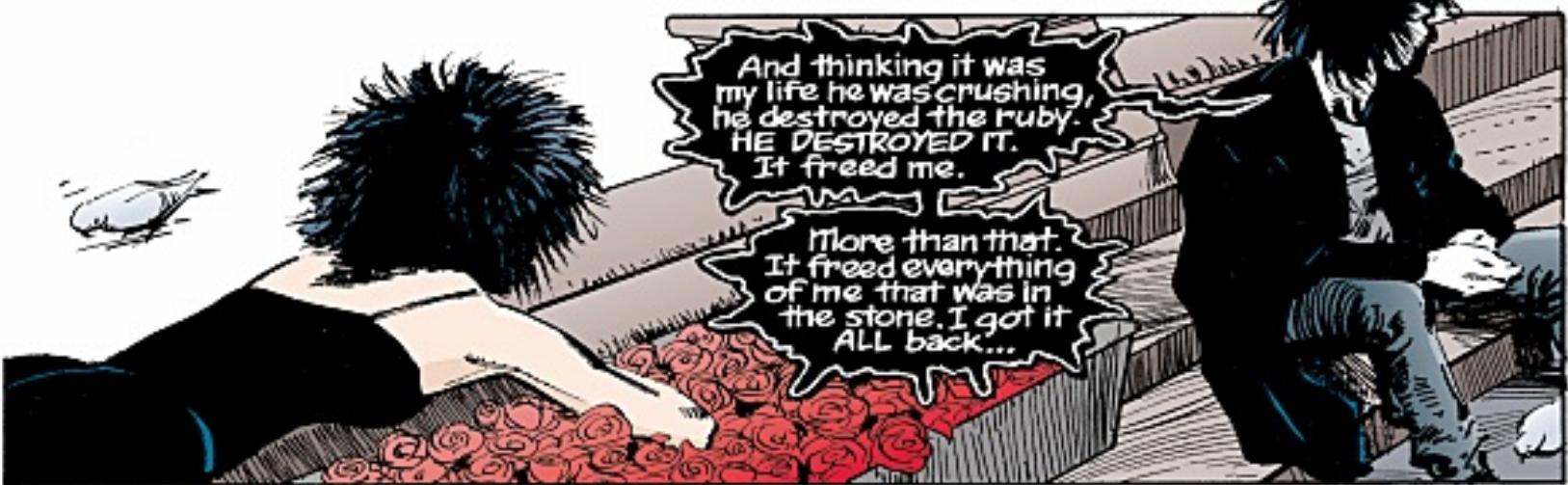
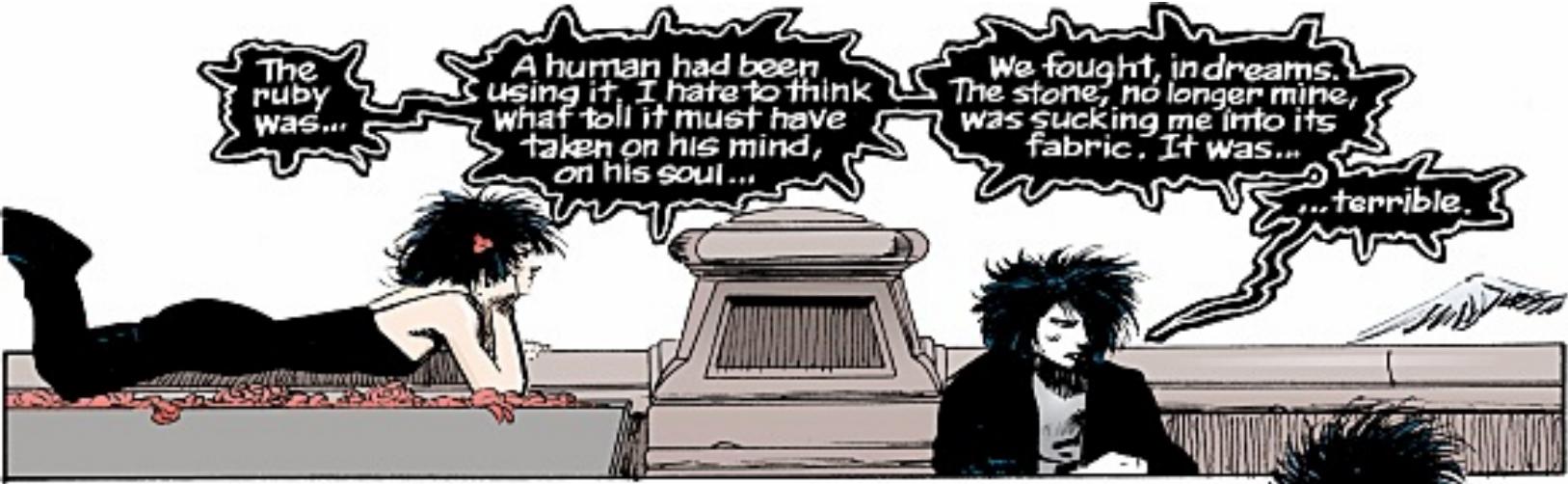


Eventually I found them.

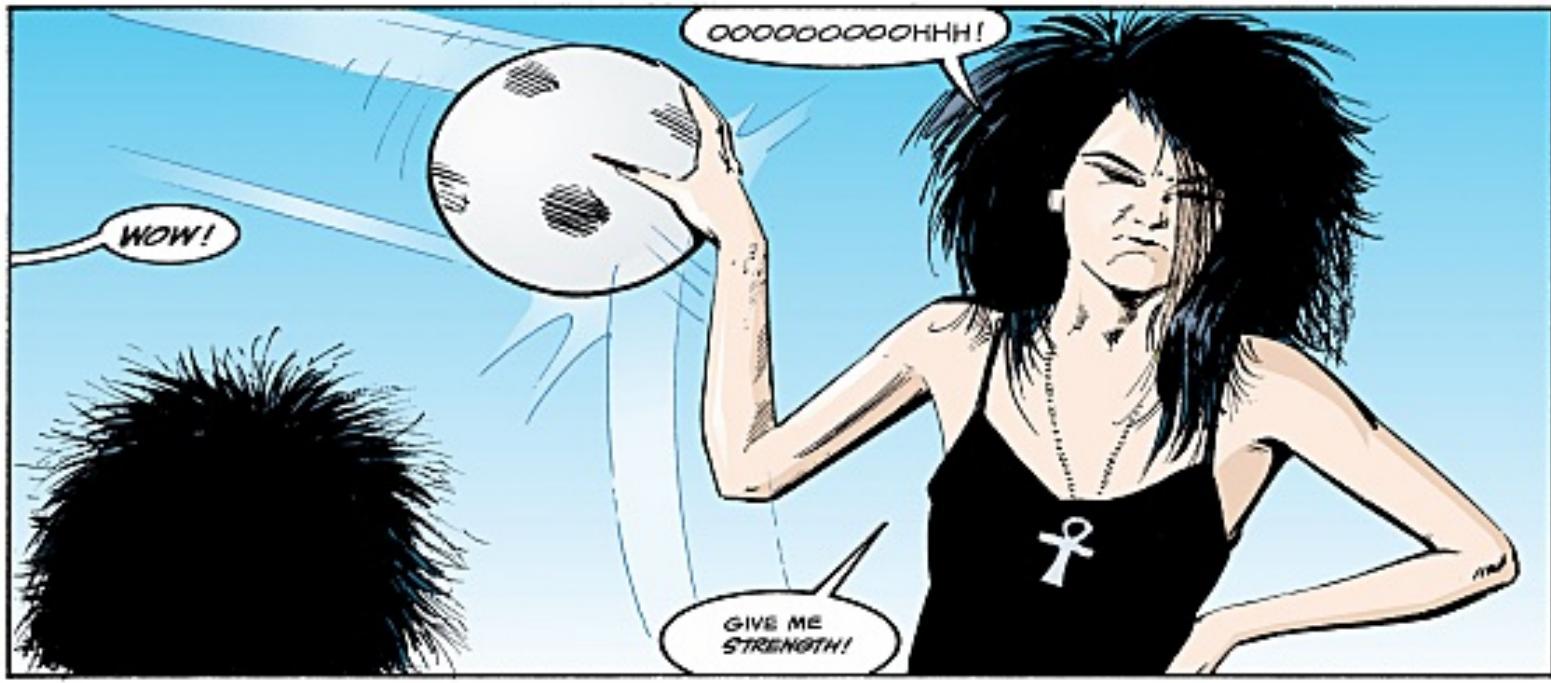
To regain the helmet I challenged a demon, I dared the Hordes of Hell, I faced down Lucifer himself.

Hahh.

That left only the ruby.









YOU CAN COME WITH ME, OR YOU CAN STAY HERE AND SULK. I DON'T MIND EITHER WAY.

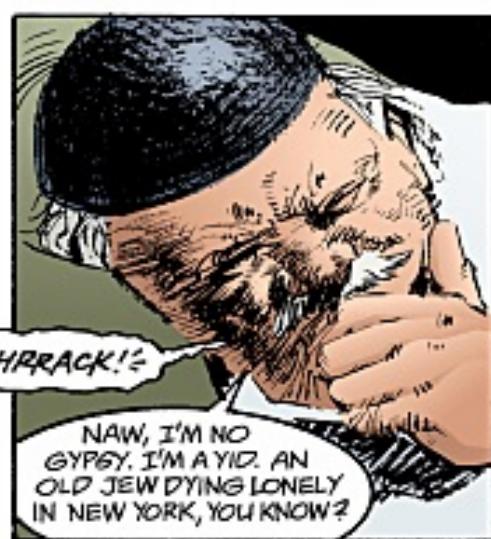
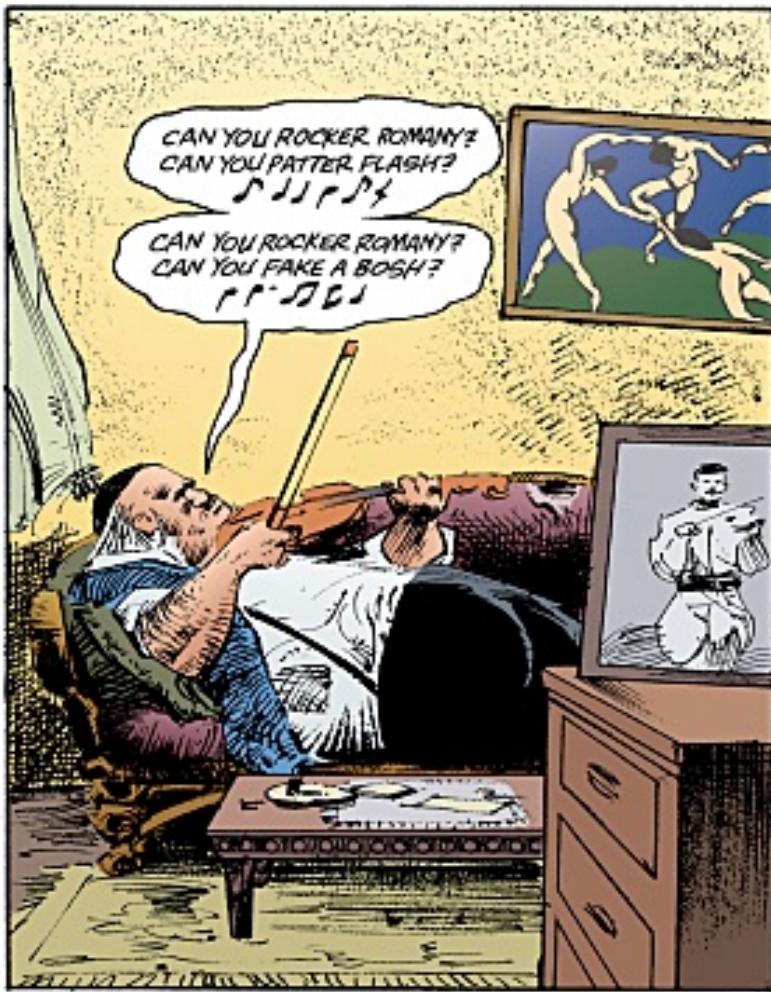
DON'T DO ME ANY FAVORS.

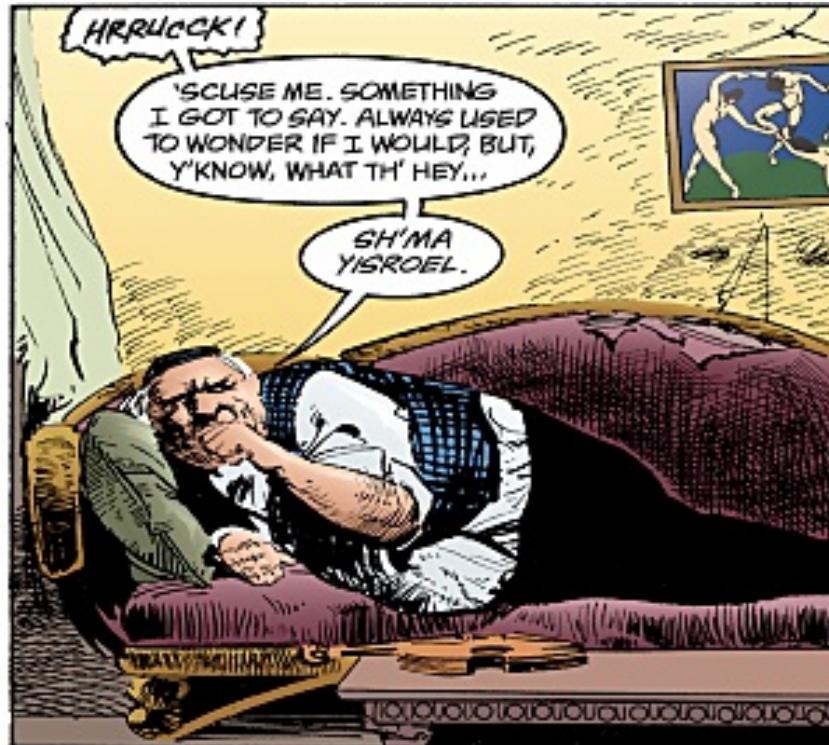


SURE, FRANKLIN. YOU'LL SEE ME AGAIN, SOON.









She draws him close.

From the darkness I hear the
beating of mighty wings...



I THOUGHT
HE WAS SWEET.
DIDN'T YOU?

Sweet?
I do not know.
Perhaps.

My sister.
When I was
captured...
...it was not
ME they wanted.
It was you.

YEAH, I KNOW.

C'MON, I DON'T
WANT TO MISS THE
NEXT ONE.

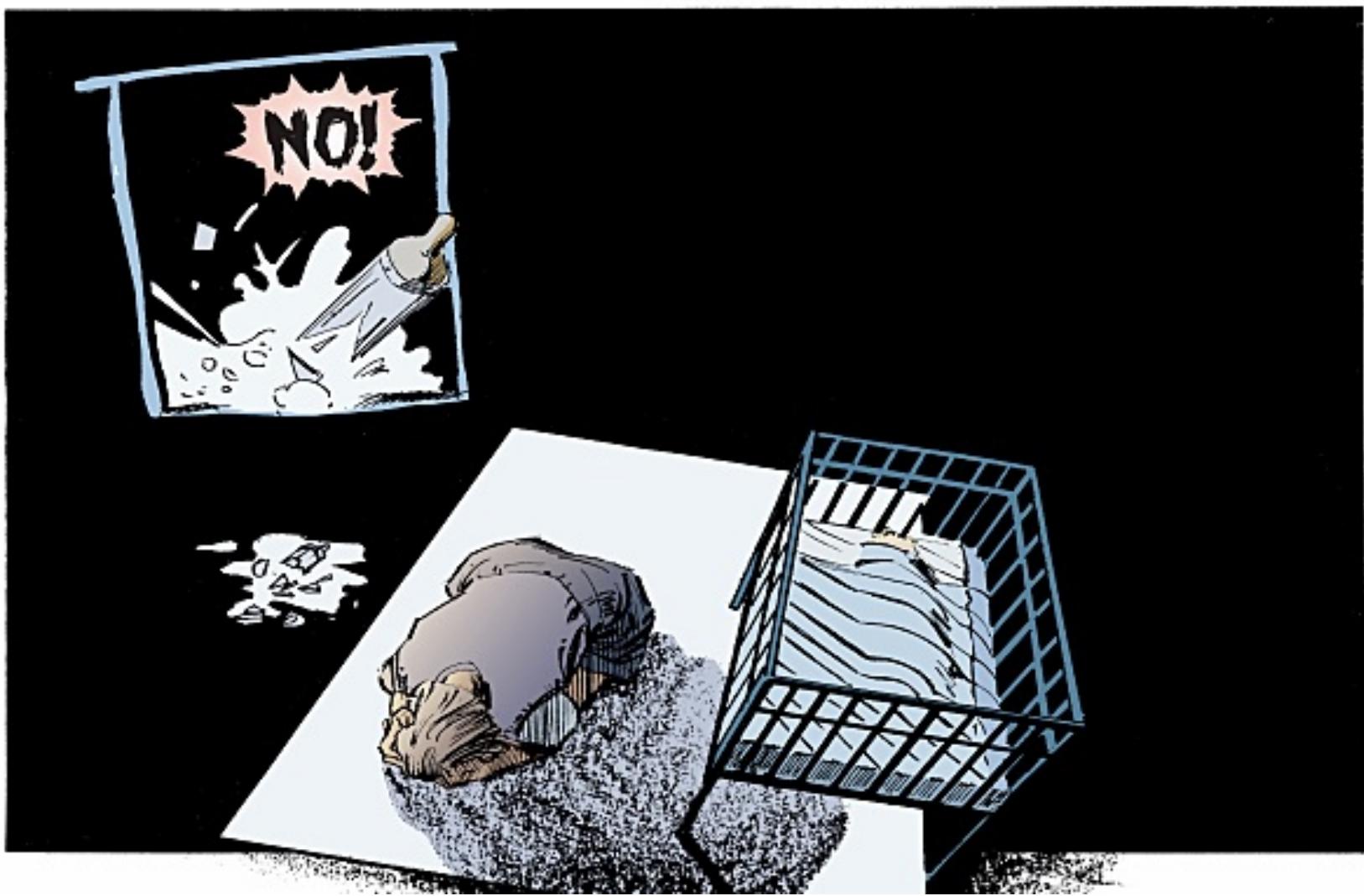
AFTERNOON, NOBODY WANTS COMEDY. THEY WANT TO DRINK IN PEACE, MAKE ASSIGNATIONS, DO THEIR DEALS. ESMÉ HAS TO FIGHT FOR EVERY LAUGH SHE GETS.



IT BEATS WAITING TABLES.







I find myself wondering about humanity. Their attitude to my sister's gift is so strange.

Why do they fear the sunless lands?

It is as natural to die as it is to be born.

But they fear her. Dread her. Feebly they attempt to placate her.

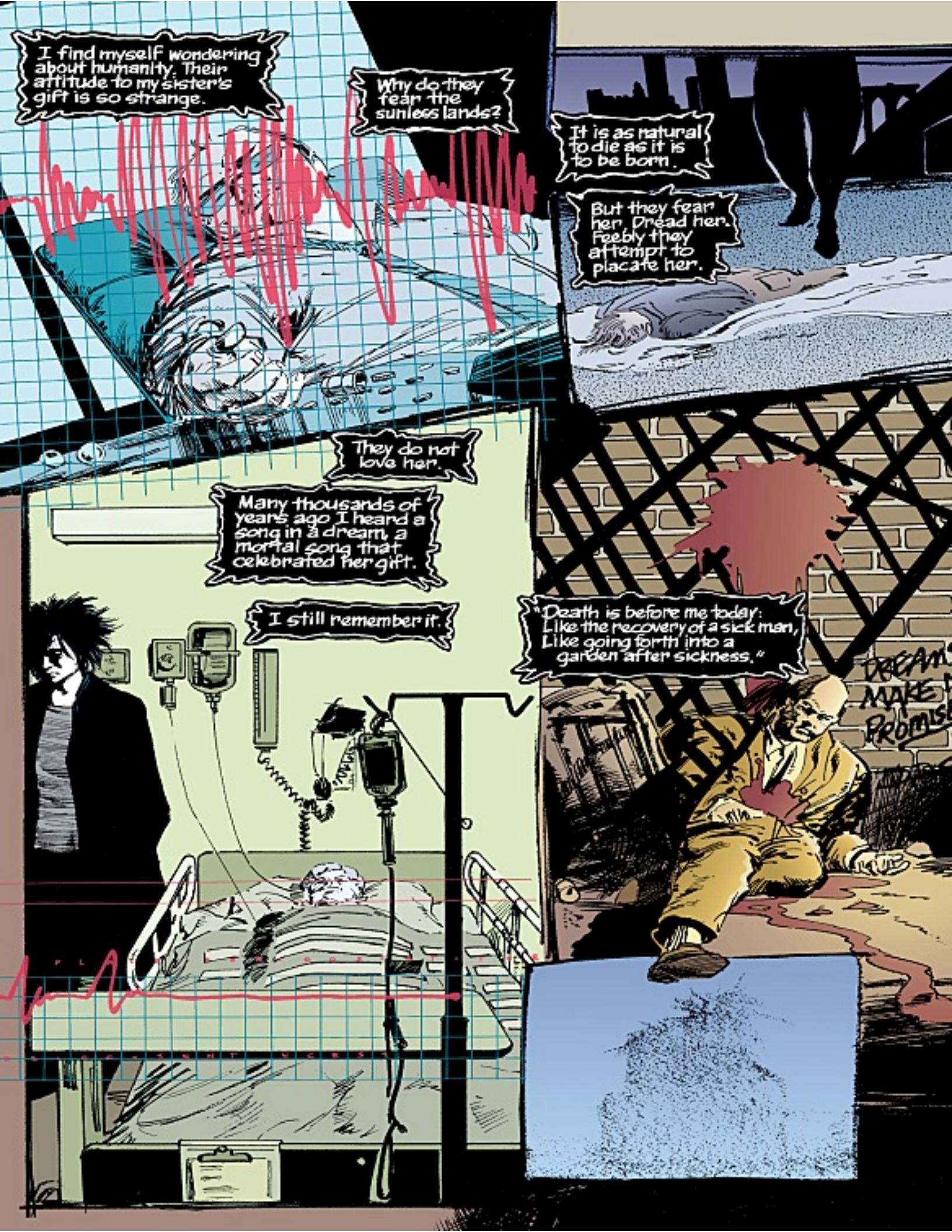
They do not love her.

Many thousands of years ago I heard a song in a dream, a mortal song that celebrated her gift.

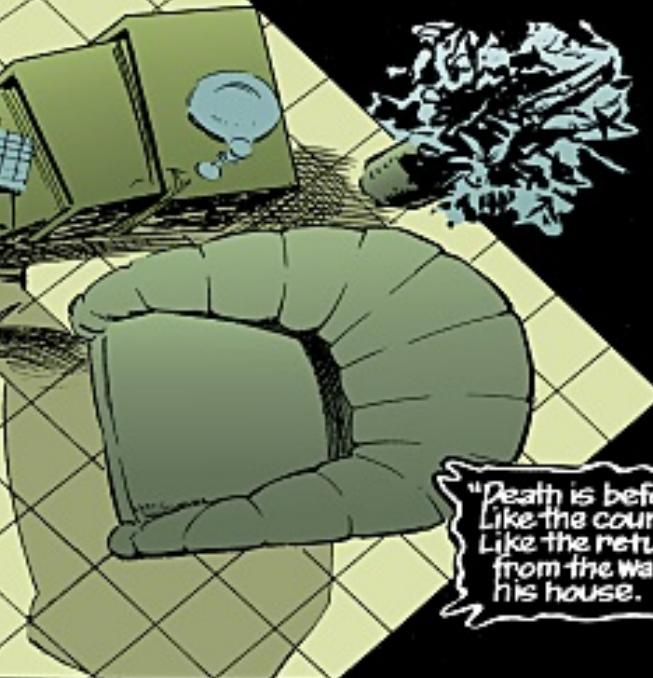
I still remember it.

"Death is before me today:
Like the recovery of a sick man,
Like going forth into a garden after sickness."

DREAM
MAKE
PROMISE



"Death is before me today:
Like the odor of myrrh,
Like sitting under a sail
in a good wind."



"Death is before me today:
Like the course of a stream;
Like the return of a man
from the war-galley to
his house."

"Death is before me today:
Like the home that a man longs to see,
After years spent as a captive."



That forgotten poet
understood her gifts.

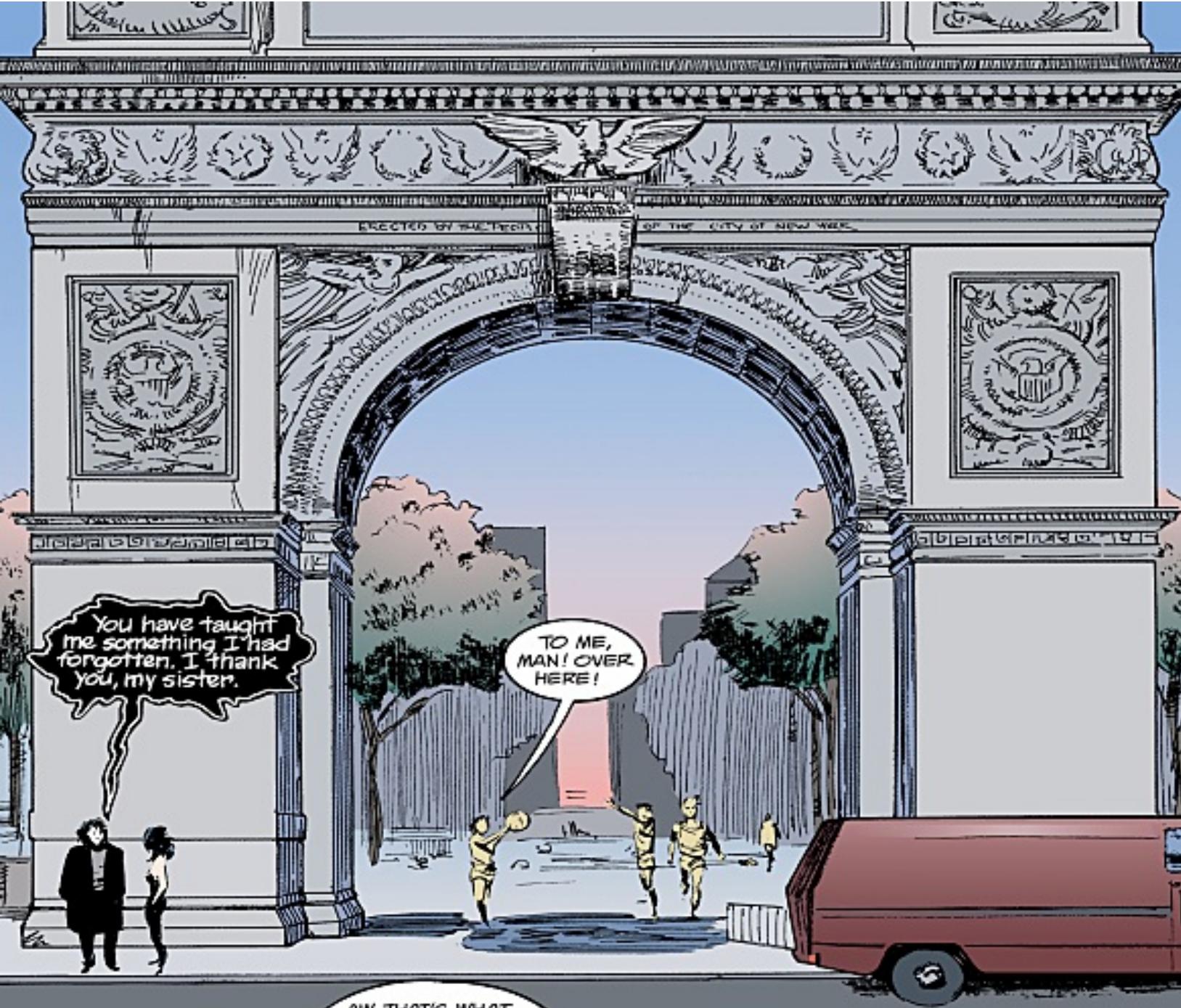
My sister has a function to
perform, even as I do. The
Endless have their
responsibilities.

I have responsibilities.



I walk by her side, and
the darkness lifts from
my soul.

I walk with her; and I
hear the gentle beating
of mighty wings...



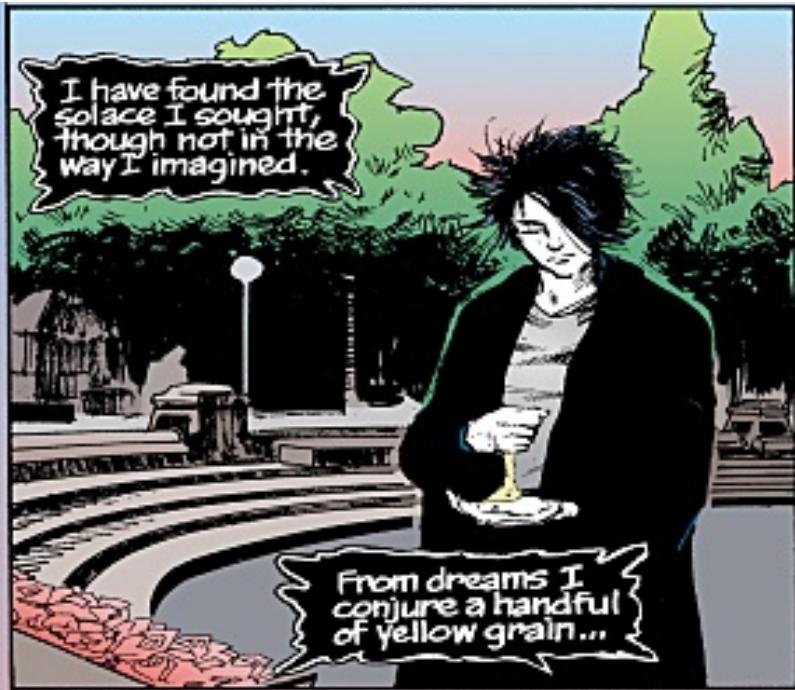
I'M TELLIN' YOU MAN,
SHE SAID SHE'D SEE ME
AGAIN SOON. AND SHE
KNEW MY NAME. THAT'S
ONE BAAAD LADY...

GET THE BALL,
BUGBRAIN!

SKREEEE
WAUMP

FRANKLIN!









AFTERWORD

In September 1987 Karen Berger phoned me up and asked me if I'd be interested in writing a monthly title for DC. That was how it all started.

Karen was already my editor on a book called *BLACK ORCHID*, and was DC's British liaison.

She rejected all my initial suggestions (sundry established DC characters I thought it might be fun to revive from limbo), and instead reminded me of a conversation we'd had the last time she was in England—a conversation I'd almost forgotten—in which I'd suggested reviving an almost forgotten DC character, "The Sandman," and doing a story set almost entirely in dreams.

"Do it. But create a new character," she suggested. "Someone no one's seen before."

So I did. A year later the first issue of *THE SANDMAN* appeared in the stores. Put like that, it all sounds so simple.

I don't think it could have been, though. Not really.

Looking back, the process of coming up with the Lord of Dreams seems less like an act of creation than one of sculpture: as if he were already waiting, grave and patient, inside a block of white marble, and all I needed to do was chip away everything that wasn't him.

An initial image, before I even knew who he was: a man, young, pale and naked, imprisoned in a tiny cell, waiting until his captors passed away, willing to wait until the room he was in crumbled to dust; deathly thin, with long dark hair, and strange eyes: Dream. That was what he was. That was who he was.

The inspiration for his clothes came from a print in a book of Japanese design, of a black kimono, with yellow markings at the bottom which looked vaguely like flames; and also from my desire to write a character I could have a certain amount of sympathy with. (As I wouldn't wear a costume, I couldn't imagine him wanting to wear one. And seeing that the greater part of my wardrobe is black [It's a sensible color. It goes

with anything. Well, anything black.), then his tastes in clothes echoed mine on that score as well.)

I had never written a monthly comic before, and wasn't sure that I would be able to. Each month, every month, the story had to be written. On this basis I wanted to tell stories that could go anywhere, from the real to the surreal, from the most mundane tales to the most outrageous. *THE SANDMAN* seemed like it would be able to do that, to be more than just a monthly horror title.

I wrote an initial outline, describing the title character and the first eight issues as best I could, and gave copies of the outline to friends (and artists) Dave McKean and Leigh Baulch: both of them did some character sketches and I sent the sketches along with the outline to Karen.

Fast forward to January 1988. Karen's back in England for a few days. Dave McKean, Karen and I met in London and wound up in The Worst French Restaurant In Soho for dinner (it had a pianist who knew the first three bars of at least two songs, the ugliest paintings you've ever seen on the wall, and a waitress who spoke no known language. The food took over two hours to come, and was neither what we had ordered, nor warm, nor edible). Then Dave went off to try to negotiate the release of his car from an underground car park, and Karen and I went back to her hotel room, devoured the complimentary fruit and nuts, and talked about Sandman.

I showed her my own notebook sketches of the character, and we talked about artists, throwing names at each other. Eventually Karen suggested Sam Kieth. I'd seen some of Sam's work, and liked it, and said so.

We rang Sam. Karen barely managed to convince him it wasn't a practical joke (and I completely failed to convince him I had actually seen his work and liked it), and she sent him a copy of the outline. He did a few character sketches, one of which was pretty close to the face I had in my head, and we got started.

Mike Dringenberg, whose work I'd seen and liked on *Enchanter*, came in to ink Sam's pencils. Dave McKean, my friend and frequent collaborator, agreed to paint (and, frequently, build) the covers. Todd Klein, possibly the best letterer in the business, agreed to letter, and Robbie Busch came in on coloring. We were in business.

The first few issues were awkward—neither Sam, Mike, Robbie nor myself had worked on a mainstream monthly comic before, and we were all pushing and pulling in different directions. Sam told us that he didn't want to carry on while drawing the third issue ("I feel like Jimi Hendrix in the Beatles," he told me. "I'm in the wrong band.") I was sorry to see him go.) and with "24 Hours" Mike Dringenberg took over on pencils. The remarkable Malcolm Jones was now our regular inker.

Together we finished the first *SANDMAN* storyline, collected in this book.

There was a definite effort on my part, in the stories in this volume, to explore the genres available: "The Sleep of the Just" was intended to be a classical English horror story; "Imperfect Hosts" plays with some of the conventions of the old DC and E.C. horror comics (and the hosts thereof); "Dream a Little Dream of Me" is a slightly more contemporary British horror story; "A Hope in Hell" harks back to the kind of dark fantasy found in *Unknown* in the 1940s; "Passengers" was my (perhaps misguided) attempt to try to mix superheroes into the *SANDMAN* world; "24 Hours" is an essay on stories and authors, and also one of the very few genuinely horrific tales I've written; "Sound and Fury" wrapped up the storyline; and "The Sound of Her Wings" was the epilogue and the first story in the sequence I felt was truly mine, and in which I knew I was beginning to find my own voice.

Rereading these stories today I must confess I find many of them awkward and ungainly, although even the clumsiest of them has something—a phrase, perhaps, or an idea, or an image I'm still proud of. But they're where the story starts, and the seeds of much that has come after—and much that is still to come—were sown in the tales in this book.

Preludes and nocturnes; a little night music from me to you.

I hope you liked them. Good night.
Pleasant dreams.

—Neil Gaiman

June 1991



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.

Sam Kieth has drawn other people's characters, including the Sandman and Batman for DC Comics and Wolverine and the Hulk for Marvel Comics. He's also written and drawn for titles featuring characters of his own creation, the best known of which are probably **THE MAXX**, **ZERO GIRL** and **FOUR WOMEN**. He's currently creating a series of books for Oni Press involving a trout, magical creatures, toilet seats and (of course) dysfunctional relationships. Kieth also makes small weird movies in his garage that no one sees, but he enjoys.

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.

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.

Daniel Vozzo was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York. After spending most of the 1980s drumming for several rock-and-roll bands, he landed a job working in DC Comics' production department, where he helped develop a computer coloring department in 1989. He soon began to work freelance, coloring a number of titles for DC's Vertigo line.

He sings great in the shower and always holds the door open for people. Currently living in northern New Jersey, Vozzo continues to color comics and is once again playing music. He has also been working on fine-tuning his writing skills. When asked if he thinks he's good at writing, he insists that he has always had very good penmanship.

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**.

T H E

SANDMAN

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