

VERTIGO

ESSENTIAL VERTIGO

DC COMICS

# THE SANDMAN

the DOLL'S HOUSE-part six



DIRECT SALES

01511 >

7 61941 20846 6

NEIL GAIMAN • MIKE DRINGENBERG • MALCOLM JONES III

15 • OCT 97 \$1.95 US \$2.75 CAN  
SUGGESTED FOR MATURE READERS

OBI



# INTO THE NIGHT

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



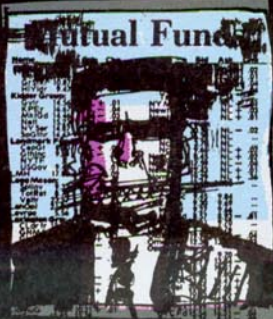


TaLkIng taLkING  
 MOney boy aR LIstENing 2ME?



mebbe  
 100 tHou

MEBBE talk taLkING MONEY BOY



gOt  
 2  
 HANdit  
 2  
 U  
 BOY...

Symbol	Price	Change
IBM	120.00	+0.25
MSFT	85.00	+0.50
GOOG	280.00	+1.00
AMZN	175.00	+0.75
FB	150.00	+0.50
Apple	130.00	+0.25
Microsoft	85.00	+0.50
Amazon	175.00	+0.75
Facebook	150.00	+0.50
Google	280.00	+1.00
Twitter	45.00	+0.25
LinkedIn	35.00	+0.10
Slack	25.00	+0.15
Zoom	15.00	+0.20
Dropbox	10.00	+0.10
Spotify	8.00	+0.05
Netflix	40.00	+0.20
Disney	110.00	+0.50
Walt Disney	110.00	+0.50
Warner Bros	45.00	+0.25
Paramount	35.00	+0.15
Universal	25.00	+0.10
Columbia	15.00	+0.05
Warner Bros	45.00	+0.25
Paramount	35.00	+0.15
Universal	25.00	+0.10
Columbia	15.00	+0.05
Warner Bros	45.00	+0.25
Paramount	35.00	+0.15
Universal	25.00	+0.10
Columbia	15.00	+0.05

meBBEE 100 tHou  
 MEbbe more...

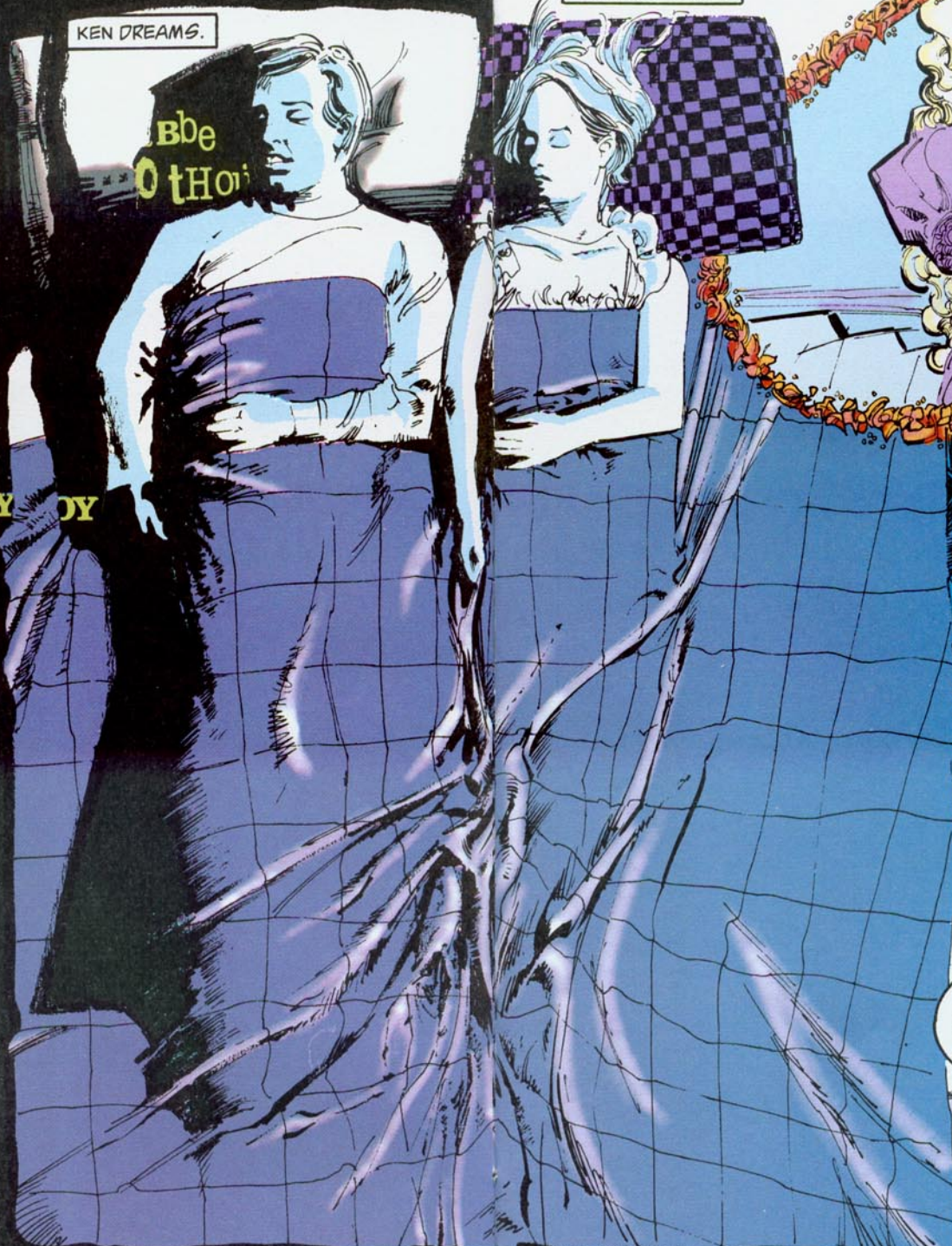
taLkIng  
 MONEY boy

aR  
 U  
 LIStENing 2ME?  
 ?

KEN DREAMS.

Bbe  
 O tHoi

BARBIE DREAMS.



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



CHANTAL DREAMS.

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

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

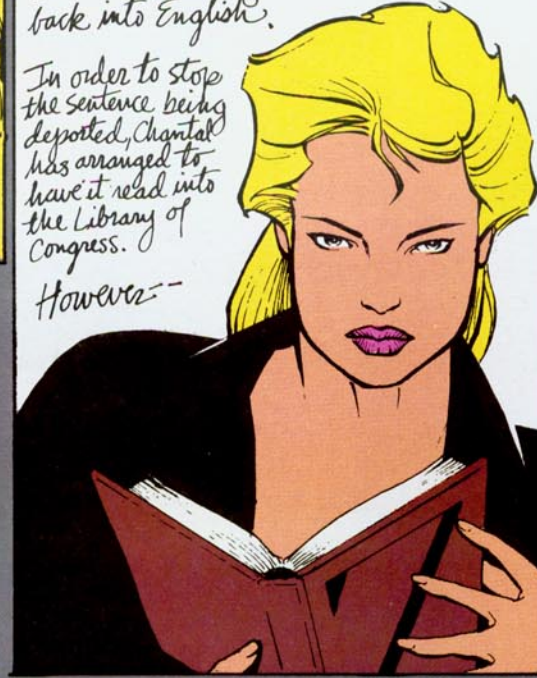


Everybody knows about her and the sentence.



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

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



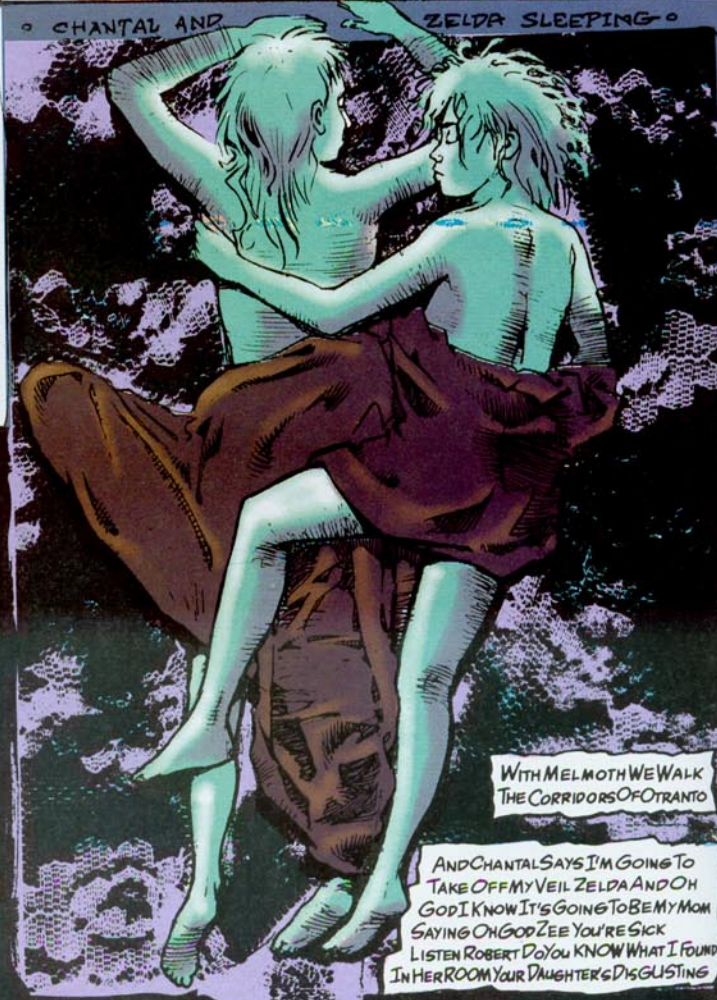
...when the time comes she discovers that she can no longer read.

She has no idea what her sentence is about.

Despondent and joyless, Chantal begins to cry.

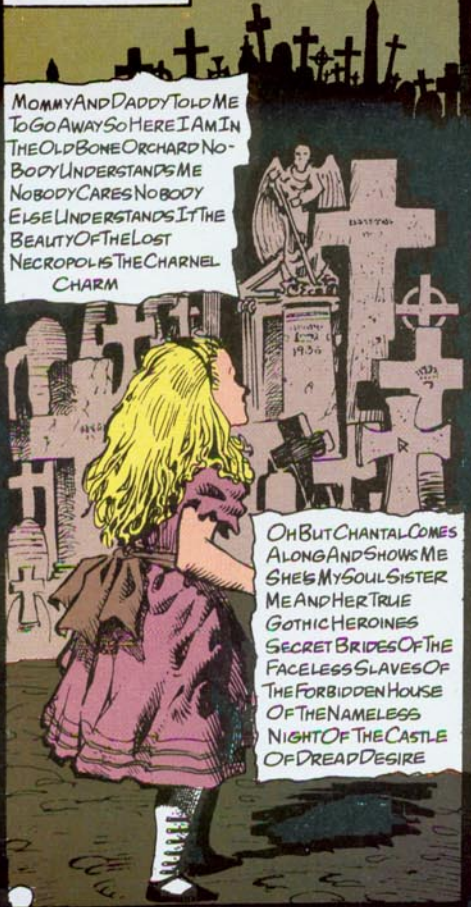


CHANTAL AND ZELDA SLEEPING



ZELDA DREAMS.

MOMMY AND DADDY TOLD ME TO GO AWAY SO HERE I AM IN THE OLD BONE ORCHARD NOBODY UNDERSTANDS ME NOBODY CARES NOBODY ELSE UNDERSTANDS IT THE BEAUTY OF THE LOST NECROPOLIS IS THE CHARNEL CHARM



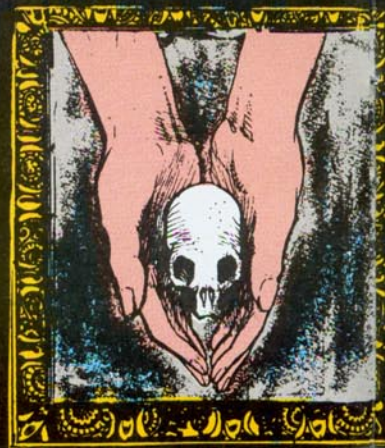
OH BUT CHANTAL COMES ALONG AND SHOWS ME SHE'S MY SOUL SISTER ME AND HER TRUE GOTHIC HEROINES SECRET BRIDES OF THE FACELESS SLAVES OF THE FORBIDDEN HOUSE OF THE NAMELESS NIGHT OF THE CASTLE OF DREAD DESIRE

THAT'S US



WITH MELMOTH WE WALK THE CORRIDORS OF OTRANTO

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



AND I'LL JUST START STAMMERING AND SHE'LL MAKE FUN OF ME HEY LITTLE MORON DO YOU BELIEVE IN GODZILLA

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



THANK YOU GOD. OH THANK YOU.



NOW THE LITTLE GIRL ZELDA STARTS LAUGHING

THE LITTLE GIRL

LAUGHS AND LAUGHS...



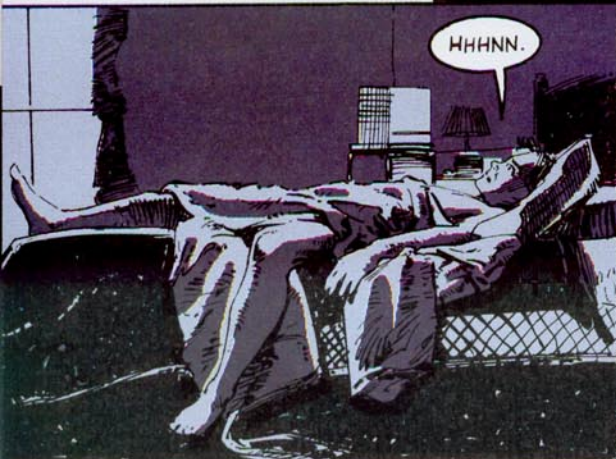
HAL DREAMS.



HAL DREAMS OF BETTE, AND JUDY, AND MARILYN. THEY'VE COME TO TELL HIM THE BIG SECRET.

HE'S ALWAYS SUSPECTED THERE WAS A BIG SECRET...

OKAY, DOLL, LISTEN CAREFULLY. WE'RE ONLY GONNA SAY THIS ONCE...



HHHNN.

LOST IT. SOME DREAM. A GOOD DREAM.



WOKE UP. SORT OF.

RETREAT BACK INTO WARM BACK INTO COMFORT BACK INTO (WHAT? WHAT WAS IN THE DREAM? JUDY GARLAND...?)



OF COURSE, THIS ISN'T MY REAL FACE, HAL.



AND THIS ISN'T MY REAL FACE EITHER.



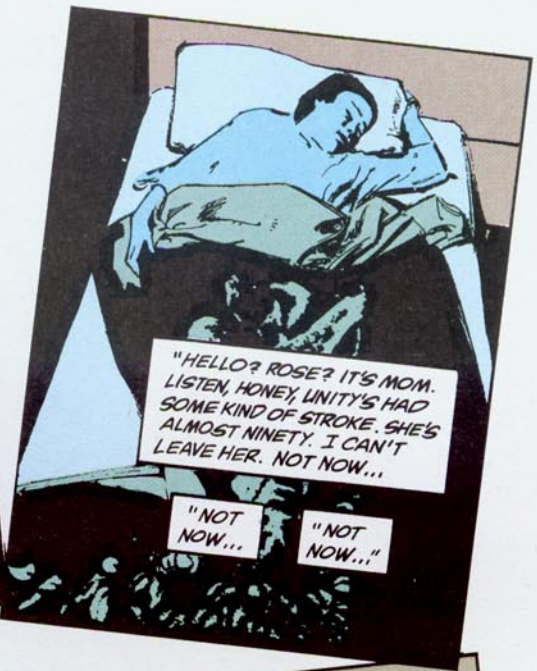
HAL. YOU'LL HAVE TO HELP ME.

I'M RUNNING OUT OF HANDS.



GO TO SLEEP, ROSE WALKER.

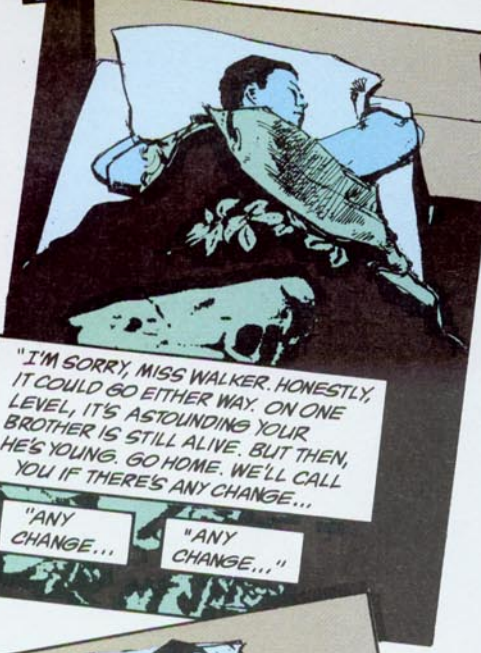
WIND UP THE DAY, LET IT GO.



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

"NOT NOW..."

"NOT NOW..."



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

"ANY CHANGE..."

"ANY CHANGE..."



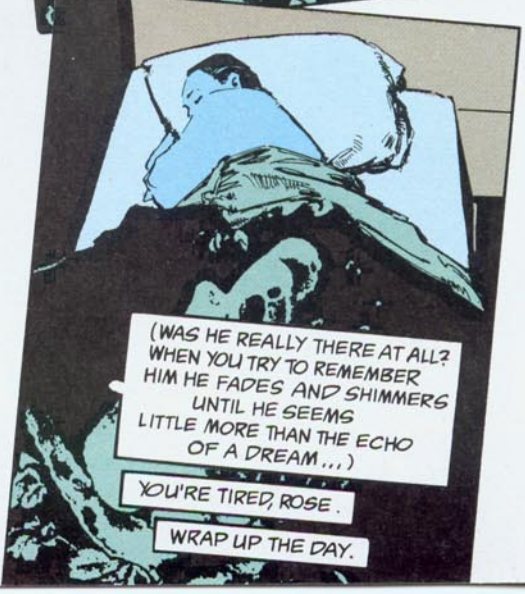
PUT THE DAY AWAY IN ITS PLACE, ROSE. FORGET THE WEIRD THINGS THAT HAVE HAPPENED IN THE LAST FEW WEEKS.

YOU DON'T NEED THEM.



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

FORGET THE PALE STRANGER...

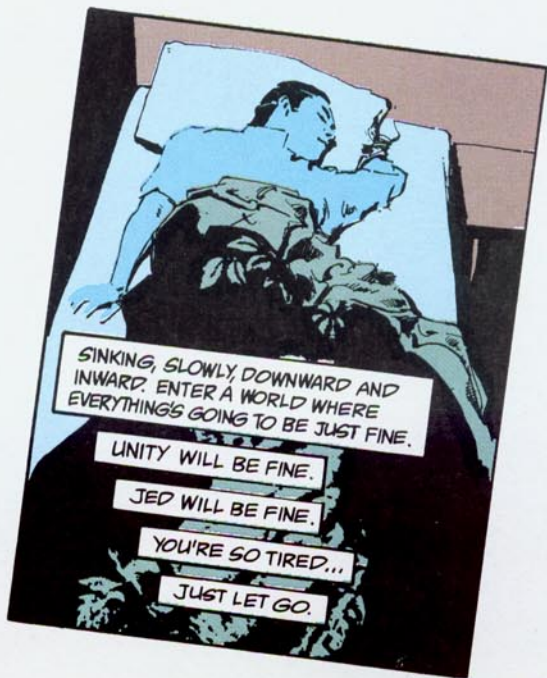


(WAS HE REALLY THERE AT ALL? WHEN YOU TRY TO REMEMBER HIM HE FADES AND SHIMMERS UNTIL HE SEEMS LITTLE MORE THAN THE ECHO OF A DREAM...)

YOU'RE TIRED, ROSE.

WRAP UP THE DAY.





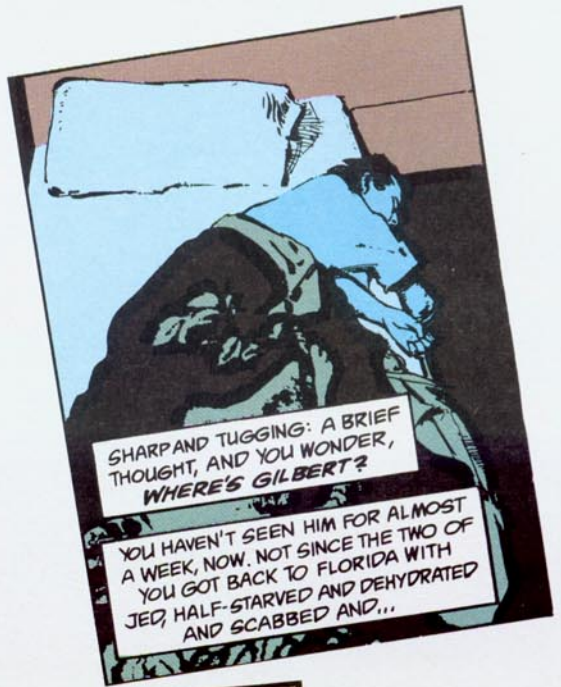
SINKING SLOWLY DOWNWARD AND INWARD. ENTER A WORLD WHERE EVERYTHING'S GOING TO BE JUST FINE.

UNITY WILL BE FINE.

JED WILL BE FINE.

YOU'RE SO TIRED...

JUST LET GO.



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

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



LET IT GO.

IT'LL STILL BE THERE TOMORROW.

(GILBERT?)

AND SLEEP.

AND DREAM...



GILBERT.

BREVARD COUNTY HOSPITAL



HOOM.

So it begins, once more. The first vortex of this era.

Nonetheless, there is something about this one-- this time-- that I do not understand.

WROARRRKK?



TO BE HONEST, I STILL DON'T QUITE FOLLOW WHAT'S GOING ON HERE.

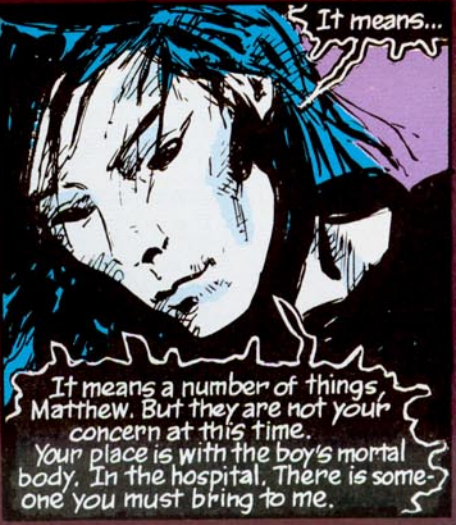
WHAT IS THAT THING?

It is the vortex, Matthew. It is also Rose Walker. And it is growing.

SO, WHAT DOES THAT MEAN, CHIEF?



It means...



It means a number of things, Matthew. But they are not your concern at this time. Your place is with the boy's mortal body. In the hospital. There is someone you must bring to me.

I DON'T LIKE HOSPITALS.



For my part, I must deal with this vortex, as I have dealt with the others in the past. As I must deal with anything that threatens the dreaming.

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

uh (!) yessz.  
uh. NO. UH. uh..



Do IT!  
DONT Doo it.  
KENNY. KENNY.

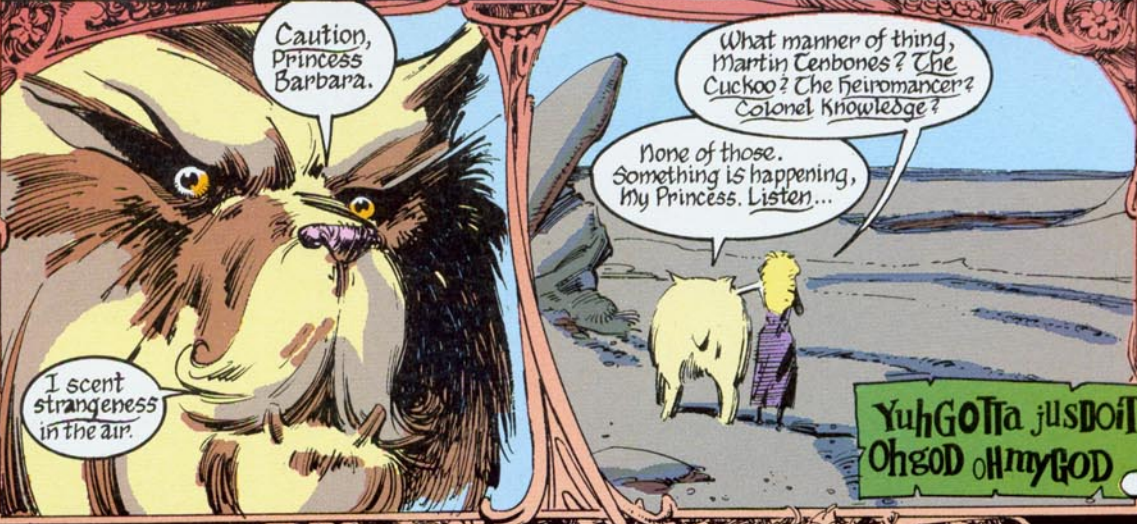


BARBIE DREAMS.

GRUMPF

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

I understand.



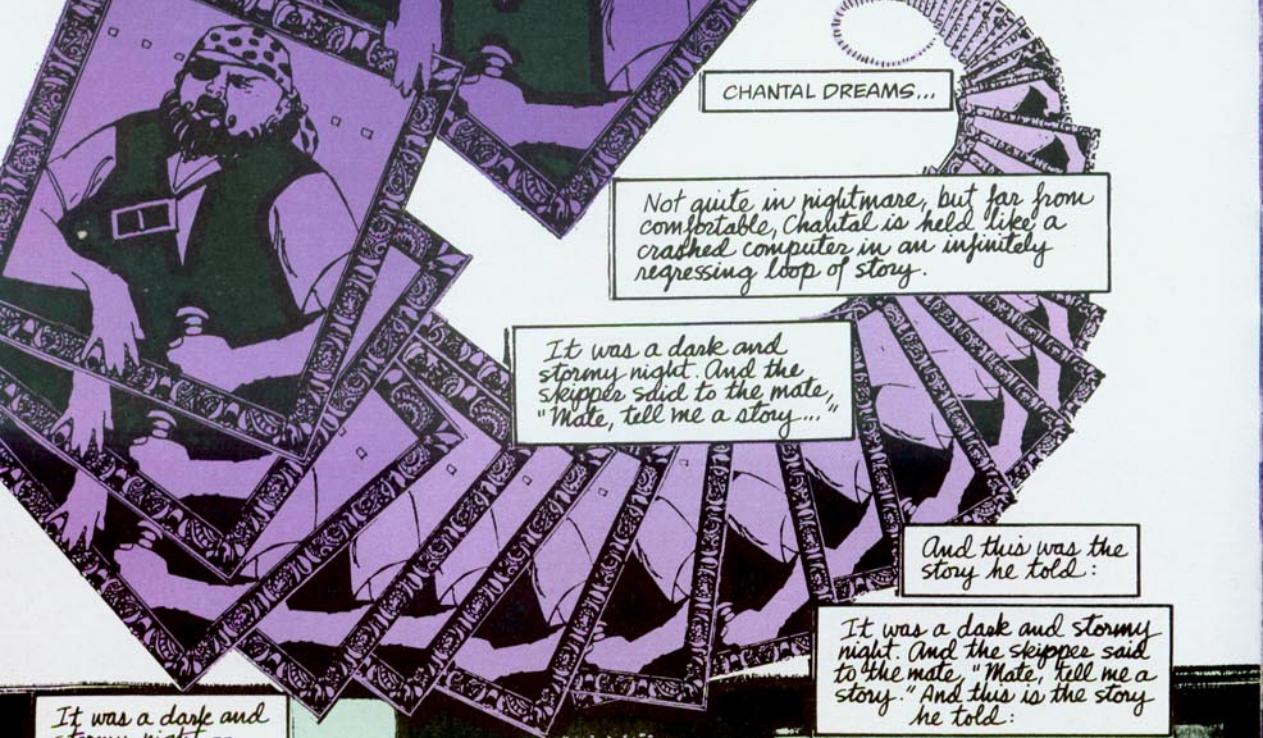
Caution, Princess Barbara.

I scent strangeness in the air.

What manner of thing, Martin Cenbones? The Cuckoo? The Heiromancer? Colonel Knowledge?

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

YuhGOTTA jusDOIT  
OhGOD OhMyGOD



CHANTAL DREAMS...

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

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

And this was the story he told:

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

It was a dark and stormy night.--

skipper said--

Story, and this is the story he--

Dark and stormy night--

And stormy--

night--

story--

ZELDA DREAMS.

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

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



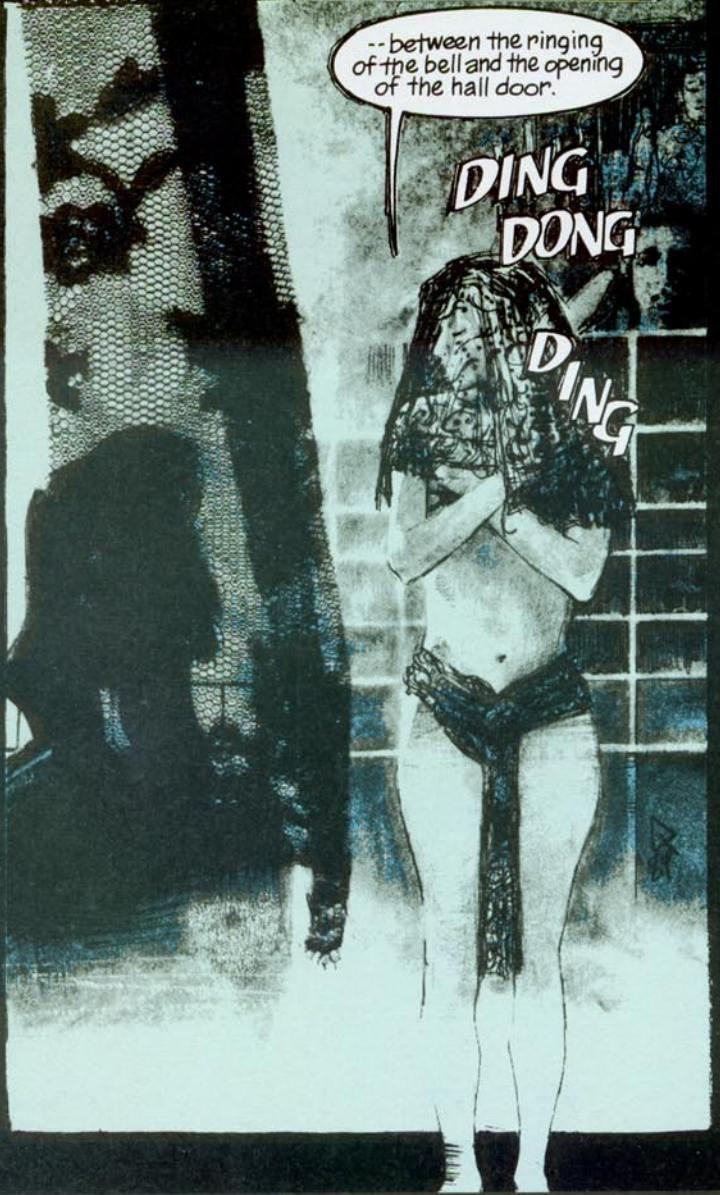
Ding-Dong

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

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

DING DONG

DING



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

NO. THIS IS THE ROBERT HE HAD HOPED FOR. THE ROBERT HE HAD DREAMED OF. FRIENDLY, OPEN, MAGICAL...

THEIR TUNE IS PLAYING IN THE BACKGROUND.



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

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

♪ DING DONG DING  
DONG DING. ♪

ROSE DREAMS.

SHE KNOWS SHE'S DREAMING.

SHE'S NEVER HAD A DREAM LIKE THIS BEFORE.

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

HER SENSE OF IDENTITY HAS NEVER BEEN SO CERTAIN.

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

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

FALTERINGLY, SHE EXTENDS HER PERCEPTIONS...



SHE CAN FEEL THEM.

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

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



BARBARA'S RICH DREAM-LIFE, MORE VALID AND TRUE THAN ANYTHING SHE FEELS WHEN WAKING.

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

HAL'S ENDLESS QUEST FOR IDENTITY AND LOVE.

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

AND SHE SEES HOW SIMPLE IT ALL IS.

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

SEES HOW SIMPLE IT WOULD BE TO SHATTER THEM.

SHE REACHES OUT HER MIND, AND NUDGES.

AND THE WALLS...

AND BEYOND...

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

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

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

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

Enough.

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

THERE ARE SO MANY DREAMERS. SO MANY.

Enough.

ROSE'S PERCEPTIONS EXTEND. SO MANY NEW THINGS.

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

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

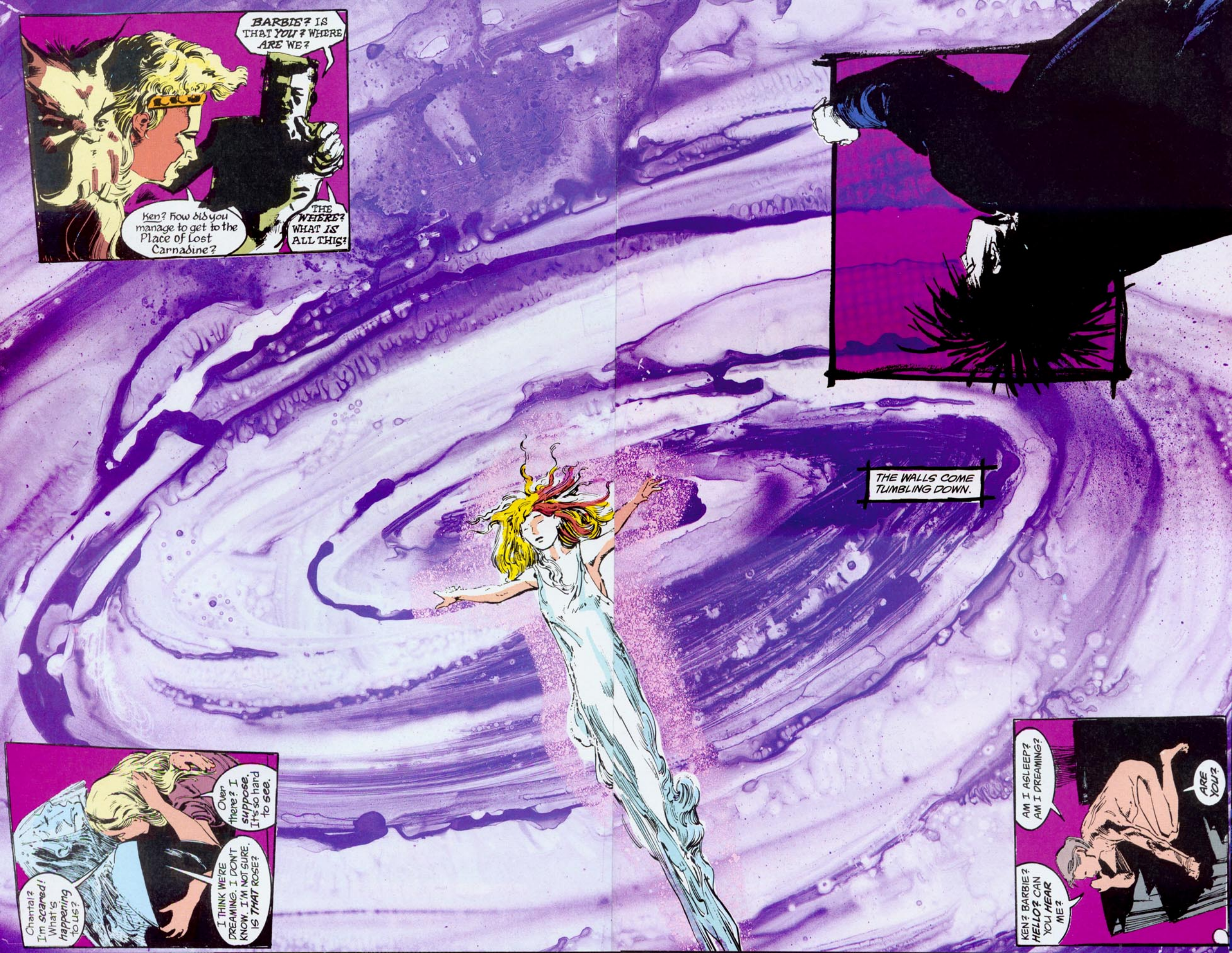
ENOUGH!

UH...

WHAT HAPPENED?

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

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



THE WALLS COME  
TUMBLING DOWN.





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

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

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

CHANTAL AND ZELDA WOKE, SCARED AND LONELY.

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

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

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



FOR A WHILE, HE SAT IN THE DARKENED ROOM.



ROSE? ROSE? ARE YOU AWAKE?



ROSE?

NO.  
SHE WAS GONE.

AND SOMEHOW HAL WASN'T AT ALL SURPRISED.



MIRANDA?

IT'S OKAY. EVERYTHING'S OKAY.

I'M HERE.



4:30 A.M. MIRANDA WALKER HASN'T SLEPT FOR TWO DAYS, NOW.

THE DOLL'S HOUSE...



I THINK ROSE SHOULD HAVE THE DOLL'S HOUSE. BUT PERHAPS SHE'S TOO OLD FOR IT...

NO. NO, I THINK SHE'D LIKE THAT, MOTHER.



THAT'S GOOD. I WISH... I WISH MY PARENTS COULD BE HERE WITH ME. IT WOULDN'T BE SO HARD. I WOULDN'T BE AFRAID OF DYING, IF THEY WERE HERE...

BUT AT LEAST I HAVE YOU WITH ME, MIRANDA. AND SO LITTLE TIME REMAINING...

AND THEN UNITY IS ASLEEP ONCE MORE.

STAY WITH ME. IT MAKES THE LETTING GO EASIER TO BEAR...

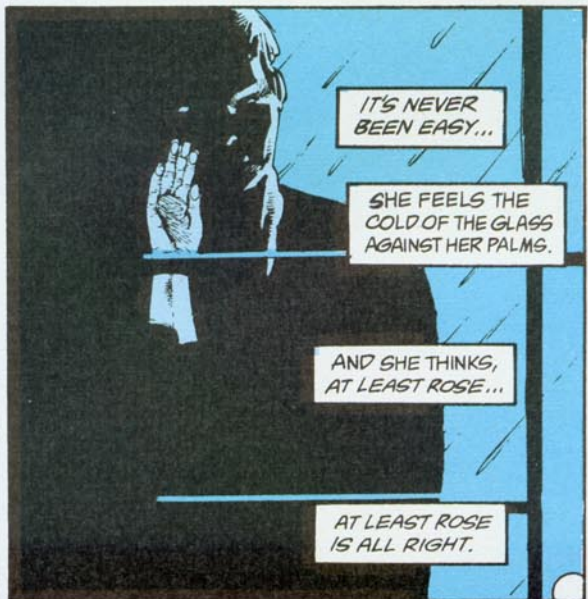


AND MIRANDA THINKS I DIDN'T NEED THAT.

I'VE A SON WHO MAY BE DYING SIX THOUSAND MILES AWAY.

I'VE GOT A MOTHER WHO IS DYING HERE.

WHAT KIND OF AN OPTION IS THAT, THEN, GOD? -- IF YOU'RE OUT THERE. IF ANYONE'S OUT THERE.

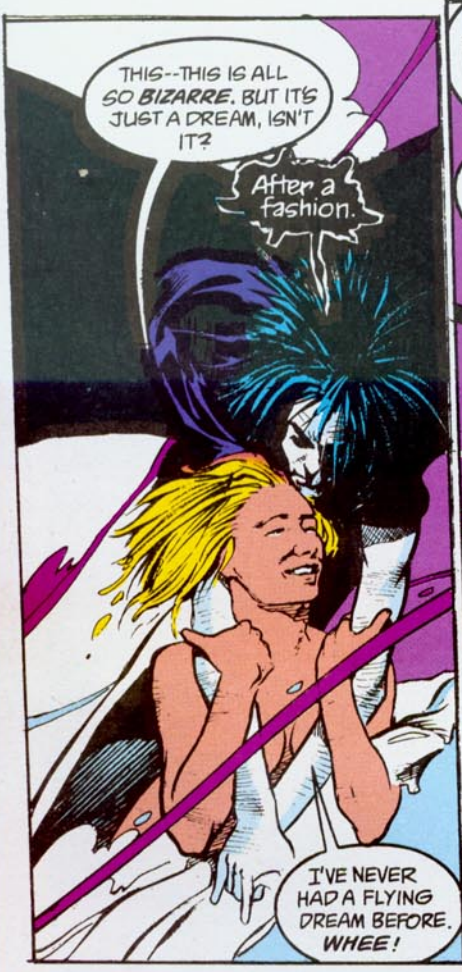


IT'S NEVER BEEN EASY...

SHE FEELS THE COLD OF THE GLASS AGAINST HER PALMS.

AND SHE THINKS, AT LEAST ROSE...

AT LEAST ROSE IS ALL RIGHT.



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

After a fashion.

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



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

IT MEANS YOU'RE REALLY DREAMING ABOUT HAVING SEX.

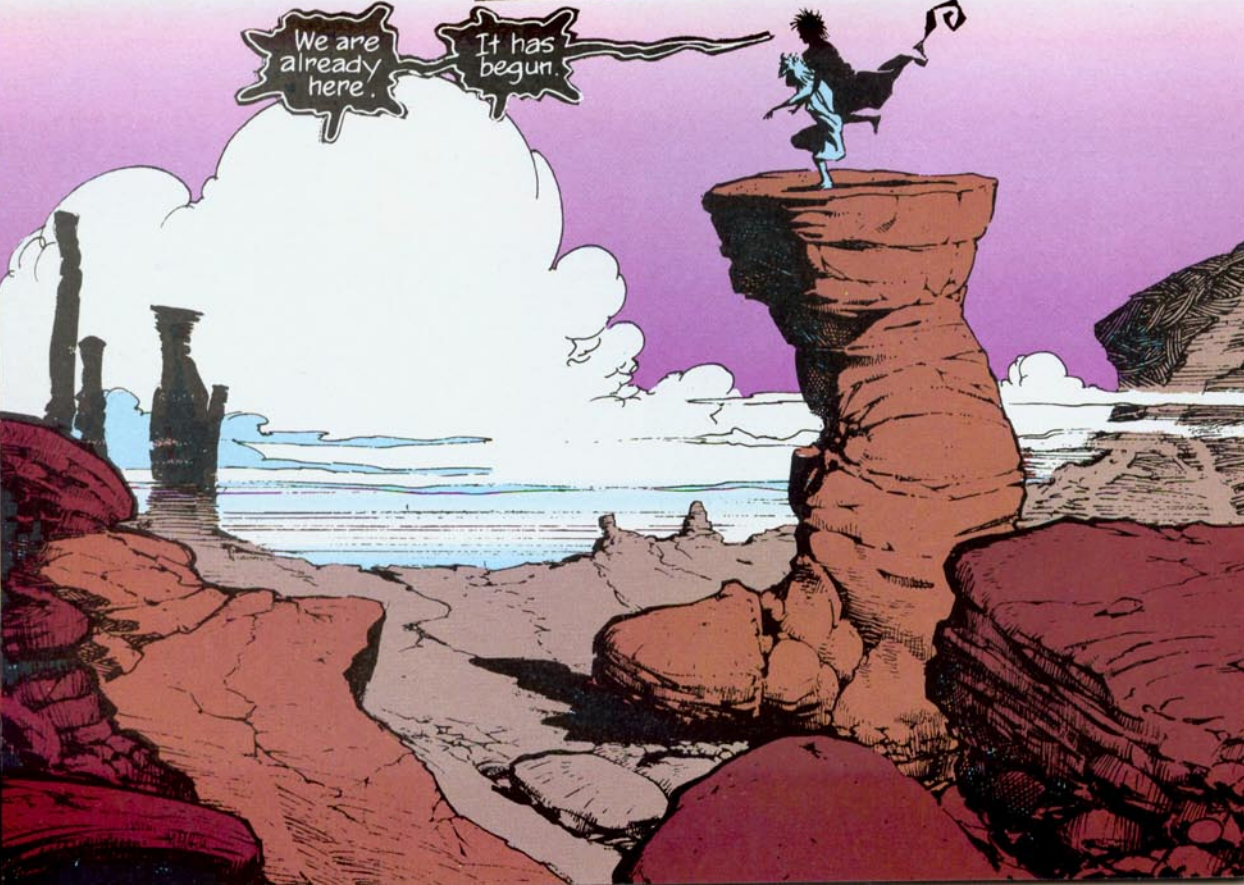


Indeed?

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

UH...

WHERE ARE WE GOING?



We are already here.

It has begun.



