

VERTIGO

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DC COMICS

THE SANDMAN™

the DOLL'S HOUSE-part two



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NEIL GAIMAN • MIKE DRINGENBERG • MALCOLM JONES III

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SUGGESTED FOR MATURE READERS

OBI



HI! ARE YOU ROSE?

YEAH

BE RIGHT DOWN!

MOVING IN

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

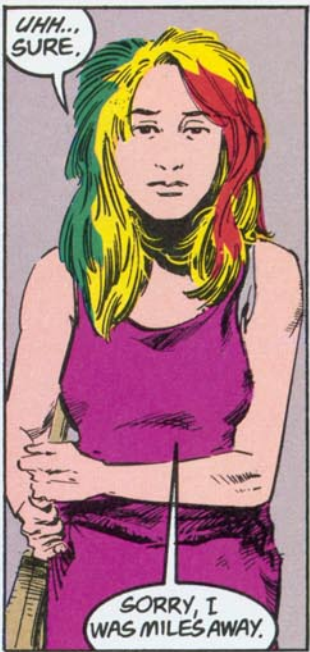


I'M HAL CARTER--YOUR NEW LANDLORD. COME ON IN.

LET ME GIVE YOU A HAND WITH YOUR BAGS.



YOU'RE UP ON THE SECOND FLOOR. THAT OKAY?



UHH... SURE.

SORRY, I WAS MILES AWAY.

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SO, WHAT DO YOU THINK OF FLORIDA? MUST BE A BIG CHANGE AFTER, WHERE WAS IT, NEW JERSEY?

YEAH, BUT I'VE ONLY BEEN BACK IN THE STATES A COUPLE OF HOURS.

I SPENT THE LAST WEEK IN ENGLAND WITH MY MOM, AND I HAVEN'T QUITE RECOVERED FROM THAT YET. ASK ME IN A WEEK.



EXCUSE ME, HAL...

... BUT WE WERE WONDERING...



... ARE YOU GOING TO BE DOLLY THIS EVENING?

BECAUSE IF YOU ARE...



... WE WON'T BRING KEN'S MOTHER BACK HERE...

... AFTER THE SHOW.



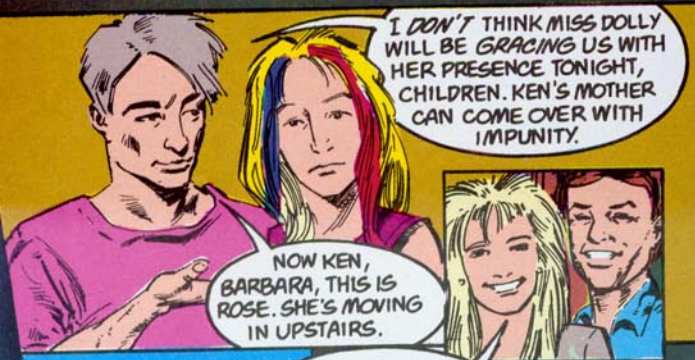
WE DON'T MIND OF COURSE...

... BUT MOM'S VERY STRAIGHT.



NOT LIKE US.

HAHA.



I DON'T THINK MISS DOLLY WILL BE GRACING US WITH HER PRESENCE TONIGHT, CHILDREN. KEN'S MOTHER CAN COME OVER WITH IMPUNITY.

NOW KEN, BARBARA, THIS IS ROSE. SHE'S MOVING IN UPSTAIRS.



CALL ME BARBIE, ROSE. BARBIE AND KEN, ISN'T THAT A SCREAM? HAHA

RIGHT. YEAH. WELL... HI, GUYS.



HELLO, NEW HOUSEMATE, WE HEARD THE COMMOTION, AND THOUGHT IT PROPER TO INTRODUCE OURSELVES.

I AM CHANTAL. THIS IS ZELDA.

ZELDA AND MYSELF HAVE LIVED HERE FOR TWO YEARS... WE POSSESS THE LARGEST COLLECTION OF STUFFED SPIDERS IN PRIVATE HANDS ON THE EASTERN SEABOARD.

OH. THAT'S NICE.



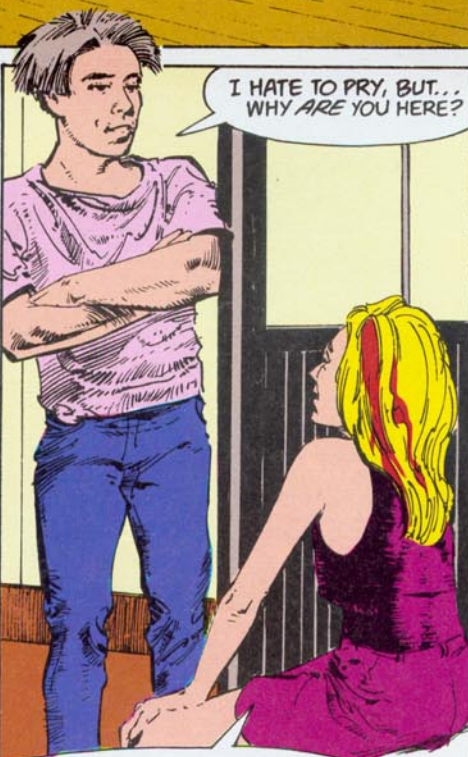
WELL, NOW YOU'VE MET JUST ABOUT ALL OF OUR HAPPY HOUSEHOLD.

EXCEPT GILBERT. HE'S ON THE TOP FLOOR.

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

THANKS.

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



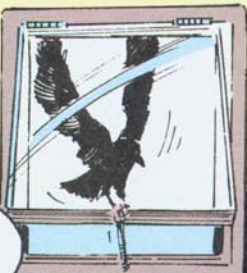
I HATE TO PRY, BUT... WHY ARE YOU HERE?

I'M IN YOUR HOUSE BECAUSE THIS IS WHAT THE ROOMMATE AGENCY FOUND ME AT NO NOTICE.

I'M IN FLORIDA TO FIND MY BROTHER. I'M PLAYING DETECTIVE FOR MY MOTHER AND GRANDMOTHER...

YOUR BROTHER? WHAT'S HE LIKE?

I DON'T KNOW. HE'D BE ABOUT TWELVE, NOW. I HAVEN'T SEEN HIM FOR SEVEN YEARS.



HIS NAME IS JED.

IN THE LAND OF MARVELOUS DREAMS



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

HE WHIMPERS, NERVOUSLY, DEEP IN HIS THROAT.

THE FLOOR IS UNCOMFORTABLE, AND HIS BLADDER ACHES.

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

HE URINATES IN THE CORNER.

THE SMELL THAT RISES FROM THE MOLE MAKES HIM GAG.

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

...JED ESCAPES.

1

I FELL ON THE TOP OF BRUTE'S BALLOON!



2

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





Dear Mom,

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

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

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



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



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

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



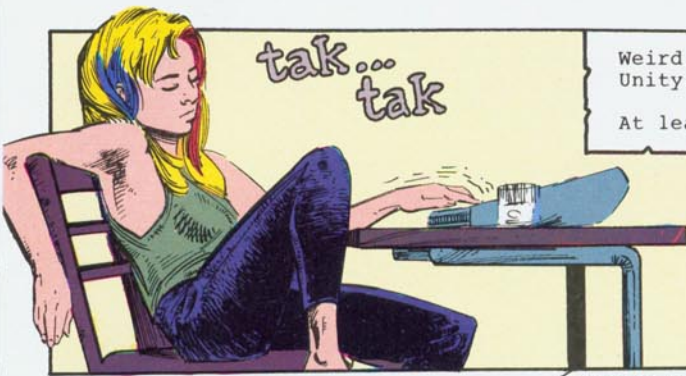
I only hope that their spiders are all dead. If I find a spider in my bath, I'm not going to check its catalogue number before screaming discreetly and flushing it down the john.

Upstairs is Gilbert.



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

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



Weird, huh? And he sounds British to me, Unity. Fruit loops from the mother country.

At least Hal, our landlord, is normal.



THAT MAN! THE GALL OF THAT IF-HE'S-SO-CLEVER-WHAT-IS-HE-DOING-DIRECTING-A-DRAG-SHOW-NO-TALENT MAN!

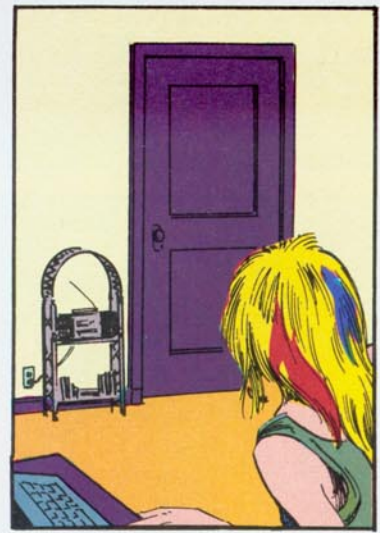
HE'S CUT MY TRIBUTE TO SONDHEIM, AND GIVEN AN EXTRA NUMBER TO THAT SLUT MITZI!

I TOLD HIM, DOUGLAS, I DON'T CARE WHO YOU'RE SCREWING...



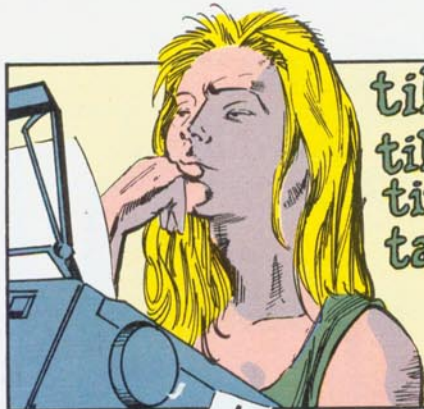
BUT IF "BROADWAY BABY" GOES, THEN SO DO I!

ASSHOLE!



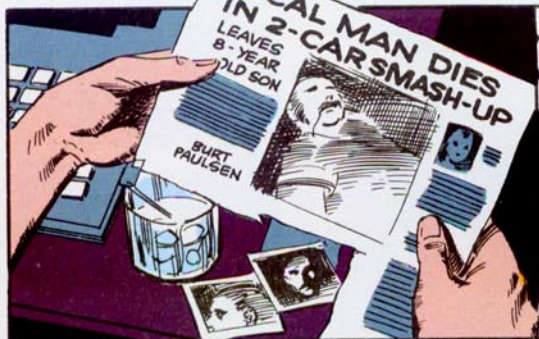
Well, relatively normal, anyway.

Oh -- another tenant showed up when I did. He -- or she -- is a big raven (I think), who's been hanging round outside my window. Hal says I ought to charge him rent on my window-ledge.



tika
tika
tip
tak

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



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



tak tak tik tap

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



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

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

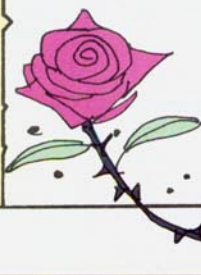


taka tak tap

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

I'll keep looking.

All my love to both of you.



Rose



Hello, Matthew.

The surveillance goes well, I presume.

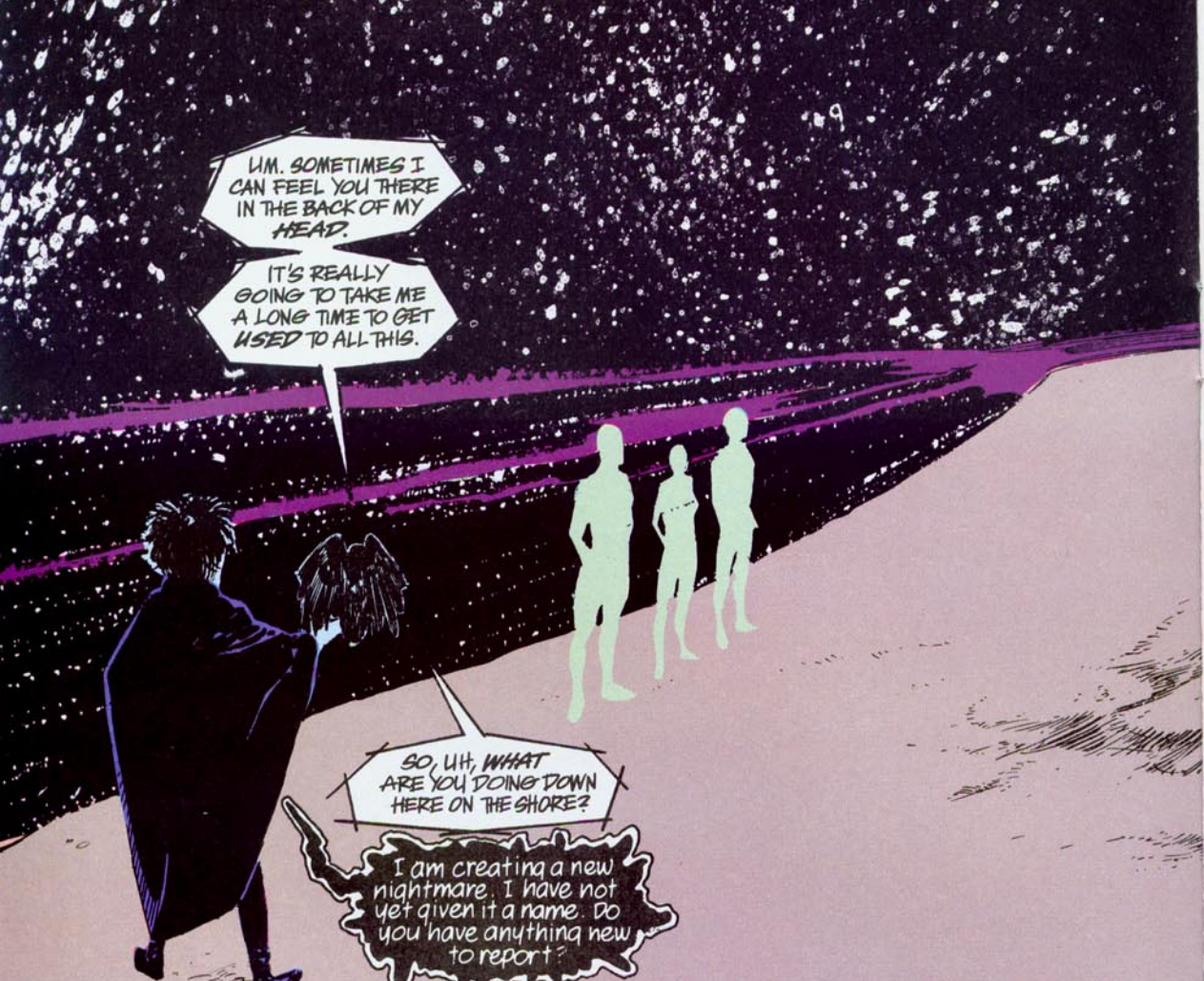


YEAH. IT GETS KINDA DULL, THOUGH, PEEKING IN THROUGH THE WINDOWS. AND I FEEL KINDA CREEPY, Y'KNOW. WATCHING HER LIKE THAT.

She's a vortex, Matthew. Sooner or later she'll attract the stray dreams to her-- or she'll be drawn to them.



Just keep watching her. You are my eyes, Matthew.




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

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


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

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



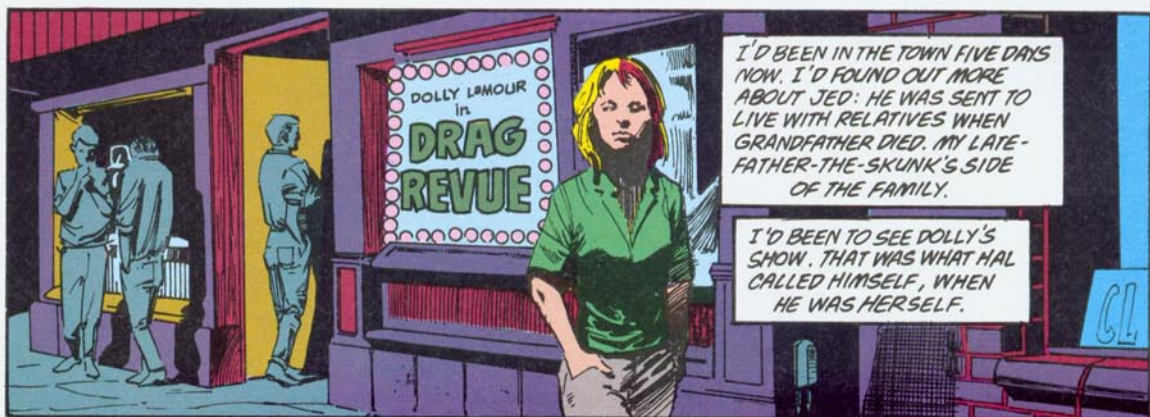
NOTHING YET. ROSE IS
STILL TRYING TO FIND
HER LITTLE BROTHER,
BOSS.

I MEAN
SIRE.



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

"I must see
him to find
him."



I'D BEEN IN THE TOWN FIVE DAYS NOW. I'D FOUND OUT MORE ABOUT JED: HE WAS SENT TO LIVE WITH RELATIVES WHEN GRANDFATHER DIED. MY LATE-FATHER-THE-SKUNK'S SIDE OF THE FAMILY.

I'D BEEN TO SEE DOLLY'S SHOW. THAT WAS WHAT HAL CALLED HIMSELF, WHEN HE WAS HERSELF.



I THOUGHT I KNEW THE TOWN AND I DIDN'T.

FOR EXAMPLE, I THOUGHT THAT THE ALLEY WAS A SHORT-CUT BACK TO THE HOUSE.

Oh...you beautiful doll...You great big beautiful doll...



LET ME put my arms around you, I can never live without you...

NOPE. NOT AT MIDNIGHT IT ISN'T.



CLICK



HEY, KITTY KITTY. YOU OUT AFTER YOUR BED TIME



HERE KITTY KITTY.

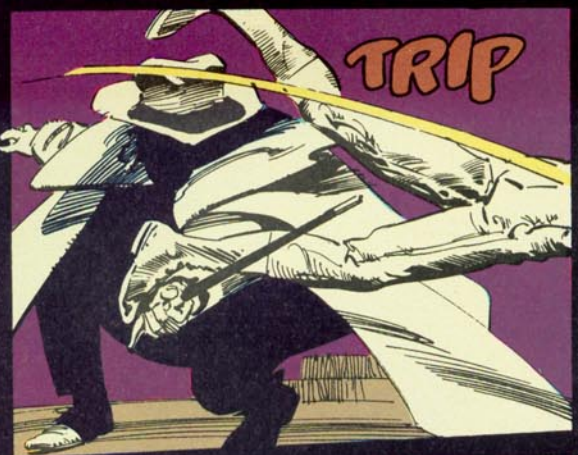
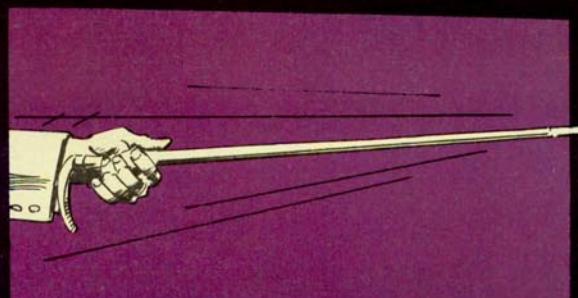
PRETTY KITTY. WANNA PLAY WITH US, KITTY KITTY?

HEE. HEE. HEE.



NOW, KITTY. MONEY FIRST, THEN WE DO THE THING.

SNICK





WOULD YOU LIKE TO KICK THEM, MISS, ER...?

MMM, NO. NO THANK YOU. THESE ARE NICE SHOES.



THANK YOU. THANKS A WHOLE BUNCH. MY NAME'S ROSE. ROSE WALKER.

AHHH, THE DOWNSTAIRS FRONT LODGER.



THE WHAT?... SAY, YOU MUST BE GILBERT, THE WEIR- UH, THE MAN UPSTAIRS.



I'M AFRAID I MUST.

GILBERT. IS THAT YOUR FIRST NAME, OR YOUR LAST?



INDUBITABLY. I COULD NOT HAVE PUT IT BETTER MYSELF.

MISS WALKER, WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO ACCOMPANY YOU BACK TO THE HOUSE?



THANK YOU.

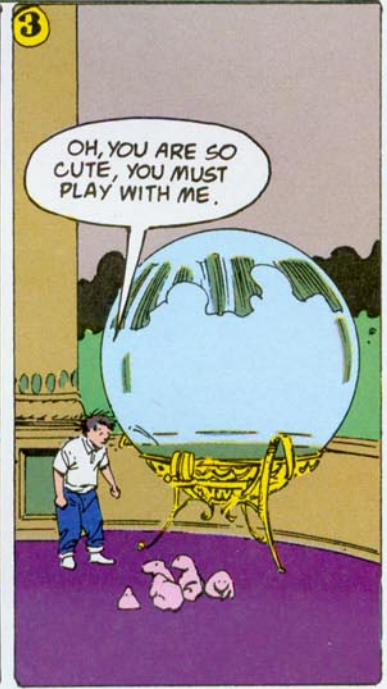
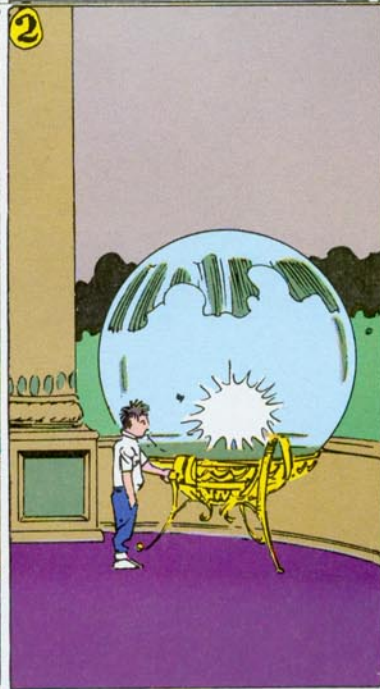
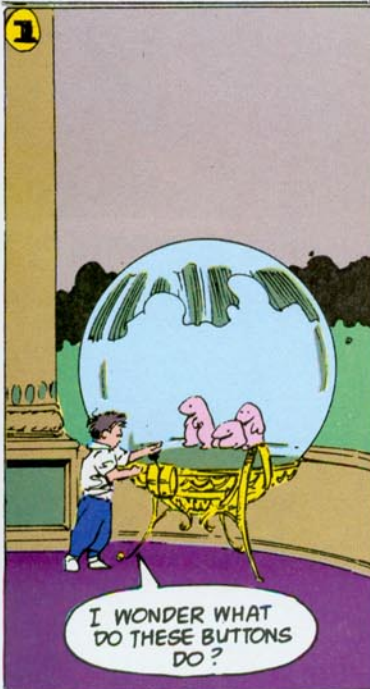
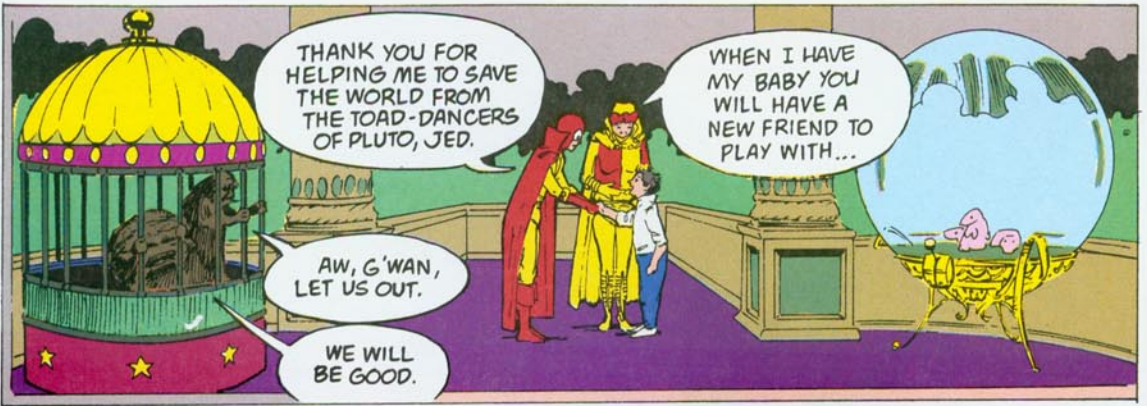
I WENT TO SEE DOLLY'S SHOW.

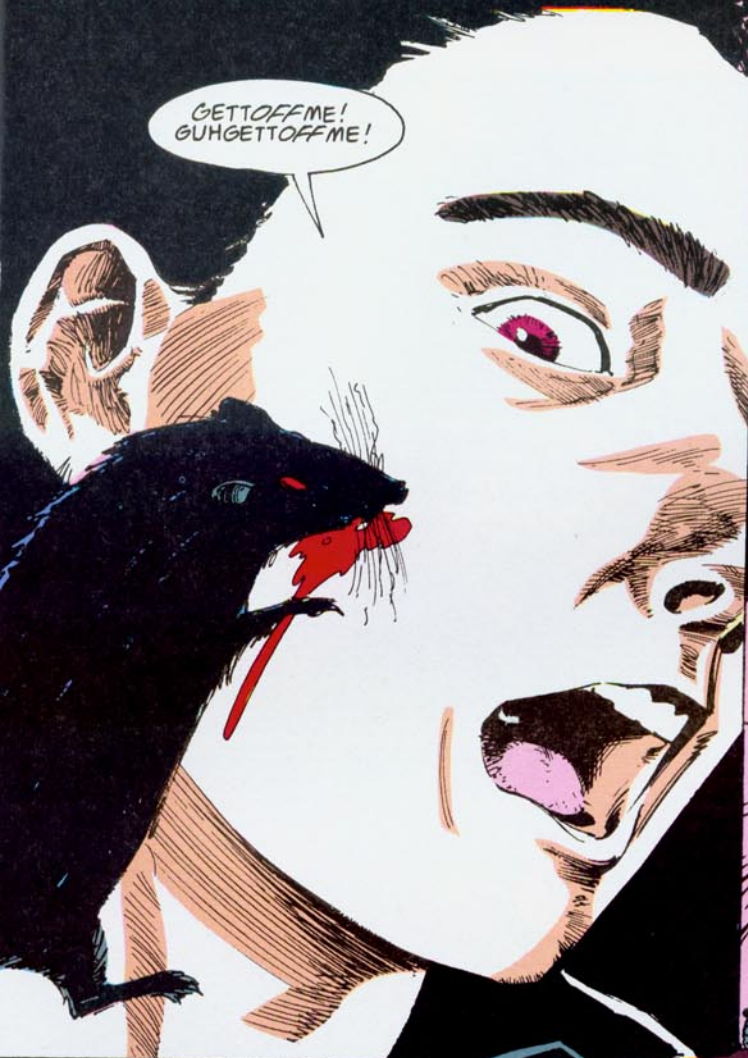
OUR ESTEEMED LAND-LORD'S THESPIAN ENDEAVOR? I MUST CONFESS I HAVE NOT HAD THE PLEASURE.



IT'S FUN, IN A CAMP SORT OF WAY, THEY ALL SING "HELLO DOLLY" WHEN HE FIRST COMES ON STAGE.

Y'KNOW, IT SEEMED LIKE MOST OF THOSE GUYS HAD BETTER LEGS THAN I DO...





GET OFF ME!
GUNGET OFF ME!



AAAAAA



STUPID GODDAMN
RAT. STUPID - HNF -
G-GODDAMN - SNF -
S-STUPID - HHU...

OH GOD.

OH GOD.





GO ON, HAL. I'VE GOT NOTHING TO DO WHILE I'M WAITING FOR THE P.I.'S TO CALL.

PLEASE?

WELL, IF YOU'RE SURE...



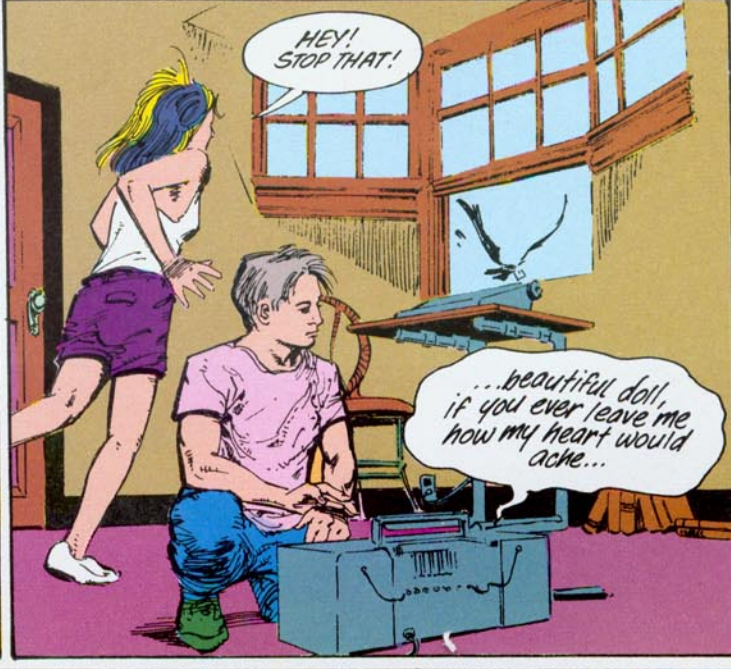
HERE GOES.

Oh you beautiful doll, ya great big beautiful doll...



OKAY, NOW, STEP, STEP-- AND TURN-- AND STEP, BALL, CHANGE AND--

Let me put my arms around you I could never live without you...



HEY! STOP THAT!

...beautiful doll, if you ever leave me how my heart would ache...



I want to hug you but I fear you'd break...



COME BACK HERE WITH THAT PICTURE, YOU THIEVING, YOU-- YOU--

OHHH...

OH! OH! OH! OH! OH! OH! YOU beautiful doll!



KNOCK KNOCK

HELLO? HELLO?

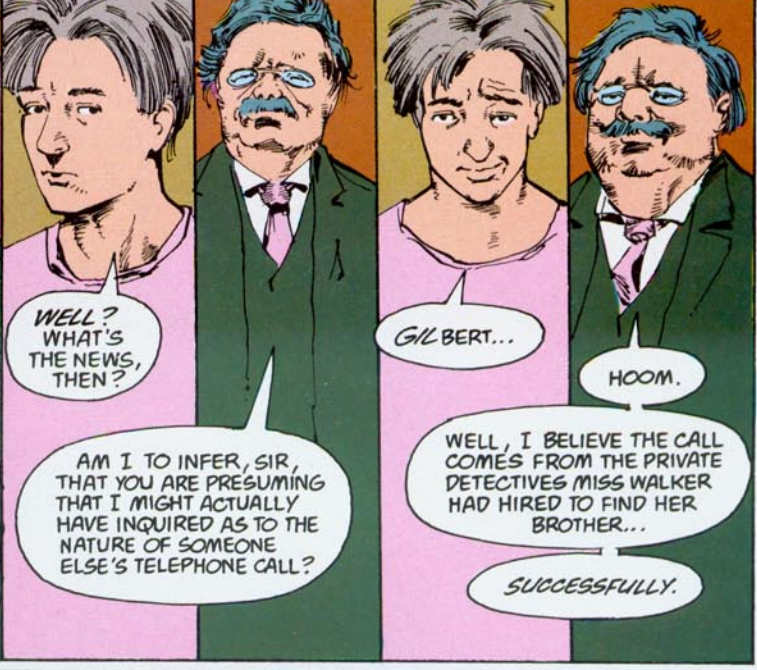
COME IN!



MISS WALKER? THERE IS SOMEONE ON THE HALL TELEPHONE FOR YOU...



GAAANGWAY!



WELL? WHAT'S THE NEWS, THEN?

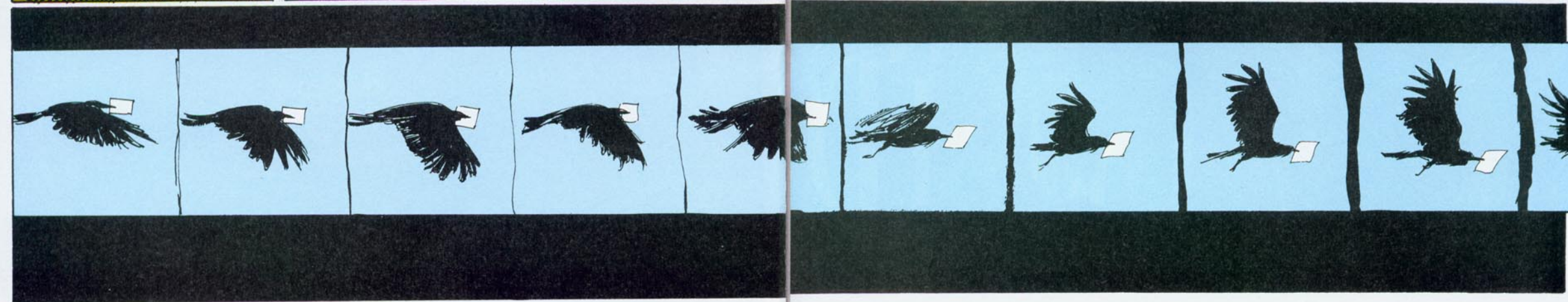
AM I TO INFER, SIR, THAT YOU ARE PRESUMING THAT I MIGHT ACTUALLY HAVE INQUIRED AS TO THE NATURE OF SOMEONE ELSE'S TELEPHONE CALL?

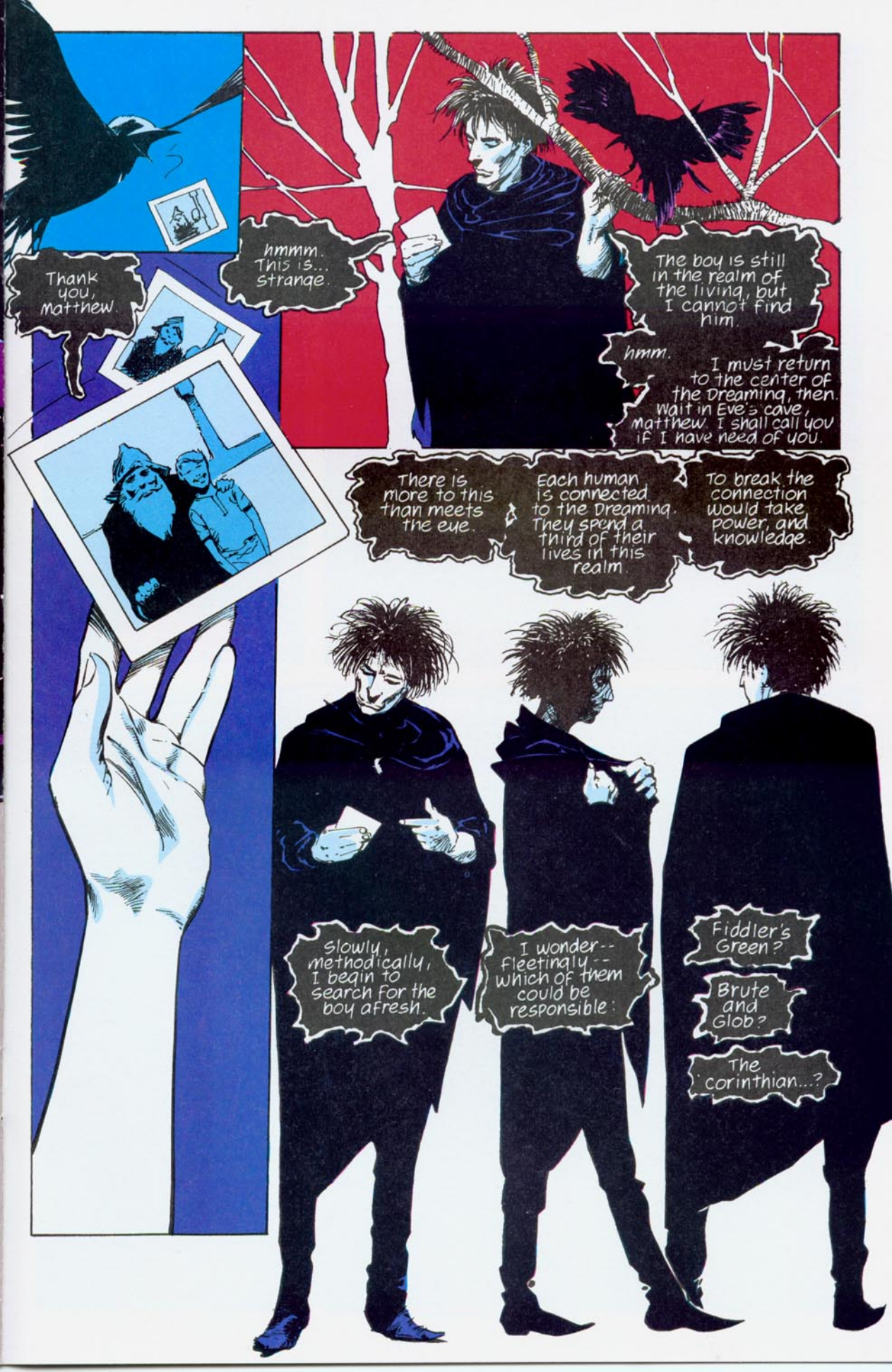
GILBERT...

HOOM.

WELL, I BELIEVE THE CALL COMES FROM THE PRIVATE DETECTIVES MISS WALKER HAD HIRED TO FIND HER BROTHER...

SUCCESSFULLY.





Thank you, Matthew.

hmmm. This is... strange.

The boy is still in the realm of the living, but I cannot find him.

hmm. I must return to the center of the Dreaming, then. Wait in Eve's cave, Matthew. I shall call you if I have need of you.

There is more to this than meets the eye.

Each human is connected to the Dreaming. They spend a third of their lives in this realm.

To break the connection would take power, and knowledge.

Slowly, methodically, I begin to search for the boy afresh.

I wonder-- fleetingly-- which of them could be responsible:

Fiddler's Green?

Brute and Glob?

The Corinthian...?

THE YELLOWHAMMER
MOTEL, BIRMINGHAM,
ALABAMA.



THE CORINTHIAN.

HELLO. IS THIS
"NIMROD"?

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



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

FOR PEOPLE WHO
SHARE OUR SPECIALIZED
INTERESTS.

UH HUH.



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

OKAY. THAT'S
THIS WEEKEND,
THEN?

I'LL BE FREE.
SO WHERE
EXACTLY?



GEORGIA, HUH?
NICE STATE.

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

I'M PART OF
THE AMERICAN
DREAM.

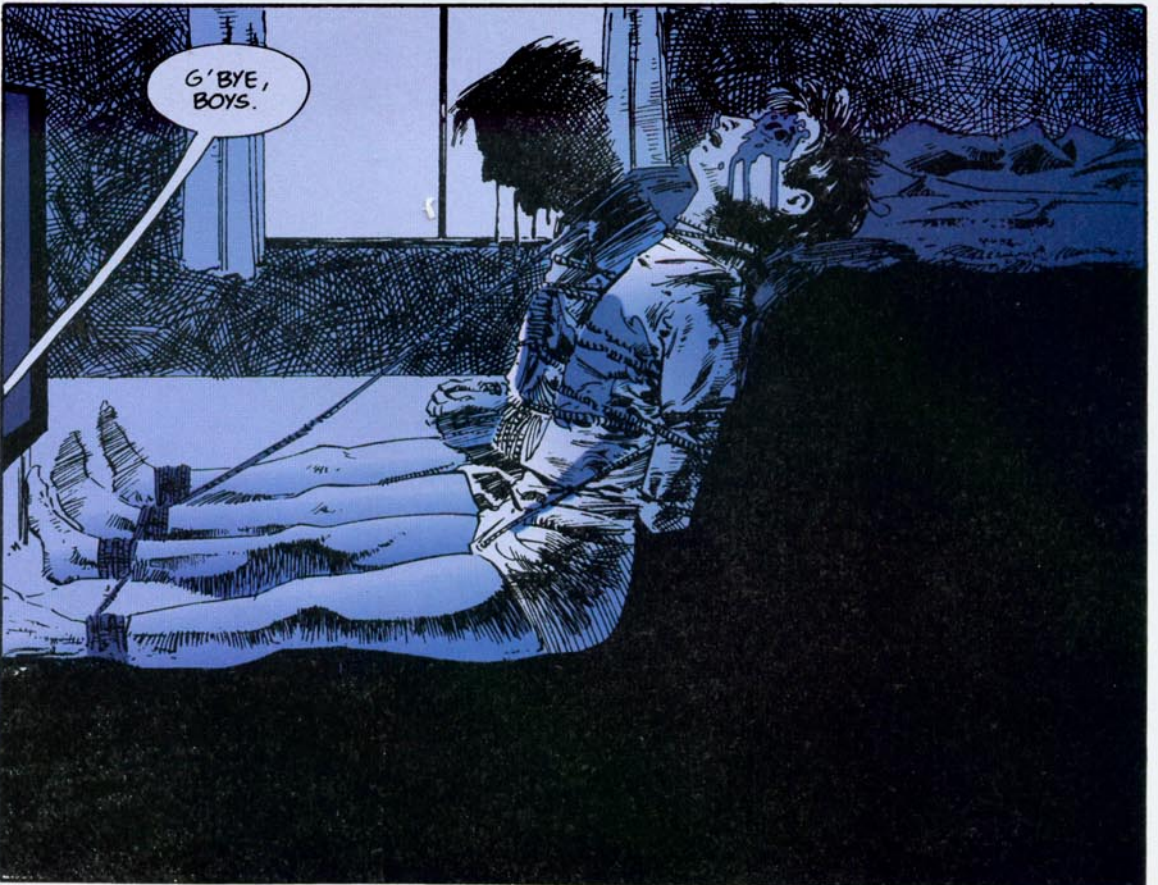
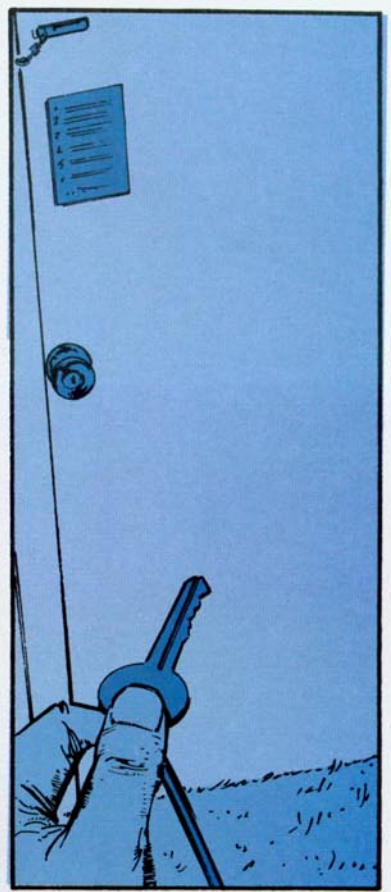


SHUMF SCHROMP
SCHOMF

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

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



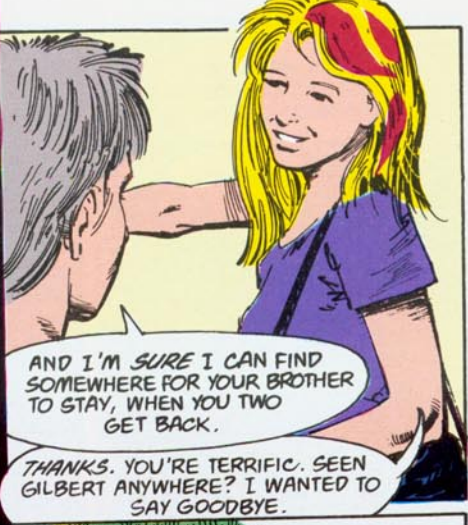




WELL, I'LL BE BACK ON MONDAY, HAL. I'VE RENTED A WRECK FOR THE DRIVE DOWN THERE.

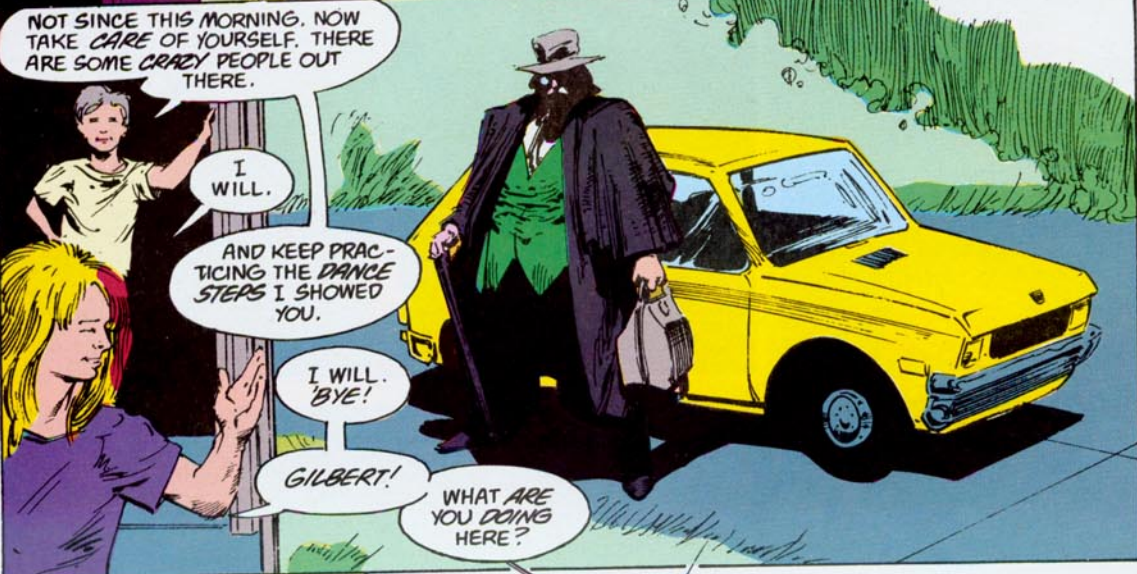
I'VE LEFT MY STUFF UP IN THE ROOM.

OH, NO PROBLEM, HONEY.



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

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



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

I WILL.

AND KEEP PRACTICING THE DANCE STEPS I SHOWED YOU.

I WILL. 'BYE!

GILBERT!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?



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

WITNESS THE OTHER NIGHT.



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

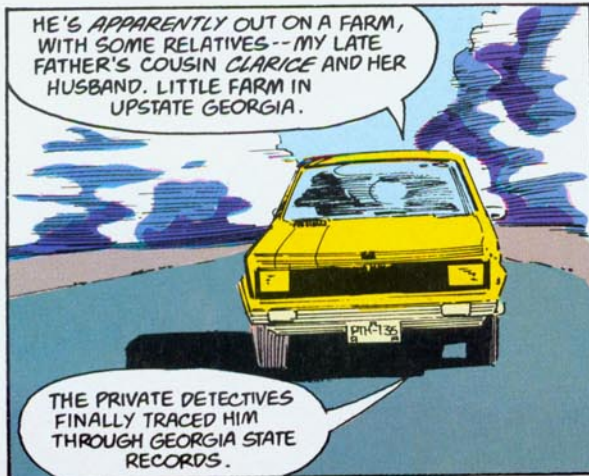
SHALL WE BE OFF?



OHHHH... NO.

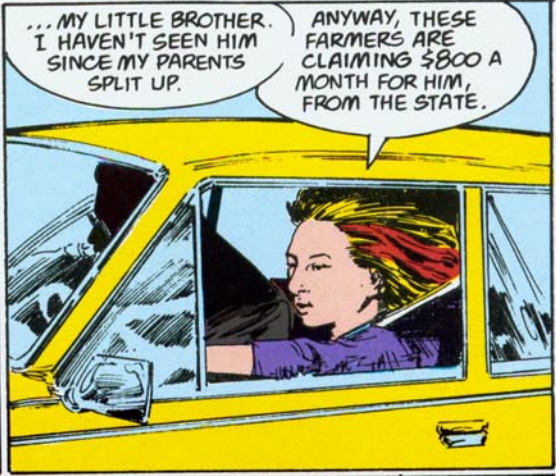
NO. NO. NO. NO. ABSOLUTELY NOT.

NO WAY!



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

THE PRIVATE DETECTIVES FINALLY TRACED HIM THROUGH GEORGIA STATE RECORDS.



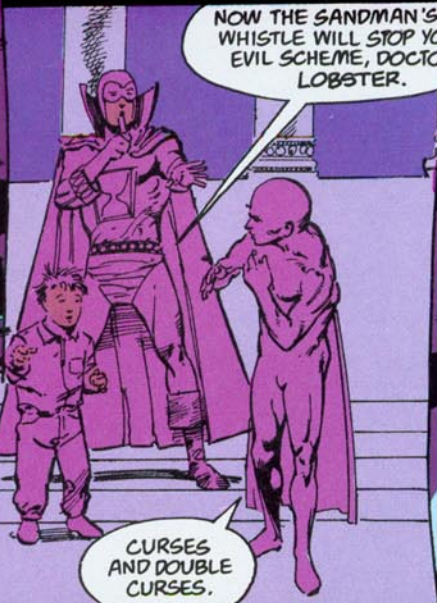
... MY LITTLE BROTHER. I HAVEN'T SEEN HIM SINCE MY PARENTS SPLIT UP.

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



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

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



NOW THE SANDMAN'S WHISTLE WILL STOP YOUR EVIL SCHEME, DOCTOR LOBSTER.

CURSES AND DOUBLE CURSES.



OH...



Found
him.



How
DARE
they?

HOW
DARE
THEY?



Brute and
Glob: Brute
strength and
base cunning.
This has their
stink about it,
Lucien.

HOW
DARE
THEY?

They severed this child from the True Dreaming.

They are LIVING in his MIND, Lucien.

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

Did they think they could hide FROM ME?

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

I AM ANGRY, Lucien.

And it's my move.

TO BE CONTINUED.