



NUMBER 1
JAN 1989
NEW FORMAT

THE SANDMAN™

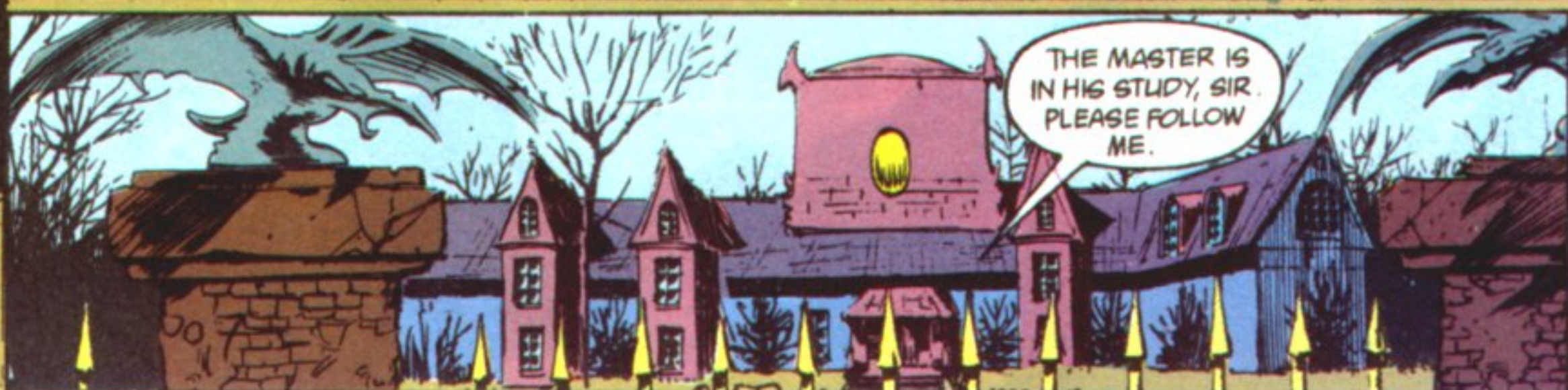
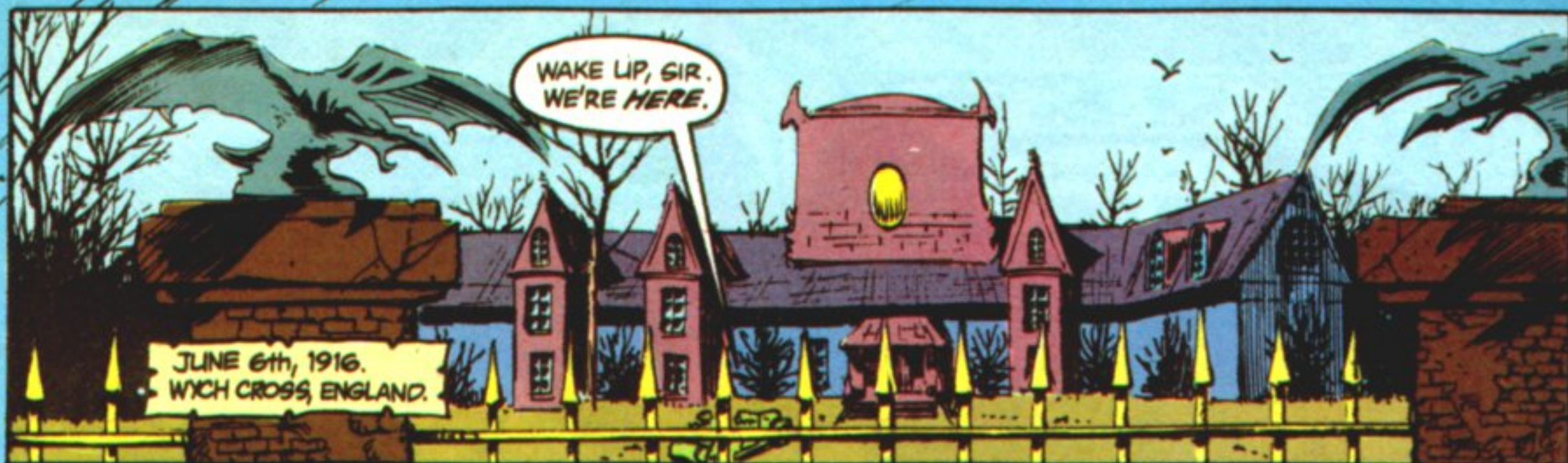
\$2.00 US
\$2.50 CAN
1.20 UK

SUGGESTED
FOR MATURE
READERS

MASTER • of • DREAMS



GAIMAN • KIETH • DRINGENBERG





DR. HATHAWAY!
WHAT AN UNEXPECTED
PLEASURE!

PLEASE TAKE
A SEAT.

COMPTON,
SOME TEA FOR
OUR GUEST.

SO. I TAKE IT
THAT YOU HAVE...
RECONSIDERED?

AFTER OUR
MEETING AT THE
MUSEUM... I--I
KNOW WHAT I
SAID, BUT...

MY SON, EDMUND.
I GOT A TELEGRAM
THIS MORNING. HIS
DESTROYER WAS
SUNK LAST WEEK.
OFF JUTLAND.

"HE'S DEAD."

I BROUGHT YOU
THE BOOK. I HAD TO. IF
WHAT YOU WERE TELLING
ME WAS TRUE... AND IT IS
TRUE, ISN'T IT?

ABOUT
DEATH?

QUITE TRUE,
DR. HATHAWAY.

THE MAGDALENE GRIMOIRE
WAS ALL THAT THE ORDER
NEEDED. WE CAN HOLD THE
CEREMONY AT THE NEXT
FULL MOON...

AND THEN... NO
ONE NEED EVER
DIE AGAIN.

JUNE 10TH, 1916.

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



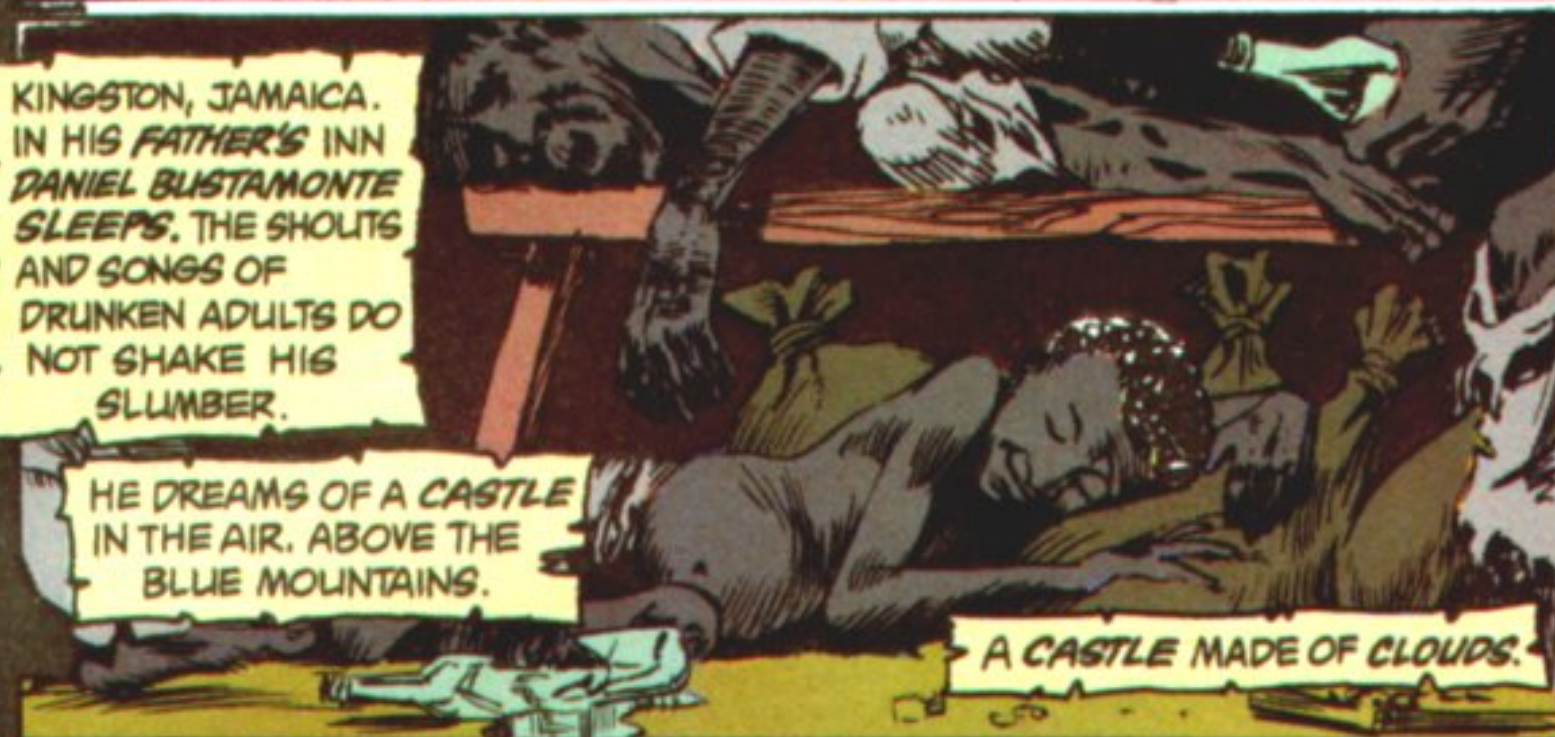
...SAID TWEEDLEDUM, "WHEN YOU'RE ONLY ONE OF THE THINGS IN HIS DREAM.

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

SHE KNOWS IT IS ONLY MEANT TO ENTERTAIN HER.

IT TERRIFIES HER.

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



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

A CASTLE MADE OF CLOUDS.

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



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

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



SHE MUTTERS AND WHIMPERS; LOST IN A WORLD BEYOND HER UNDERSTANDING, LUNITY DREAMS.

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



AND OF DEATH, OF COURSE.

ESPECIALLY DEATH.

IT'S MIDNIGHT.
IT'S TIME.



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

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

YES,
FATHER.

FATHER?

... MAGUS.



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

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

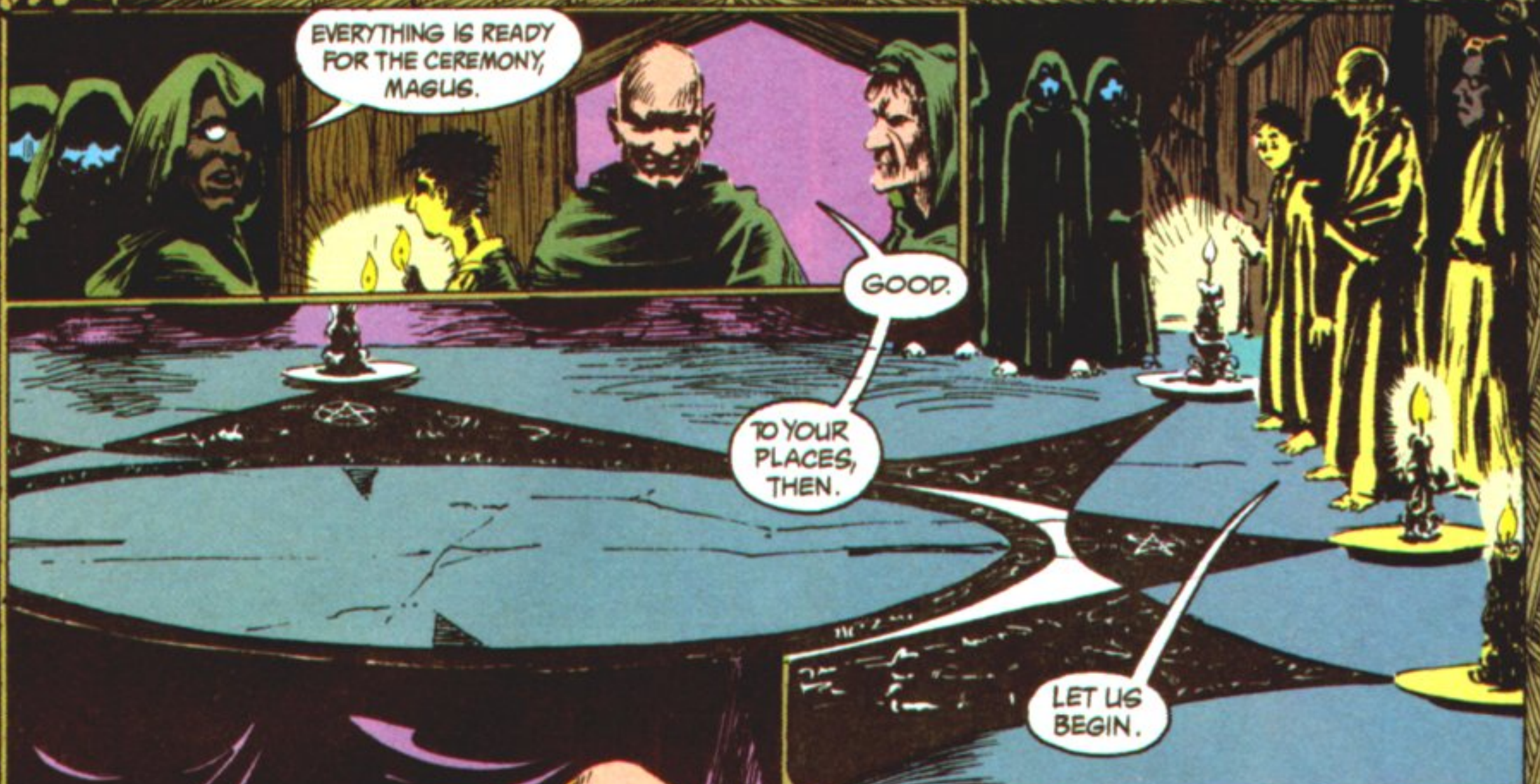
AND I HAVE THE
MAGDALENE GRIMOIRE.
POOR PROFESSOR
HATHAWAY... EVEN IF WE
FAIL TONIGHT, MY SON,
HATHAWAY GAVE
US THE BOOK.



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



POOR
OLD FOOL...

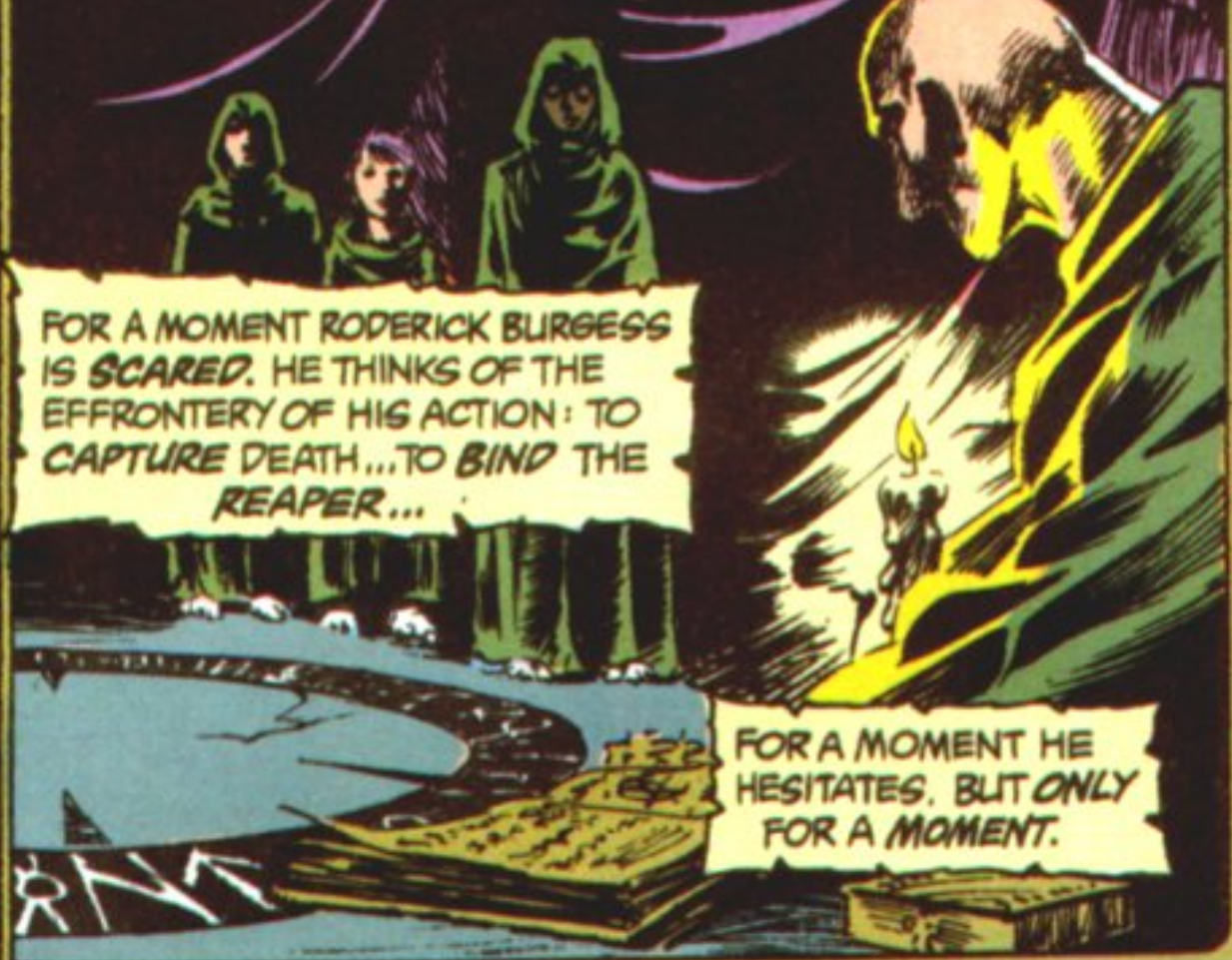


EVERYTHING IS READY FOR THE CEREMONY, MAGUS.

GOOD.

TO YOUR PLACES, THEN.

LET US BEGIN.



FOR A MOMENT RODERICK BURGESS IS SCARED. HE THINKS OF THE EFFRONTERY OF HIS ACTION: TO CAPTURE DEATH...TO BIND THE REAPER...

FOR A MOMENT HE HESITATES, BUT ONLY FOR A MOMENT.



I GIVE YOU COIN I MADE FROM A STONE.

I GIVE YOU A SONG I STOLE FROM THE DIRT.



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



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



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

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

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

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

COME.

COME.

COME.

COME.

COME.

COME.

COME.

COME.

I *SUMMON* YOU IN THE NAMES
OF THE OLD LORDS.

NAMTAR. ALLATU.
MORAX. NABERIUS.
KLESH. VEPAR.
MAYMON.

WE *SUMMON*.

COME.

COME.

COME.

COME.

COME.

COME.

COME.

COME.

COME.

COME.

ASHEMA-DEVA
CALLS YOU.

MABORYM
CALLS YOU.

HORVENDILE
CALLS YOU.

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

COIN AND
SONG, KNIFE
AND STICK...

"CLAW AND NAME,
BLOOD AND FEATHER."

"HERE IN THE
DARKNESS..."

HERE IN THE
DARKNESS...

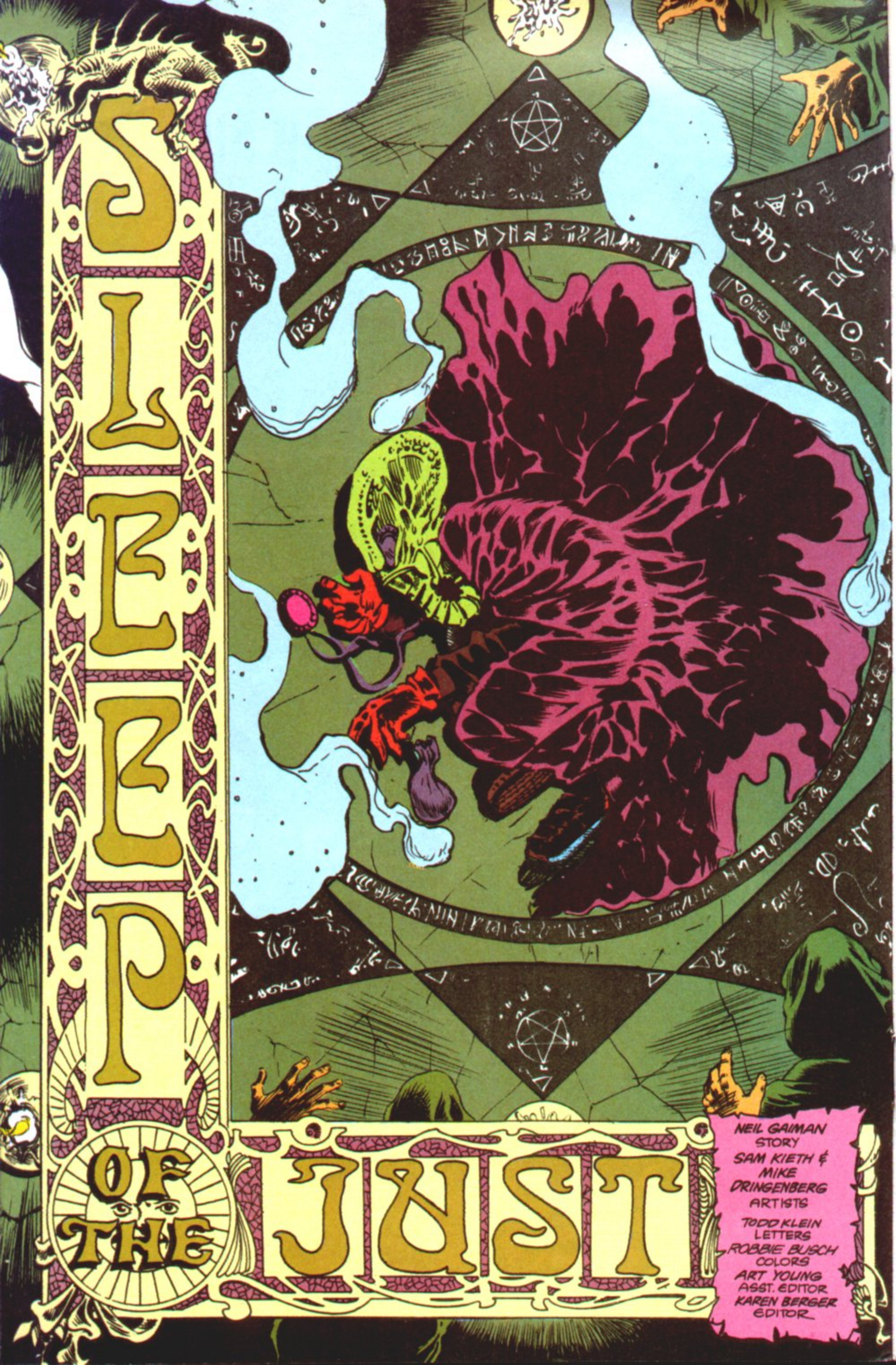
HERE IN THE
DARKNESS...

HERE IN THE
DARKNESS...

HERE IN THE
DARKNESS...

"WE SUMMON YOU,
TOGETHER."

"COME!"



S

I

L

R

P

OF
THE

JUST

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





HER FATHER CARRIED HER TO HER BED.



BUT THIS TIME THE CLOUDS ARE FLIMSY, FRAIL, LESS REAL...

AND THEN THE CLOUDS AREN'T THERE AT ALL.



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



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



THE MORPHINE IS PROVING USELESS.

IT'S SAD.



STEFAN WASSERMAN WENT OVER THE TOP.

LINITY KINKAID FINDS IT HARDER AND HARDER TO STAY AWAKE.

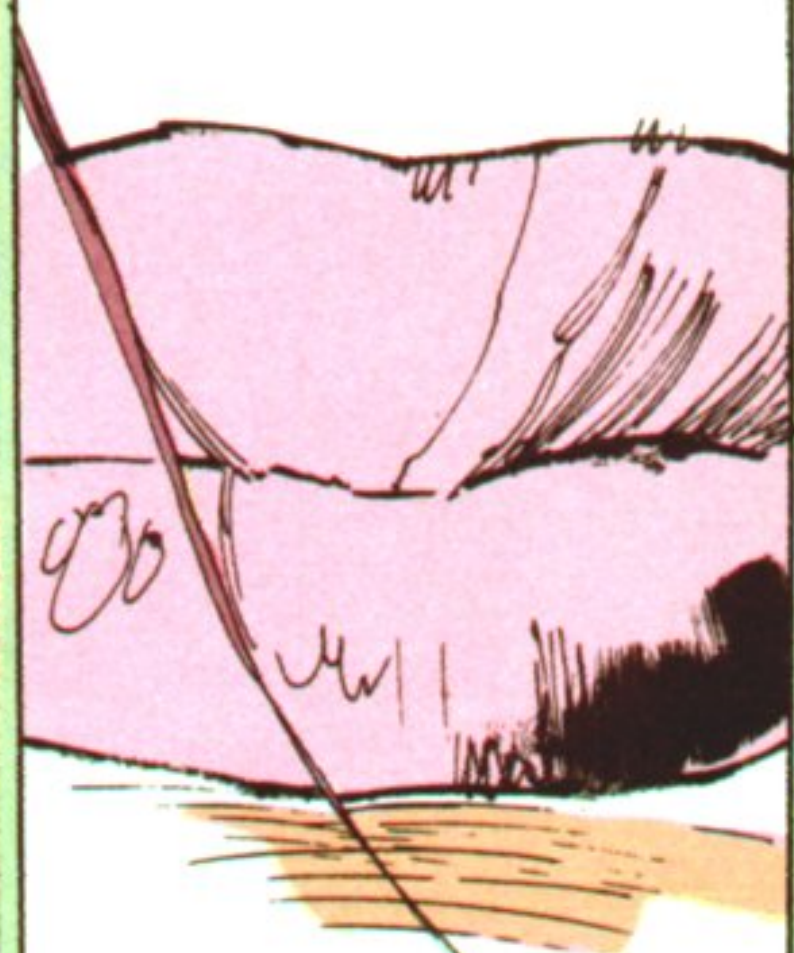


SHE NOW SLEEPS FOR ALMOST TWENTY HOURS A DAY.



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

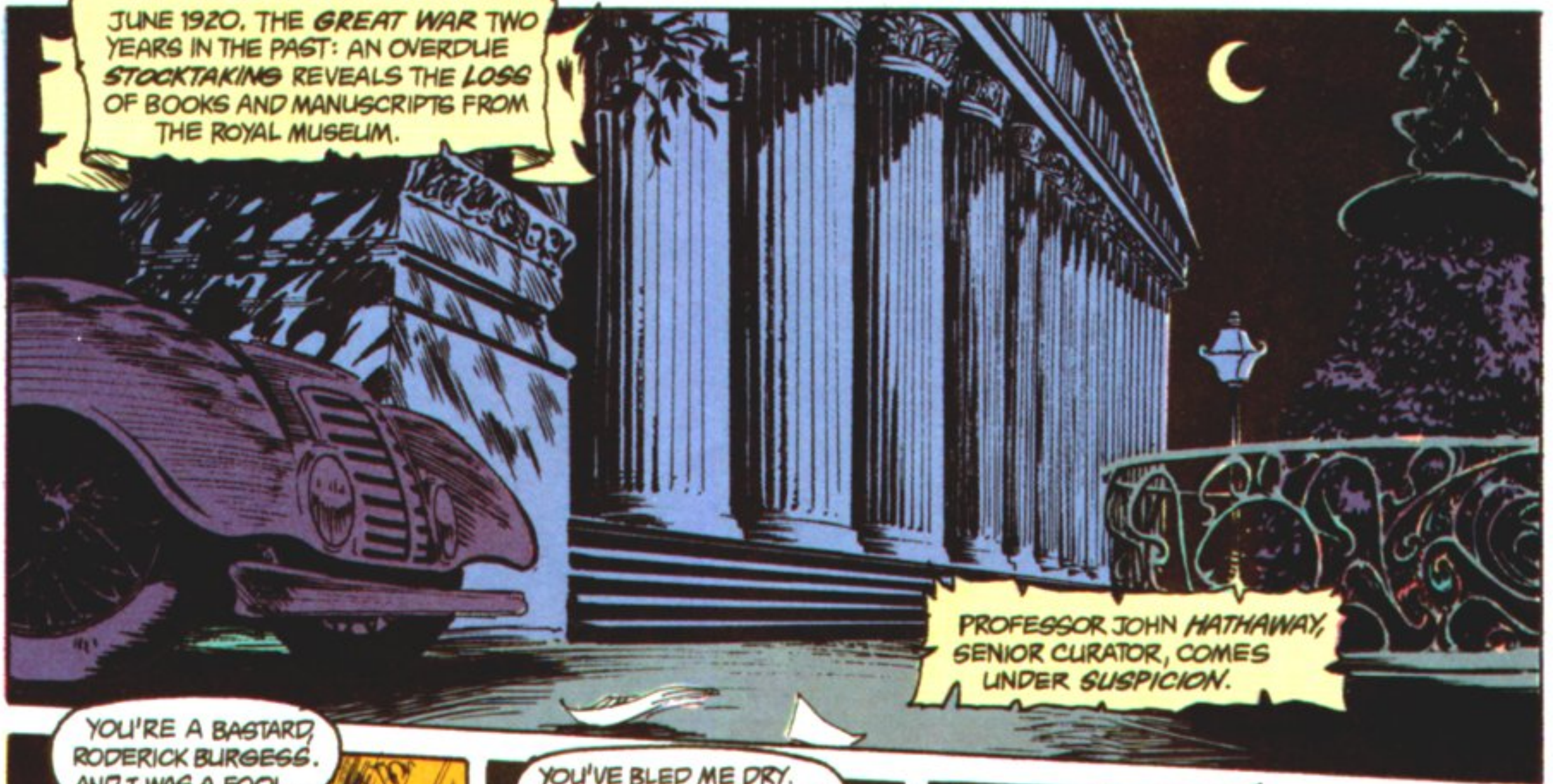
NOW SHE LIES UNMOVING, BREATH SHALLOW AND SILENT, LOST TO THE WORLD.



LINITY SLEEPS.



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



PROFESSOR JOHN HATHAWAY, SENIOR CURATOR, COMES UNDER SUSPICION.

YOU'RE A BASTARD, RODERICK BURGESS. AND I WAS A FOOL.

I WAS A FOOL TO THINK YOU COULD REPLACE EDMUND. I WAS A FOOL TO HAVE GIVEN YOU THAT DAMNED BOOK.



YOU'VE BLED ME DRY. BUT YOU CAN'T BLACKMAIL ME ANY LONGER.

I'VE WRITTEN A SUICIDE NOTE. TO MY SHAME I KNOW TOO MUCH ABOUT YOU. IT'S ALL THERE--ALL I KNOW.



"IF YOU'RE LUCKY THEY'LL ONLY HANG YOU. YOU'LL RUIN NO MORE LIVES.



"I CANNOT BEAR MY LIFE ANY LONGER. DAMN YOU TO HELL, BURGESS; AND, ALAS..."

"...I AM CERTAIN YOU WILL MEET ME THERE."



CONFESSION
I, John Hathaway,
Wishing to die peacefully,
here state that the true
of my in

FOOL.



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

NO SUICIDE NOTE WAS FOUND.

CURATOR'S MYSTERY SUICIDE POLICE BAFFLED

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

NOTHING COULD BE PROVEN.

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

THE DAILY MAIL

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

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

In 1916 Mr. Burgess announced widely in occult circles that he would raise and imprison Death, proving himself as the greatest magician of his day. Whatever the truth of what occurred in Wych Cross in 1916—and it is doubtful anyone will ever know for sure—one thing is certain: it was a significant turning point for Burgess and his Order of Ancient Mysteries. Mr. Burgess' efforts to win himself a reputation in the early years of the century were scorned by the other "serious"



TRAGEDIES OF SLEEPY SICKNESS. WARPED MINDS AND BROKEN BODIES.

Since The Daily Mail published the letter from Mr. E. W. Hore, of Manchester concerning the death of his daughter, who was a victim of sleepy sickness...

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

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

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

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

HE WAS SIXTEEN.

STEFAN WASSERMAN 1902-1918

AUGUST,
1926.

BUGGER AND
BLAST HIM!

I KNOW HE
UNDERSTANDS ME!

TEN YEARS
IN THAT GOLDFISH
BOWL AND HE HASN'T
SAID A WORD!

HE
HATES
US!

UH, FATHER, MAGUS. I'VE
FOUND SOMETHING THAT MAY
CAST SOME LIGHT ON OUR
GUEST. IN THE PAGINARUM
FULVARUM...

HERE, LOOK AT
THIS PICTURE...

HMM, YES,
INDEED.

WHY DO YOU THINK I ORDERED
THAT NONE OF THE GUARDS
WERE TO SLEEP?

HE HAD TO BE
ONE OF THE
ENDLESS... SO
WHICH ONE?

NOT DEATH. WE
KNEW THAT. DESTINY,
THEN? DESIRE?

JUST STARES
AT ME WITH THOSE
CREEPY EYES
OF HIS!



Here is
said the
Kinge of
Drems

DREAM WAS THE ONLY
ONE THAT FITTED THE BILL.
I WAS HOPING YOU'D WORK
IT OUT ON YOUR OWN ONE
DAY, THOUGH. AND YOU
HAVE.

WELL DONE,
ALEX.

I KNOW THAT THE ORDER
WILL BE SAFE IN YOUR HANDS.
IF EVER I FORSAKE THE
MATERIAL PLANE, HEHHH.
EH, MISTER SYKES?

INDUBITABLY,
MAGUS.

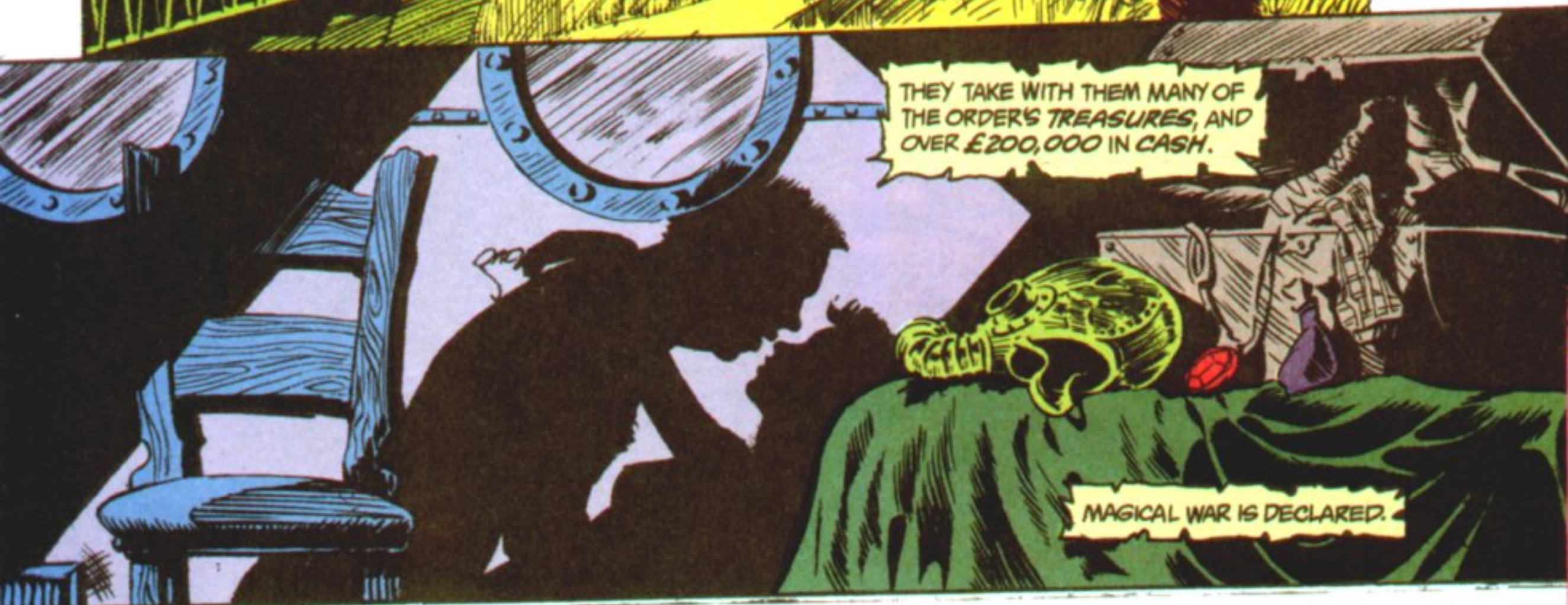


NOVEMBER, 1930.

A SCHISM BRINGS CHAOS TO THE ORDER.

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

...IN COMPANY WITH *ETHEL CRIPPS*, THE MAGUS'S *MISTRESS*



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

MAGICAL WAR IS DECLARED.



SAN FRANCISCO. DECEMBER, 1930.

I BEG PROTECTION, LORD.

PROTECTIONSS COMES DEAR, MORTAL. THE THINGSZ YOU OFFERSS ISSS PALTRY TRIFLESS...

HAVE YOU NOSZSING ELSSSSE...?



PERHAPS THIS HELMET SIRE?

AAAH. YESSSSSSSSS. FOR THISSS I WOULD GIVE YOU WHAT YOU ASKS... SSSZO SSPLENDID...



THISSS AMULET WILL MAKES SS SAFE FROM ANYSSZINGGGS...

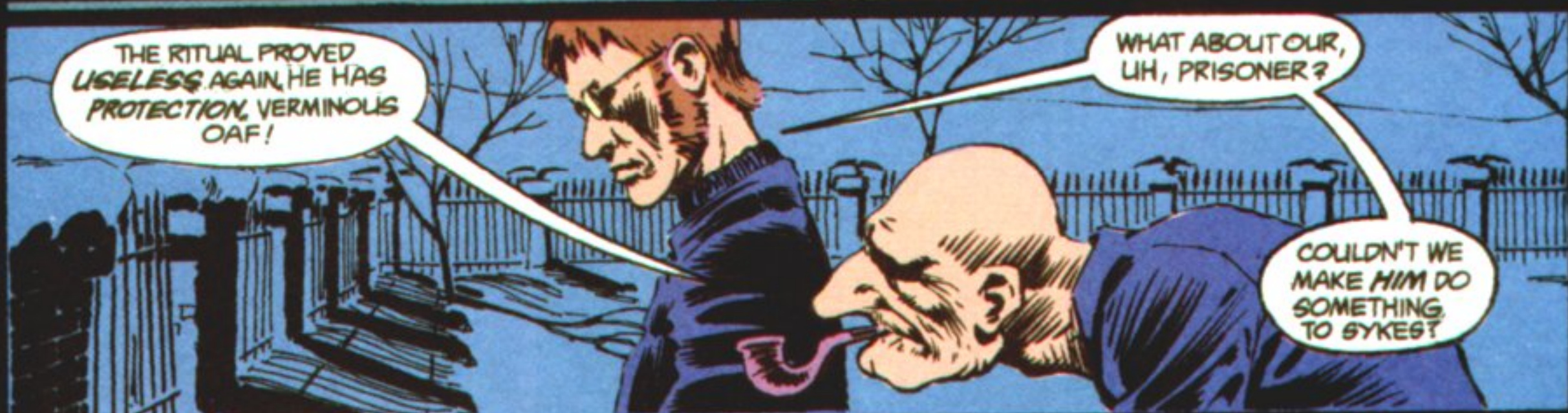


WYCH CROSS, ENGLAND.

PURRRRRRR

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

TRAITOR AND
OATH-BREAKER.



THE RITUAL PROVED
USELESS. AGAIN, HE HAS
PROTECTION, VERMINOUS
OAF!

WHAT ABOUT OUR,
UH, PRISONER?

COULDN'T WE
MAKE HIM DO
SOMETHING
TO SYKEST



WE CAN'T MAKE HIM "DO"
ANYTHING, ALEX. ALL WE CAN
DO IS KEEP HIM THERE,
AND HOPE.

WE COULD TRY
TO RAISE DEATH
AGAIN...?

CRETIN.



"WE CAN GET
SYKES IF WE
JUST KEEP
TRYING."

IN 1936 SHE
WALKED OUT
ON HIM. SHE
TOOK THE
DEMON'S GIFT
WITH HER...

YES!

NO.

OH GOD,
NO.

...WHEN HE STILL POSSESSED
IT, IT WAS WORTH EVERYTHING.

...WHILE HE
OWNED THE
AMULET, IT
KEPT HIM
SAFE...

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

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

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

HIS WIFE AND CHILDREN MISS HIM.

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

THE SCANDAL WAS HUSHED UP.

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

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

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

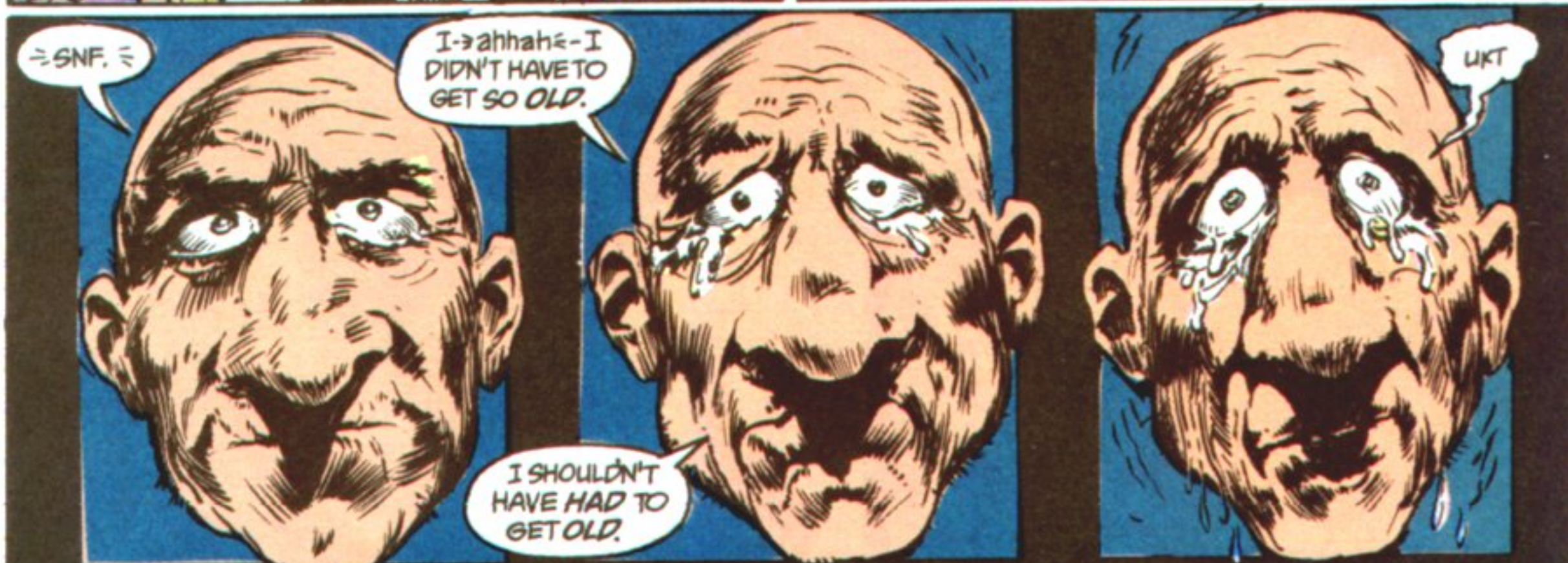
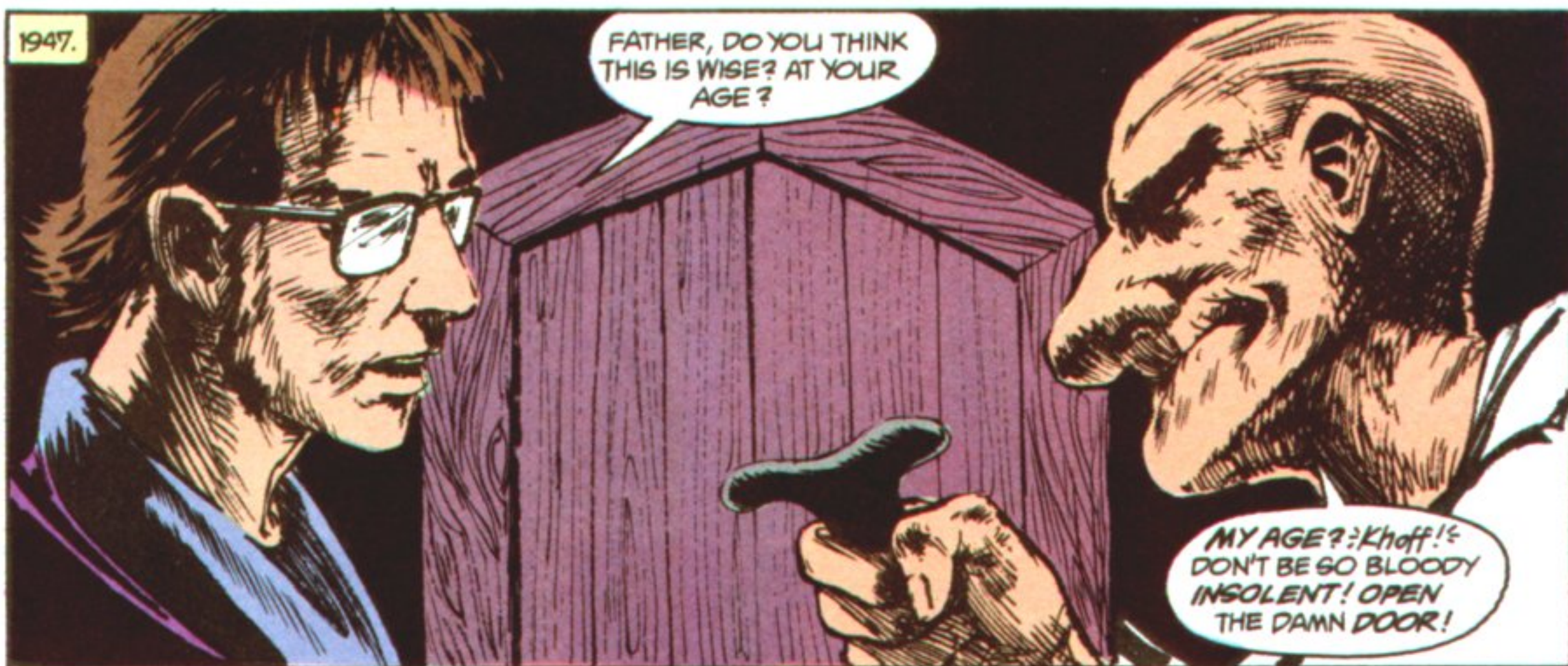
HE DOESN'T DREAM ABOUT THE MAN IN THE STRANGE HELMET ANYMORE. NO MORE BURNING EYES.

EVERYTHING'S ALL RIGHT.

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

THE IDEA CAME TO HIM IN HIS SLEEP.

WESLEY DODDS SLEEPS THE SLEEP OF THE JUST.



1955.



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



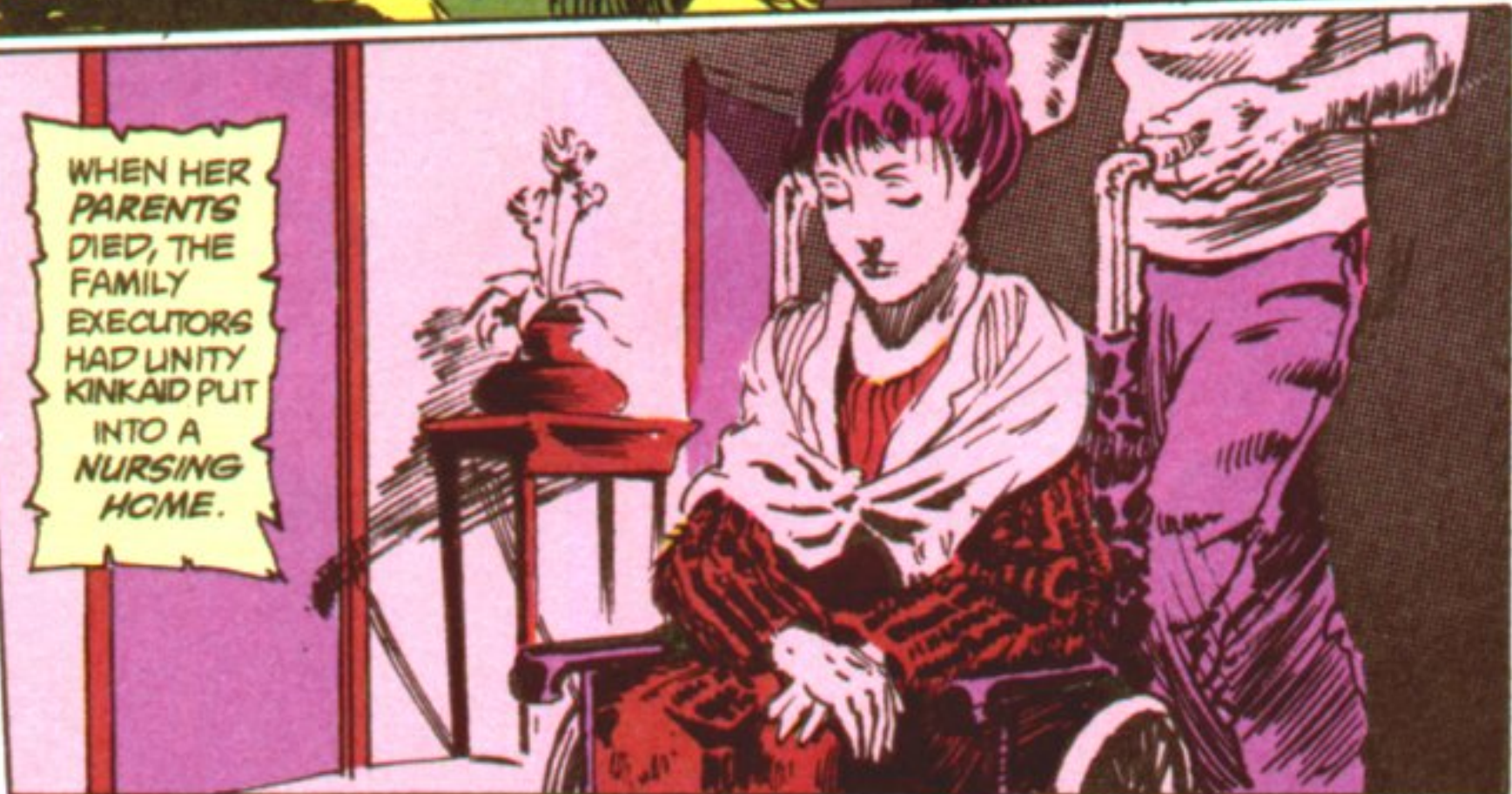
DANIEL BUSTAMONTE IS AWAKE MUCH OF THE TIME. HE DOESN'T SPEAK, THOUGH.

SHE WANTS SOMEONE TO READ HER A STORY.

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



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



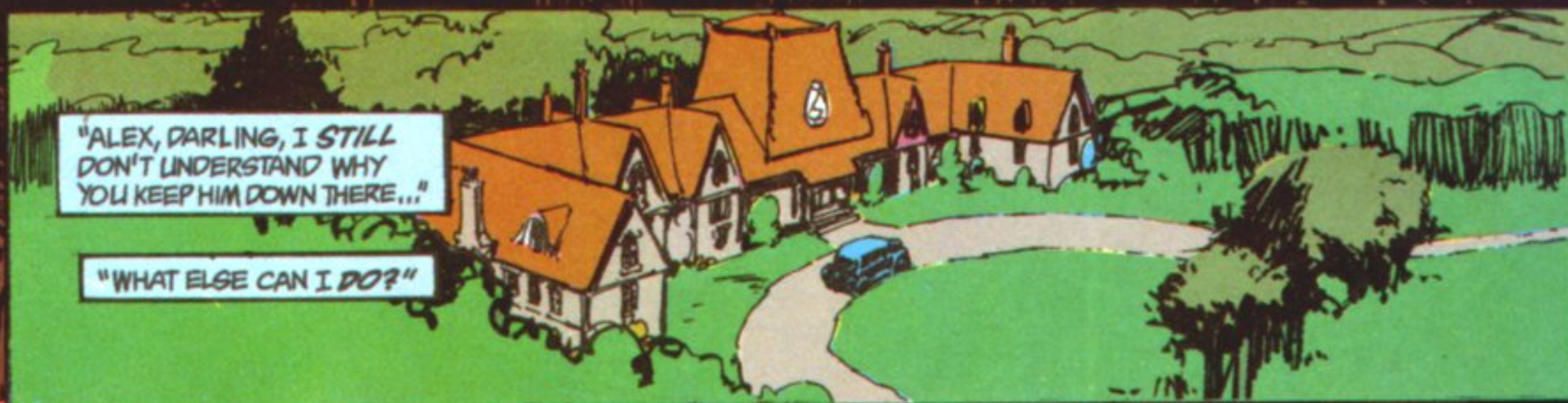
WHEN HER PARENTS DIED, THE FAMILY EXECUTORS HAD UNITY KINKAID PUT INTO A NURSING HOME.



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

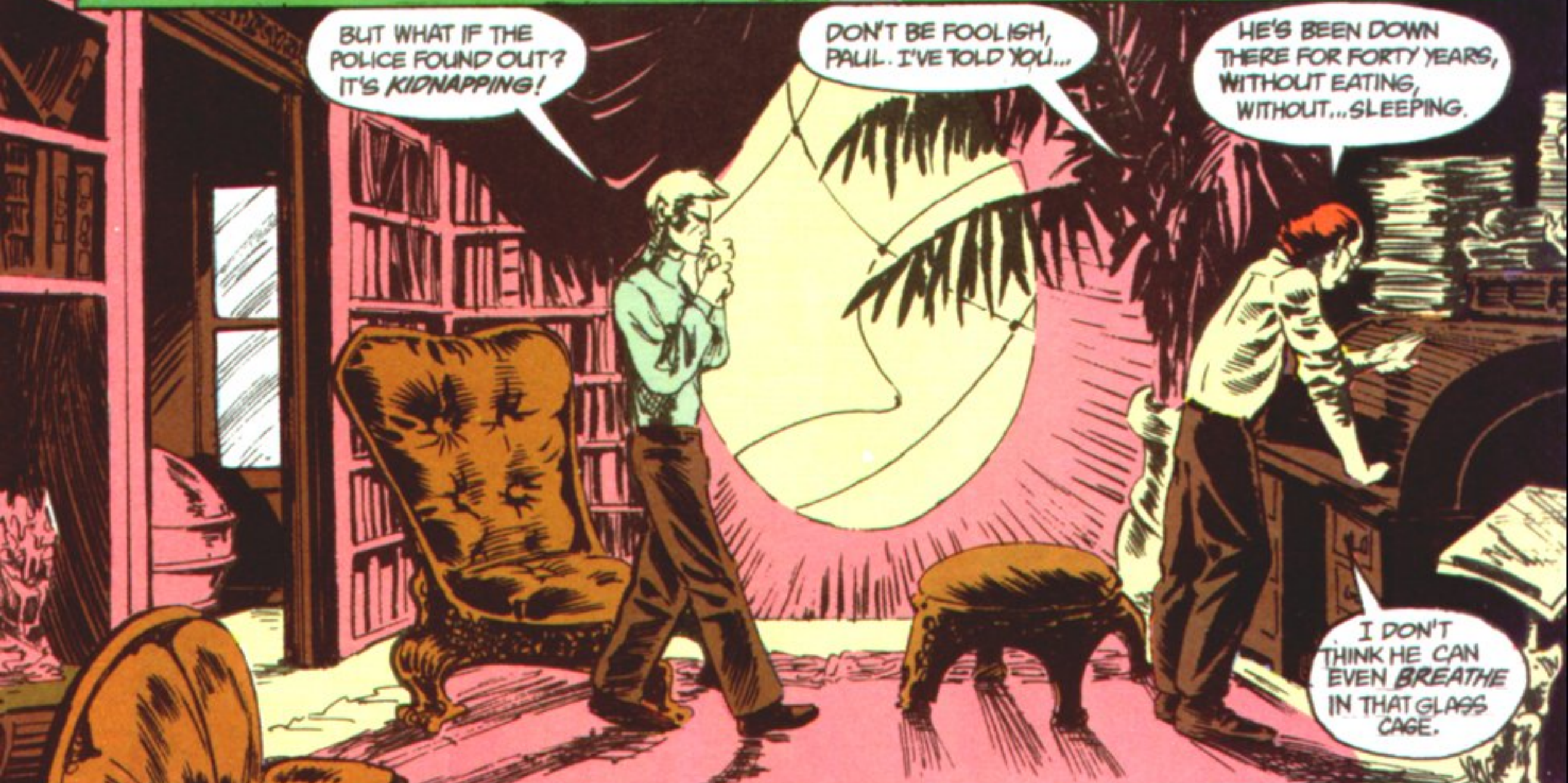
AROUND HER THE ELDERLY WAIT FOR DEATH, AS THEY'D WAIT FOR AN OLD FRIEND.

KILLING TIME.



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

"WHAT ELSE CAN I DO?"

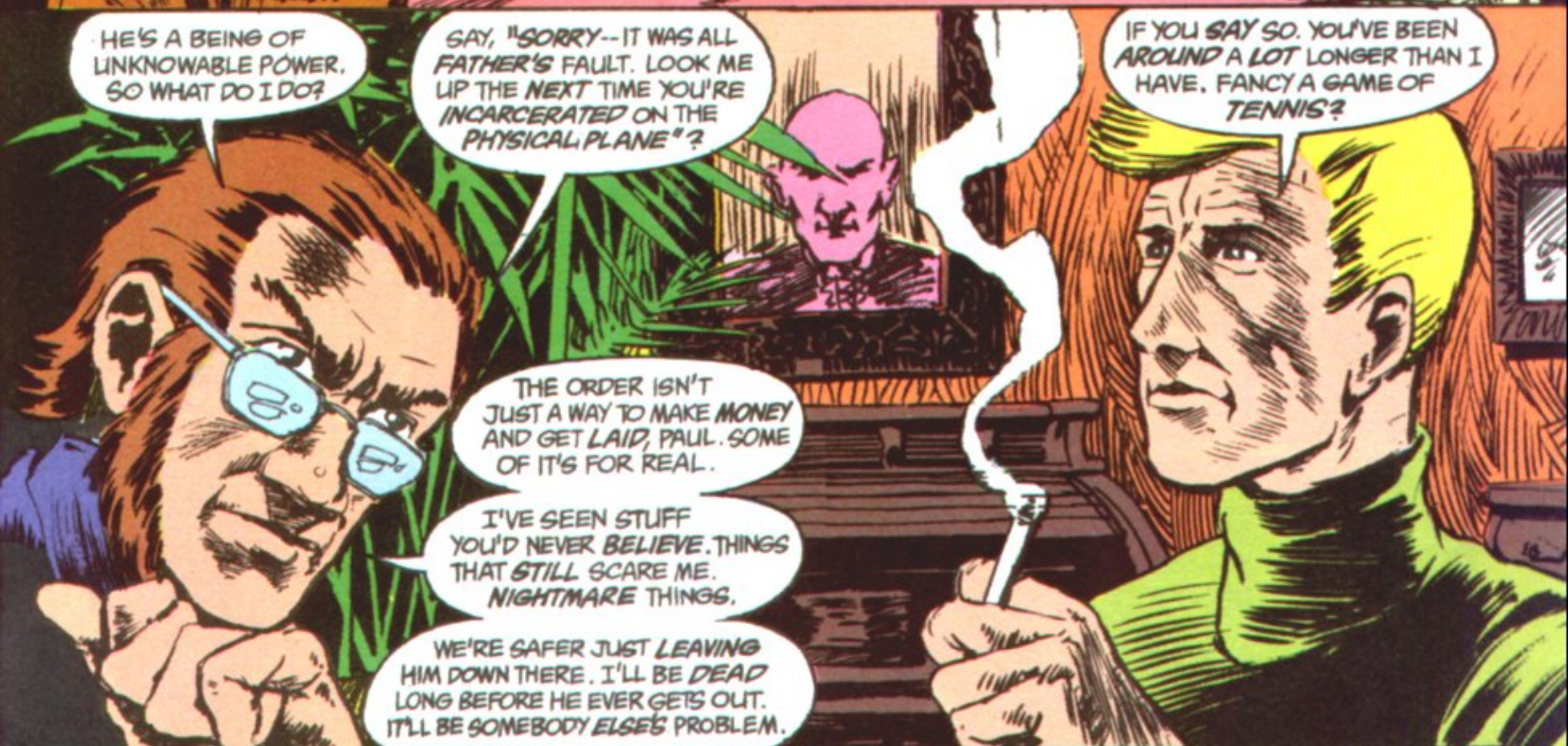


BUT WHAT IF THE POLICE FOUND OUT? IT'S KIDNAPPING!

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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



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



HELLO.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO
BE IN THERE, YOU KNOW.
THE DEAL'S *STILL* THE
SAME ONE THAT MY
FATHER OFFERED
YOU.

POWER.
IMMORTALITY. A
PROMISE THAT YOU
WON'T SEEK REVENGE.

WELL? I KNOW YOU
CAN UNDERSTAND ME!
SAY SOMETHING!



No.

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

NOTHING IMPORTANT.

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

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

DANIEL SLEEPWALKS UNSPEAKING THROUGH HIS WORLD.

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

HE MOVES SLOWLY, LIKE A MAN WADING THROUGH QUICKSAND.

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

ASLEEP, SHE WATCHES TELEVISION.

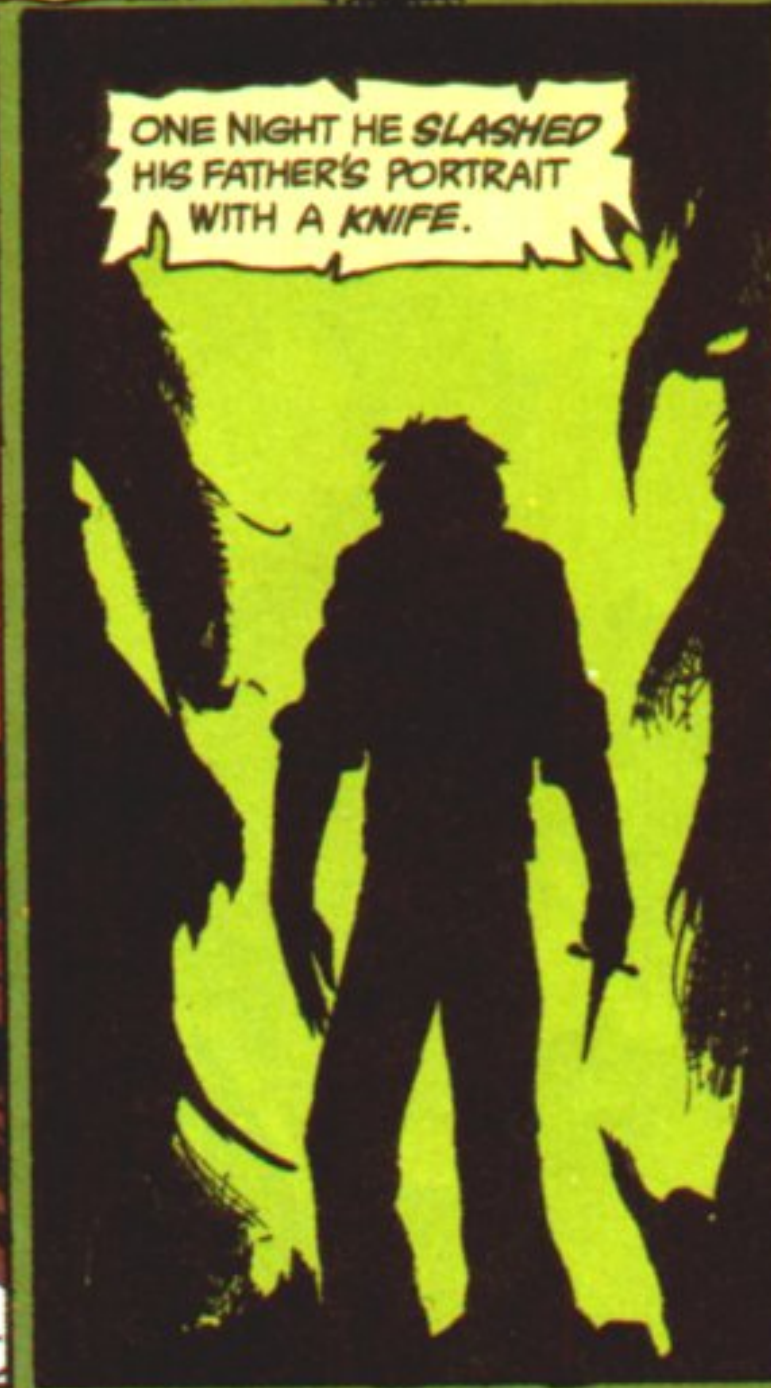
ASLEEP, SHE RELAXES IN THE SUN.

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

DO WHAT THOU WILT, BLASTER!

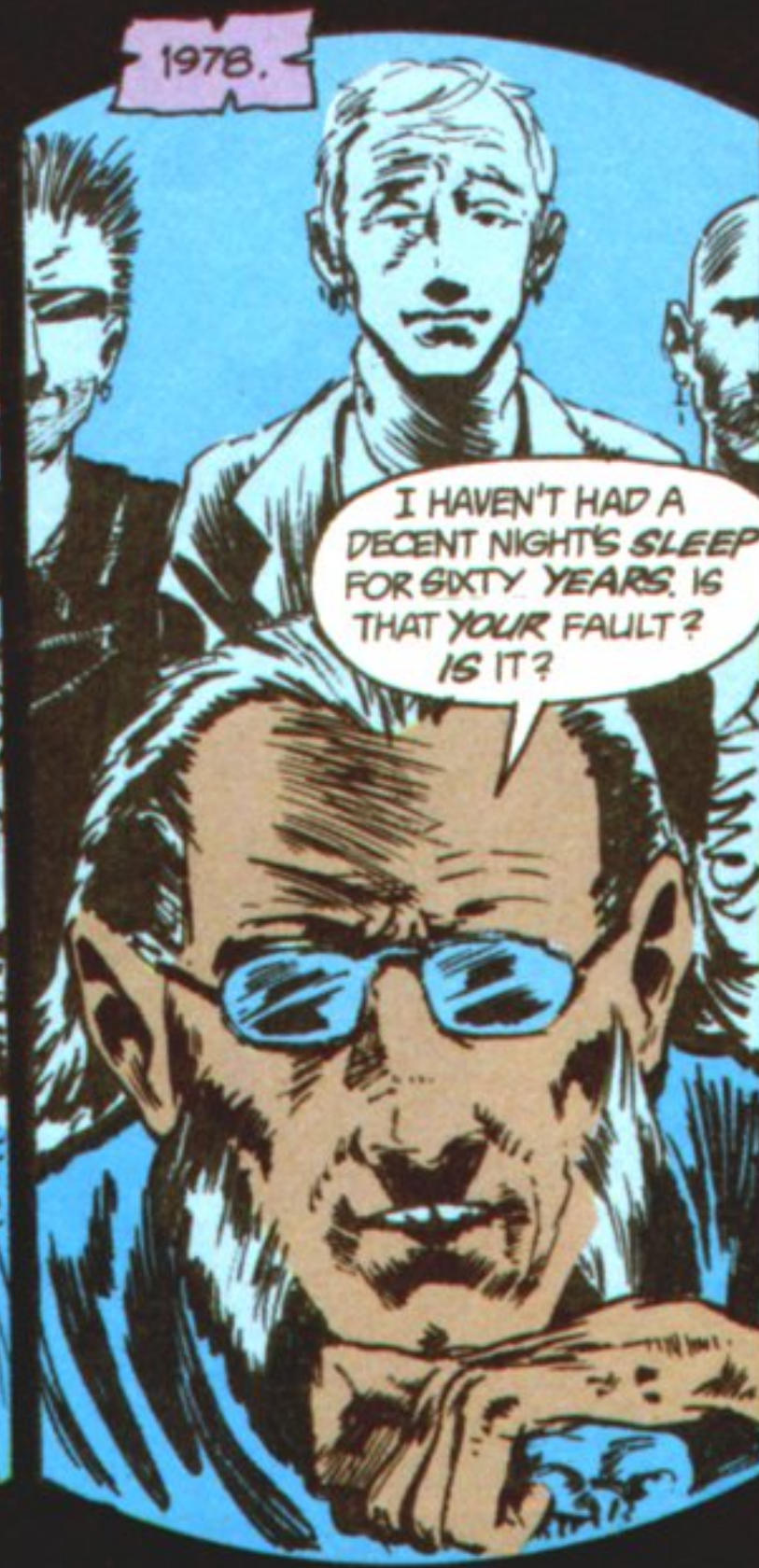


ALEX HANDS OVER THE REINS OF ORGANIZATION TO PAUL MCGUIRE, HIS LONGTIME PERSONAL ASSISTANT.





WHY WON'T YOU
TALK TO ME? YOU COULD
TELL US SO MUCH. SO
MANY THINGS...



I HAVEN'T HAD A
DECENT NIGHT'S SLEEP
FOR SIXTY YEARS. IS
THAT YOUR FAULT?
IS IT?



I COULD... UH...
TORTURE YOU, YOU KNOW.
I COULD. DON'T THINK
THAT I COULDN'T...

I'VE KILLED
PEOPLE BEFORE
NOW...



I HATE YOU.
I'M GLAD WE
TRAPPED YOU.

YOU'RE...
NOTHING SPECIAL.
YOU KNOW THAT?

YOU'RE
NOTHING
AT ALL.



A NAKED MAN
IN A GLASS BOX.
THAT'S ALL YOU
ARE.

YOU'RE
NOTHING
AT ALL.



Soon.



EHH...
POINTLESS.
QUITE
POINTLESS.

TAKE ME
UP TO MY OFFICE,
PAUL.

I, UH,
HAVE WORK
TO ATTEND
TO...



... DON'T I?



OF COURSE YOU
DO, ALEX, LOVE. OF
COURSE YOU DO.



DON'T HUMOR
ME, PAUL.

I CAN'T STAND
IT WHEN YOU HUMOR
ME!



BOY, THE OLD
MAN'S *STRADDY*
TODAY.

ANYTHING
HAPPENING,
THEN?

NAH. SAME OLD RUBBISH.
I DUNNO WHY I BUY IT. FORCE
OF HABIT, I S'POSE, THAT
'N' PAGE 3...



AND I'LL BE IN MAJORCA
THIS TIME NEXT WEEK, SO
THERE'LL BE PLENTY OF THE
REAL THING...

YOU KNOW.
THE KIND OF
EYEFUL YOU'D
NEVER GET AT
THE BEACH AT
EASTBOURNE!

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

HE'S THINKING ABOUT
HIS *HOLIDAY*...

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

It begins.

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

STRAIGHT OUT OF A
HOLIDAY *BROCHURE*.

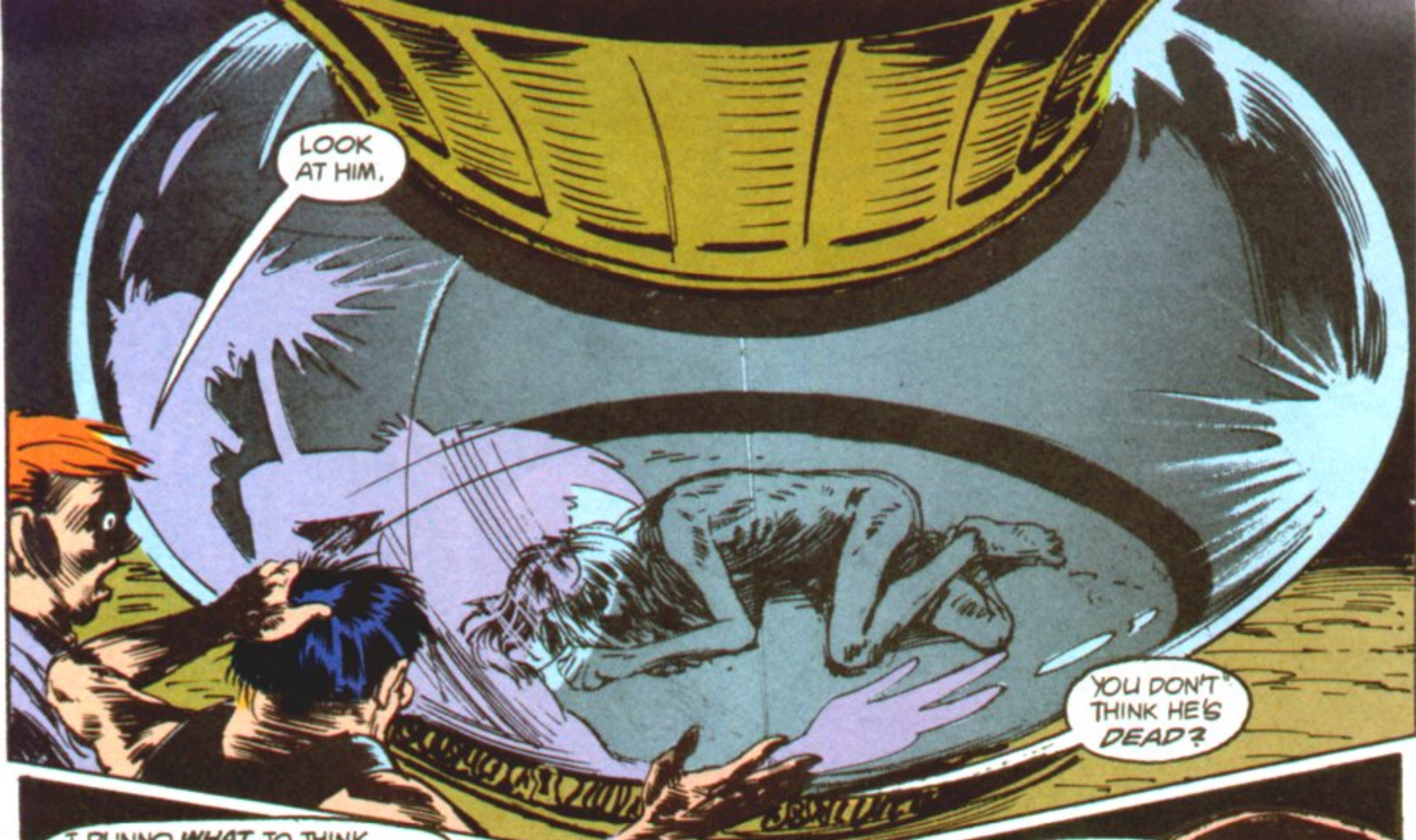
SUN... SEA...

...SAND...

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

THUD

--UH! CHRIST!
WHAT WAS THAT?



LOOK
AT HIM.

YOU DON'T
THINK HE'S
DEAD?



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

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



WAIT HERE--I'LL
GET MCGUIRE!

DEAD. I BET
HE'S DEAD.



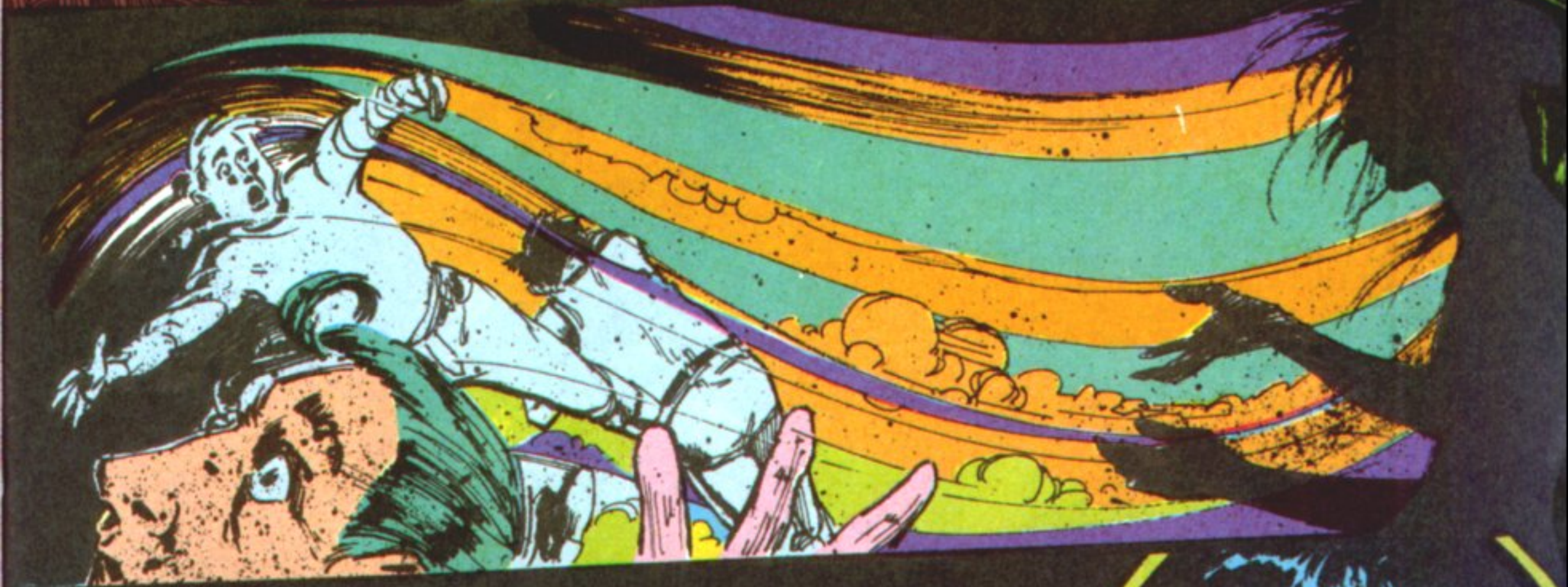
HOW LONG'S HE
BEEN LIKE THIS?

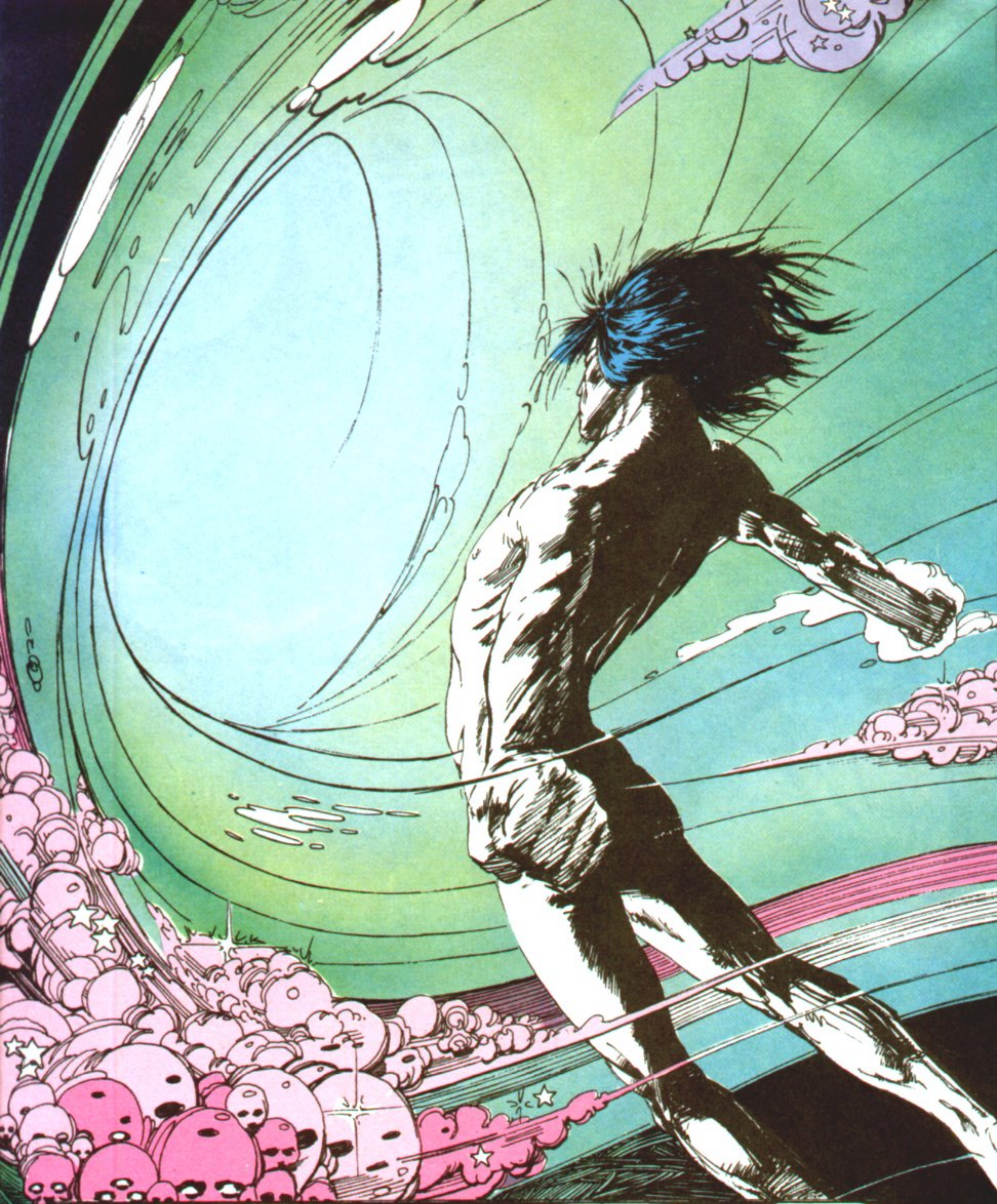


LINH. I SUPPOSE...I
SUPPOSE WE OUGHT TO
TAKE A LOOK AT HIM.

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

HELL...





UHN... URRHH...
WHAT HAPPENED?

WHERE DID
HE GO?



Home.

It feels so
good to be
back...

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

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

Hungry.

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

HE THOUGHT IT WAS
A COSTUME PARTY.

HE DIDN'T KNOW.

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

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

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

First, food;

then
clothing...

DREAMS. GO
FIGURE THEM.

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



I am weak,
lacking my
tools. Still...



I imagine the
texture of fabric
against my skin;
sculpt it from
dream-space...

It has been
so long.



There.

That's two
of three.

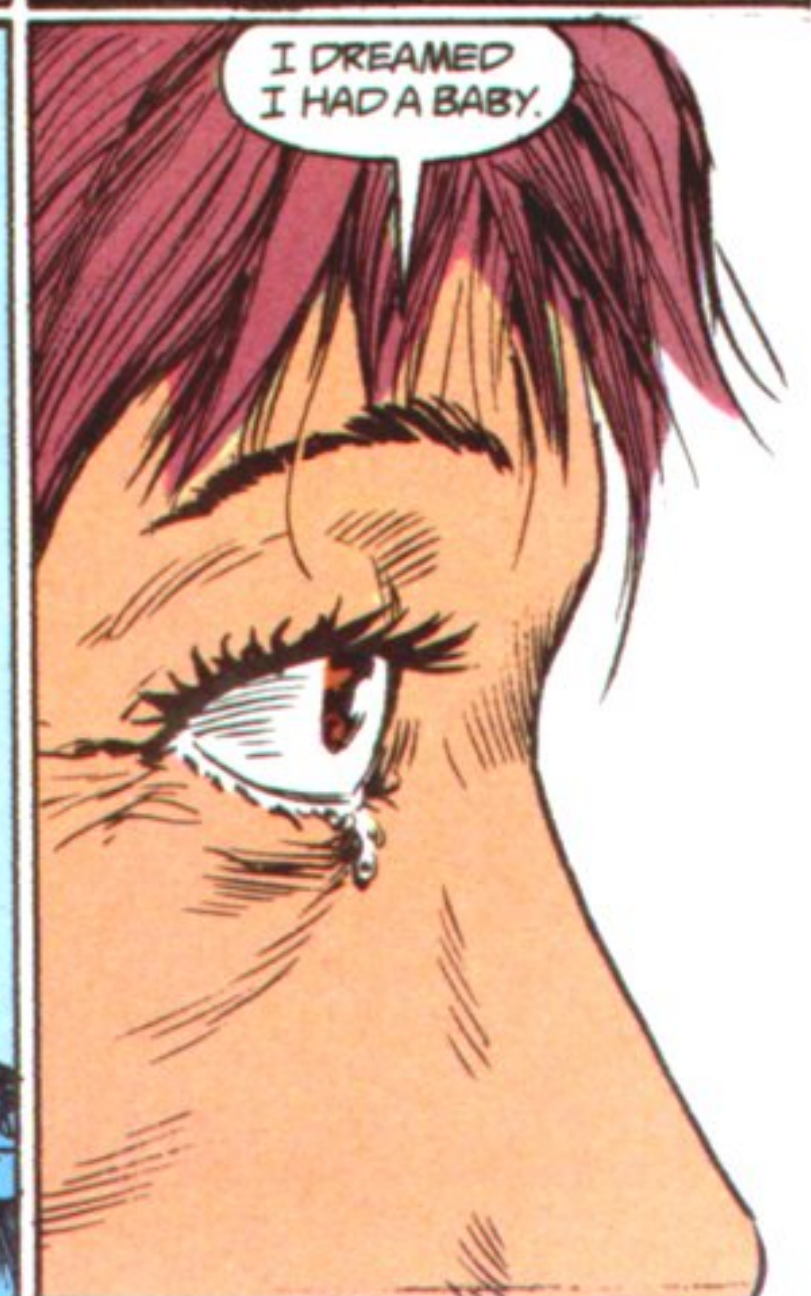
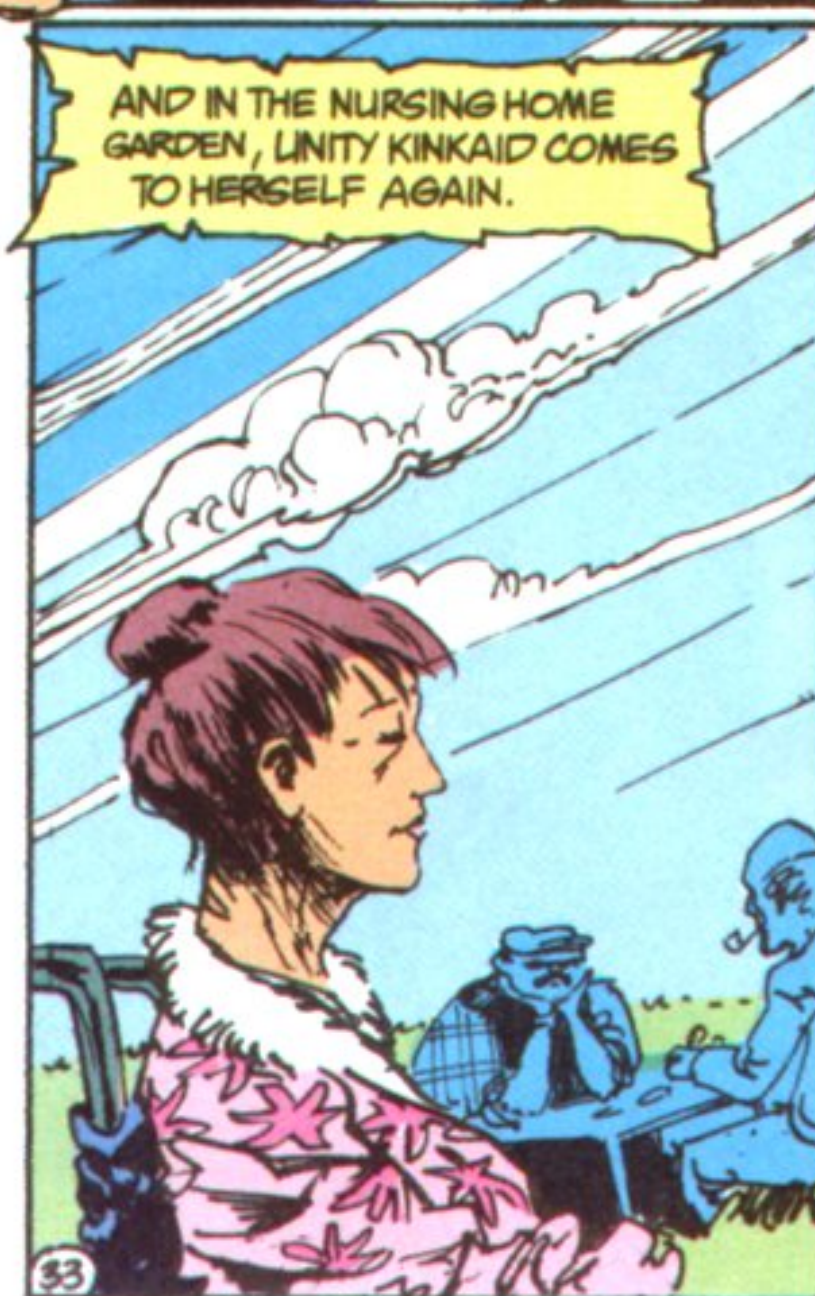


I have food and raiment.
I need the tools stolen
from me by my former
captor. He will give them
to me.

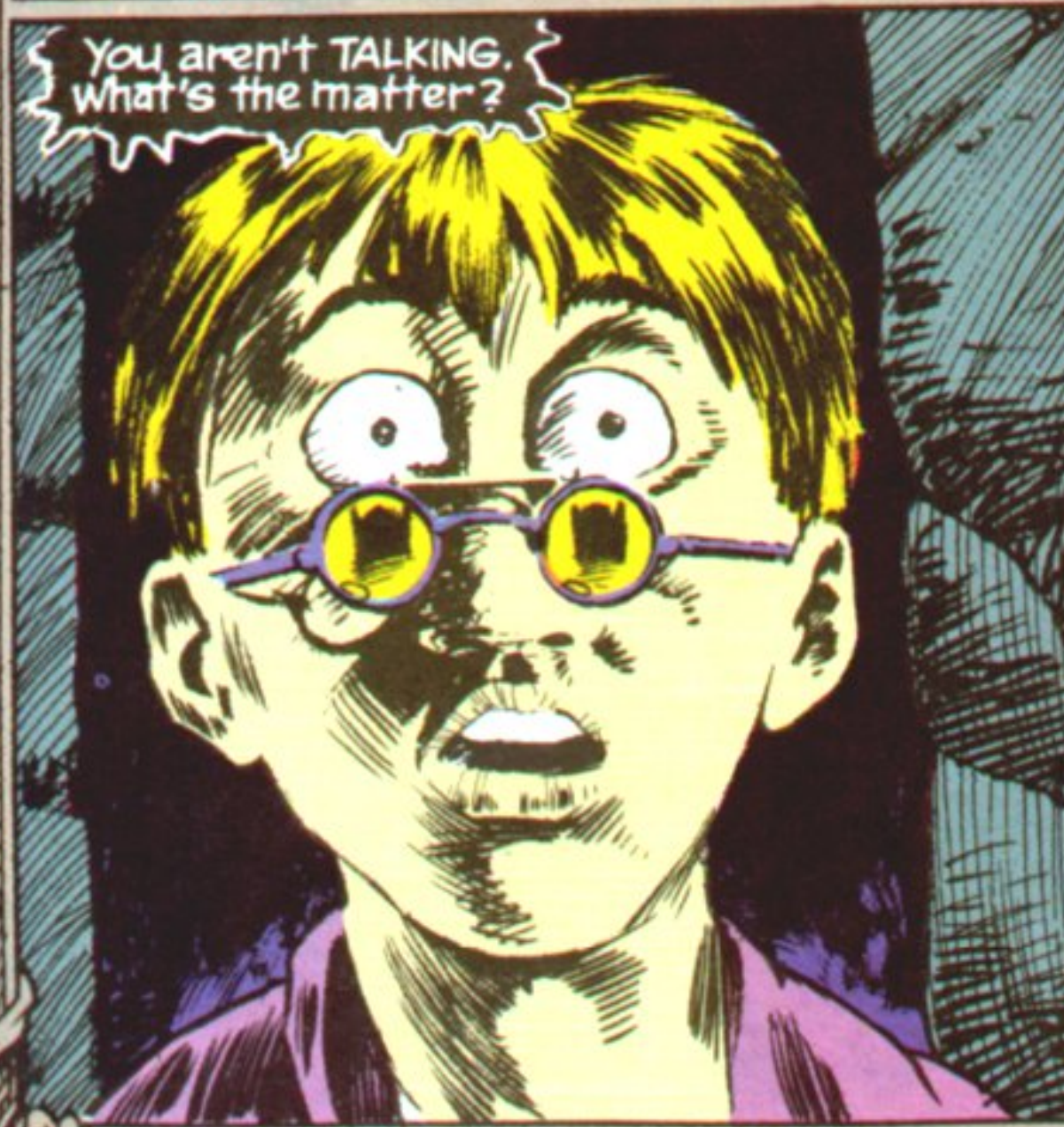


And he will give me
the other thing I
crave...

REVENGE.









YOU. IT'S YOU.

That's right. It's ME.



I'M, GOD, I'M SORRY, IT, IT WASN'T ME, MY FATHER, HE DID IT, I, I NEVER KNEW, I WOULDN'T HAVE, I'M SORRY, I DIDN'T--



Shushhh... Enough.



There are offenses that are UNPARDONABLE.

Can YOU have any idea what it was LIKE? Can you have ANY IDEA?



CONFINED in a glass box for three score years and ten. A human LIFETIME

TIME moves no FASTER for my kind than it does for humanity, and in PRISON it CRAWLED at a snail's pace...

I was... I am... the LORD of this REALM of DREAM and NIGHTMARE.



YOU--your FATHER--PIPED me DOWN with his PETTY hedge-magicking, his twopenny spell...

ME. You did THAT to ME.



You barred me from my realm with your foolish circle...

You threatened, cajoled and pleaded for gifts are neither mankind's to receive nor mine to give.

You had no thought for the harm you must have brought to your world...

Lord, what fools these mortals be.



WELL? Have you
no EXCUSE? NO
EXPLANATION?
Some reason I
should not take
REPRISAL?

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

WE WANTED
TO CAPTURE
DEATH.

WHAT? You wanted DEATH? Then
count yourself lucky for the sake of
your species and your petty planet
that you did NOT succeed...



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



You'll never know how LUCKY you were
Where are my TOOLS?

...SORRY?

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

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



I SEE

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

To reward you for your
years of HOSPITALITY



I give you
this...

ETERNAL
WAKING



HNERR...

NO!



ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

YES. I-- OHHHH...
SORRY, I MUST HAVE
HAD A NIGHTMARE.

I DREAMED THAT OUR
PRISONER HAD ESCAPED.
IN THIS TOWER, HE WAS...
HE SAID...

FINANCIAL TIMES



HE HAS.
HE DID.

HE'S OUT,
ALEX.

HE CHECKED
OUT THIS
MORNING...



KEEP
AWAY FROM
ME!

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

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


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

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

BTHUMP!

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

HAWAHA-HA-HA...



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

His is the nightmare everlasting...

Eternal Waking...




HOW LONG HAS HE BEEN LIKE THIS?

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



SNUR. NO. NO... NO... PLEASE. URF. SHUT. JM.

And I have showed him fear...



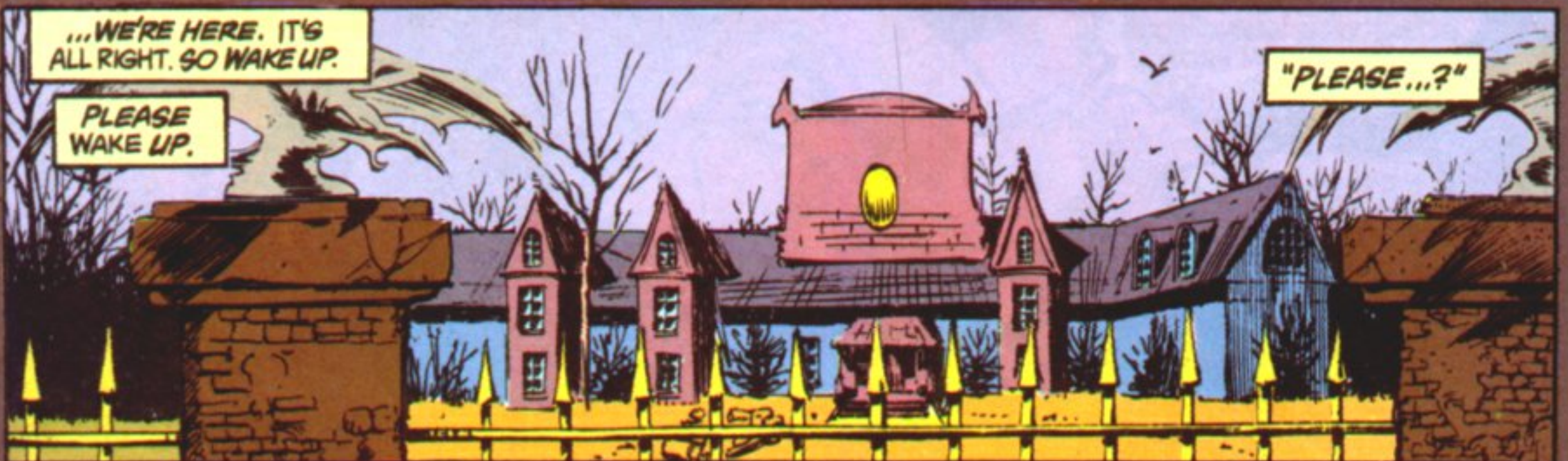
ALEX? ALEX, IT'S ME. PAUL. COME ON, ALEX. COME ON, OLD FELLOW.

ME AND NURSE EDMUNDS...

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

PLEASE WAKE UP.

"PLEASE...?"



VERTIGO

ESSENTIAL VERTIGO

DC COMICS

THE SANDMAN

PRELUDES & NOCTURNES



NEIL GAIMAN

SAM KIETH

MIKE DRINGENBERG



2 SEP 96 \$1.95 US \$2.75 CAN
SUGGESTED FOR MATURE READERS

OBI

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

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

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

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

NOW, WHY WOULD
I GIVE YOU AN EXPLODING
PRESENT?

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

MY KIND OF
B-BROTHER.

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

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

...JUST OPEN
YOUR BLASTED
PRESENT!

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

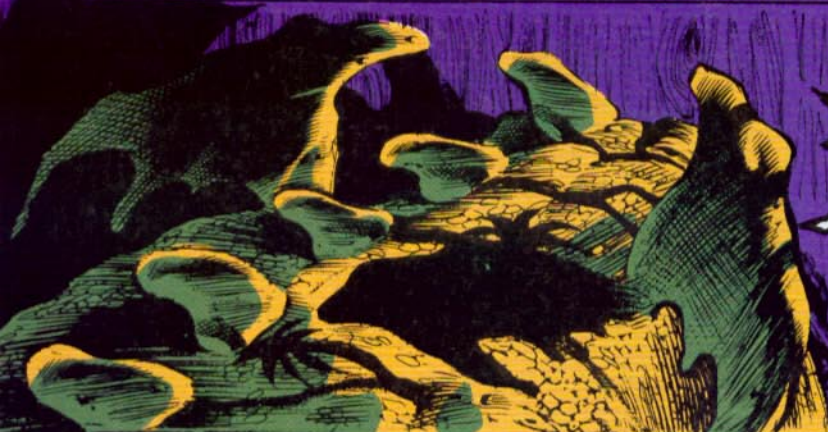
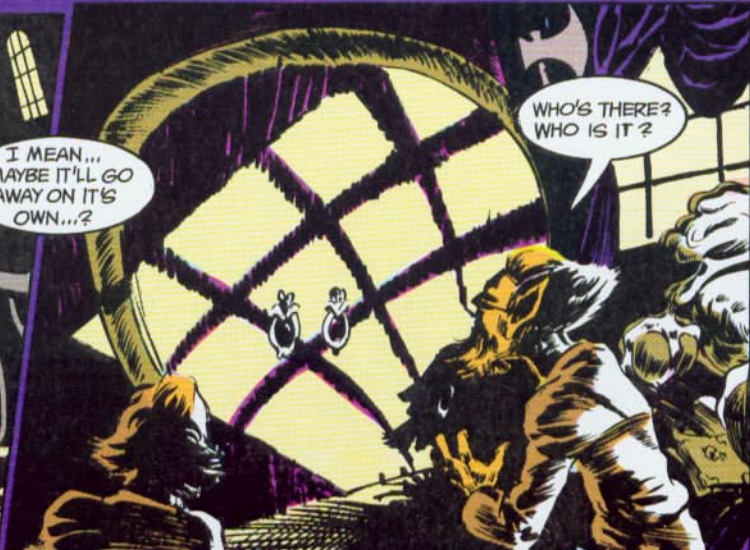
WHAT
WAS
THAT?

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

**BDUNK
THOK!
THOK!**



I MEAN...
MAYBE IT'LL GO
AWAY ON IT'S
OWN...?



NOW COME TO THINK
OF IT, GREGORY *IS*
EXTRAORDINARILY BIG AND
NASTY IN HIS *OWN* RIGHT,
ANYWAY.

IT *IS*
GREGORY, ISN'T
IT?

SPIT IT OUT,
GULLY-GUTS!
WHAT *IS* IT?

IT'S *HIM*,
BROTHER.

HE'S BACK...

YES, B-BUT,
AWUH UH I-UH
I-UH AWUH
UR...

...THE P-PRINCE
OF STORIES.

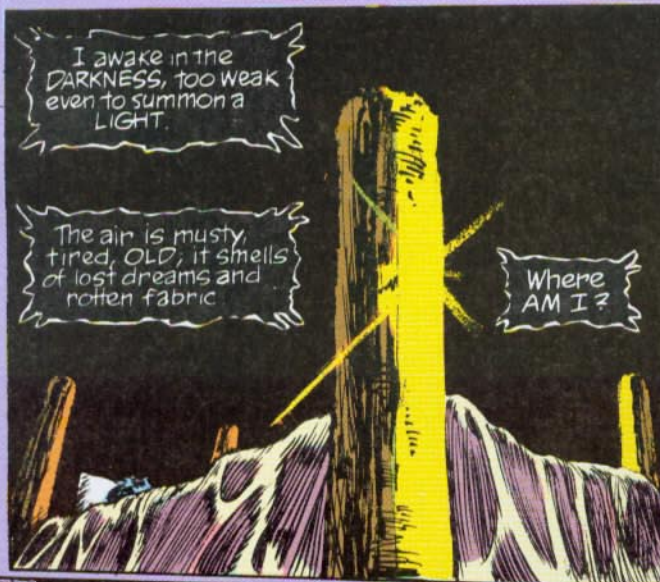
AURGK!

...help me...

...please...

IMPERFECT HOSTS

NEIL GAIMAN: WRITER
SAM KIEH &
MIKE DRINGENBERG: ARTISTS
TODD KLEIN: LETTERER
ROBBIE BUSCH: COLORIST
ART YOUNG: ASST. EDITOR
KAREN BERGER: EDITOR



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

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

Where AM I?



HELLO?
M-MY LORD?

You. I KNOW you. You're, uh...



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



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

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

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



Yes. I was on my way to the castle.




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




HE'S, UHMM, MADE YOU SOME FOOD.

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

REMEMBERING




It was a DARK
and STORMY
NIGHTMARE...




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


I would NOT
even have
NEEDED to
TRAVEL.



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




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



And I
was far too
WEAK.

I do not know
how long I
remained there.



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

But the way was HARD.



I remember the
WIND on my FACE...
staring down at the
DREAMSCAPE below
me...

And then... I was here.

AHEM!



GOOD EVENING, YOUR HIGHNESS, PRINCE MORPHEUS...

I'VE MADE YOU SOME FOOD.

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



You are CAIN, aren't you?

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



OR I WAS.

THINGS HAVE BEEN STRANGE SINCE YOU'VE BEEN GONE.

Tell me, Cain...do you POSSESS any-thing of MINE?



Anything I CREATED?



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



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

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



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

Fetch me these letters. Fetch me ANYTHING of mine.



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



HERE.
TUH-TAKE
IT.

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



NOW, CAIN.
Your turn.

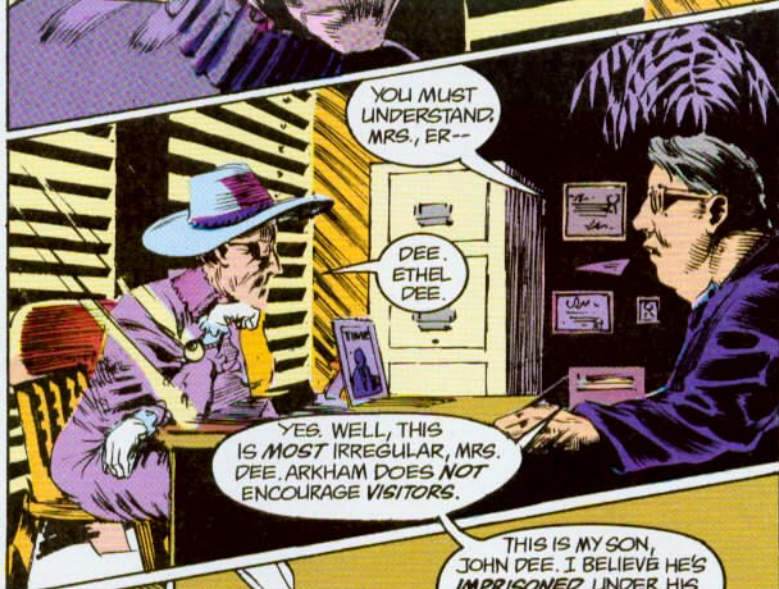



"UHHH, MU-MY LORD, UH
IF IT'S NOT A-UHH, F-FOOLISH
QUESTION ...HAMMM HAMM, UH..."

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

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

"WHERE have I BEEN?..."





WATCH THE STEPS! THEY CAN BE SLIPPERY.

I'M FLABBERGASTED YOU COULDN'T BRING JOHN UP TO SEE ME, MISTER HUNTOON.

IT'S DOC-TOR. DR. HUNTOON. WE CAN'T RISK LETTING HIM OUT. HE'S TOO DANGEROUS.

HE NO LONGER SLEEPS, OR DREAMS-- IN THE NORMAL SENSE OF THE WORD...

AND PHYSICALLY, HE'S QUITE DEBILITATED...

JOHN?
IS THAT YOU?

JOHN!

MOTHER...?

I WOULD HAVE DREAMED OF YOU...

IF I COULD DREAM.

IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME.

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO HIM?

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?

MOTHER? YOU LOOK SO OLD. THINGS ARE SO STRANGE THESE DAYS.

MOTHER? THEY TOOK MY DREAMS AWAY FROM ME!

MRS. DEE? I'M AFRAID HE'S GETTING OVER-EXCITED. WE SHOULD GO.

MRS. DEE. SAY GOODBYE.



GUH-GOODBYE.
I-UH-I-UH FEEL I
OUGHT TO GIVE YOU
GUH-GOOD ADVICE,
AND I-UH-I-UH--

OH, SHUT UP, SPONGE-WIT--
CAN'T YOU? GOODBYE, SIRE!

AARRWRUK!



UHHH, THERE HE
GOES. SHUH-SHOULDN'T
WE HAVE TOLD HIM? ABOUT
THE CASTLE? ABOUT
WHAT'S HAPPENED TO
THE DREAMTIME?



WHY?
HE'LL FIND
OUT SOON
ENOUGH.


YOU, AH,
AREN'T MUH-MAD
AT ME, ARE YOU?

MAD? WHY
SHOULD I BE MAD? I
DON'T OWN YOU... YOU
REFUGEE FROM A BLOODY
SHAMBLE.



NOW...
OPEN YOUR
PRESENT!





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

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

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

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

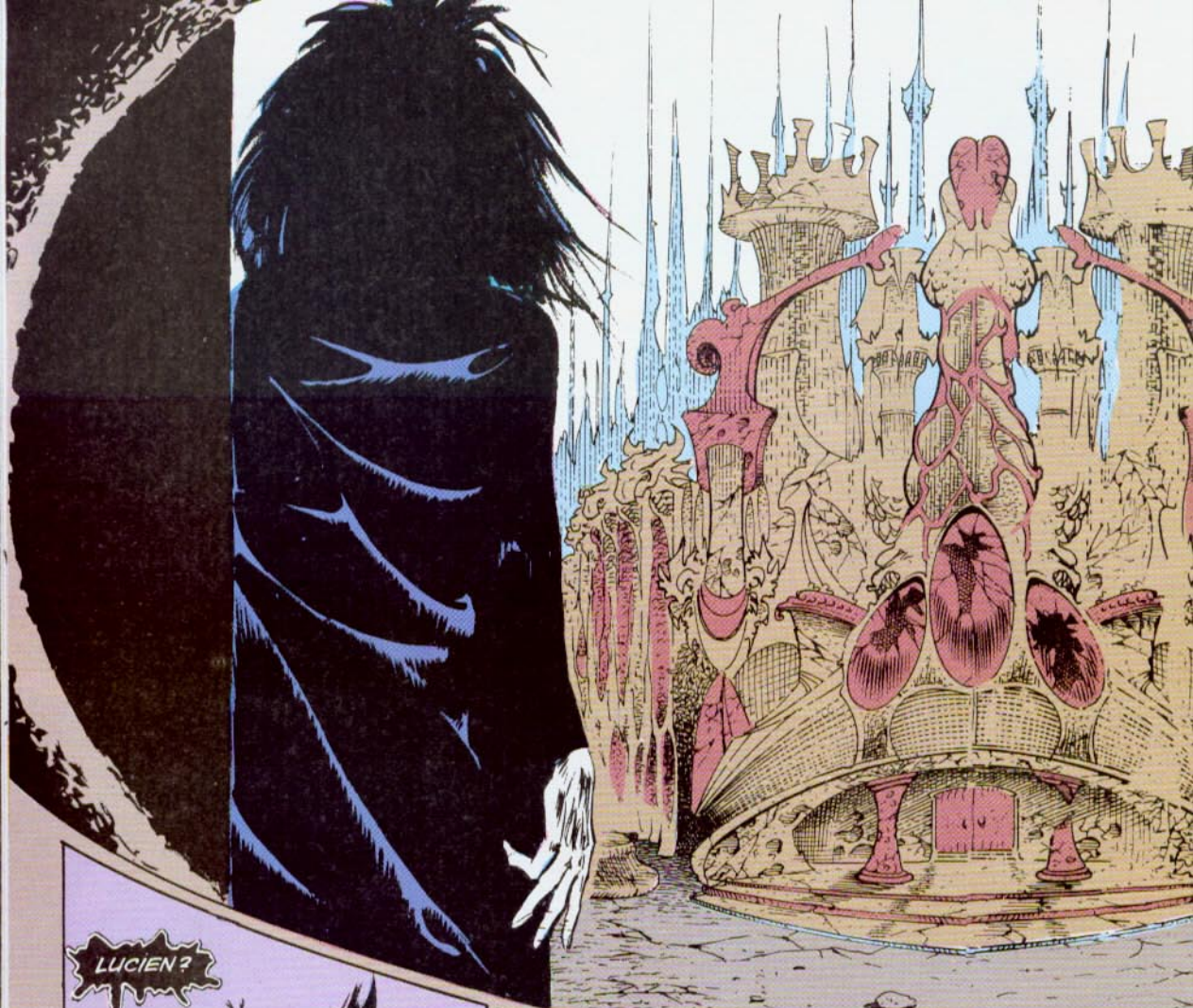
I HASTEN to the GATES.

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

Once through it I can SEE my CASTLE.

Through it I will be able to see...

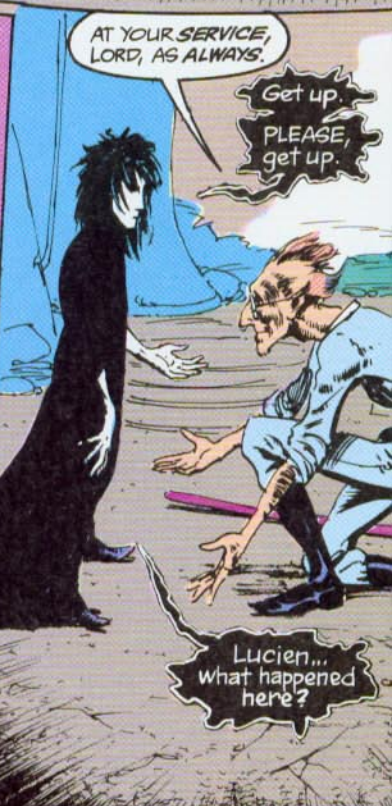
... My Home...



LUCIEN?



ONE AND THE SAME, MY LORD.



AT YOUR SERVICE, LORD, AS ALWAYS.

Get up.
PLEASE get up.

Lucien...
what happened here?



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

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




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

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

SLOWLY,
THE WORDS
BEGAN TO
FADE.

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


I NEVER
FOUND IT
AGAIN...



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



"THE RAVEN WOMAN HAS
DECAYED BADLY.




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

BRUTE AND
GLOB VANISHED TWO-
SCORE YEARS AGO.

"SHE LIVES ONLY IN
NIGHTMARES..."

I DO
NOT KNOW
WHERE.



"THE WEIRDNESS HAS
BEEN GETTING WORSE."




UH. AN
EGG...?



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



IT...IT'S
BEAUTIFUL!



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

IT'S NOT
JUST ANY EGG,
YOU UNDERSTAND.

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

BLOOD AND PERRIER, GODDAMNIT!

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

I have ENCOUNTERED Cain and Abel ALREADY.

AH.

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

BUT SINCE YOU'VE BEEN GONE...

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

YOU... CAN'T CALL IT IRVING.

NAMES FOR GARGOYLES ALWAYS BEGIN WITH A "G."

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

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

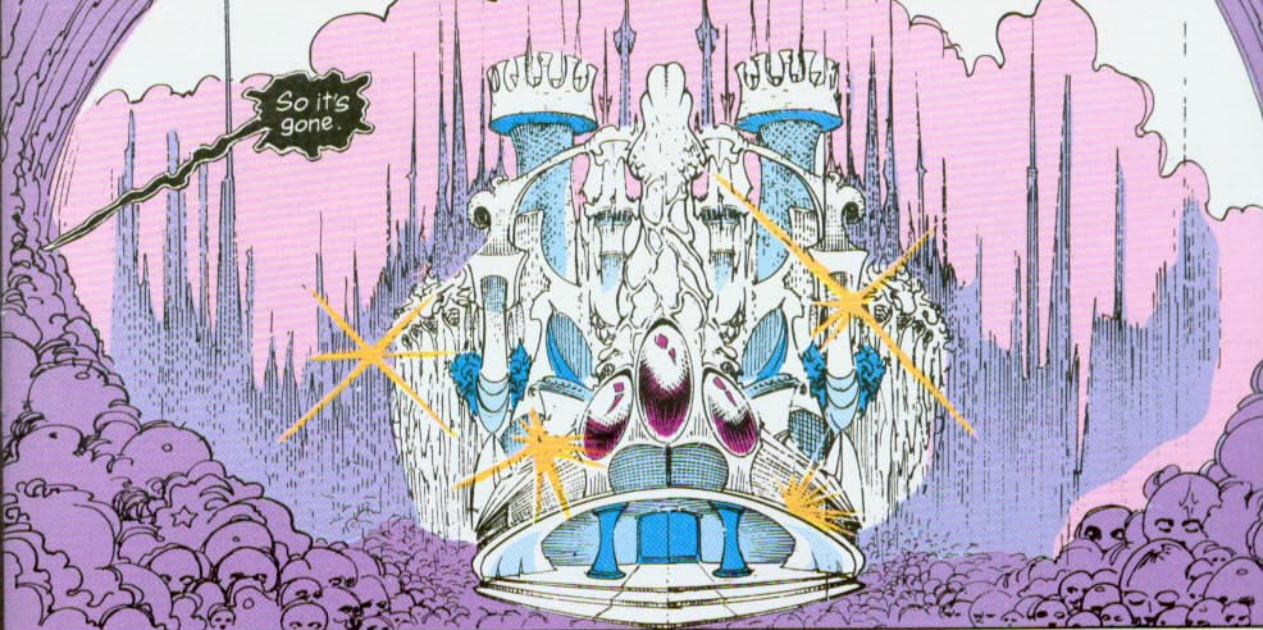
arwk?

IRVING??

LIKE GAZPACHO--OR GORMAGON--OR GLADSTONE--OR GANYMEDE--OR--OR -- ðpfah!ε

STOP IT, CAIN. PLEASE.

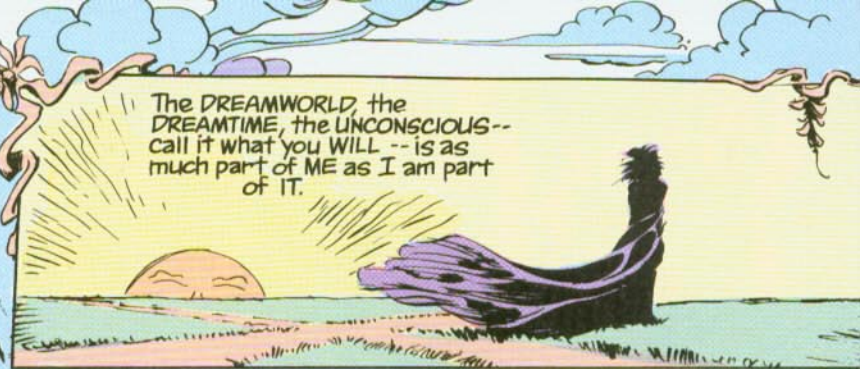
NO!





YES. Yes... I
WILL call them.

Leave me,
Lucien.



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



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

...and I SHAPE
the WORLD...



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

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

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

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

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



DONG DONG DONG
DONG DONG DONG
DONG DONG DONG
DONG DONG DONG
DONG DONG DONG

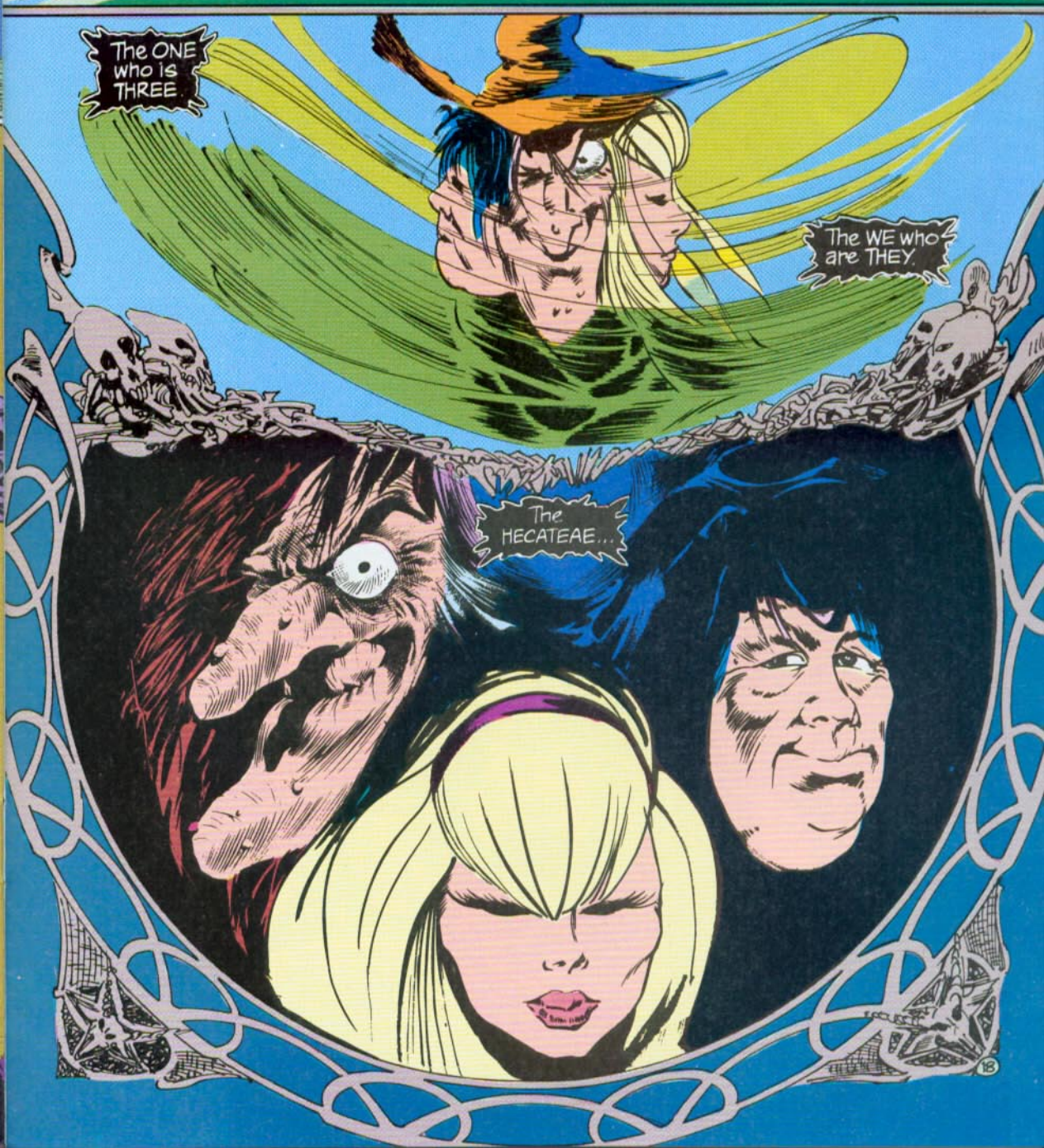
THERE.

It's MIDNIGHT.



The
WITCHING
Hour.

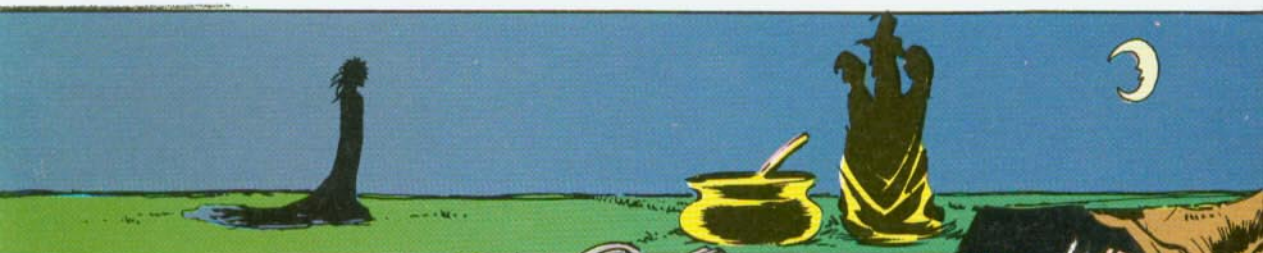
And they
COME.



The ONE
who IS
THREE

The WE who
are THEY.

The
HECATEAE...



Welcome ladies



YOU LOOK SO THIN, MY DARLING. YOU HAVEN'T BEEN EATING PROPERLY, HAVE YOU NOW?

MORPHEUS. IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME.

HEHHH. HE WANTS SOMETHING!



Lady ATROPOS, you have found me out. I DO want something



ATROPOS? NO. NOT NOW. YOU MIGHT AS WELL CALL ME THE MORRIGAN!

SHE'S RIGHT, MY DUCKS. MIGHT AS WELL CALL US TISIPHONE, ALECTO, AND MAGAERA--AND THAT TAKES US BACK, EH?

MIGHT AS WELL CALL US DIANA, MARY, FLORENCE AND CANDY. HA HA! UH, SORRY.



For me, you will always be the three graces, ladies.

FLATTERER!



I'M CYNTHIA.

SHE'S MILDRED. I'M MORDRED. STUPID NAME. I OUGHT TO BE MORGANE.

IT WASN'T MY FAULT. I JUST GOT THEM CONFUSED, WAS ALL!

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



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

"He has it STILL?"

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



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

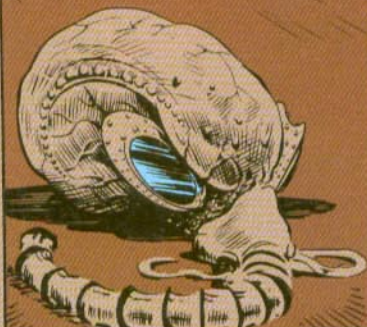


"TRADED WITH A DEMON, MY DOVE, MANY YEARS AGO. LONG GONE FROM THE MORTAL PLANE."



"WHICH demon?"

"ONE QUESTION, MY HONEYSUCKLE, AND ONE ANSWER."



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



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

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


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



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

"Thank you weird sisters"







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

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

AHAHAHAHAHA!
HEEEE! WE HAVEN'T
HELPED YOU!




YOUR TROUBLES
ARE ONLY JUST
BEGINNING!



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

This will be an
UPHILL quest...




ABEL HAD BEEN DEAD
FOR A COUPLE OF HOURS
NOW.

BUT HE WAS
STARTING TO
FEEL BETTER.

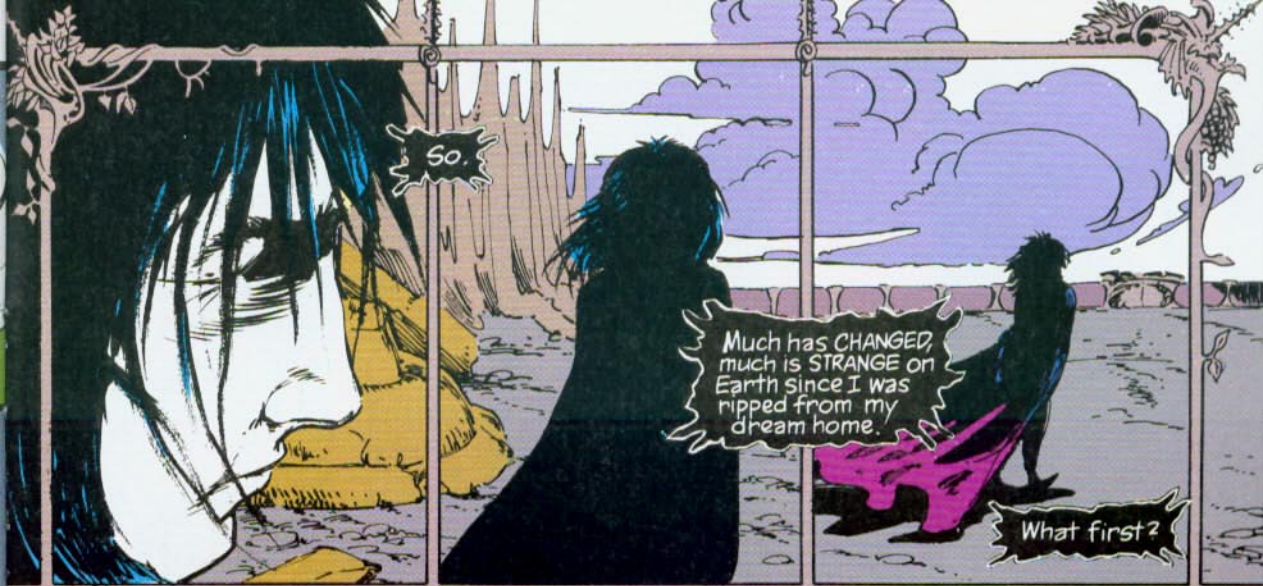


UHHN.



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

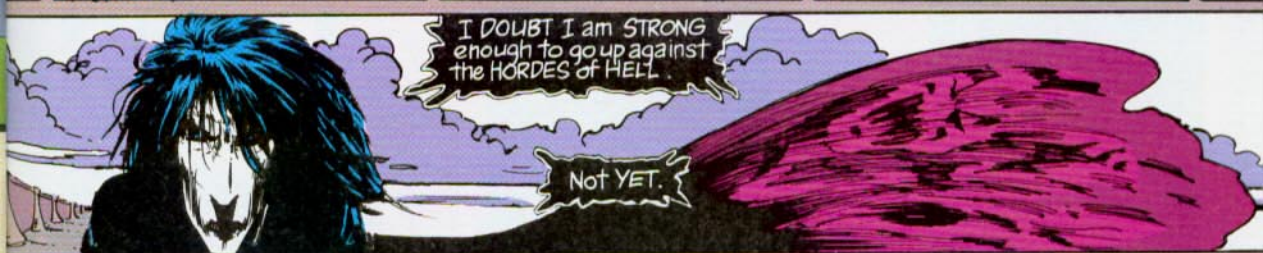
IT'S A LONG WAY BACK UP.



So.

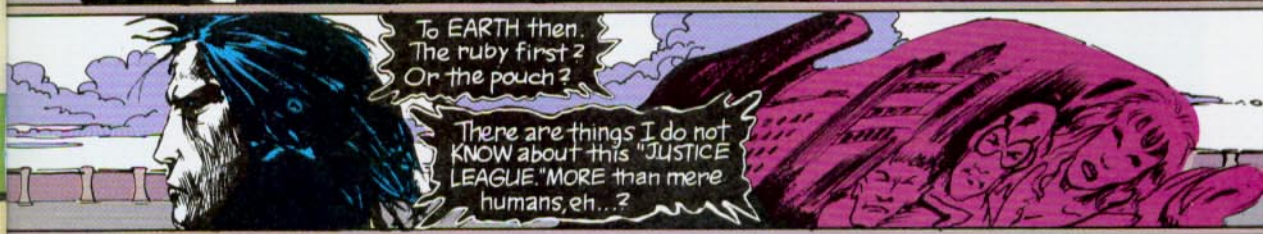
Much has CHANGED,
much is STRANGE on
Earth since I was
ripped from my
dream home.

What first?



I DOUBT I am STRONG
enough to go up against
the HORDES of HELL.

Not YET.



To EARTH then.
The ruby first?
Or the pouch?

There are things I do not
KNOW about this "JUSTICE
LEAGUE." MORE than mere
humans, eh...?



The ENGLISHMAN, then,
JOHN CONSTANTINE. He
has the POUCH--or he
knows where it is.

And he is
JUST a MAN.



I will visit Constantine.
Regain my POUCH,
and with the POUCH I
will have the POWER to
dare the GATES of
Hell itself...

He is, after all,
just a HUMAN.
Just ONE human.



What could
POSSIBLY
go WRONG?



UHH... I'LL, UM,
TELL YOU A STORY,
GOLDIE.



AND THE ELDER
BROTHER WOULD NEVER
HURT THE YOUNGER
BROTHER. NEVER. AND
THEY LIVED TOGETHER
IN THE SAME
HOUSE.



I'M, AH,
CALLING YOU GOLDIE
AFTER A F-FRIEND OF
MINE WHO WENT AWAY.
BUT I'LL THINK OF
YOU AS IRVING
REALLY.

arwk!

IN MY
HEART.



AND THEY
WERE ...

HNH. UHAH.
TH- THEY WERE, UH,
V-VERY HAPPY.

I'M SORRY. I
WASN'T-- I'M N-NOT
CRYING. I'M REALLY
NOT CRYING.



IT'S A SECRET STORY.

IT'S A STORY OF
TWO BROTHERS. AND
THEY, UH... THEY LOVED
EACH OTHER VERY MUCH.
AND THEY WERE ALWAYS
NICE TO EACH
OTHER.

NICE AND KIND
AND B-BROTHERLY.



"IT'S ONLY
BLOOD,
LITTLE
BROTHER."

"ONLY
BLOOD."

N · E · X · T :
"DREAM A LITTLE
DREAM OF ME ..."

VERTIGO

ESSENTIAL VERTIGO

DC COMICS

THE SANDMAN

PRELUDES & NOCTURNES



NEIL GAIMAN
SAM KIETH
MIKE DRINGENBERG

3 · OCT 96 \$1.95 US \$2.75 CAN
SUGGESTED FOR MATURE READERS

OBI

DIRECT SALES



ONE. TWO.
THREE. FOUR...

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

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

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

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

HER FINGERNAILS GREW LONG
AND BRITTLE; THEN THEY BROKE
OFF. THE RAGGED NAILS RIP HER
SKIN WHEN SHE SCRATCHES.

HER STOMACH SHRANK, THEN
BLOATED. THEN IT SHRANK
AGAIN. HUNGER SUBSIDED TO A
LOW NAGGING IN THE BACK OF
HER MIND.

IT'S OK. IT
GOES AWAY.

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

...SHE FEELS REALITY
EBBING BACK.

DELAY THE
PLEASURE.

DELAY THE
DREAMS.

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

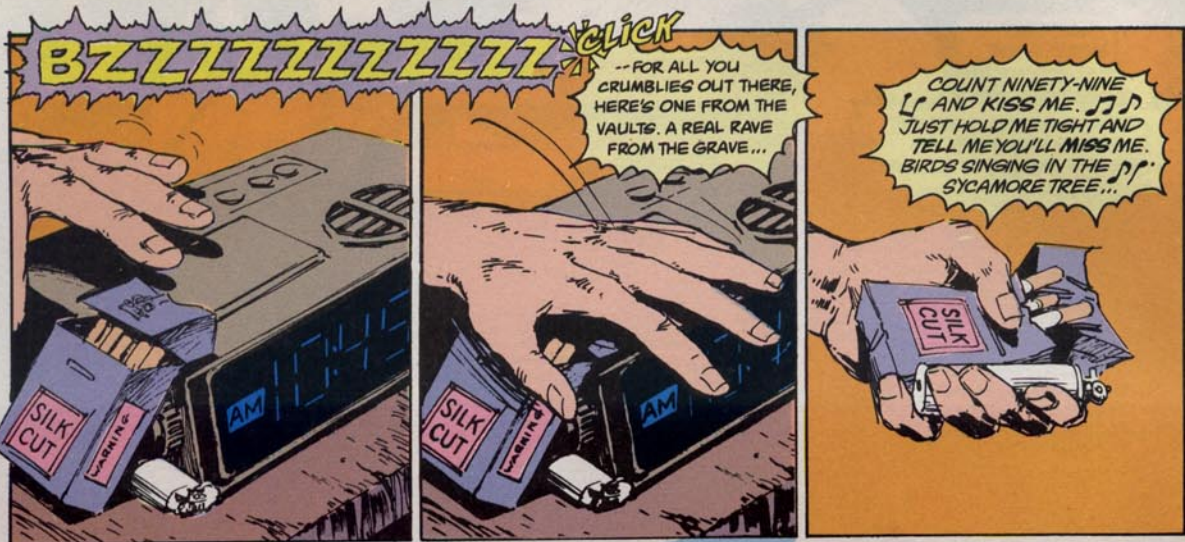
IT DOESN'T
MATTER.

SHE'S COUNTING
TO A HUNDRED.

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

SIXTY-FIVE.
SIXTY-SIX...

SHE'LL
WAIT.



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

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

I'D JUST HAD THIS NIGHTMARE.

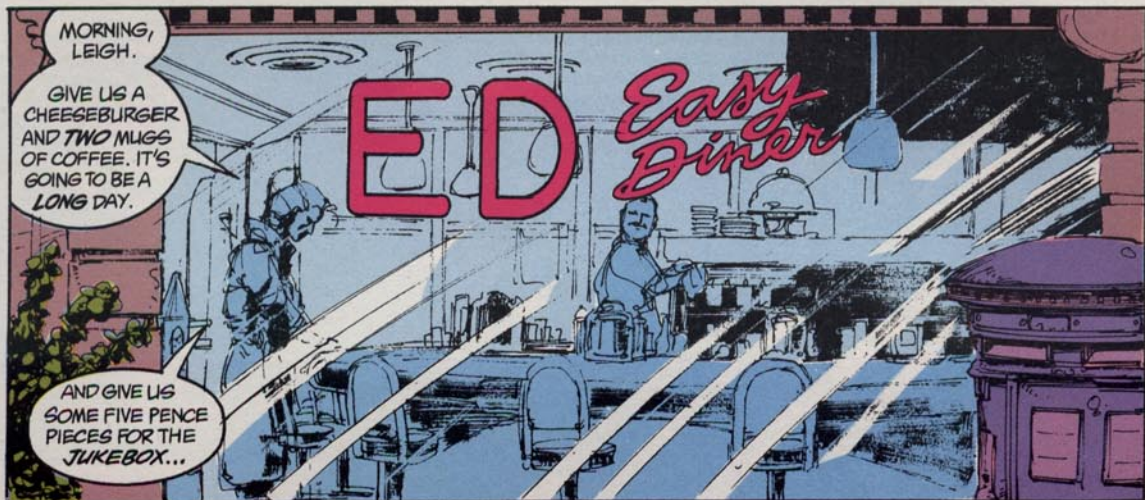
THESE THINGS WITH FACES LIKE APPENDECTOMY SCARS WERE CROCHETING MY INTESTINES INTO BODY BAGS FOR THE BLIND AND DEAD.

...BLAST FROM THE PAST
OLDIE BUT GOODIE
THE MAN WITH
THE MAGIC...

I TOLD MYSELF IT WAS ONLY A DREAM, BUT IT DIDN'T MATTER. THE BASTARDS JUST KEPT ON BLOODY KNITTING.

MIS-TER SANDMAN
I'M SO ALONE, AIN'T
GOT NO BODY--**CLICK**





MORNING,
LEIGH.

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

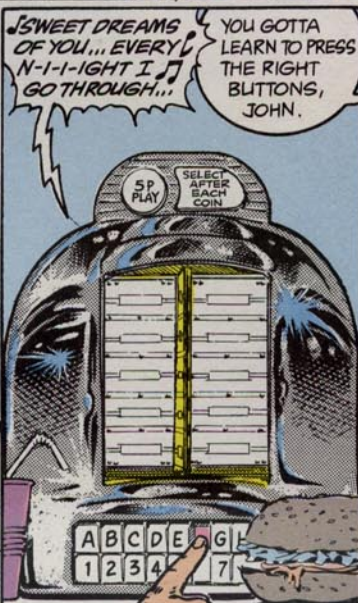
ED *Easy Biner*

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



WHAT ARE YOU
PUTTING ON?

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



♪ SWEET DREAMS
OF YOU... EVERY
N-1-I-I-GHT I
GO THROUGH... ♪

YOU GOTTA
LEARN TO PRESS
THE RIGHT
BUTTONS,
JOHN.



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

...SOMETHING TRYING TO
TELL ME SOMEBODY...?



SOMEBODY
TRYING TO TELL
YOU SOMETHING?
YUP.

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

WHUMP WHUMP



JESUS!
MAD
HETTIE...



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

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

DURING THE DAY HE'S AN **INVESTMENT COUNSELOR**.

CHECKBOOKS. CREDIT CARDS. CDS. VIDEO TAPES.

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

AND HE...

HE...

HE...

HE **MUST BE DREAMING**.

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

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

THIS IS **TOO GOOD**.

TOO GOOD
TO BE TRUE.

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

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

JESUS.

HE'S DYING FOR THEM
AND THEY LOVE HIM.

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

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

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

LAST SON OF A
DEAD PLANET.

STRONGEST
MAN IN THE
WORLD.

HE CAN DO
ANYTHING.

ANYTHING.

ABSOLUTELY
ANYTHING.

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

MY OWN RESEARCHES
KEEP ME BUSY ENOUGH.

0000-000H... ♪
SWEET DREAMS ARE
MADE OF THIS... WHO- ♪
AM I TO DISAGREE?... ♪



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



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

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

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

THEN THE
DREAMS GET
SCARY AND
BAD.

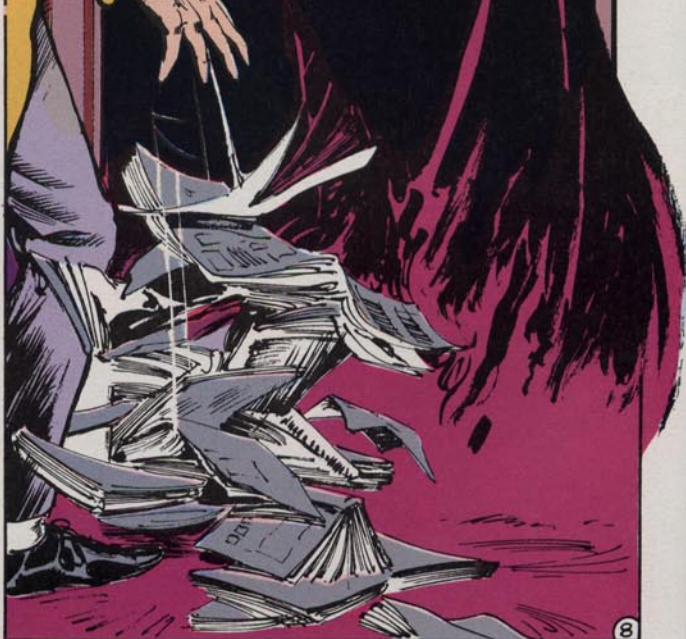


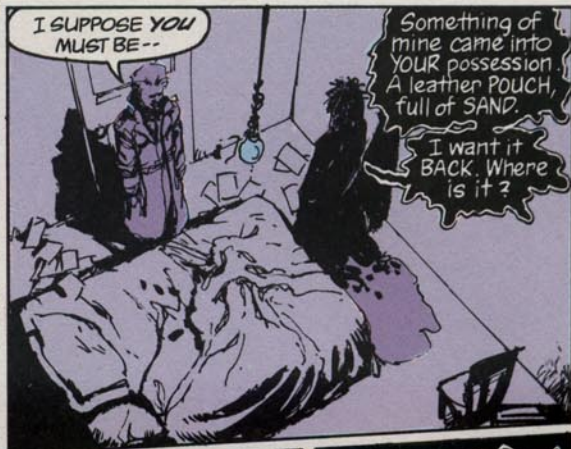
AS PER
USUAL.

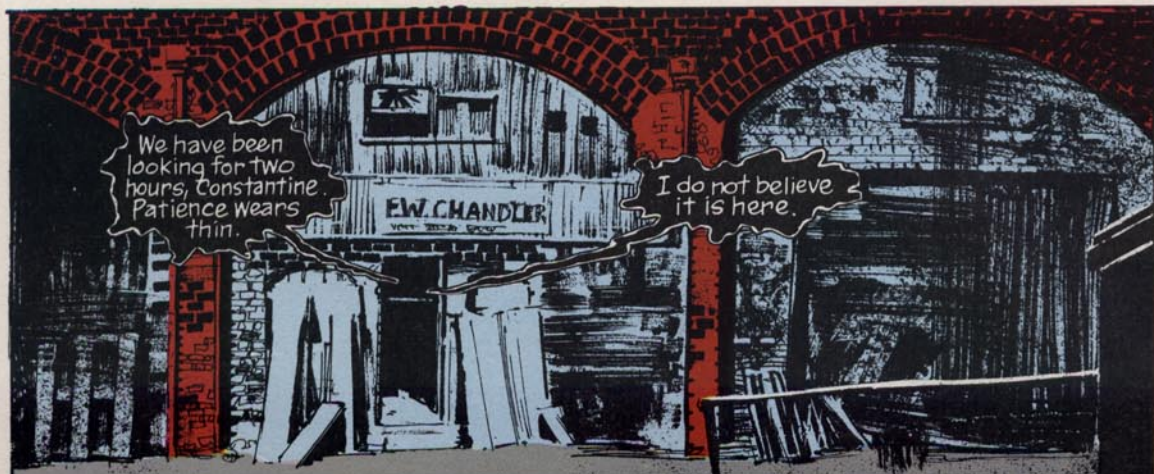
IT WAS ON THE THIRD DAY THAT
HE CAUGHT UP WITH ME.



John Constantine,
I presume.







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

I do not believe it is here.



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

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

KEEP SMILING. IT'LL TURN UP.



HOW DID YOU LOSE THIS POUCH, ANYWAY?

THE OLD "DAEMON KING" HIMSELF, EH?

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



DAMN!

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

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

OH.

JESUS. OH JESUS.

BLOODY HELL.

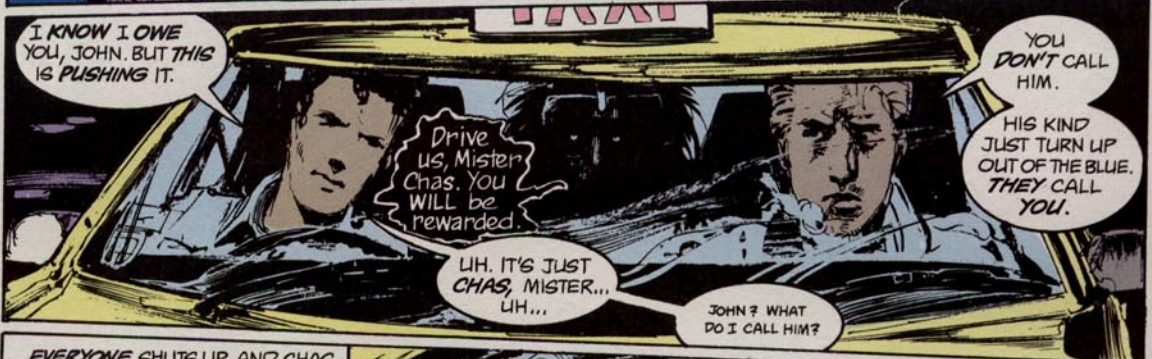
UH, BOSS. I THINK I KNOW WHERE YOUR POUCH IS.



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

No.

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



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

Drive us, Mister Chas. You will be rewarded.

YOU DON'T CALL HIM.

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

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

JOHN? WHAT DO I CALL HIM?



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

AND I REMEMBER RACHEL.

AMAZING RACHEL.

JUNKIE RACHEL.

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



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

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

STUPID BITCH.

SOMETIMES I *STILL* MISS HER.

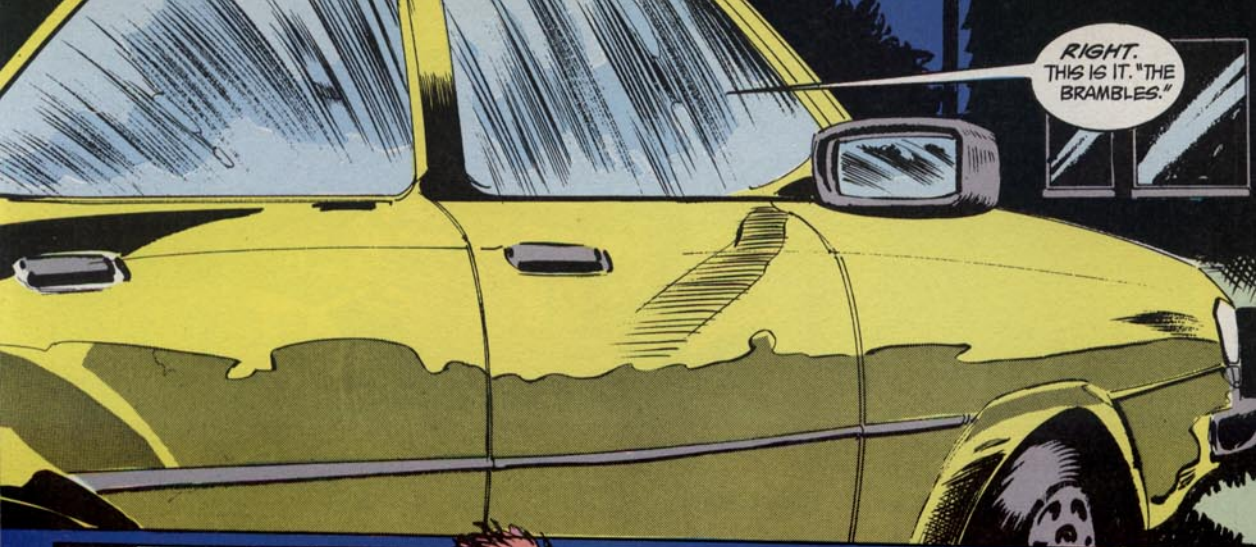
EITHER OF YOU GENTS MIND IF I PUT ON THE RADIO? NO?



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

THE CANDY-COLORED CLOWN THEY CALL THE SANDMAN... TIP-TOES THROUGH MY ROOM EVERY NIGHT... JUST TO SPRINKLE STARDUST...

"CANDY-COLORED CLOWN"? YEAH, RIGHT.



RIGHT.
THIS IS IT. "THE
BRAMBLES."



WE'LL ASK HER
DAD WHERE SHE'S
LIVING THESE DAYS,
AND GO FIND
HER.

NO
PROBLEMS,
EH?

HER DAD'S ALL
RIGHT. RETIRED AIR
PILOT. NICE MAN.
WE'LL GET YOUR
BAG BACK.



The POUCH
is HERE.

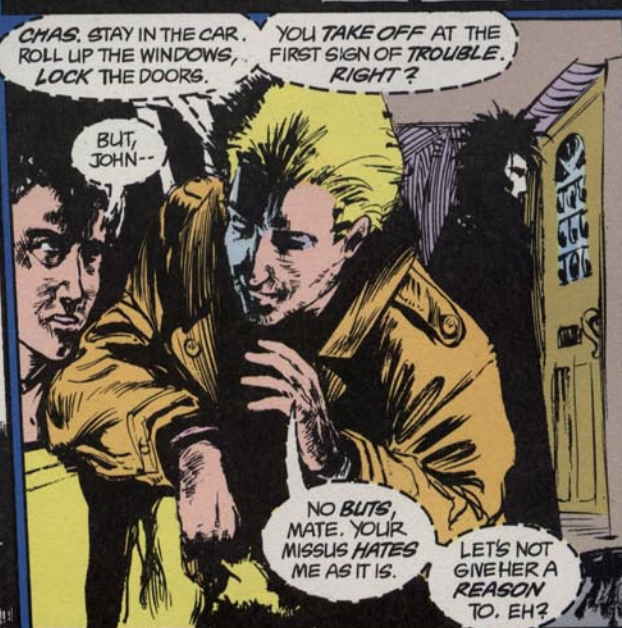
HOW
DO YOU
KNOW?

I KNOW.



The POUCH is
here. And MORE
than the Pouch...

This house
is DANGEROUS,
Constantine.



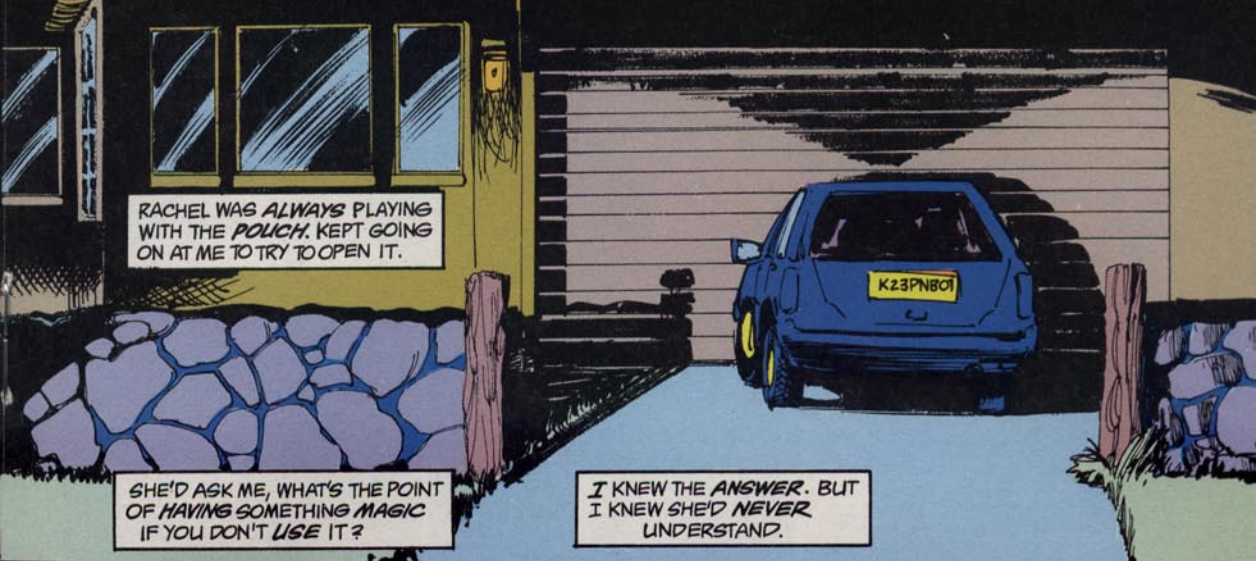
CHAS. STAY IN THE CAR.
ROLL UP THE WINDOWS.
LOCK THE DOORS.

YOU TAKE OFF AT THE
FIRST SIGN OF TROUBLE.
RIGHT?

BUT,
JOHN--

NO BUTS,
MATE. YOUR
MISSUS HATES
ME AS IT IS.


LET'S NOT
GIVE HER A
REASON
TO. EH?




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

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

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




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



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

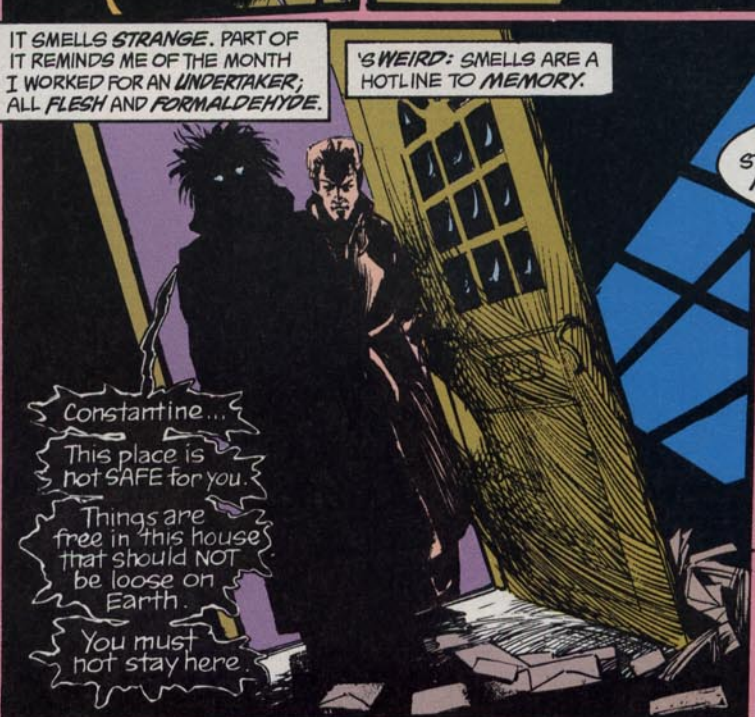
NO

MAIL



We go in by the *FRONT* door.

KREEK



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

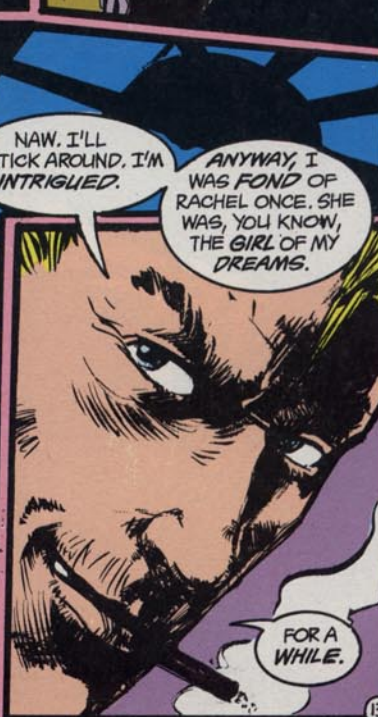
'S *WEIRD*: SMELLS ARE A HOTLINE TO *MEMORY*.

Constantine...

This place is not *SAFE* for you.

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

You must not stay here.



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

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

FOR A *WHILE*.

THE
ELECTRICITY'S
CUT OFF. THERE'S
SIX MONTHS' WORTH
OF MAIL ON THE
DOORMAT.

WHAT'S BEEN
HAPPENING
HERE?

Watch out
for the
HUMAN.

WHAT DO YOU
MEAN, WATCH OUT
FOR--

AAAH!

THU-DUMP

HUMAN.

IS HE...?

YES.

He's
ALIVE.
After a
fashion.

CLUCK

He's
being
eaten by
dreams.

WHAT
HAPPENED
TO HIM?

You need light. Is
that better?

UH.
SURE. THANKS.

I'VE BEEN OUT OF MY
DEPTH BEFORE.
SOMETHING TELLS
ME THERE ARE SHARKS
IN THESE DEPTHS.

I OUGHT TO
BE RUNNING
AWAY. BUT.

RACHEL...

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



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



OF COURSE.

UNTHINKING, I REACH
FOR THE LIGHTSWITCH...



YECHH.

CHRIST.
THERE'S SOME-
THING ON THE
WALLS.



SOMETHING
WET.

AND.

AND.

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



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

AND I'M
FALLING.

HOW DID I
GET HERE?

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

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

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

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

...IT'S WHEN
YOU STOP.

CONSTANTINE!

John,
You're HERE.

UH.

...SO
REAL.


YAAAAH!

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

YOU WERE
THERE, TOO.

A DREAM.
IT WAS ONLY A
DREAM.

More
light.



JEEESUS.




WHAT IS THIS STUFF?

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



BUT IT-IT'S STILL ALIVE.

That's right.

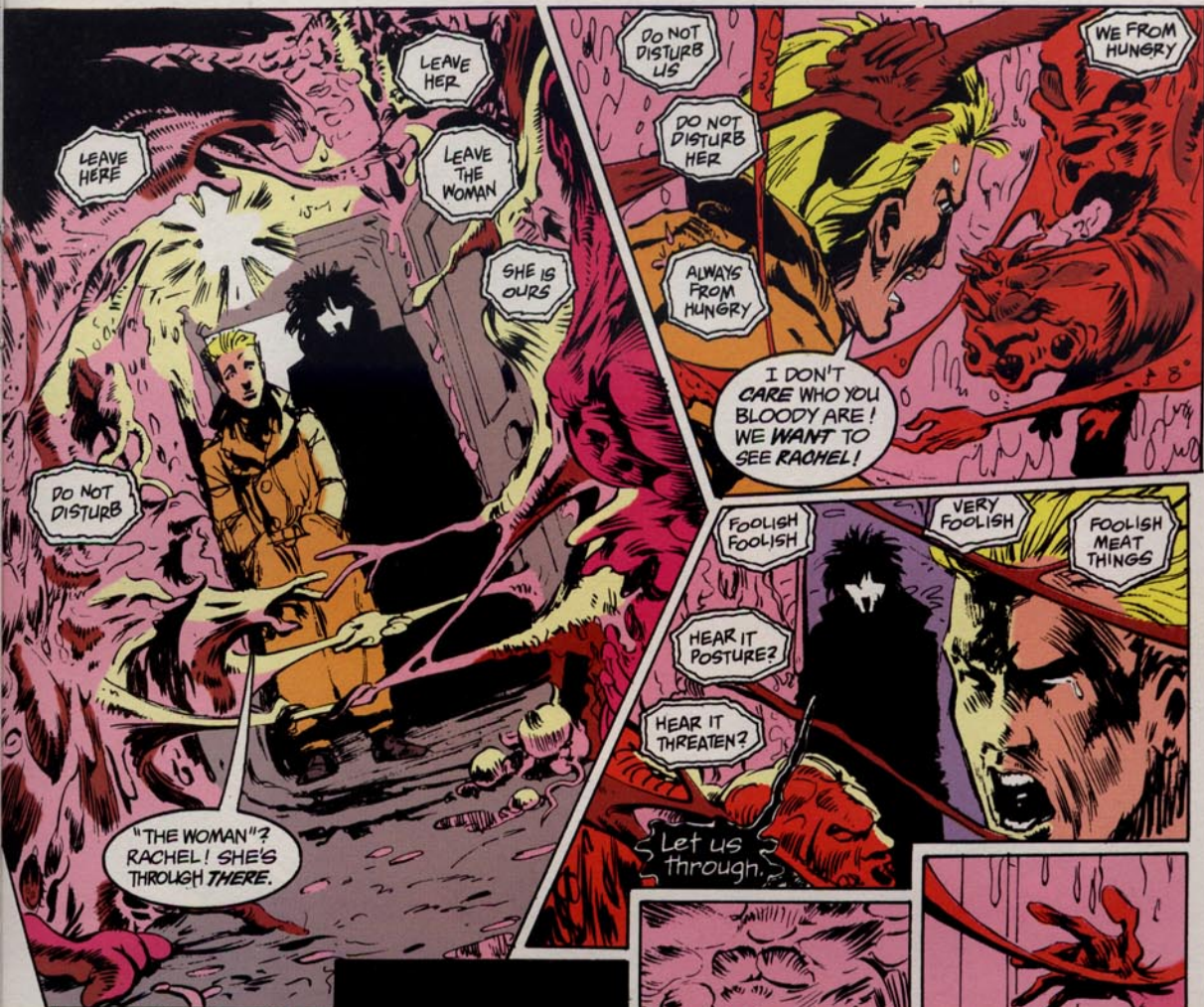


I FEEL SICK. I CAN FEEL THE HOT DOG AND COFFEE I GRABBED FOR DINNER TRYING TO FIGHT THEIR WAY BACK UP FOR AIR ...

HOW?



The Pouch.



LEAVE HERE

LEAVE HER

LEAVE THE WOMAN

SHE IS OURS

DO NOT DISTURB

DO NOT DISTURB US

DO NOT DISTURB HER

ALWAYS FROM HUNGRY

WE FROM HUNGRY

I DON'T CARE WHO YOU BLOODY ARE! WE WANT TO SEE RACHEL!

"THE WOMAN"? RACHEL! SHE'S THROUGH THERE.

FOOLISH FOOLISH

VERY FOOLISH

FOOLISH MEAT THINGS

HEAR IT POSTURE?

HEAR IT THREATEN?

Let us through.



WHO SAID?

WHO SPOKE?

NOT HIM

NEVER HIM

HE'S GONE

ALL GONE LONG GONE



This has gone far enough. You have exceeded your bounds.



MASTER...?



DREAM DREAM
DREEEEAM...

WHENEVER
I WANT TO...

ALL I
HAVE TO DO...
IS...

...DREEEEAM...

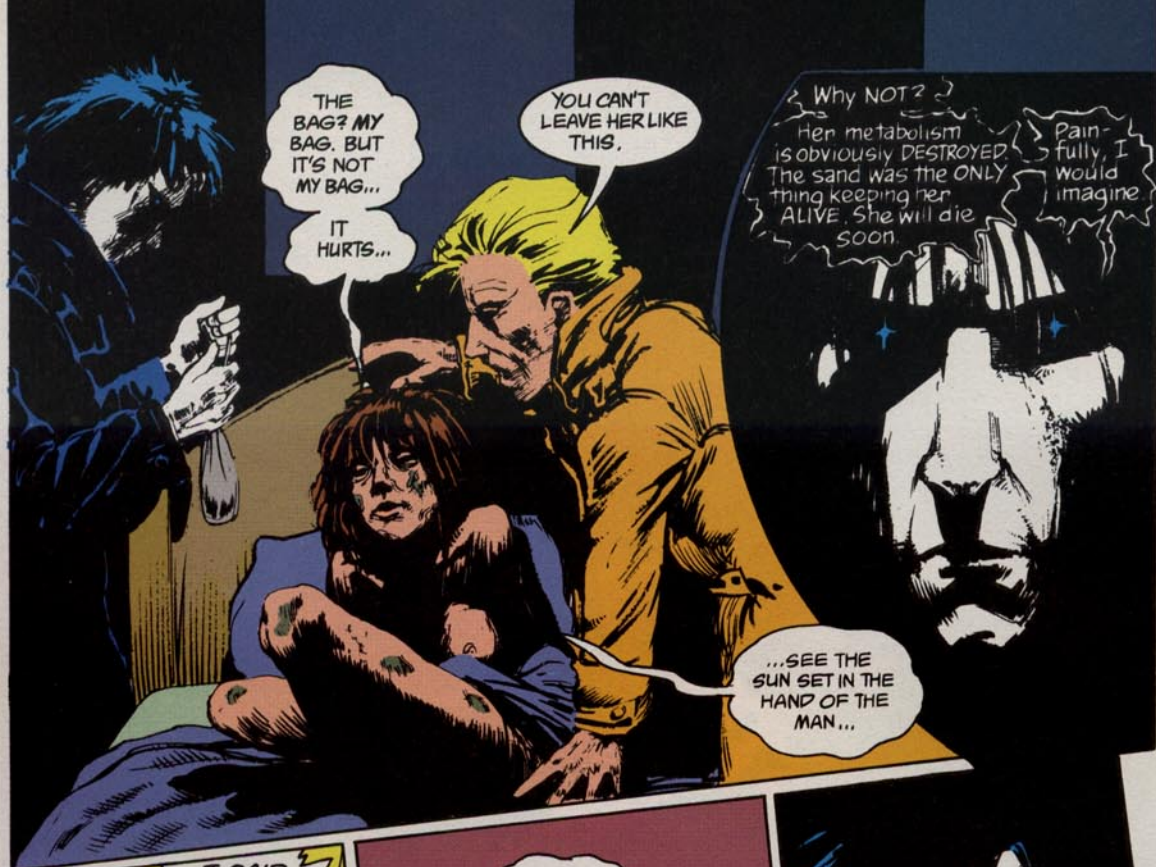
JESUS.

RACHEL.

JESUS.

I have
the pouch.
The dreams
will return
to their
proper
location,
in time...

We can
GO now.



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

IT
HURTS...

YOU CAN'T
LEAVE HER LIKE
THIS.

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

Pain-
fully, I
would
imagine

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

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

OUI. NN.
OUGH.

Very well,
Constantine.
Go outside.

BUT--
YEAH. ALL
RIGHT.

RACHEL.

SWEET
DREAMS,
LOVE.



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

AND SHE KNOWS HE'S WAITING FOR HER.

JOHN.

HULLO, LOVE.

'S BEEN A LONG TIME.

DID YOU MISS ME, THEN?

NAH.

BASTARD. LOVE YOU.


I KNOW.

IT'S THE BEST OF ALL POSSIBLE WORLDS.







NEXT:
GOING  HELL

VERTIGO

ESSENTIAL VERTIGO

DC COMICS

THE SANDMAN

PRELUDES & NOCTURNES

DIRECT SALES

00411 >

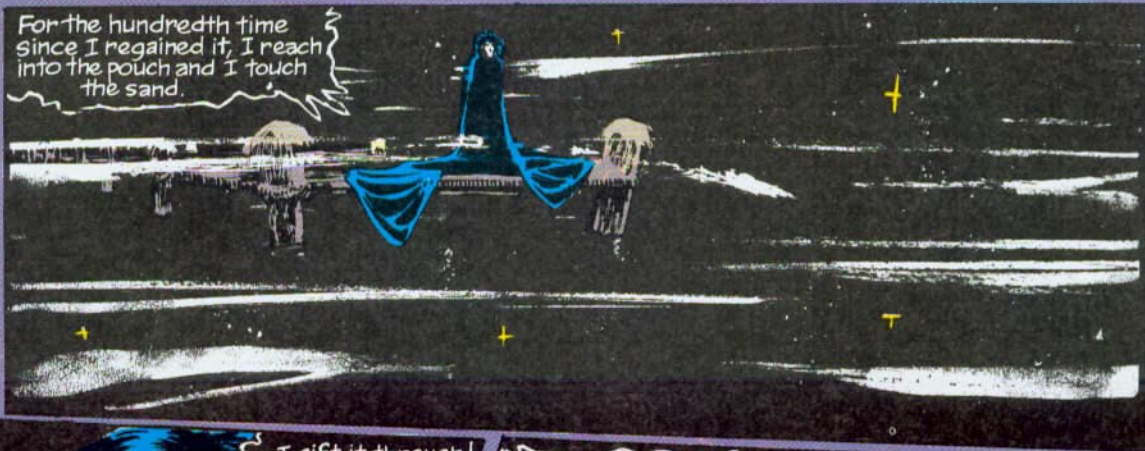
7 61941 20846 6

4 - NOV 96 \$1.95 US \$2.75 CAN
SUGGESTED FOR MATURE READERS

NEIL GAIMAN
SAM KIEITH
MIKE DRINGENBERG

OBI

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



I sift it through
my fingers.

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

Tonight I
feel alone.

Feel each
grain of it,
inexhaustible.
Endless.

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

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

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

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

I must talk to
the Morningstar.

I do not have
high hopes for
the meeting.



ESSENTIAL VERTIGO: THE SANDMAN 4. November, 1996 (Originally published as THE SANDMAN #4 April, 1989, © 1989). Published monthly by DC Comics, 1700 Broadway, New York, NY 10019. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to THE SANDMAN, DC Comics Subscriptions, P.O. Box 0528, Baldwin, NY 11510. Annual subscription rate \$23.40. Canadian subscribers must add \$12.00 for postage and GST. GST # is R125921072. All foreign countries must add \$12.00 for postage. U.S. funds only. Subscriptions to this title are offered only to readers who attest they are 18 years of age or older, or with parental approval to readers under 18 years of age. Copyright © 1996 DC Comics. All Rights Reserved. DC, VERTIGO and all characters featured in this issue, the distinctive likenesses thereof, and all related indicia are trademarks of DC Comics. The stories, characters and incidents featured in this publication are entirely fictional. For advertising space contact: East Coast, Tom Ballou, (212) 636-5520; Midwest, The Graffiti Group (312) 527-4040; West Coast, The Berman Company (818) 865-9708. Printed on recyclable paper. Printed in Canada.

DC Comics, Division of Warner Bros.—A Time Warner Entertainment Company





The Wind that blows between
the Worlds chills me as I fall.

Suppose
I fail?

I cannot bluff Demons,
as I bluffed the errant
dreams with Constantine.

But I have the
pouch. I have a
modicum of
power.



I have
hope.

And I stand here,
alone and afraid, in
the Naked Space...

...at the gate
of Hell.



GON GOG GGGG



AUH! MASTER! THERE IS ONE AT THE DOOR! LORD SQUATTERBLOAT! MASTER!



THERE'S ONE AT THE DOOR, AT THE GATE TO DAMNATION...



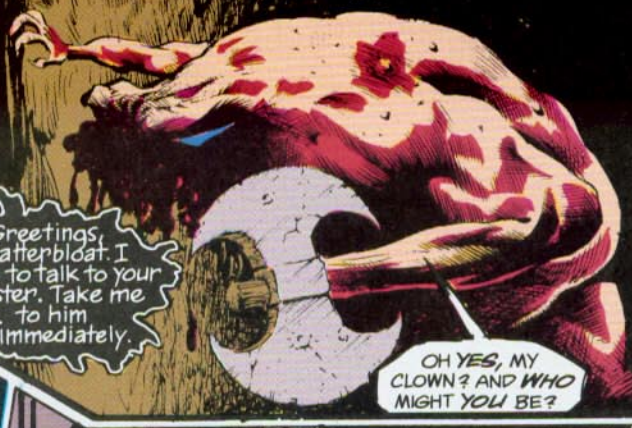
IS IT THIEF, THUG OR WHORE? THERE'S ONE AT THE DOOR...

AND THERE'S ROOM FOR ONE MORE TILL THE END OF CREATION.



THERE'S ONE AT THE DOOR.

AT THE GATE TO DAMNATION. HHHUUUUHHH...



Greetings Squatterbloat I wish to talk to your master. Take me to him immediately.

OH YES, MY CLOWN? AND WHO MIGHT YOU BE?

I have many names. But I am the King of Dreams, of the Nightmare Realms... I seek Lord Lucifer. The Lord of hell.

SO WHERE'S YOUR CROWN?



Some demon has stolen it. I have come to Hell to get it back.

OH YES, MY CLOWN. YOU'RE NEW IN TOWN.

SO WHERE'S YOUR RUBY?

I will take no insults
from you, little demon!
Guard your tongue!

Lucifer will not be kind to one
who insults an honored guest--
and I AM a guest in this realm,
as I am the monarch of my
own.

UHHN.

SPLOQ!

CHUNN-G!!

OH YES, MY
CLOWN--AND WHO
MIGHT YOU BE?

BACK TO YOUR GATE AND DUTY,
SQUATTERBLOAT! I'LL TAKE THE
DREAMLORD, PLAY HIS
GUARDIAN...

...THAN
ETRIGAN?

FOR
INNOCENTS ABROAD
NEED GUIDES OF NOTE--
AND WHO NOTES MORE
THAN ME...?

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

THIS WAY.

THINGS CHANGE.

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

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

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

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

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

THINGS CHANGE ... IN EARTH AND HELL...

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

SNAP

Perhaps.

...I THOUGHT THE HURTING WOULD STOP.

Now it resembles a forest.

HURTING HURTING HURTING
HURT HURTING HURT
HURTING

Hell is changing.

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

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

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

Etrigan...

"Etrigan, WHY did you bring me here?"

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

I IMPORE YOU...

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

DON'T YOU LOVE ME?

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

"But I have not yet forgiven you."

NOW, ONWARD TO THE CITY! HAHHAHA HAHHA!



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

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

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

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

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

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

Greetings to
you, Lucifer
Morningstar.

HELLO.

HELLO, DREAM.

ETRIGAN,
PLEASE LEAVE
US.

WE HEAR YOU
WERE CAUGHT BY
MORTALS, LIKE A NEWLY
FLEDGED DEMON, SWEET
MORPHEUS. WE
EXPECTED BETTER
OF YOU.

STILL, YOU
ARE HERE NOW.

HAVE YOU COME TO
JOIN FORCES? TO ALLY YOUR
REALM TO OURS? TO
ACKNOWLEDGE THE
SOVEREIGNTY OF HELL?

You know
my views on that,
Lightbringer

yes.

YES, WE DO. YOUR
FAMILY ARE WELL, I TRUST?
DESTINY, DEATH, DESPAIR
AND THE OTHERS? NO
MATTER. WE ASSUME
THAT THIS IS NO
SOCIAL CALL...

WHAT DO
YOU WANT?

My helm was...
stolen from me. I
believe one of your
demons has it. I
would like it back.

NOW.

BZZT

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

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

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

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

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

Things do
not change that
much, proud
one.

AH, BUT
THEY DO.
MMMORPHEUS.

LUCIFER ISZZ
INDEED NO LONGER
SOLE MMONARCH
OVV THE NEZZER
REGIONZZZ...

BBBUT NO.
IT'SZZZZ A
TRIUMMMVIRATE.

AZAZEL
WILL JOIN US SHORTLY.
HE IS THE THIRD LORD
OF HELL.

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

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

WE RULE IN
COALITION NOW,
AZAZEL, BEELZEBUB
AND I.



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

Hell, a triumvirate?
Things change indeed.

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

I do
not know
the demon's
name.

WHICH DEMON,
ZZEN? NAME IT AND
WE WILL BBBRING
IT HERE.

THERE ARE MORE
THAN A MILLION DEMONS,
AFTER ALL.

THEN LET
US SUMMON ALL
OF THEM TO TELL,
AND MEET THEM
ON THE VASTY
PLAINS OF FELL!



THERE.
NOW, DREAM
KING ...

TELL
US ...

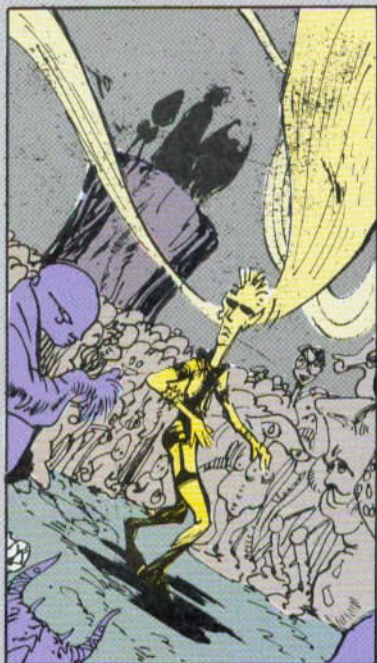
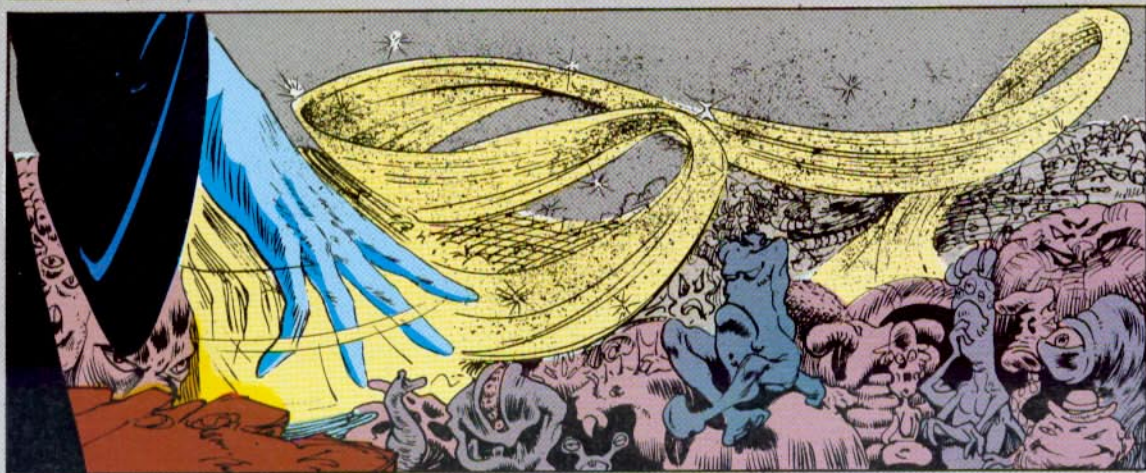
WHICH
DEMON HAS YOUR
HELMET?



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

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

Ah.





CHORONZON, A DUKE
OF HELL. ONE OF BEELZEBUB'S.
WELL, CHORONZON.
DOES DREAM SPEAK *TRULY*?
DO YOU INDEED HAVE HIS
MASK OF OFFICE?



SSSS.
WHAT IF
I HAVE?

you may not
talk to us that
way, choronzon.
*HAVE YOU
THE HELMET?*



YES,
LORDS.



Return
it to me.
Now.



SSSS. I TRADED
IT FROM A MORTAL
FOR A PALTRY THING,
BUT IT WAS A FAIR
TRADE.

I HAVE BROKEN
NONE OF THE *LAWS* OF
HELL. IF YOU WANT YOUR
PRECIOUS BACK THEN
YOU MUST FIGHT ME
FOR IT. SSS.

A challenge? I do
not know if I am
strong enough. I
truly do not know.



Very well.
Yes, I
challenge you,
Choronzon.

SSS. SSS. AS
THE CHALLENGED, I CHOOSE
THE BATTLEFIELD.



I ASSERT
REALITY.

SSS. WELCOME,
LADIES N' GENNEMEN,
TO ANOTHER **THRILL-
PACKED** EVENING OF
FUNFUNFUN HERE
AT THE **HELLFIRE**
CLUB.

I AM YOUR HOST,
CHORONZON, HIGH DUKE
OF THE EIGHTH CIRCLE,
CAPTAIN OF THE HORDE
OF LORD BEELEZEBUB.

TONIGHT, FOR
YOUR ENTERTAINMENT
AND--SSS--DELEC-
TATION...

A FORMAL
CHALLENGE.

AS THE
CHALLENGED,
I SET THE METER
AND TAKE FIRST
MOVE.

AND THE
CHALLENGER IS **DREAM**,
ONCE THE MASTER OF
THE REALM OF SLEEP...

SSSO LET'S HAVE
A **BIG HAND** FOR--
MISTER SANDMAN!

It has been long since I was
forced to play such games
with Demons.

I rise slowly,
approach
the stage.

Around me a soft
susurrus of sound,
and a languorous,
ironic applause.

"The Hellfire Club."
It feels like a
bad joke.

And like everything
else in Hell, it is
deadly serious.





I AM A SNAKE, SPIDER-DEVOURING,
POISON-TOOTHED.



I am an ox,
snake-crushing,
heavy footed.



I feel the snake writhe beneath
my hoof, its spine crushed.



I AM AN ANTHRAX,
BUTCHER BACTERIUM,
WARM-LIFE DESTROYING.



A change in
direction, but
still an old
gambit.

I think...

I think I
understand
how Choronzon
plays. How I
can turn it
against him.



I think I will
abandon the
offensive.

I am a
world, space-
floating, life
nurturing.



I AM A NOVA,
ALL-EXPLODING...



...PLANET-CREMATING.



I am the Universe--all things encompassing, all life embracing.



I AM ANTI-LIFE, THE BEAST OF JUDGMENT. I AM THE DARK AT THE END OF EVERYTHING. THE END OF UNIVERSES, GODS, WORLDS...

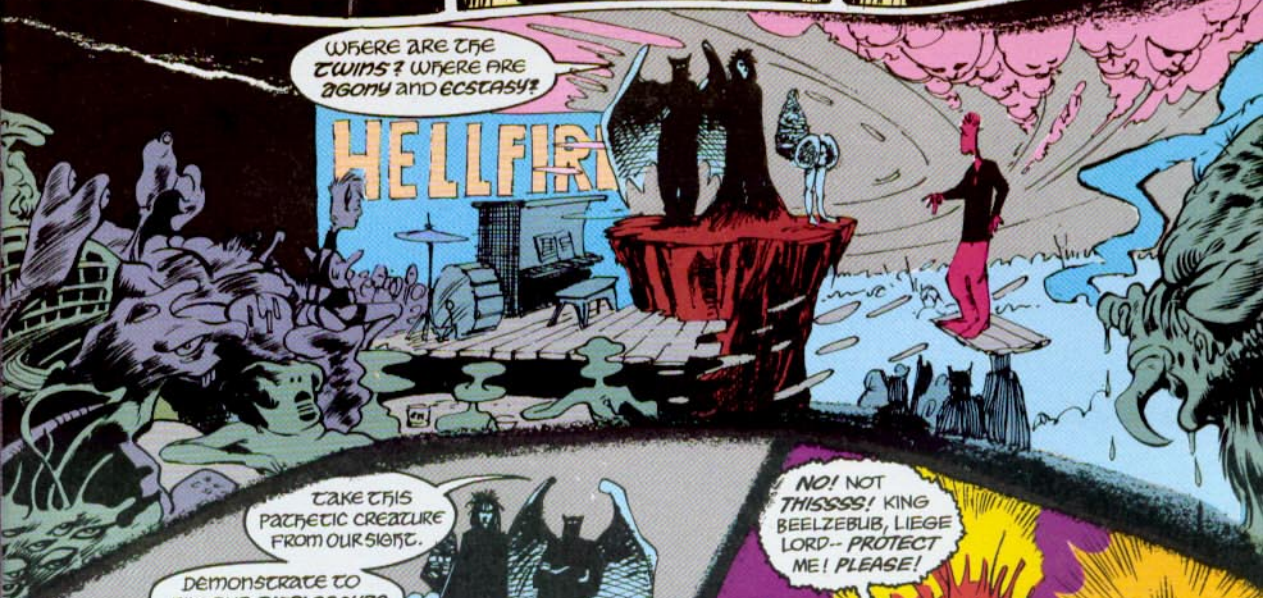
...OF EVERYTHING.



SSS. AND WHAT WILL YOU BE THEN, DREAMLORD?



I am hope.





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

TAKE
IT.

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

HONORABLE?
YOU JOKE, SURELY.

LOOK
AROUND YOU,
MORPHEUS.




THE MILLION
LORDS OF HELL STAND
ARRAYED ABOUT
YOU.

TELL US
WHY WE SHOULD
LET YOU LEAVE?



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





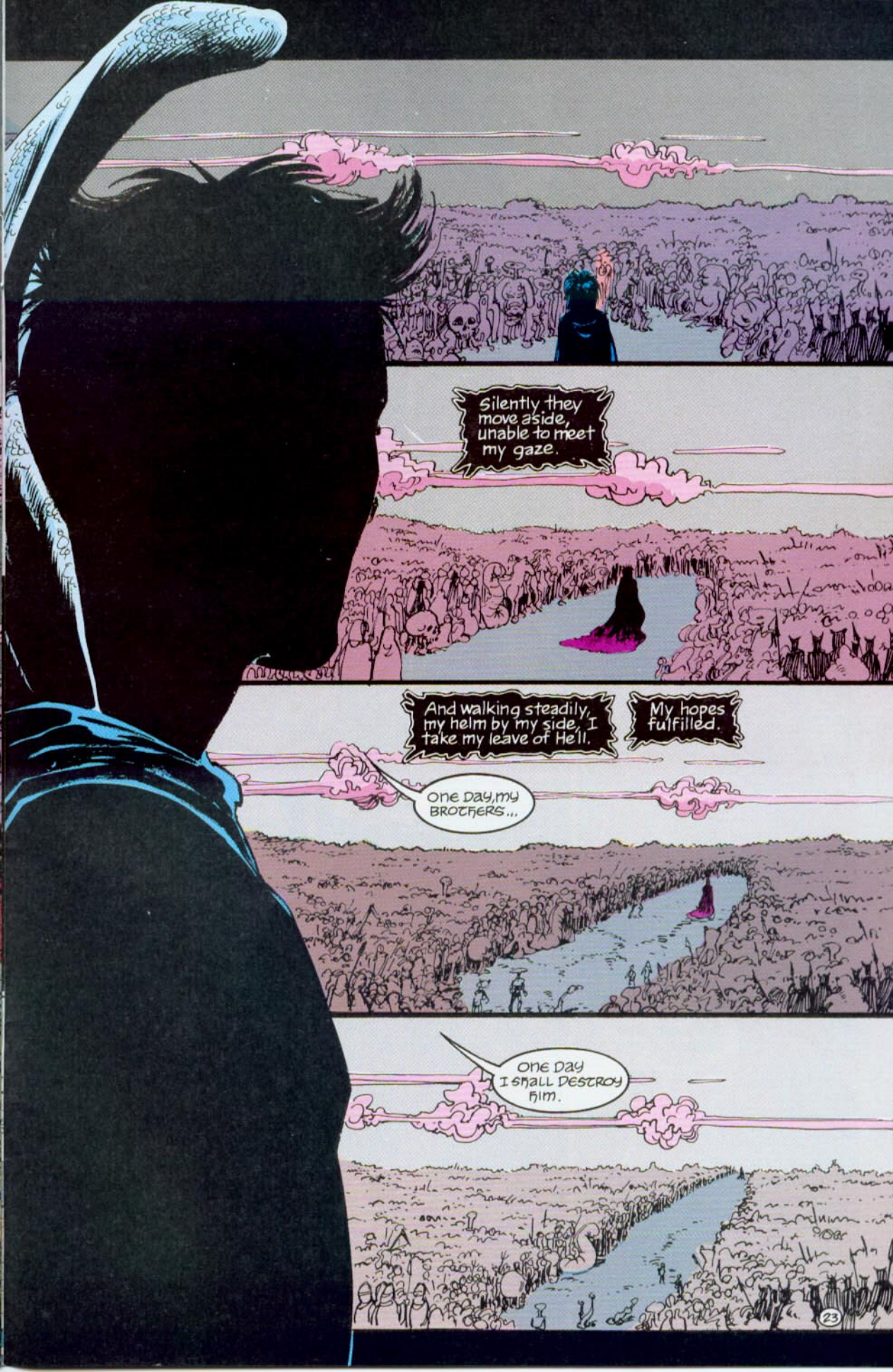
You say I have
no power? Perhaps
you speak truly...

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

Tell me,
Lucifer
Morningstar...

Ask
yourselves,
all of you...

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



Silently they
move aside,
unable to meet
my gaze.

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

My hopes
fulfilled.

One day, my
BROTHERS...

One day
I shall DESTROY
him.

EPILOGUE



VERTIGO

ESSENTIAL VERTIGO

DC COMICS

THE SANDMAN

PRELUDES & NOCTURNES

NEIL GAIMAN

SAM KIEH

MALCOLM JONES III

OBI

DIRECT SALES

00511 >



5 - DEC 96 \$1.95 US \$2.75 CAN
SUGGESTED FOR MATURE READERS

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

♪ POM-DA-♪
POPOFA-POM-
♪ DA-POM...♪

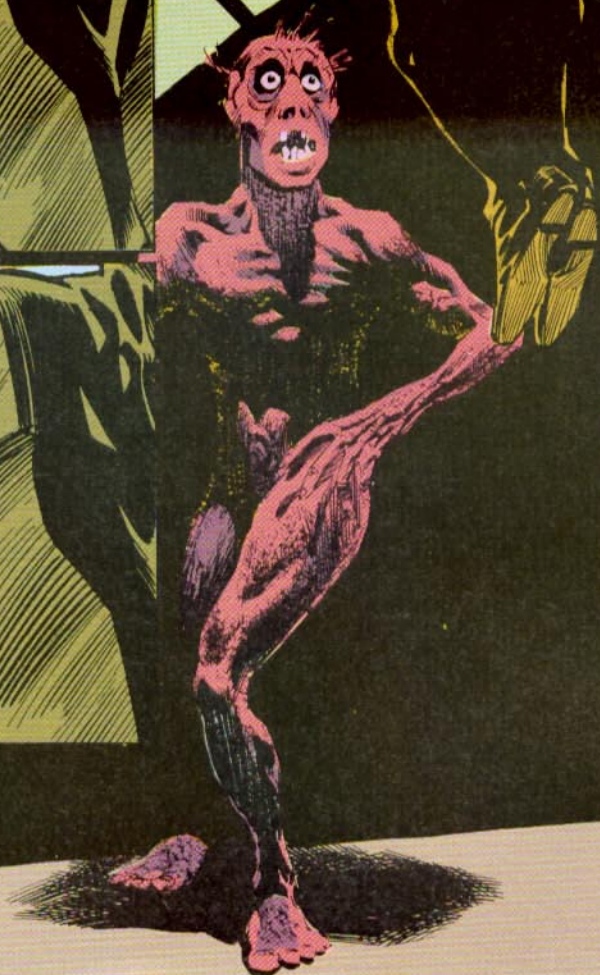
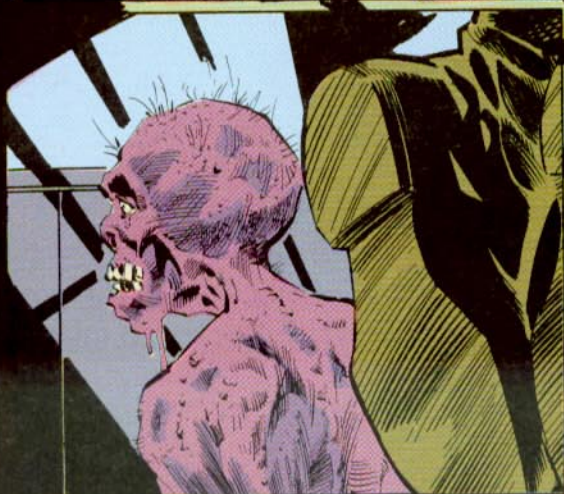
...POM-POMETTY-
POM POM-POM...

GOOD EVENING,
FELLOW TOURISTS...

I THINK THIS PROVES
THAT IN SOME WAYS THE
AIRPLANE CAN NEVER
REPLACE THE
TRAIN.

HEHH.

DINING
HALL



SURPRISE!
IT'S ONLY ME!

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

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

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

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

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

TELL ME.
TELL ME.

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

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

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

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

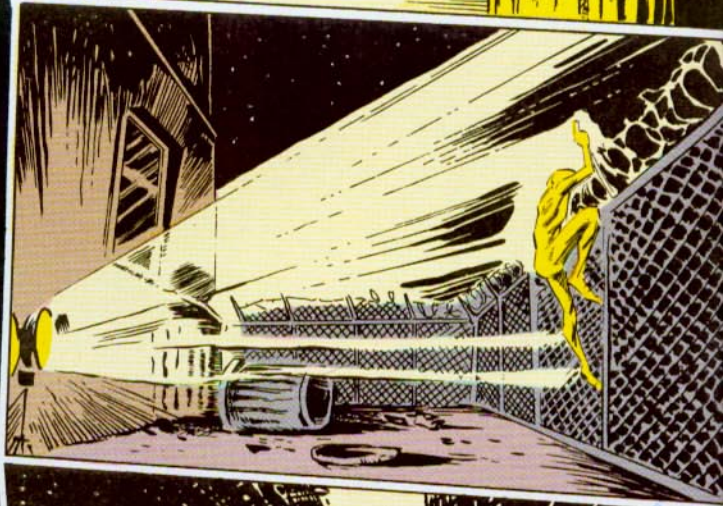
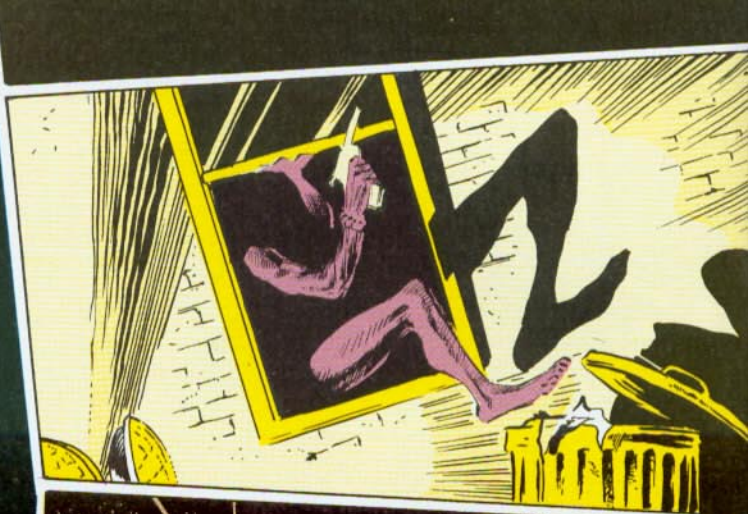
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND. I'M
GOING TO RULE THE WORLD.
OR DESTROY IT.

I'M NOT
COMING
BACK.

YES
YES...

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

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





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

HAPPINESS IS THE HEART THAT'S GRANNY'S.

RIP OUT YOUR HEART FOR GRANNY.

GRANNY LOVES YOU.



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



SHE WRAPS ME TIGHT IN HER LOVE AND HER VOICE. TIES ME TIGHT WITH STEEL AND GRANITE.



I'VE BEEN A BAD LITTLE BOY, I SAID A BAD THING. I LEFT HER.

AND THIS IS WHAT THEY DO TO BAD LITTLE BOYS: THEY PUT THEM IN THE MURDER MACHINE.



I LEAVE THE COFFIN BEHIND ME.



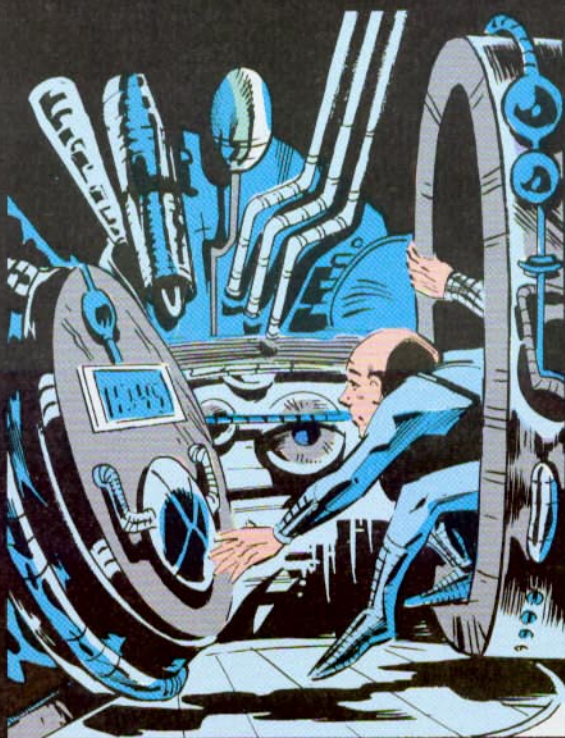
I SIDESTEP THE KNIVES, LEAP THROUGH THE FLAMES.



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



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

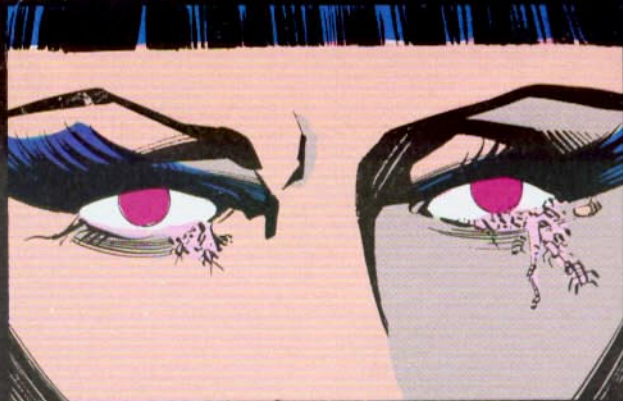
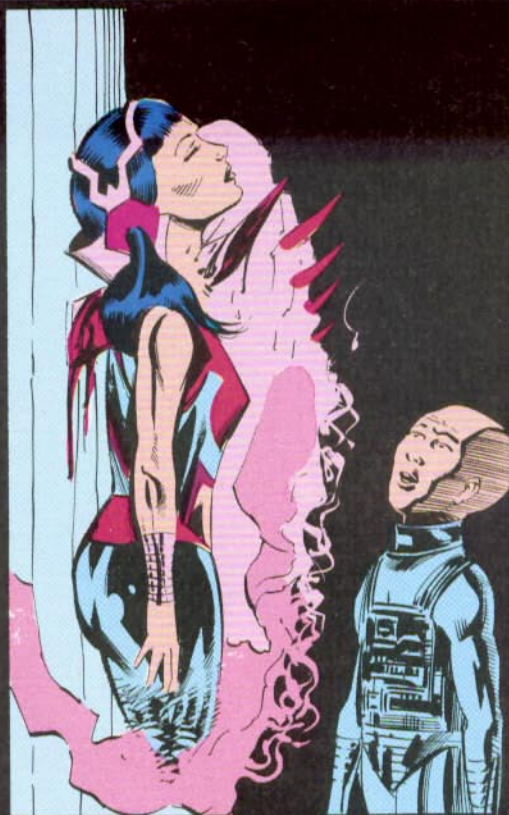


I REACH THE WOMB, THE EXIT. THE BOX.

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

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

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

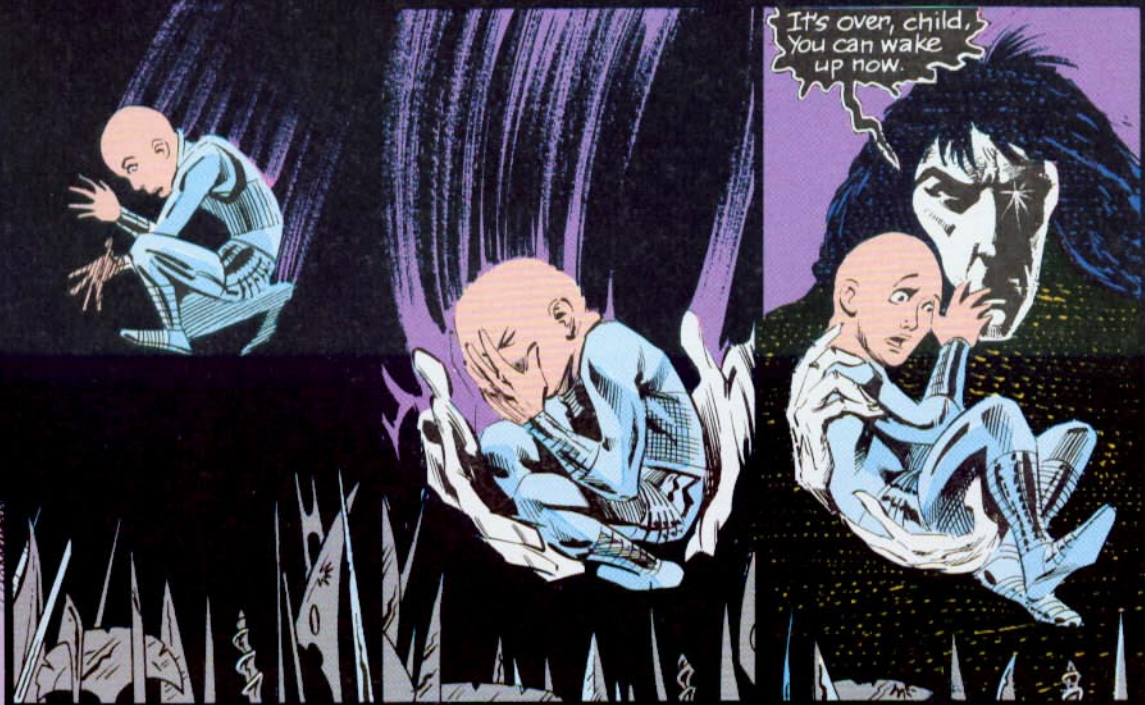


AURALIE HANGS THERE. SWEET AURALIE, MY FIRST LOVE, HER FEET BURNED AWAY AND HER EYES CHURNING WITH MAGGOTS. WHAT DO I CALL YOU? SHE ASKS ME. NOT SCOTT FREE. SCOTT FREE WAS JUST GRANNY'S JOKE.

WHAT'S YOUR NAME, MY LOVE?

I DON'T KNOW.

I'M GOING TO DIE.



It's over, child.
You can wake
up now.



I OPEN MY EYES ON A STRANGE
ROOM AND FOR A MOMENT I
DON'T KNOW WHERE I AM.

THE DISORIENTATION PASSES:
A BEDROOM IN THE J.L.I.
EMBASSY IN MANHATTAN. A
LONG WAY FROM APOKOLIPS.

IT WAS ONLY A DREAM.



BUT IF IT WAS ONLY A DREAM...

WHAT ARE
YOU DOING
HERE?

AND
WHO ARE
YOU?



You want a name, "Scott
Free"? I am a friend.

I have come
to reclaim something
of mine. A ruby...



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

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

AREN'T YOU COLD?

OH. I'M SORRY.

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

YES. VERY COLD.

WELL...

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

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

THANK YOU.

PASSENGERS

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



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

SHOULD BE UP ON THE SCREENS ANY SECOND.

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

IT WAS KEPT IN THE TROPHY ROOM ON THE SATELLITE.

SPACE JUNK, DESTROYED.

And my ruby?

Where is this satellite?

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

You don't know.

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

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

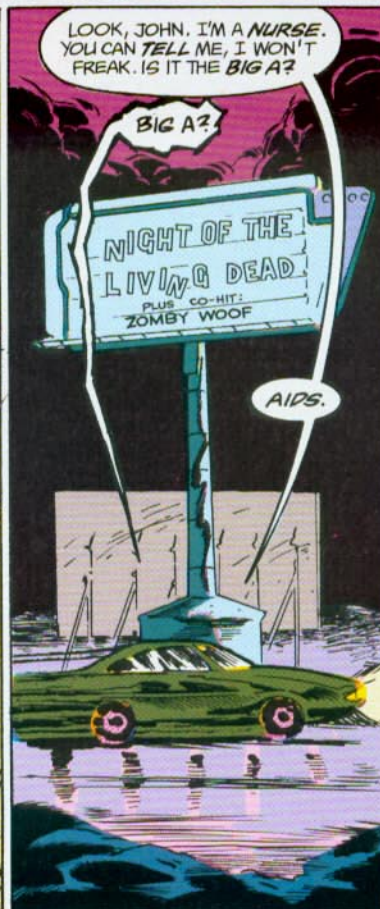
WHO ELSE WAS IN THE OLD JLA...?

GOT IT!

HMMM. LET'S GO WAKE HIM UP.

NOT A CLUE.

Somebody must know.



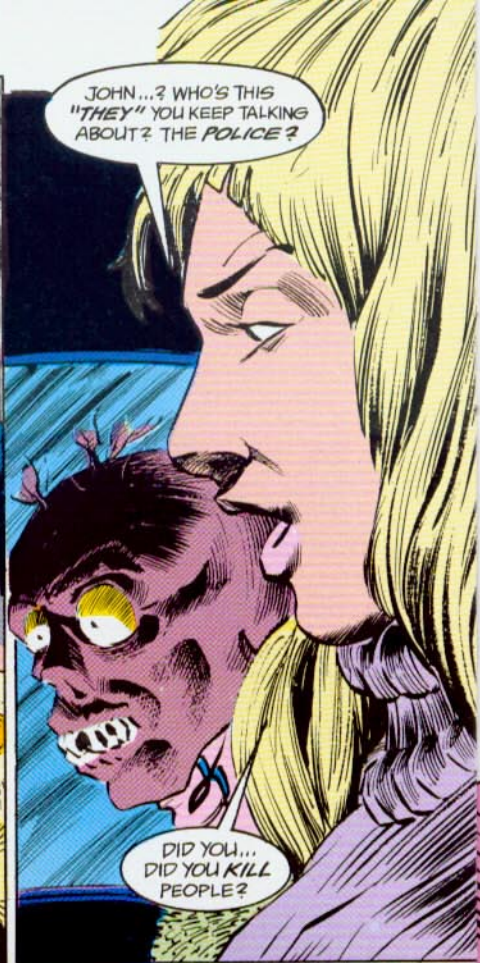


OH. I SHOULD'VE...

SORRY.



THEY PUT ME THERE, AND THEY FORGOT ABOUT ME.



JOHN...? WHO'S THIS "THEY" YOU KEEP TALKING ABOUT? THE POLICE?

DID YOU... DID YOU KILL PEOPLE?

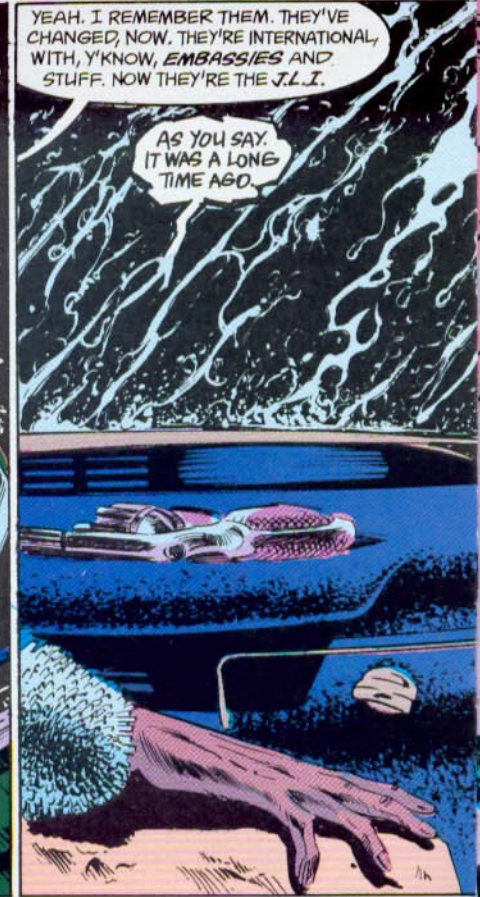


NO. I DID... FOOLISH THINGS. THINGS TO GRAVITY. TO IDENTITY. I TRADED THEIR FACES WITH THEIR ENEMIES, I PRETENDED I WAS OF THEIR NUMBER...



WHO, JOHN?

THE COSTUMES. THE HEROES. THE JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA.



YEAH. I REMEMBER THEM. THEY'VE CHANGED, NOW. THEY'RE INTERNATIONAL, WITH, Y'KNOW, *EMBASSIES* AND STUFF. NOW THEY'RE THE J.L.I.

AS YOU SAY. IT WAS A LONG TIME AGO.



SCOTT...

DO YOU KNOW
WHAT *TIME* IT IS?
I HOPE THIS IS
IMPORTANT...



YEAH. SORRY. I
KNOW IT'S NEARLY
FOUR, J'ONN. BUT
YOU'RE THE *ONLY*
MEMBER OF THE
OLD JLA WHO'S
STILL AROUND.
WE'VE GOT A
VISITOR...




YOU!



LORD L'ZORIL, I GREET
YOU HUMBL Y: MAY YOU GUARD
US IN THE DARKNESS AND ON
THE PATHWAY BETWEEN WAKING
HOURS, AND PROTECT US IN
DREAMS FROM THE FLAME
OF YOUR WRATH.

A Martian?
I thought your
kind were
eons-gone.

I AM THE LAST
OF MY RACE.



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

WHAT HAPPENED
TO THE OLD JLA'S
TROPHIES, J'ONN?

Where?

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

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

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

WHO
WAS
THAT?

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

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

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

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

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

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

I'M NOT A BLACK MAGICIAN.

I DIDN'T SAY YOU WERE, JOHN.

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

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

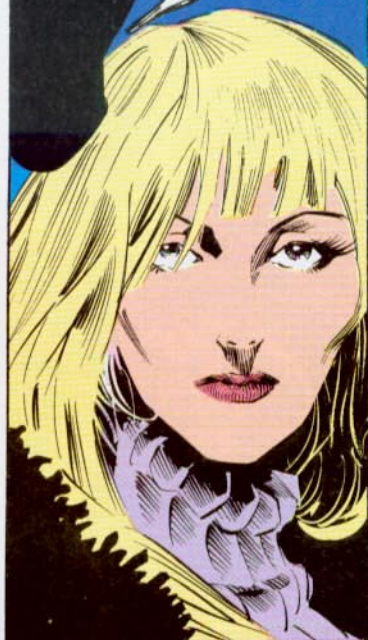
DO YOU KNOW WHAT DREAMS ARE MADE OF, ROSEMARY KELLY?

MADE OF? THEY'RE JUST DREAMS...

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

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

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



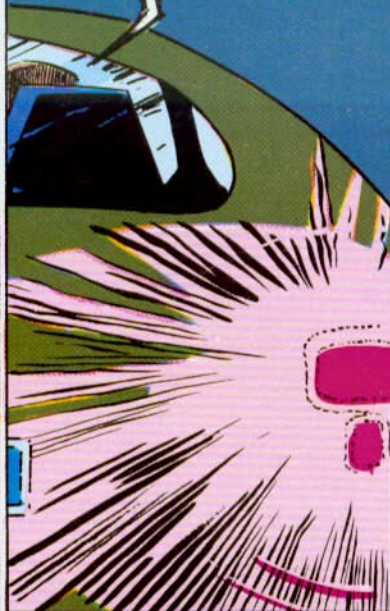
I DON'T KNOW WHERE MOTHER GOT THE RUBY FROM. SHE HAD A LUCKY CHARM AS WELL. SHE WOULDN'T GIVE ME THAT... NOT WHILE SHE LIVED.

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



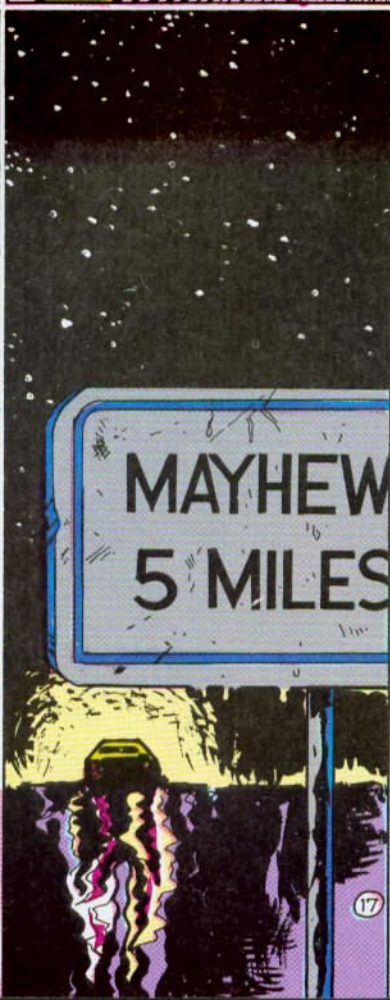
I CODED CIRCUITRY INTO ITS CLASP. I CHANGED ITS RESONANCE; I IRRADIATED IT; I FORCED FLAMES; I ISOLATED IT FROM ITS ORIGINAL POWER SOURCE, WHATEVER--OR WHOEVER-- THAT WAS.

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



IT ISN'T A RUBY, REALLY. IT'S A SOLID DREAM. IT'S THE ONLY DREAM I HAVE. NOBODY ELSE CAN USE IT ANYMORE. NOBODY BUT ME.

AND WE'RE CLOSE TO IT, NOW. I WANT TO DRINK ITS LIGHT. TO DRINK THE LIGHT OF MY RUBY.



MAYHEW
5 MILES

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

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

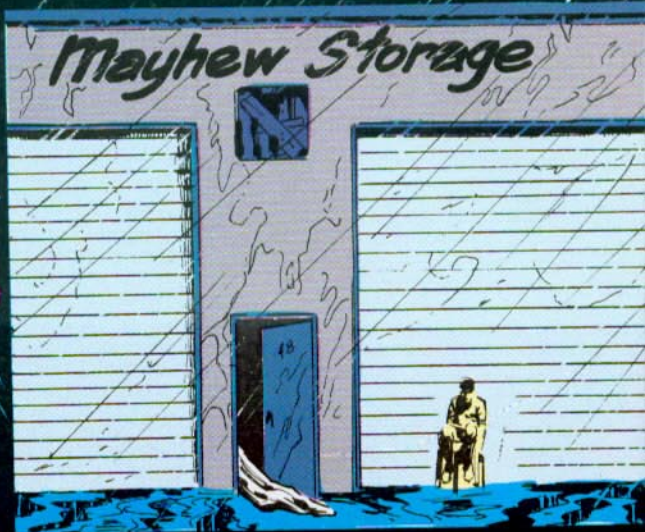
I travel briefly by bus: in
the back the dreamer copulates
desperately, not noticing his
autonomous passenger. I sit
at the front and talk to the
driver.

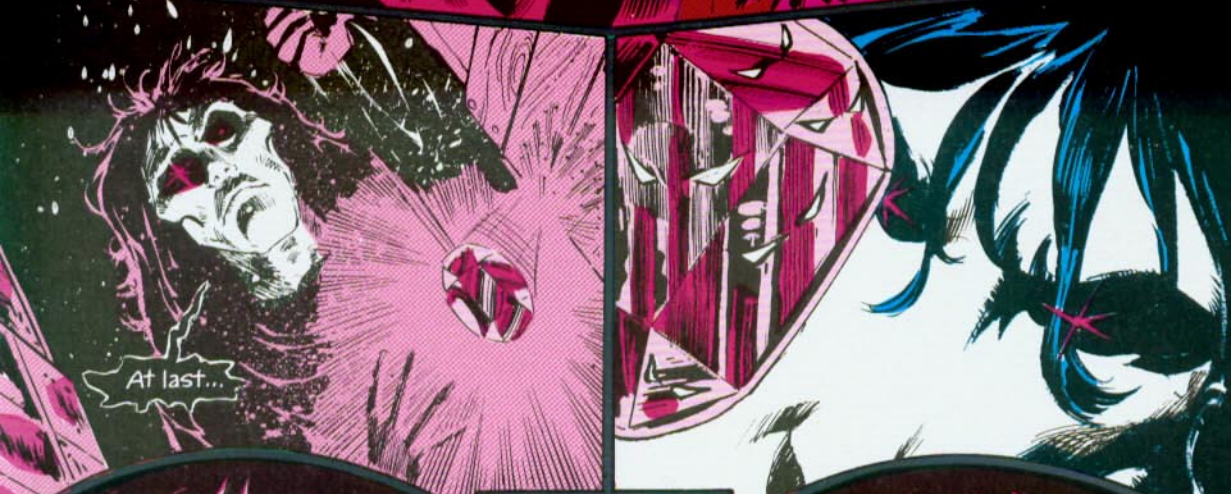
Approaching the state of
Delaware, the dreamer is a
small dog, dreaming impatiently
of a past life, long forgotten,
when he sailed tall ships across
uncharted .

The salt spray of
the ocean stings
my face.

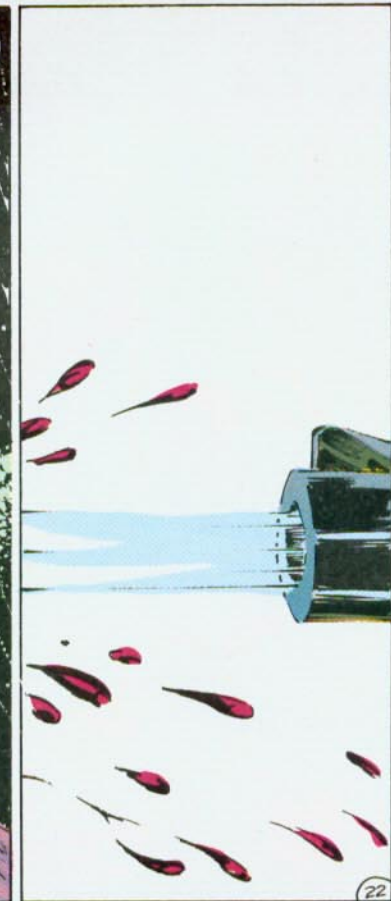
I am moving through
dreams, pulling toward
Mayhew, feeling for
the jewel.

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











HOURS

SO GO MY LITTLE LOVE. TOUCH THE WORLD.

EAT THEIR HEARTS AND POISON THEIR DREAMS. RIP THEIR NIGHTMARES INTO THE DAYLIGHT AND SCUM THEIR SLEEP WITH CREEPING FEAR.



YES.



24 HOL

HELLO, MISS. I WOULD LIKE A CUP OF COFFEE, WHILE I WAIT.



SURE, HON. THAT'LL BE FIFTY CENTS.

UH... WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?



OH, YOU KNOW. THE USUAL.

THE END OF THE WORLD.

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



VERTIGO

ESSENTIAL VERTIGO

DC COMICS

THE SANDMAN

PRELUDES & NOCTURNES

NEIL GAIMAN
MIKE DRINGENBERG
MALCOLM JONES III

DIRECT SALES



6 JAN 97 \$1.95 US \$2.75 CAN
SUGGESTED FOR MATURE READERS

OBI

HOUR 1: THE FLIES
WALKED INTO THE WEB.

NITE DINNER HOURS

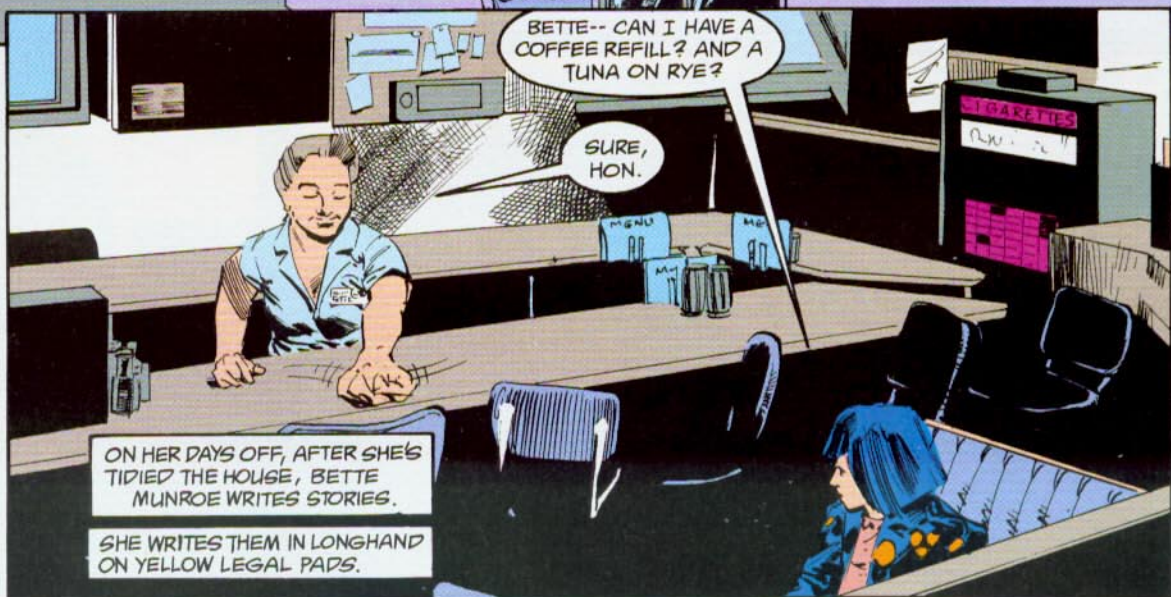
NEIL
GAIMAN,
WRITER

ROBBIE
BUSCH,
COLORIST

TODD
KLEIN,
LETTERS

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

ART YOUNG, ASST. EDITOR
KAREN BERGER, EDITOR



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

SURE,
HON.

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

SHE WRITES THEM IN LONGHAND
ON YELLOW LEGAL PADS.

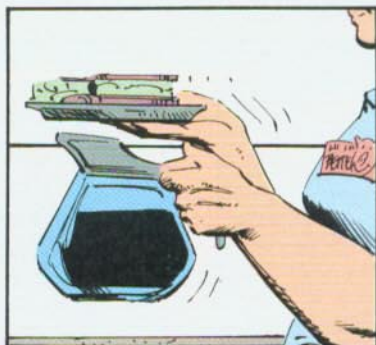


SOMETIMES SHE WRITES ABOUT
HER EX-HUSBAND, BERNARD, AND
ABOUT HER SON, BERNARD JR.,
WHO WENT OFF TO COLLEGE
AND NEVER CAME BACK TO HER.



SHE MAKES THESE STORIES
END HAPPILY.

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



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

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

IT'S HER SECRET.

SHE'S NEVER SHOWN ANYONE HER STORIES.

COMING RIGHT UP!

ONE TUNA ON RYE ...

RUDE GIRL

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

AND A COFFEE. THERE.

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

SHE'LL SMILE.

SHE WON'T TELL HIM.

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

IT'LL BE HER SECRET.

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

SURE, JUDY.

SHE ALREADY KNOWS JUDY'S STORY.

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

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

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

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

NO TROUBLE AT ALL, HON.

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

YEAH. I KNOW.

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

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

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

...I SAID, IT'S ALL MERINGUE AND RAZOR BLADES, AND SHE SAID...

HE'LL GET THE JOB.

MARRY, THE BOSS' DAUGHTER.

HI I'M BETTE

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

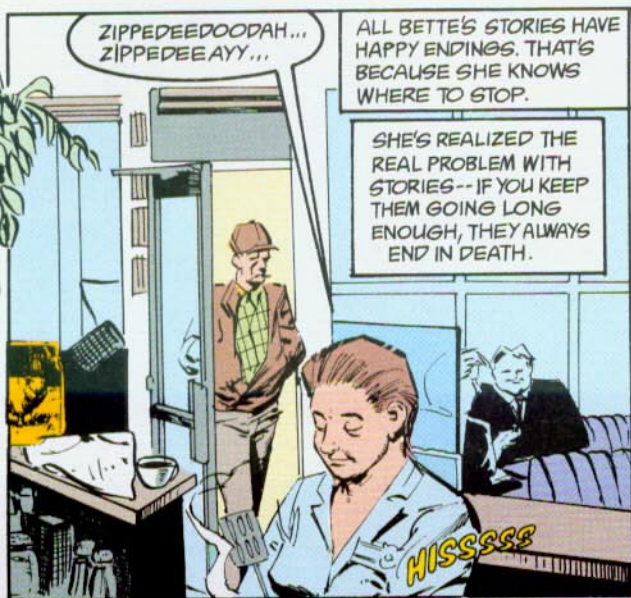
UH HUH. I'LL HAVE TO SEE.

10245

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

LIKE LOVEBIRDS.

TAKE ONE LOVEBIRD AWAY, THE OTHER HANKERS AND DIES.



ZIPPEDEEDOODAH...
ZIPPEDEEAY...

ALL BETTE'S STORIES HAVE
HAPPY ENDINGS. THAT'S
BECAUSE SHE KNOWS
WHERE TO STOP.

SHE'S REALIZED THE
REAL PROBLEM WITH
STORIES--IF YOU KEEP
THEM GOING LONG
ENOUGH, THEY ALWAYS
END IN DEATH.

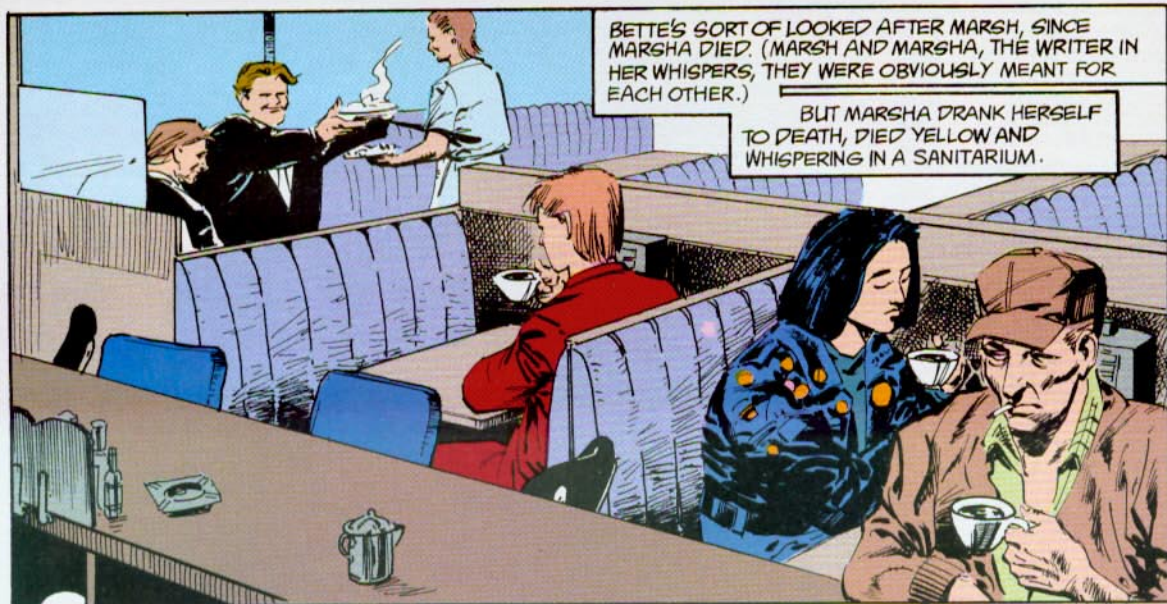
HISSESS



HI, BETTE. WHEN
YOU'RE READY.

WITH
YOU GOON,
MARSH.

MARSH'S STORY SHE KNOWS ALREADY.



BETTE'S SORT OF LOOKED AFTER MARSH, SINCE
MARSHA DIED. (MARSH AND MARSHA, THE WRITER IN
HER WHISPERS, THEY WERE OBVIOUSLY MEANT FOR
EACH OTHER.)

BUT MARSHA DRANK HERSELF
TO DEATH, DIED YELLOW AND
WHISPERING IN A SANITARIUM.



OH... THANKS.

MARSH, HE WENT SORT OF CRAZY
AFTER THAT; A GOOD MAILMAN
GONE BAD. STATE PEN, STEALING
FROM THE MAILS. FIVE YEARS.



HE'S A TRUCKER THESE DAYS, WORKING
OUT OF SOME UPSTATE TOWN THAT HAS
NEVER HEARD OF HIM. BUT HE STILL
LOOKS IN ON HER
EVERY FEW WEEKS...

...FOR OLD TIME'S SAKE.



WHEN DO YOU GET OFF, HONEY?

YOU *KNOW*, MARSH. NOT
UNTIL AFTER LUNCH.

S'OK.
I'LL
WAIT.



THEY WEREN'T JUST CUSTOMERS.

THEY WERE RAW MATERIAL.



EVEN THE QUIET LITTLE STRANGER
IN THE CORNER SEAT.



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

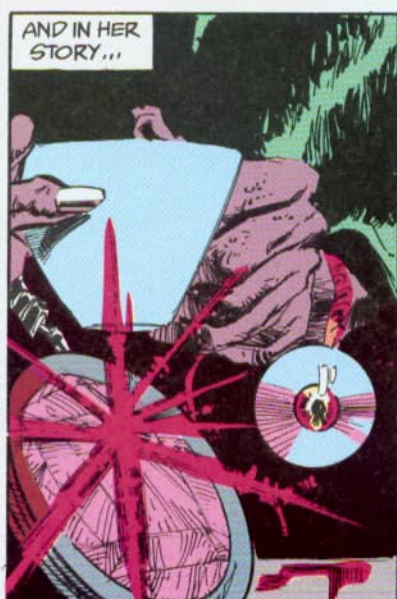


SHE WONDERS
ABOUT HIM...

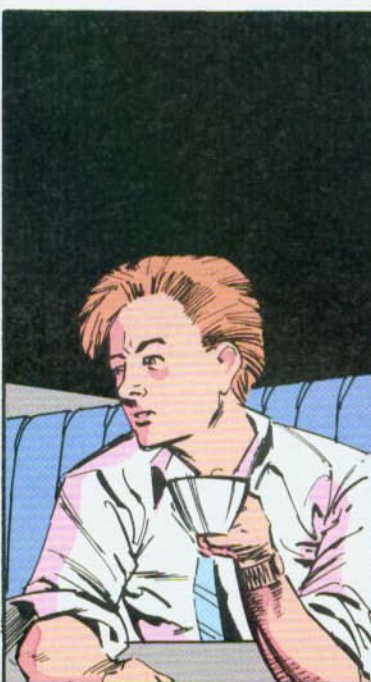
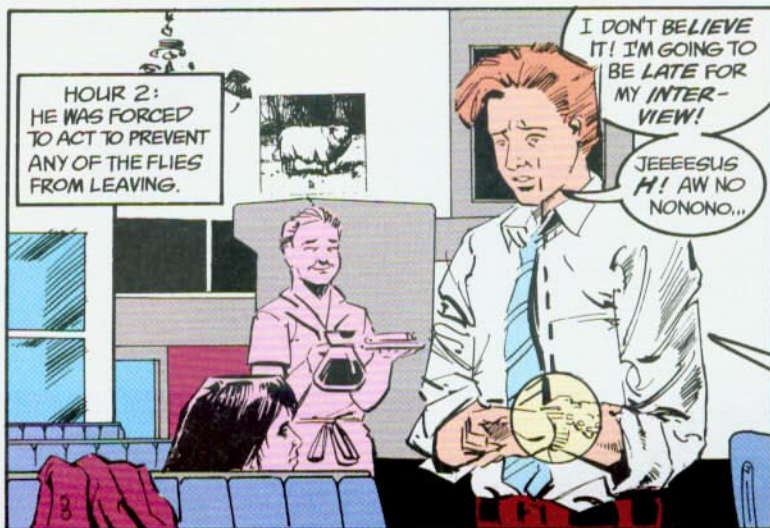


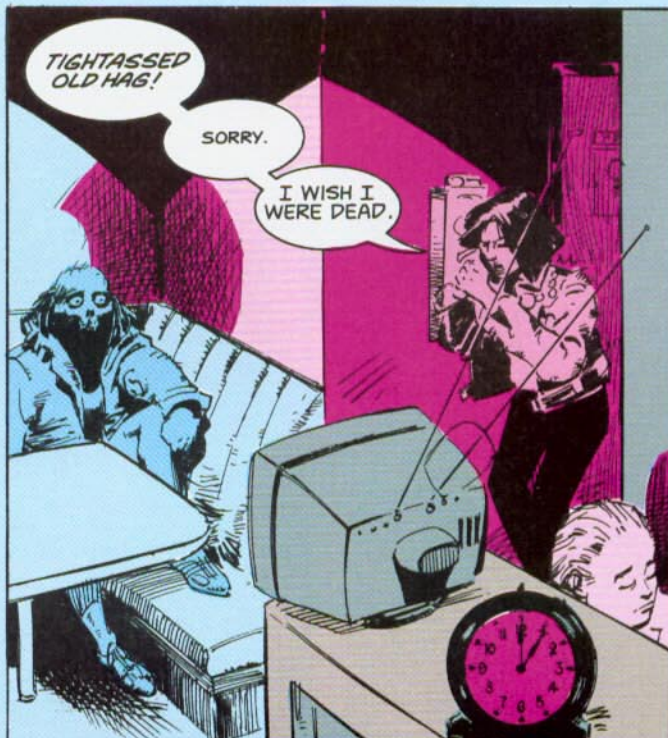
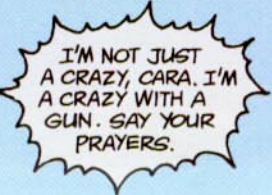
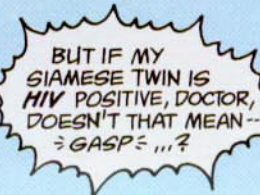
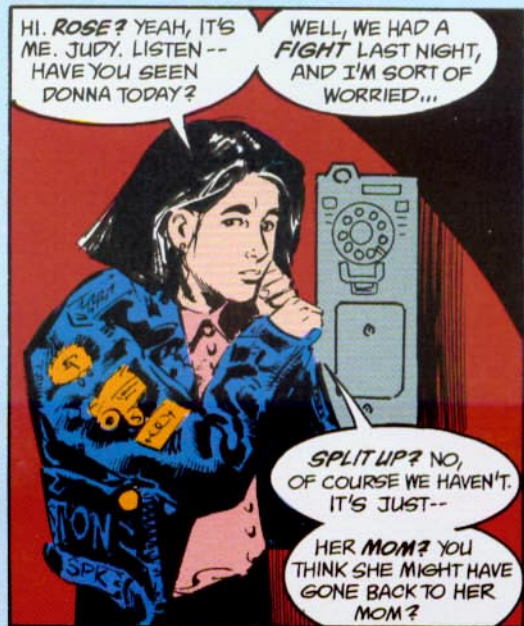
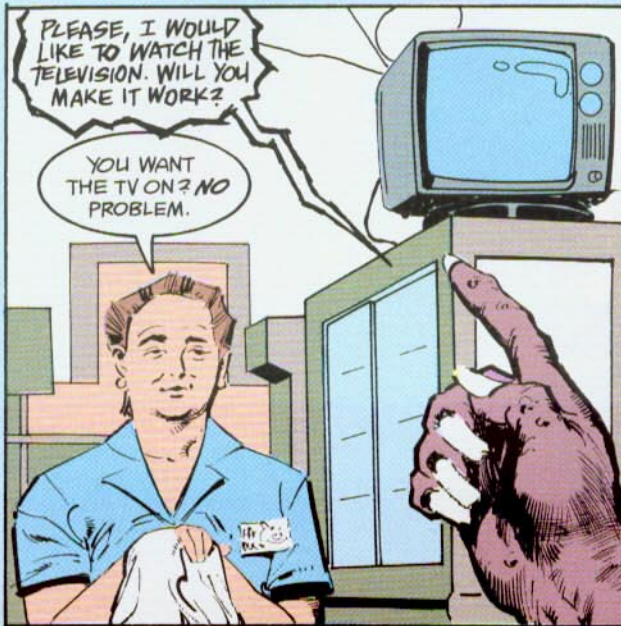
SHE'LL TALK TO HIM WHEN THINGS
GET QUIETER, DRAW HIM OUT, THEN
TONIGHT, WHEN MARSH HAS
CLIMBED IN HIS TRUCK AND
HEADED BACK UPSTATE, SHE'LL
WRITE A STORY ABOUT HIM.

AND IN HER
STORY...



...SHE'LL MAKE HIM HAPPY.







Hour 4: He watched television.

LOOK EVERYONE-- IT'S *DINO*!

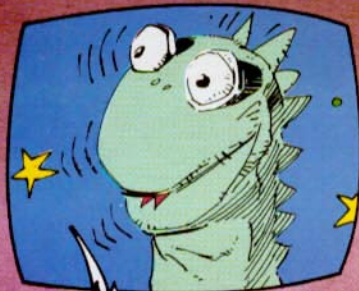
YAYYYY!



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



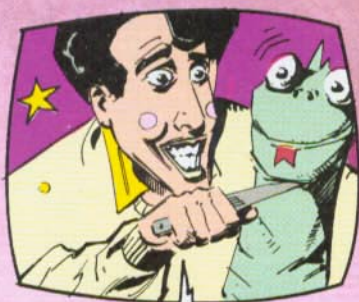
GEE, DINO! I DIDN'T KNOW IT WAS TERRY PTERANODON'S BIRTHDAY TODAY. SHOULD WE BAKE HIM A CAKE?



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



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



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



DINO'S KID-VID PLAYHOUSE



PLEASE STAND BY
WE ARE EXPERIENCING
TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES

1 HOUR 5: THE FLIES GET RESTLESS.



I'M SAYING IT'S WEIRD!



NOBODY'S COME IN-- IT SEEMS LIKE WE MUST HAVE BEEN HERE FOR HOURS.

BUT IT SEEMS LIKE WE JUST CAME IN...



SOMETHING'S VERY...



UHHHH... I, MM...



I LOVE THIS PLACE.



ME TOO.

ANYWAY, I HAD THESE HORRIBLE DREAMS THIS MORNING. HORRIBLE.

1 HOUR 6:

Dear Donna,



I don't blame you for all you said about us last night. And I said I was sorry after I hit you. And I am sorry.



I'M SAYING IT'S WEIRD! NOBODY'S COME IN-- IT SEEMS LIKE WE MUST HAVE BEEN ... UH...



Donna, I love you. I only hurt you because I was scared of losing you. I'm sorry.




Hour 7: He makes them feel good. He makes their dreams come true. Gives them what they want.


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

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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

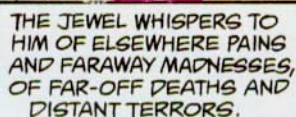
AND KATE KNOWS SHE'LL NEVER HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT GARRY'S LITTLE INFIDELITIES AGAIN. NO MORE LIPSTICK ON HIS COLLAR. HE'S ALL HERS.


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

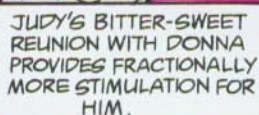

 HE FEELS ECHOES OF THEIR DREAMS.

BETTE HAS DISLODGED STEPHEN KING FROM THE BESTSELLER LISTS.

IT DOES LITTLE FOR HIM. SIMPLE PLEASURES NO LONGER EXCITE HIM.


 THE JEWEL WHISPERS TO HIM OF ELSEWHERE PAINS AND FARAWAY MADNESSES, OF FAR-OFF DEATHS AND DISTANT TERRORS.

THIS COMFORTS HIM.


 JUDY'S BITTER-SWEET REUNION WITH DONNA PROVIDES FRACTIONALLY MORE STIMULATION FOR HIM.

AND MARSH THINKS HE'S **DEAD**; DRANK HIMSELF TO HELL AND GONE; RIGID ON A SLAB -- HIS LIVER HAS FAILED; HIS SKIN IS SLOWLY GOING COLD.

DEE ALMOST GETS ENJOYMENT FROM THAT.

NEARLY AS MUCH ENJOYMENT AS HE GETS FROM WATCHING HIS JEWEL IN ACTION.


 NEWS AT SIX.

IS EVERYBODY GOING CRAZY? REPORTS ARE COMING IN FROM ACROSS THE STATE ABOUT A WAVE OF MADNESS, SUICIDE AND BAD DREAMS...

PLEASURE.

HOUR 9: CONFLICT, HE
 DECIDES, REVEALS
 CHARACTER.

UHT!

...FILTHY
 DYKE
 BITCH!

HOUR 9: CONFLICT, HE
 DECIDES, REVEALS
 CHARACTER.

UHT!

...FILTHY
 DYKE
 BITCH!

HOUR 9: CONFLICT, HE
 DECIDES, REVEALS
 CHARACTER.

UHT!

...FILTHY
 DYKE
 BITCH!

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

BEAUTIFUL. YOU'RE SO BEAUTIFUL.

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

BEAUTIFUL. YOU'RE SO BEAUTIFUL.

HOUR 11: HE CATCHES
 UP ON THE NEWS.

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


HOUR 11: HE CATCHES
 UP ON THE NEWS.

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



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

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



LEADING
FUNDAMENTALISTS
HAVE ALREADY
BEGUN TO PROCLAIM
THE ARMAGEDDON.

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



MARGH, HONEY, PLEASE CALM DOWN. PLEASE. SHE'S JUST A KID.

FILTH. LESBO. FILTH.

YOU BASTARD! I'LL KILL YOU-- LET GO OF ME! I'LL KILL HIM!



ALL YOU NEED. ALL YOU NEED IS A PROPER MAN. A REAL MAN. I'LL SHOW YOU, BITCH. I'LL GIVE IT TO YOU...



DOCTOR DEE. DOCTOR DEE.

GREAT AND WISE AND WONDERFUL...

DEE...



HE LICKS THE BLOOD FROM THE MAN'S FINGER. A GOD MUST NOT APPEAR UNGRACIOUS TOWARD A SACRIFICE; HOWEVER, HE DERIVES NO SATISFACTION FROM IT.

HE DOESN'T KNOW *WHAT* HE WANTS TO EAT. THERE MUST BE SOMETHING.



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



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



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



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



Hour 12: IT IS TIME FOR THEM TO GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER BETTER.

...WORST, MOST SHAMEFUL THING I'VE EVER DONE? OH GEE. I CAN'T TELL YOU. I CAN'T. I...

I WAS 18. I WAS AT COLLEGE. I WAS *DRUNK*. TO BEGIN WITH I WAS DRUNK, ANYWAY.

NEXT DOOR TO MY APARTMENT WAS A FUNERAL HOME.

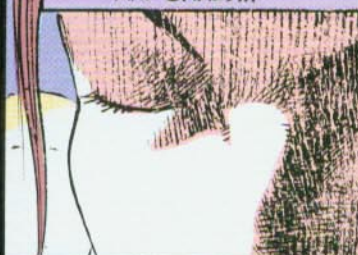


"I WENT *OVER* TO THE BODY AND I STARTED TO PLAY WITH IT.



AND ALL OF A SUDDEN BLOOD STARTED TO WELL UP IN HIS MOUTH, AND I PUT MY FACE DOWN AND I...

"MY BOYFRIEND HAD JUST *SPLIT*. THAT WAS WHY I GOT DRUNK. AND I WAS HORNY, AND *CRAZY*..."

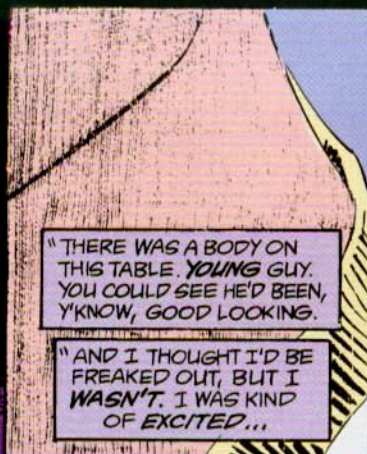


"I THINK MAYBE I WAS LOOKING FOR SOMEPLACE TO *PEE*, Y'KNOW -- A LADIES' ROOM.

"AND THE *DOOR* OPENED, AND I WAS IN THE *MORTUARY*.



... I JUST WALKED AND I FOUND MYSELF OUTSIDE THE FUNERAL HOME AND I JUST SORT OF TRIED THE DOOR.



"THERE WAS A BODY ON THIS TABLE. *YOUNG* GUY. YOU COULD SEE HE'D BEEN, Y'KNOW, GOOD LOOKING.

"AND I THOUGHT I'D BE FREAKED OUT, BUT I *WASN'T*. I WAS KIND OF *EXCITED*..."

"THEN I CLIMBED ON TOP OF HIM, AND STARTED, UH, I STARTED REALLY *GOING*."



I DON'T WANT TO TELL YOU THIS. I DON'T WANT TO TELL ANYBODY THIS.

SOMETIMES WHEN I'D MAKE LOVE TO GARRY I'D ASK HIM TO LIE REAL *STILL*. I'D CLOSE MY EYES AND *PRETEND* BUT IT WAS NEVER--

IT WAS NEVER THE SAME.



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

THEIR HOUSE IS
A MU-SE-LIM

WHEN PEOPLE
COME TO SEE 'EM

THEY REALLY ARE
A SCREE-LIM

AH.
AH.

YESSS.
OHH YESSSS.
MNN.

EEEE.
MMMM.
EEEE.
JESUS.

OH DO
IT. NOW.
DO IT.

THE
ADDAMS
FAMILY

THE ADDAMS
FAMILY.

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

YES. NOW.
YESSSSS.

~~~~~

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

NEAT.



sheep come walking... that don't knock... electric dreams... comic book... animal sheep/wolves eat...



Hour 14: Midnight, and he consulted oracles.



YOU  
COME FROM  
DUST.

YOU  
WALK THE  
DUST.



YOU  
GO BACK  
TO DUST.

TELL ME MY  
FUTURE,

THERE IS NO FUTURE  
FOR YOU, JOHN DEE.

IT'S A FUTURE  
BOUNDED BY WALLS  
AND GUARDS AND  
THE SOUR SMELL  
OF MADNESS.

AND THEN THE SKEIN  
OF YOUR LIFE IS CUT, SON  
OF YOUR MOTHER.

TELL MY  
FUTURE!

YOU HAVE STOLEN  
SOME OF THE POWER  
OF DREAMS.

THAT'S GOOD. I LIKE  
THAT FUTURE. CLEVER  
FLIES. CLEVER LITTLE  
INSECTS.

YOU WILL  
TAKE ALL  
OF IT.

YOU WILL CRUSH  
OUT THE DREAM-LORD'S  
LIFE IN YOUR HANDS,  
JOHN DEE.







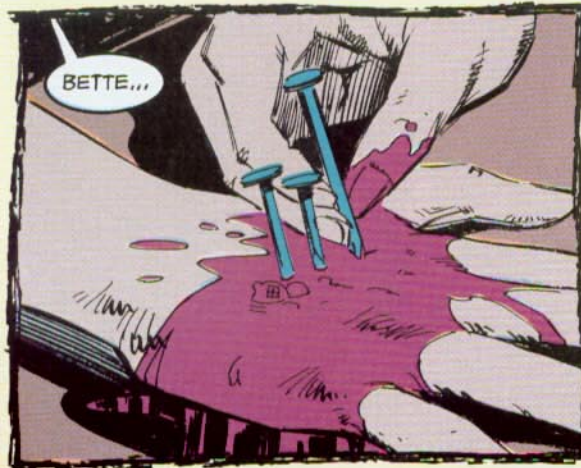
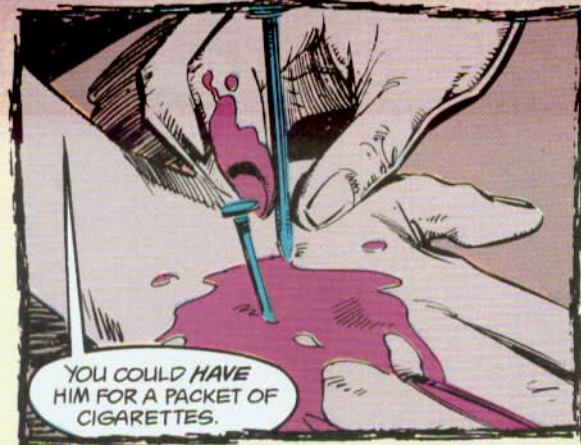
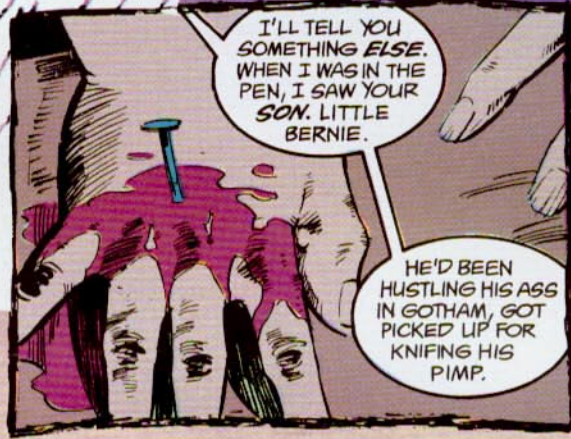
HOUR 16: PARTY GAMES.

MURDER IN THE DARK...

AAAAHH!

HE-HE-HE-HE-HEE!







HOUR 18: HE BRINGS OUT THE BEAST IN THEM.

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

THE PACK LEADER IS SPOILING FOR A FIGHT.

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

THE PACK LEADER PAUSES, THEN SPRINGS.

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

THEY GROWL.

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

RRRODDAWRRR

RRRR





RRRRROOWRRRAW

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

THE SMELL OF BLOOD IS HEAVY ON THE AIR.

AAAAOOOOOOOO

THE VICTORY, LIKE THE BLOOD, IS SWEET.

HOUR 19: HE LIES TO THEM.

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

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

AH.

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

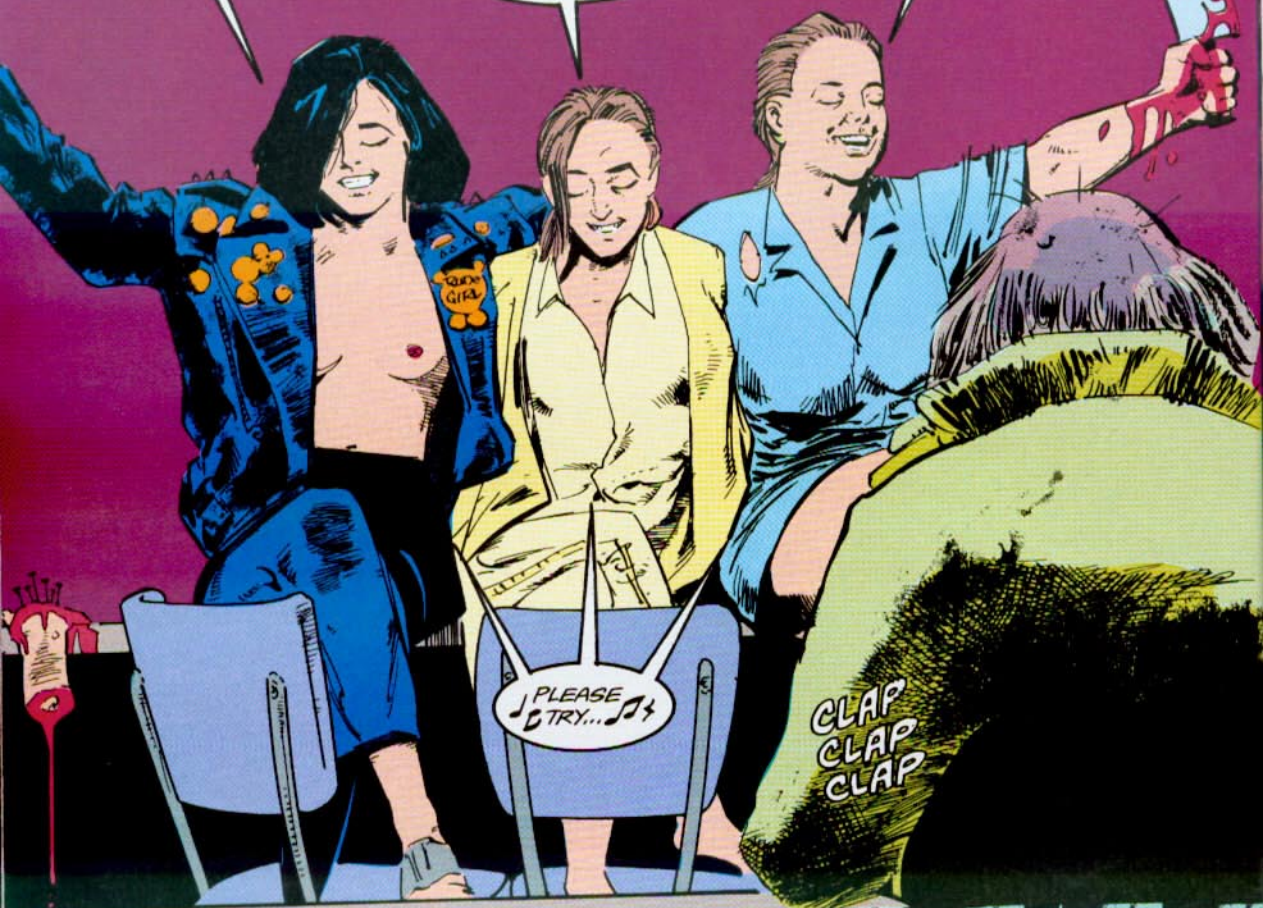


HOUR 20: IT WAS TIME FOR ENTERTAINMENT.

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

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

SPREAD A LITTLE  
HAPPINESS AS YOU  
GO BY...



HOUR 21: HE SHOWS THEM THE  
DELIGHTS OF BELIEF.

AHN. AH. GOD

I CAN SEE  
IT! SWEET  
LORD...

I CAN  
SEE THE  
GLORY!



I WANT TO SEE  
IT, DOCTOR. I TRUST  
YOU. I WILL SEE THE  
GLORY...







HOUR 22.

PLEASE THANK YOU  
FOR AGING WOOD





HOUR 23.





Hour 24.



HELLO.

I'M GLAD YOU'RE HERE. IT WAS STARTING TO GET A BIT BORING.



BUT YOU DON'T LOOK STRONG ENOUGH EVEN TO MAKE IT INTERESTING...

"DO YOU?"

NEXT:  
DREAM'S  
END.



VERTIGO

ESSENTIAL VERTIGO

DC COMICS

# THE SANDMAN

PRELUDES & NOCTURNES

MEKEAN

NEIL GAIMAN  
MIKE DRINGENBERG  
MALCOLM JONES III

7 • FEB 97 \$1.95 US \$2.75 CAN  
SUGGESTED FOR MATURE READERS

OBI



LISTEN: YOU  
CAN HEAR THE  
SCREAMING.

HAROLD SMITH PROWLs  
THE DOGS' HOME, A  
TIRE IRON CLUTCHED  
IN HIS BLOODIED FIST.

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

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

LISTEN.

GASOLINE





LISTEN :

YOU CAN HEAR  
SOBBING.

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

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

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

RESENT  
THE  
END  
IS  
NEAR

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

LISTEN.

LISTEN TO A  
WORLD IN PAIN.

LISTEN.

YOU CAN HEAR IT.



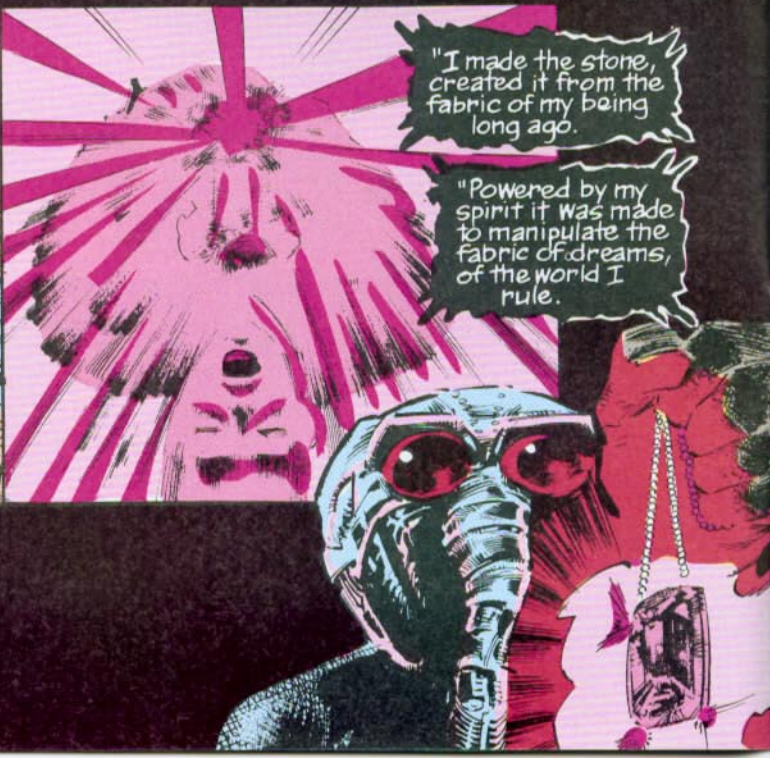
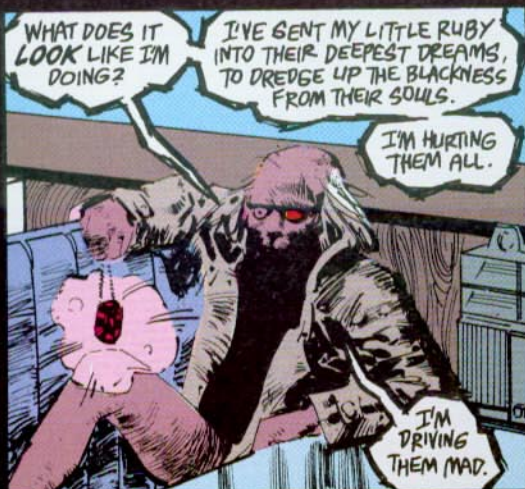
# S O U N D



# A N D F U R Y

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









It was not made  
for THIS. You must  
stop.

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



The ruby contains  
too much of me--of  
my power--in its  
fabric.

It stole more when  
I tried to use it.



You have robbed  
me of it. I cannot use  
it, and I am no longer  
strong enough to  
repair the havoc  
alone.

Can you not see  
what you are doing?  
You must LISTEN.

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



**IT'S YOUR  
STOLEN POWER  
I'VE BEEN USING  
ALL THESE YEARS.  
YES. I SEE.**

**VERY  
WELL.**



You will repair  
it, then, give back  
control of it to  
me?

You will  
return it?



**GIVE MY BABY  
TO YOU? NO.  
DON'T BE  
STUPID.**



**I'M GOING  
TO KILL YOU.**





Kill me?

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



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



...nor garbed for less than battle.



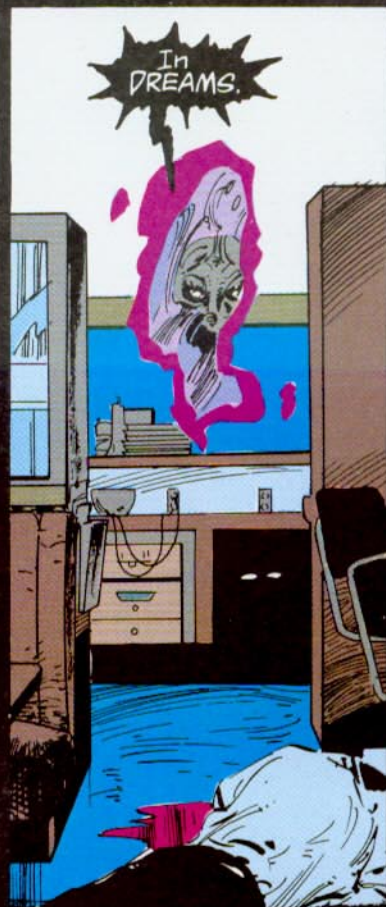
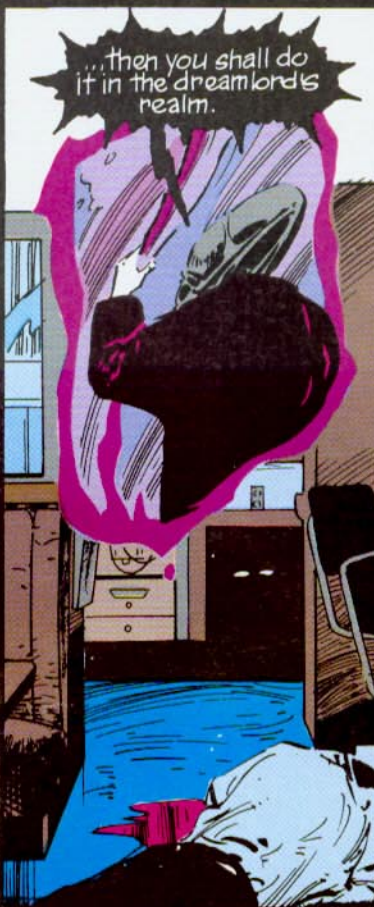
And you shall not do it here.



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

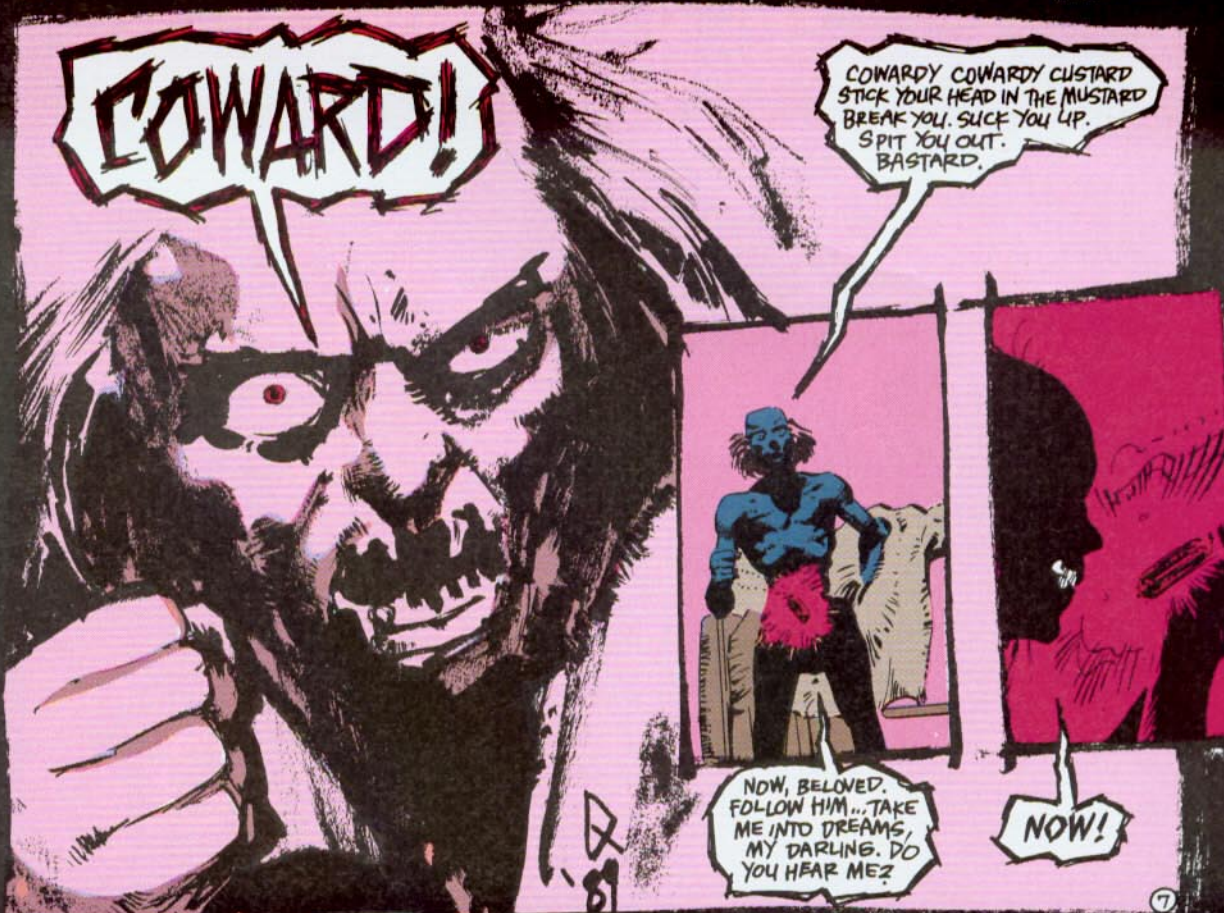
...then you shall do  
it in the dreamlord's  
realm.

In  
DREAMS.



**COWARD!**

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



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

**NOW!**



LISTEN:

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

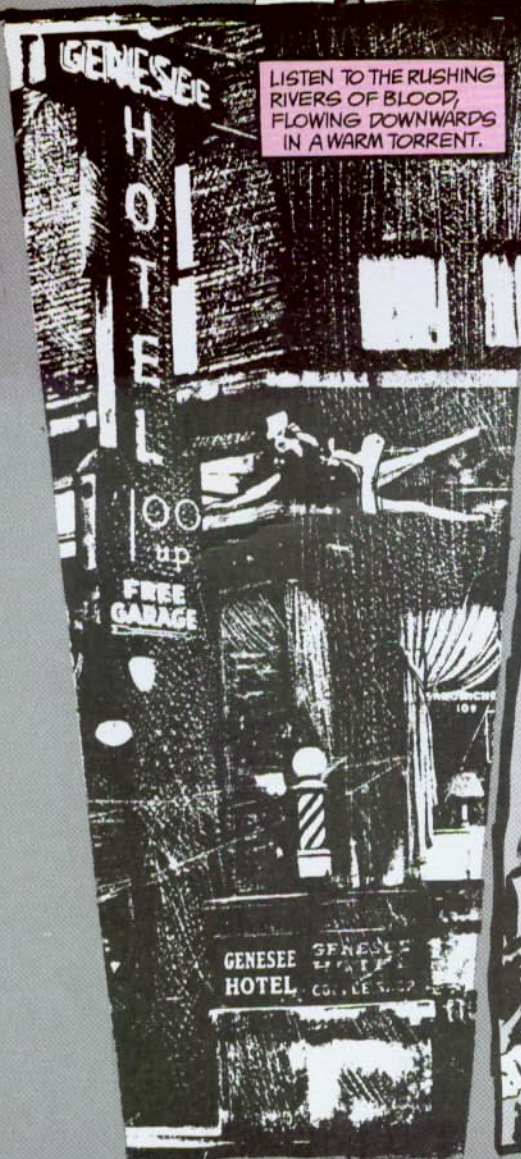


TO THE NOISE JOEY CAMPBELL MAKES AS THE OVEN CLEANER CONSUMES HIS FACE, BURNS OUT HIS EYES; TO THE HAPPY LAUGHTER OF THE LITTLE CHILDREN.

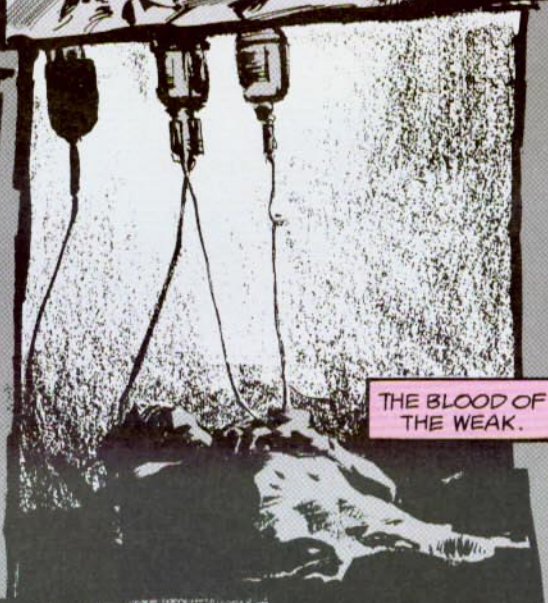


LISTEN:

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



THE BLOOD OF THE WEAK.



OF THE HELPLESS.

OF THE MAD.

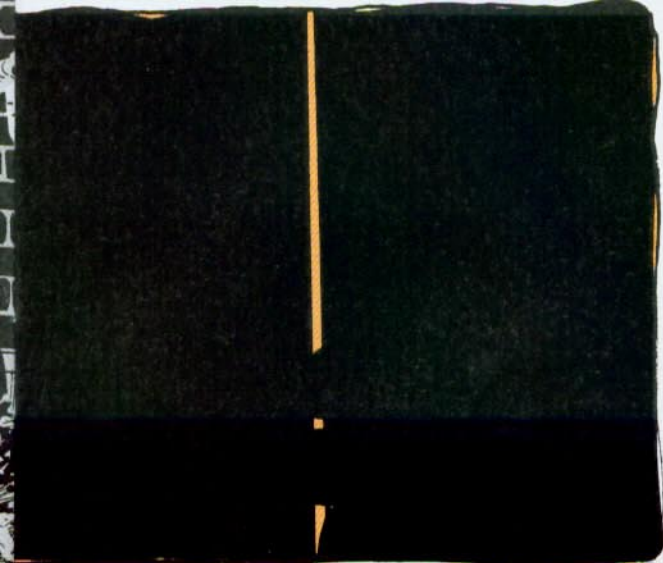


LISTEN.

YOU CAN HEAR IT.











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

YOU HAD A  
DREAM ABOUT RAPING  
YOUR MOTHER.

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



*to Roddy,  
Love in Love,  
Ethel 1927*

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

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



CAESAR...



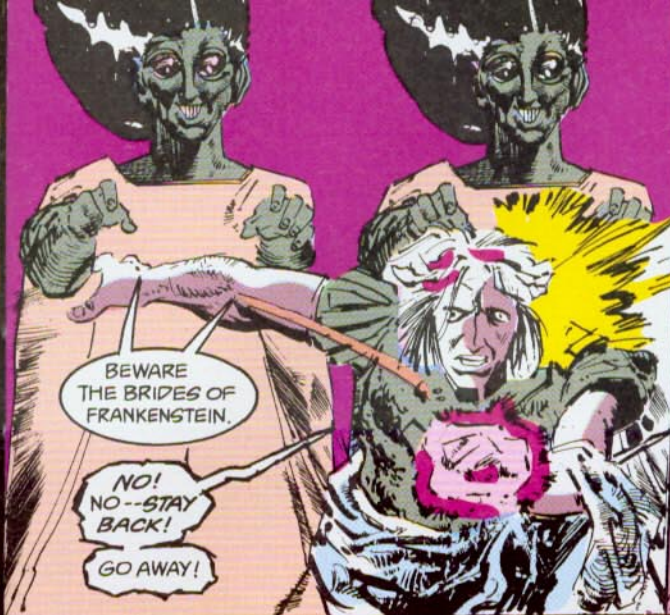
CAESAR.  
BEWARE THE IDEAS  
OF MARCH!

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

BEWARE  
THE MARCH  
OF IDEAS?

NO...





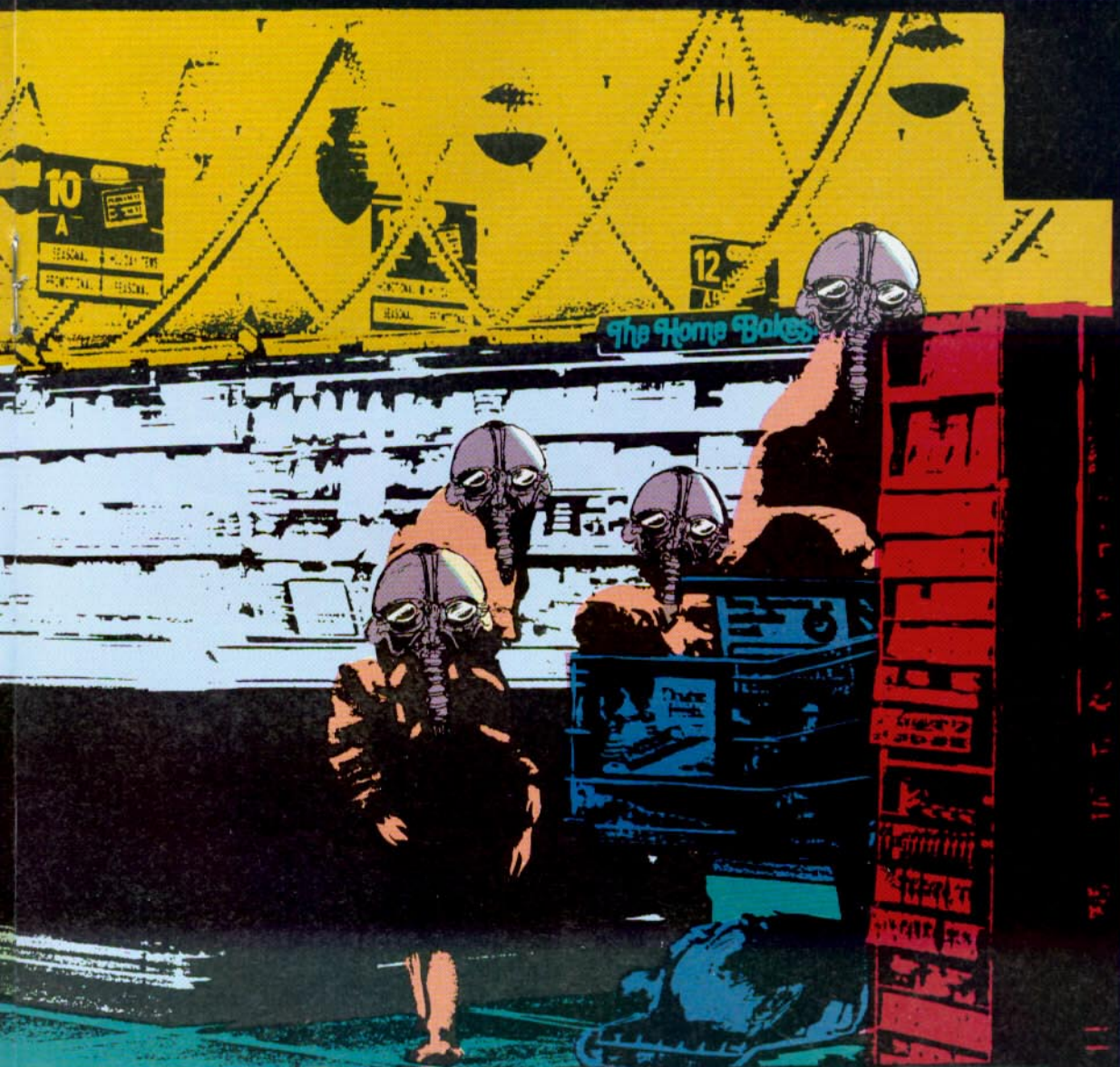




WHERE ARE YOU?  
SHOW YOURSELF! I'M  
GOING TO SUCK YOUR  
BLASTED LIFE OUT,  
SWINE-SCUM!

YOU CAN'T  
HIDE FROM ME  
FOREVER!





AND A HUNDRED  
MILLION SLEEPERS  
STIRRED LINEASILY  
IN THEIR SLUMBER.





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

LOOK!

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


CAN YOU  
SEE ME?

HAHAHAHAHAHA

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

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







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



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




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




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

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



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



OHMMMM. THIS IS SO GOOD.

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

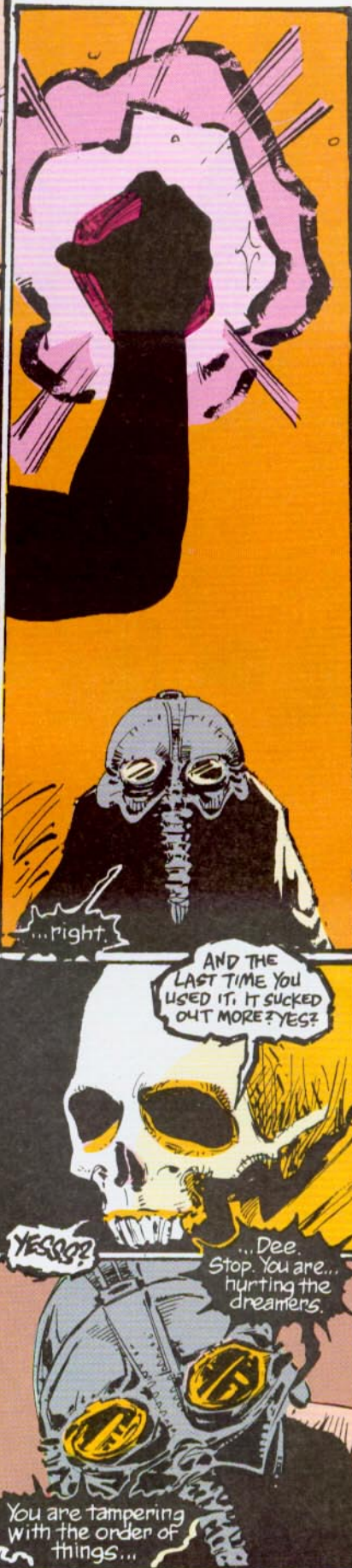


STOP!

Enough! I am here Dee! Resist!

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









WHOOOMPH!





I DID IT.



I... I KILLED HIM.  
WHOEVER HE WAS.  
WHATEVER IT WAS...  
IT'S DEAD.

THE RUBY. THE RUBY'S GONE TOO.  
I FEEL SO STRANGE... I FEEL DIFFERENT.



SO... NOW I RULE THE  
DREAMWORLD. I WILL HIDE  
IN DREAMS. I'LL NEVER GO BACK,  
NEVER LEAVE HERE FOR THE REAL  
WORLD WHERE PEOPLE HURT YOU,  
WHERE THEY DON'T CARE...



WHERE THEY DIE WHEN  
YOU STILL NEED THEM.

I WILL BE A  
WISE AND TOLERANT  
MONARCH, DISPENSING  
JUSTICE FAIRLY, AND  
ONLY SETTING  
NIGHTMARES TO  
RIP OUT THE MINDS  
OF THE EVIL AND  
THE WICKED.

OR JUST  
ANYBODY I  
DON'T LIKE.



I'M THE KING.  
OF DREAMS. OF  
EVERYTHING.

BUT IT'S FUNNY.  
I ALWAYS THOUGHT WHEN  
I BECAME KING... I THOUGHT  
THERE WOULD BE APPLAUSE.



I THOUGHT  
SOMEBODY WOULD  
SAY SOMETHING.



Thank you,  
John Dee.



It has been  
so long. I had  
forgotten...

I had forgotten  
how much of my power  
I had placed in that  
jewel. How much of it  
was denied to me...

BUT I  
KILLED YOU...

WHAT ARE  
YOU GOING TO  
DO TO ME?

I am not sure you  
have pretended to power  
not yours. Wreaked  
havoc in my realm  
inflicted pain upon  
my person.

For that you  
should be punished.

A-ARE YOU GOING  
TO KILL ME?

I could  
Perhaps I will...

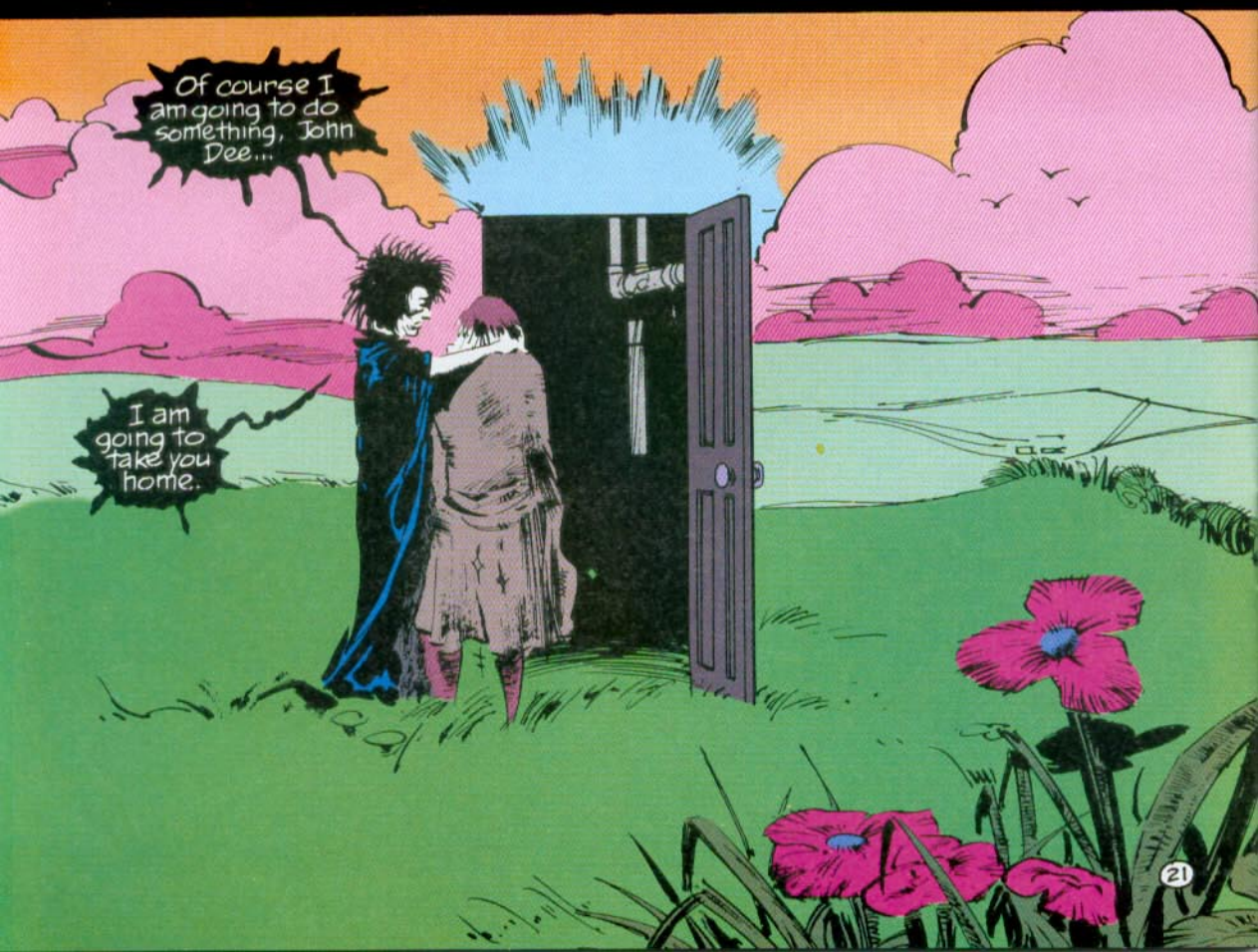
But you destroyed  
the ruby. I doubt I  
would have thought  
of that.

Destroying it,  
you released the  
power stored in  
it. My control of  
the dreamworld  
It's all mine  
again.

It  
feels  
GOOD.

SKRATCH  
SKRATCH

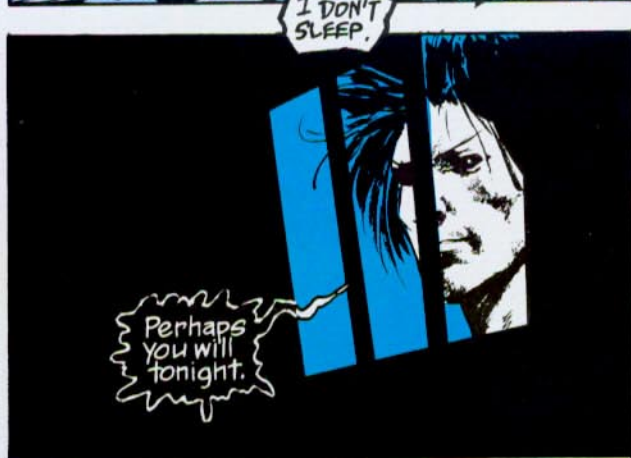














AS FAST AS THEY DAWNED,  
THE CRAZY TIMES ARE OVER.

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

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

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

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

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

JUST PEACE.

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

LISTEN.

YOU CAN HEAR IT.

ARKHAM  
ASYLUM

NEXT:  
**A DEATH  
IN THE  
FAMILY**



VERTIGO

ESSENTIAL VERTIGO

DC COMICS

# THE SANDMAN

THE SOUND OF HER WINGS



NEIL GAIMAN  
MIKE DRINGENBERG  
MALCOLM JONES III

DIRECT SALES



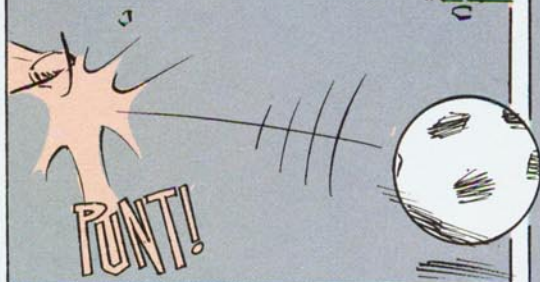
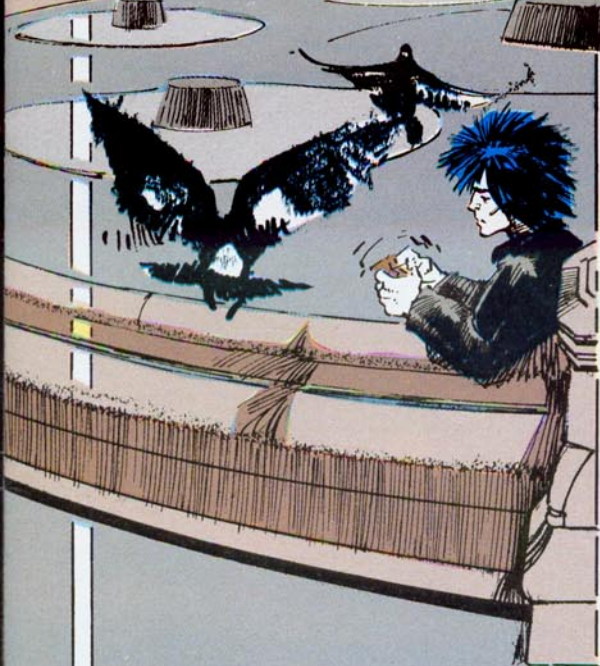
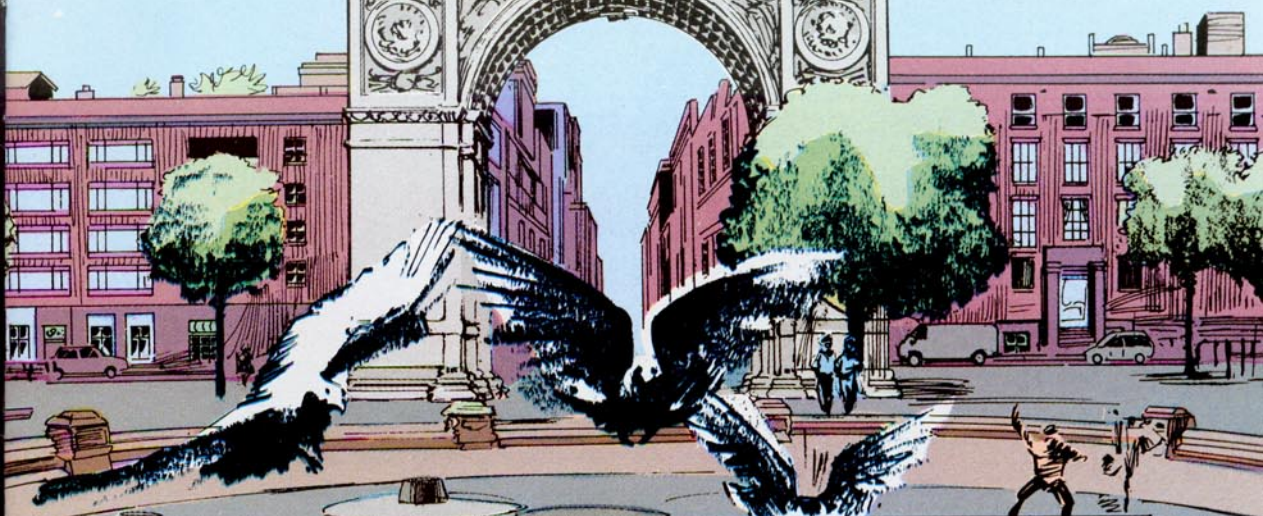
8 · MAR 97 \$1.95 US \$2.75 CAN  
SUGGESTED FOR MATURE READERS

OBI



# "THE SOUND OF HER WINGS"

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



ESSENTIAL VERTIGO: THE SANDMAN #8, March, 1997 (Originally published as THE SANDMAN #8 August, 1989, © 1989). Published monthly by DC Comics, 1700 Broadway, New York, NY 10019.  
 POSTMASTER: Send address changes to THE SANDMAN, DC Comics Subscriptions, P.O. Box 0528, Baldwin, NY 11510. Annual subscription rate \$23.40. Canadian subscribers must add \$12.00 for postage and GST. GST # is R125921072. All foreign countries must add \$12.00 for postage. U.S. funds only. Subscriptions to this title are offered only to readers who attest they are 18 years of age or older, or with parental approval to readers under 18 years of age. Copyright © 1997 DC Comics. All Rights Reserved. DC, VERTIGO and all characters featured in this issue, the distinctive likenesses thereof, and all related indicia are trademarks of DC Comics. The stories, characters and incidents featured in this publication are entirely fictional. For advertising space contact: Henry Watkins, National Sales Director (212) 636-5520. Printed on recyclable paper.  
 Printed in Canada.  
 DC Comics. A Division of Warner Bros.—A Time Warner Entertainment Company





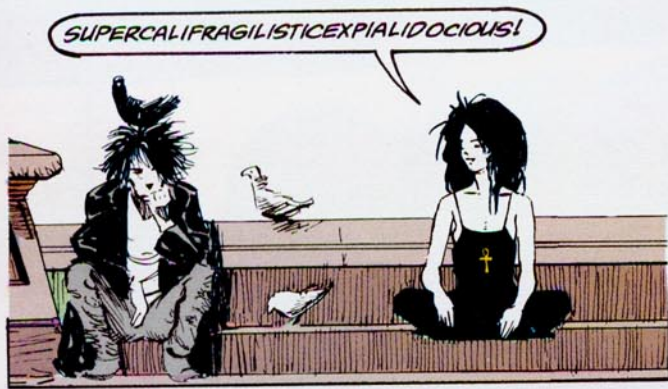
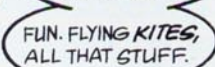
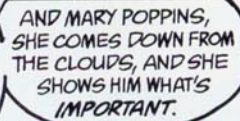
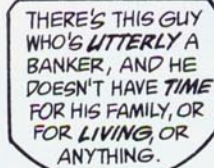




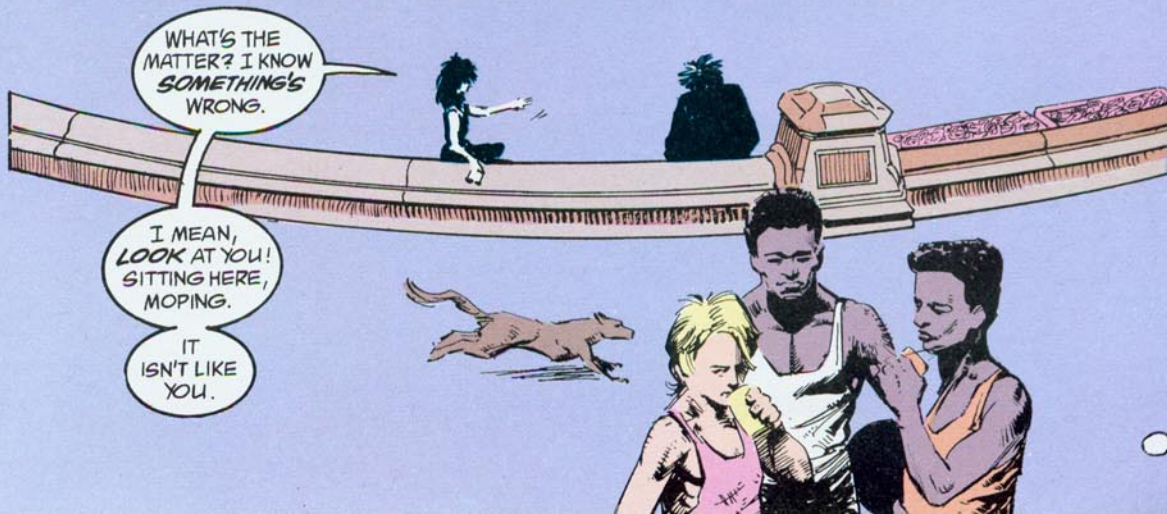
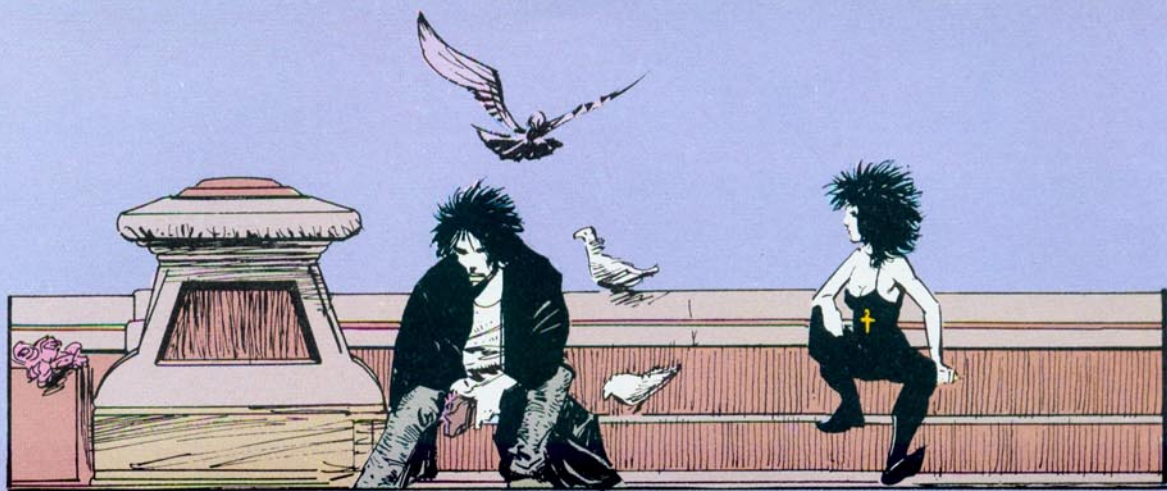














No... perhaps it isn't.

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



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

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

It felt... fine, I suppose.



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

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

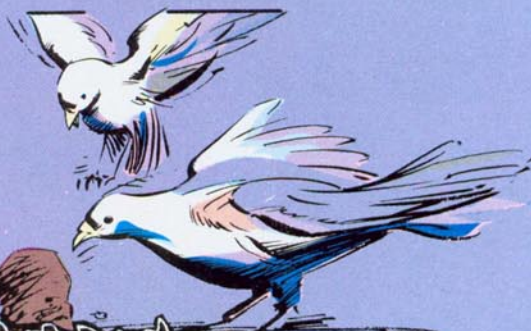
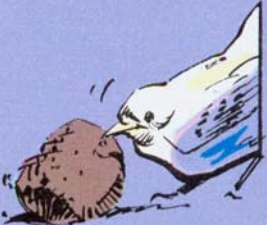


One by one I found them.



Eventually I found them.

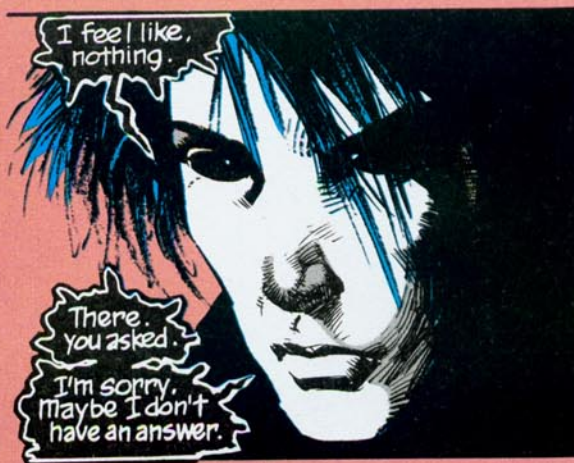
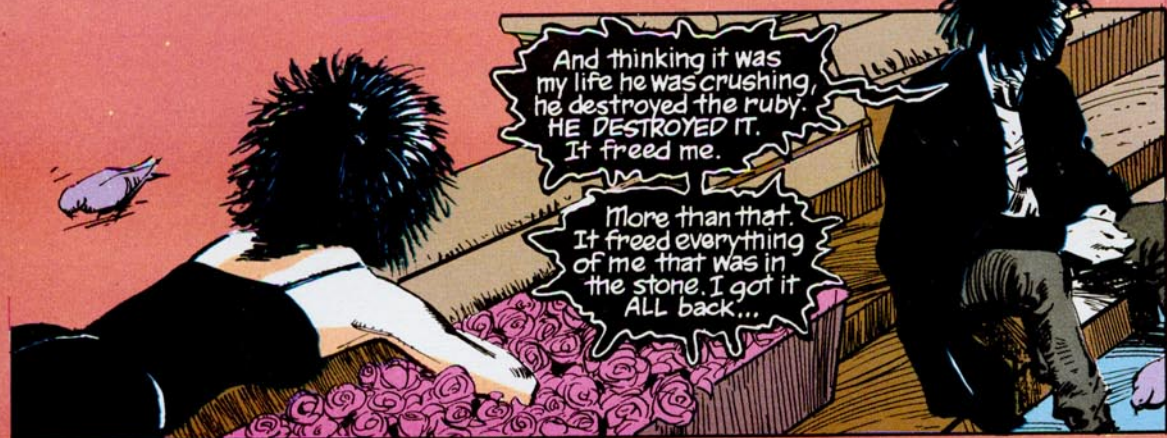
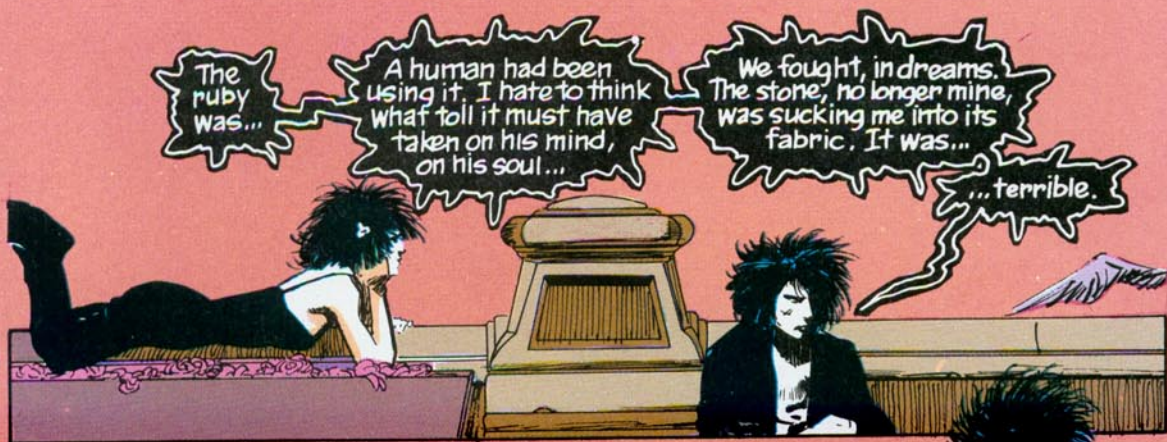
The pouch was relatively easy.



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

Hahh. That left only the ruby.

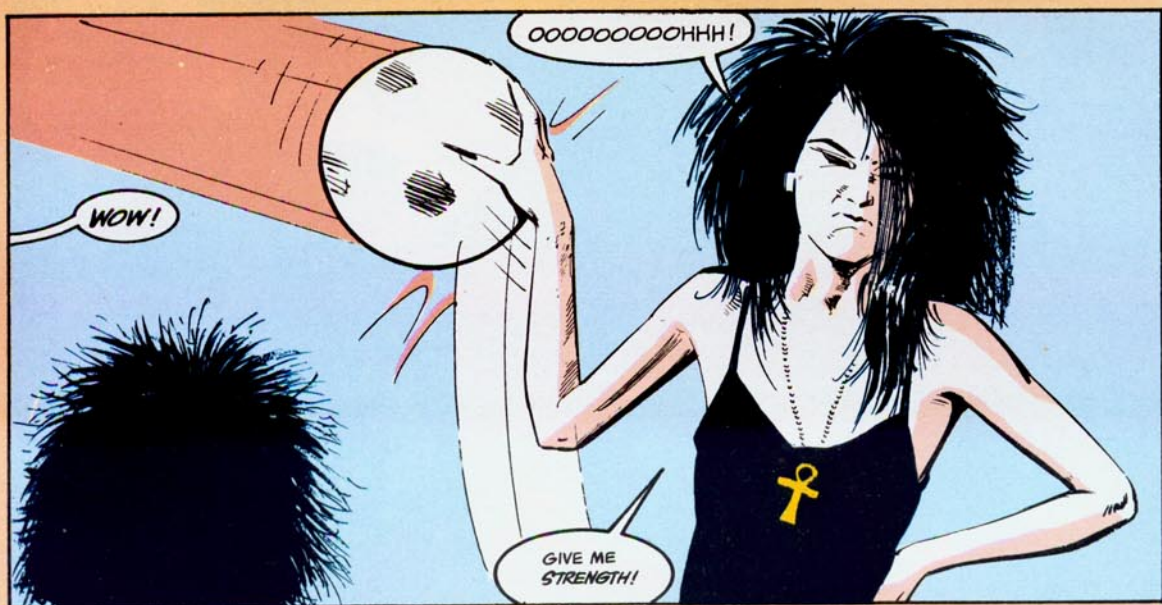
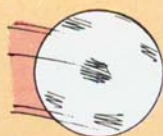




















Soundless, we travel.  
No heads turn to mark  
our passing.

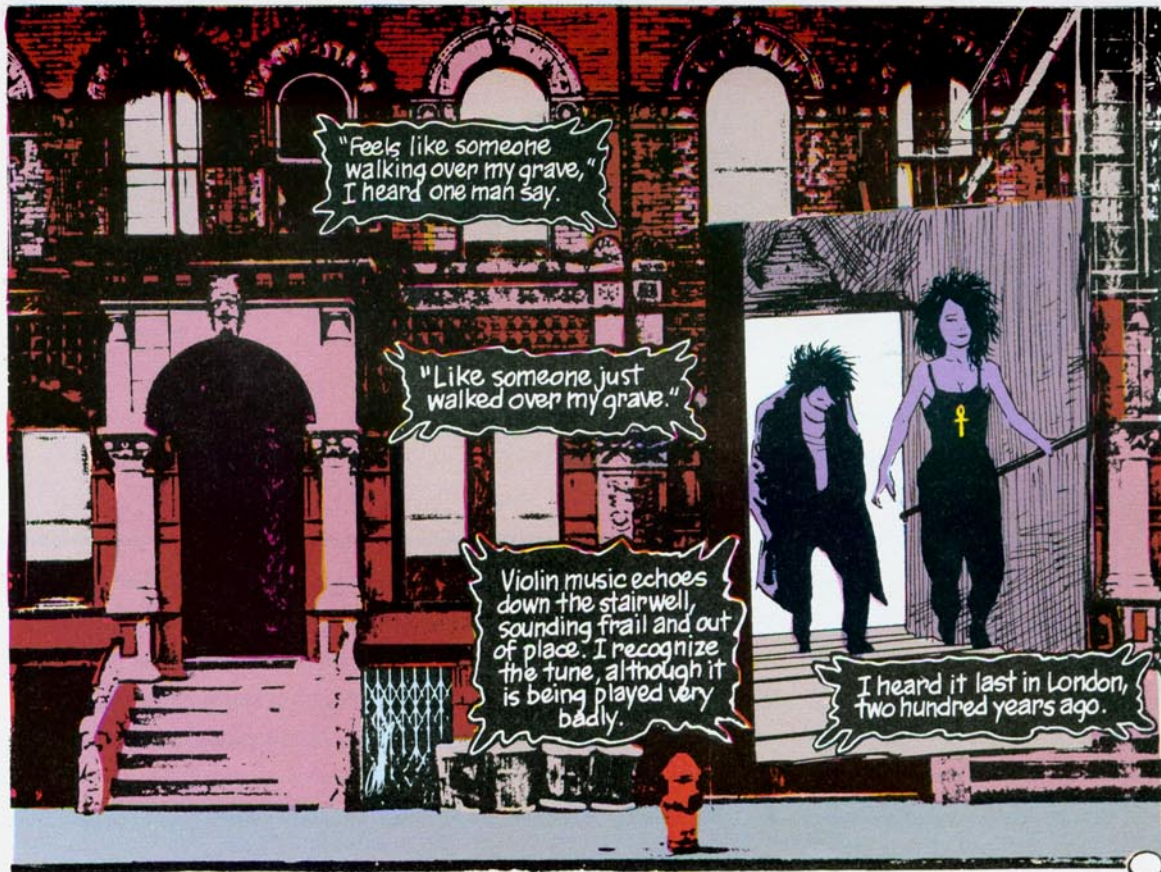


The churning crowd  
parts as we walk  
through it, looking  
everywhere else,  
but not at us.

In the world of the  
waking, of the living,  
we move silent as a  
breath of cool wind.



As we pass them,  
people shiver and  
look away, mutter  
to each other.



"Feels like someone  
walking over my grave,"  
I heard one man say.

"Like someone just  
walked over my grave."

Violin music echoes  
down the stairwell,  
sounding frail and out  
of place. I recognize  
the tune, although it  
is being played very  
badly.

I heard it last in London,  
two hundred years ago.





CAN YOU ROCKER ROMANY?  
CAN YOU PATTER FLASH?

CAN YOU ROCKER ROMANY?  
CAN YOU FAKE A BOSH?



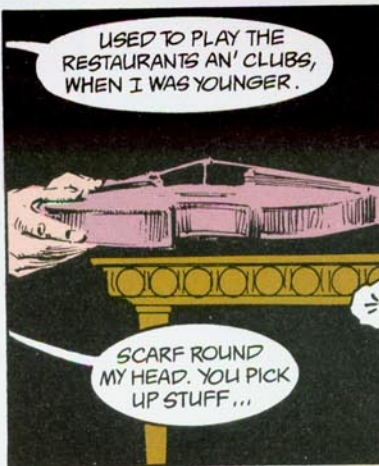
YES. I CAN  
PATTER ROMANY, HARRY.  
CAN YOU?

HUNH? I  
DIDN'T HEAR NOBODY  
COME IN ...



CAN **I** PATTER  
ROMANY?

NOT SO GOOD. BUT  
I CAN FAKE A BOSH. MEANS  
T' PLAY THE FIDDLE. I'M  
NOT REAL ROMANY...



USED TO PLAY THE  
RESTAURANTS AN' CLUBS,  
WHEN I WAS YOUNGER.

SCARF ROUND  
MY HEAD. YOU PICK  
UP STUFF ...



≡HRRACK!≡

NAW, I'M NO  
GYPSY. I'M AYID. AN  
OLD JEW DYING LONELY  
IN NEW YORK, YOU KNOW?



YES, I KNOW WHO  
YOU ARE, HARRY. DO YOU  
KNOW WHO I AM?

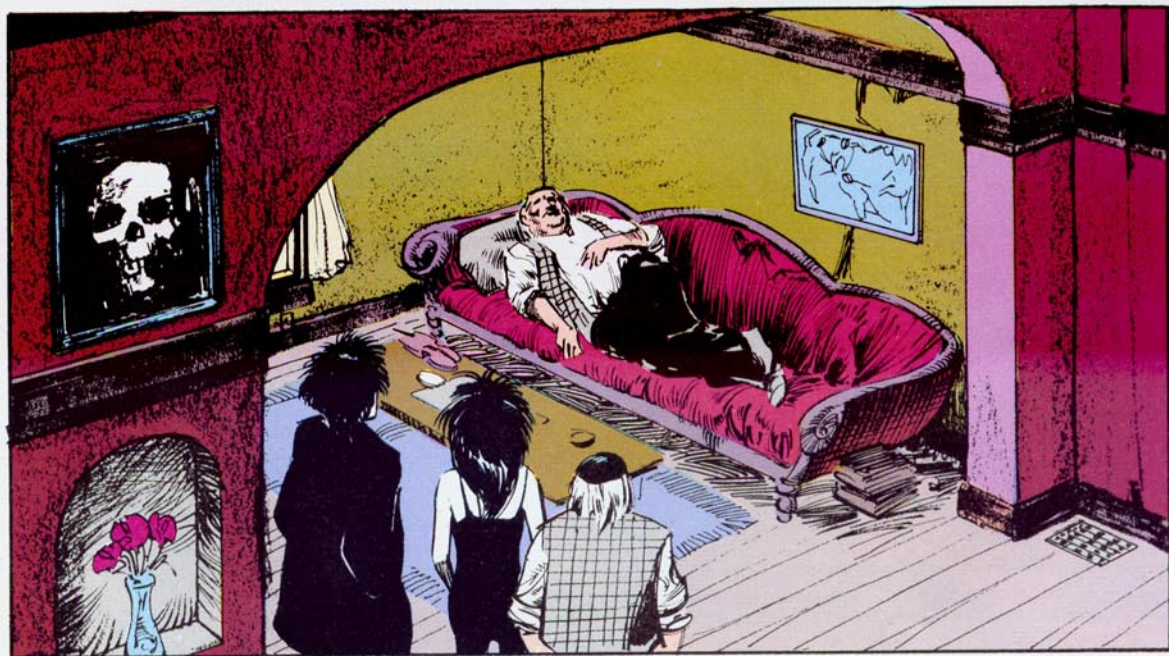


YOU? YOU'RE...  
NO! NOT YET!  
...PLEASE?



YEAH, I KNOW  
WHO YOU ARE.









She draws him close.

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



I THOUGHT HE WAS SWEET. DIDN'T YOU?

Sweet? I do not know. Perhaps.



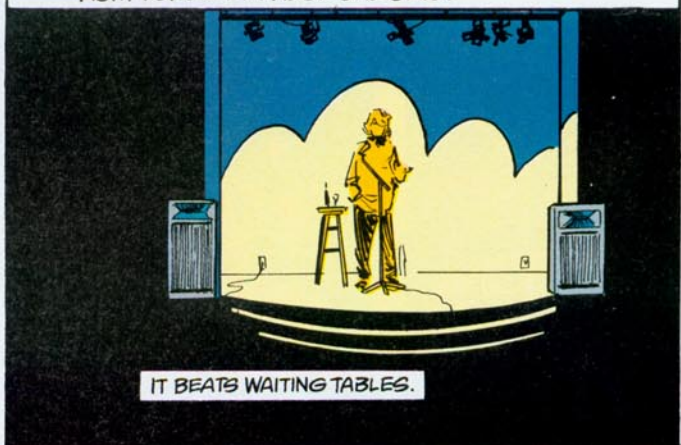
My sister. When I was captured...  
...it was not ME they wanted. It was you.



YEAH. I KNOW.

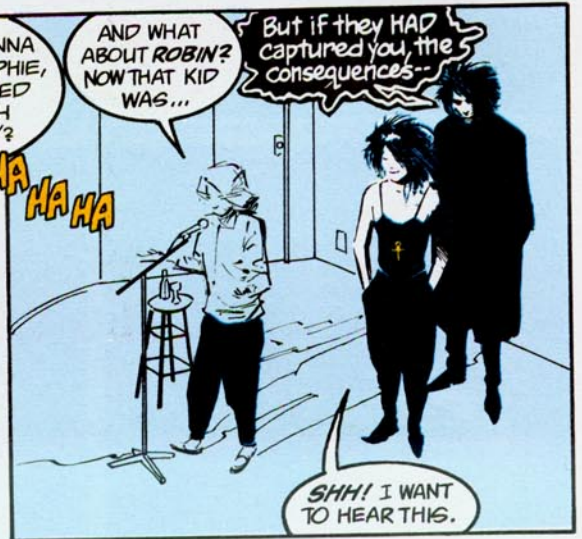
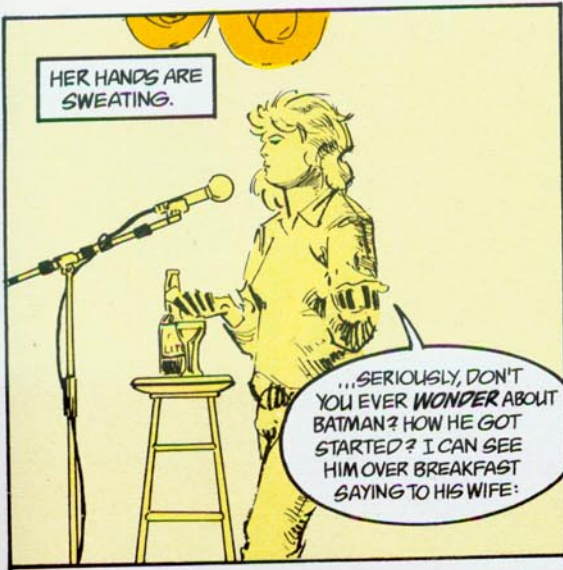
C'MON, I DON'T WANT TO MISS THE NEXT ONE.

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

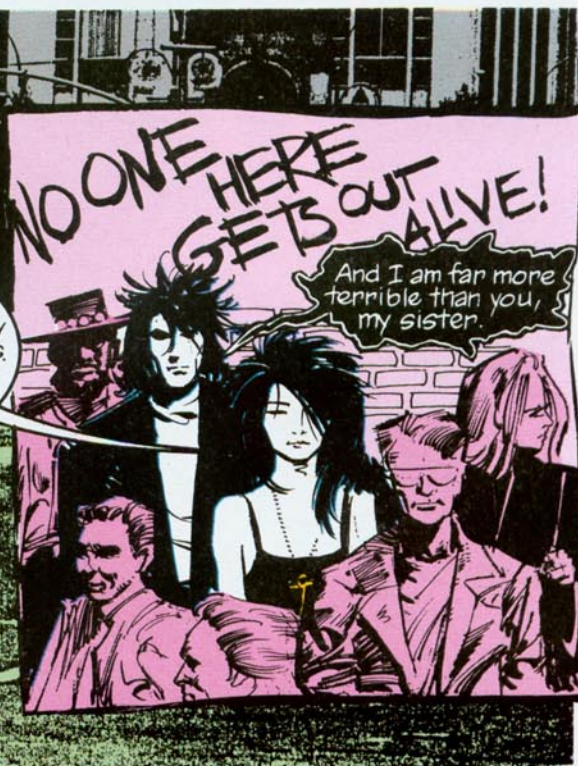


IT BEATS WAITING TABLES.

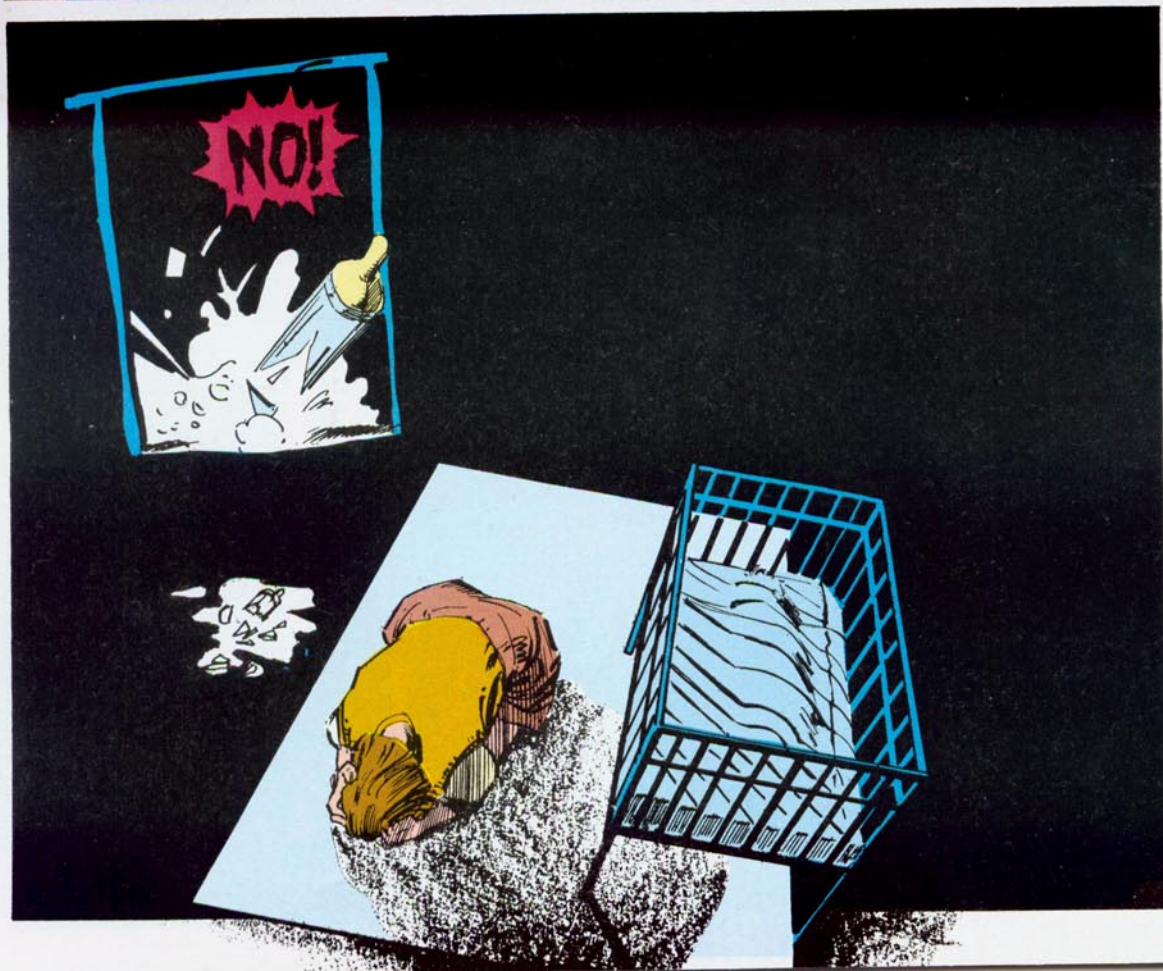

















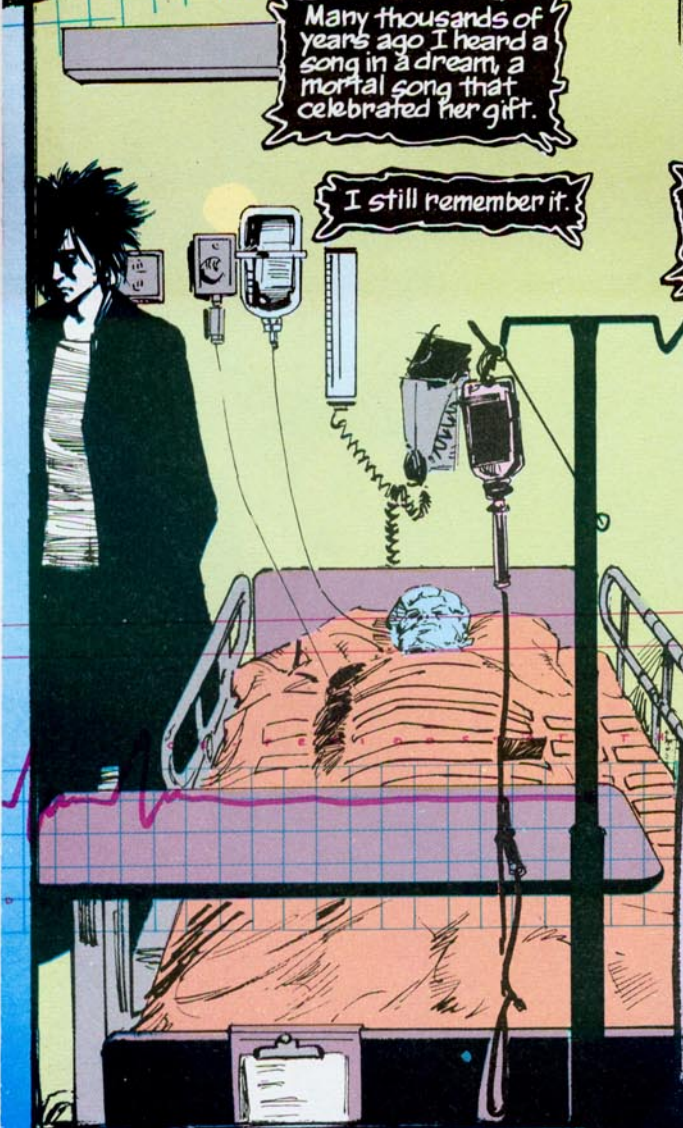
I find myself wondering  
about humanity. Their  
attitude to my sister's  
gift is so strange.

Why do they  
fear the  
sunless lands?



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


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



They do not  
love her.

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

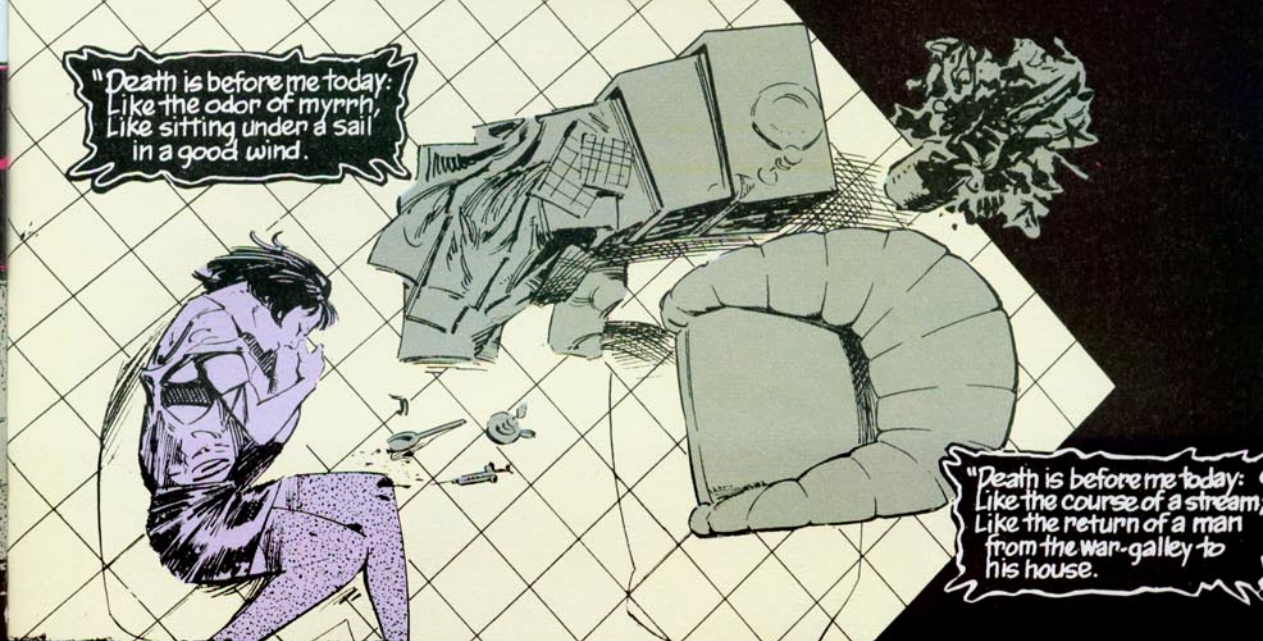
I still remember it.



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


DREAMS  
MAKE NO  
PROMISE





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

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




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


That forgotten poet  
understood her gifts.

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

I have responsibilities.

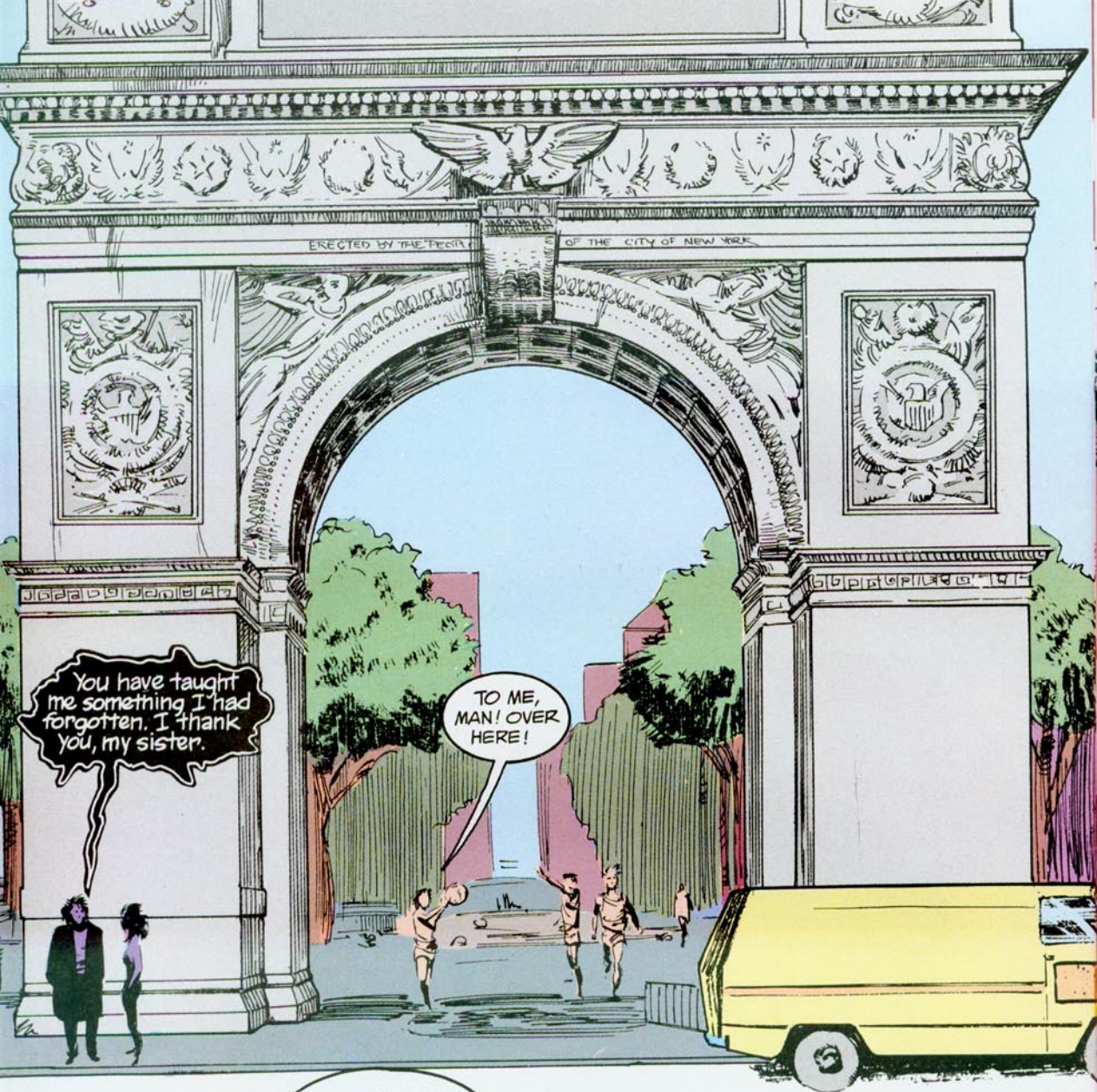


I walk by her side, and  
the darkness lifts from  
my soul.



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









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

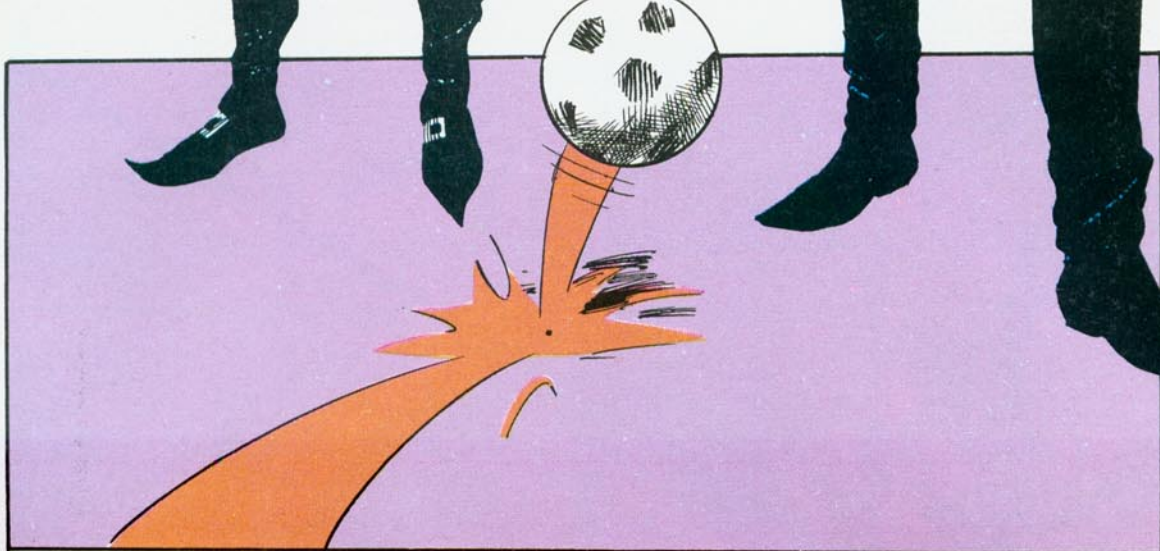
GET THE BALL,  
BUGBRAIN!

SKREEE

WHUMP

FRANKLIN!



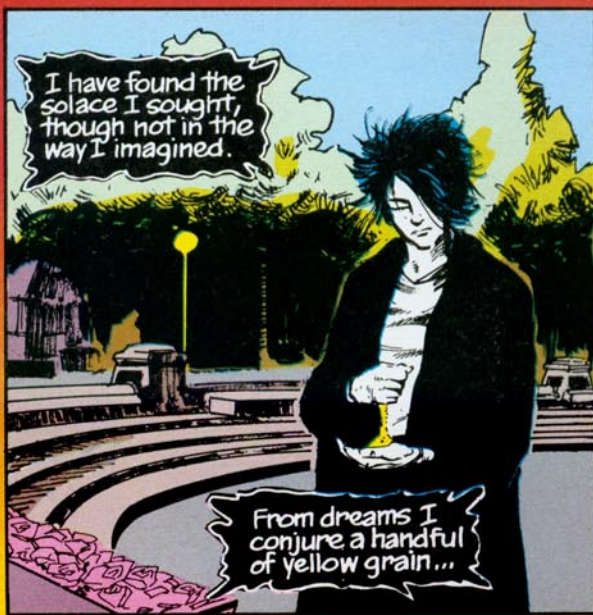






There is much to do  
in my kingdom. Much  
to restore. Much  
to create.

But that  
can wait...



I have found the  
solace I sought,  
though not in the  
way I imagined.

From dreams I  
conjure a handful  
of yellow grain...

I throw the grain  
into the air.

And I hear it.

The sound  
of wings...





# ESSENTIAL VERTIGO Sandman

COVER ART AND  
LOGO DESIGN:  
DAVE MCKEAN

How would you  
feel about life  
if Death  
was your  
older  
sister?

DC COMICS  
1700 BROADWAY  
NEW YORK, NY 10019

JENETTE KAHN  
President & Editor-in-Chief

PAUL LEVITZ  
Executive VP & Publisher

KAREN BERGER  
Executive Editor

BOB KAHAN  
Editor

BRUCE BRISTOW  
VP-Sales & Marketing

RICHARD BRUNING  
VP-Creative Director

PATRICK CALDON  
VP-Finance & Operations

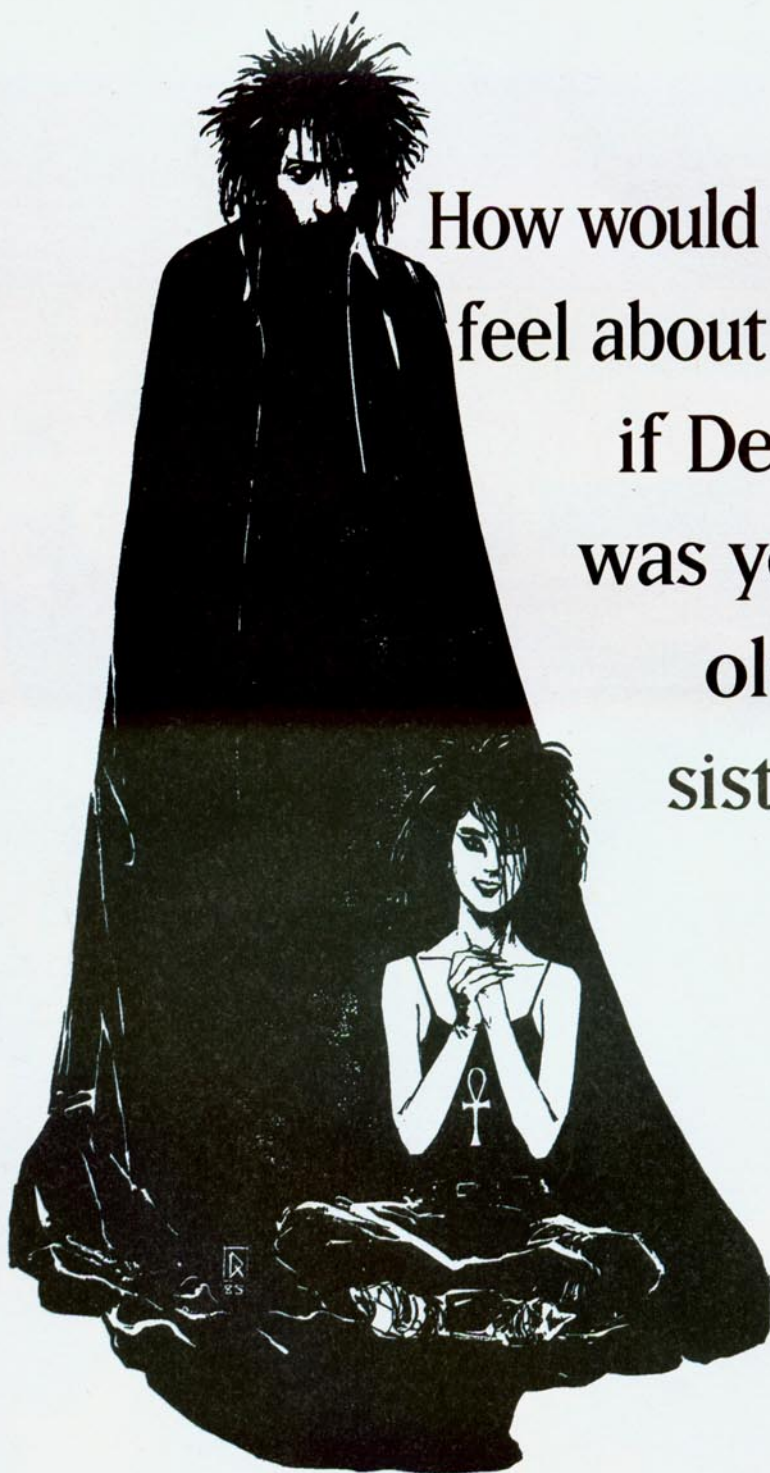
TERRI CUNNINGHAM  
VP-Managing Editor

CHANTAL D'AULNIS  
VP-Licensed Publishing

JOEL EHRLICH  
Senior VP-Advertising  
& Promotions

LILLIAN LASERSON  
VP & General Counsel

BOB ROZAKIS  
Exec. Director-Production



VERTIGO