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DC VERTIGO

Volume 4



NEIL GAIMAN

The SANDMAN™

*Season of Mists*

Illustrated by

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Foreword by

HARLAN ELLISON

Introduced by

PATTON OSWALT





There is a dreadful Hell,  
And everlasting pains;  
There sinners must with devils dwell  
In darkness, fire, and chains.  
—Isaac Watts (1674-1748),  
*from Divine and Moral Songs  
for Children, 1720*

You don't have to stay anywhere forever.  
—Edwin Paine (1901-1914),  
in conversation, December 1990





# THE *SANDMAN*

THE SANDMAN SEASON OF MISTS

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

Cover design and interior illustrations by DAVE McKEAN

**THE SANDMAN VOL. 4: SEASON OF MISTS  
30TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION**

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## INTRODUCTION

Here's my hardbound copy of *THE SANDMAN: SEASON OF MISTS*—the 1992 edition, with the cover that looks like sun-darkened leather, and the embossed gold key. It would look gorgeous on an eldritch shelf of forbidden tomes in a hidden library in an unnamed town.

I, of course, keep my copy in a snug polybag, sealed with tape over the rear flap.

You see, this one is signed by a big handful of the people involved in its creation. I waited in line at Comix Experience in San Francisco back in 1992 with a happy horde of pre-Internet comic book geeks; a snaky line of antisocial men and the young women who tolerated or ignored them, curbing down Divisadero Street. Neil Gaiman, Kelley Jones, Mike Dringenberg and Matt Wagner were all seated at a table inside, waiting to sign my book. Neil being Neil, he drew a silvery sketch of Morpheus. Mike being Mike, he added buck teeth in gold marker. Years later, when I met Harlan Ellison, I asked him to sign it, too. He was the one who wrote the introduction to the 1992 edition.

So please understand the paralysis and intimidation I'm writing this under. One of the best graphic novels of the 20th century, written and drawn and lettered and assembled by a Justice League of the finest talents in the business, and introduced by a mind that—at Gaiman's confirmation—kicked open the imaginative doors that made such a book possible? We are hurtling down the ladder of influence and talent by the time we get to me. But I'll do my best.

I'd been reading *THE SANDMAN* since my sophomore year of college. I don't remember from which shop I picked the first issue up, but after I devoured it I realized that I hadn't been "hooked" so much as I had been seduced. I was helpless in the hypnotic tendrils of Gaiman's narrative; before I knew it, it was too late. When the last page was reached, when Burgess' son had been consigned to the "gift" of endless waking, I didn't feel like I'd exited the story. Instead, Morpheus simply left that narrative, and I followed him.

I followed him through the issues where he rebuilt his realm, and re-collected his symbols of power. I read and reread "The Sound of Her Wings," where we meet the goth-girl-ne-plus-ultra Death—Dream's older, exasperated, wonderful sister. Then on through *THE DOLL'S HOUSE*, a few stops in *DREAM COUNTRY* (poor Element Girl) and then...

### ...SEASON OF MISTS.

I can safely say that this is one of a handful of written and artistic works that affected me in ways I wasn't cognizant of at the time. When I first read it, *SEASON OF MISTS* was a hilarious, horrific and touching tale about a battle for the key to Hell; a key that had been slyly placed into the unwilling hands of Lucifer's hated enemy—Dream of the Endless, who'd humiliated the fallen angel in an earlier issue. There were gods from different pantheons vying for dominion over the empty Hell, a quick sidetrack into how life on Earth was dealing with Hell's closing, palace intrigues, double-crosses,



superhero cameos and a "played fair" surprise ending that wasn't actually a surprise if you'd been paying attention from the start. We also got to meet four more members of Dream and Death's family, were teased with a missing seventh member and, most importantly, were given more entertainment in 22-page installments than any comic had the right to dish out.

I've reread *SEASON OF MISTS* over the years, and just reread it again for this introduction. I'm now going to indulge in some speculation about themes and statements in the work. And I know full well that I could easily e-mail Neil and have him clear up any ambiguity in these musings. But what fun is that?

So here we go.

*SEASON OF MISTS* is as much about the creative process as it is about the story it tells. In a way, it's about breaking old habits and patterns to bring about different, fresher worlds—not, mind you, better ones; not all the time, at least.

Every single character in this story either quits their posts (Lucifer, among others), switches identities (not telling), amends and reverses past actions (Morpheus) or is forced to give up actions and habits that they don't realize are meaningless (Breschau, in a haunting, hilarious scene in the near-empty Hell). Like any good writer, Gaiman is all about recognizing calcifying patterns in his own work and doing his best to break free from them. Why not put his characters and their universe through the same process and see what happens? While it's true that stories never really

end, it's also true that they can become swamps instead of streams if the exact same technique is used over and over again. And what keeps stories like *SEASON OF MISTS* (and movies like *The Searchers*, music like *The Rite of Spring*, TV shows like *The Wire* and the poetry of Wallace Stevens) seeming fresh and new every time a reader returns to them is the confidence with which chaos is handled.

*SEASON OF MISTS* is first experienced as the poetic apocalypse it's meant to be. But subsequent readings reveal the story's subtle planning, the intricate framework of its plot and, finally, the rich details that, while they have zero to do with the overall structure, are so amazing and entertaining (Lucien's what-could-have-been dream library, the JSA fighting Ragnarok inside Odin's glass cube) that you delight in the delight Gaiman must have felt putting them into the work.

If you're about to read this for the first time, I envy you getting swept away in the gorgeous upheaval. If this is one of many returns, then ponder, as I'm doing right now, the houseplant in Hell (chapter two, page 18). What's it doing there? I want to e-mail Neil so badly right now.

But I won't. I, and my thoughts, belong to me. I just have to face up to it.

To paraphrase Lucifer Morningstar.

—**Patton Oswalt**  
August 30, 2018  
Los Angeles

## FOREWORD

Possibly the only dismaying aspect of excellence is that it makes living in a world of mediocrity an ongoing prospect of living hell. The subtle distressing perturbation.

Michelangelo wrote: "Trifles make perfection and perfection is no trifle." Hardly a sentiment for our times, for a world of assembly lines and buck-passing and litterbugs.

Perfection. Excellence. What a passionate lover. But once having tasted the lips of excellence, once having given oneself to its perfection, how dreary and burdensome and filled with anomie are the remainder of one's waking hours trapped in the shackled lockstep of the merely ordinary, the barely acceptable, the just okay and not a stroke better.

Sadly, most lives are fashioned on that pattern. Settling for what is possible; buying into the cliché because the towering dream is out of stock; learning how to avoid taking the risk of the dizzying leap. Miguel de Unamuno (1864–1936) wrote: "In order to attain the impossible one must attempt the absurd." So the paradigm becomes all the Salieri shadows unable to touch the Mozart reality, all the respectably talented but not awesomely endowed Antonios fulminating with frustration at the occasional Amadeus. Excellence in the untalented and ordinary produces pleasure and awe; but in the minimally talented it produces hatred and envy that boils like sheep fat.

Excellence is its own master, owes no allegiance, bows its head to no regimen. It exists pure and whole like the silver face of the moon. Untouchable, unreachable, exquisite. But frustrating because it reminds us of how much mediocrity we put up with, just to get through the week.

The point being: Neil Gaiman's work on THE SANDMAN.

In any field of endeavor, in any medium of the arts or sciences, an occasional talent will manifest itself and, through bare existence, we perceive how mundane has been the effort in that field or genre, that medium or category. Until Monteverdi, was there higher achievement than that of Palestrina, William Byrd, Andrea Gabrieli? Before Mark Twain, what were the names of the writers at the pinnacle: Sir Walter Scott, R.D. Blackmore, James Fenimore Cooper? Prior to John L. Sullivan, can anyone make a rational comparison of excellence with any of the nameless bare-knuckle champions who spilled their blood in sawdust arenas? There was only one Machiavelli, only one Chaka Zulu, only one Alexander of Macedon. Name the highest and brightest and most accomplished till you get to Fellini or Billie Holiday or George Bernard Shaw; and compare; and recognize how much higher thereafter is the high-water mark. Suddenly, there is more sunlight in the world.

The point being: Neil Gaiman's work on THE SANDMAN.

This is remarkable work. Perhaps you know that already. Nonetheless, I tell you. A fact: do with it what you will.

It is not merely that Mr. Gaiman (who is midway between being a frequent acquaintance and a close friend of mine, something more than a pal but less than an intimate, and thus available to me as "Neil" rather than "Mr. Gaiman") has committed with these Sandman stories what is usually known as *macrography*, "huge writing," work that is to be examined with the naked eye, the opposite of *micrography*. Nor is it unique that Neil has created a compelling, internally consistent universe for these stories: a fully realized cosmology with a pantheon of beings and godlike non-beings, a non-Aristotelian superimposed pre-continuum, a freshly minted polytheism as compelling as it is revisionist. Hardly unique, because every fantasist builds a new universe each time s/he creates a new story. It's the way the game of "what if?" is played. Some people do it better than others; and most people can't do it at all (which is why there are folks who believe actors make up their own lines, that truth is stranger than fiction, that one picture is worth a thousand words, and that we are regularly visited by far-traveling, malevolent, incredibly intelligent aliens in revolving crockery, who have nothing better to do with their time than

snag couch potato humans so they can have unfulfilling sex with them and, just for laughs, give these lousy sex partners rectal examinations with mechanical appendages the size of oil pipeline caissons); and every once in a while a person does it so splendidly that it raises the high-water mark and puts more sunlight into the world.

The point being: Neil Gaiman's work on THE SANDMAN.

Notwithstanding the macrography and the new cosmology, the runaway excellence of what Neil has done with this character is wrapped up in the sense one gets, as one reads THE SANDMAN, that what one is reading is new, is of consequence, and isn't as transitory (however entertaining) as most of what is done day in and day out in comics. If you have been following the progression of Neil as guiding intelligence on THE SANDMAN—

(Available for the aficionado in three previous graphic novels—PRELUDES & NOCTURNES, THE DOLL'S HOUSE and DREAM COUNTRY—and even as a boxed set of the trio as THE WORLD OF THE SANDMAN.)

—you will have been snared by an outstanding intellect given to esoteric amusements and surreal re-viewings of the Natural Order. You will certainly (if you're one of the few surviving atavists who still read for the pure pleasure of intellectual invigoration) have been mesmerized by the sneaky wit and puckish nastiness of the Gaiman reformation of the received universe. I would praise his erudition, his frequent seeding of the stories with arcane facts and literary glyphs, but as it is a truism that it takes a very good con artist to con a very good con artist, so it is possible that Neil "Scam Man" Gaiman is no more widely read and filled with erudition than the con artist who writes these words of introduction. And, knowing what a fraud I am, quoting here and there in Latin and colloquial French just to seem clever, *ignorantia legis neminem excusat*, like *n'est-ce pas*, I have my suspicions that Neil has as diverse and bellyful a library of references as I maintain just to drop in something obscure to remind the groundlings what a smart cookie I am.

Not to be diverted too long on that preceding point, but let me give you a frinstance: Early on in the story of SEASON OF MISTS, when Morpheus sends Cain to deliver the message of his imminent visit to the nether regions, the emissary tells Lucifer what is about to transpire, and the fallen angel goes off into one of those wonderful rhapsodic panegyrics all mad scientists,



despots, nitwit super-villains and televangelists indulge in for many odd-shaped panels. He culminates his paralogical blather by ranting, "Better to reign in Hell, than serve in Heaven."

And just in case the reader hasn't seen the 1941 Warner Bros. adaptation of Jack London's *The Sea Wolf*, in which Edward G. Robinson as the tyrannical freighter skipper Wolf Larsen quotes that quotation repeatedly, Neil bangs us over the head with the information that the aphorism comes from Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667). Leaf ahead to that page and take a look at it.

See what I mean? A *really* intellectual guy, secure in his own voluminous erudition, wouldn't have bothered making sure we know how goddam sharp he is. Now, I'm not saying Neil isn't as sharp as he wants us to believe he is, I'm merely suggesting that he is so intent on building all the buttressing into his fictional structure that he makes certain we perceive of what excellent granite is made the basement slab.

So excellent that one might quote yet again from Milton: "The mind is its own place, and in itself can make a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n."

The point being: Neil Gaiman's work on *THE SANDMAN* is so excellent, so much a presentation of the new high-water mark, that we realize as we read that it is about something, that it is not merely an amusing entertainment. (Though it is that, of course.)

I'll not reconnoiter the story in this graphic novel... what originally appeared in monthly comic book format as sections 0 through 7, December 1990–July 1991. The story lies before you, and I wasn't engaged to restate the obvious. (As critic John Simon wrote in 1981: "...there is no point in saying less than your predecessors have said." Which is good advice that should be taken by all those who write Sherlock Holmes or Sam Spade pastiches.) Nor will I play the role of the carping blue jay, shrieking that Neil says in the earliest section of the story that Destiny casts no shadow, but Dringenberg has repeatedly scumbled in shadows only pages earlier. That sort of petty bitching is beneath me, a guy as clever as I am.

I will only repeat the theme of this preamble by reporting that excellence, as contained in the work of Gaiman's *THE SANDMAN*, has made the awareness of the mediocre world extremely painful for a great

many people. I know this to be true, for I sat there at the 13th annual World Fantasy Convention in Tucson in 1991 and watched with devilish pleasure as Neil won the highly prized FantasyCon Howard Phillips Lovecraft trophy for the year's Best Short Story...an issue of *THE SANDMAN* "comic book." Devilish pleasure, I tell you, because all those artsy-fartsy writers and artists and critics sitting there expecting a standard-print short story to win, choked on their little almond cups as this renegade funnybook guy carted off the Diamond as Big as the Ritz. Much snorting through the nose. Much umbrage taken. Many dudgeons raised to new heights. And screams and cries of foul play at the polls. So infuriated were the Faithful at such a choice having been made by a blue ribbon panel of experts who couldn't be suborned or shamed into overlooking excellence, that the Great Gray Eminences who run the FantasyCon from behind their nightshadow veil of secrecy have rewritten the rules so that, heaven forfend, no "comic book" will ever again be nominated, much less have an opportunity to kick serious artistic butt.

The point being: Neil Gaiman's work on *THE SANDMAN* brings that perennial DC Comics character, whom I first loved in 1940 in the 96-page, 15¢ *NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR COMICS*, with his green business suit, his orange-colored snapbrim fedora, his fuchsia cape, his World War I doughboy gas mask and his deadly gas gun, into a refurbished state of rebirth, transmogrified for our angst-festooned era, not merely as a marvelous and entertaining myth-figure, but as a symbol of excellence in a world where mediocrity is our normal prison.

And how do we know that what Gaiman has done is excellence?

We know it because of something critic Susan Sontag wrote. She said, "Real art has the capacity to make us nervous."

Nervous. You should've been there at the awards ceremony. Those suckers like as almost laid square bricks.

The point being: isn't this Gaiman just too cute for words!

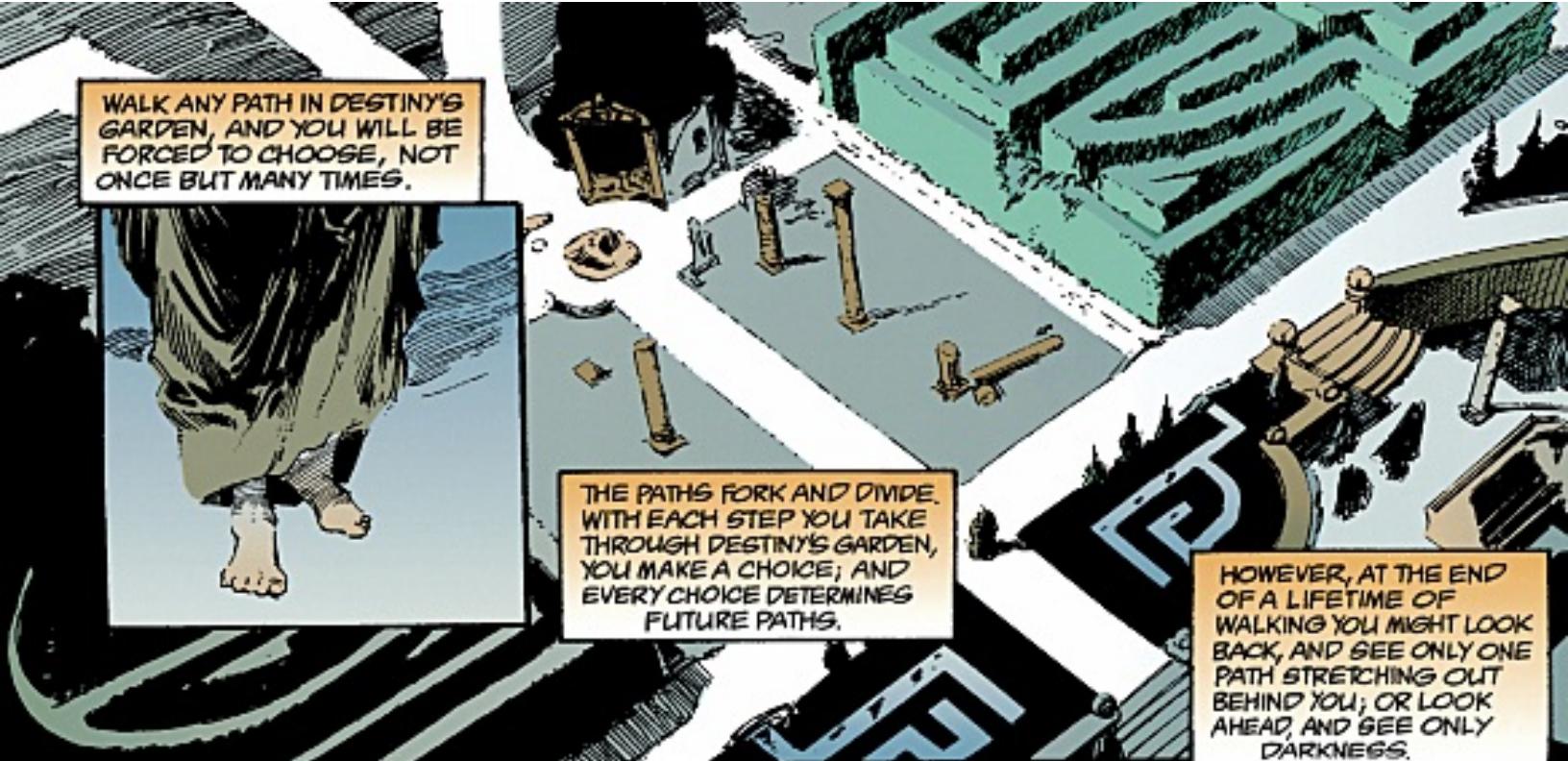
—Harlan Ellison



*O*N WHICH A FAMILY REUNION OCCASIONS CERTAIN PERSONAL RECRIMINATIONS; ASSORTED EVENTS ARE SET IN MOTION; AND A RELATIONSHIP THOUGHT LONG DONE WITH PROVES TO HAVE MUCH RELEVANCE TODAY.

E P I S O D E   0



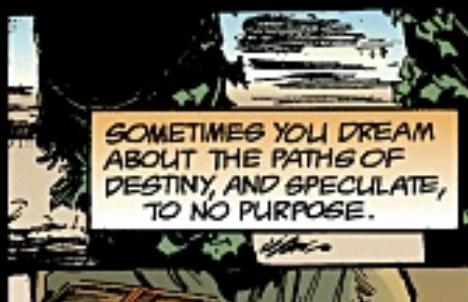


WALK ANY PATH IN DESTINY'S GARDEN, AND YOU WILL BE FORCED TO CHOOSE, NOT ONCE BUT MANY TIMES.



THE PATHS FORK AND DIVIDE. WITH EACH STEP YOU TAKE THROUGH DESTINY'S GARDEN, YOU MAKE A CHOICE; AND EVERY CHOICE DETERMINES FUTURE PATHS.

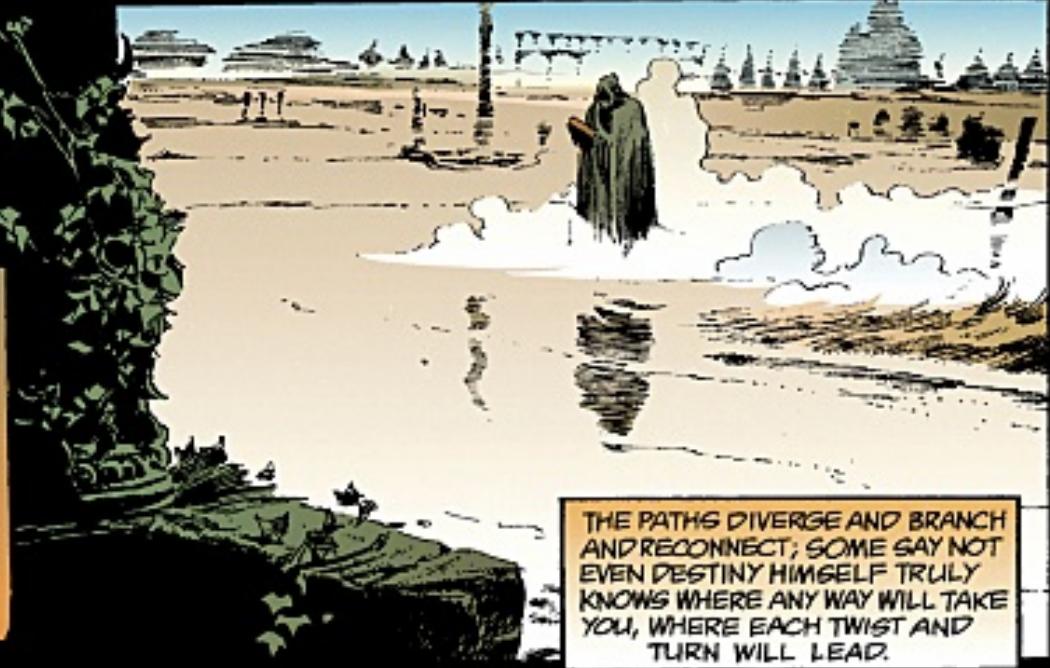
HOWEVER, AT THE END OF A LIFETIME OF WALKING YOU MIGHT LOOK BACK, AND SEE ONLY ONE PATH STRETCHING OUT BEHIND YOU; OR LOOK AHEAD, AND SEE ONLY DARKNESS.



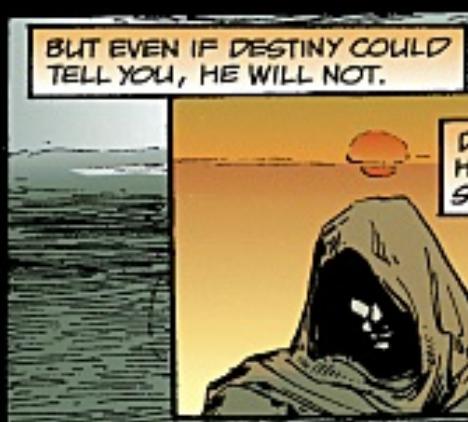
SOMETIMES YOU DREAM ABOUT THE PATHS OF DESTINY, AND SPECULATE, TO NO PURPOSE.



DREAM ABOUT THE PATHS YOU TOOK AND THE PATHS YOU DIDN'T TAKE ...



THE PATHS DIVERGE AND BRANCH AND RECONNECT; SOME SAY NOT EVEN DESTINY HIMSELF TRULY KNOWS WHERE ANY WAY WILL TAKE YOU, WHERE EACH TWIST AND TURN WILL LEAD.



BUT EVEN IF DESTINY COULD TELL YOU, HE WILL NOT.

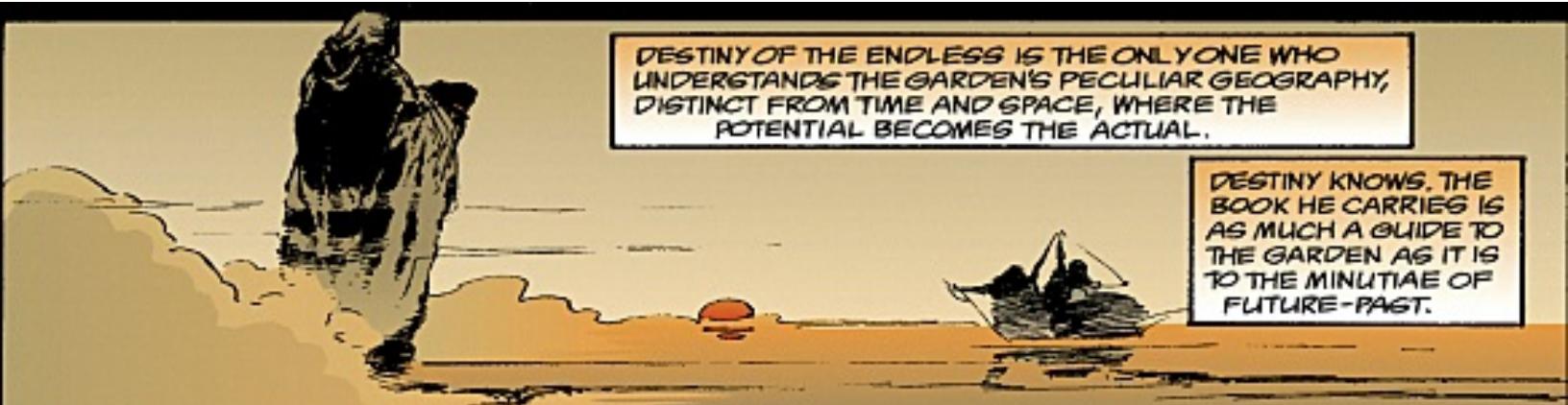
DESTINY HOLDS HIS SECRETS.

THE GARDEN OF DESTINY. YOU WOULD KNOW IT IF YOU SAW IT. AFTER ALL, YOU WILL WANDER IT UNTIL YOU DIE.

OR BEYOND.

FOR THE PATHS ARE LONG, AND EVEN IN DEATH THERE IS NO ENDING TO THEM.





DESTINY OF THE ENDLESS IS THE ONLY ONE WHO UNDERSTANDS THE GARDEN'S PECULIAR GEOGRAPHY, DISTINCT FROM TIME AND SPACE, WHERE THE POTENTIAL BECOMES THE ACTUAL.

DESTINY KNOWS. THE BOOK HE CARRIES IS AS MUCH A GUIDE TO THE GARDEN AS IT IS TO THE MINUTIAE OF FUTURE-PAST.

DESTINY HAS NO PATH OF HIS OWN. HE MAKES NO DECISIONS, PICKS NO BRANCHING WAYS; HIS WAY IS LAID OUT, DRAWN AND DEFINED, FROM THE BEGINNING OF TIME TO THE END OF EVERYTHING.



NOTHING  
BEGINS IN THIS  
PLACE.

THIS PLACE  
IS BEYOND BEGINNINGS  
AND ENDINGS, GREY  
WOMEN.

REALLY?  
EVERYTHING HAS TO  
START SOMEWHERE ...  
AND HERE IS AS GOOD  
A PLACE AS ANY.

EVERYTHING  
CREATED HAS A BEGINNING,  
DESTINY OF THE ENDLESS...

...AS  
EVERYTHING  
CREATED HAS  
AN END.

AND THEY  
ARE GONE.

DISTURBED, IN A MANNER HE  
WOULD FIND ALMOST  
IMPOSSIBLE TO ARTICULATE,  
DESTINY RETURNS TO HIS  
STRONGHOLD.

EXAMINING HIS BOOK, HE FINDS  
THE ENCOUNTER WITH THE THREE  
WOMEN OUTLINED THERE IN  
EVERY DETAIL.

READING ON, HE KNOWS  
WHAT HE MUST DO.

DESTINY HAS TO  
CALL A FAMILY  
MEETING.



## SEASON of MISTS: a prologue

In which a Family reunion occasions certain personal recriminations; assorted events are set in motion; and a relationship thought long done with proves to have much relevance today.

NEIL GAIMAN MIKE DRINGENBERG MALCOLM JONES III STEVE OLIFF TODD KLEIN TOM PEYER KAREN BERGER Writer Penciller Inker Colorist Letterer Asst. Editor Editor

Featuring characters created by GAIMAN, KIETH and DRINGENBERG





BROTHER DREAM.  
IT IS I, DESTINY OF THE  
ENDLESS WHO CALLS  
YOU. THE FAMILY  
MUST MEET.

COME  
TO ME.

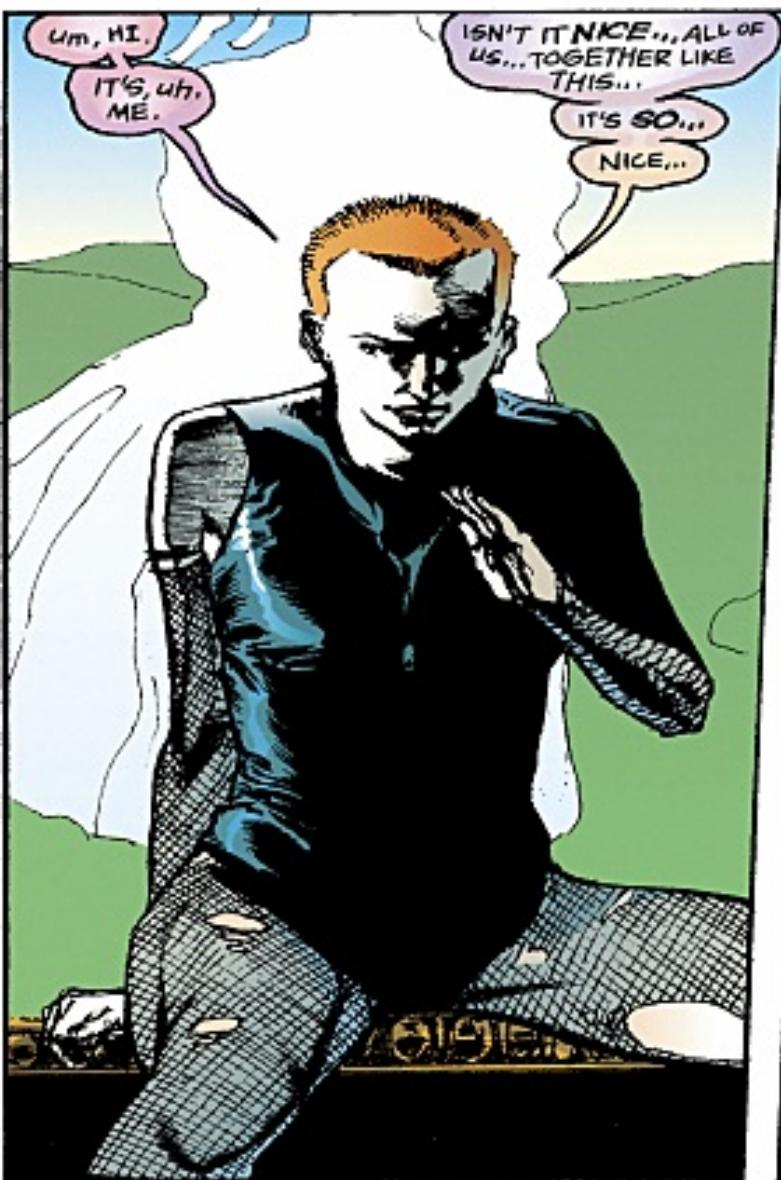


INTERESTING? PERHAPS.  
FOR YOU MORE THAN  
ANY OF US, MY  
BROTHER.

BUT IN  
GOOD TIME  
THERE ARE  
THREE MORE  
OF US STILL  
TO COME.









*Let us pause for a moment, as they descend  
the grey steps toward Destiny's banqueting hall,  
to consider the Endless.*

*Desire is of medium height. It is unlikely that  
any portrait will ever do Desire justice, since to  
see her (or him) is to love him (or her),—  
passionately, painfully, to the exclusion of all  
else.*

*Desire smells almost subliminally of summer  
peaches, and casts two shadows: one black and  
sharp-edged, the other translucent and forever  
wavering, like heat haze.*

*Desire smiles in brief flashes, like  
sunlight glinting from a knife-edge. And there is  
much else that is knife-like about Desire.*

*Never a possession, always the possessor, with  
skin as pale as smoke, and eyes tawny and  
sharp as yellow wine: Desire is everything you  
have ever wanted. Whoever you are. Whatever  
you are.*

Everything.



*Despair, Desire's sister and twin, is queen of  
her own bleak bourn. It is said that scattered  
through Despair's domain are a multitude of tiny  
windows, hanging in the void. Each window  
looks out onto a different scene, being, in our  
world, a mirror. Sometimes you will look into a  
mirror and feel the eyes of Despair upon you,  
feel her hook catch and snag on your heart.*

*Her skin is cold, and clammy; her eyes are the  
colour of sky, on the grey, wet days that leach  
the world of colour and meaning; her voice is  
little more than a whisper; and while she has no  
odour, her shadow smells musky, and pungent,  
like the skin of a snake.*



*Many years gone, a sect in what is now  
Afghanistan declared her a goddess, and  
proclaimed all empty rooms her sacred places.  
The sect, whose members called themselves  
The Unforgiven, persisted for two years, until its  
last adherent finally killed himself, having  
survived the other members by almost seven  
months.*

*Despair says little, and is patient.*

*Destiny is the oldest of the Endless; in the Beginning was the Word, and it was traced by hand on the first page of his book, before ever it was spoken aloud.*

*Destiny is also the tallest of the Endless, to mortal eyes.*

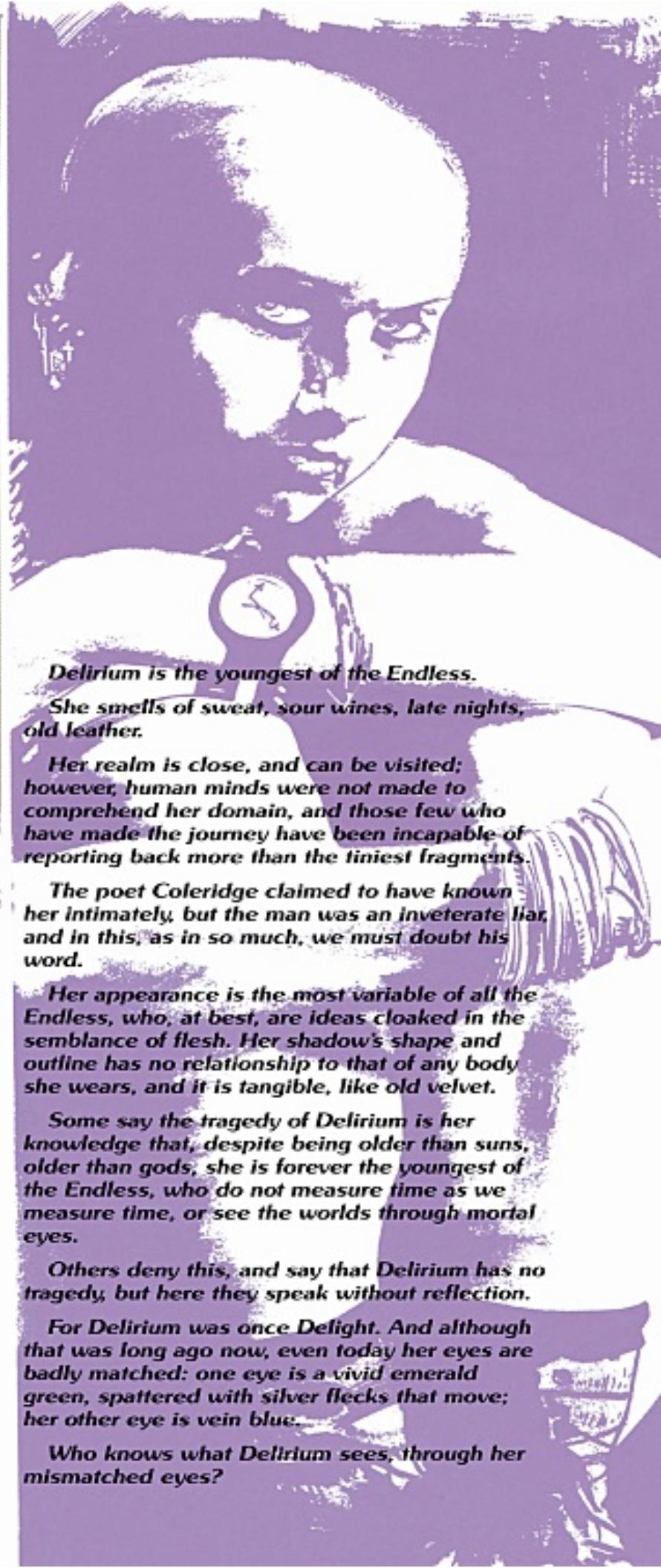
*There are some who believe him to be blind; whilst others, perhaps with more reason, claim that he has travelled far beyond blindness, that indeed, he can do nothing but see: that he sees the fine traceries the galaxies make as they spiral through the void, that he watches the intricate patterns living things make on their journey through time.*



*Destiny smells of dust and the libraries of night.*

*He leaves no footprints.*

*He casts no shadow.*



*Delirium is the youngest of the Endless.*

*She smells of sweat, sour wines, late nights, old leather.*

*Her realm is close, and can be visited; however, human minds were not made to comprehend her domain, and those few who have made the journey have been incapable of reporting back more than the tiniest fragments.*

*The poet Coleridge claimed to have known her intimately, but the man was an inveterate liar, and in this, as in so much, we must doubt his word.*

*Her appearance is the most variable of all the Endless, who, at best, are ideas cloaked in the semblance of flesh. Her shadow's shape and outline has no relationship to that of any body she wears, and it is tangible, like old velvet.*

*Some say the tragedy of Delirium is her knowledge that, despite being older than suns, older than gods, she is forever the youngest of the Endless, who do not measure time as we measure time, or see the worlds through mortal eyes.*

*Others deny this, and say that Delirium has no tragedy, but here they speak without reflection.*

*For Delirium was once Delight. And although that was long ago now, even today her eyes are badly matched: one eye is a vivid emerald green, spattered with silver flecks that move; her other eye is vein blue.*

*Who knows what Delirium sees, through her mismatched eyes?*

*Dream of the Endless: ah, there's a conundrum.*

*In this aspect (and we perceive but aspects of the Endless, as we see the light glinting from one tiny facet of some huge and flawlessly cut precious stone), he is rake-thin, with skin the color of falling snow.*

*Dream accumulates names to himself like others make friends; but he permits himself few friends.*

*If he is closest to anyone, it is to his elder sister, whom he sees but rarely.*



*He heard long ago, in a dream, that one day in every century Death takes on mortal flesh, better to comprehend what the lives she takes must feel like, to taste the bitter tang of mortality; that this is the price she must pay for being the divider of the living from all that has gone before, all that must come after.*

*He broods on this tale, but has never questioned her about its truth. Perhaps he fears that she would answer him.*

*Of all the Endless, save perhaps Destiny, he is most conscious of his responsibilities, the most meticulous in their execution.*

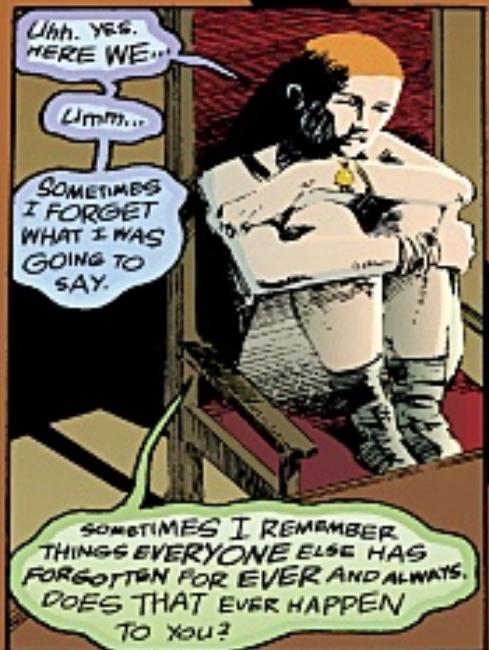
*Dream casts a human shadow, when it occurs to him to do so.*

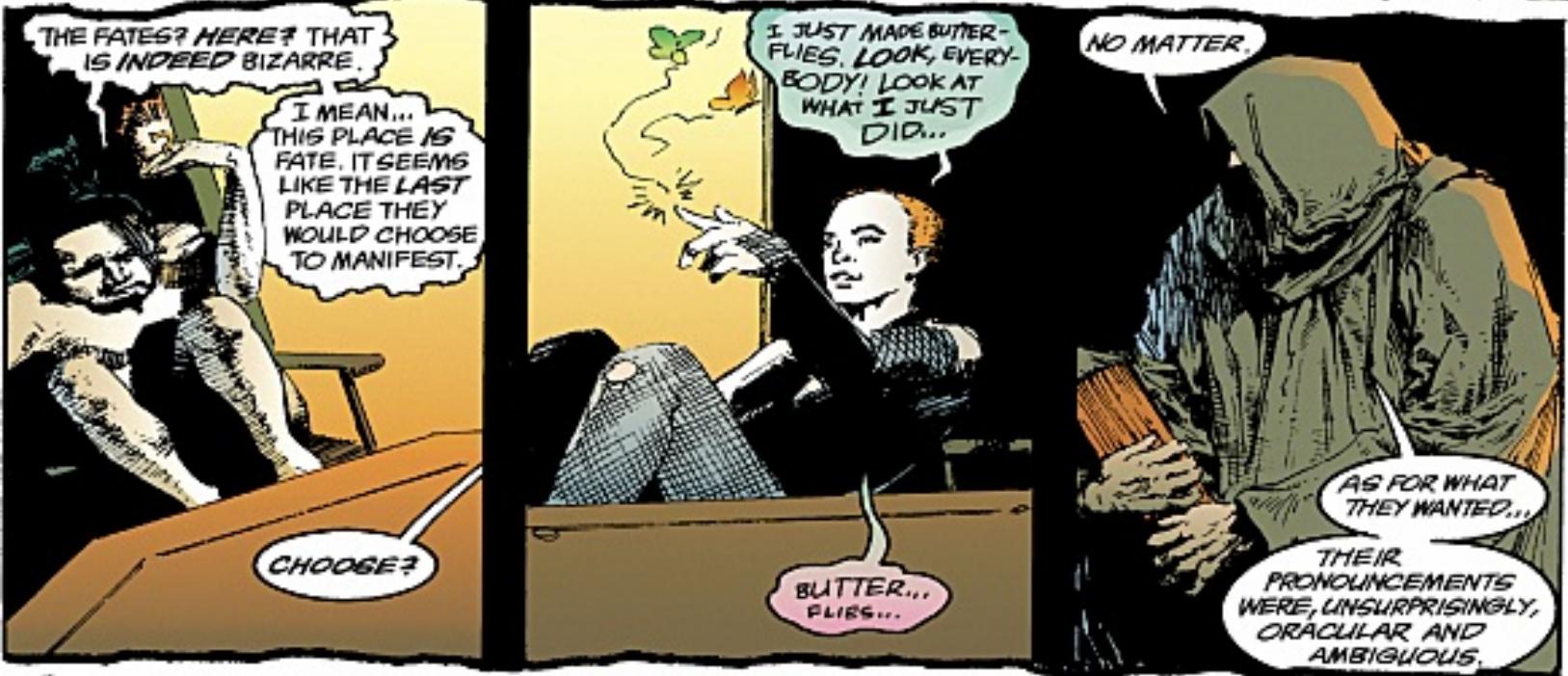


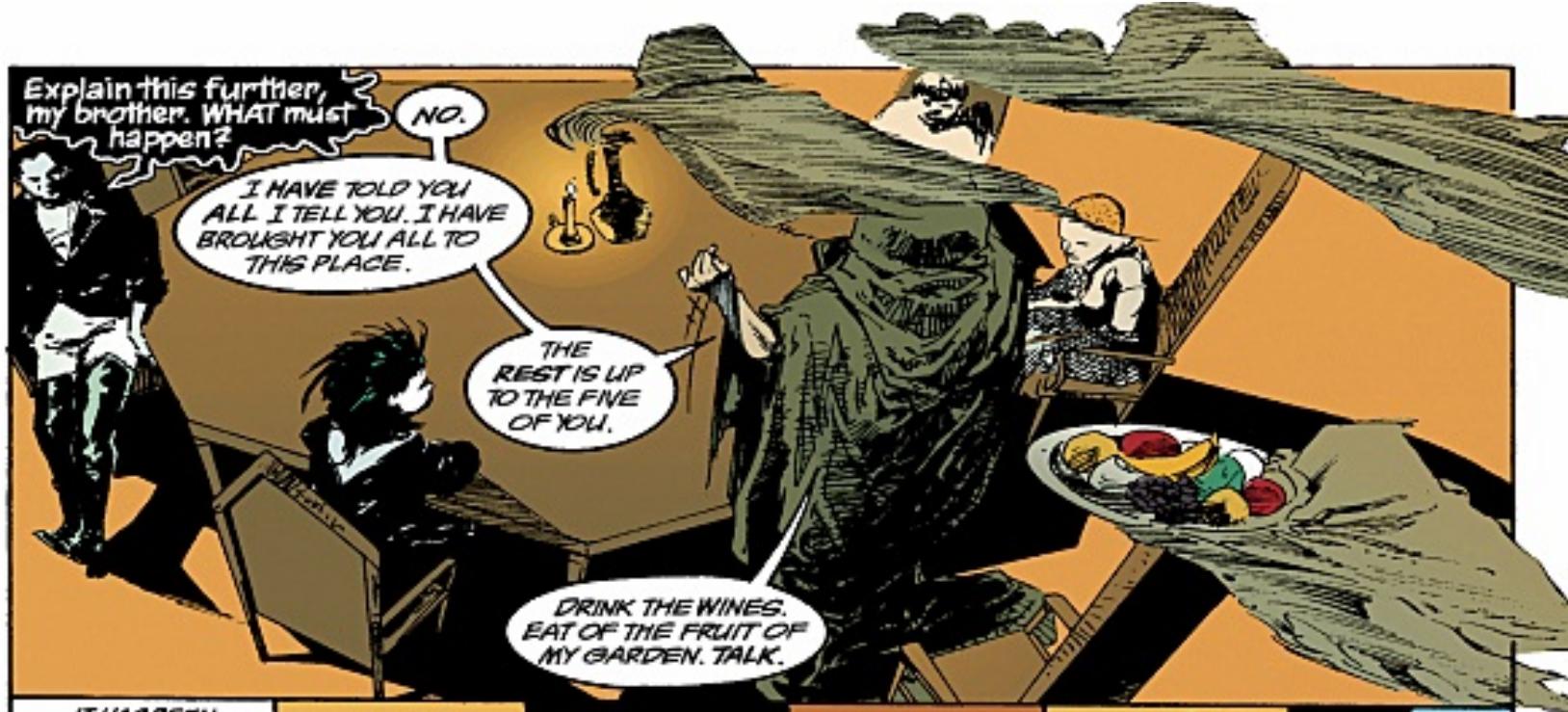
*And there is Death.*



I HAVE SENT FOR  
REFRESHMENTS.  
IN THE  
MEANTIME, PLEASE,  
MAKE YOURSELVES  
COMFORTABLE.







You are saying that you summoned us here because it is necessary for us to be here at this time.

EXACTLY.

This is foolish. I am currently rebuilding my kingdom. I have duties to attend to, and there is much that must be done.

THAT WILL NOT HAPPEN, YET.

I will leave now.

I LOST SOMETIME ONCE.  
IT'S ALWAYS IN THE LAST PLACE YOU LOOK FOR IT.

AW, C'MON. HANG AROUND FOR A LITTLE. WHAT'S SOME LOST TIME? WE'VE GOT ALL THE TIME THERE IS.

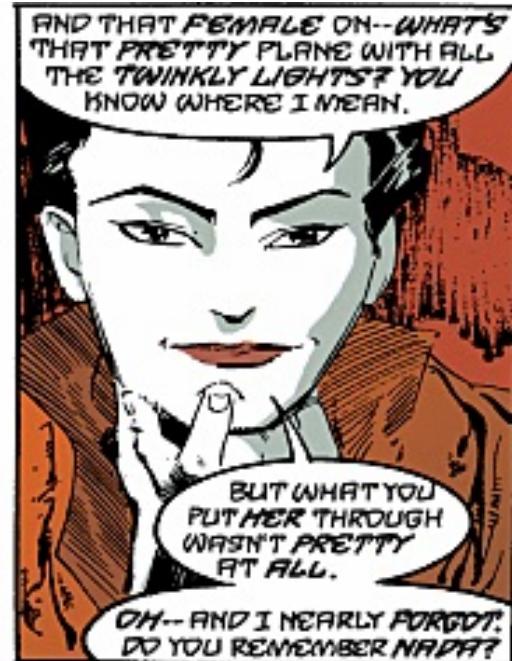
HAVE A GRAPE.

I do not want a grape.

I COULD MAKE YOU WANT ONE.









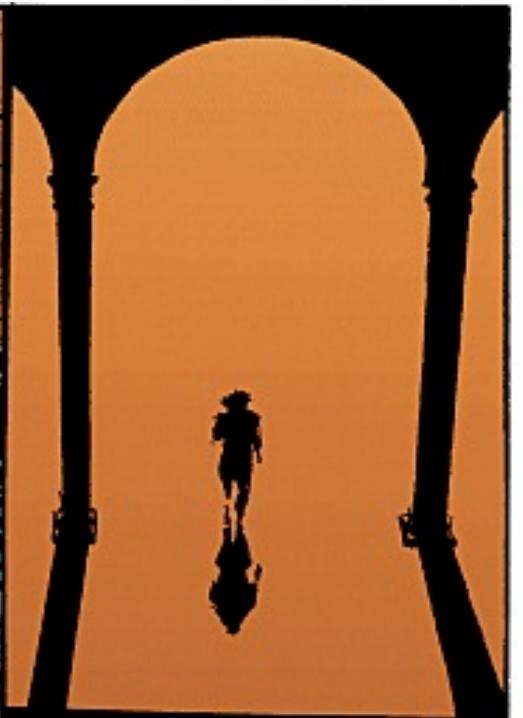
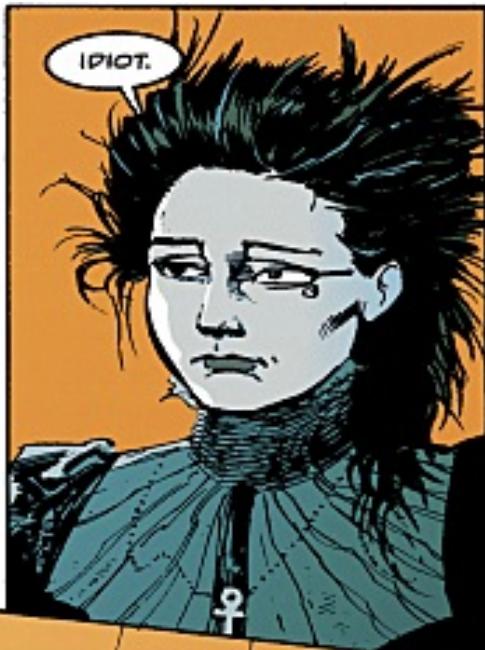








IDIOT.



LIM, HE SAID,  
SORRY, BUT HE HAD  
TO TAKE OFF.

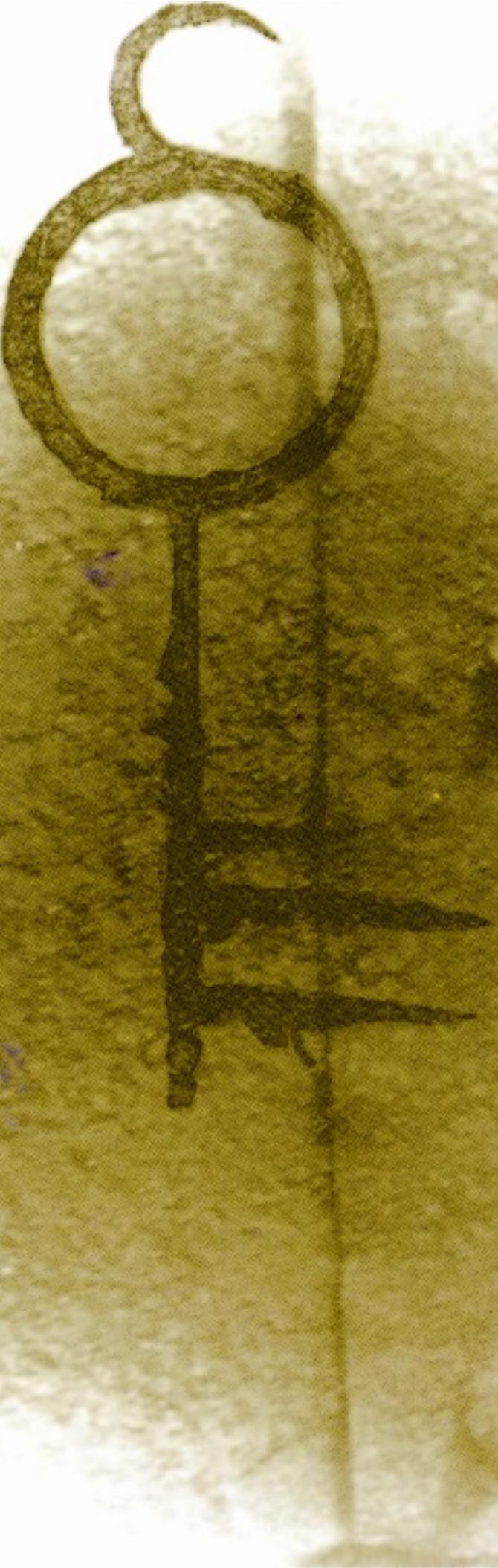
SO, UH, MAYBE WE  
OUGHT TO SIT AND TALK  
SOME MORE. YOU KNOW,  
WITHOUT HIM.

TALK FURTHER,  
SISTER? THERE  
IS NO NEED.

HE IS  
RETURNING TO  
HELL.

IT HAS  
BEGUN.





*S*

N WHICH THE LORD OF DREAMS  
MAKES PREPARATIONS TO VISIT  
THE REALMS INFERNAL;  
FAREWELL'S ARE SAID; A TOAST  
IS DRUNK; AND IN HELL THE  
ADVERSARY MAKES CERTAIN  
PREPARATIONS OF HIS OWN.

*Z*um Edlen Lerdand entweichen sein esen auf  
der PISODEN EINER FALLEIN ein stundt der  
haffet behiele In bey seinem leid wurdet her zum

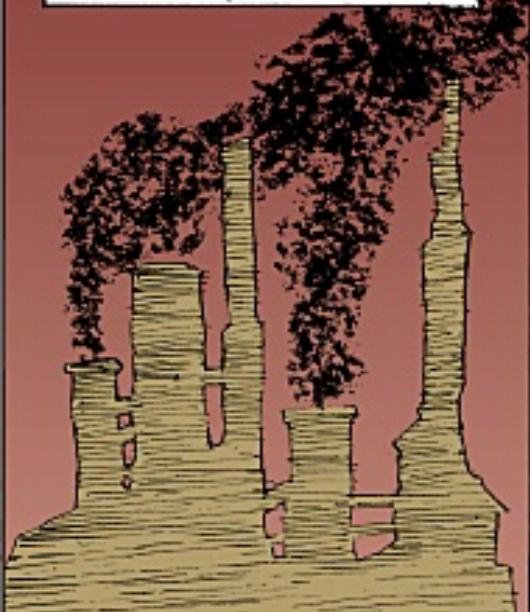


Quis ambigitur in te  
et sapientia tua in te  
qui sunt. Ecce vero omnes  
ambigunt: et illam quae  
nunquam est hoc vobis  
**H**o dicte me quia le  
nisti: et a queritur  
per avide exaltatus  
et qui perit exiit. Autem  
in vestimentis sicut foran  
veni vobis et abducere  
Consolabit ergo di  
tumus eum. Et postea  
etiam loquimur eum  
biu alencia inuenies in  
laetitia. Et credite ad  
me: non vos sed etiam e

edie  
ludem H  
er gembi  
dey seicar

ONCE UPON A TIME, THERE  
WAS A PLACE THAT WASN'T  
A PLACE.

IT HAD MANY NAMES: AVERNUS,  
GEHENNA, TARTARUS, HADES,  
ABADDON, SHEOL....



IT WAS AN INFERNO OF PAIN  
AND FLAME AND ICE, WHERE  
EVERY NIGHTMARE HAD COME  
TRUE LONG SINCE.



IT WAS NOT CONSIDERED A PLEASANT  
PLACE BY THE MAJORITY OF ITS  
INHABITANTS; HOWEVER, BEING DEAD,  
AND BEING THERE (AS THEY IMAGINED)  
AGAINST THEIR WILL, THEIR OPINIONS  
COUNTED FOR LITTLE.



HUMANITY CALLED THEM DEMONS  
WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING WHAT  
IT HAD NAMED.



WHICH THEY  
RECEIVED IN  
ABUNDANCE.



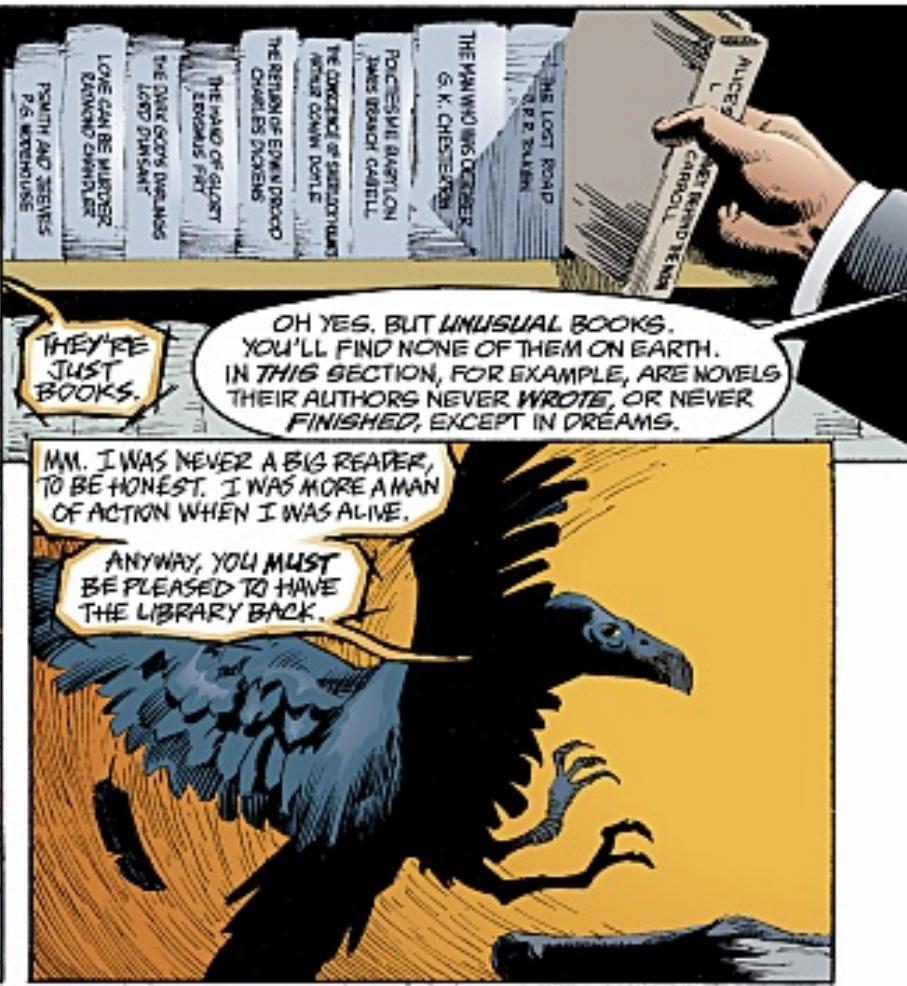
HOWEVER, THEY WERE ALL  
AGREED ON ONE THING.



WE'LL CALL IT HELL.

THIS WAS AS BAD  
AS IT GOT.

IT COULDN'T  
GET ANY WORSE.







# SEASON of MISTS Chapter -1

In which the Lord of Dreams makes preparations to visit the realms infernal; farewells are said; a toast is drunk; and in Hell the adversary makes certain preparations of his own.

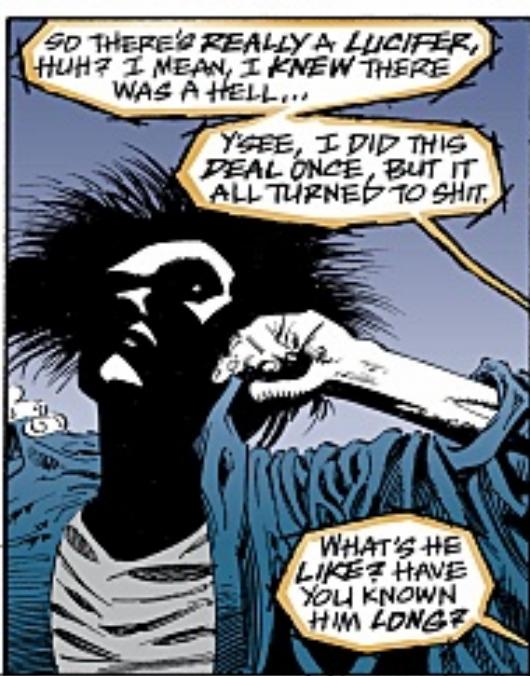
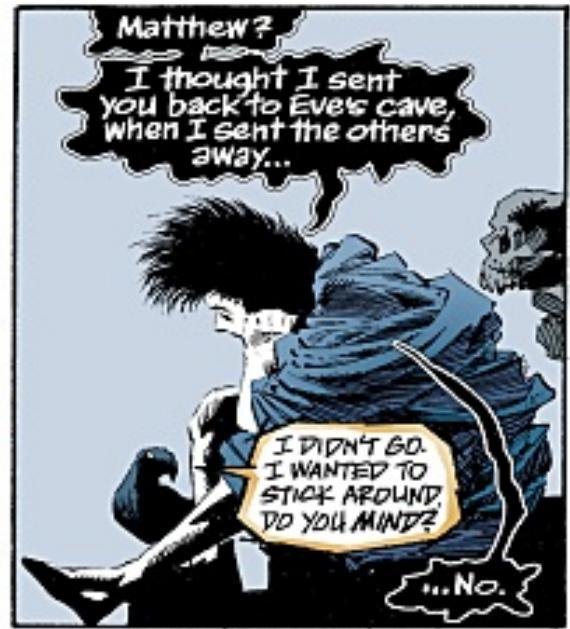
Written by NEIL GAIMAN  
Drawn by KELLEY JONES  
Inked by MALCOLM JONES III  
Colored by STEVE OLIFF  
Lettererd by TODD KLEIN  
Asst. Editor: TOM PEYER  
Editor: KAREN BERGER

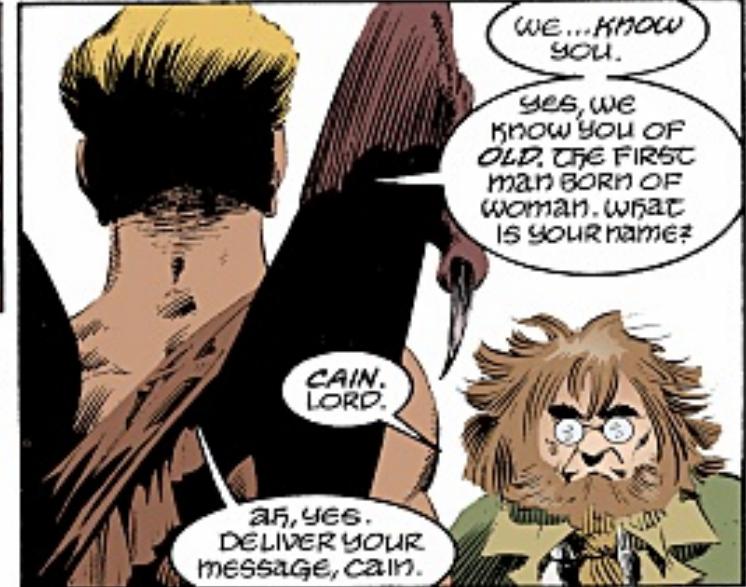
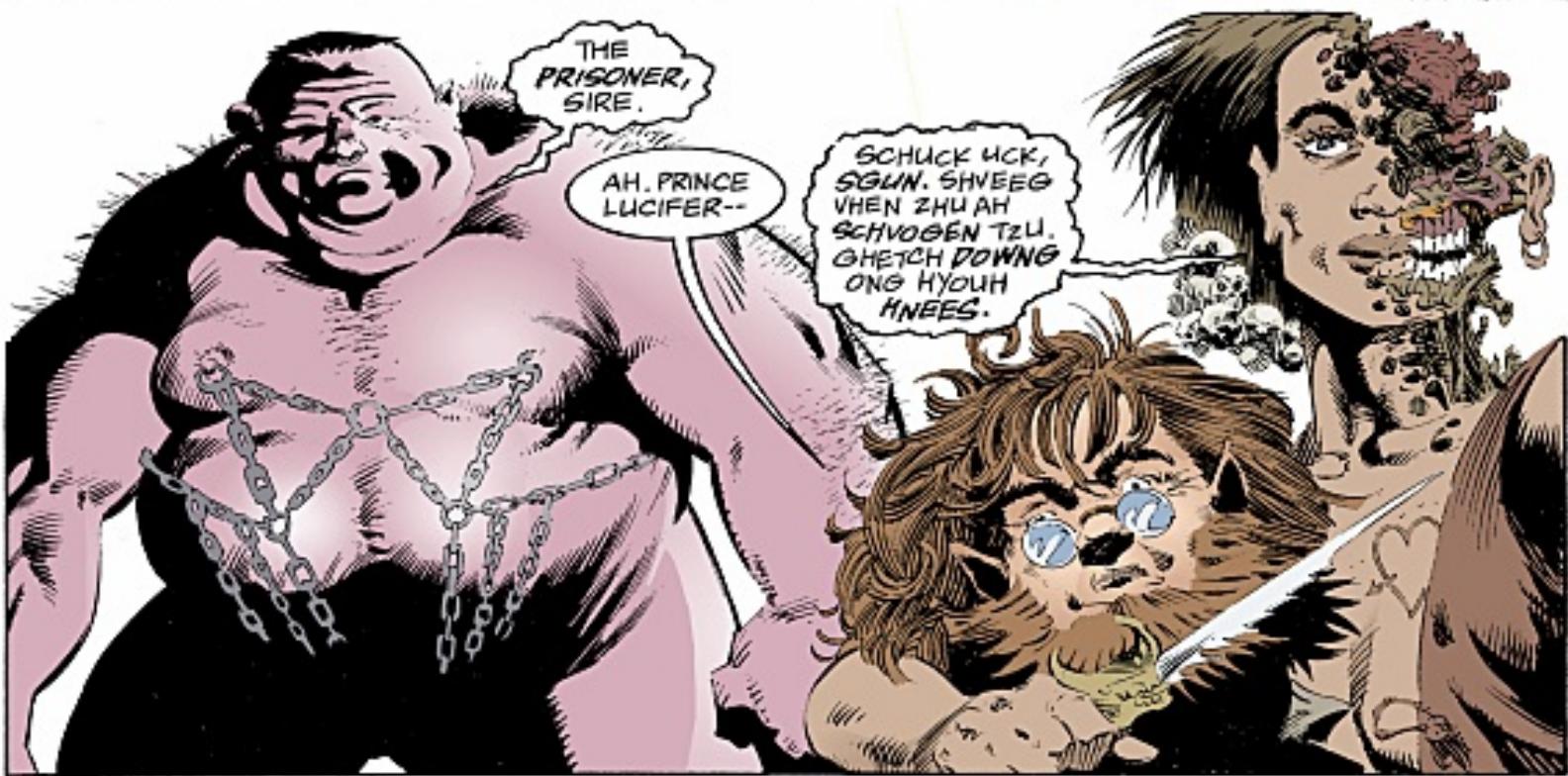
Featuring characters created by  
GAIMAN, KIETH and DRINGENBERG

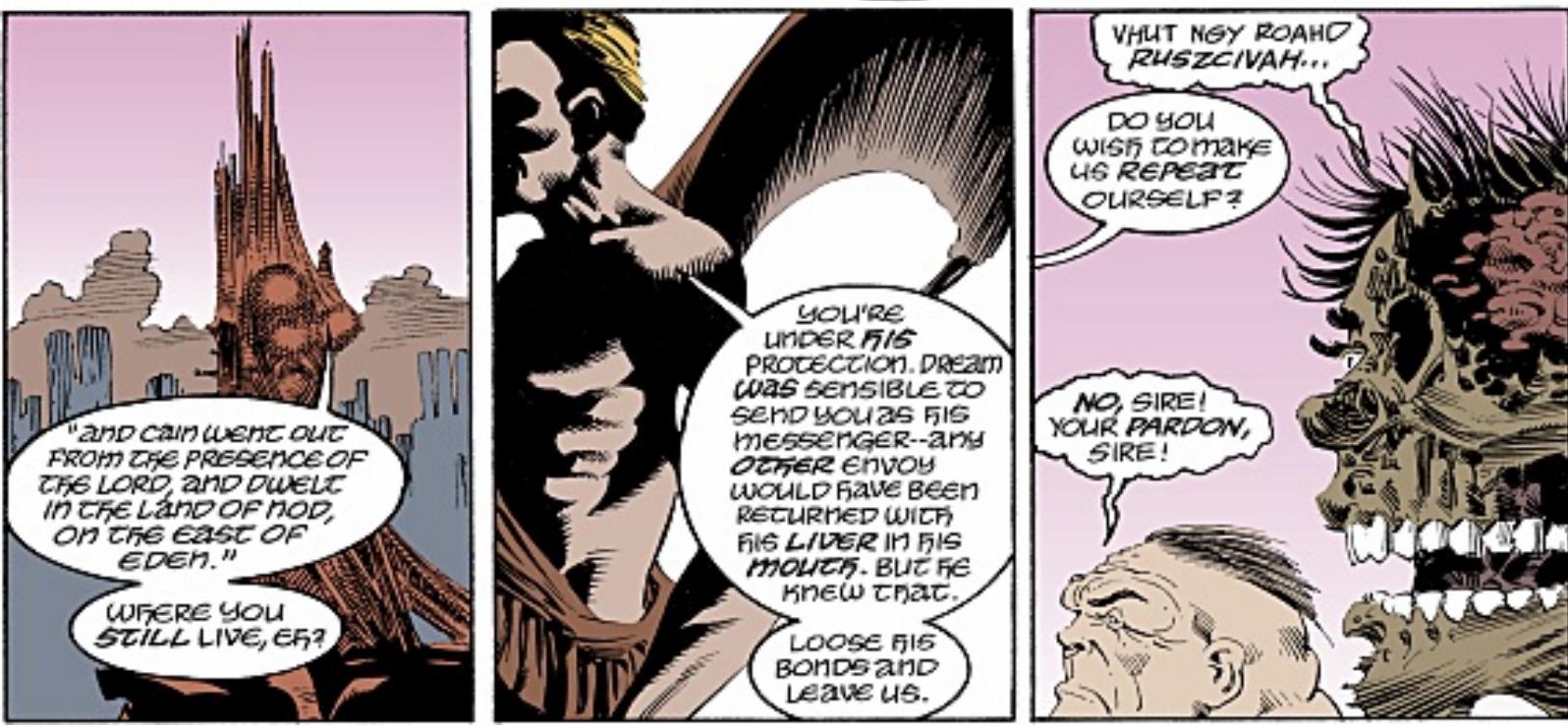
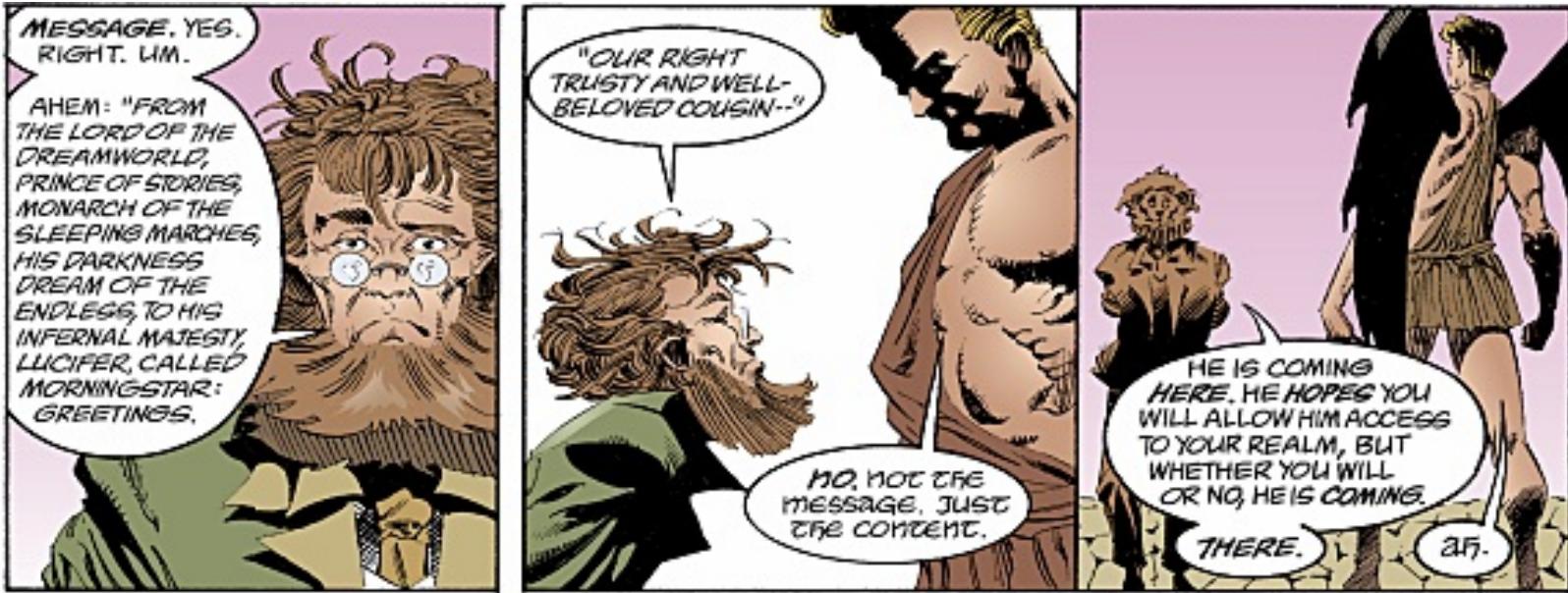


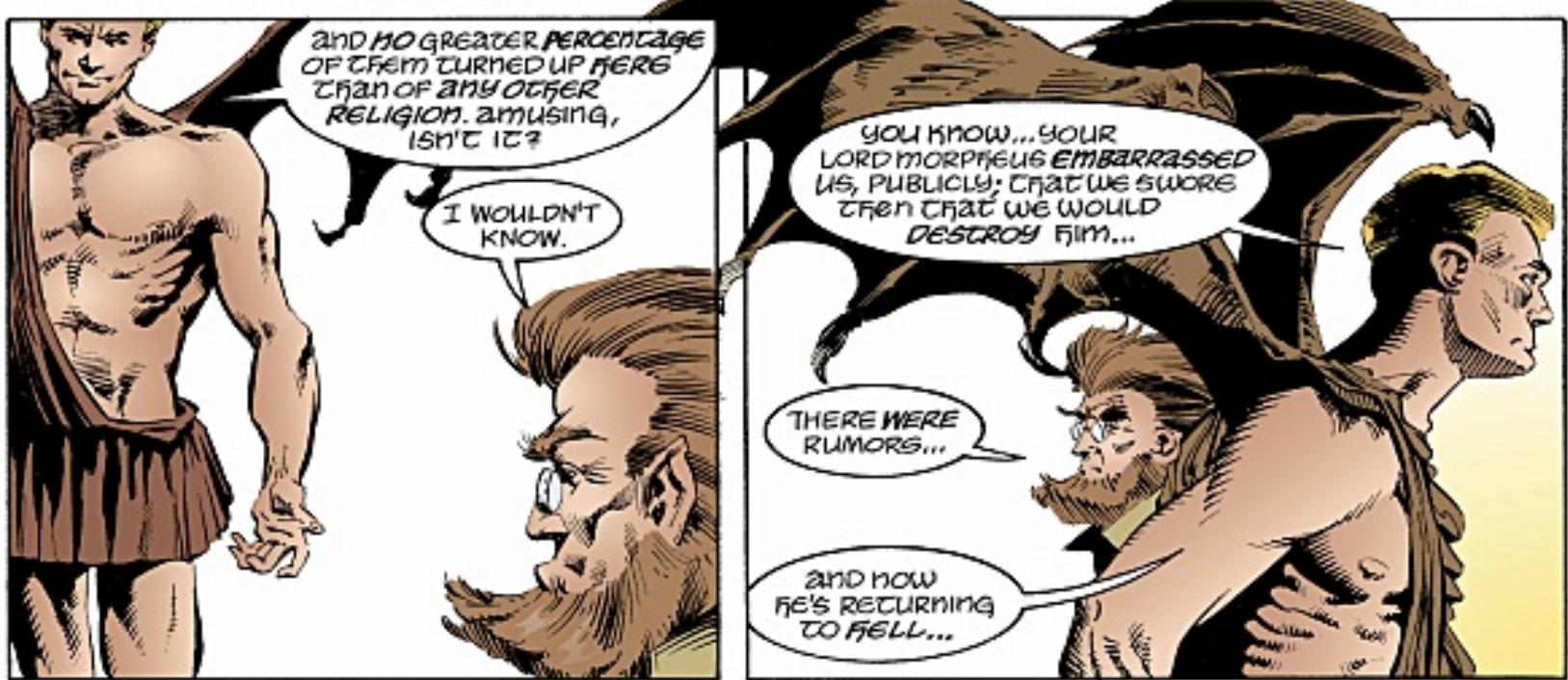


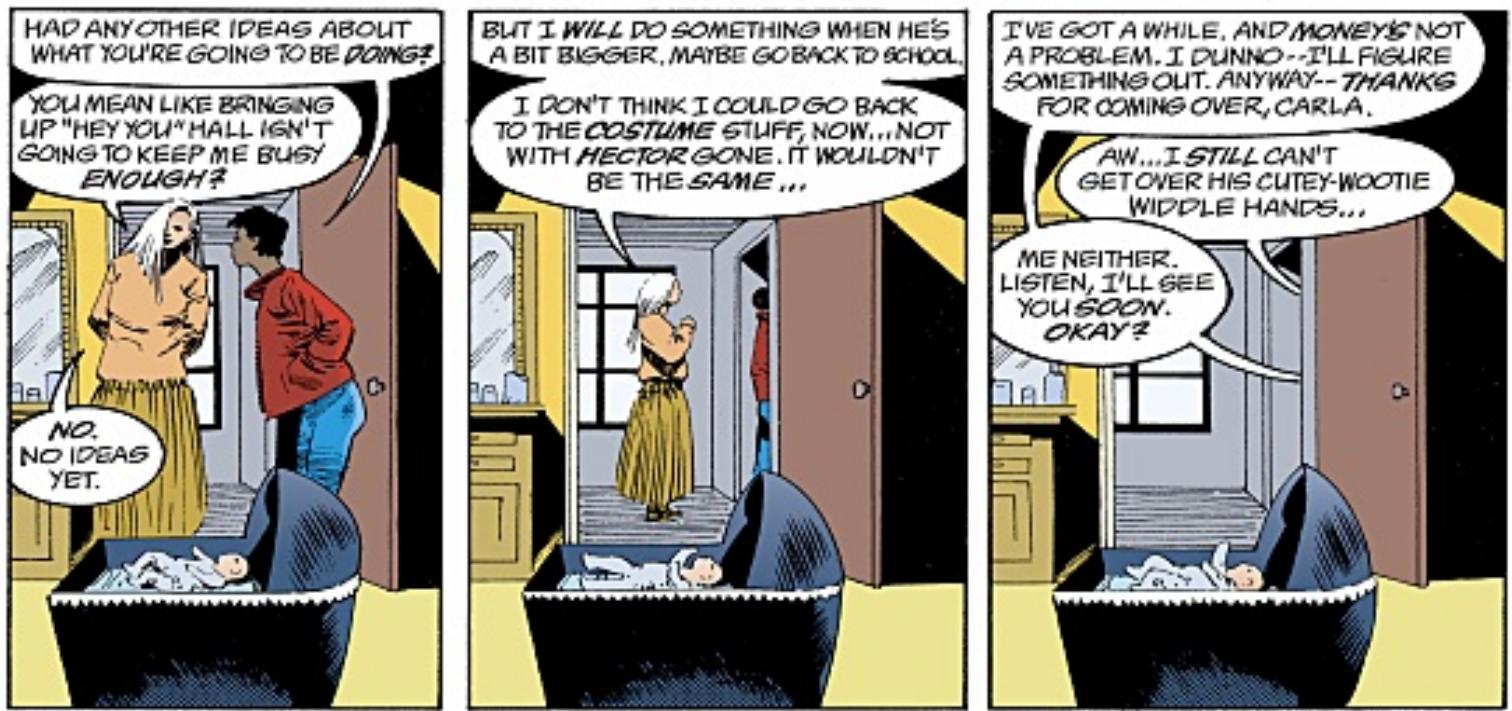


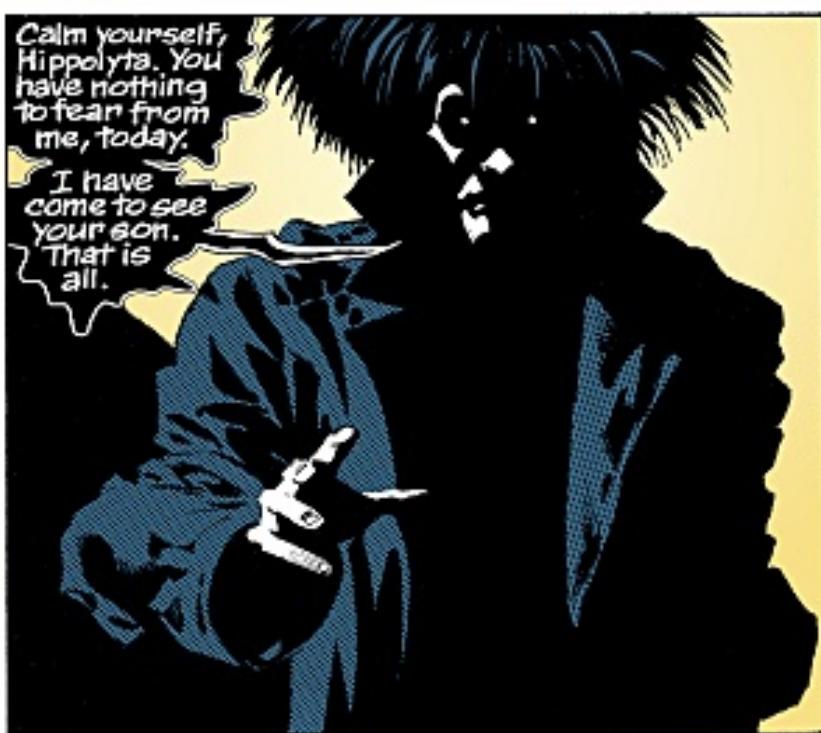


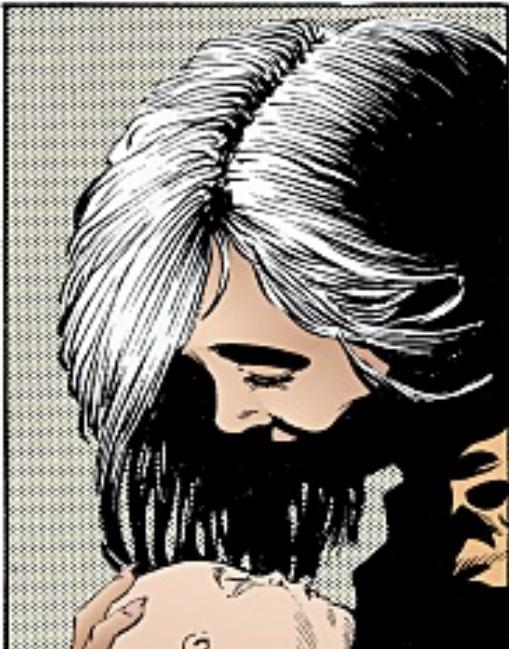
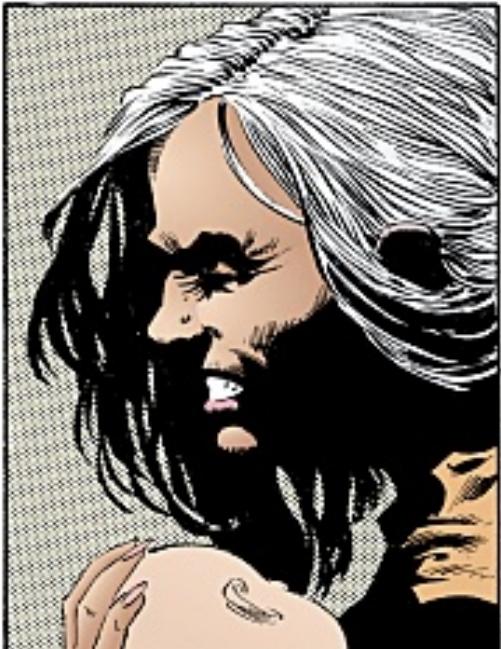
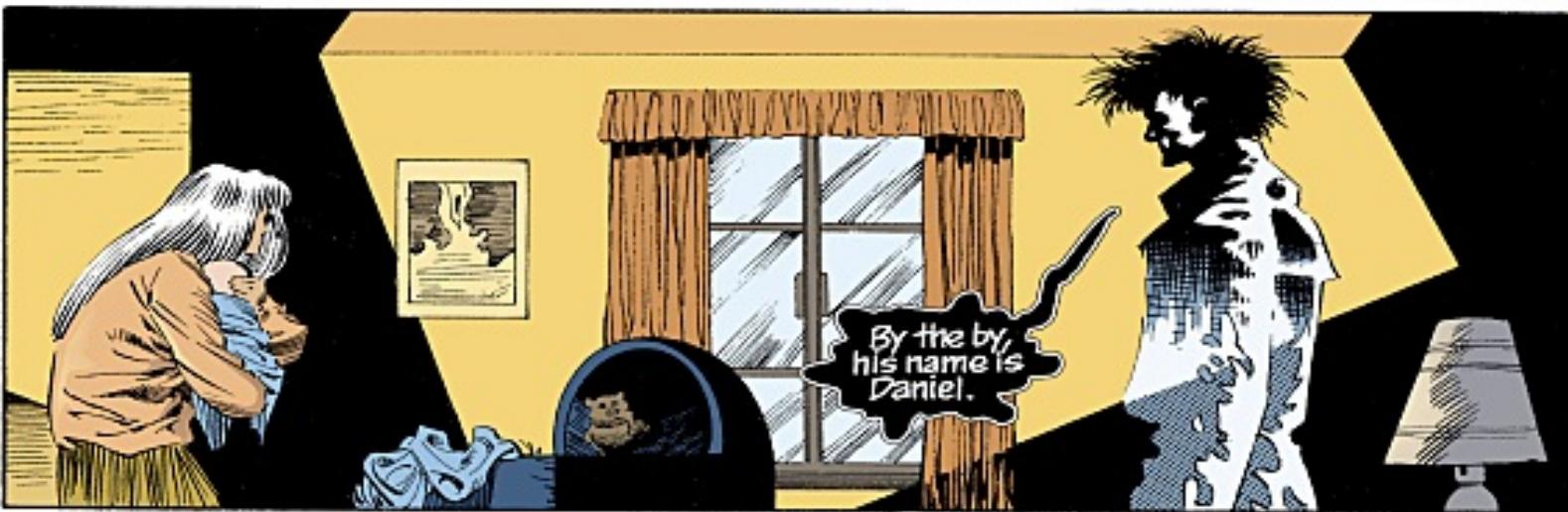
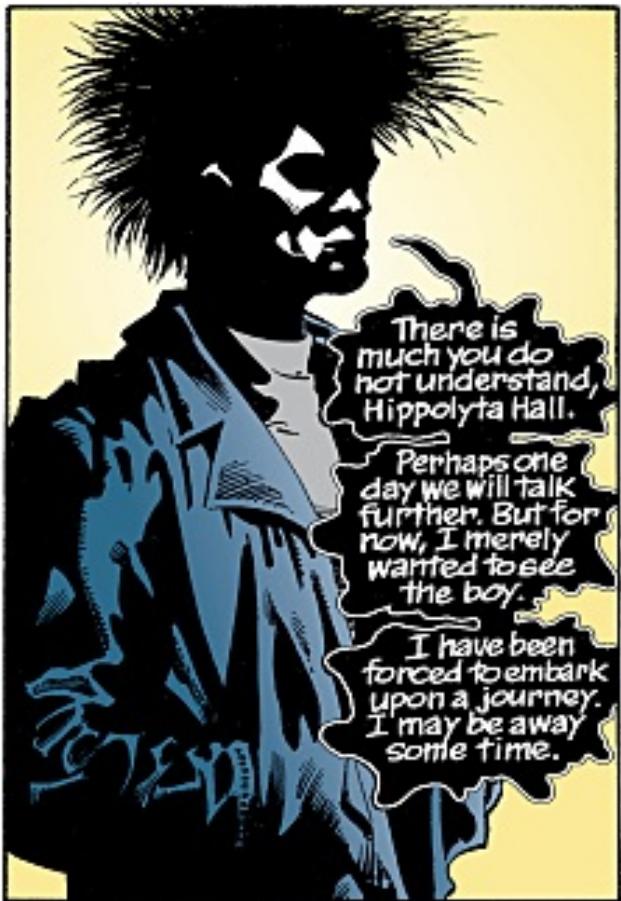












I move from dreamer to dreamer, from dream to dream, hunting for what I need.

Slipping and sliding and flickering through dreams; and the dreamer's will wake and wonder why this dream seemed different, wonder how real their lives can truly be.

One more person to see, then. One final goodbye to be said, and then to Hell.

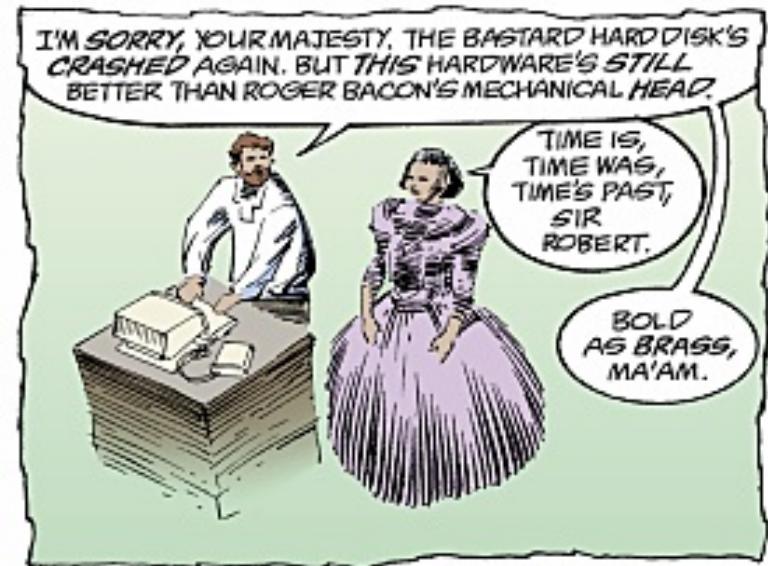
To Nada.

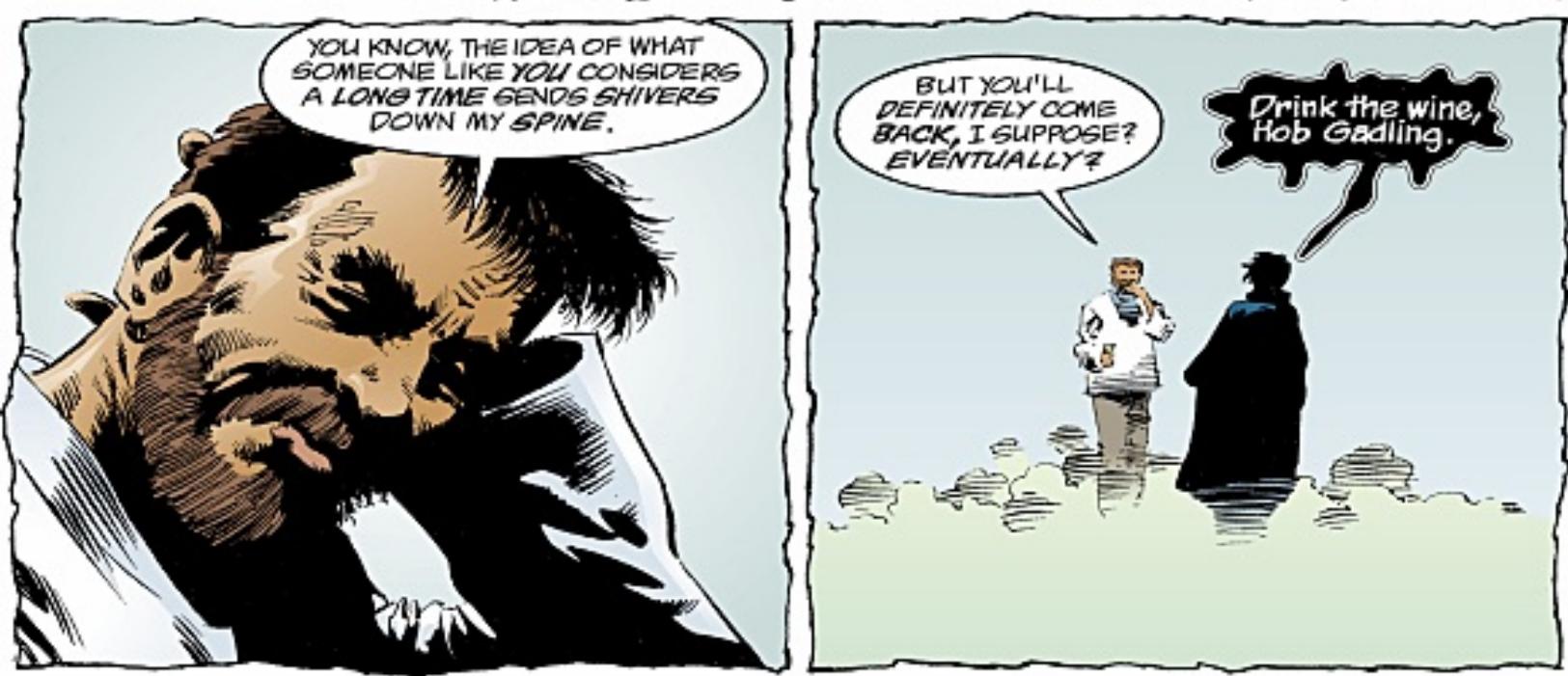
To Lucifer.

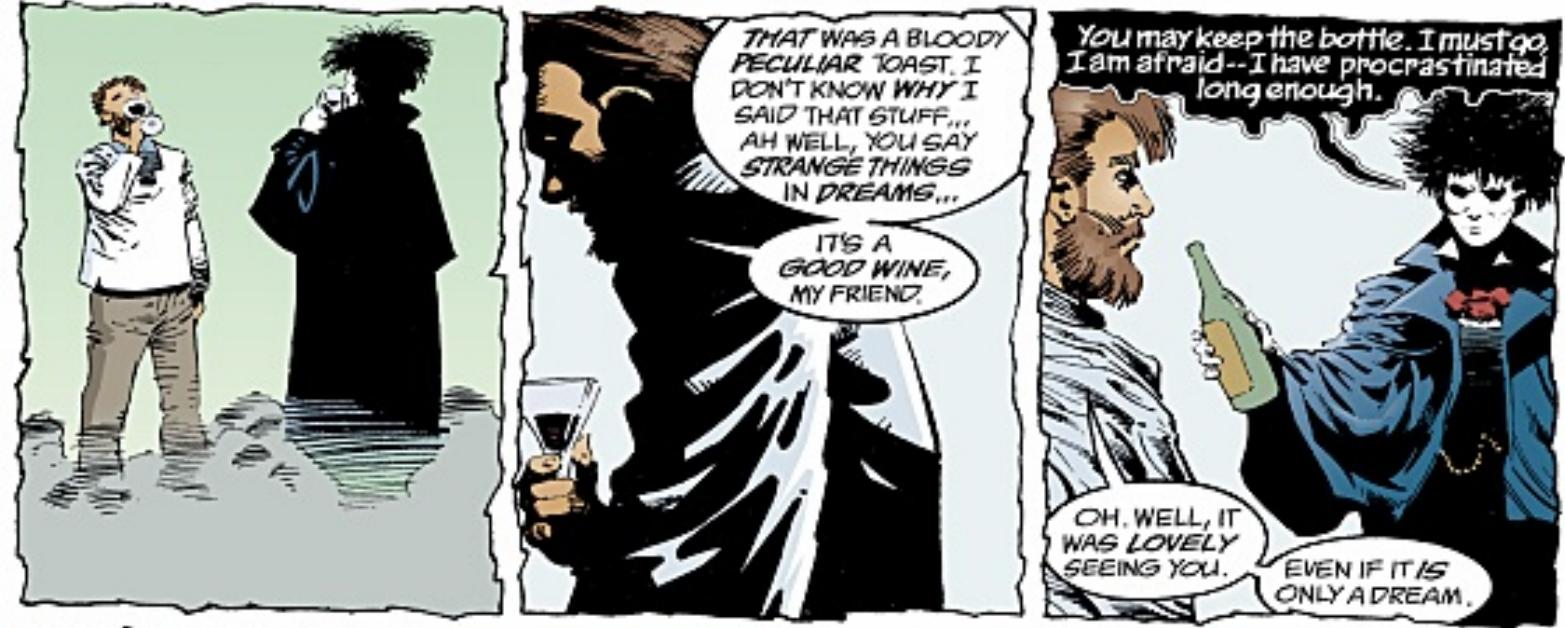
Here: in the dream of Cecile Latour, as her father, now long dead, walks her through the family cellars.

PAY NO ATTENTION TO THAT MAN BEHIND THE CURTAIN, MA CHERIE.

There.







BELOW YOU IS OUR DOMAIN, FIRST-BORN man. LOOK AT IT.

WHAT DO  
YOU THINK?

HOME TO  
MILLIONS OF  
DEMONS, TO AN  
UNCOUNTABLE  
NUMBER OF  
MORTAL SOULS.  
DO YOU THINK  
THEY ARE  
HAPPY?

AH.

WHY, JUST RECENTLY ONE OF THE MINOR DEMONS - SOME LITTLE YELLOW RAYMER - THOUGHT TO DECLARE HIMSELF A KING OF HELL, TO USURP THE TRIUMVIRATE...

IT CAME  
TO NOTHING.  
THESE THINGS  
NEVER DO, BUT  
PERHAPS IT MADE  
HIM HAPPY.  
BRIEFLY.

WHAT WE WONDER IS  
WHY THEY BOTHER THESE  
LITTLE DEMONS...

THEY COME TO OUR PALACE AND SAY, "WE HAVE BATTLED; THERE WILL BE A COALITION." WE SAY, VERY WELL, AND THEY OUTSTRIKE EACH OTHER, AND DESTROY EACH OTHER, AND IT MATTERS NOT.

OR THEY SAY, "LUCIFER,  
YOU ARE DEPOSED, YOU ARE  
NO LONGER KING OF HELL--AS IF  
MERELY SAYING SOMETHING  
WERE ENOUGH TO MAKE  
IT TRUE.

THEY BELIEVE  
THEMSELVES LUCIFER'S  
EQUALS, Cain, all  
these pitiful little  
gnats.

BUT THERE IS ONLY ONE THAT WE  
HAVE EVER OWNED TO BE OUR SUPERIOR.  
THERE IS BUT ONE GREATER THAN  
US. AND TO HIM...

TO HIM  
WE NO LONGER  
SPEAK.

OH THANK YOU LORD,  
THANK YOU THANK YOU  
THANK YOU THANK YOU...





IT WAS TEN BILLION  
YEARS AGO THAT WE  
FIRST CAME TO THIS  
PLACE. TEN BILLION  
YEARS AGO WE FIRST  
BEGAN TO REIGN.

SINCE THEN, ONE BY  
ONE, WILLINGLY OR  
OTHERWISE, EACH  
OF YOU HAS FOLLOWED  
US HERE.

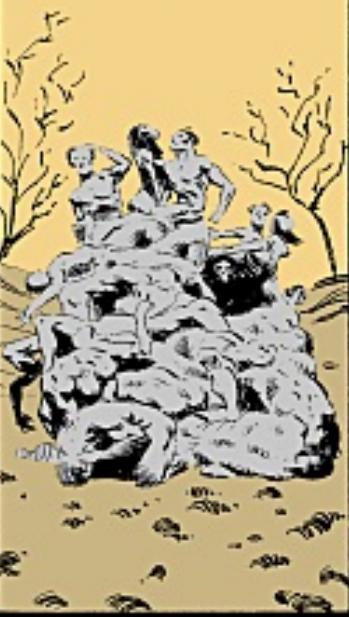


YOU HAVE TAKEN  
UP RESIDENCE IN THIS  
WORLD. TAKEN YOUR  
OPPORTUNITIES FOR  
PAIN AND PLEASURE.



NOW, WE DISCOVER, WITH  
WE MUST ADMIT, A CERTAIN  
PERVERSE DELIGHT, THAT  
ONE MORE COMES HERE.  
MORPHEUS OF THE  
ENDLESS. THE DREAMLORD.

THE NEWS OF HIS  
VISIT HAS CRYSTALLIZED  
CERTAIN MATTERS  
WE HAVE BEEN  
PONDERING FOR  
MILLENNIA.



SOME SAY THAT ONE  
DAY IN HELL IS MUCH LIKE  
ALL THE REST. THAT IN  
THIS PLACE OF FLUX  
ETERNAL, NOTHING CHANGES.



"SIRE -- CAIN HAS RETURNED. HE HAS GIVEN YOUR MESSAGE TO THE MORNINGSTAR."

"Ah. Where is he?"





We do what we must, Lucien.

Sometimes we can choose the path we follow. Sometimes our choices are made for us.



And sometimes we have no choice at all.





FAREWELL,  
MY LORD.

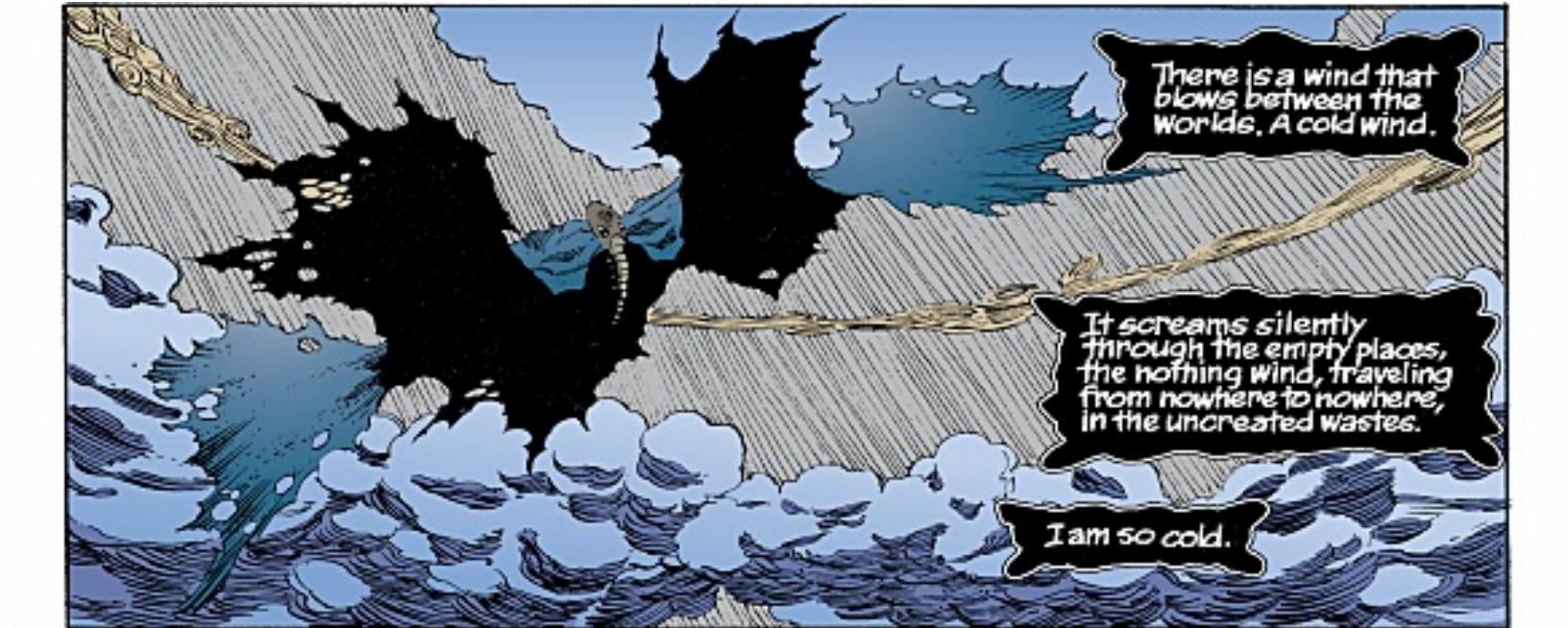
To Be Continued



*G*

N WHICH THE LORD OF DREAMS  
RETURNS TO HELL, AND HIS  
CONFRONTATION WITH THE LORD  
OF THAT REALM; IN WHICH A  
NUMBER OF DOORS ARE CLOSED FOR  
THE LAST TIME; AND CONCERNING  
THE STRANGE DISPOSITION OF  
A KNIFE AND A KEY.

## E P I S O D E   2



There is a wind that blows between the Worlds. A cold wind.

It screams silently through the empty places, the nothing wind, traveling from nowhere to nowhere, in the uncreated wastes.

I am so cold.



This is not a place, after all. It is BETWEEN places.

This is NOWHERE.

A brief thought: I could stay here, abandon my quest, hang forever in the void, safe and cold and alone.

NO.

We do as we must do.



And already the wind is dying back, signaling the transition from nowhere to WHERE.

Already the mists are parting.

"Welcome to Hell," I tell myself. And I am afraid.



Welcome to Hell.



The doors to Hell are legion.

There are entrances less-well-guarded than this one, gates more poorly defended.

But I am here as Dream of the Endless. I wear my helm of office. I am caparisoned formally. I have no choice but to use the Main Gate.

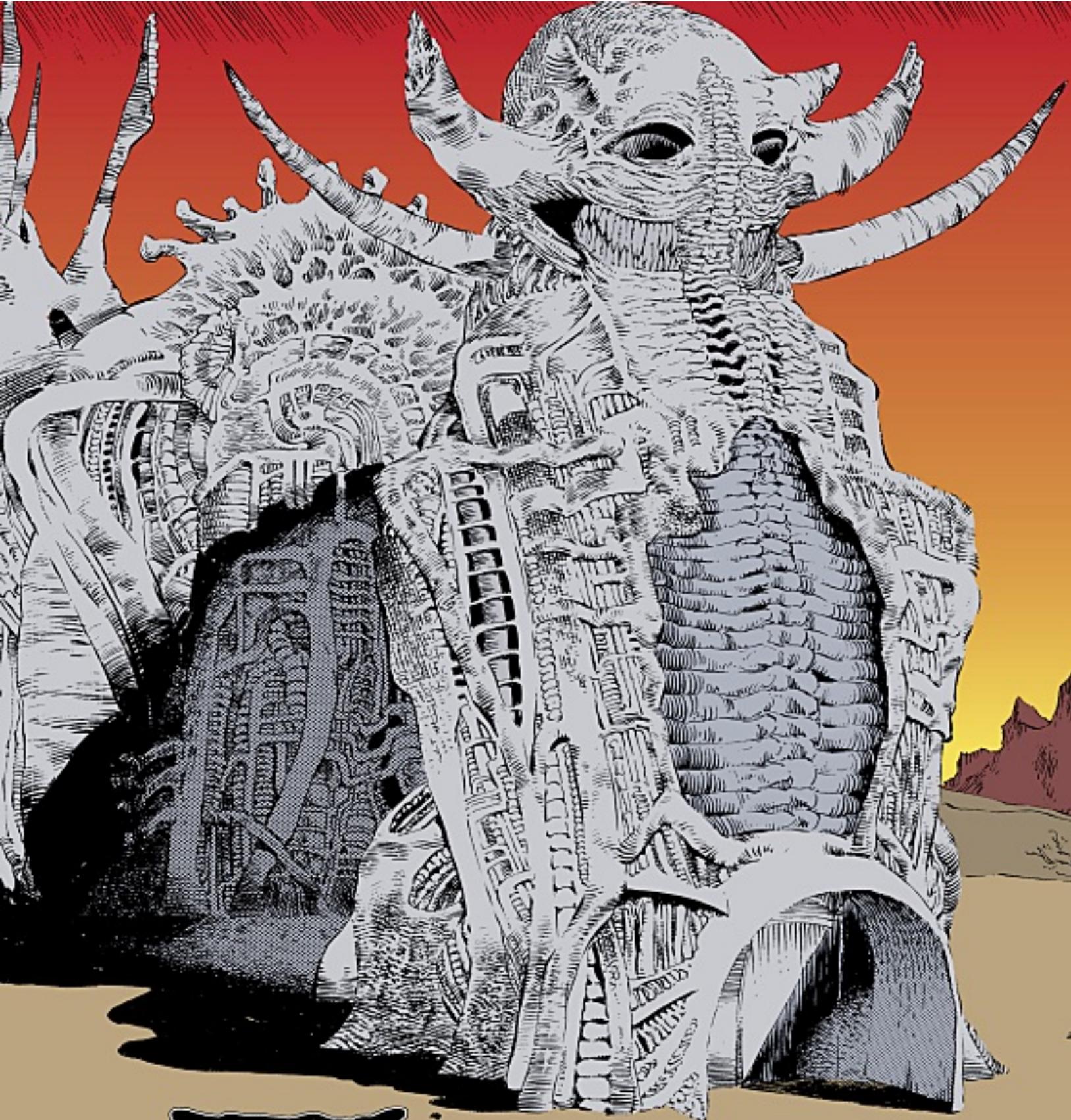
If necessary, I am prepared to storm the gateway. To force an entry. I have power enough to do that.

It is no great task. I can open doors.

Even the  
Doors of Hell.

## SEASON of MISTS Chapter = 2

In which the Lord of Dreams returns to Hell; his confrontation with the Lord of that realm; in which a number of doors are closed for the last time; and of the strange disposition of a knife and a key.



There is, however,  
no need for that.  
Not now.

It would seem my  
visit has been  
anticipated.

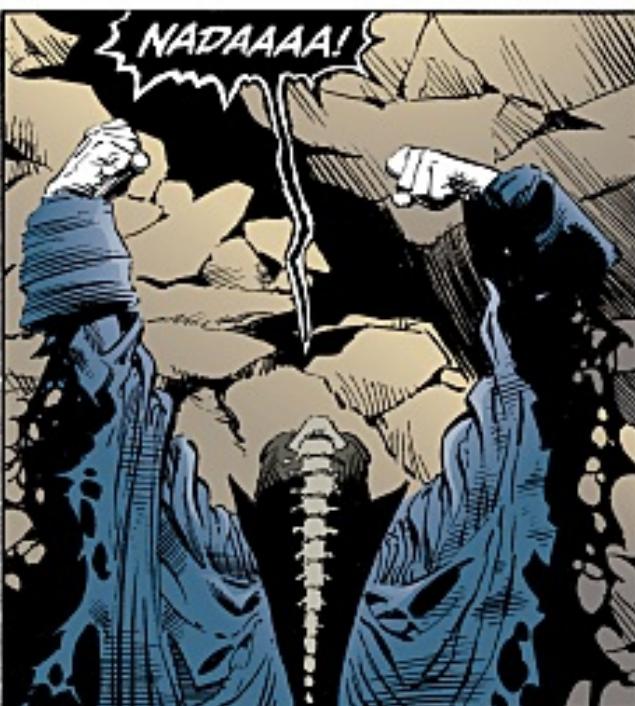
The gates of  
Hell are open.

Unopposed,  
I enter Hell.

NEIL GAIMAN Writer KELLEY JONES Penciller MALCOLM JONES III Inker DAN VOZZO Colourist TODD KLEIN Letterer TOM PEYER Art Editor KAREN BERGER Editor

Featuring characters created by Gaiman, Keith & Dringenberg





And I think:

They have taken her.

They have hidden her from me.

And then I think:

There is something deeply wrong.

Even for Hell, there is something wrong...

I listen.

Silence, pure and dead.

I feel, with my mind.

Nothing.



It is not just Nada who has gone.

They have all gone. The dead, and the never-born. All of them.

Where are they?

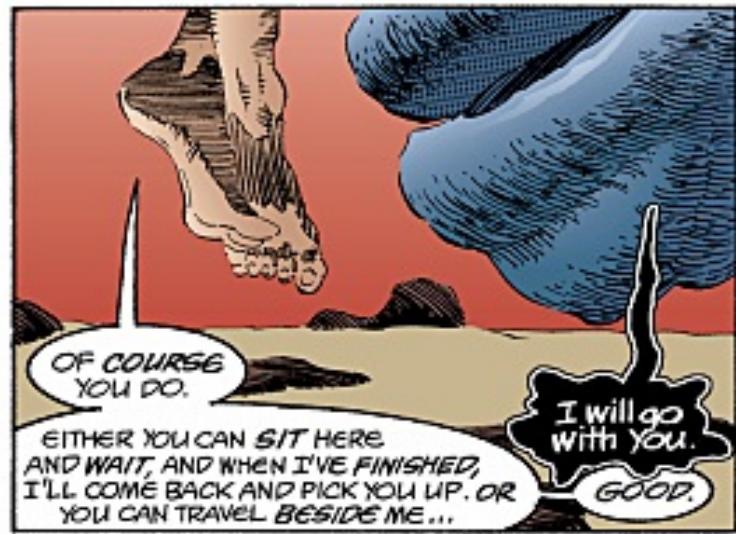
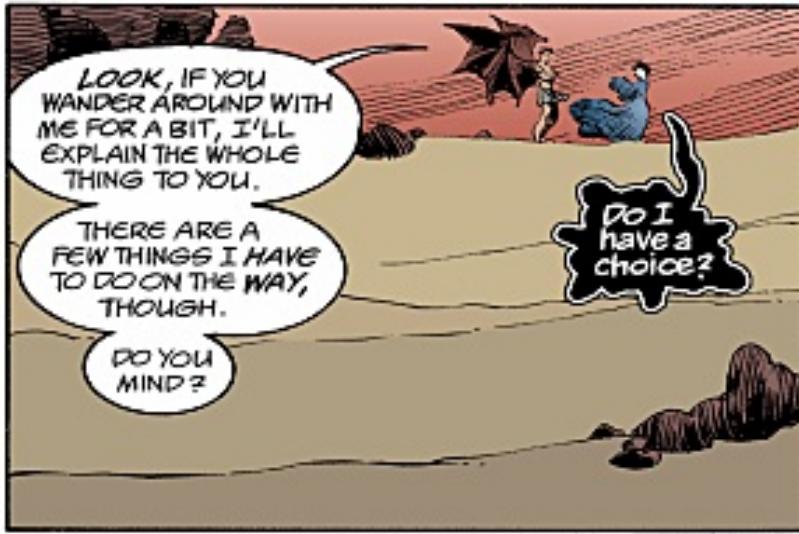
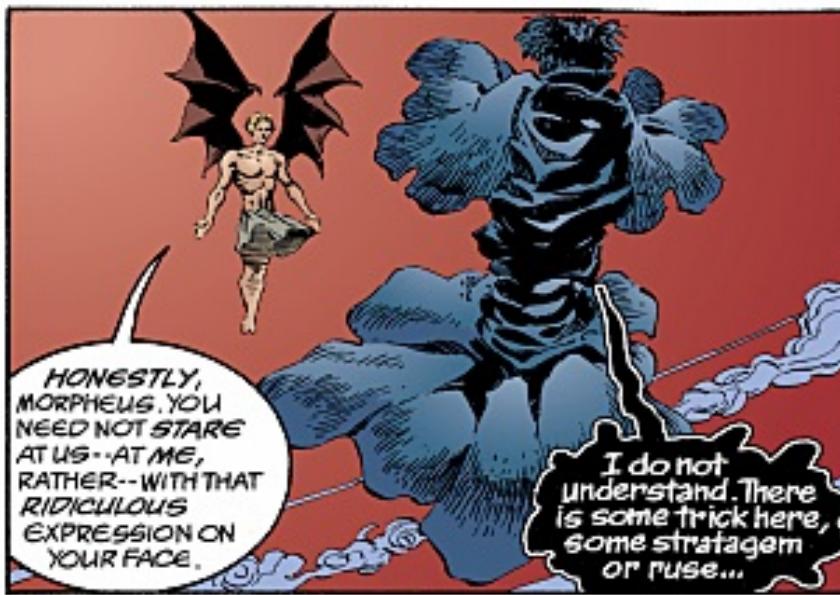
Where is she?

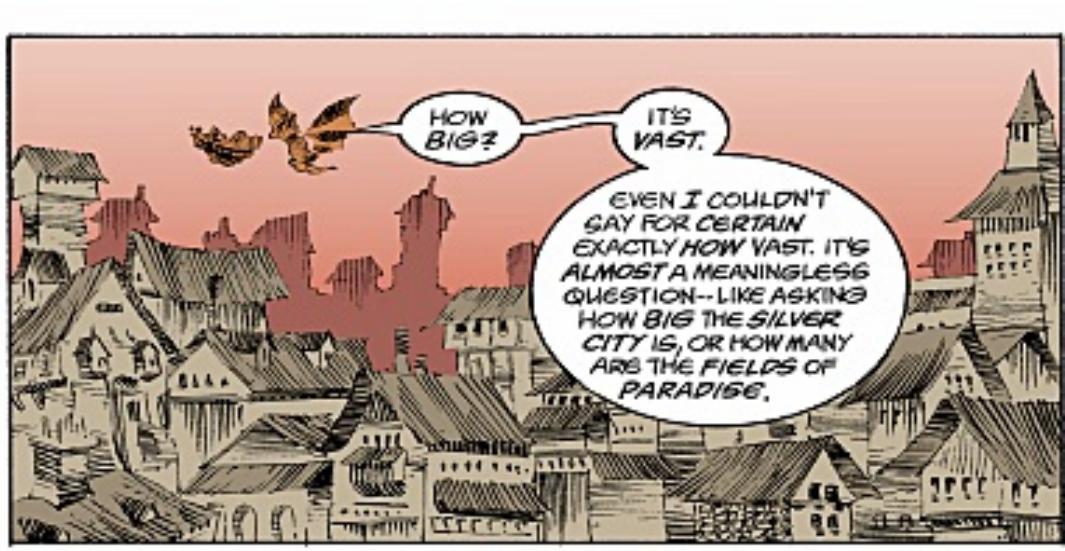
What trickery is this?



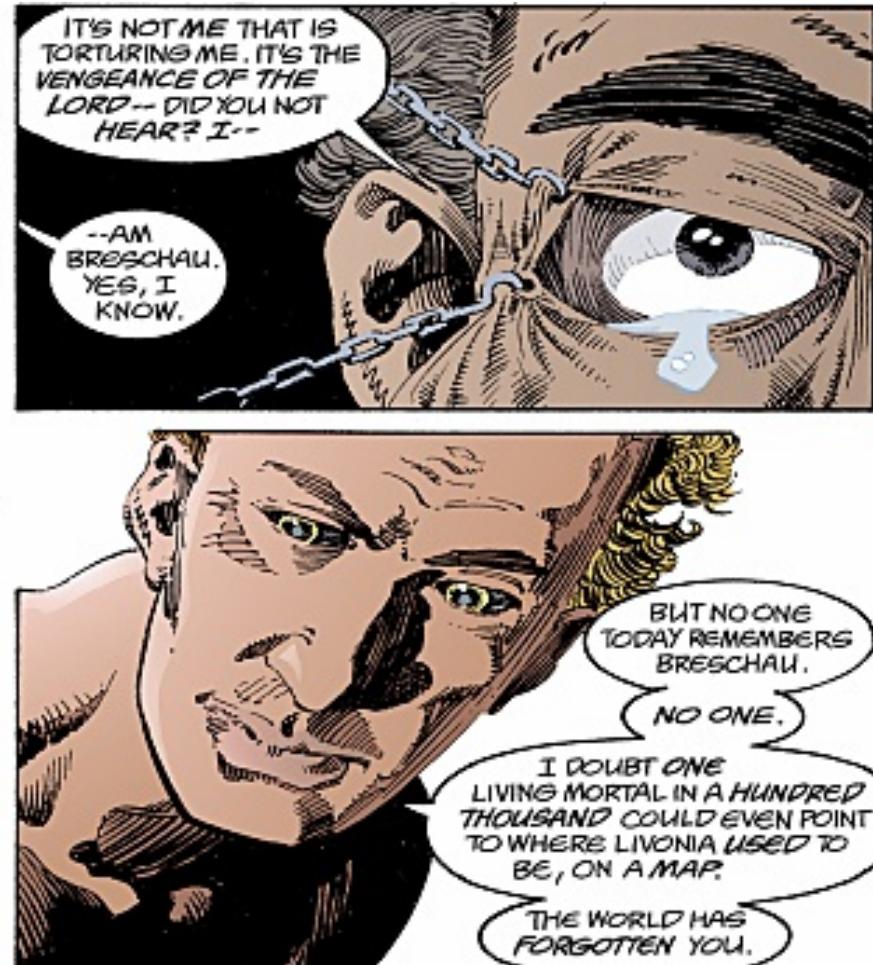
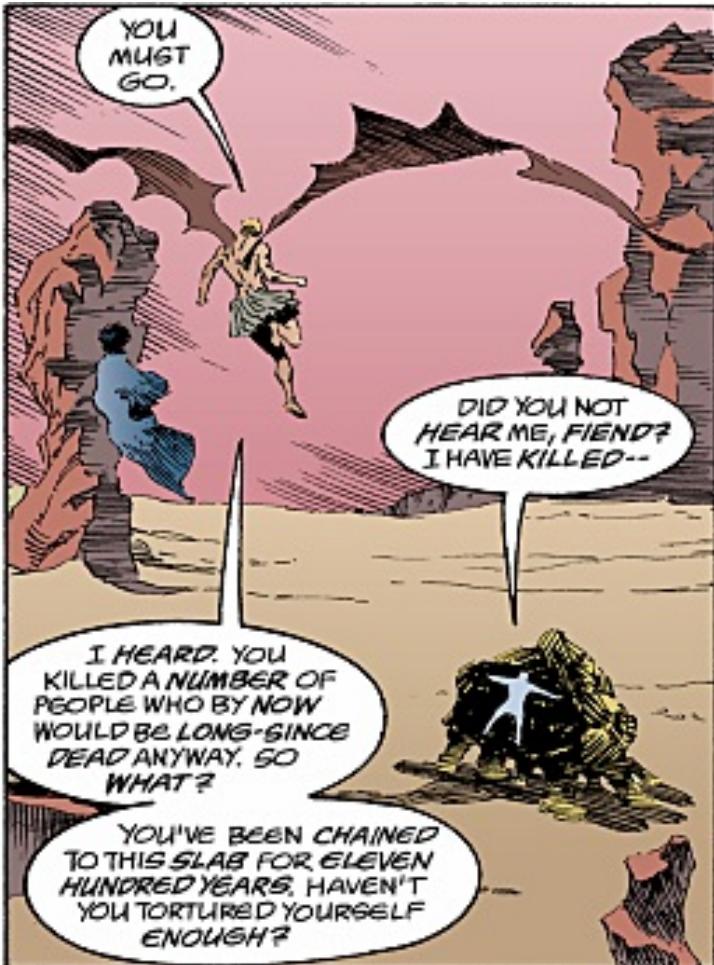


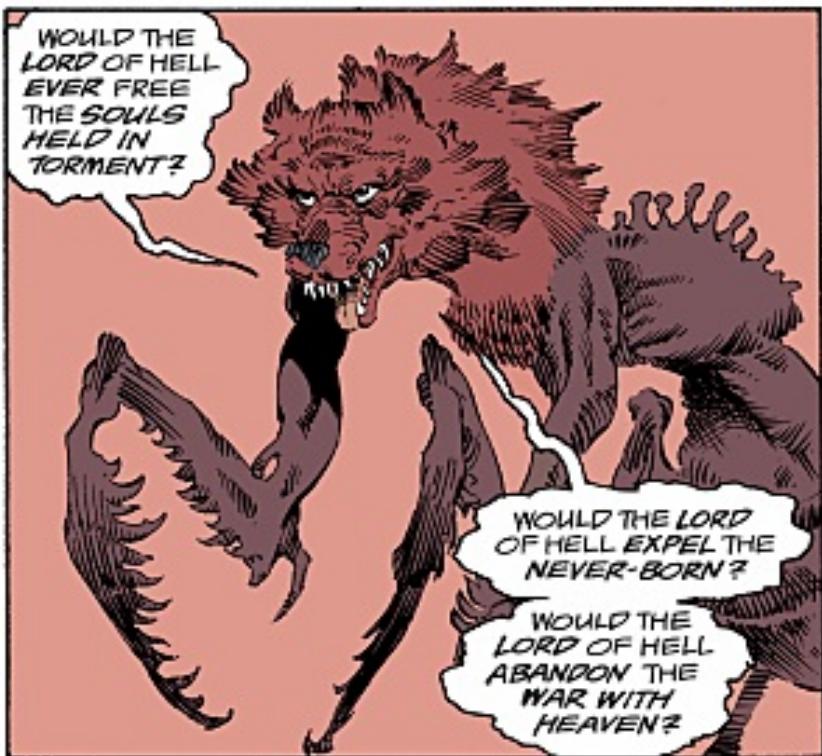


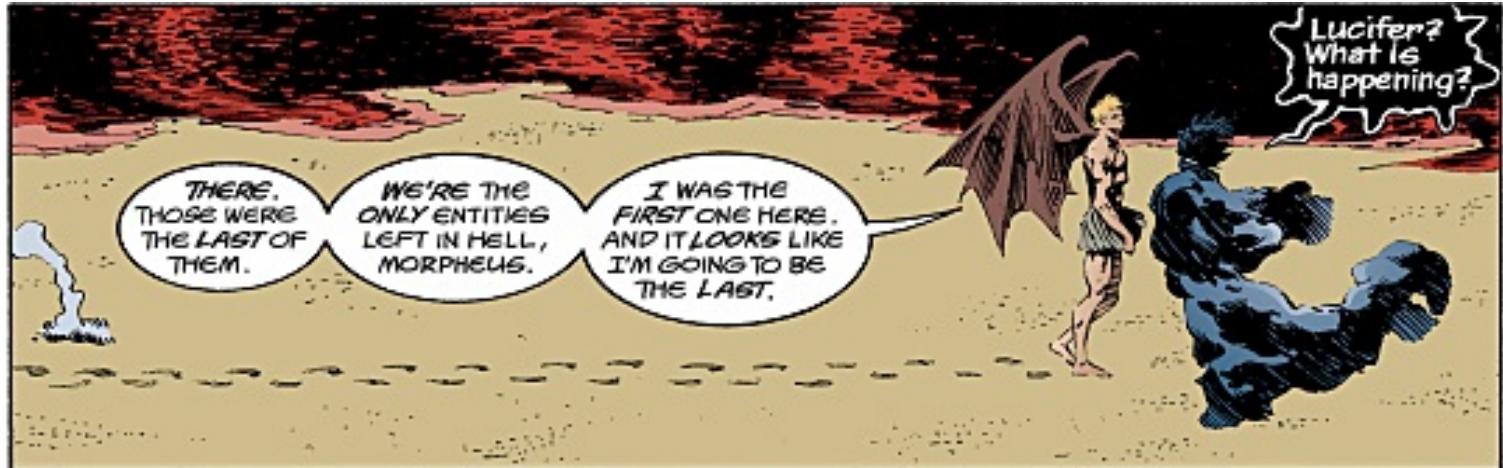


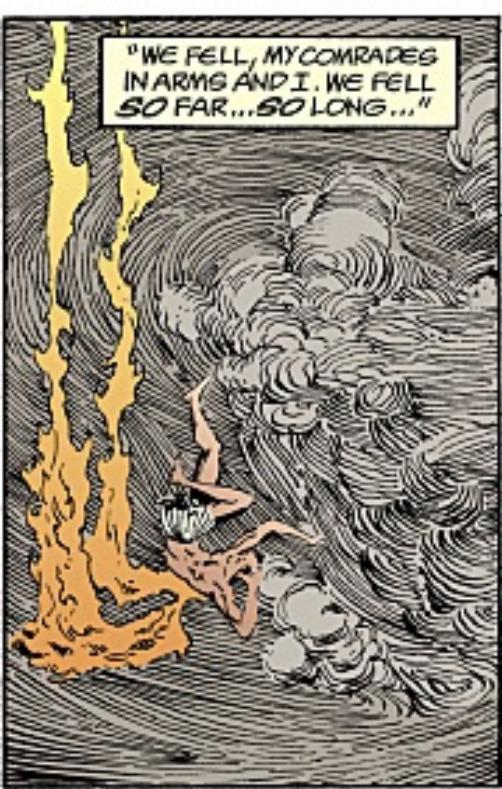


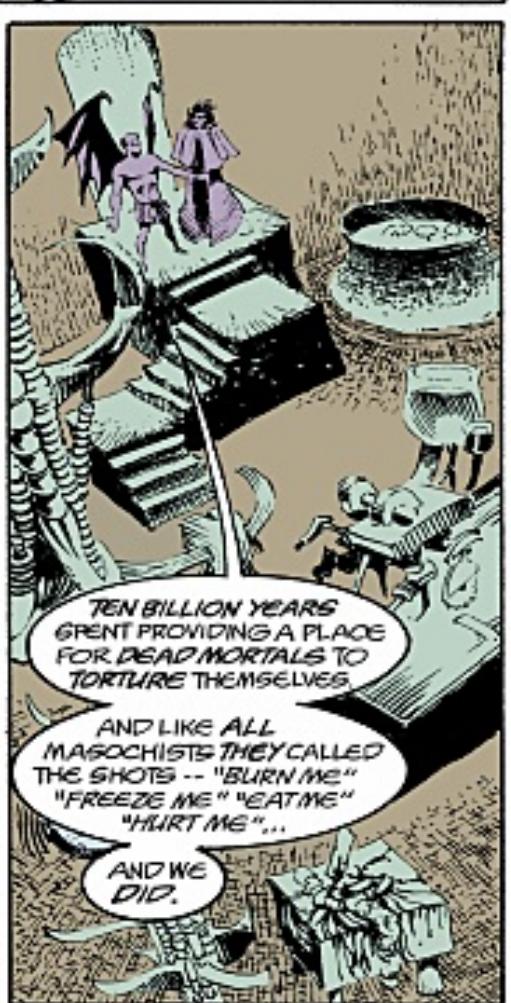
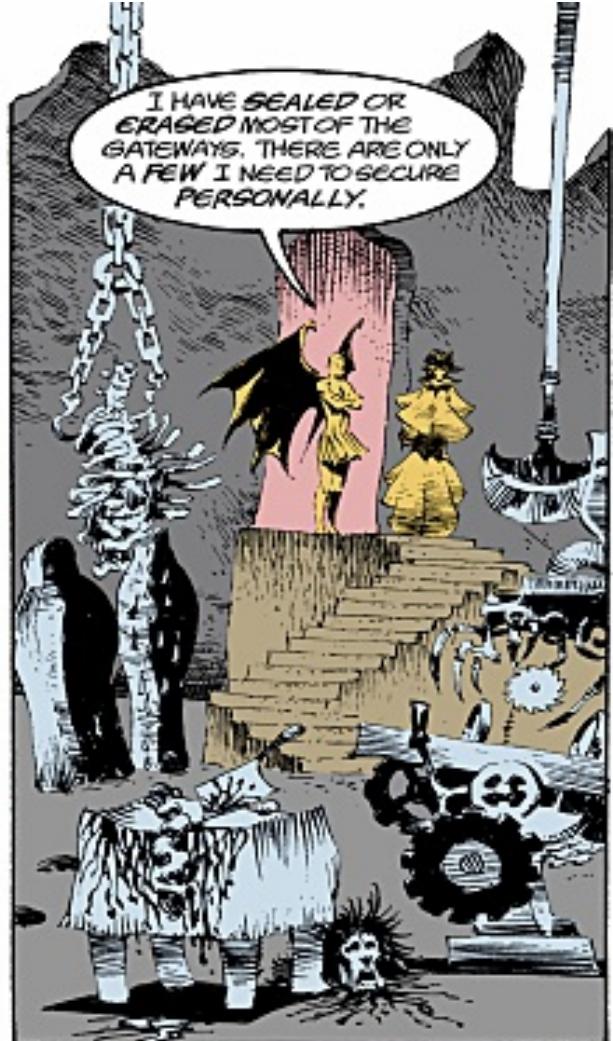








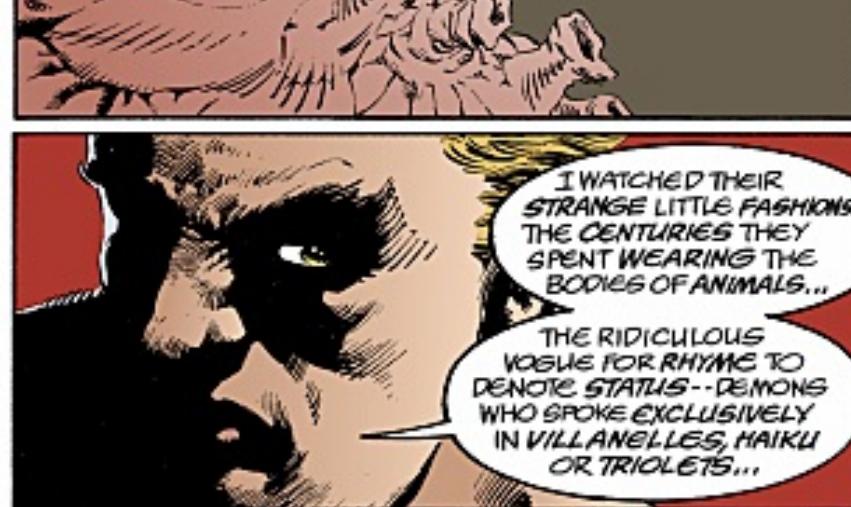




AND THEN THERE WERE THE DEMONKIND. IMAGINE BEING THEIR LORD AND MASTER.

A HANDFUL OF THEM WERE ONCE ANGELS, WHO FELL WITH ME AT THE DAWN. OTHERS STRAYED HERE FROM ELSEWHERE, OVER THE AEONS, MAKING THIS PLACE A HOME.

AND SOON I FOUND MYSELF THEIR LORD AND MASTER. A MILLION OF THEM, OR MORE, SQUABBLING AND WARRING AND CARRYING ON...



I WATCHED THEIR STRANGE LITTLE FASHIONS. THE CENTURIES THEY SPENT WEARING THE BODIES OF ANIMALS...

THE RIDICULOUS VOGUE FOR RHYME TO DENOTE STATUS--DEMONS WHO SPOKE EXCLUSIVELY IN VILLANELLES, HAIKU OR TROILOTS...



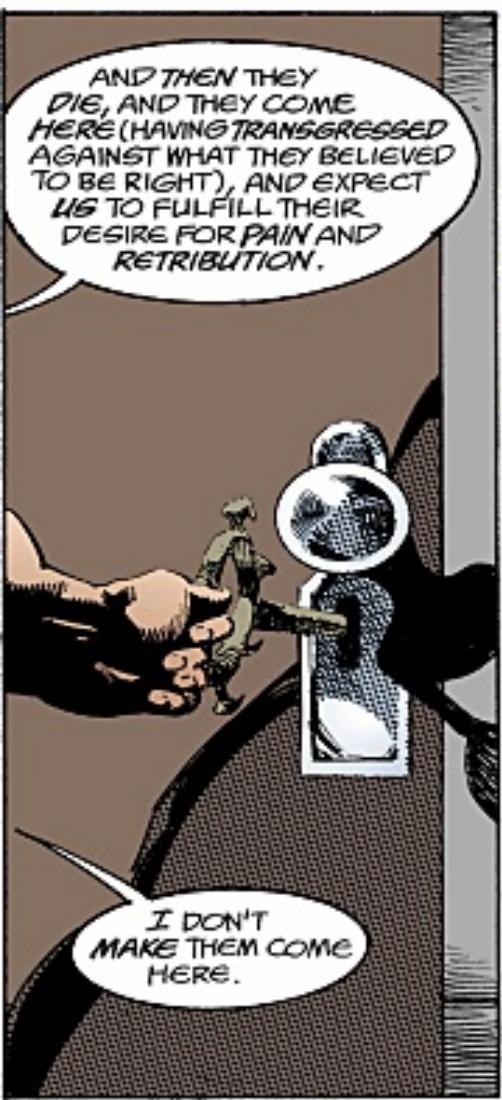
SO I MANIPULATED THEM; SET THEM ONE AGAINST THE OTHER; LET THEM FACTION AND DIVIDE AND PLOT.

BUT...

BUT I GREW WEARY, DREAM LORD. MIGHTILY WEARY.

I CEASED TO CARE.



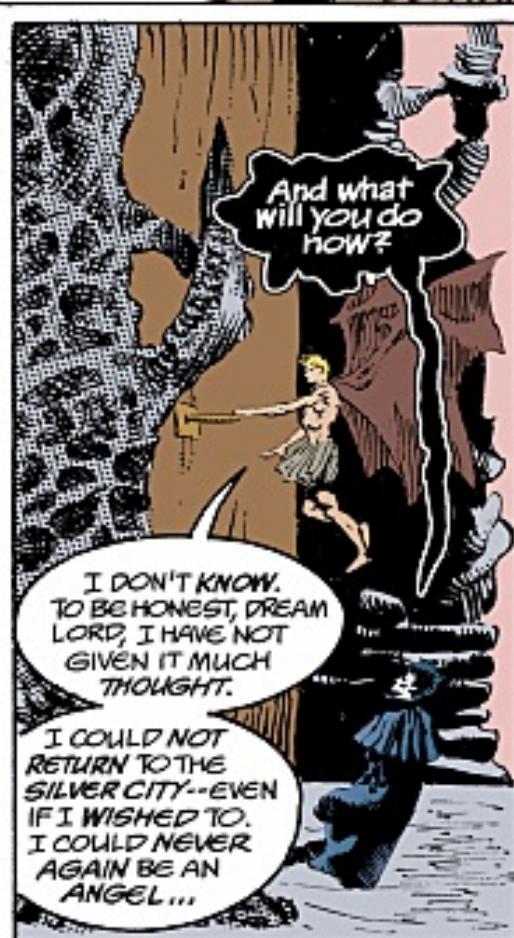


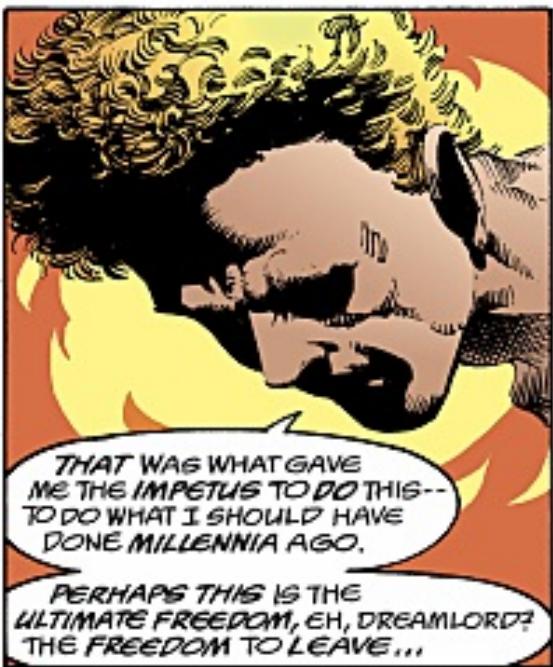


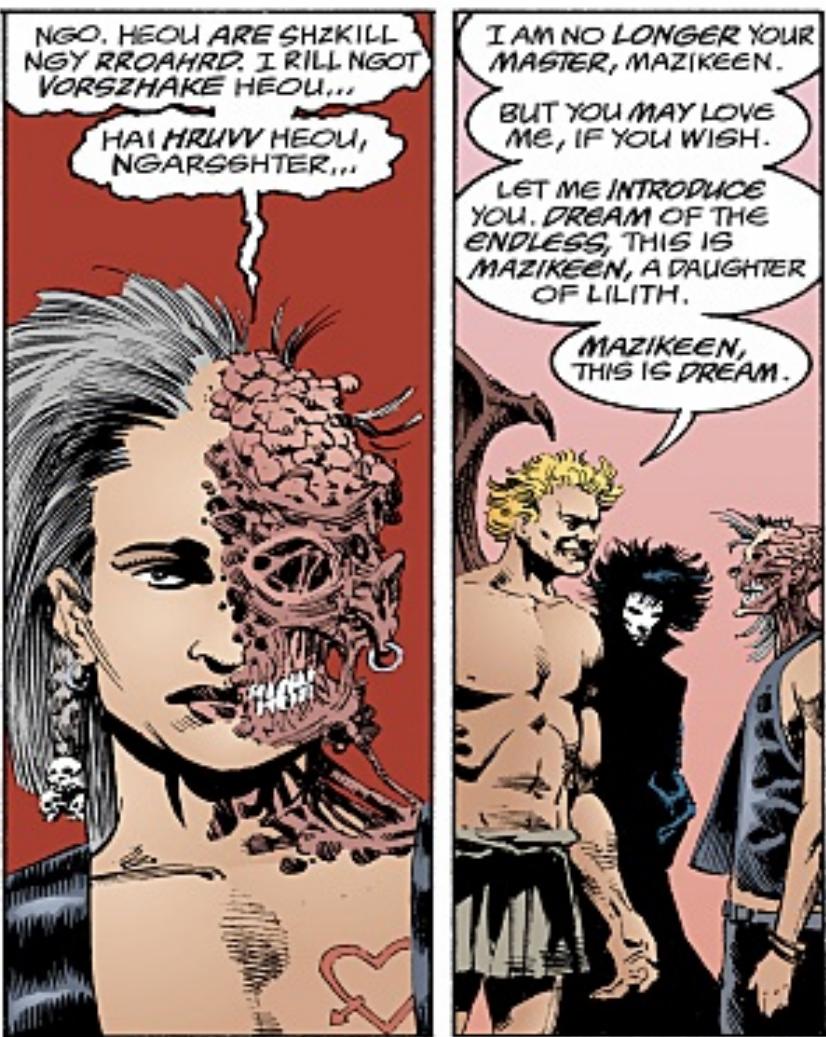
YES, I REBELLED.  
IT WAS A LONG TIME AGO.  
HOW LONG WAS I MEANT  
TO PAY FOR THAT ONE  
ACTION?

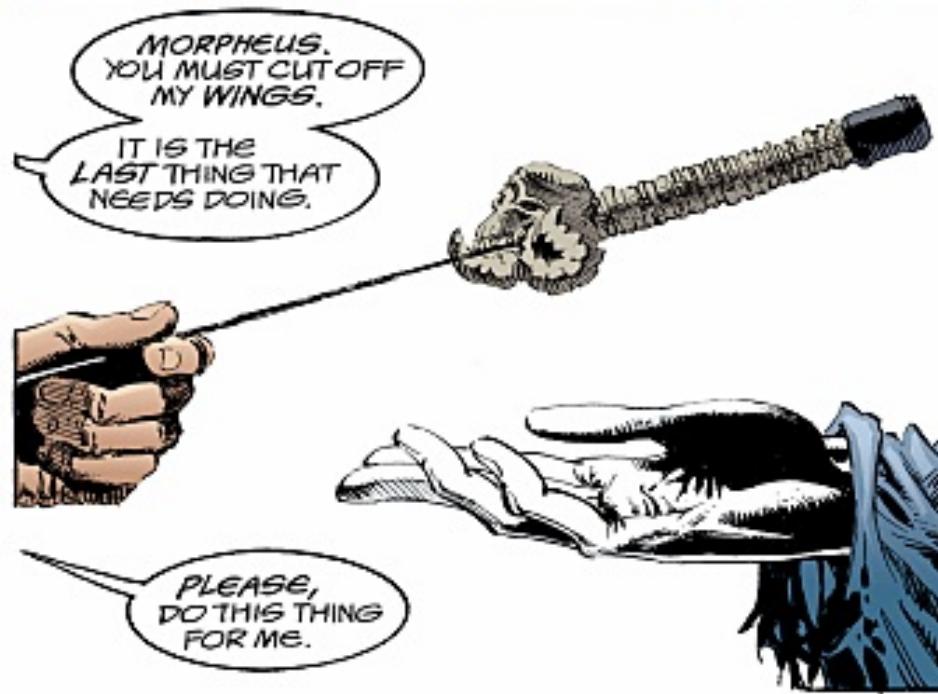
SO NOW  
IT'S OVER.

I HAVE SENT ALL  
OF THEM AWAY--ALL OF  
HELL'S INHABITANTS.

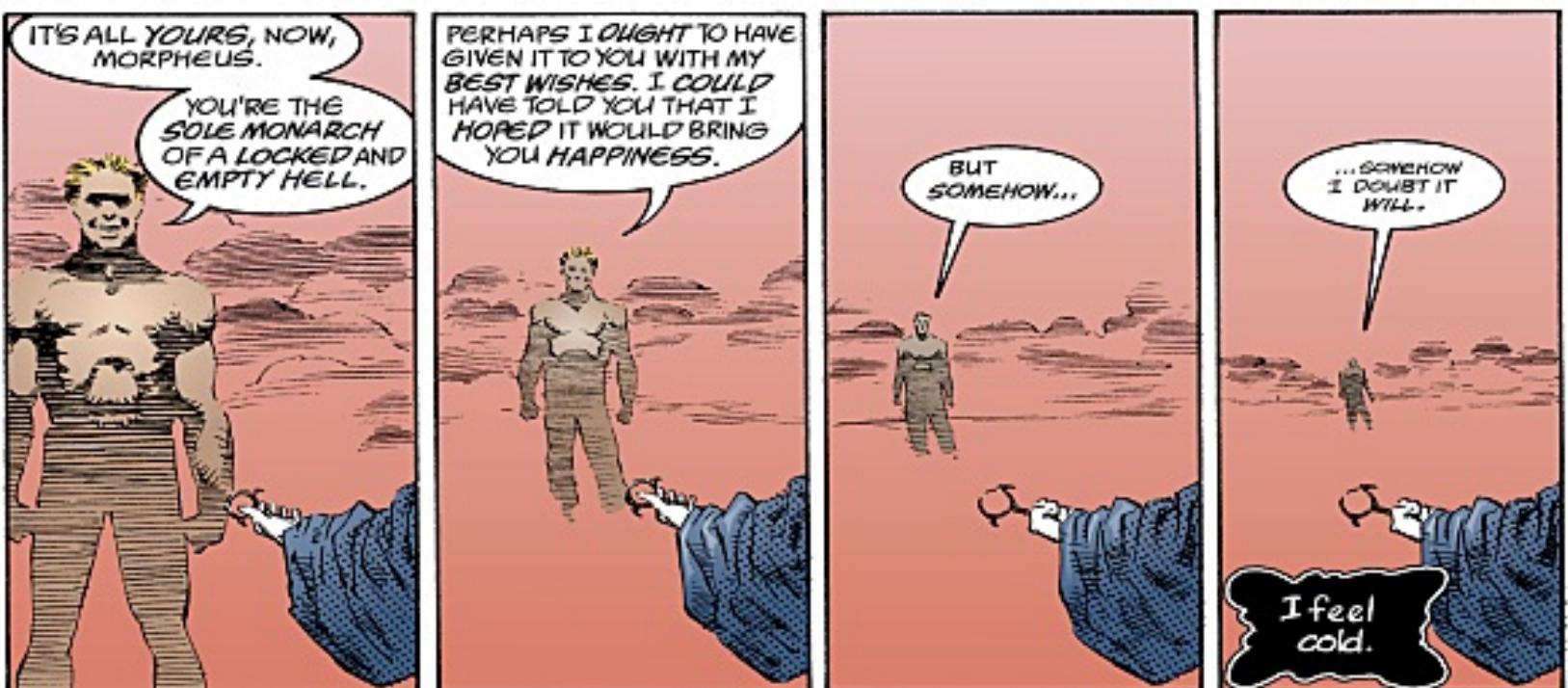












To Be Continued



*O*N WHICH LUCIFER'S PARTING  
GIFT ATTRACTS UNWANTED  
ATTENTION; AND THE DREAM  
LORD RECEIVES UNWELCOME  
VISITORS.

E P I S O D E   3



## Asgard:

IN THE HIGH HALL OF GLADSHEIM  
THE LORD OF THE AESIR SITS  
AND WAITS FOR THOUGHT AND  
MEMORY TO RETURN TO HIM.

AT HIS FEET TWO WOLVES  
ATTEND HIM.

LACKING THOUGHT AND  
MEMORY, HE COULD NOT EVEN  
NAME THEM. THE FLOOR OF  
THE HIGH HALL IS MUD,  
SCATTERED WITH RUSHES.

HE SITS AND WAITS, THE  
GALLONS-GOD, THE  
ONE-EYED KING OF  
ASSARD.

THERE IS A FLUTTERING  
OF WINGS.

THE GHOST-BIRDS  
RETURN TO HIS  
SHOULDER.

AND INSTANTLY HE  
KNOWS; HE KNOWS  
ALL THEY'VE SEEN.

HUGINN AND MUNINN:  
THOUGHT AND MEMORY.

AND HE SMILES, THE  
LORD OF THE GALLONS.

AT  
LAST...

THE MEAD HE DRINKS IS  
NOT THE MEAD OF THE AESIR.  
IT IS HIS MEAD, BREWED  
BY DWARFS FROM DEAD  
KVASIR'S BLOOD; A DRAUGHT  
OF LIQUID VERSE AND MADNESS.

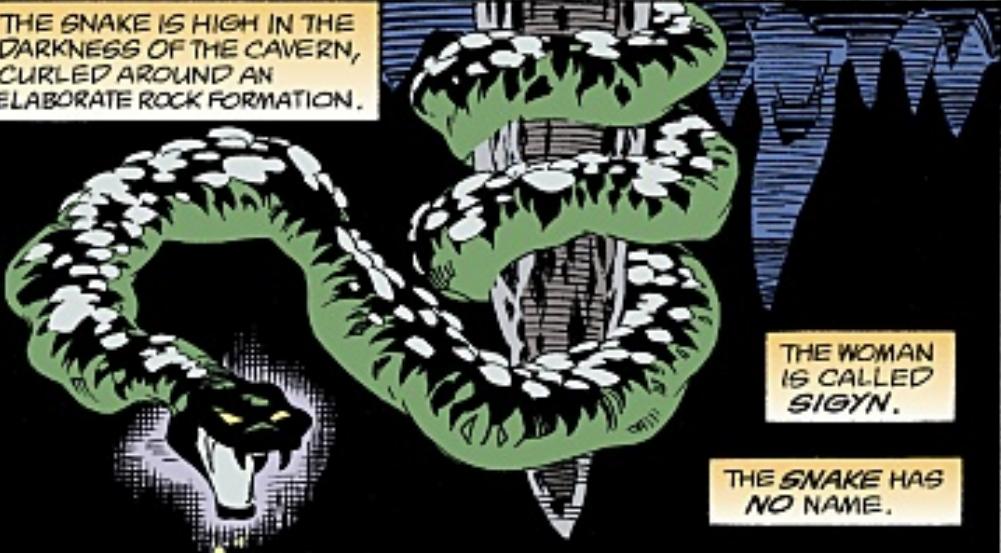
IT IS THE MEAD OF ODIN, THE  
ALL-FATHER, AND NONE BUT  
ODIN MAY DRINK OF IT.

HE DRAINS THE  
GOBLET. AND  
HE IS GONE.

THERE IS A CAVERN BENEATH THE WORLD.

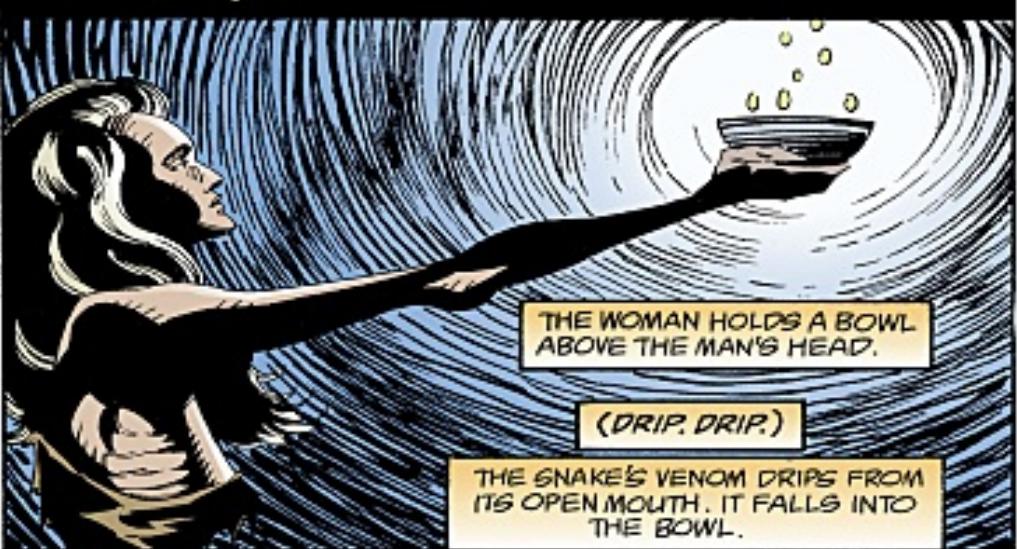
(THIS IS TRUE. YOU MUST KNOW IN YOUR BONES THAT THIS IS TRUE, ALTHOUGH ALL LOGIC ARGUES AGAINST IT.)

THE SNAKE IS HIGH IN THE DARKNESS OF THE CAVERN, CURLED AROUND AN ELABORATE ROCK FORMATION.



THE WOMAN IS CALLED SIGYN.

THE SNAKE HAS NO NAME.



THE WOMAN HOLDS A BOWL ABOVE THE MAN'S HEAD.

(DRIP, DRIP.)

THE SNAKE'S VENOM DRIPS FROM ITS OPEN MOUTH. IT FALLS INTO THE BOWL.



THE MAN IS BOUND WITH THE ENTRAILS OF HIS SON.

(THEIR SON.)

(THE WOMAN IS HIS WIFE.)



THE BOWL FILLS GRADUALLY WHEN IT IS FULL, THE WOMAN EMPTIES IT INTO A PIT.

THERE IS A CAVERN BENEATH THE WORLD, AND IN THAT CAVERN A MAN IS BOUND.

IN THE CAVERN THERE IS ALSO A WOMAN, AND A SNAKE.

WHILE SHE IS GONE, THE SNAKE'S VENOM DRIPS ONTO THE MAN'S FACE.



WHEN HE WRITHES, THE EARTH QUAKE.

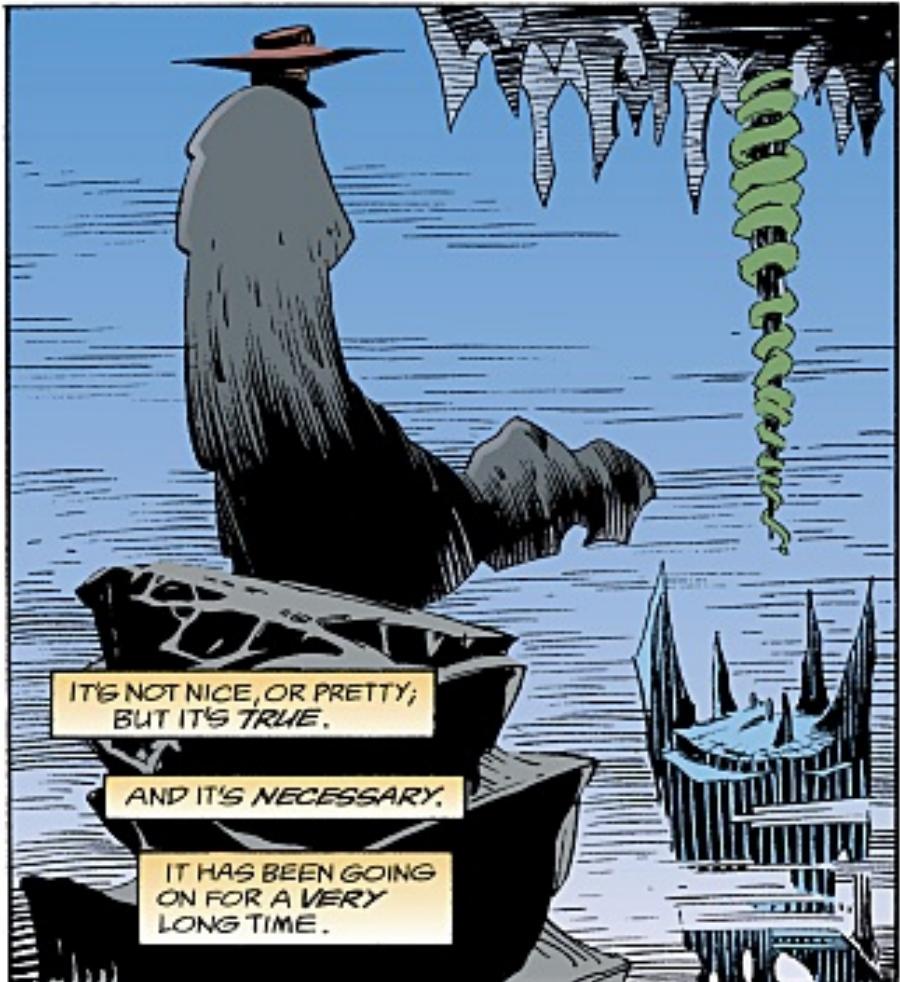


HE TWISTS AND WRITHES AS THE POISON EATS INTO HIS FLESH. HE SCREAMS AS IT ENTERS HIS EYES.



HE CURSES THE WOMAN, BUT STILL SHE STAYS WITH HIM.

THE MAN.  
THE WOMAN.  
THE SNAKE.  
THE BOWL.



IT'S NOT NICE, OR PRETTY;  
BUT IT'S TRUE.

AND IT'S NECESSARY.

IT HAS BEEN GOING  
ON FOR A VERY  
LONG TIME.



IT HAS BEEN SAID: "THAT LOKI WILL BE BOUND UNTIL RAGNAROK, WHEN THE FIMBULWINTER WILL FREEZE THE WORLD, WHEN GREAT WOLVES WILL EAT THE SUN AND THE MOON, WHEN THE GIANTS WILL RIDE TO WAR ON A SHIP MADE OF DEAD MEN'S NAILS..."

"AND ON THAT DAY LOKI WILL BREAK HIS BONDS AND FIGHT HEIMDALL, AND THEY BOTH WILL DIE." I KNOW THE OLD TALES AS WELL AS YOU, GALLows-GOD SO?

IT NEED NOT HAPPEN, LOKI.

PERHAPS ASGARD WILL BE DESTROYED. BUT WE CAN BE GONE.

TO THE HELL OF LUCIFER.

HAHAHAHAHA! WILL YOU GO TO WAR AGAINST THE FALLEN, ODIN? OHHH, YOU HAVE BECOME SENILE, OLD MAN...



NO. NO WAR. LUCIFER HAS... ABDICATED. HIS DOMAIN LIES EMPTY: A PROTECTORATE OF THE DREAM-WEAVER.

IT COULD BEOURS FOR THE GRASPING.

AHHH.

I NEED YOU, LOKI.

YES. YES, YOU DO.  
I AM WITH YOU, THEN, ODIN. FOR NOW.

AND THEY ARE GONE.



The Dreaming:



## SEASON of MISTS: Chapter - 3

In which Lucifer's parting gift attracts unwanted attention; and the Dream Lord receives unwelcome visitors.

NEIL GAIMAN • KELLEY P. CRAIG • DANIEL T. JONES • TOM PEYER • KAREN RUSSELL • DANILO VOZZO • KAREN BERGER featuring characters created by Gaiman, Kiehl and Pringenberg  
Writer Pencillerinker Colorist Letterer Asst. Editor Editor

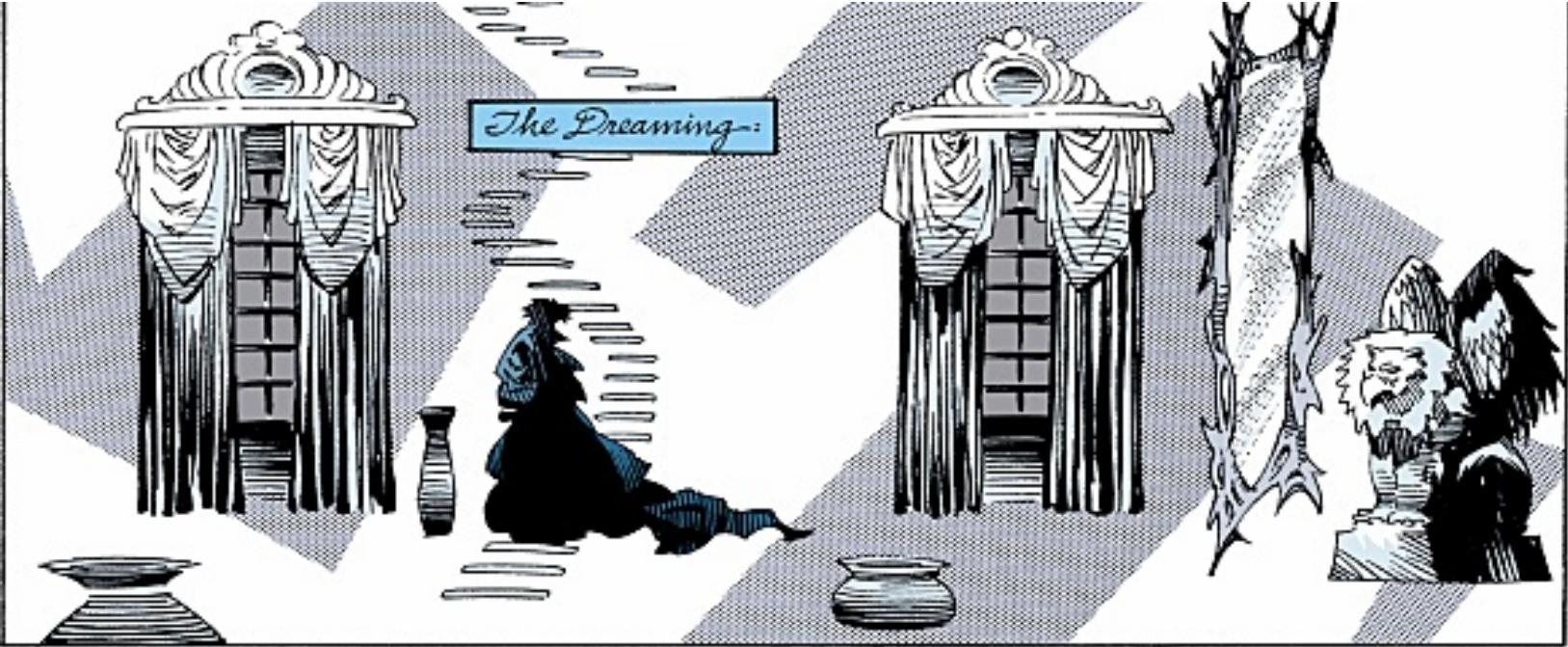


Asgard:

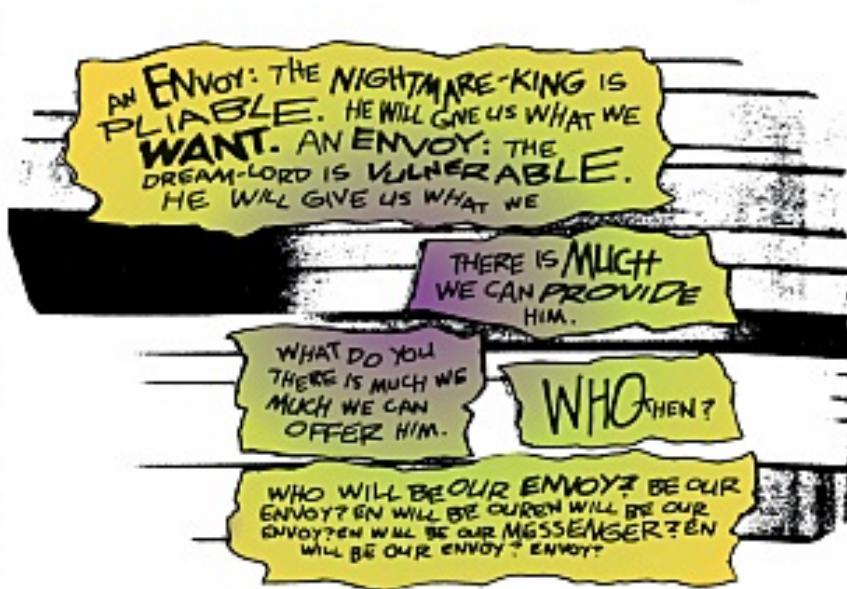
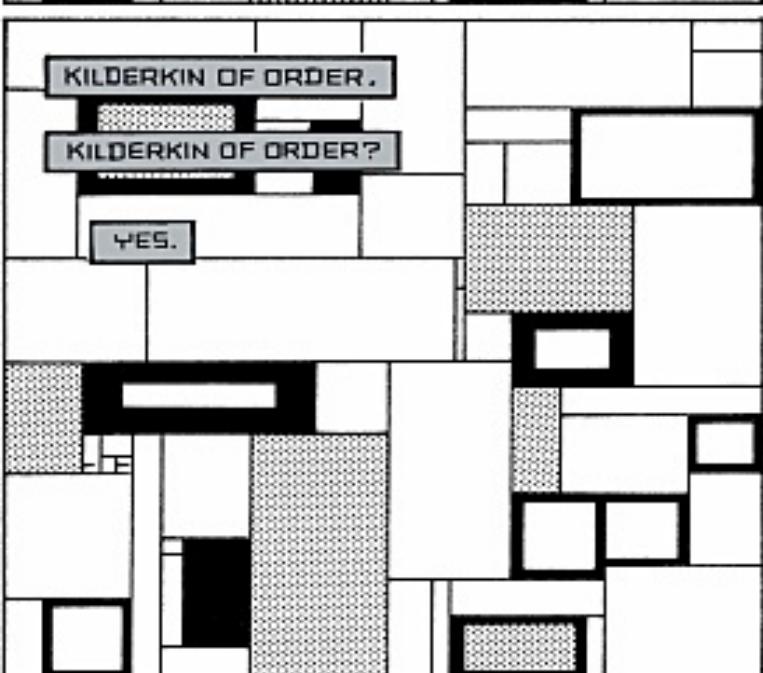
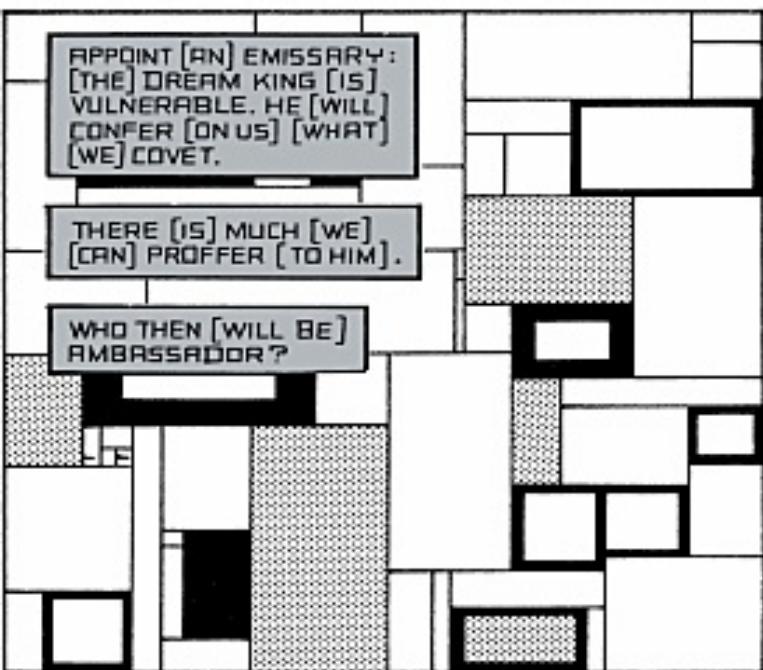
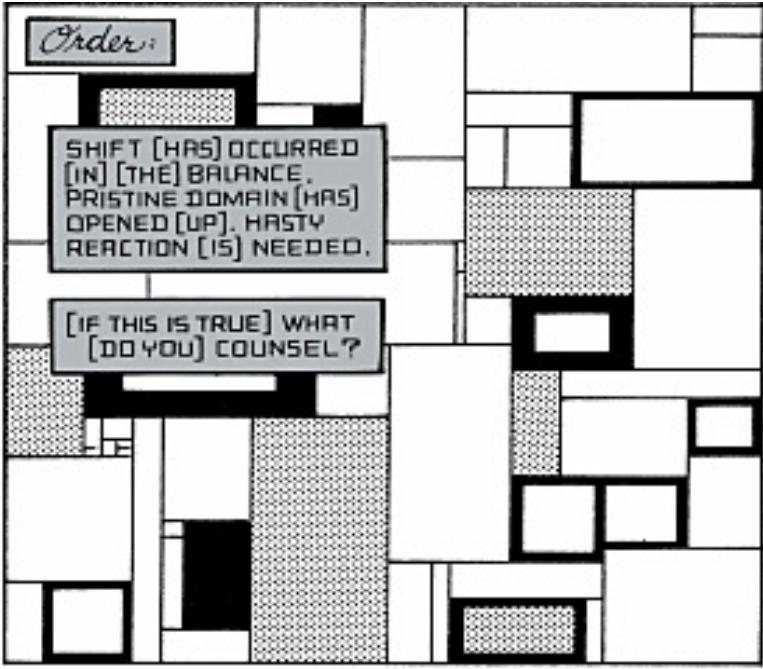


AND  
YOU TRUST  
HIM?











BUT MAKE IT FAST--I'M IN KIND OF A HURRY.



And now, I have another problem; and I am coming to you for advice.

SHOOT.

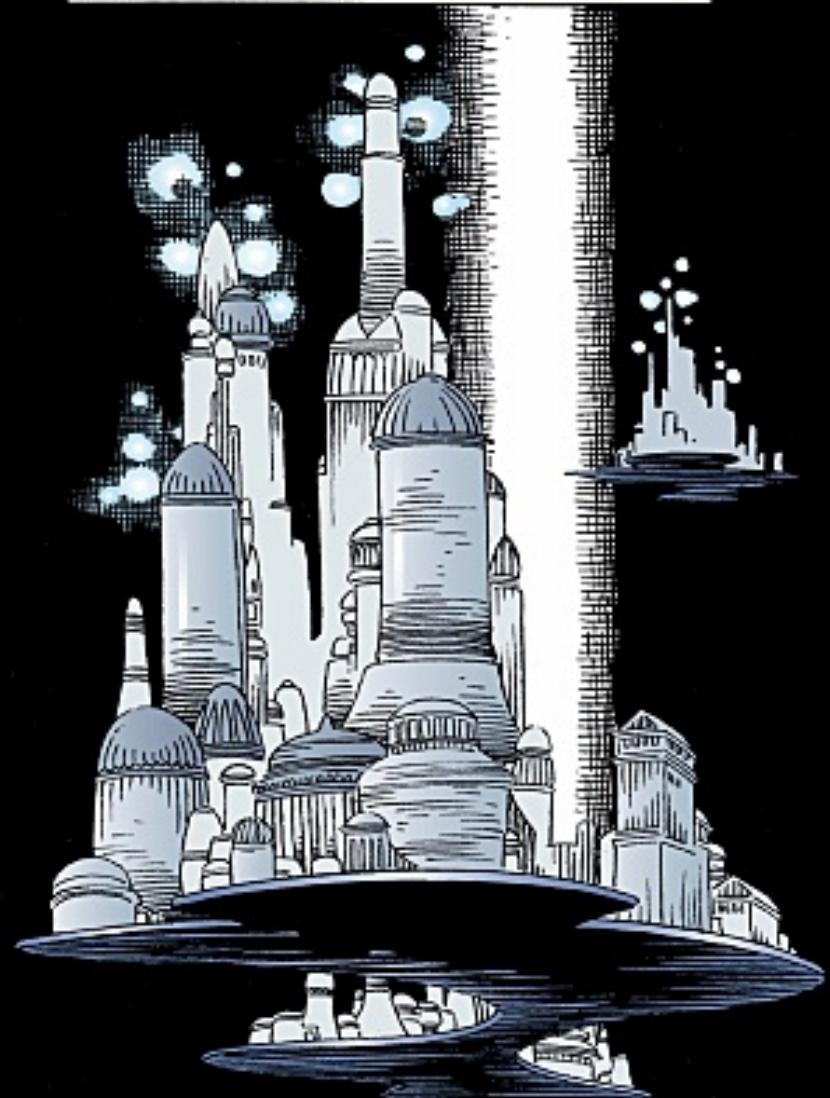


Mm. Shoot. Yes. I went to Hell, sister. To free the Woman Nada...

I KNOW, YOU WENT TO HELL, AND YOU FOUND LUCIFER HAD TURNED EVERYONE OUT...



FAR BELOW THE SILVER CITY THE UNIVERSE GLITTERS AND GLISTENS, LIKE A CHILD'S TOY; FROM THIS VANTAGE POINT GALAXIES COIL AND GLEAM LIKE MULTICOLORED JEWELS, DISTANT NEBULAE FLICKER AND PULSE.



THE SILVER CITY.

IT CANNOT BE VISITED.



THE INHABITANTS OF THE CITY WERE CREATED IN THE SAME BREATH AS THE CITY ITSELF, IN THE DARKNESS BEFORE TIME.



THE INHABITANTS OF THE CITY POSSESS NAMES, AND IDENTITIES. PERHAPS THEY POSSESS SOMETHING WE MIGHT RECOGNIZE AS FREE WILL; PERHAPS NOT.

NOW TWO OF THEM TAKE WING.

DUMA:  
ANGEL OF  
SILENCE.

REMIEL: WHO  
IS SET OVER  
THOSE WHO  
RISE.

TOGETHER THEY SOAR:  
ABANDON THE SILVER  
CITY, ABANDON THEIR  
CONTEMPLATION.

THEY FLY TOGETHER  
IN PERFECT UNISON,  
SHINING WINGS  
BEARING THEM  
EFFORTLESSLY  
ACROSS THE VOID.

TWO  
ANGELS.

FALLING  
TOWARD  
THE WORLD.

Limbo:

SILE

WE ARE OUTCASTS! WE ARE EXILES!  
WE ARE THE DISPOSSESSED!  
FOR TOO LONG WE HAVE BEEN DOWN-TRODDEN.  
NO LONGER!  
BROTHERS. SISTERS. OTHERS. ALL OF US. AT THIS MOMENT, IN THIS OUR TROUGH OF DESPAIR, IT MAY SEEM LIKE THE GREATEST SETBACK WE HAVE EVER EXPERIENCED.



BUT THIS TIME WILL BE IN THRALL TO A DIFFERENT! NO LONGER SHALL WE BE VASSALS OF SOME SHIFTING TRIUMVIRATE.

THIS WILL BE A NEW HELL. A FORWARD-LOOKING HELL, THAT RECOGNIZES INDIVIDUAL WORTH; IN WHICH A DAEMON CAN RAISE ITS HEAD-- OR ANY OTHER IMPORTANT MEMBER-- HIGH, AND SAY:

"THIS IS MY LAND, AND NO ONE IS EVER GOING TO TAKE IT AWAY FROM ME AGAIN."

AZAZEL! AZAZEL! AZAZEL!

TODAY, I WILL GO  
TO THE DREAM-KING,  
AND I WILL DEMAND  
HE GIVE US--RETURN  
TO US--THE LAND THAT  
IS RIGHTFULLY OURS.

AND I  
WILL NOT GO  
ALONE.

WITH ME WILL GO THE MERKIN--SHE  
WHOSE WOMB SPAWNS SPIDERS. THE  
MERKIN HAS BEEN MY AIDE IN WAR AND  
PEACE.

SHE WILL BE  
INVALUABLE IN CONVINCING  
THE DREAM MASTER OF THE  
WISDOM OF OUR CASE.

AND CHORONZON--ONCE A CREATURE OF  
BEELZEBUB'S--AND MOST FOULLY BETRAYED BY  
THAT SHIFTY DUPE OF LUCIFER. NOW ONE OF US...

UNTIL THE  
END OF TIME,  
PRINCE AZAZEL.

THE DREAM-CREATURE  
WILL OF COURSE ACCEDE  
TO OUR WISHES. HE MUST  
SEE THAT HELL IS OURS BY  
RIGHT! HE MUST RETURN  
OUR LANDS TO US.

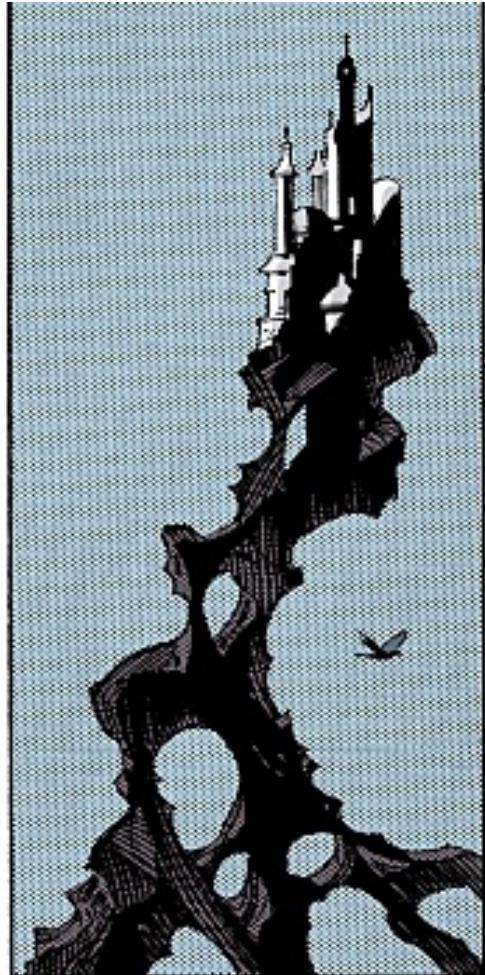
BUT IF HE FAILS  
TO SEE REASON, WE  
HAVE SOMETHING TO  
HELP HIM MAKE UP  
HIS MIND.

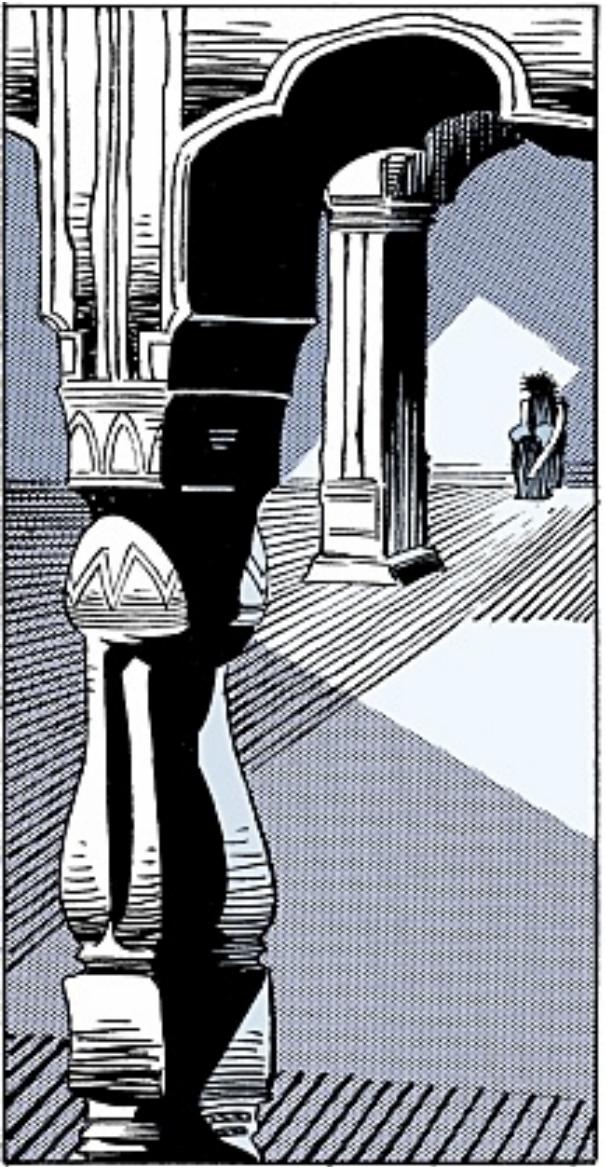
HE IS A  
REASONABLE  
BEING, AFTER  
ALL.

AND HE  
WILL BE  
WILLING TO  
TRADE.

ISN'T THAT  
RIGHT, LITTLE  
MISS NADA?









BUT THEY ARE ENVOYS,  
MY LORD. I RECOGNIZE A  
FEW OF THEM. SOME HAVE  
BEEN HERE BEFORE--  
AS HONORED GUESTS.

SOME OF THEM ARE  
GODS. ALL OF THEM ARE  
PUISSANT.



WE GATEKEEPERS  
CANNOT KEEP THEM ALL  
OUT, SHOULD THEY TAKE IT  
TO FORCE THEIR WAY IN.

NOT UNLESS  
YOU LEND US POWER,  
LORD.

NOT UNLESS  
YOU LEND US  
STRENGTH...



Enough.



WHAT  
SHALL WE DO,  
LORD?



Let them in.

...TELL YOU AGAIN, IF  
YOU DO NOT OPEN THIS  
FARTSLUCKING DOOR, THEN  
MY HAMMER MJOLLNIR WILL  
SMASH IT INTO TOOTH-  
PICKS! HAH!

I AM THE  
MIGHTY THOR!

I HAVE SPOKEN TO MY  
LORD. HE APOLOGIZES FOR  
THE DELAY, AND BIDS YOU  
ALL WELCOME.

HE WILL GREET  
YOU IN HIS THRONE  
ROOM.

ENTER,  
AND ANNOUNCE  
YOURSELVES.



I AM ODIN ALL-FATHER, OF THE AESIR. WITH ME ARE MY SON THOR, OF THE AESIR, AND LOKI SKY-WALKER--THE CHILD OF GIANTS, BUT AESIR BY RIGHT OF BLOOD-BROTHERHOOD.

WE SEEK THE KEY TO HELL.



I AM ANUBIS, LORD OF THE DEAD OF THE NILE DELTA. WITH ME ARE BEAST, LADY OF CATS, AND BES, A HOUSEHOLD DEITY.

WE SEEK THE GRANT OF THE LAND THAT WAS ONCE LUCIFER'S.



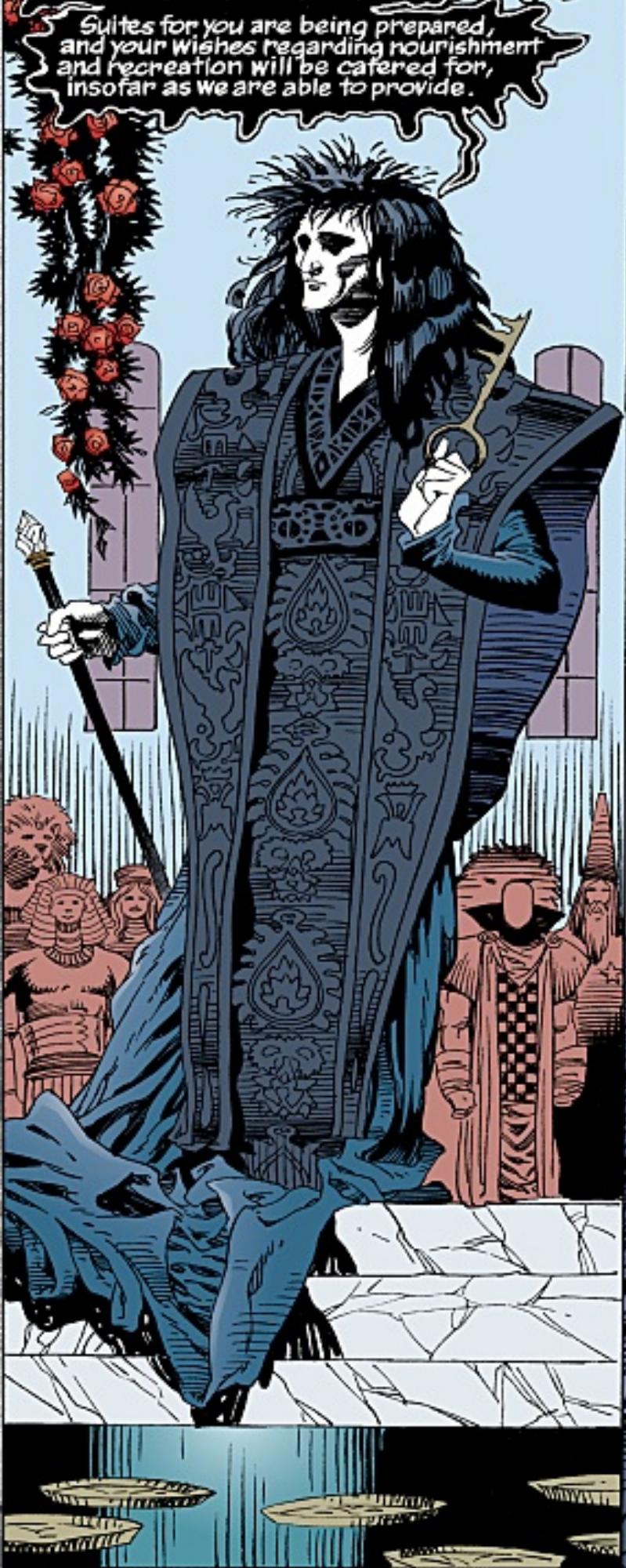
I AM AZAZEL, FORMERLY A PRINCE OF HELL. WITH ME ARE THE MERKIN, MOTHER OF SPIDERS, AND CHORONZON, ONCE A DUKE OF THE EIGHTH CIRCLE.

WE SEEK THE RETURN OF OUR LANDS.





I welcome you to the Heart of the Dreaming.  
I extend my hospitality to you all.



Suites for you are being prepared,  
and your wishes regarding nourishment  
and recreation will be catered for,  
insofar as we are able to provide.



You all, or almost all, seek the same  
thing: this key, and what it represents:

The empty  
Hell that once  
was Lucifer's.  
But you have  
journeyed far to  
come here this  
day.

You will be shown to your rooms.  
Tonight there will be a banquet, for  
you, and for any others who may  
arrive meanwhile.

And tomorrow...



...we'll  
talk.

~To Be Continued~



*O*N WHICH THE DEAD RETURN;  
AND CHARLES ROWLAND  
CONCLUDES HIS EDUCATION.

E P I S O D E   4



# SEASON of MISTS Chapter = 4

In which the dead return;  
and Charles Rowland  
concludes his education.

DECEMBER  
1990.

ROWLAND?  
ARE YOU AWAKE  
YET?

NEIL GAIMAN, Writer  
MATT WAGNER, Penciller  
MALCOLM JONES III, Inker  
DANIEL VOZZO, Colorist  
TODD KLEIN, Letterer  
TOM PEYER, Assist. Editor  
KAREN BERGER, Editor

## SANDMAN

featuring characters  
created by Gaiman,  
Kieth and Dringenberg

MUMMY...?  
NO. IT'S ME.  
PAIN. DO YOU  
FEEL ANY  
BETTER?

I'M SO  
HOT...

AM I REALLY  
HERE? I HAD  
THIS DREAM.

I WASN'T  
SURE WHERE  
I WAS.

PAIN?

YES, I'M  
HERE.

HOLD MY  
HAND.





MONDAY. SIX DAYS AGO.

EVEN WHEN EVERYONE'S GONE AWAY,  
THOUGHT CHARLES ROWLAND, THE  
SCHOOL SMELLS THE SAME...

THE SMELL OF SCHOOL IS A STRANGE,  
PERVERSIVE THING: IT'S DISINFECTANT,  
WOOD POLISH AND INK, CHALK DUST,  
PIPE TOBACCO, BOILED CABBAGE,  
PAPER, FLATULENCE AND SOCKS.

THEY SAT AWKWARDLY IN ONE CORNER OF THE  
DINING HALL, WHILE LONG-DEAD HEADMASTERS  
STARED DOWN AT THEM STERNLY FROM DUSTY  
FORMAL PORTRAITS, HIGH ABOVE.

CHARLES ROWLAND HAD  
JUST TURNED THIRTEEN.

SO...WHAT DO YOU  
HAVE PLANNED FOR THIS  
EVENING, THEN, EH,  
YOUNG ROWLAND?

I DON'T KNOW, SIR. I'VE  
GOT TO WRITE A LETTER TO  
MY FATHER, AND THEN I'LL  
PROBABLY JUST GO UP  
TO THE LIBRARY AND  
READ.

IF THE FOG  
LIFTS I'LL GO FOR  
A WALK.

MMPH.  
GOOD, GOOD.  
KEEP YOURSELF OCCUPIED.  
THAT'S THE IMPORTANT THING. KEEP  
YOUR MIND OFF IT. I'LL BE IN MY  
STUDY. IF THERE ARE ANY  
TELEPHONE CALLS FOR YOU,  
I'LL COME AND--MMPH--  
FIND YOU.

THANK  
YOU,  
SIR.

ROWLAND'S FATHER WAS  
IN KUWAIT.

EVEN SO, I MUST SAY,  
THIS IS MOST AWKWARD. ARE  
YOU QUITE SURE YOU HAVE NO  
RELATIVES TO WHOM YOU COULD  
BE SENT, FOR THE REST OF  
--MMMPH-- SCHOOL  
HOLIDAYS?

THERE'S  
NO ONE THAT  
I KNOW OF,  
SIR.

FATHER  
WAS GOING TO FLY ME  
OUT TO KUWAIT, IN THE HOLS.  
I'VE ALWAYS SPENT THE  
HOLIDAYS WITH HIM.  
UNTIL NOW.

DON'T BE HARD ON THE BOY,  
HEADMASTER. WHAT I SAY IS, IT'S  
ALL THAT SADDAM HUSSEIN'S  
FAULT. POOR MISTER ROWLAND  
DIDN'T ASK TO BE A HOSTAGE,  
DID HE?

IT'S A GOOD THING THAT  
WE'RE BOTH STAYING ON AT SCHOOL  
OVER THE HOLIDAYS, OTHERWISE  
I DON'T KNOW WHERE THE  
LAD COULD GO.

YOU'RE RIGHT,  
OF COURSE, MISS  
GRIBBLE.

OF COURSE I  
AM. AND ROWLAND  
CAN KEEP HIMSELF  
OCCUPIED. CAN'T  
YOU, DEAR?

YES,  
MATRON.

THAT'S RIGHT, LOVE. IF  
YOU GET BORED, COME ON  
UP TO THE SAN. -- I'LL MAKE  
YOU A CUP OF TEA, AND WE  
CAN HAVE A BIT OF A  
NATTER.

RIGHT. NOW, YOU RUN  
ALONG. DON'T WORRY ABOUT  
THE PLATES. ALFRED WILL  
CLEAN UP LATER.

YES, MATRON.

ALL RIGHT.  
THANK YOU,  
MATRON. THANK  
YOU, SIR.

OUTSIDE, IT WAS COLD: THE DAMP WINTER AIR HUNG IN A WET MIST OVER ST. HILARION'S SCHOOL FOR BOYS, OVER THE WORLD. CHARLES ROWLAND SHIVERED.

FOUNDED IN 1802, A BOARDING SCHOOL FOR THE SONS OF ARMY OFFICERS...

THE SCHOOL NOW OFFERED EDUCATION TO ANYONE WHO COULD AFFORD IT; PARTICULARLY TO THOSE WHO LIVED ABROAD BUT WANTED THEIR SONS EDUCATED ON BRITISH SOIL.

CHARLES ROWLAND HAD BEEN HERE FOR A YEAR AND A HALF; SINCE HIS FATHER LEFT THE COUNTRY.

HIS FATHER WAS AN ARCHITECT, A TALL, NERVOUS MAN, WHO DESIGNED HOSPITALS.

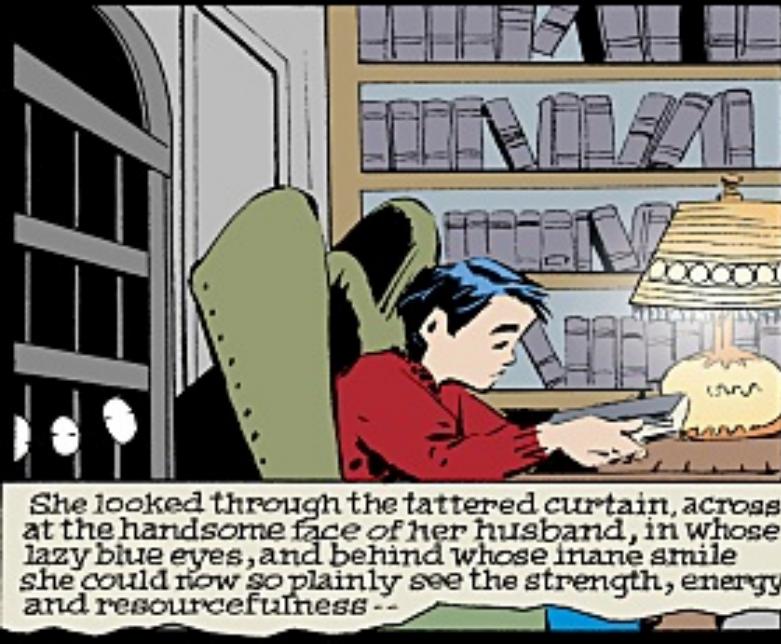
HIS MOTHER WAS LONG DEAD.

HE WALKED OVER TO THE EMPTY LIBRARY, COMPOSING A LETTER IN HIS HEAD, TO HIS FATHER.

IT WAS THE SAME LETTER HE HAD WANTED TO WRITE FOR A YEAR AND A HALF, AND NEVER HAD.

"PLEASE, DADDY."

"TAKE ME HOME."



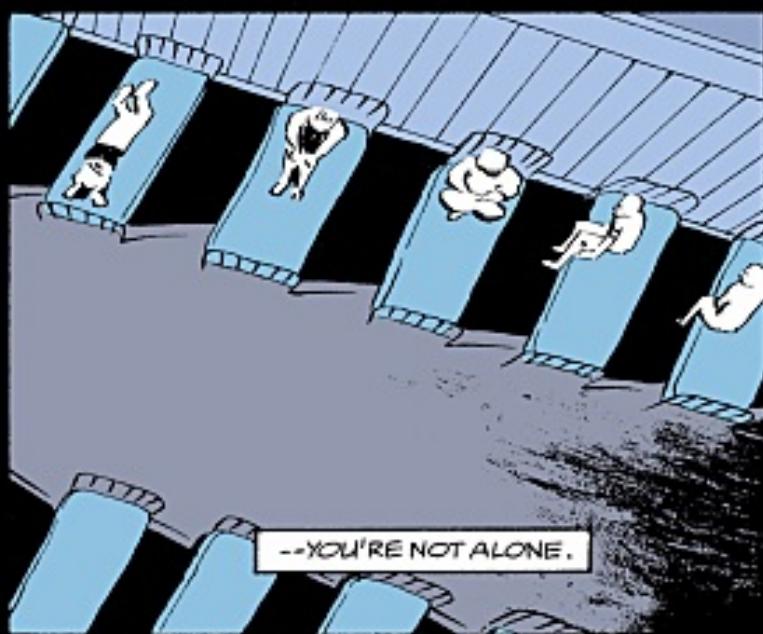
--which had caused the Scarlet Pimpernel to be reverenced and trusted by his followers.

ROWLAND? CHARLES?



EVEN WHEN IT'S EMPTY, THOUGHT CHARLES ROWLAND, YOU'RE NEVER ALONE IN A SCHOOL.

IT BELONGS TO ALL THOSE DEAD PEOPLE, ALL THE OTHER KIDS, THE ONES WHO SAT AT YOUR DESK, OR SLEPT IN YOUR BED, OR RAN DOWN THE CORRIDORS A HUNDRED YEARS AGO.





TUESDAY, FIVE DAYS AGO.

CHARLES ROWLAND WENT DOWN FOR BREAKFAST, BUT THERE WAS NOBODY THERE, AND NO BREAKFAST IN SIGHT.

PUZZLED AND HUNGRY, HE WENT TO HIS LOCKER, AND GOT OUT HIS LAST PACKET OF CHOCOLATE DIGESTIVE BISCUITS.

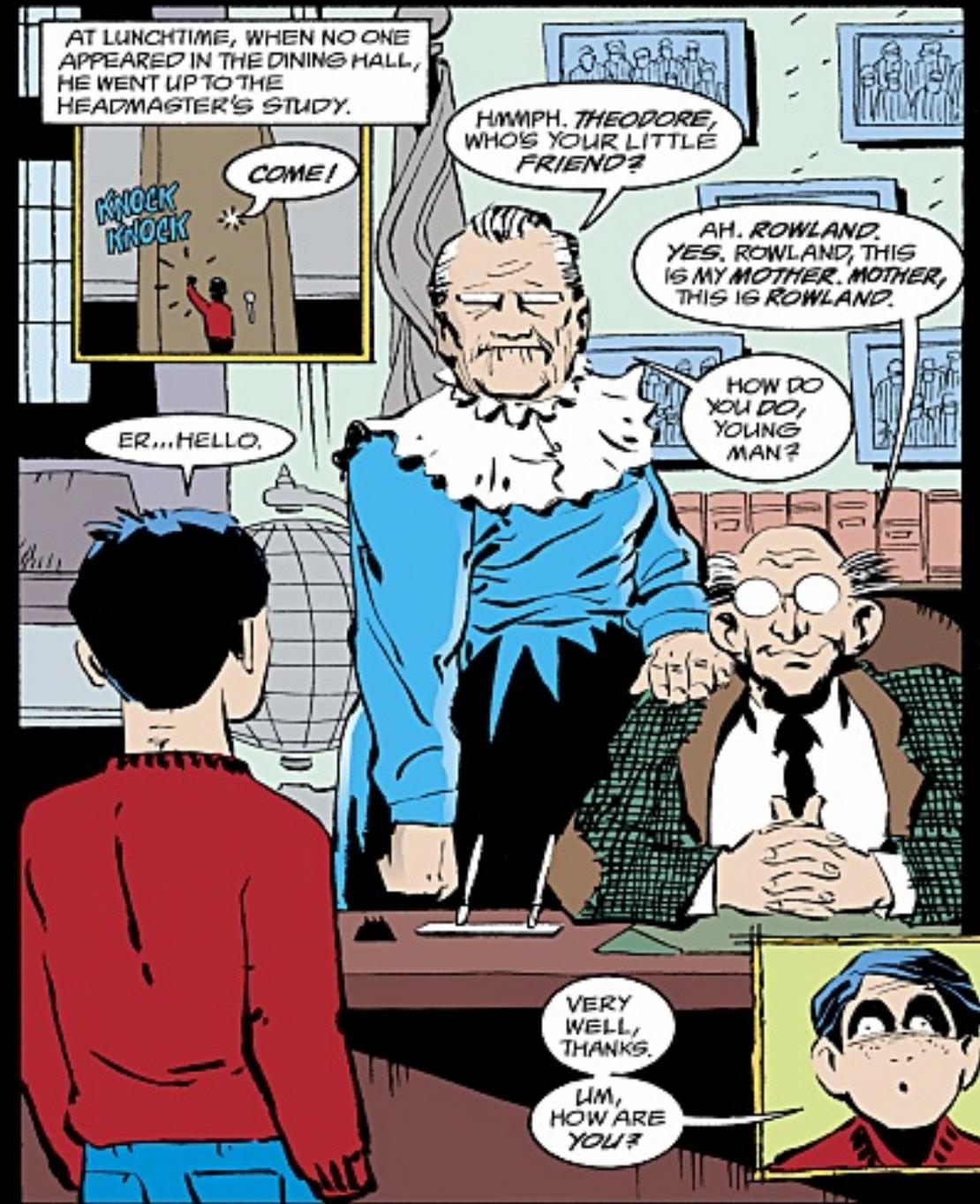
THEN HE WALKED OUTSIDE, AND SAT ON THE WAR MEMORIAL, AND ATE THE WHOLE PACKET.

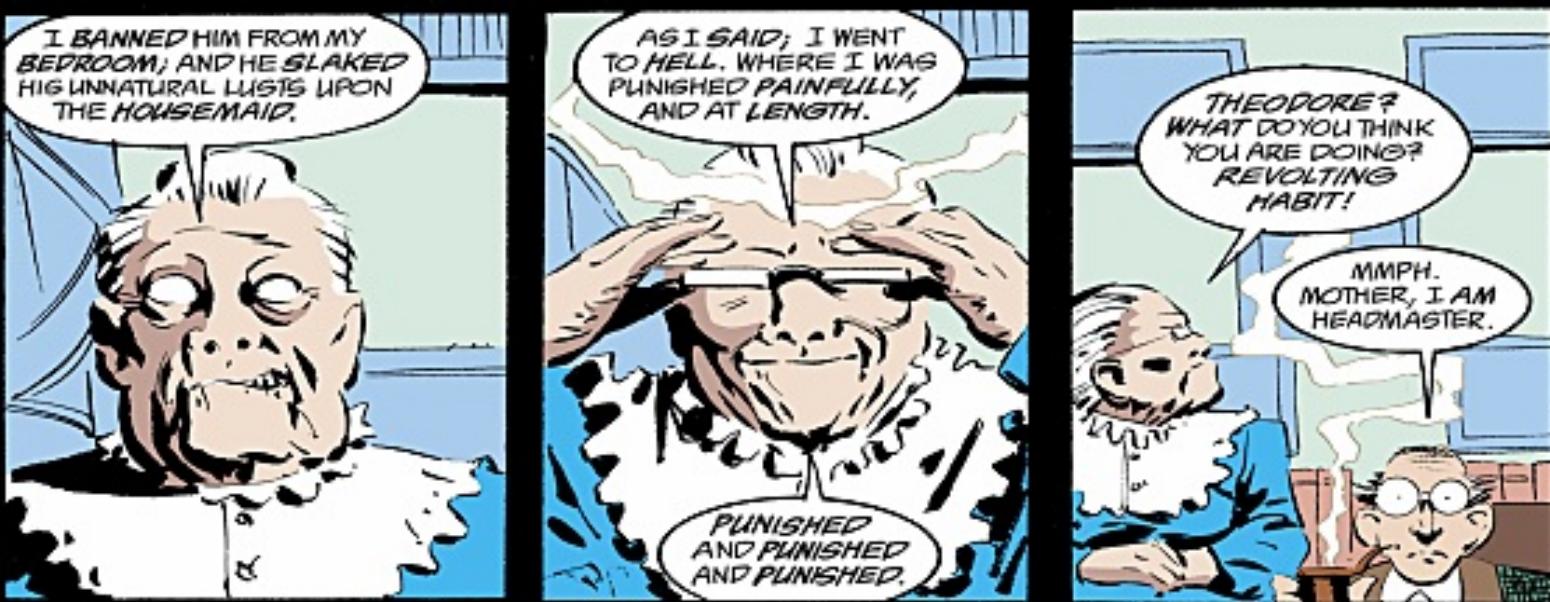
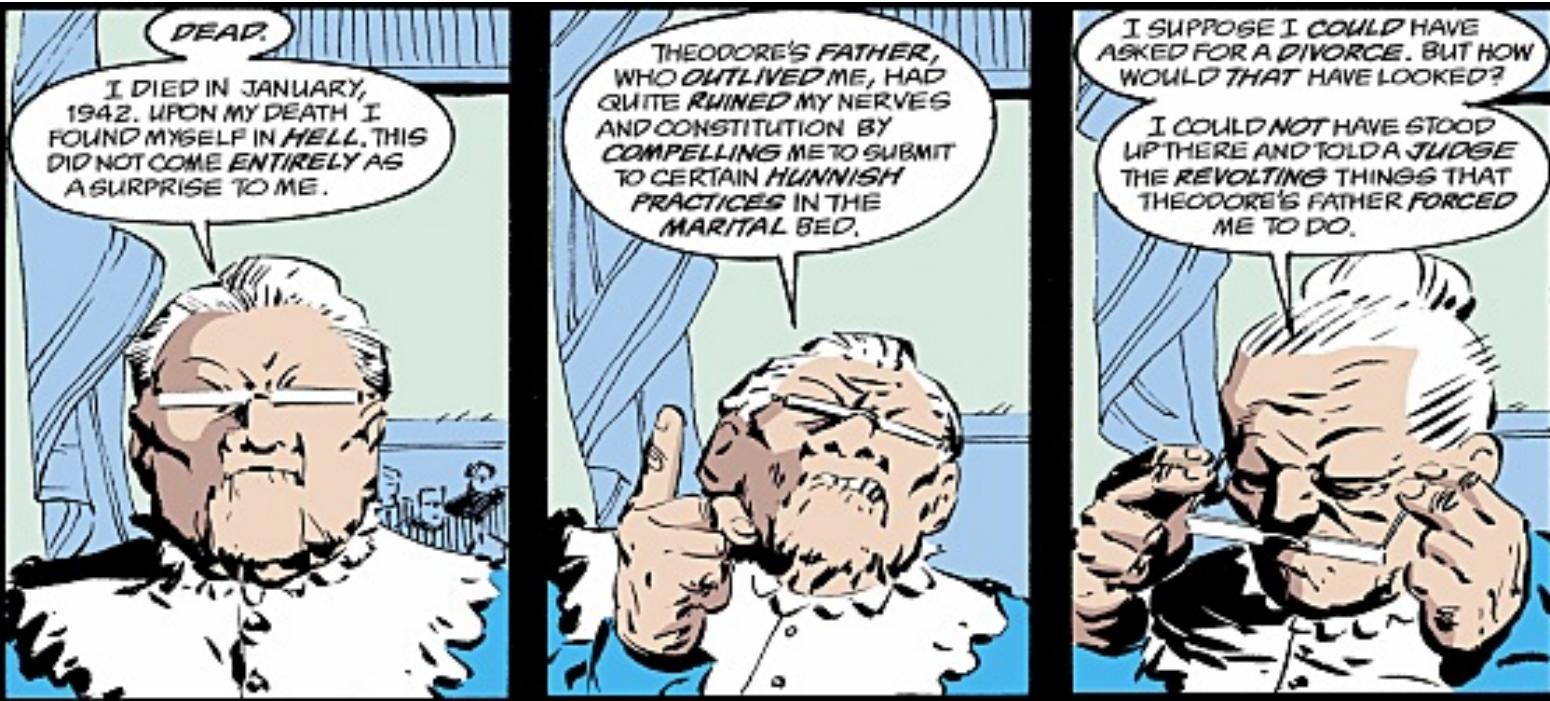


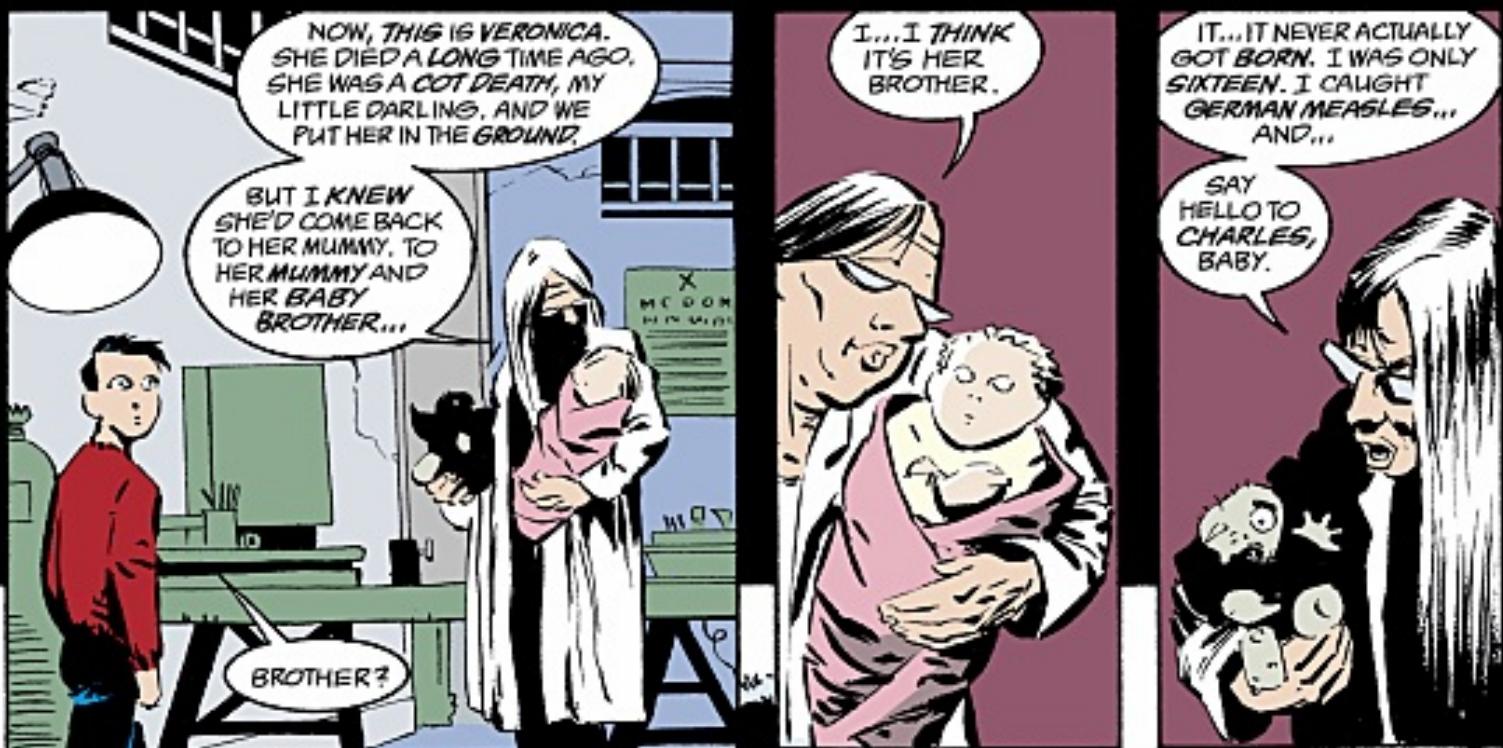
IN MEMORY OF THOSE BOYS FROM ST. HILARION'S WHO LAID DOWN THEIR LIVES IN THE GREAT WAR (1914 - 1918)

ANDREWS, R.M.  
AWCOCK, G.C.  
BARROW, L.T.  
BEETLE, J.  
BLEEK, T.L.  
BRUNT-SMITH, K.W.  
CHEESEMAN, N.K.  
COOK, S.  
CROTT, R.R.  
CUTHBERTSON, S.M.L.W.  
DAVIES, P.  
DEWIMBLE, J.

ROWLAND WAS COLD, AND HIS HAIR AND SKIN FELT DAMP.







CHARLES ROWLAND RETURNED TO THE DORMITORY, HUNGRY AND SCARED. THAT EVENING HE STARED AT THE MIST, AS NIGHT FELL.

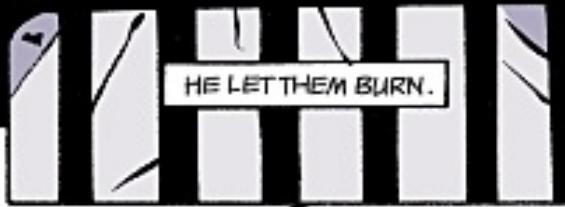
HE SAT UP IN BED THAT NIGHT, HUNGRY AND FRIGHTENED; NOBODY CAME TO TURN OFF THE LIGHTS.



HE WATCHED AS ALFRED, THE SCHOOL GROUNDSMAN, RAN PAST, WAILING SOFTLY, PURSUDED BY A WOMAN AND A CHILD. THE MISTS SWALLOWED THE THREE OF THEM; HE SAW NONE OF THEM AGAIN.



AND EVENTUALLY, CHARLES ROWLAND FELL ASLEEP.



HE LET THEM BURN.



WHY ARE YOU ... UP HERE? I MEAN, WHY DID YOU HIDE IN THE ATTIC?

BECAUSE MY BONES ARE UP HERE. IN THAT TRUNK. SEE? THIS IS WHERE I DIED.

THEY HID IT HERE. NOONE EVER FOUND OUT.



HONESTLY-- I DON'T THINK THEY COULD HAVE LOOKED VERY HARD!

ALL THEIR STUFF IS STILL HERE. THEY HARDLY EVEN COVERED THEIR TRACKS. YOU CAN STILL SEE THE CIRCLE THEY DREW ON THE FLOOR OVER THERE ...



THIS WAS WHERE THEY USED TO COME, YOU SEE.

AT NIGHT, TRYING TO RAISE DEVILS THAT NEVER CAME.

THEY'D DRESS UP, AND THEY'D DO STUFF. THEY'D KILL FROGS AND RABBITS AND CATS...

AND YOU.



AND ME.

WEDNESDAY.  
FOUR DAYS  
AGO.

WAKE  
THE BUG UP,  
CHEESEY.

GOD,  
IT'S A  
BUG!

YUCK!  
A BUG.

WHAT'S YOUR  
PATHETIC NAME,  
BUG?

GOD,  
WHAT A  
SUB-HUMAN  
MORON. COME  
ON, SCUMBUG.  
WHAT'S YOUR  
NAME?

OW!

OWWW!  
PLEASE! IT'S CHARLES  
ROWLAND.

THAT'S  
BETTER, BUG. I'M  
CHEESEMAN.

I'M BARROW.

I'M SKINNER.  
WE'RE OLD BOYS.

VERY  
OLD. HEE HEE  
HEE.

YOU THREE! YOU  
SILLY BOYS! I KNOW YOU  
THREE, DON'T THINK I  
DON'T! GET AWAY  
FROM THAT BOY.

BARROW,  
CHEESEMAN, AND...  
HMM, SKINNER,  
ISN'T IT?

YES, HEADMASTER.  
SORRY, HEADMASTER.

I NEVER TRUSTED YOU  
THREE. YOU DID SOMETHING TO  
THAT BOY, DIDN'T YOU? THE ONE  
WHO DISAPPEARED.

NOT  
US, SIR. NO,  
SIR.

LIARS, STILL,  
IT'S ALL HISTORY  
NOW.

ASSEMBLY IN TEN MINUTES  
IN THE MAIN HALL. AND YOU--  
LIVE BOY!--CLEAN YOURSELF  
UP!

Y-YES,  
SIR.

WE CAN  
WAIT, LITTLE BUG.  
WE CAN WAIT.



HOWEVER, DESPITE ANY TRIBULATIONS WE MIGHT HAVE EXPERIENCED, WE ARE ALL NOW BACK AT SCHOOL. AT THE OLD SCHOOL.

YOU ALL DIED HERE, OR HAD NO PLACE ELSE TO WHICH YOU COULD RETURN.

IT SEEMS THAT I AM THE ONLY MASTER WHO HAS RESUMED HIS DUTIES AT ST. HILARION'S.

VERY WELL, EVIL LITTLE BOYS. I AM THE ONLY MASTER.

I WILL TEACH YOU WHAT I LEARNED.

IN HELL I LEARNED SO MANY THINGS.

YOU, BOY. THE BOY BLUBBING. FRONT ROW. WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

AND I WILL NOT TOLERATE SLACKNESS, OR LACK OF DISCIPLINE, FROM ANY OF YOU.

EVIL LITTLE BOYS.

OF COURSE YOU MEANT TO, YOU SILLY LITTLE BOY. NOW, STOP BLUBBING. OR I'LL GIVE YOU SOMETHING TO BLUB ABOUT.

I WILL SPEND TODAY DRAWING UP A TIMETABLE FOR THE SCHOOL; SO THIS DAY WILL BE DEVOTED TO SILENT STUDY. I'LL WANT TO HEAR SILENCE FROM ALL OF YOU.

WHAT'S THE POINT? I MEAN, WHAT ARE WE GOING TO STUDY?

DEAD LANGUAGES?

AAGH!

WAK!

YOU WILL MIND YOUR MANNERS, BOY. WHO ARE YOU?

PETER HINCHCLIFFE, SIR. I CHOKED ON MY OWN VOMIT IN 1977, SIR. BOOZE AND PILLS.

YOU ARE SCHOOLBOYS.

YOU ARE AT SCHOOL.

YOU COME TO SCHOOL TO STUDY.

GET YOUR HAIR CUT, HINCHCLIFFE.

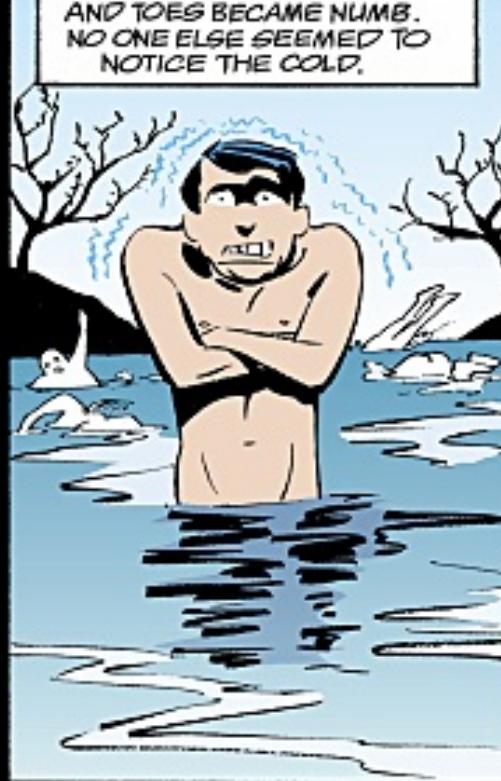
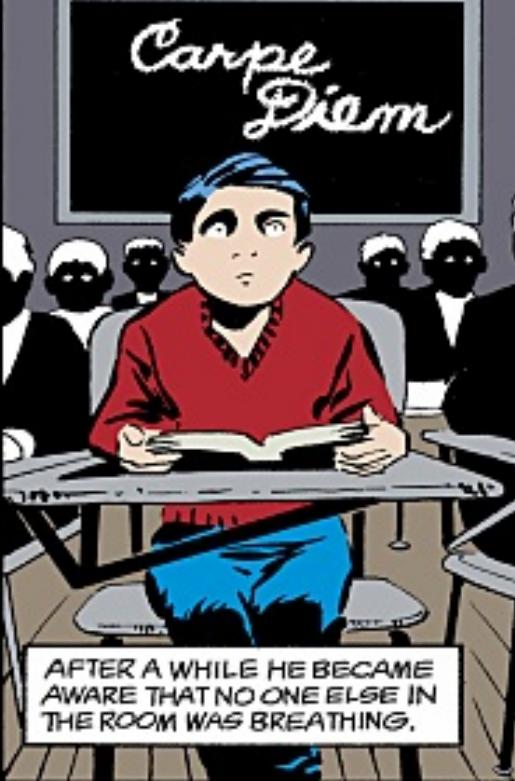
THEREFORE, YOU WILL STUDY.

MENS SANA IN CORPORE MORCHA. EH, BOYS? "A HEALTHY MIND IN A DEAD BODY..."

CHARLES ROWLAND SAT, HUNGRY, IN A ROOM SURROUNDED BY DEAD BOYS, AND TRIED TO FOCUS ON HIS TEXT-BOOK.

IN THE AFTERNOON, THE NEW HEADMASTER SENT THE BOYS DOWN TO THE SCHOOL LAKE, TO BATHE.

THERE WAS NO FOOD THAT NIGHT.





SAY "I'M JUST A PATHETIC SNOTTY LITTLE BUG, NOT FIT TO LICK THE SHIT FROM YOUR ARSES."

LET ME -- GO -- YOU -- BASTARDS.

GO ON, SAY IT.

WHEN THE -- HEADMASTER -- CATCHES YOU -- YOU'LL BE -- IN TROUBLE...



WHAT'S HE GOING TO DO TO US, THEN, BUG? EH?

KILL US?

AAAH!

NOW, SAY IT.



REMEMBER SOMERVILLE? OR BARTLETT-JONES? OR THE YATES TWINS?

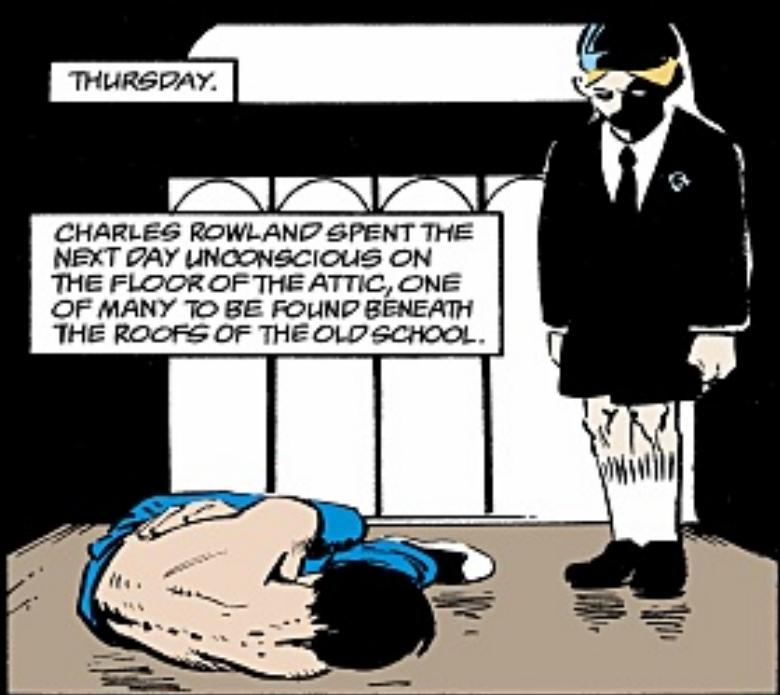
THOSE WERE THE GOOD OLD DAYS.

BLOODY HELL, FELLOWS, HE'S OUT COLD ALREADY, WE'D HARDLY STARTED.

IN OUR DAY A GOOD NEW BUG WOULD LAST FOR MUCH LONGER THAN THAT.

HAPPIEST DAYS OF OUR LIVES...









SO, WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO NOW?

I'M NOT SURE, BUT I CAN TELL YOU WHAT WE'RE NOT GOING TO DO. WE'RE NOT STAYING HERE ANY LONGER.

HUH?

LEAVE THE ATTIC?

BUT WE CAN'T. I MEAN, MY BONES ARE UP HERE.

WELL, SO ARE MINE.

NOT TO MENTION MY FLESH AND HAIR AND STUFF. BUT I DON'T SEE WHY THAT MEANS I HAVE TO SIT AROUND UP HERE UNTIL SHE COMES BACK FOR US.



ANYWAY, I DON'T FEEL ILL ANY MORE. I FEEL FINE.

DEAD, BUT FINE.

COME ON.

ROWLAND. I'M SCARED.

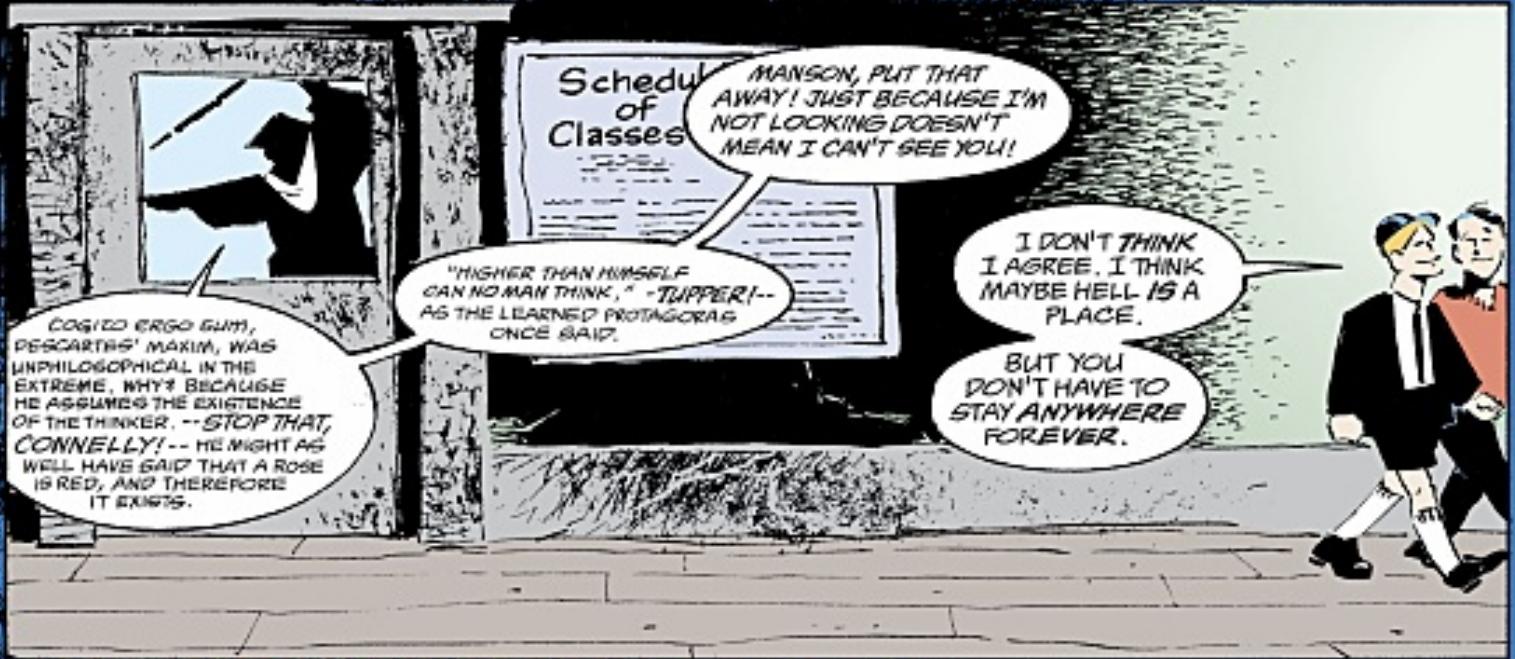
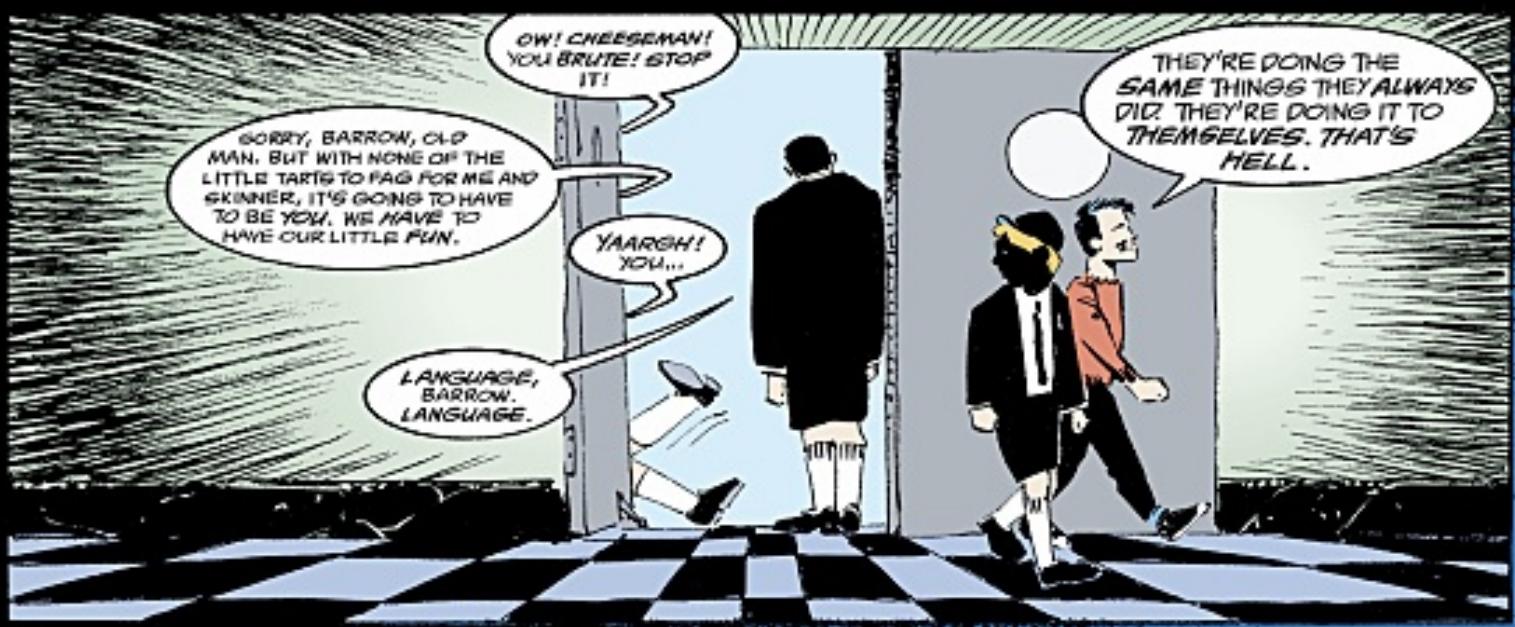
LOOK AT IT THIS WAY: DO YOU WANT TO BE A GHOST IN AN ATTIC ALL YOUR LIFE?

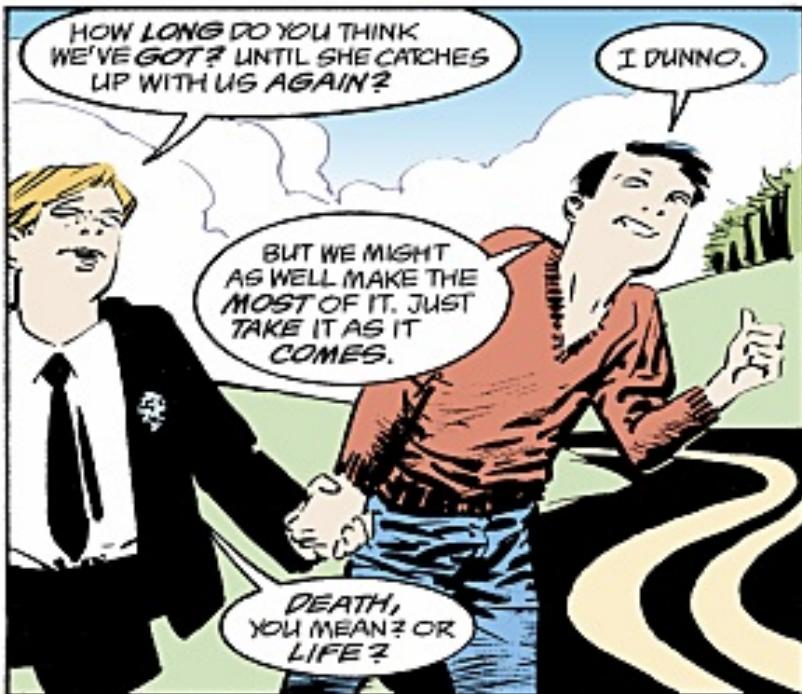


YES. YOU'RE RIGHT. IT'S PART OF GROWING UP, I SUPPOSE...

YOU ALWAYS HAVE TO LEAVE SOMETHING BEHIND YOU.







To Be Continued.

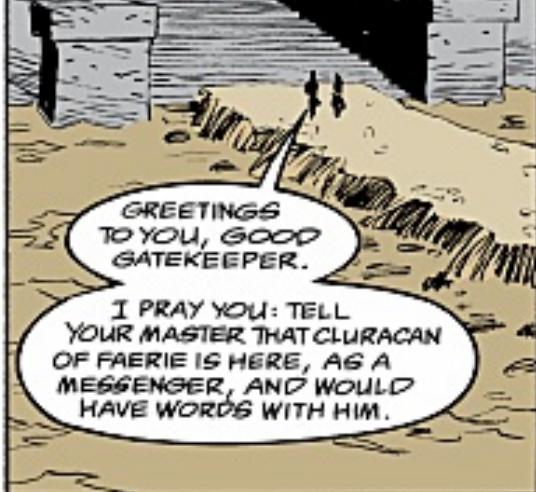


*G*

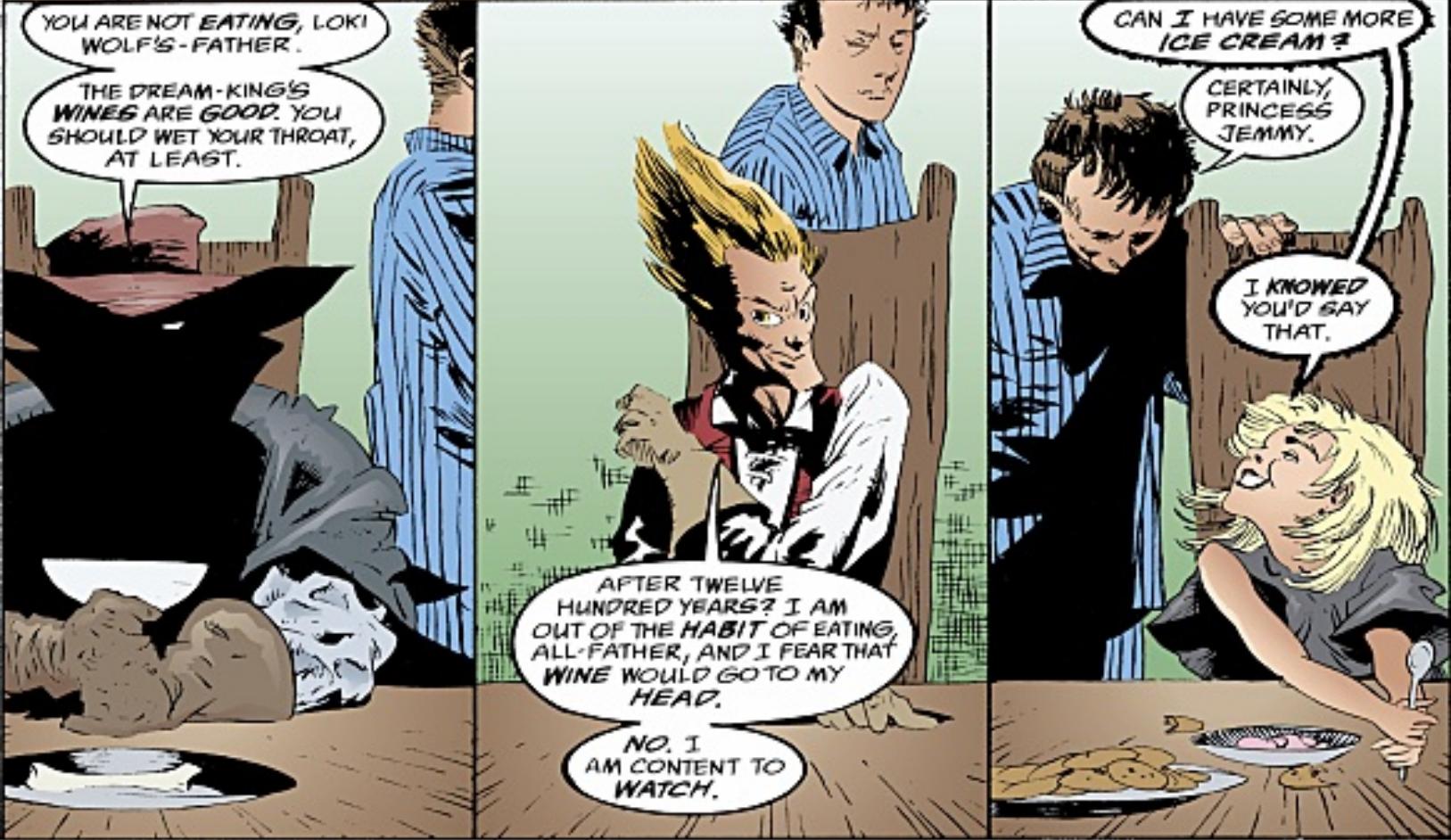
N WHICH A BANQUET IS HELD,  
AND OF WHAT COMES AFTER;  
CONCERNING DIPLOMACY AND  
BEDROOMS, BLACKMAIL AND  
THREATS; AND AN UNUSUAL  
RECIPE FOR SAUSAGES.

## EPISODE 5











There are many visitors here, Cluracan. They want many things.



Tomorrow I will talk with you all, and make my decision. Not now.



BUT, MY  
LORD...

You have delivered  
your message, and you  
heard my response. Your  
obligation is fulfilled.

The matter is ended,  
Cluracan. Your impertinence  
invites my severest displeasure.

I--I BEG PARDON,  
LORD SHAPER. I DID  
NOT MEAN TO PRESUME...

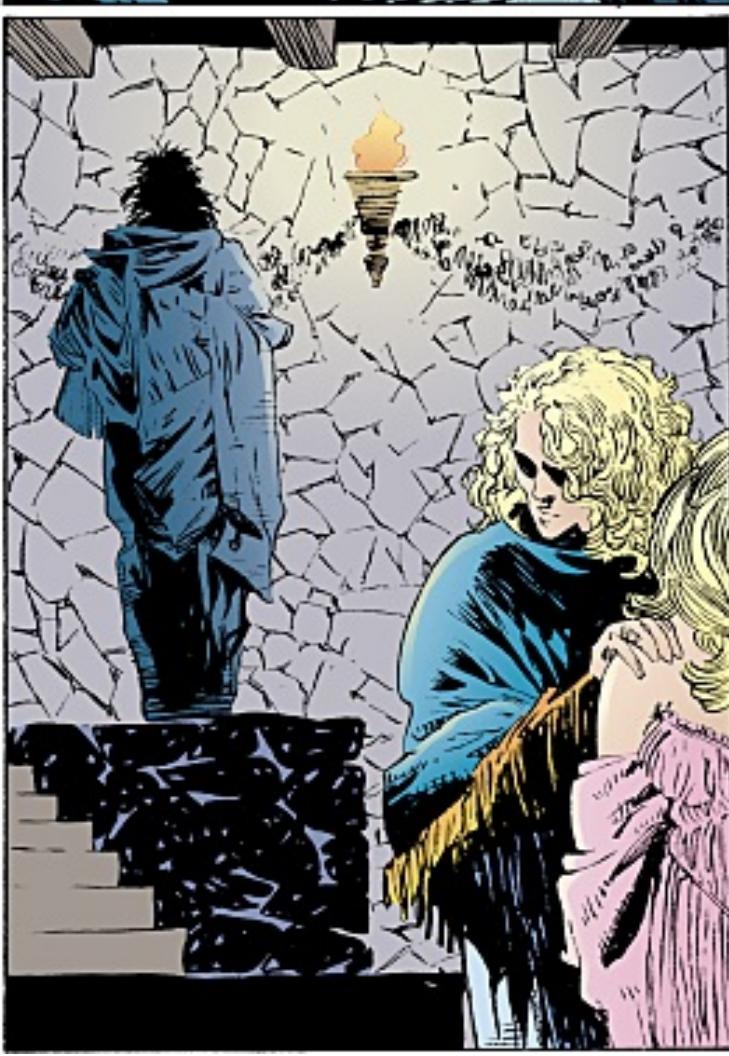
Enough, Cluracan.  
I will talk to you  
more later.

MY LORD? MY LADY? WHAT  
WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO  
BRING YOU?

JUST WINE.  
BRING ME A BOTTLE,  
AND A GLASS. NO,  
FORGET THE GLASS.  
BUT MAKE THAT TWO  
BOTTLES...

I WILL HAVE  
FLOWER BLOSSOMS,  
PLEASE. VIOLETS, ROSE  
PETALS, AND GILLY-  
FLOWERS.

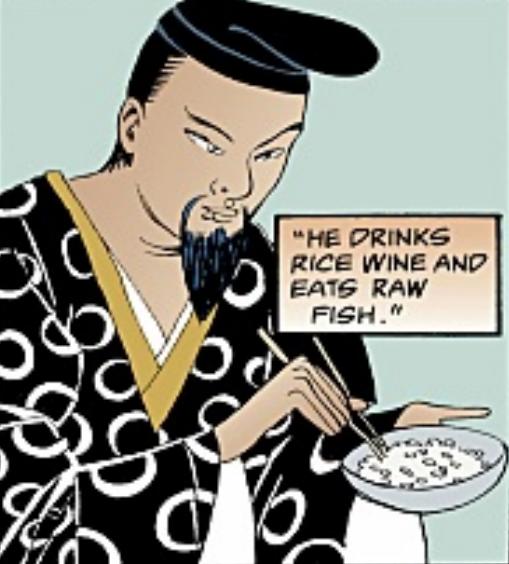
AND  
WATER.



AND WHAT DO YOU SEE,  
WHEN YOU WATCH, GIANTS'  
SON?

I SEE MANY THINGS,  
GALLOWS GOD, AND THEY  
AMUSE ME.

"I SEE SUSANO-O-NO-MIKOTO; A  
STORM GOD, LIKE YOUR SON, A LONE  
MEMBER OF HIS ANCIENT PANTHEON.



"I SEE ANUBIS, GOD  
OF THE DEAD OF THE  
NILE DELTA, FEASTING  
UPON HUMAN HEARTS  
-- OR UPON THE  
DREAMS OF HUMAN  
HEARTS, PERHAPS.



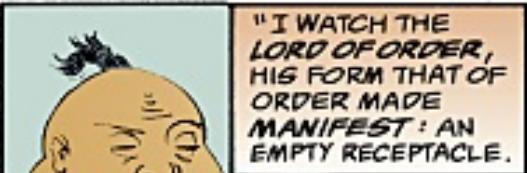
"THE FAIRY WOMAN, AS SHE EATS  
THE PETALS OF FLOWERS. I WONDER  
WHY SHE IS HERE, WHAT SHE IS  
THINKING ABOUT.

"I WATCH THE DEMON CONTINGENT.  
THERE IS A PEGLAR FLIRTATION  
OCCURRING BETWEEN CHORONZON  
AND THE MERKIN, MOTHER OF SPIDERS.



"AND I WONDER WHAT SHE  
WOULD BE LIKE BETWEEN  
THE SHEETS.

"IT'S BEEN TWELVE  
HUNDRED YEARS  
SINCE I DID THAT,  
AS WELL."



"I WATCH THE PRINCESS OF CHAOS,  
INCARNATE AS A TINY CHILD.



"AND LIKE ALL OF US, KILDERKIN  
OF ORDER IS HERE FOR HELL.



"AND, ABOVE ALL, I WATCH THE ANGELS. THEY DO NOT EAT, OR FLIRT, OR CONVERSE.

"THEY OBSERVE."

"I WATCH THEM IN AWE, ALL-FATHER; THEY ARE SO BEAUTIFUL AND DISTANT. THE FEET OF ANGELS NEVER TOUCH THE BASE EARTH, NOT EVEN IN DREAMS."

"I CAN READ NOTHING FROM THEIR FACES, MUCH AS I TRY."

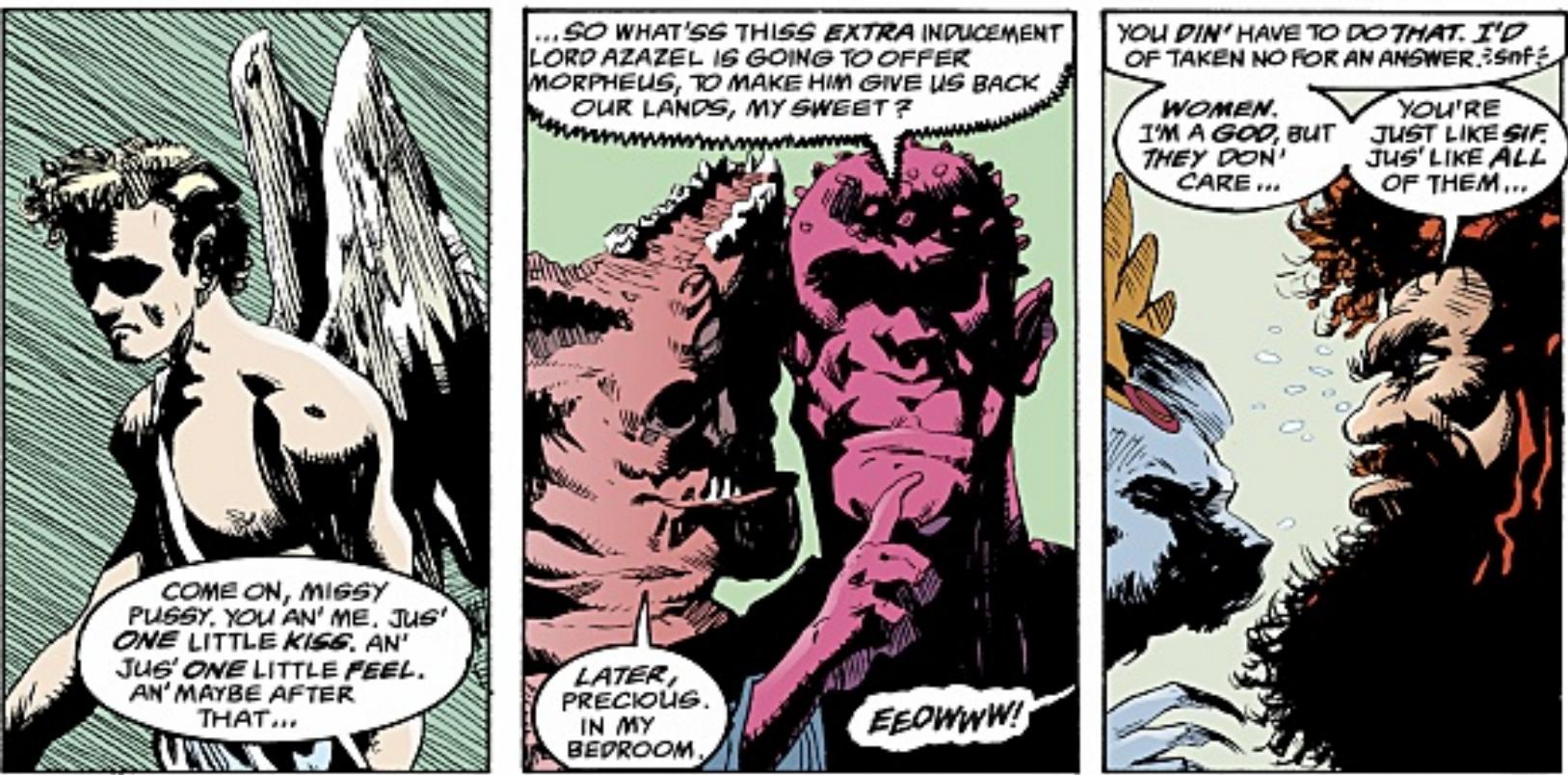
"AND WHAT THEY ARE THINKING, I CANNOT EVEN IMAGINE."

SEASON  
of MISTS  
Chapter = 5

*In which a banquet is held, and of what comes after; concerning diplomacy and bedrooms, blackmail and threats; and an unusual recipe for sausages.*

NEIL GAIMAN, Writer  
KELLEY JONES, Penciller  
GEORGE PRATT,inker  
DAN VOZZO, Colorist  
TODD KLEIN, Letterer  
ALISA KWITNEY, Asst. Editor  
KAREN BERGER, Editor

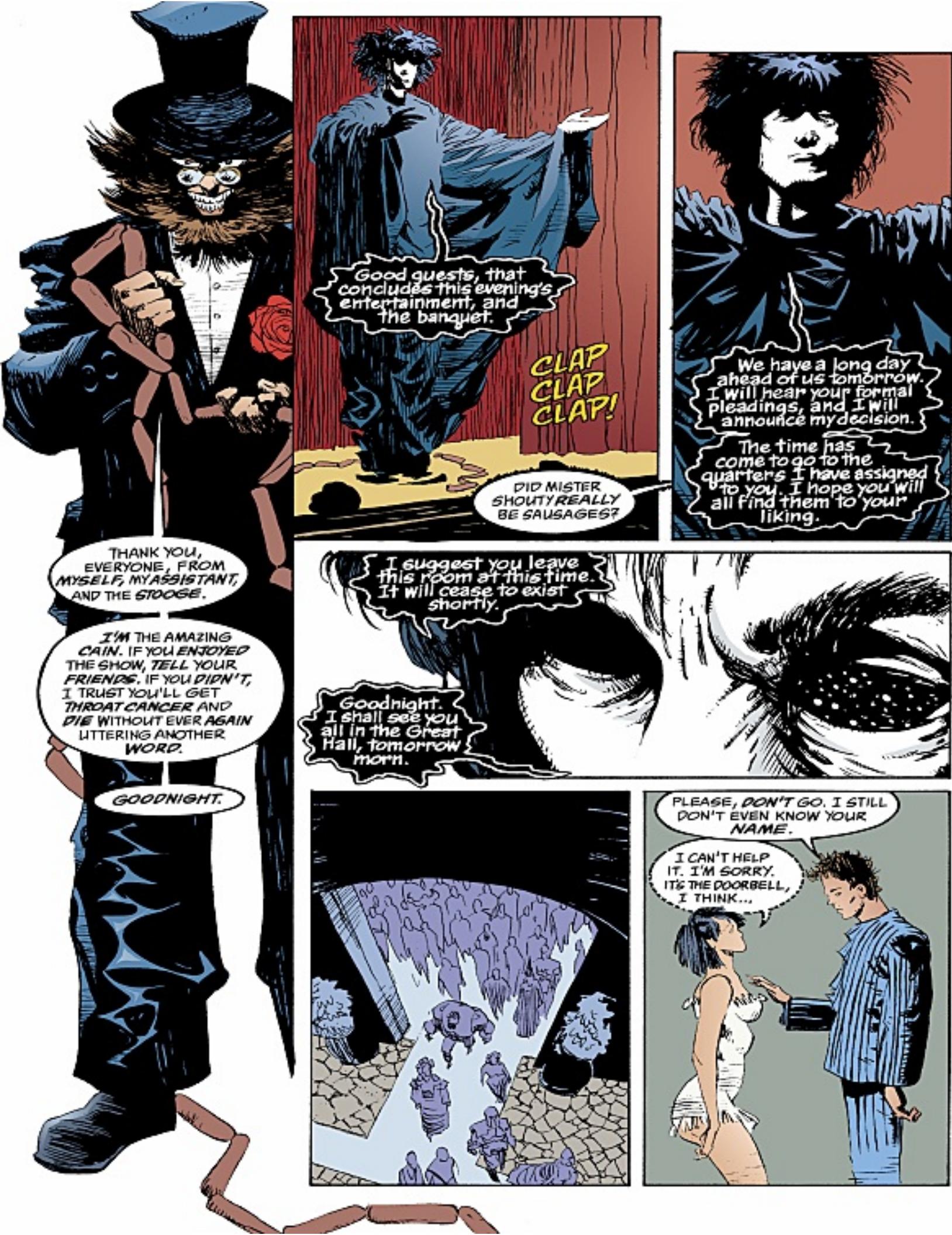
SANDMAN,  
Featuring  
characters  
created by  
Gaiman,  
Keith and  
Prinsepberg

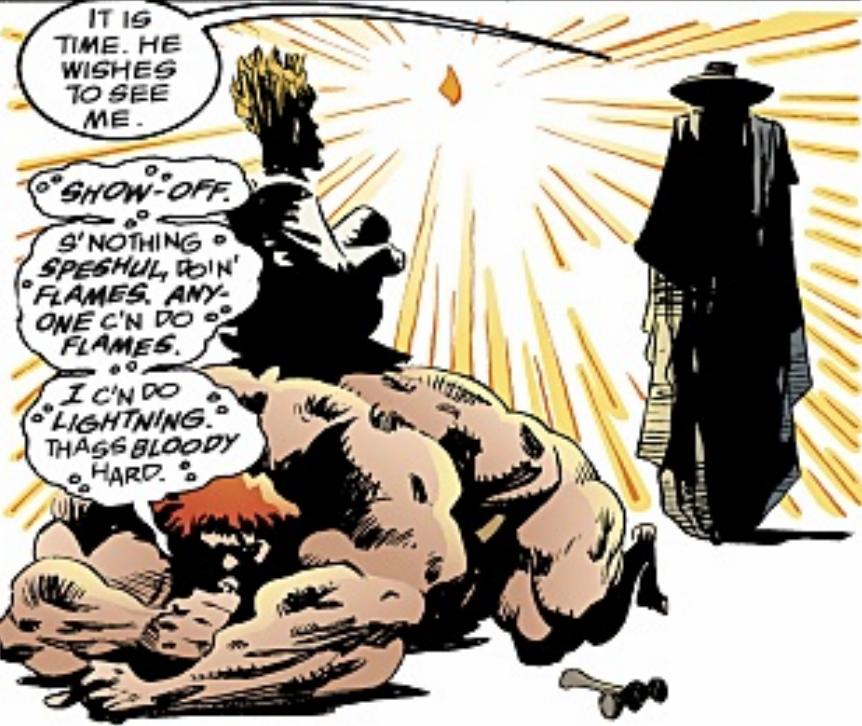
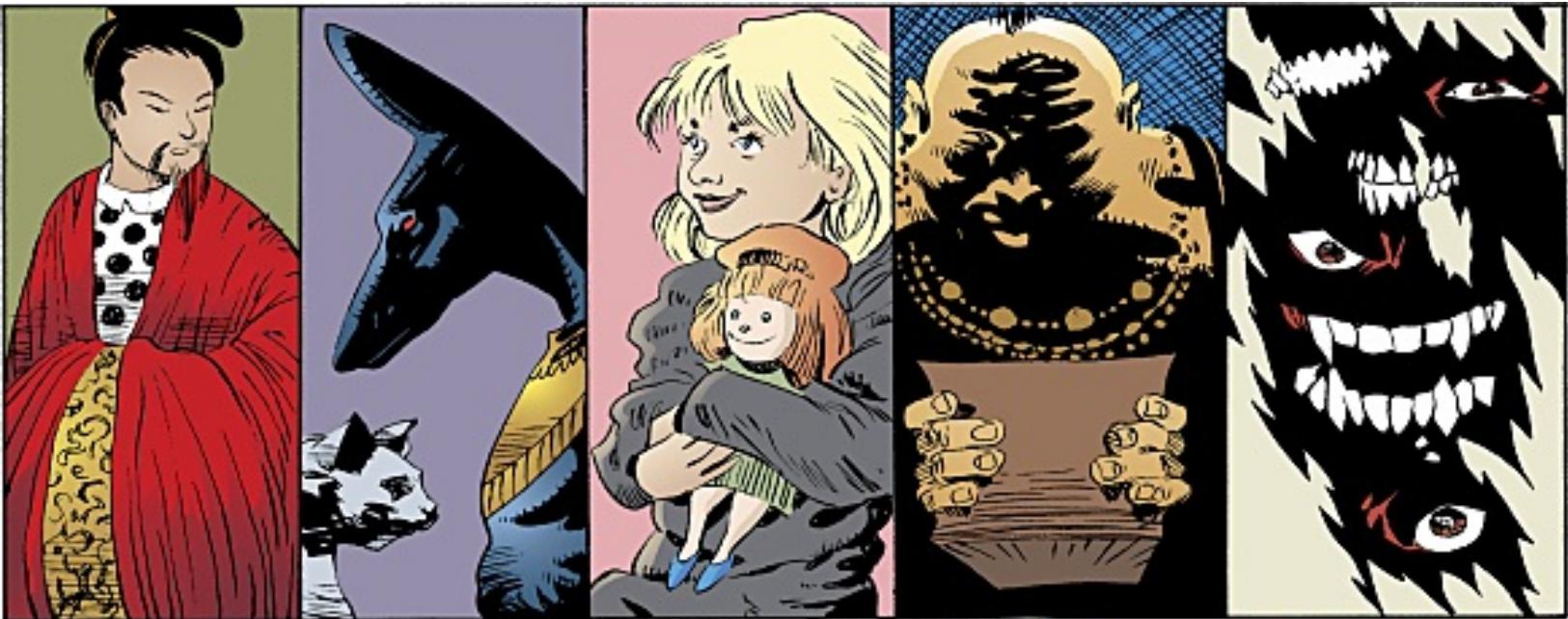












I THANK YOU FOR  
AGREEING TO SEE ME,  
DREAM WEAVER.

The pleasure is  
all mine, Rune-Lord.  
I regret our  
discussion must  
be brief.  
I have much to  
do this night.

SOME  
OTHERS TO SEE,  
I'D HAZARD.

Perhaps.

We have no time  
for nice words,  
Odin One-Eye.  
You wish me to  
grant you the  
Hell that once  
was Lucifer's.

I have not  
decided what to do  
with the place. Tell  
me, then, why should  
it be yours?

I AM A BRAVE GOD. YOU KNOW  
THAT TO BE TRUE. THERE IS ONLY ONE  
THING THAT FRIGHTENS ME.

Ragnarok.

INDEED, RAGNAROK.  
THESE DAYS TOO MUCH  
OF MY TIME IS SPENT HATCHING  
SCHEMES TO CIRCUMVENT  
THE DARKNESS AHEAD OF  
ME AND MINE.

I PICK AT IT,  
IRRATIONALY, AS A MAN  
PICKS AT A SORE.

SOME YEARS AGO, IT  
OCCURRED TO ME THAT IT  
IS EASIER TO FIGHT SOME-  
THING ONE KNOWS SOME-  
THING ABOUT.

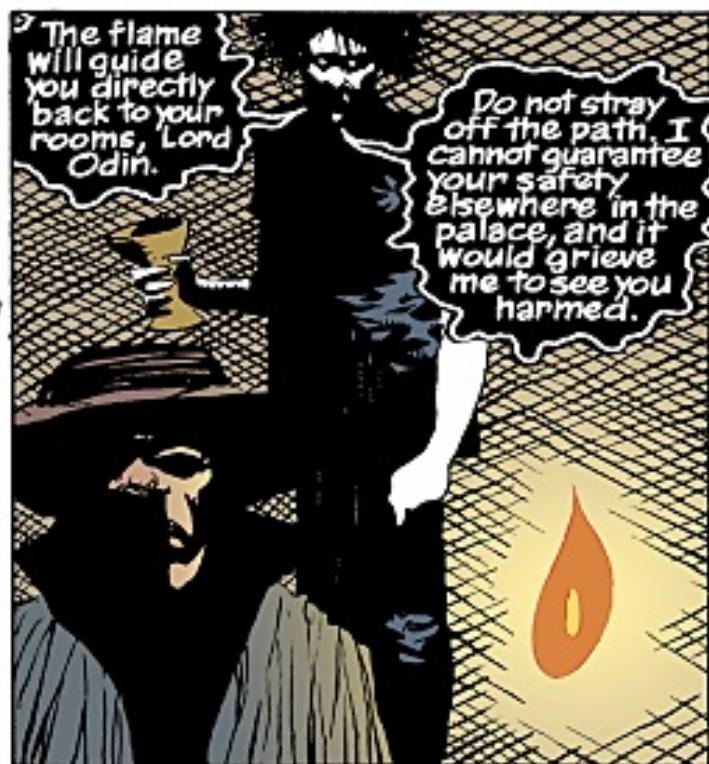
I CREATED A  
WORLD--A NOTIONAL  
DIMENSION--AND IN IT,  
I FASHIONED A TINY  
RAGNAROK.

I DO NOT KNOW HOW  
THEY GOT THERE, NOR WHY  
THEY FIGHT, THESE LITTLE  
MORTAL HEROES.

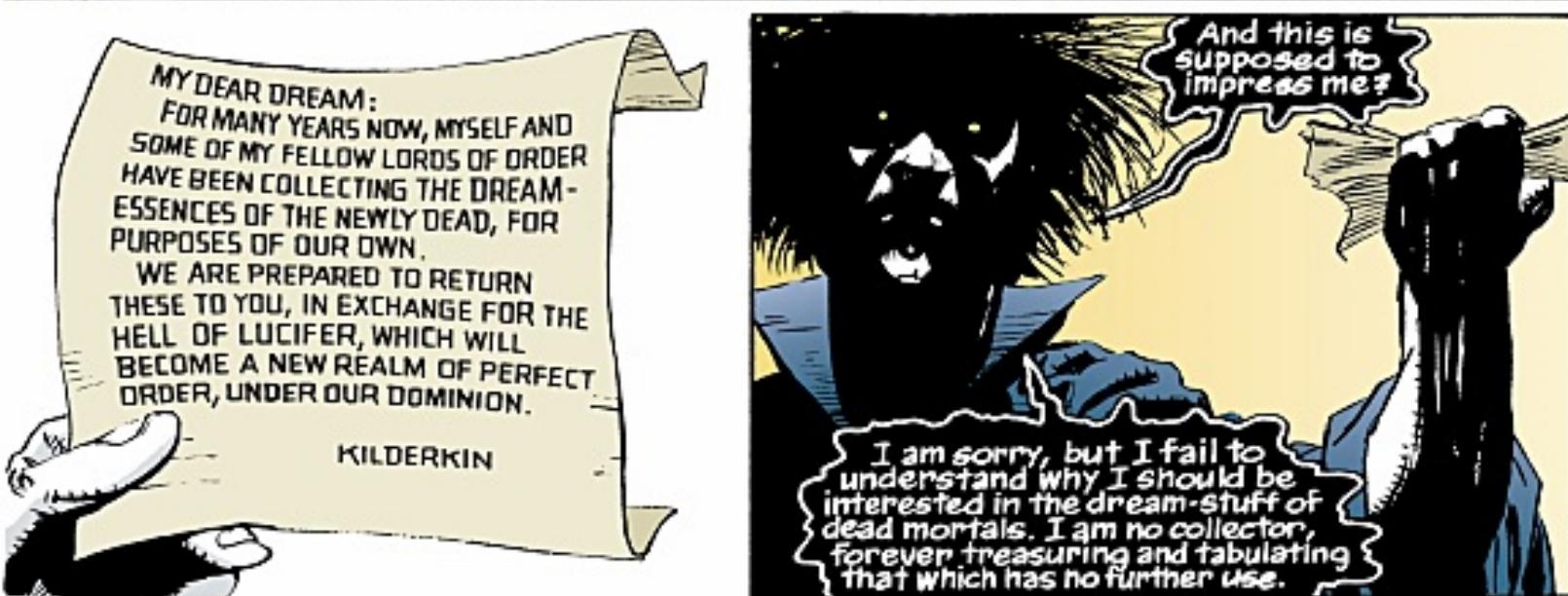
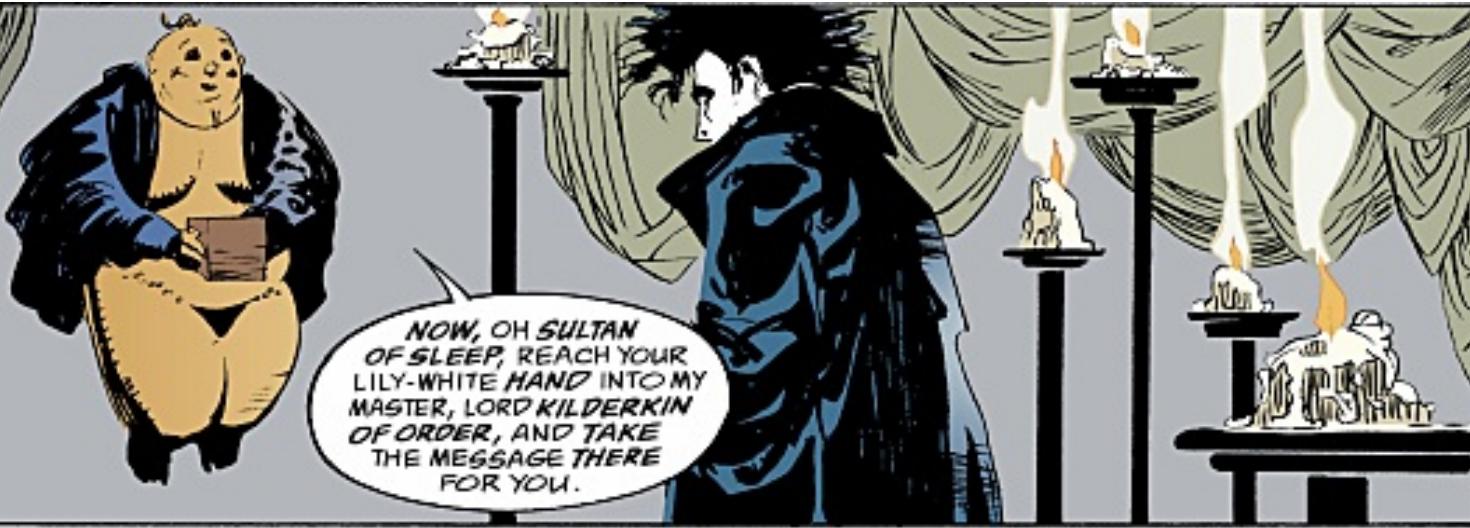
IN MY WORLD, THE  
LAST BATTLE IS FOUGHT,  
DAY IN, DAY OUT, FOREVER.  
I HAVE LEARNED MUCH  
FROM IT.

ONE THING THAT  
SURPRISED ME, THOUGH,  
WAS WHEN MY LITTLE WORLD  
GAINED FURTHER WARRIORS  
--ONES I HAD NOT  
CREATED.

BUT LOOK,  
THEY WAR ALONGSIDE  
MY WEE AESIR IN THE  
BATTLE UNENDING.







IT SHOULD, PERHAPS,  
BE MENTIONED THAT THIS ONE  
IS HERE AS A PRIVATE INDIVIDUAL.  
ONE HAS NOT COME AS PART  
OF HIS PANTHEON.



I understand.  
You may talk  
freely.

IT IS GOOD.

THE GODS OF NIPPON ARE  
VERY POWERFUL. WE ARE NO  
LONGER WORSHIPPED AS ONCE  
WE WERE, BUT WE HAVE  
ADAPTED.

TIMES HAVE  
CHANGED, AND WE  
HAVE CHANGED  
WITH THEM.



WE ARE EXPANDING--  
ASSIMILATING OTHER  
PANTHEONS, LATER GODS,  
NEW ALTARS AND ICONS.  
MARILYN MONROE IS OURS  
NOW, AS ARE KING KONG  
AND LADY LIBERTY.

MY MOTHER IS  
QUEEN OF OUR OWN  
UNDERWORLD; IT IS A  
MOST EFFICIENT  
PLACE. LUCIFER'S HELL  
SHOULD BE OURS TOO.  
IT HAS MUCH  
POTENTIAL.



NAME YOUR  
PRICE.

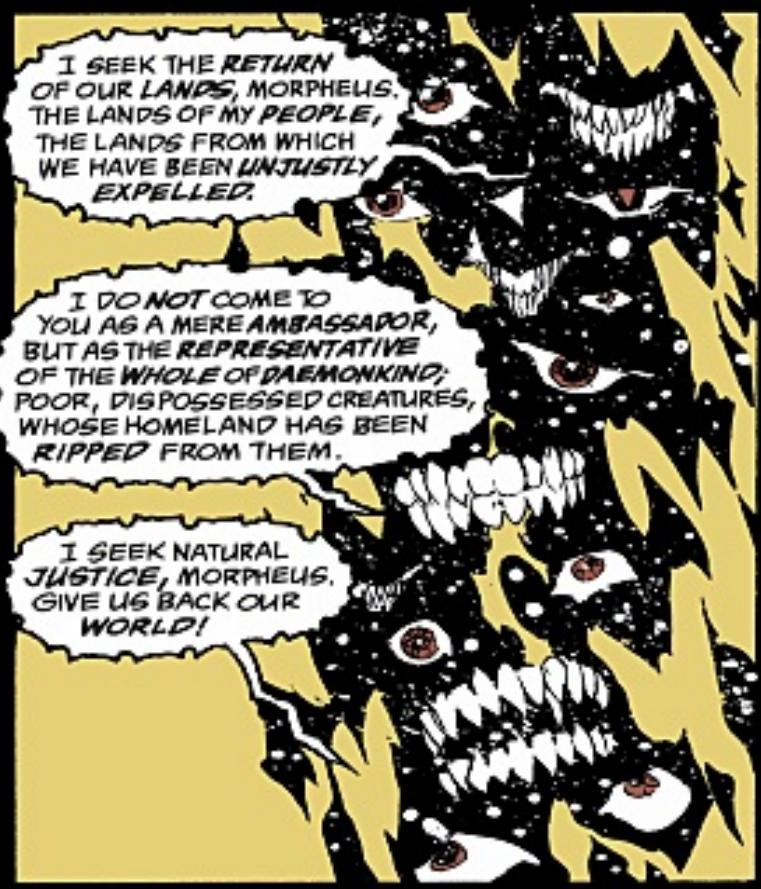
WHATEVER  
IT IS, WE WILL  
PAY IT.



The matter will be  
given my most careful  
consideration, Honored  
Susano-O-No-Mikoto.







FIRSTLY: YOU CAME TO HELL TWO YEARS AGO, TO RETRIEVE YOUR HELMET.



IF WE CANNOT COME TO AN AGREEMENT, THOUGH--UNLIKELY AS THAT PROSPECT MUST BE--I WILL TAKE GREAT PLEASURE IN CONSUMING HER SOUL.

I WILL GOBBLE HER UP AND GULP HER DOWN AND MAKE HER A PART OF ME FOREVER--WHAT TINY SPARK OF HER CONSCIOUSNESS STILL REMAINS, AFTER THAT, WILL BE MINE.





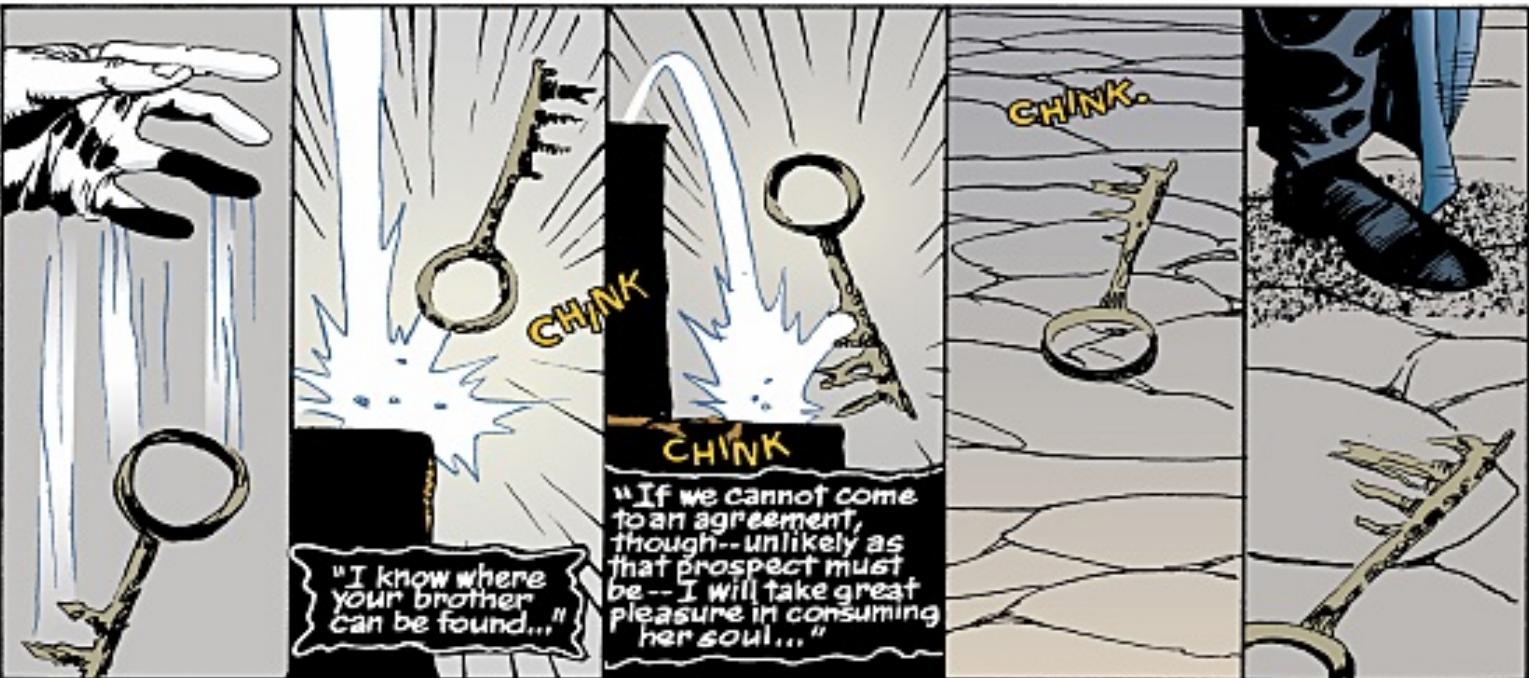
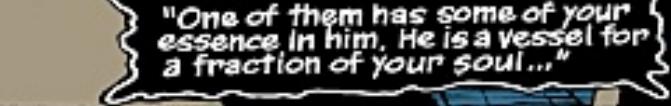
"Of course, it is not just a favor we'd be asking. There is much that Faerie can offer you..."

"Give us the Hell of Lucifer, Morpheus, or the entire Host of Chaos will be at your throat until the end of time..."

"One of them has some of your essence in him. He is a vessel for a fraction of your soul..."

"Tomorrow I shall plead the rightness of our claim. Perhaps that will convince you..."

"Name your price. Whatever it is, we will pay it..."



If only it were that easy.

If I could just throw it away...



To Be Continued



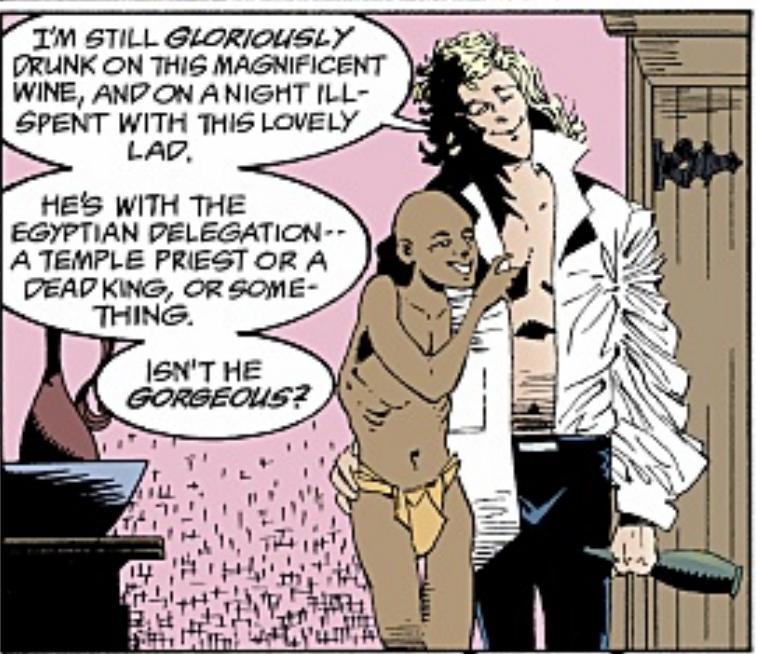
*O*N WHICH THE VEXING QUESTION  
OF THE SOVEREIGNTY OF HELL  
IS FINALLY SETTLED, TO THE  
SATISFACTION OF SOME; THE  
FINER POINTS OF HOSPITALITY;  
AND IN WHICH IT IS DEMONSTRATED  
THAT WHILE SOME MAY FALL,  
OTHERS ARE PUSHED.

## E P I S O D E   6





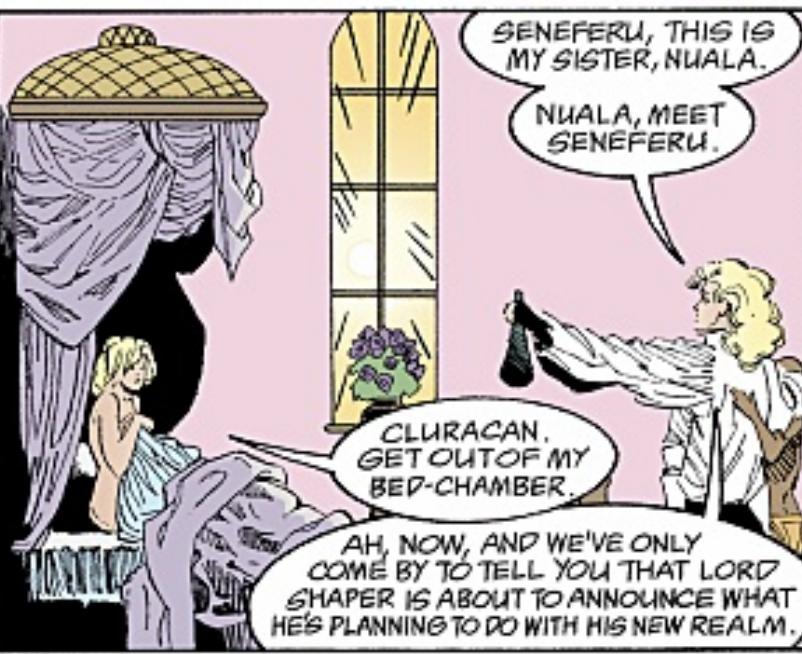
"GOOD MORNING, PRETTY SISTER.  
OUR HOST HAS FINALLY SEEN FIT TO  
LET THE SUN RISE. A BRIGHT, NEW  
DAY HAS DAWNED."



I'M STILL GLORIOUSLY  
DRUNK ON THIS MAGNIFICENT  
WINE, AND ON A NIGHT ILL-  
SPENT WITH THIS LOVELY  
LAD.

HE'S WITH THE  
EGYPTIAN DELEGATION--  
A TEMPLE PRIEST OR A  
DEAD KING, OR SOME-  
THING.

ISN'T HE  
GORGEOUS?



SENEFERU, THIS IS  
MY SISTER, NUALA.

NUALA, MEET  
SENEFERU.

CLURACAN,  
GET OUT OF MY  
BED-CHAMBER.

AH, NOW, AND WE'VE ONLY  
COME BY TO TELL YOU THAT LORD  
SHAPER IS ABOUT TO ANNOUNCE WHAT  
HE'S PLANNING TO DO WITH HIS NEW REALM.



SO GET A  
FROCK ON, LITTLE  
SISTER, AND COME  
AND HEAR THE  
GOOD WORD.

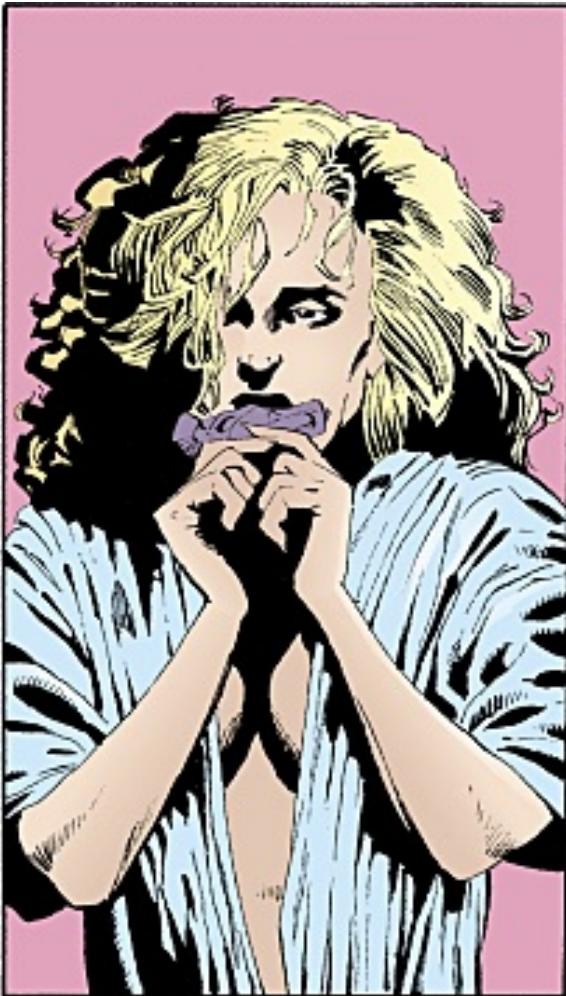
DO YOU THINK  
HE WILL ACCEDE TO  
OUR WISHES? THAT  
HE'LL KEEP HELL  
EMPTY, AND FORGIVE  
US THE TITHE?

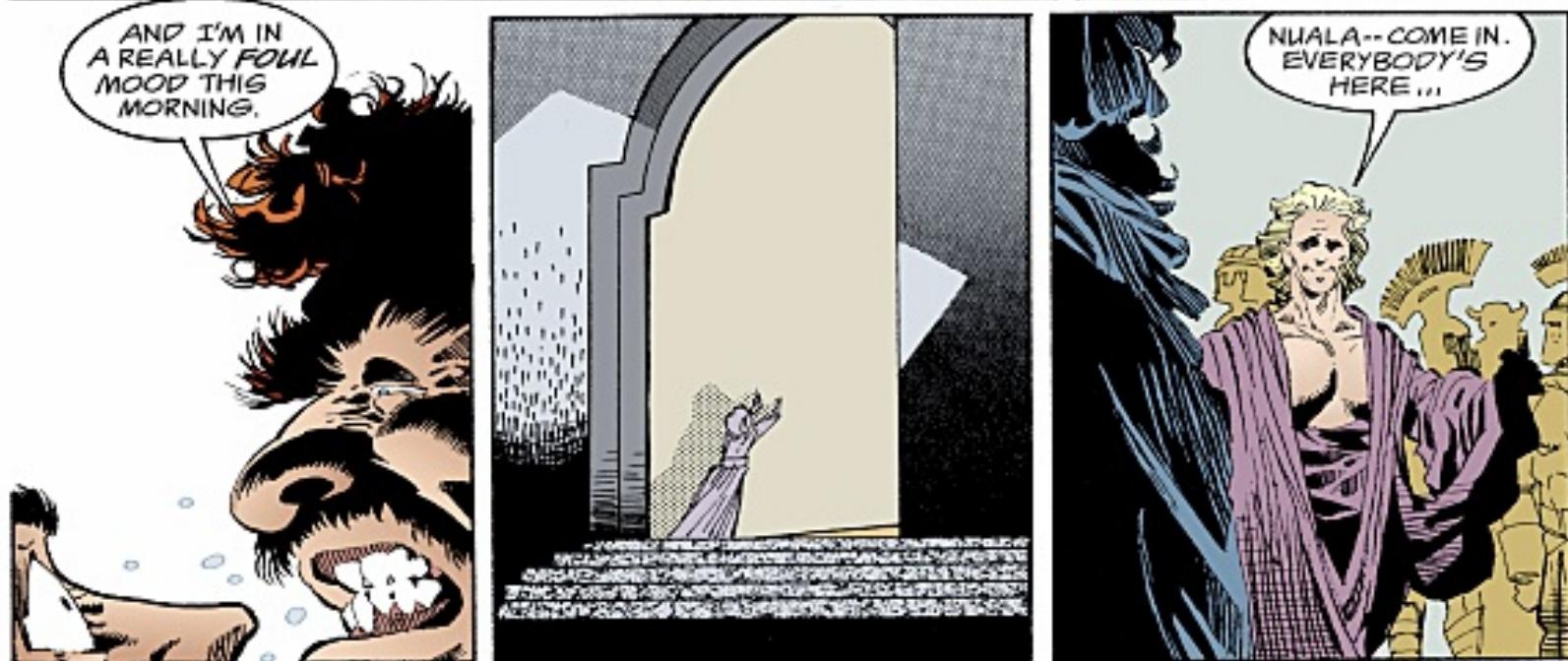


NOT A HOPE.  
THERE'S TOO MANY  
BIG BOYS LEANING  
ON HIM--YOU SAW  
THEM ALL LAST  
NIGHT.

PERSONALLY, I  
FIGURE THE BEST I CAN  
HOPE TO GET OUT OF  
THESE SHENANIGANS  
IS EXCELLENT WINE,  
AND GREAT SEX.

SEE YOU  
DOWN THERE.









## SEASON of MISTS Chapter -6

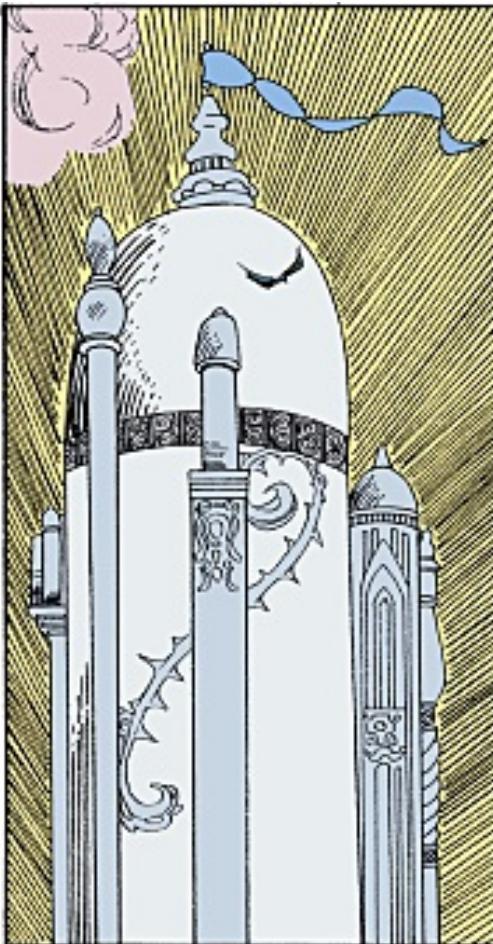
In which the vexing question of the sovereignty of Hell is finally settled, to the satisfaction of some; the finer points of hospitality; and in which it is demonstrated that while some may fall, others are pushed.

NEIL GAIMAN, Writer  
KELLEY JONES, Penciller  
DICK GIORDANO,inker  
DANIEL VOZZO, Colorist  
TODD KLEIN, Letterer  
ALISA KWITNEY, Asst. Editor  
KAREN BERGER, Editor

# the SANDMAN

featuring characters  
credited to  
Gaiman, Kieth & Dringenberg









I am saying... I have been told to say...  
that Hell cannot be entrusted to other than those who serve the Name directly. It is too important.  
That myself, and Duma, are to take over Hell.

That it will be under our control, as representatives of The Name.

And... that we can never return to the Silver City. We can never again enter the Presence.

But--this is neither fair nor just. We have done nothing to be cast out. We have never rebelled--we fought bravely, side by side, against the armies of Lucifer. We are of the Host.

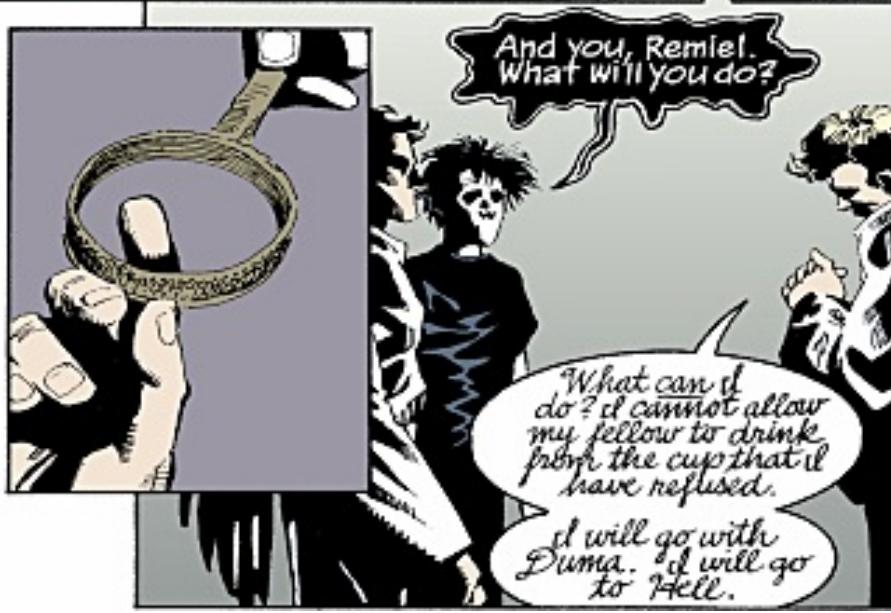
Does He not understand what this means?

To be exiled into the darkness? To be Banished from our Creator's Light, his grace? We are too pure for our feet ever to touch the base clay--why then should we be forced into the Pit?

This is... this is wrong. We can not... We must not...

Hell is for the Evil. Hell is for those who have offended against his love. Hell is for...

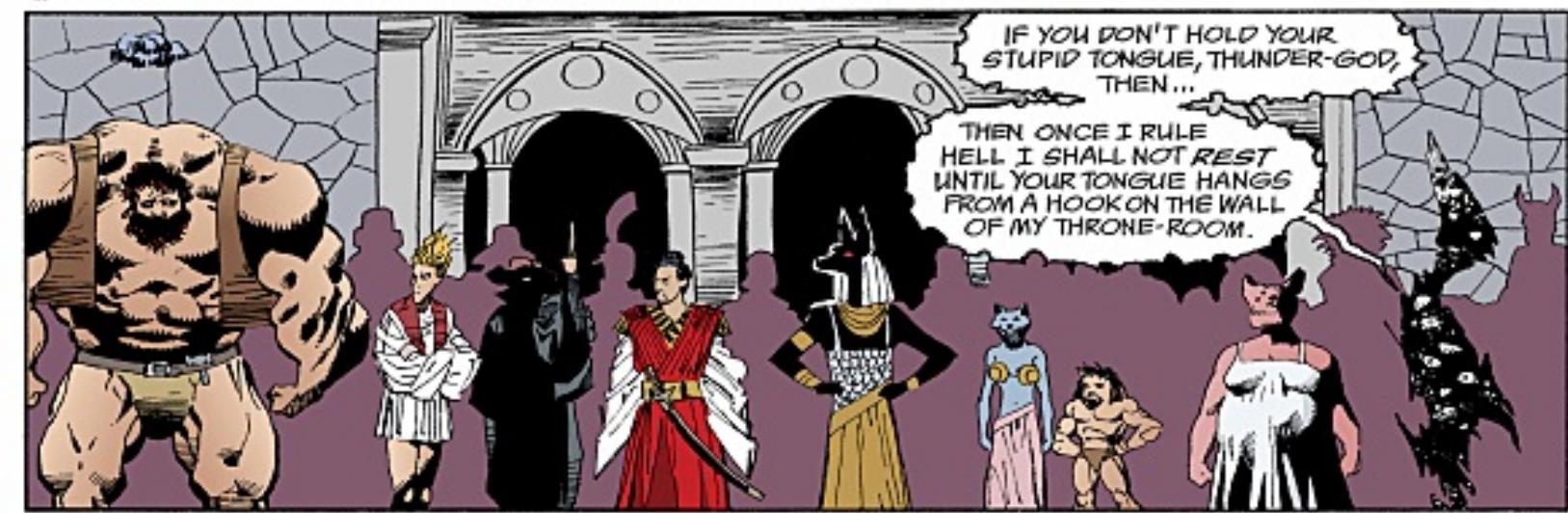
If--I will rebel like Lucifer. I will protest. This is wrong...



What can I  
do? I cannot allow  
my fellow to drink  
from the cup that I  
have refused.

I will go with  
Duma. I will go  
to Hell.





Thank you for waiting. I apologize for the delay. But then, I am sure none of you would have wished me to rush into a decision.

Order and Chaos, Egypt and Asgard, Faerie, Demonkind and Nippon...each of you has come to me, each of you has asked for a favor...

ENOUGH BABBLING, DREAMER! GIVE ME THE KEY TO HELL AND BE DONE WITH IT...

Give you the key to Hell?

I cannot do that. I cannot give it to any of you.

WHAT?







I hope it will cause none of you undue distress.



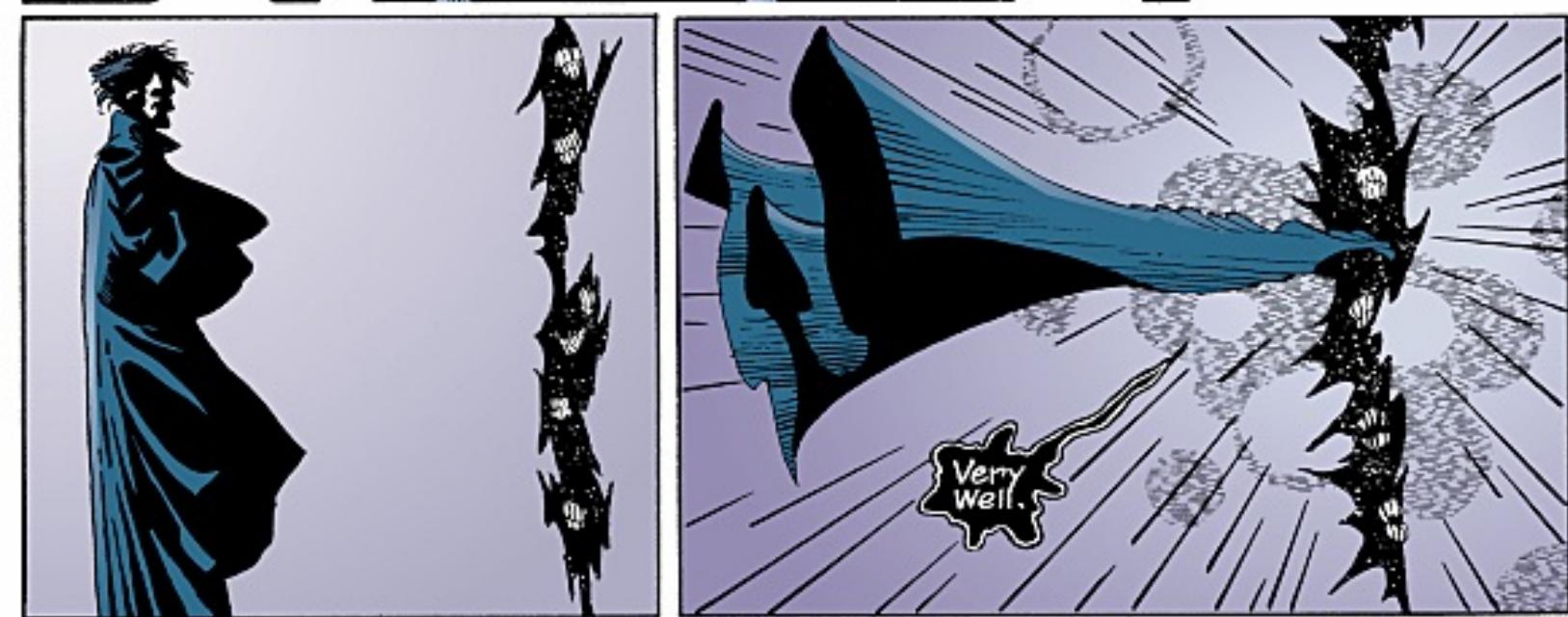
CAUSE US DISTRESS? OHH, THAT'S A FINE ONE, MORPHEUS. WHAT ABOUT THE DISTRESS IT'S GOING TO CAUSE YOU?



I SAID I WOULD DEVOUR HER SOUL. AND I WILL.

SLOWLY, THOUGH. A BITE AT A TIME. AND WITH EVERY BITE I WILL BE THINKING OF YOU.





I DID NOT... BELIEVE...  
YOU WOULD BE WILLING TO  
ENTER INTO US... DREAMER.

But I did,  
Azazel.



YES, YES, YOU DID.  
VERY WELL. FIND THEM,  
AND RELEASE THEM, AND  
THEY ARE YOURS, AND  
YOU MAY LEAVE ME  
FREELY.

FAIL AND I WILL  
FEAST ON THEIR SOULS--  
AND ON YOURS.

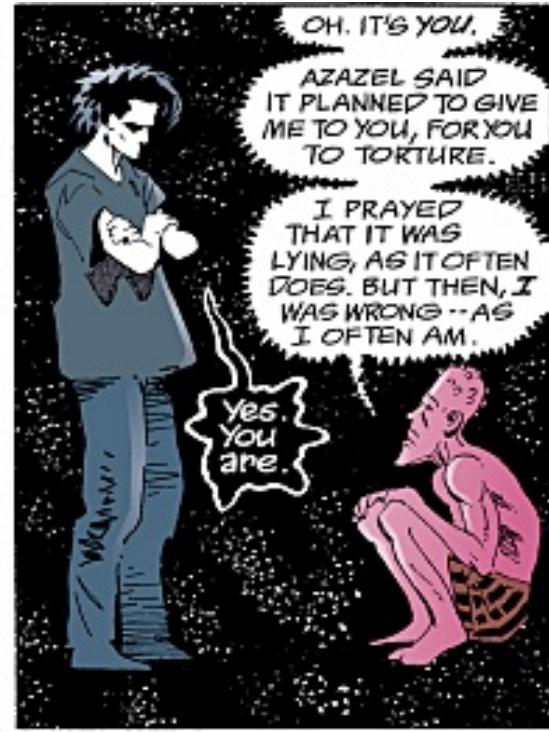
I understand.

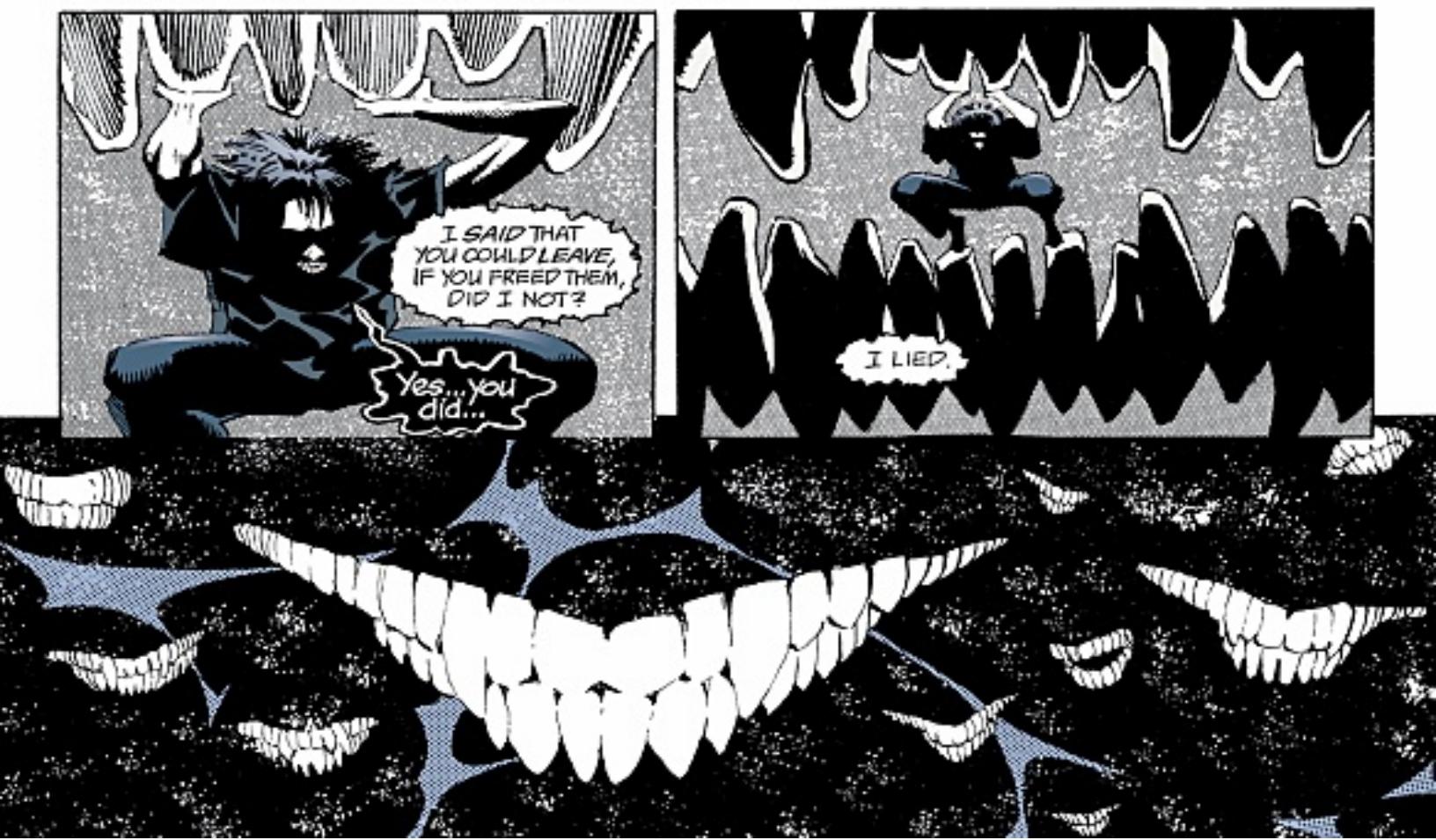
DO YOU?  
REALLY?

THEN FIND THEM,  
IF YOU CAN.

Very  
well.

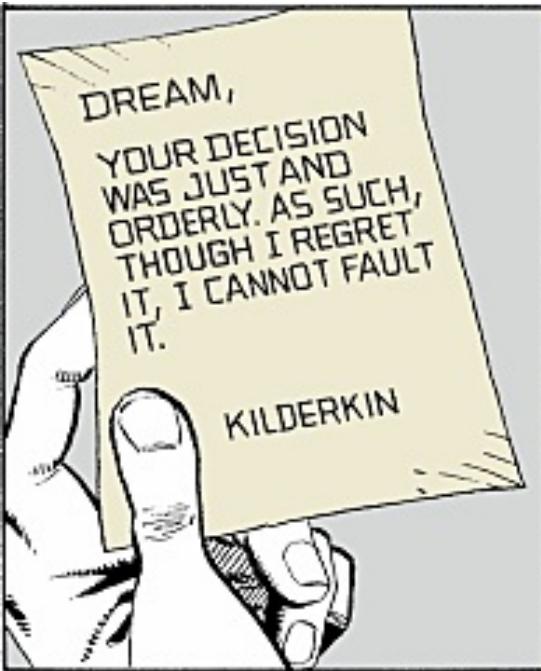


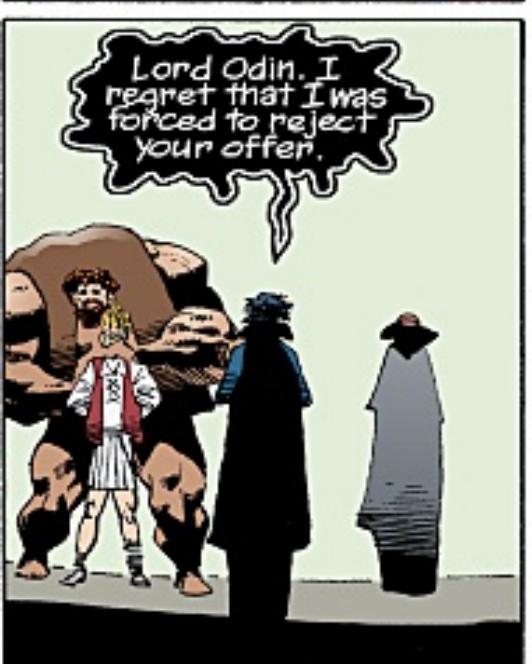




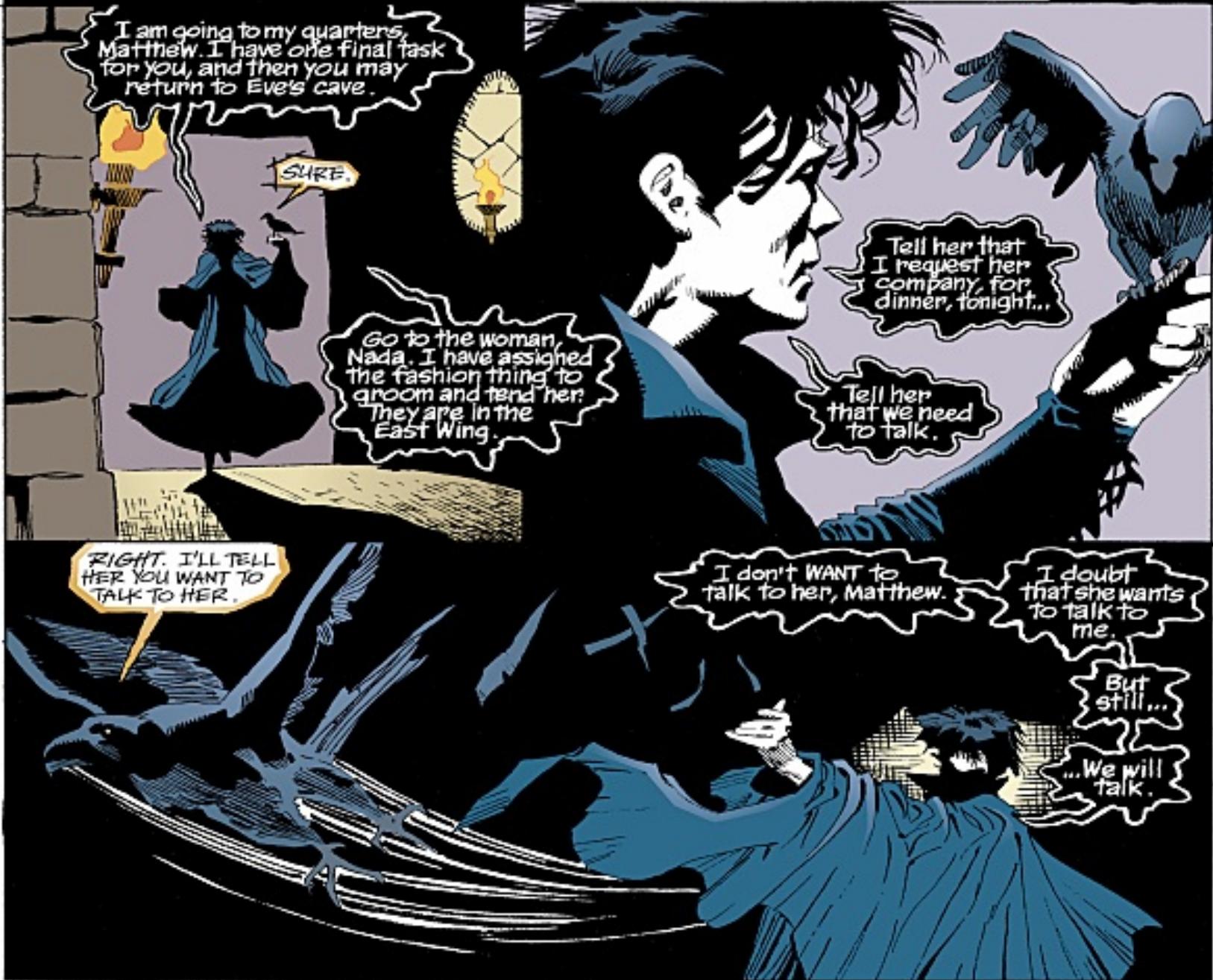
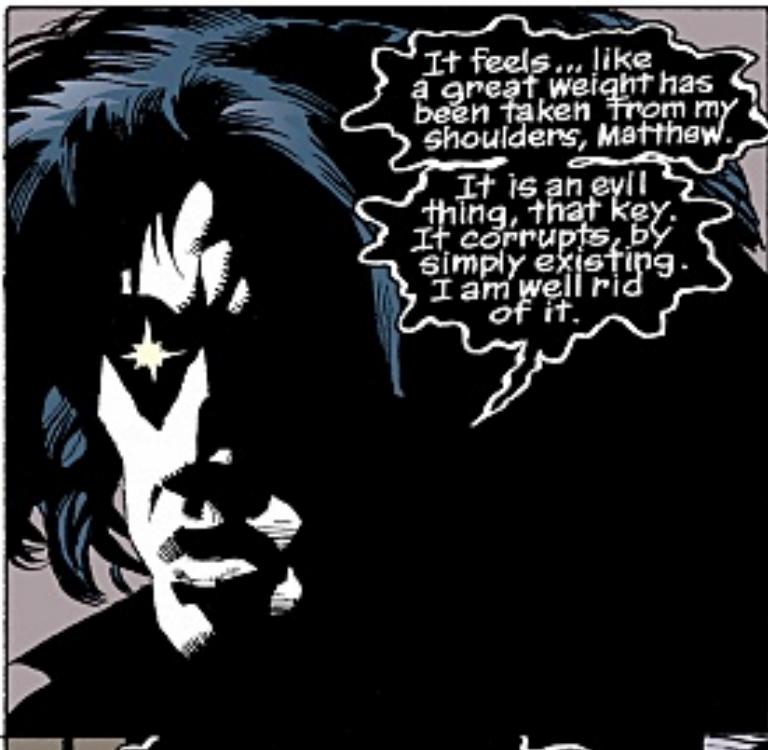












To Be Concluded



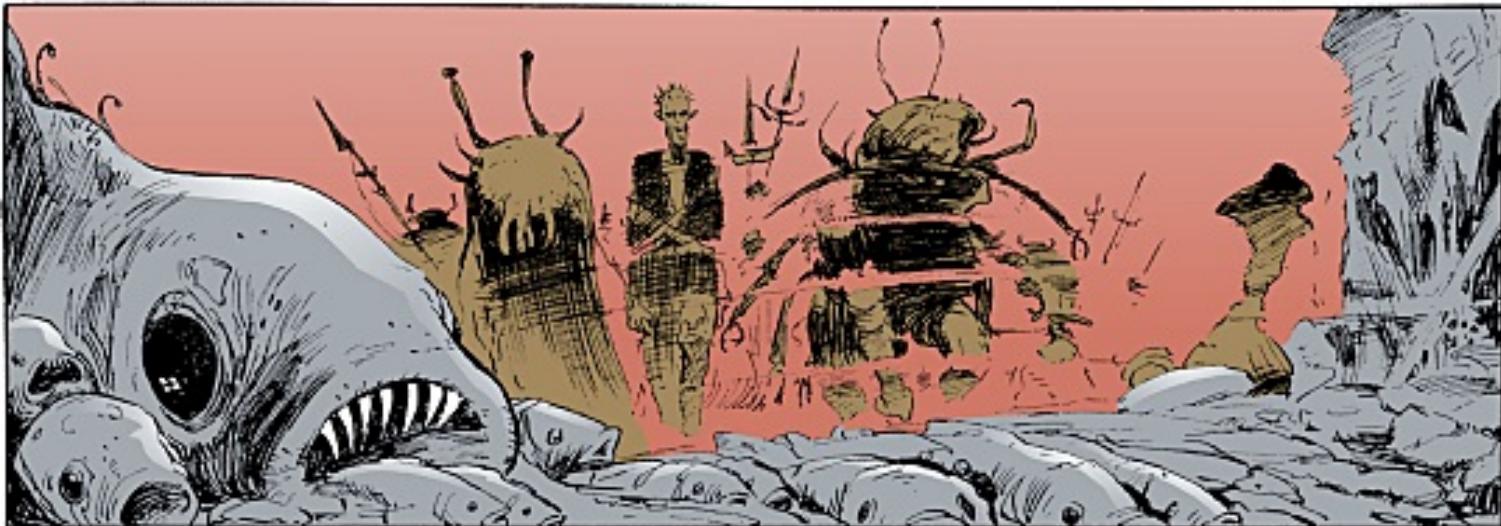
*(*  
N WHICH WE BID FAREWELL TO  
ABSENT FRIENDS, LOST LOVES, OLD  
GODS, AND THE SEASON OF MIXED;  
AND IN WHICH WE GIVE THE DEVIL  
HIS DUE.

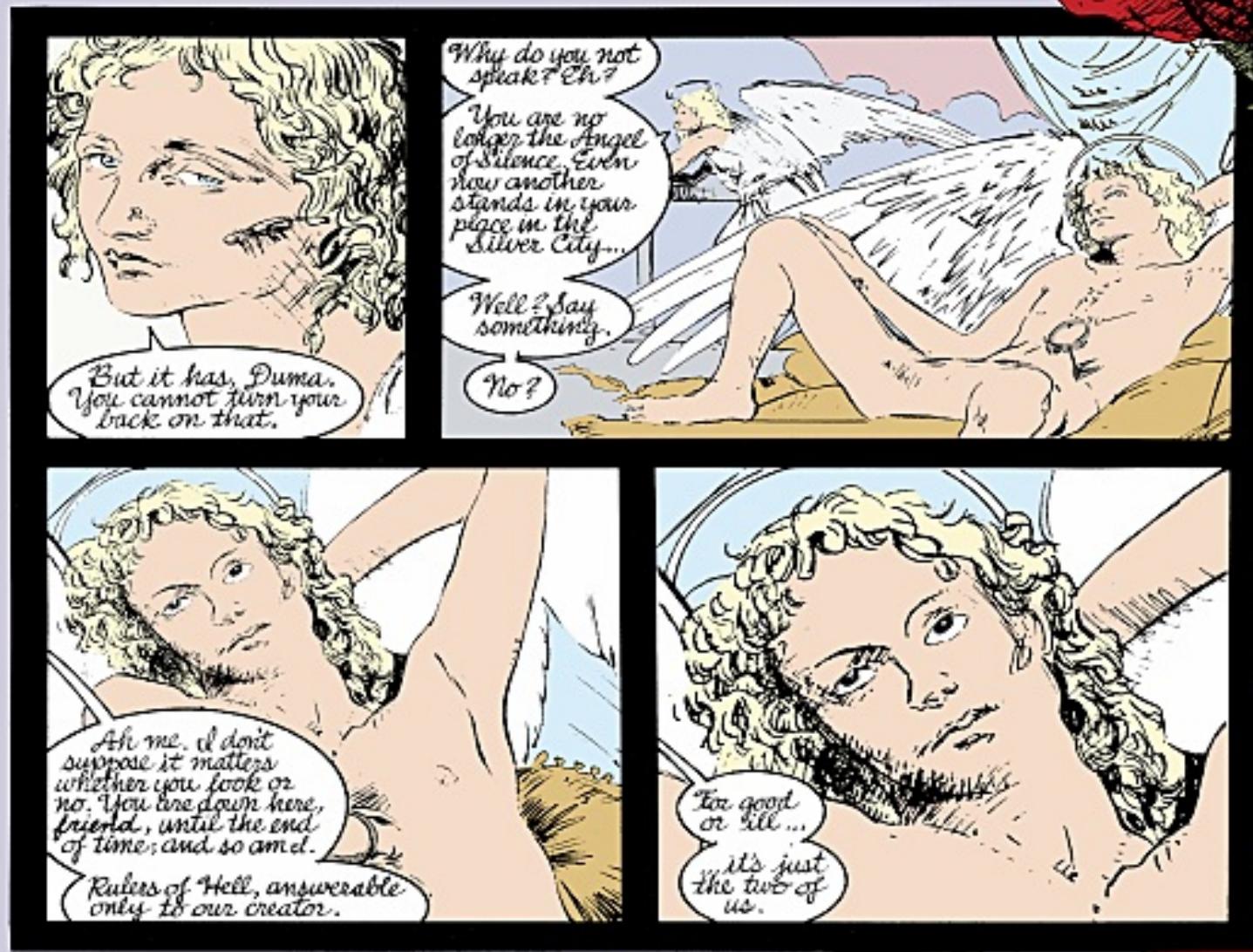
E P I S O D E    ∞



Hell:

They  
are coming  
back.







# SEASON of MISTS

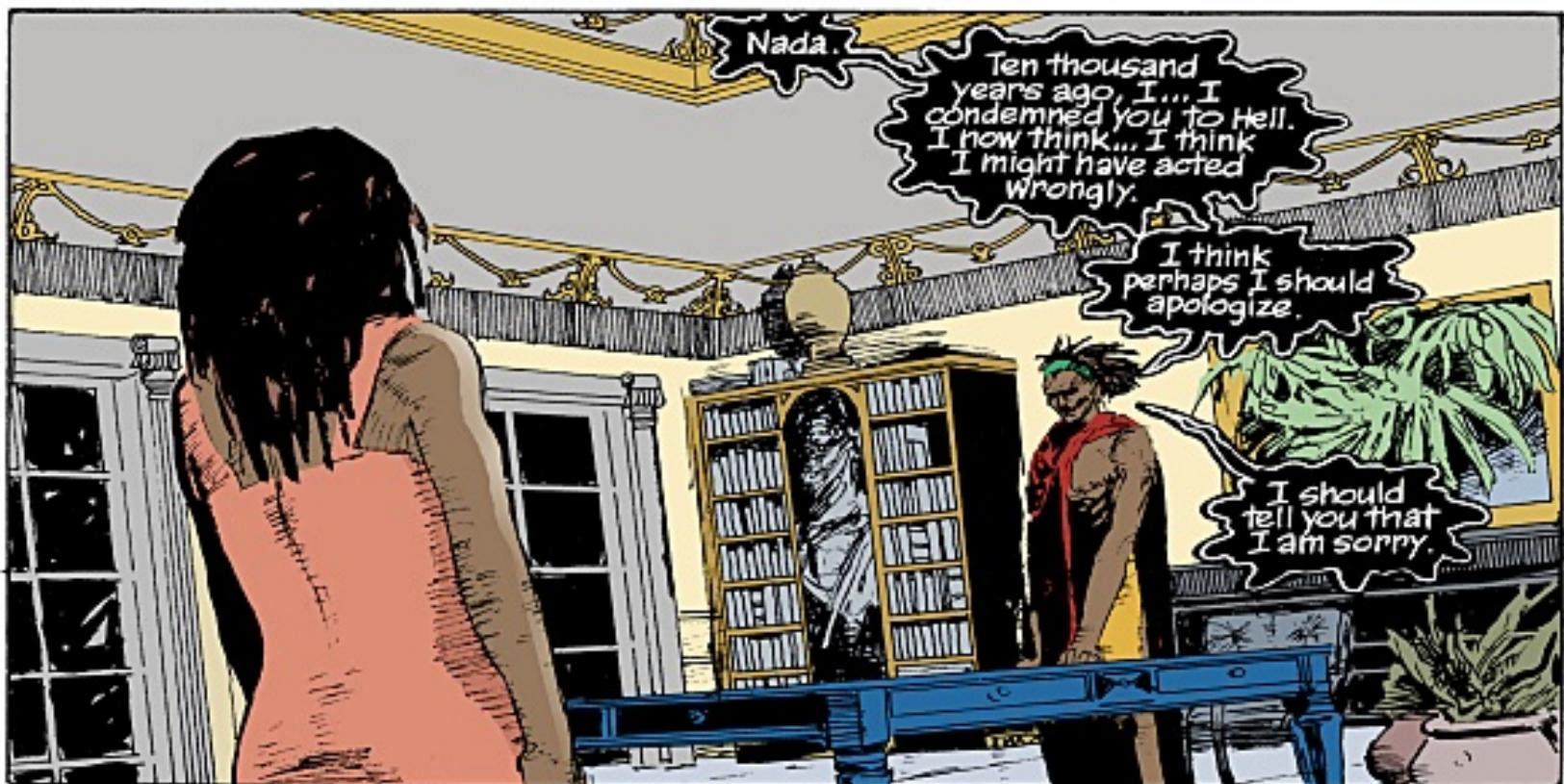
## Epilogue

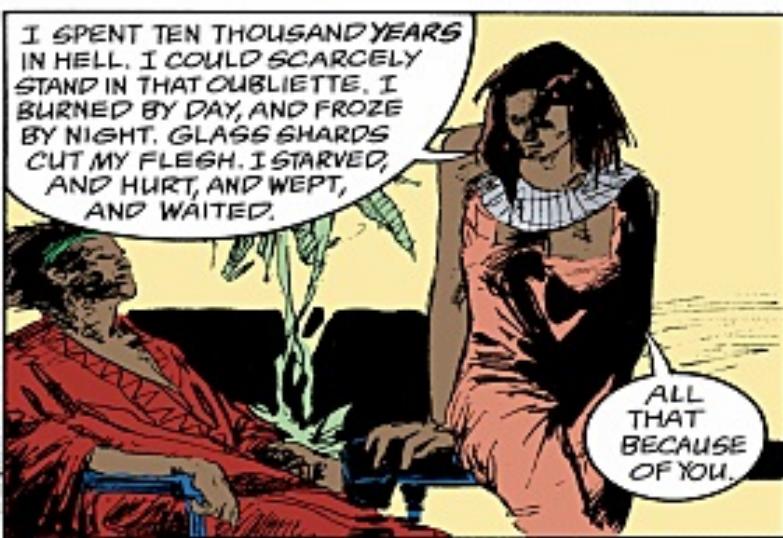
In which we bid farewell to absent friends, lost loves, old gods, and the season of mists; and in which we give the devil his due.

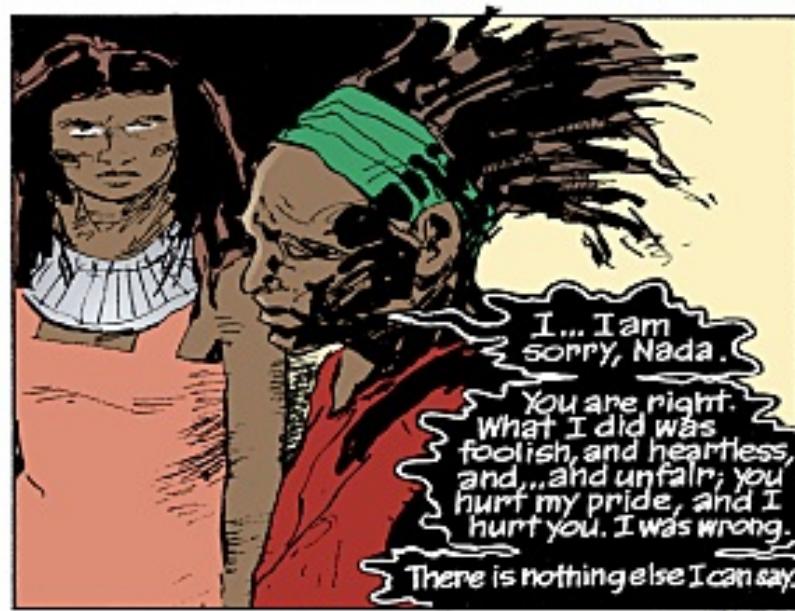
NEIL GAIMAN MIKE PRATT GEORGE KLEIN DANIEL VOZZO TODD KWTNEY ALISA BERGER Writer Penciller Inker Colorist Letterer Art. Ed. Editor

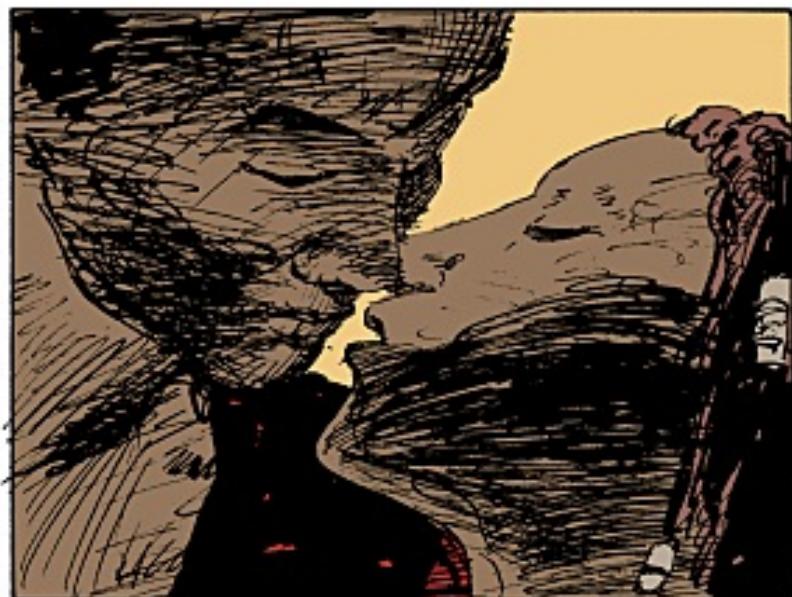
Sandman characters created by Gaiman, Kieth & Dringenberg.

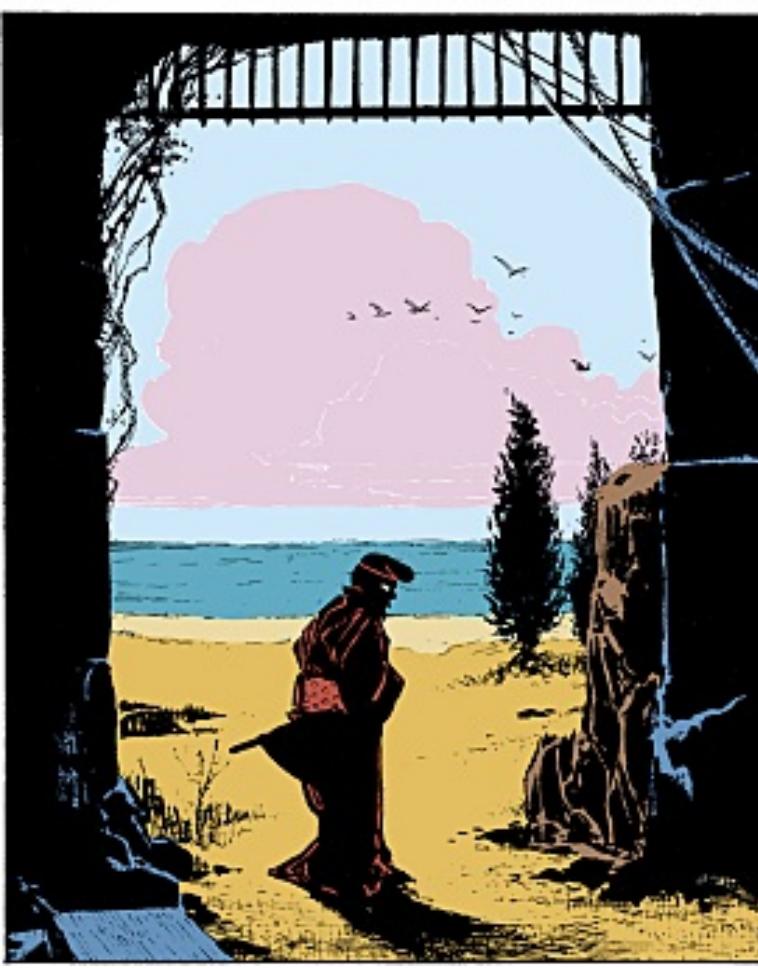




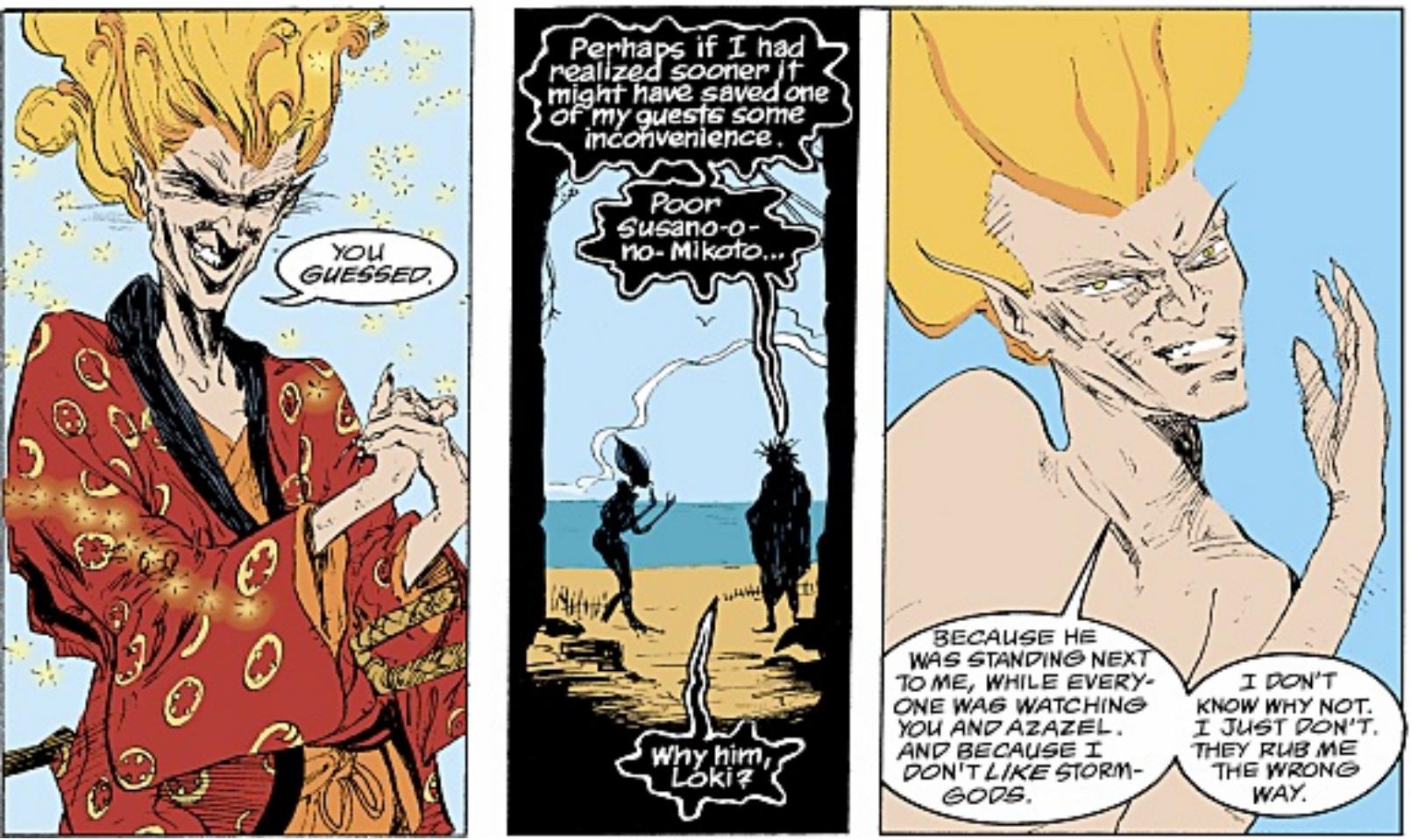


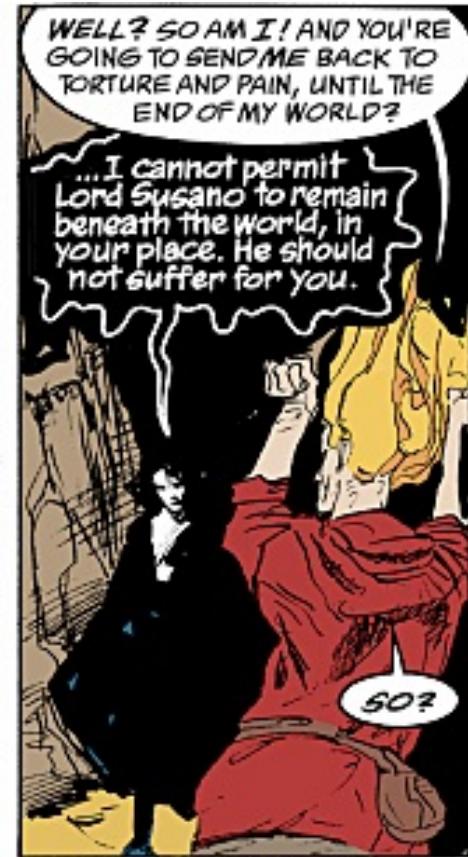


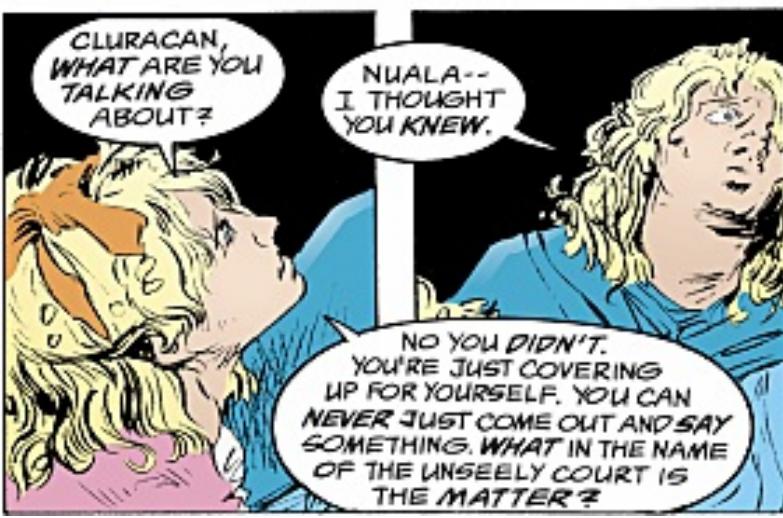
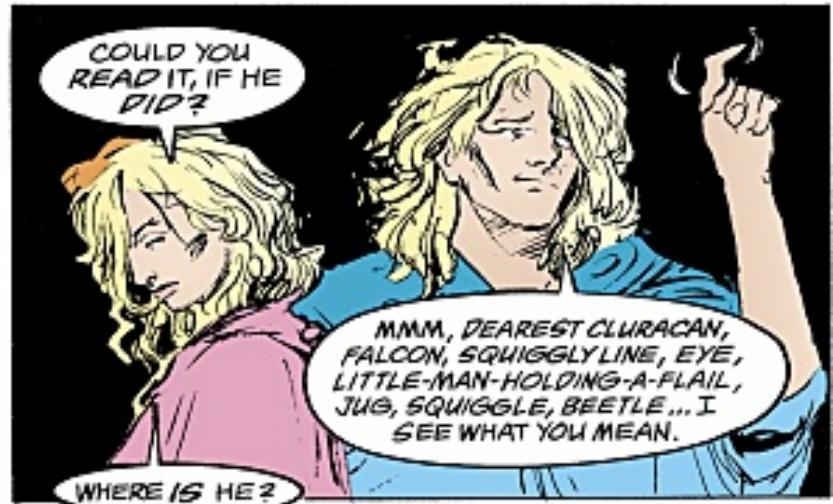
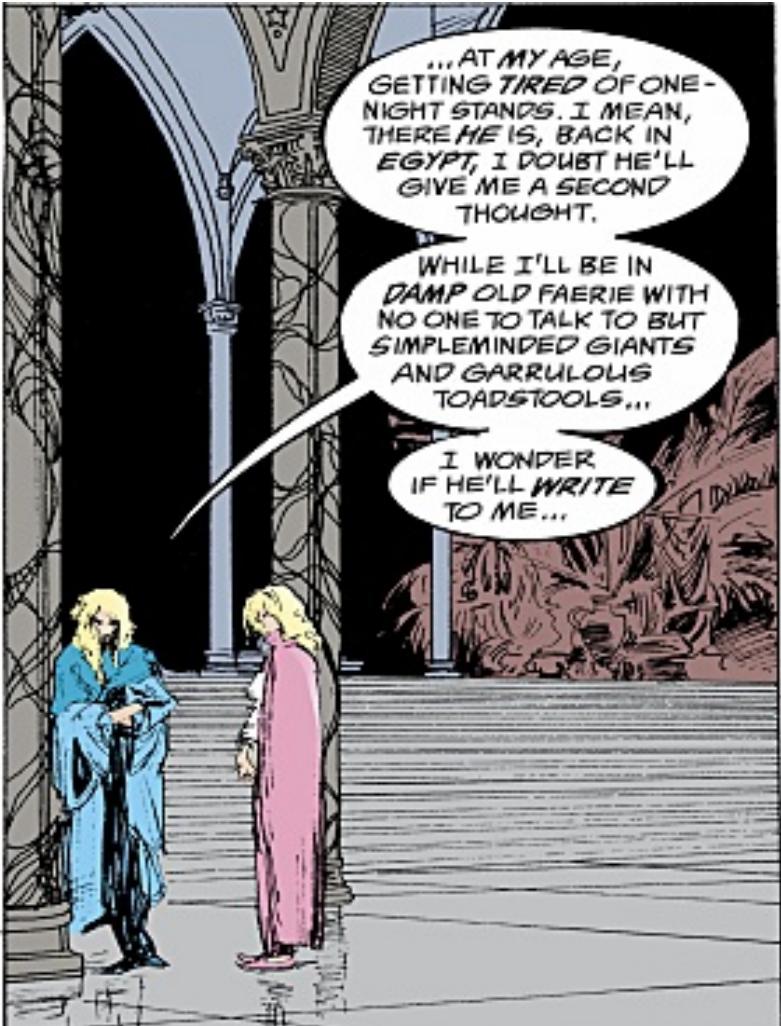


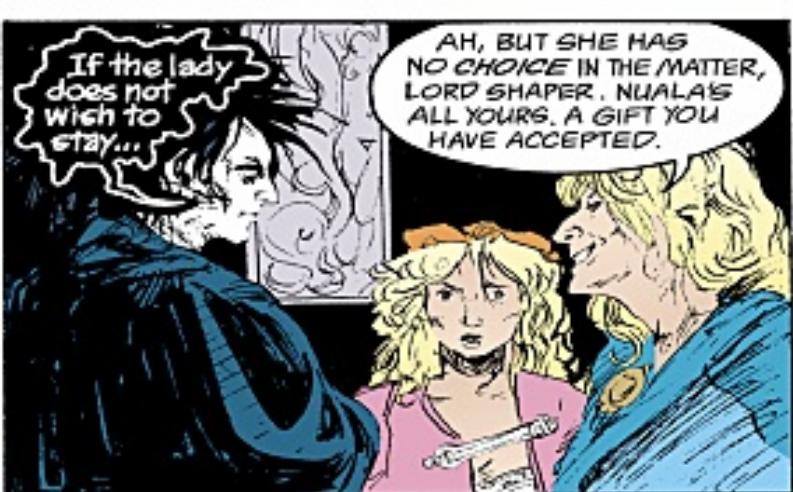
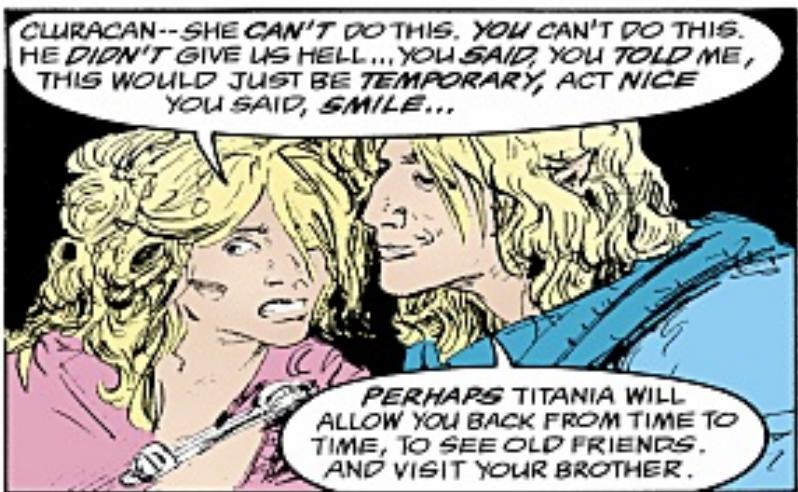


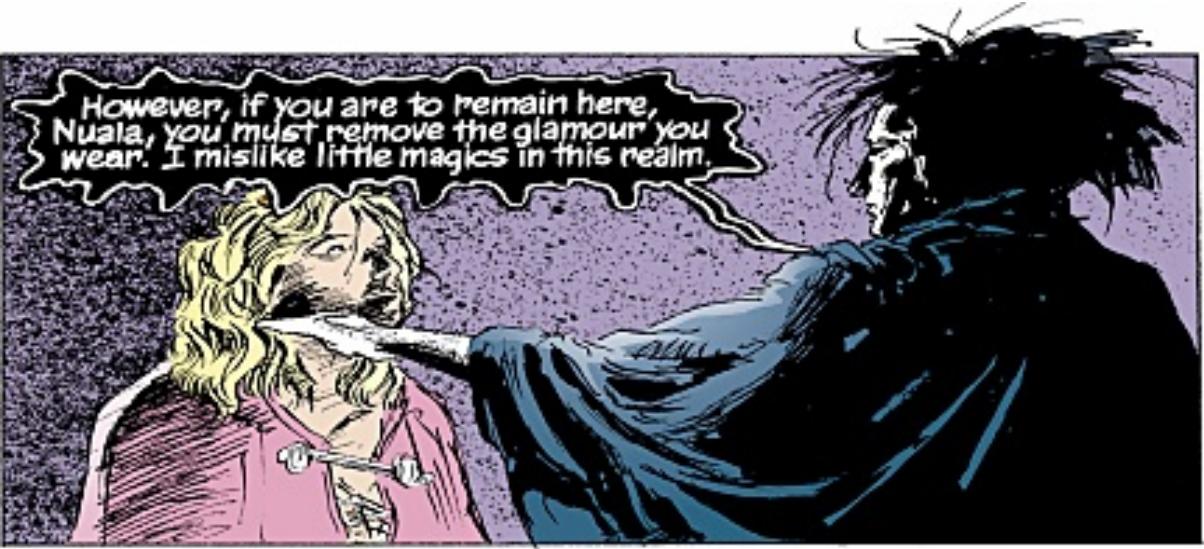
I WAS UNWORTHY OF YOUR HOSPITALITY, DREAMWEAVER. BUT I HUMBLY THANK YOU, NONTHELESS.











I'VE CHOSEN THE SECOND  
OF THE CHOICES YOU  
GAVE ME. IT SEEMS...  
EASIEST, SOMEHOW.

NOW, Nada?  
Will you not  
wait?

NO.

I'M NOT AFRAID,  
MY LOVE. ISN'T THAT  
STRANGE? I THOUGHT  
I'D BE AFRAID, AND  
I'M NOT...

WHAT DO  
I DO?

Just take  
my hand,  
Nada.

I SPENT TEN THOUSAND  
YEARS IN HELL, KAI'KUL.  
I BLAMED YOU FOR  
MY PAIN...

COULD I HAVE  
LEFT? COULD I  
HAVE WALKED AWAY  
FROM THAT?

Perhaps.

WILL YOU  
REMEMBER ME, DO  
YOU THINK?

BUT WILL I  
KNOW THAT, KAI'KUL  
DREAMLORD? WILL I STILL  
REMEMBER THAT YOU  
CARE?

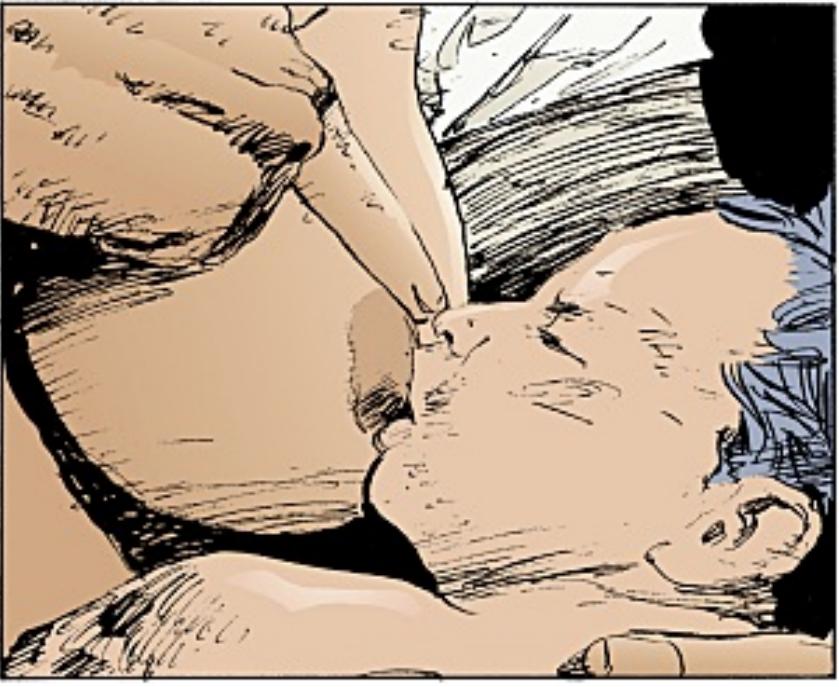
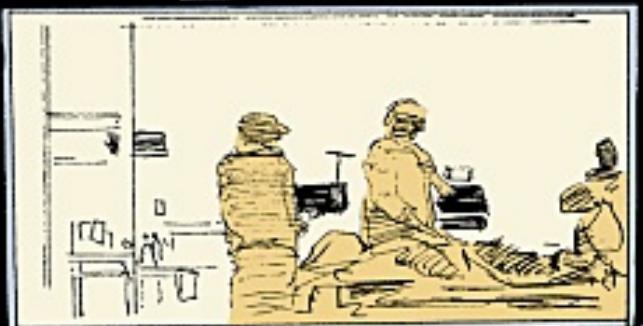
I will always  
care for you,  
Nada.

No. But I  
shall know,  
Nada.

I shall know.

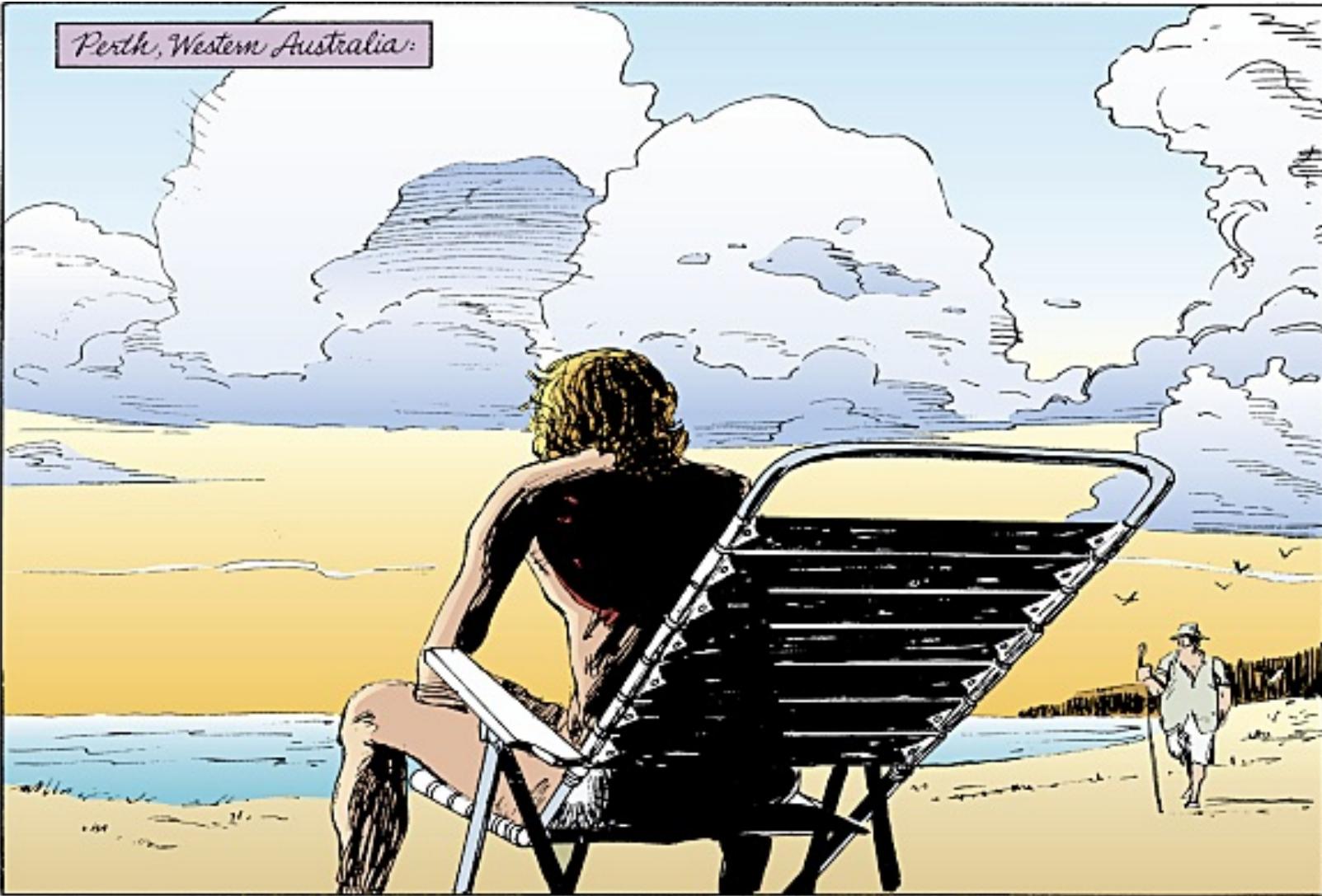


Hong Kong :





Perth, Western Australia:



Y'KNOW, I'VE SEEN  
YOU BEFORE, MATE. DOWN  
ON THE BEACH. SLEEPING  
ROUGH, ARE WE?

THERE ARE  
WORSE  
PLACES.

I SUPPOSE  
THAT WE ARE.

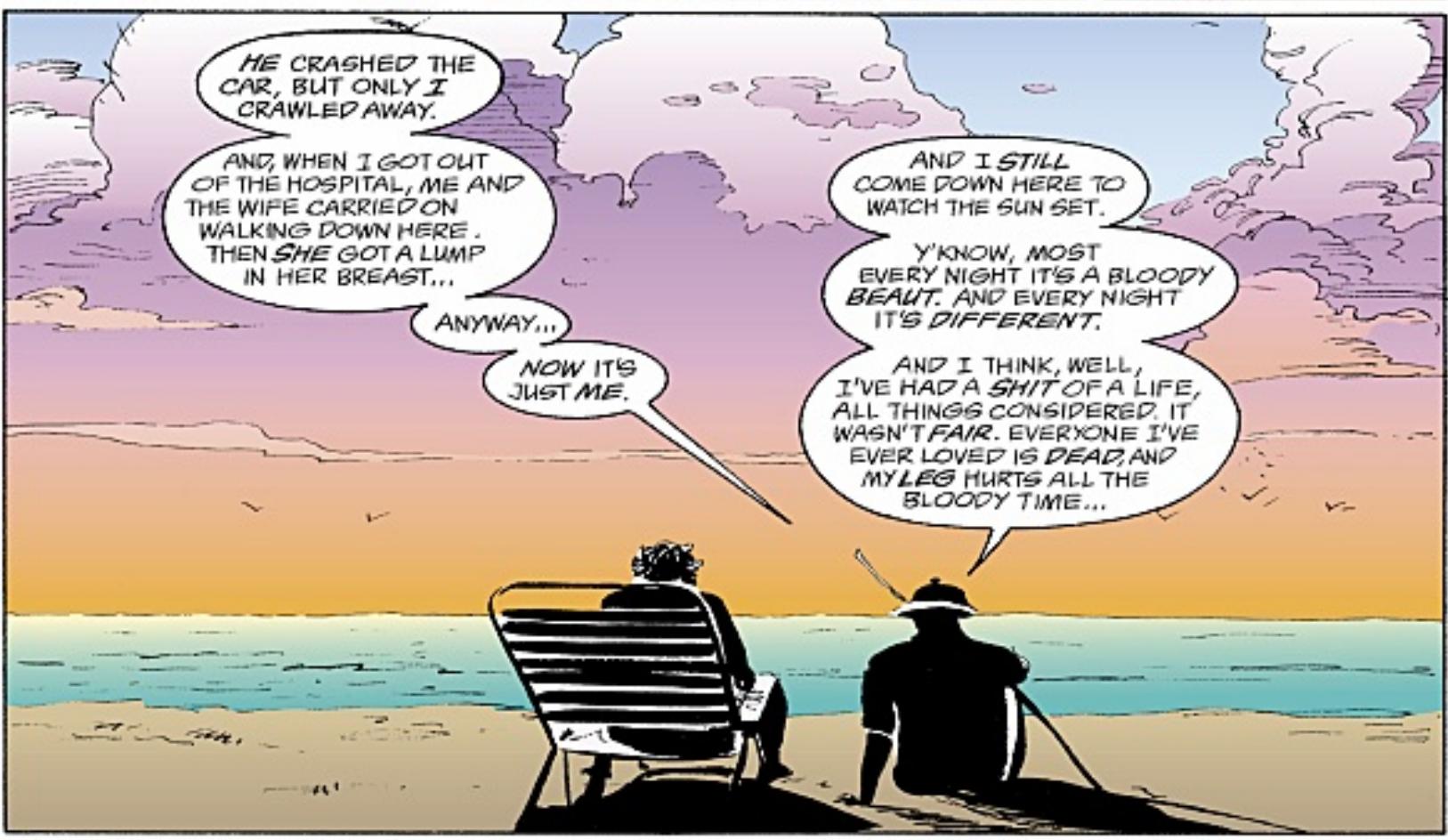
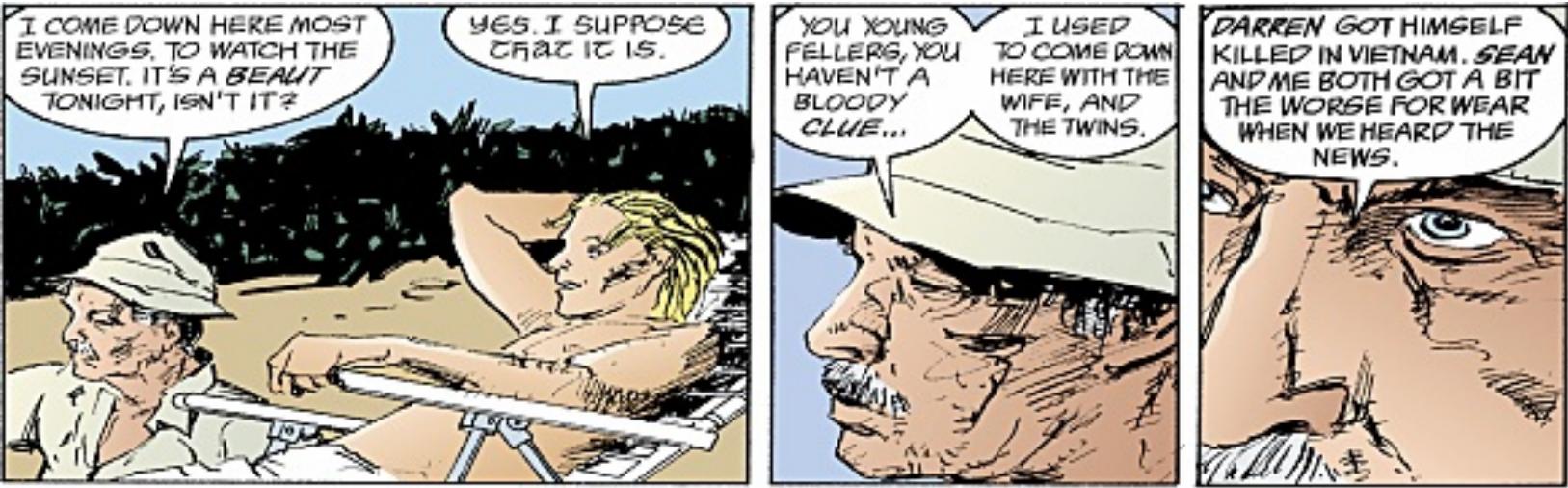
IT CAN GETS A  
A BIT WARM IN THE DAYTIME,  
BUT CRACK A TUBE, OR GO  
FOR A DIP, AND YOU'RE  
RIGHT AS RAIN.

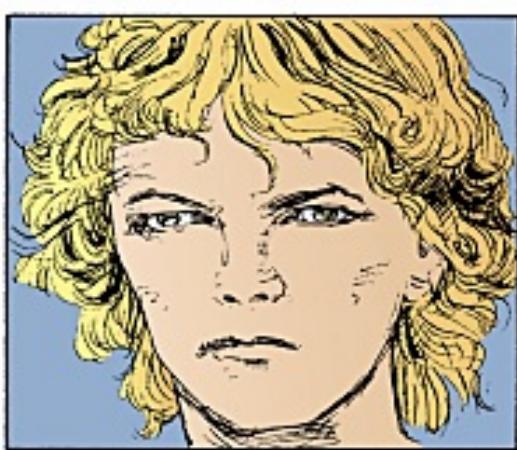
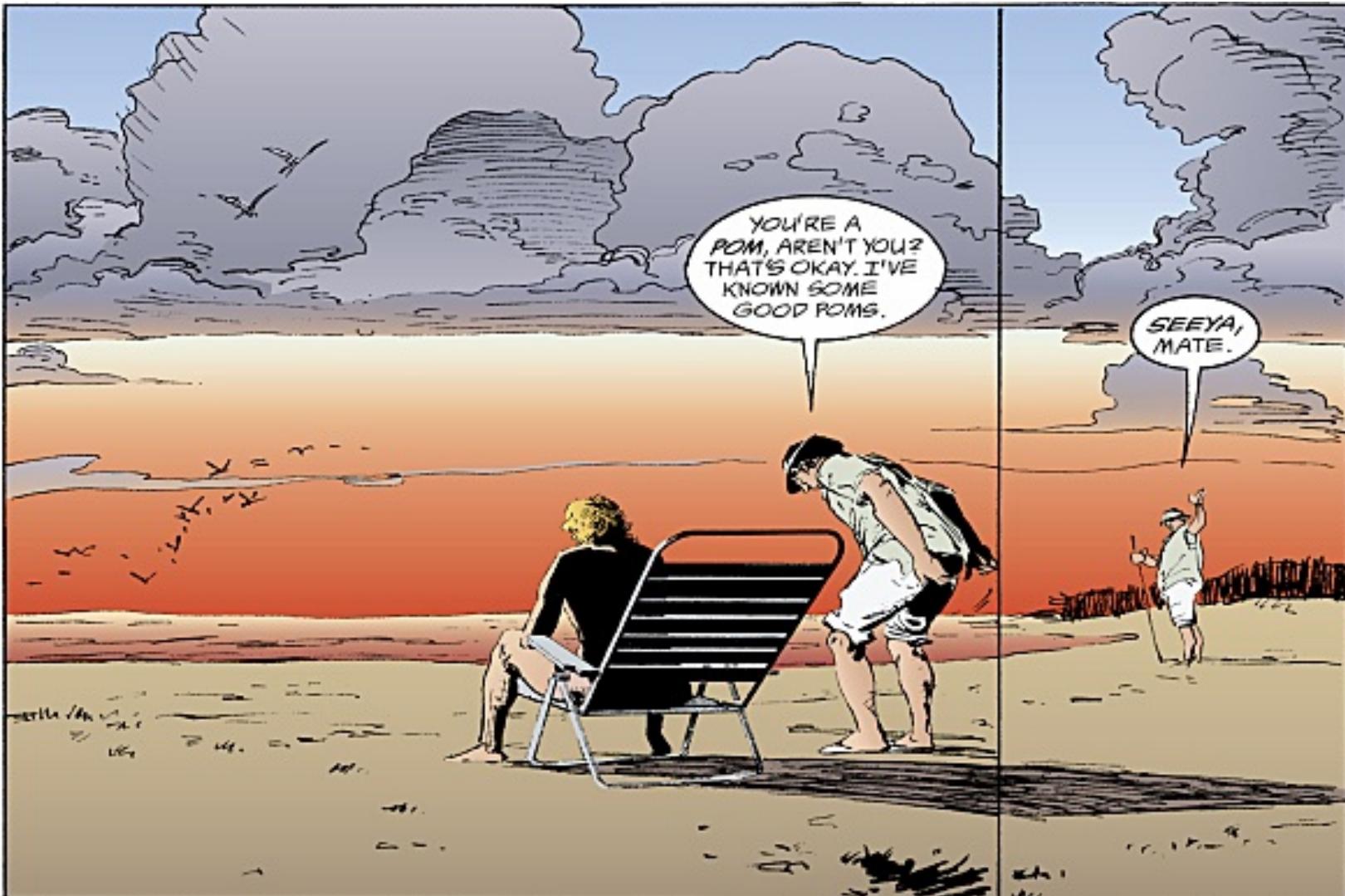
I DON'T  
COME DOWN  
HERE MUCH  
IN THE DAY,  
ME.

BEACHES ARE FOR  
THE YOUNGSTERS, IN THE  
DAYTIME. Y'KNOW, STARIN'  
AT ALL THE YOUNG SHEILAS  
WITH NOTHING TO COVER  
THEIR NEVER-YOU-MINDS.

REALLY.  
DO  
GO  
ON.

I'LL TELL YOU  
THIS FOR FREE, ANY  
KID WHO TRIED BATH-  
ING TOPLESS 'ROUND  
HERE TWENTY YEARS  
AGO, WELL, WE'D  
SAID SHE WAS NO  
BETTER THAN  
SHE SHOULD  
BE.





Hell:

"This is Hell. Smell the reek of burning fat in the air. Listen to the screams and the whimpers and the moans. Feel the pain..."

"I never imagined it would be like this. Our realm of reflection. Our realm of shadow. Our little realm of pain..."

"And we are kings. Or queens."

"Or...angels."

I am only here because of you...

And what are you thinking? Eh, Duma? Are you contemplating our new domain, as once you contemplated the meaning of silence, or the perfection of the name?

But perhaps it's a blessing. Perhaps it's an opportunity to do good. Has that occurred to you?

In this place every tiny act of goodness, of self-sacrifice, or love, is magnified, and becomes... important.

There is so much that we can do for them.

So much...



We will hurt you.  
And we are not sorry.

But we do not  
do it to punish you.  
We do it to redeem  
you.

Because afterward,  
you'll be a better person...



BUT...  
YOU DON'T  
UNDERSTAND...



THAT MAKES  
IT WORSE.

THAT MAKES IT  
SO MUCH WORSE...

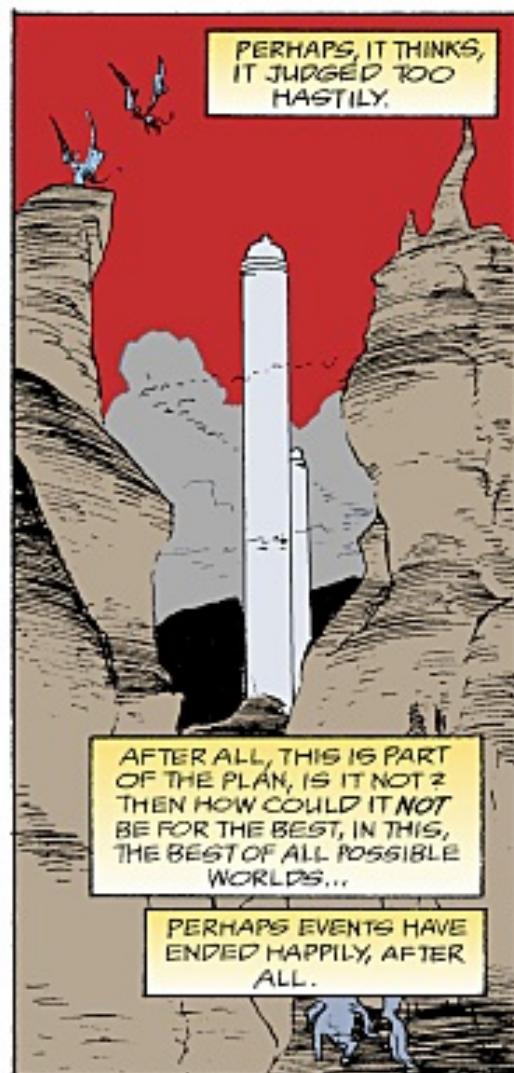


AND THE ANGEL REMIEL ASCENDS  
INTO THE SKY OF THE UNDERWORLD,  
CONFIDENT THAT IT HAS BEGIN  
TO CHANGE THINGS. TO SUBSTI-  
TUTE REDEMPTION FOR  
DAMNATION, CORRECTION FOR  
DESPAIR...

BIT BY BIT, A LITTLE AT A TIME. THE BILLIONS  
OF SOULS, THE MILLIONS OF DEMONS...



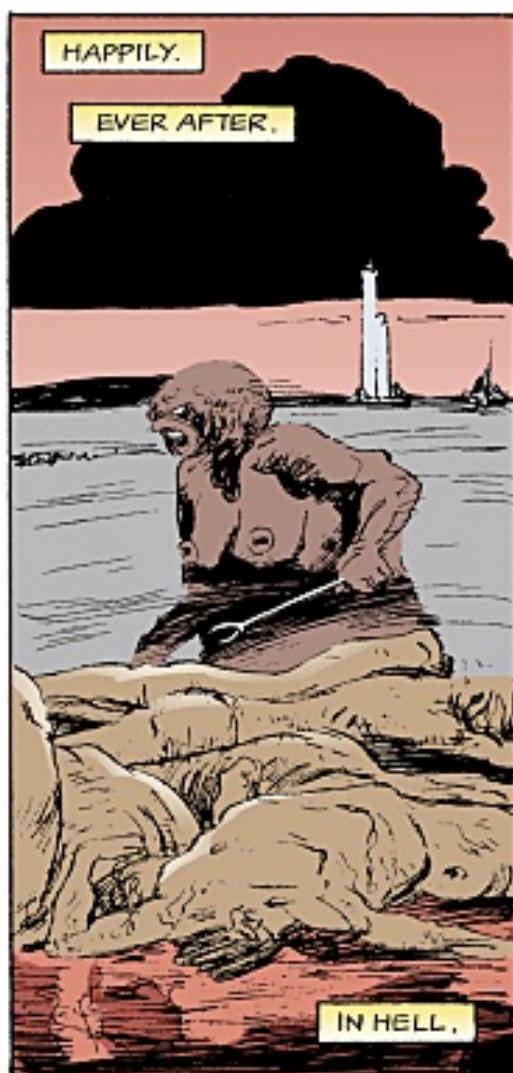
REMIEL HEARS  
THE SCREAMS,  
AND IT SMILES.



PERHAPS, IT THINKS,  
IT JUDGED TOO  
HASTILY.

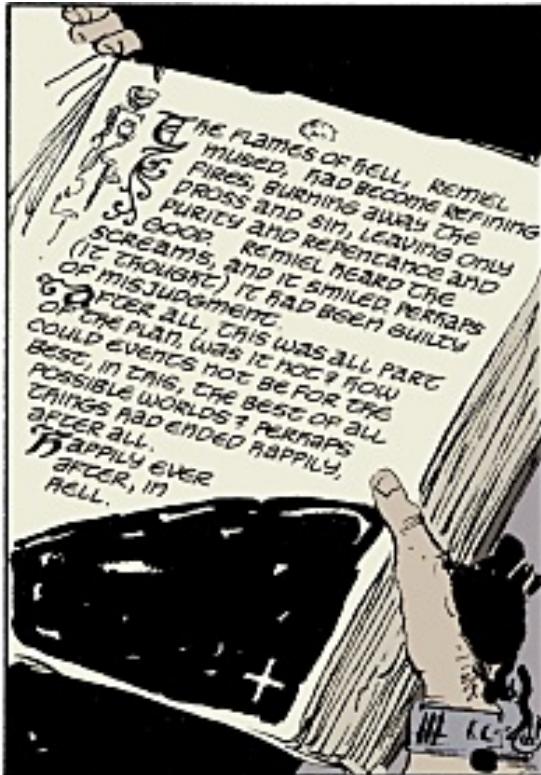
AFTER ALL, THIS IS PART  
OF THE PLAN, IS IT NOT?  
THEN HOW COULD IT NOT  
BE FOR THE BEST, IN THIS,  
THE BEST OF ALL POSSIBLE  
WORLDS...

PERHAPS EVENTS HAVE  
ENDED HAPPILY, AFTER  
ALL.



HAPPILY.  
EVER AFTER.

IN HELL.



October knew, of course, that the action of turning a page, of ending a chapter or of shutting a book, did not end a tale.

Having admitted that, he would also avow that happy endings were never difficult to find: "It is simply a matter," he explained to April, "of finding a sunny place in a garden, where the light is golden and the grass is soft; somewhere to rest, to stop reading, and to be content."

--from The Man Who Was October by G. K. Chesterton / Library of Dreams

# *b i o g r a p h i e s*



## KELLEY JONES

*penciller  
episodes 1,2,3,5,6*

When he was born, in 1802, Kelley Jones had every appearance of being in his mid-nineties. He astonished physicians by growing younger with each year that passed. This photograph, taken in his seventieth year, appears to be that of a man in his twenties. He died as an infant in 1888, killed in a nursery fire. A recording of his voice reciting Keats's 'To Autumn' was discovered on the telephone answering machine of a taxi company in Toronto in 1979, but was erased by a temporary secretary who failed to understand its worth.

## NEIL GAIMAN

*writer*

To set certain popular misconceptions to rest once and for all:

- 1) He was not found wandering the sewers of London as a child during the winter of 1864, unable to say anything more than "Powerful big rats, gentlemen."
- 2) He was never exhibited in public houses to the curious; only briefly in July, 1865, to selected gentlemen of standing from the scientific and literary community.
- 3) He did not have a vestigial tail.
- 4) He did indeed have what most people would commonly understand as "eyes."
- 5) He was not actually the pilot of the Zeppelin, although he did disappear for good following the explosion.
- 6) There is quite obviously no "underground kingdom beneath London inhabited by huge, intelligent rodents." And even if there were, any suggestion of Neil's involvement in the mazy territorial negotiations between Londons Above and Below can be considered a joke, and in poor taste at that.
- 7) He was afraid of neither mirrors nor street conjurers.
- 8) There were no tooth-marks on the bones.



**by NEIL GAIMAN**



## P. CRAIG RUSSELL

*inker  
episode 3*

The details of his black life and dubious death are written in certain books, and the foolish and the curious may seek them out. Nothing could induce us to elaborate here: by comparison Gilles de Rais was an angel in human form, and de Sade a weak and simpering child. The world is well rid of him—if rid of him it truly is.



## MIKE DRINGENBERG

*penciller  
episodes 0,oo*

"... all of the people were coming and I said to them and I said, there's no hope for me here, none of them have faces, always walking, and I never saw any of them before, and they keep touching me in the night, always in the night, sometimes when the rain comes, and no-one sees them but me, grey eyes maybe screaming, and I said to them, and I said to them . . ."



## MATT WAGNER

*penciller  
episode 4*

Matt Wagner was the only man to be elected posthumously to the United States Senate. He served three terms before being narrowly defeated by a living candidate in 1874, whereupon he retired from public life. Until recently his jawbone was on display in the Smithsonian Institution.

## GEORGE PRATT

*inker*

episodes 5,oo

Documented cases of spontaneous human combustion are rare; however, in all the annals of this phenomenon, only George Pratt was able to combust on cue. As a thaumaturgic Music Hall 'turn,' Mister Pratt would ignite on stage, in front of a paying audience, whereupon Millicent Wirth, his lover and assistant, would extinguish the blaze with a patent liquid of Pratt's own invention. This photograph was taken of 'Combustible George' the afternoon before his final performance, in Boston, in 1901. 'Miss Millie's' subsequent trial and acquittal was a *cause célèbre* for many weeks. Fifty years later she filled a bathtub with gasoline and climbed into it, naked, holding a lighted taper.



## MALCOLM JONES III

*inker*

episodes 0,1,2

This photograph of one of Malcolm Jones's three homunculi was originally published in the *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Knowledge*. Measuring no more than six inches in height, these tiny creatures were, it is said, capable of human speech, and were wholly subordinate to Jones's will. None of them survived Jones by more than a week, disintegrating to dried blood, rose petals and ashes.



## DICK GIORDANO

*inker*

episode 6

Impresario, shipping magnate, oil baron, surgeon, and philanthropist. One Thursday morning in November, 1893, Giordano took his usual table at the Savoy Hotel and requested the waiter bring him 'a newspaper, a bootjack, the Bible, a pint of vinegar, a paper of pins, and some barley sugar.' Upon the waiter's refusal to comply with this extraordinary request, Giordano's face dissolved into silent tears. "Aye, me, sir," he said, "you have condemned an honest man to his doom." Thereupon he hailed a cab, and was heard to tell the driver to take him to his office, a journey of no more than fifteen minutes. He was, of course, never seen again, although his tiepin was cut from the stomach of a twenty-five pound sturgeon caught in the Black Sea on the first day of World War One.

# DANIEL VOZZO

colourist

episodes 2,3,4,5,6,∞

Professor Vozzo's handbook, *Ten Thousand Important Questions Resolved for the Modern Gentleman*, issued in monthly parts from October 1889 on, contained essays on such vital subjects as: "Is dancing, as usually conducted, compatible with a high standard of morality?" "Was the purchase of Alaska by this government wise?" "Does the study of physical sciences militate against religious belief?" "Has our government a right to disfranchise the polygamists of Utah?"

Not satisfied with resolving these questions, and many others of equal import, by 1894 he began to address such issues as: "Is there a purpose to existence?" and "What is the composition of the Philosopher's Stone?"

At this time Vozzo began to complain of being followed by women with the faces of animals. All copies of the latter installments of his handbook were bought up by an anonymous cartel, and destroyed, and shortly thereafter Vozzo was removed to a private asylum. He is still there, and he has not aged, although on the advice of a long-dead physician his tongue was surgically removed, and he is permitted no writing materials.

## STEVE OLIFF

colourist

episodes 0,1

Best known for his revolutionary embalming techniques. Upon his death in 1897 his collection of perfectly preserved schoolchildren was donated to the Royal College of Surgeons. It may be inspected by prior appointment, although several of the older boys were damaged by falling masonry during the Blitz, and have been removed from the permanent exhibition.



## TODD KLEIN

letterer

Was never convicted of any capital crime, for reasons that still remain shrouded in mystery.



## ALISA KWITNEY

*assistant editor*

According to an old New York folk-tale, Alisa Kwitney appears in a bathroom mirror to people in the final stages of *delirium tremens*, and pleads with them to mend their ways. In another version of the same story she can be induced (by threatening to break the mirror) to reveal winning lottery ticket numbers.



## KAREN BERGER

*editor*

They say she done them all of them in. They say she done it with an axe.



## TOM PEYER

*assistant editor*

Notorious for his cross-dressing during a period when society frowned on such hobbies, Peyer (the illegitimate son of Francis Egerton, the Eighth Earl of Bridgewater and self-styled Prince of the Holy Roman Empire), was arrested at the outbreak of the Crimean War for singing an obscene ballad in a public place while dressed as a washerwoman. The ballad, in the *Parlarie Argot*, went as follows:

*Nanti dinarly; the omee of the khazi  
Says due bione peroney, manjaree on the cross.  
We'll all have to scarper the latty in the morning  
Before the bona omee of the khazi shakes his doss.*

DAVE MCKEAN

*covers and design*



This photograph, found in the Hanussen collection, appears at a hasty first glance to be a portrait of a bearded man in a hat, his coat glittering with five brass buttons. A second, and more careful look reveals that this is simply an illusion: we are looking from above at a snowy landscape: the 'coat' is a river, the 'buttons' stepping stones, the 'face' an island, and a fallen tree, the 'hat' a small body of water in the distance. Photographic illusions of this kind were popular with our forefathers; to our more sophisticated eyes, however, the deception is transparent, and once we see it for what it is, we are unable to see the face that once we thought we saw. The seagull in the foreground is extremely blurred, due to the lengthy exposures Victorian photography demanded.

## HARLAN ELLISON

*introduction*

Harlan Ellison is the author of fifty-eight books and is listed in the *Swedish National Encyclopedia*.



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SON OF ULTRON

"THIS FAN...  
THIS MONSTER!"

