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The New York Times best-selling author of *American Gods* and *Coraline*

NEIL GAIMAN

Volume One

THE SANDMAN & PRELUDES NOCTURNES

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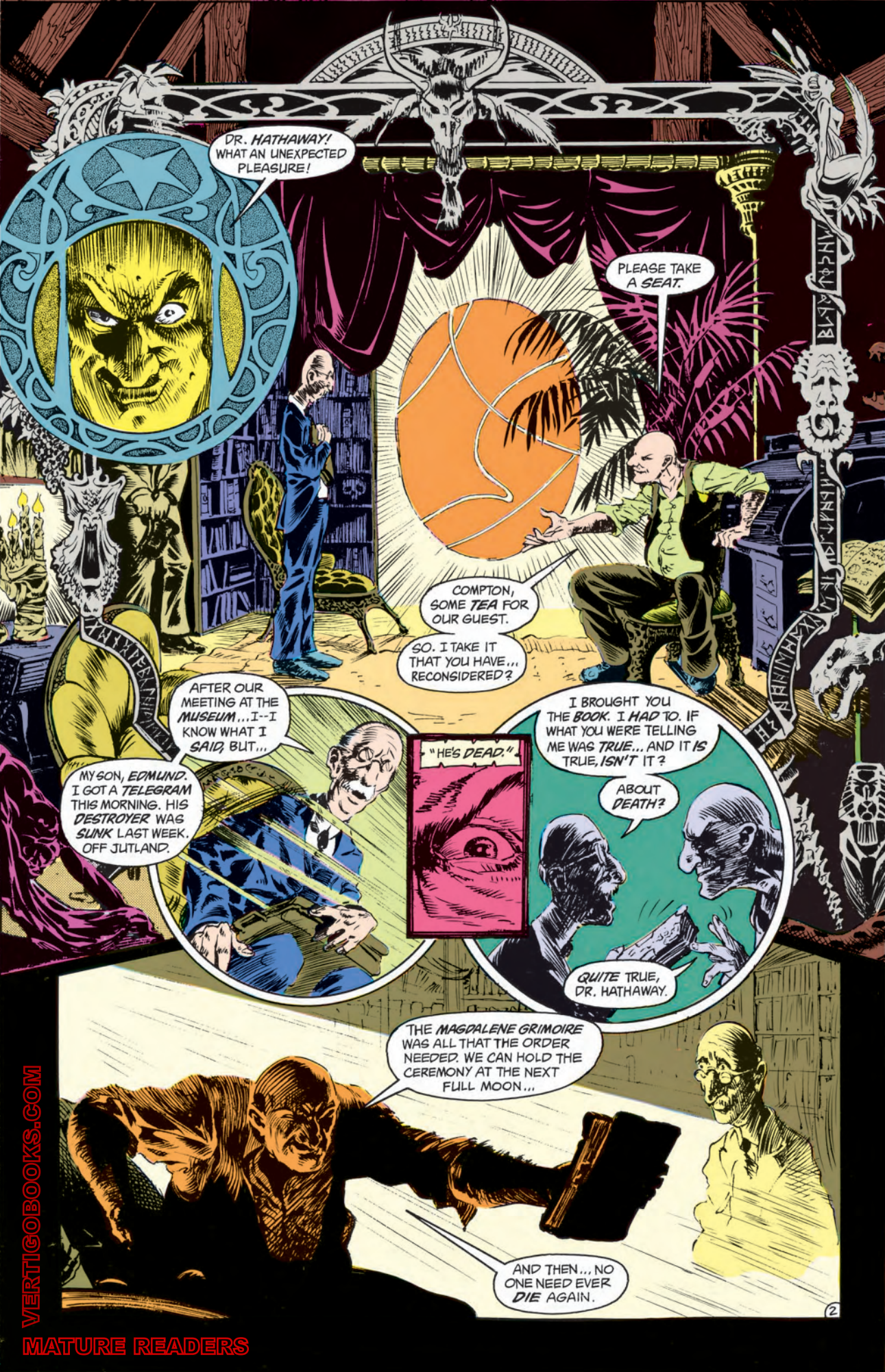
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VERTIGO

Mature Readers

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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.



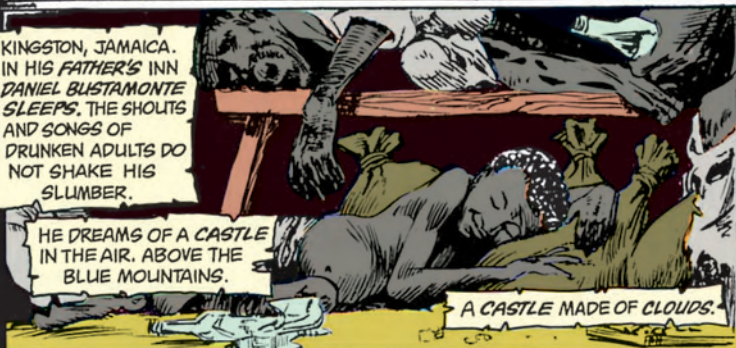
...SAID TWEEDLEDUM, "WHEN YOU'RE ONLY ONE OF THE THINGS IN HIS DREAM.

"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.

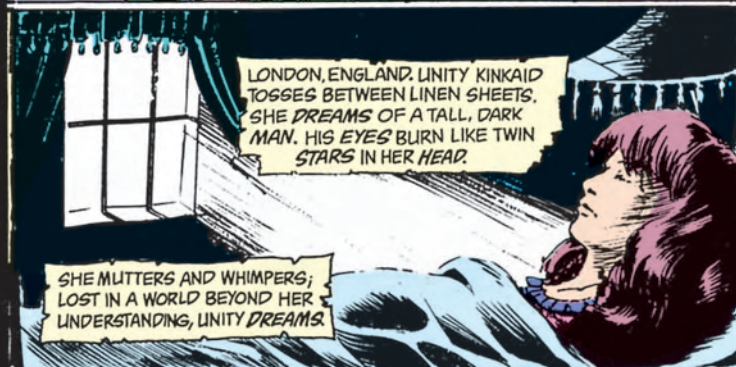
A CASTLE MADE OF CLOUDS.

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



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

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



AND OF DEATH, OF COURSE.

ESPECIALLY DEATH.

MATURE READERS

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

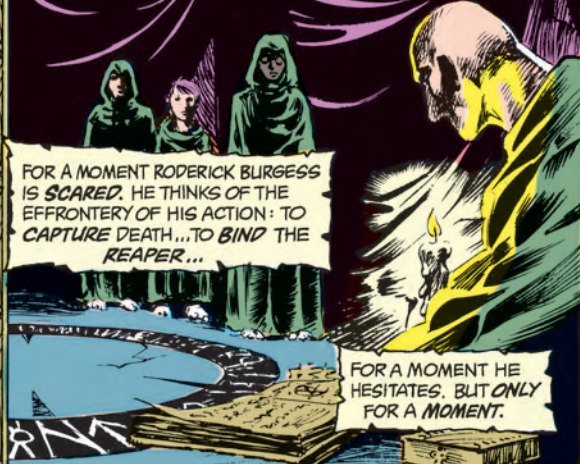
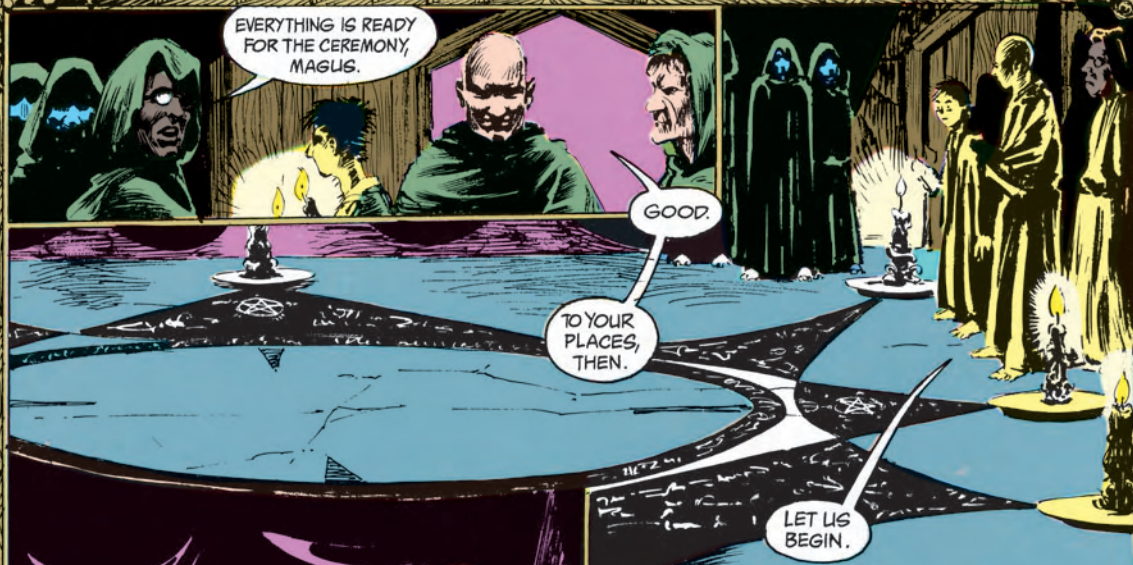
AFTER TONIGHT
I'D LIKE TO SEE ALEISTER
AND HIS FRIENDS TRY
TO MAKE FUN OF ME!

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...



MOONSTONE COMICS

MATURE READERS

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.

ASHEMA-DEVA
CALLS YOU.

MABORYM
CALLS YOU.

HORVENDILE
CALLS YOU.

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.

COME.

"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...

"WE SUMMON YOU,
TOGETHER."

HERE IN THE
DARKNESS...

HERE IN THE
DARKNESS...

"COME!"

HERE IN THE
DARKNESS...

JUST

VERTIGOBOOKS.COM

MATURE READERS

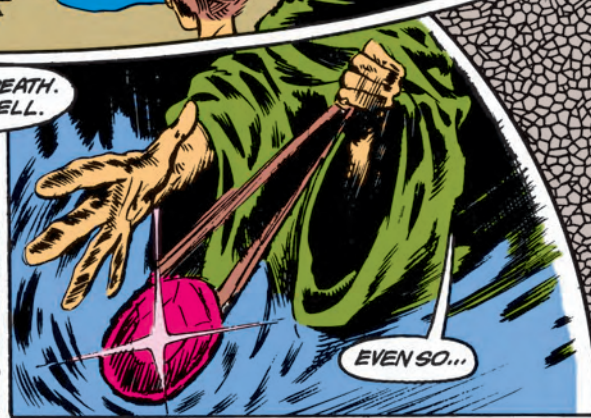


WE DID IT.
I DON'T BELIEVE
IT. WE DID IT.

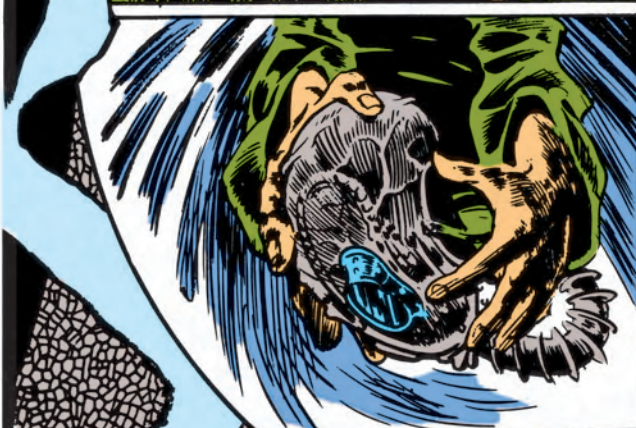


NO. WE
FAILED.

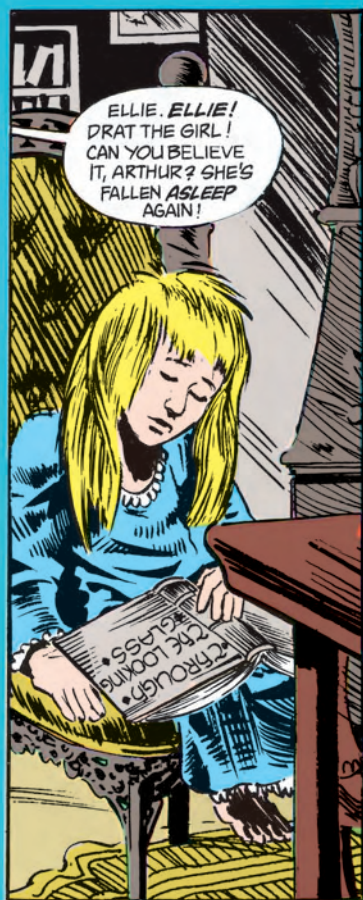
THIS ISN'T DEATH.
DAMN IT TO HELL.



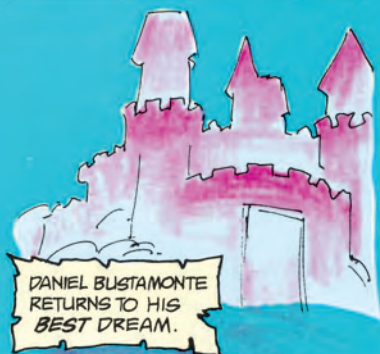
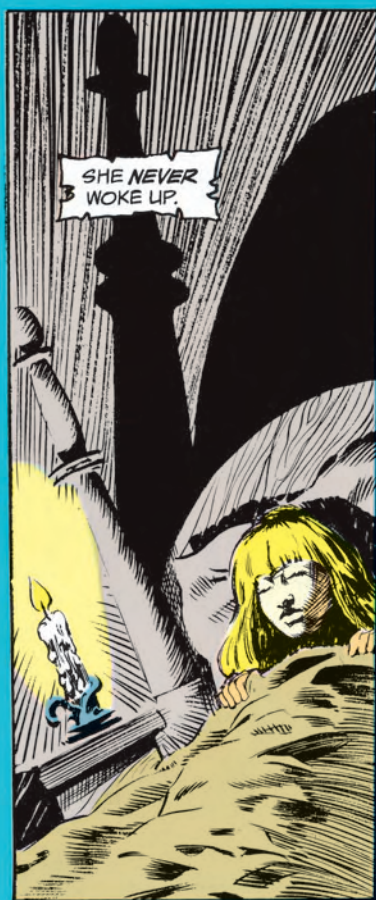
EVEN SO...



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



HER FATHER CARRIED HER TO HER BED.



AND THEN THE CLOUDS AREN'T THERE AT ALL.



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



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.

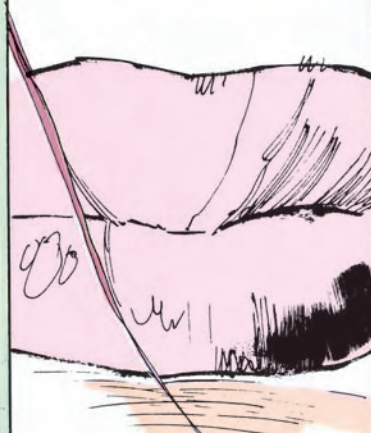


SHE NOW SLEEPS FOR ALMOST TWENTY HOURS A DAY.



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

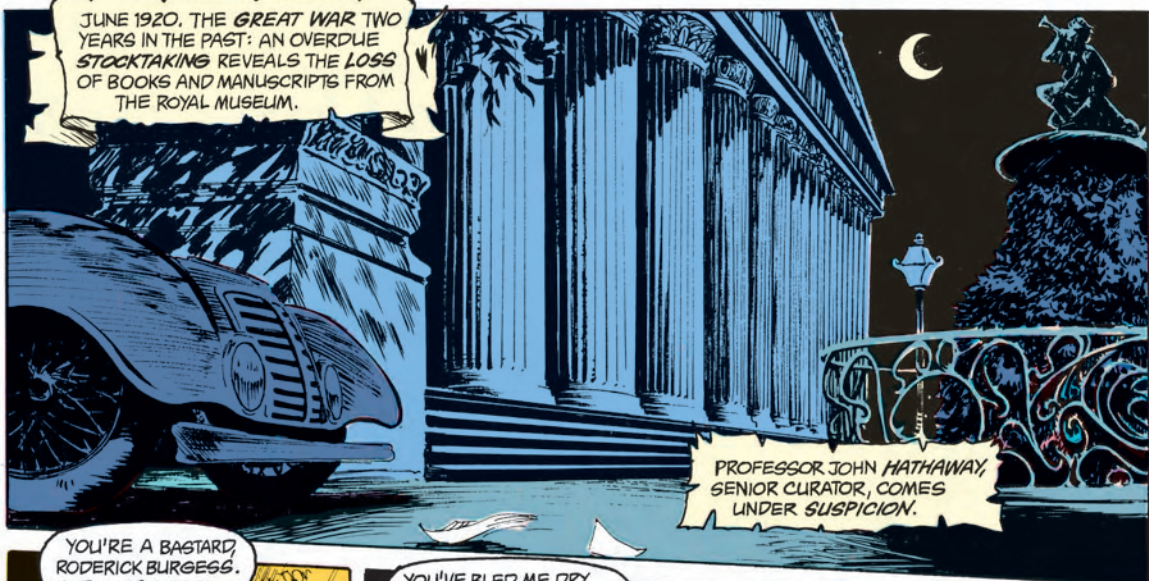
NOW SHE LIES UNMOVING, BREATH SHALLOW AND SILENT, LOST TO THE WORLD.



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."



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.

E 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 Rug," 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's efforts to win him- self in the early years of the century were scorned by the "serious"



TRAGEDIES OF SLEEPY SICKNESS. WARPED MINDS AND BROKEN BODIES.

Since The Daily Mail published the letter of Mr. F. W. Hore, of Manchester concerning the death of his daughter, who was a member of the Order of Ancient Mysteries, the "serious" occult circles have been greatly interested.

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

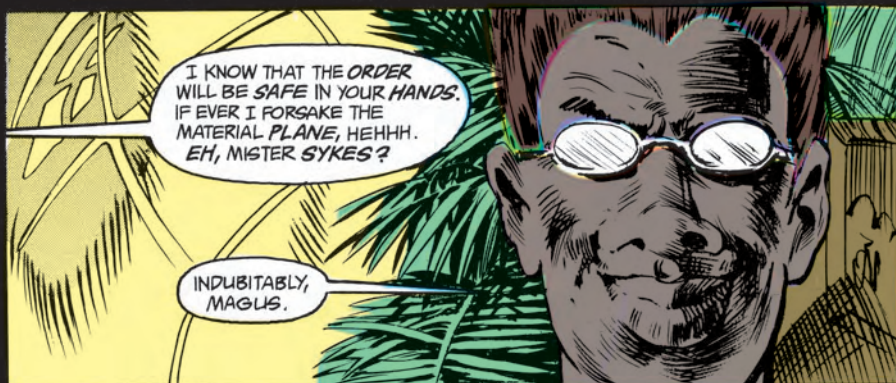
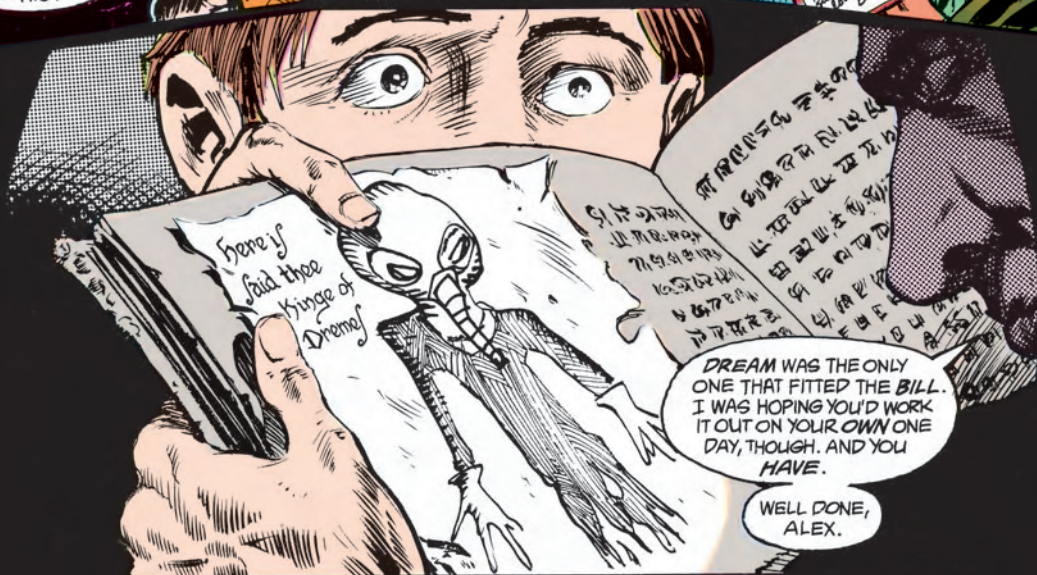
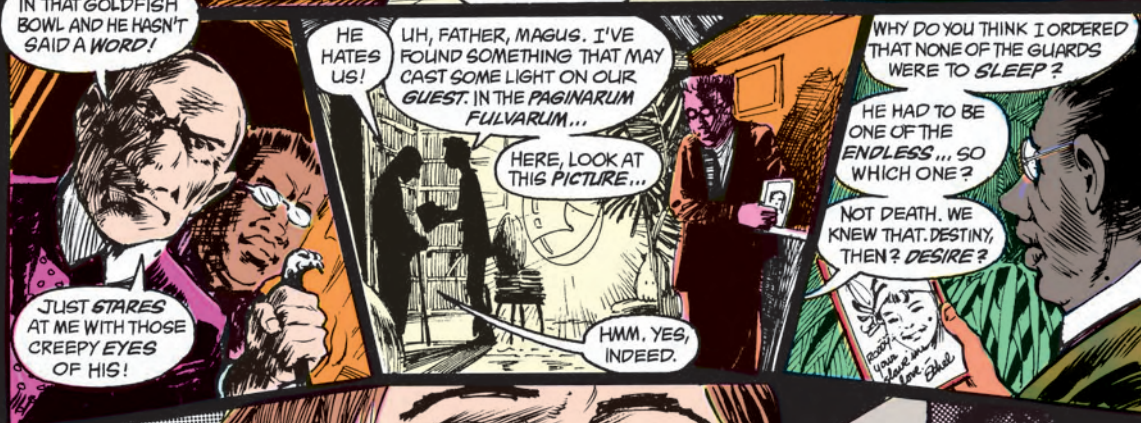
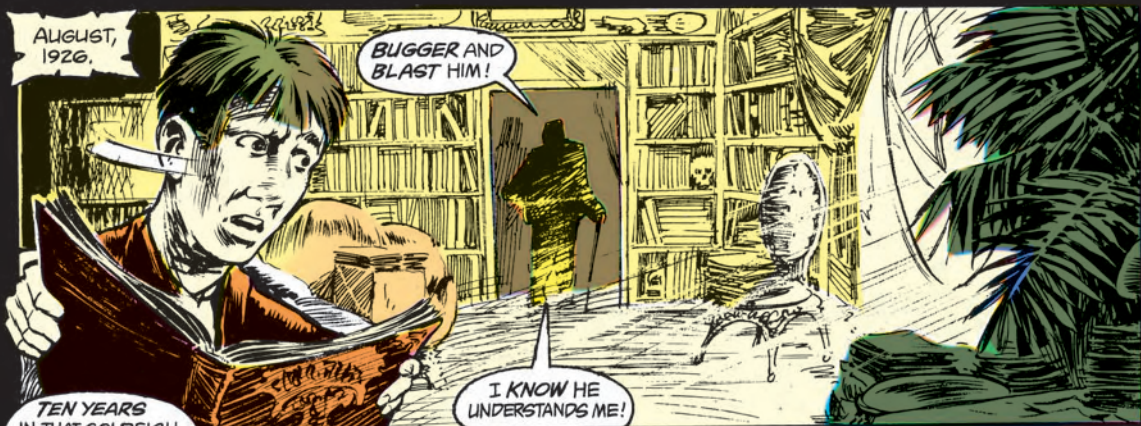
THEY LIVED THEIR LIVES LIKE SLEEPWALKERS; EATING IF FED, SOMETIMES TALKING NONSENSE, DREAM-STUFF...

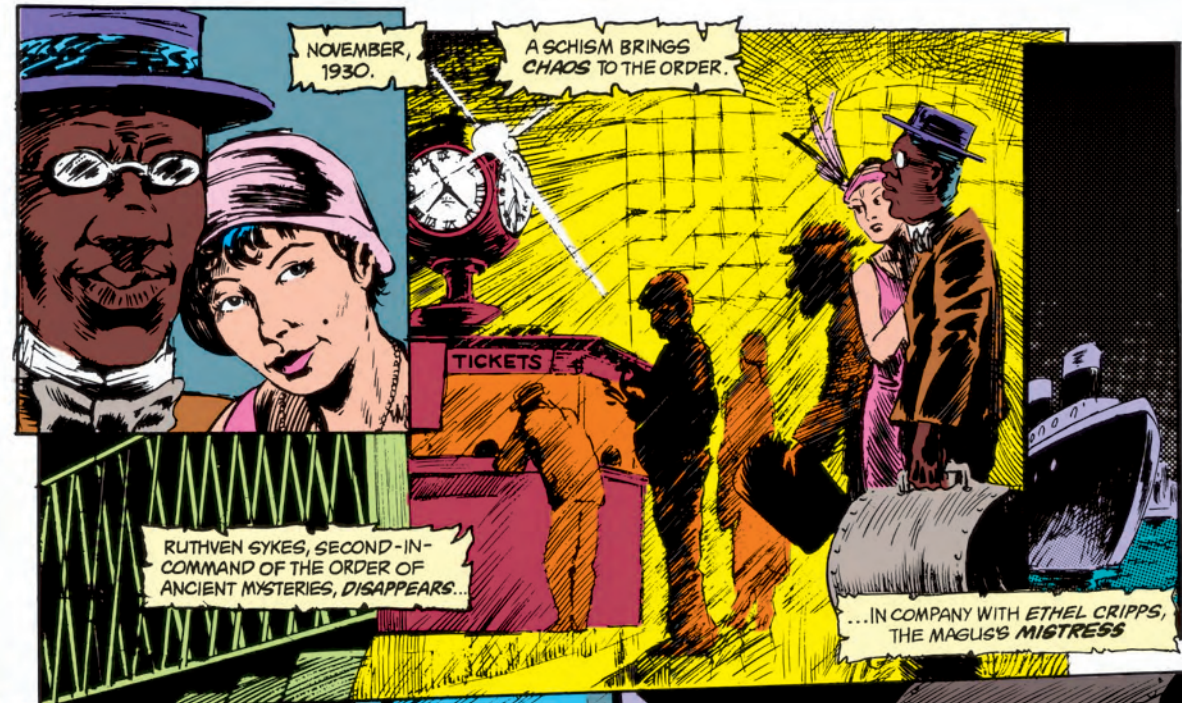
PSYCHIC RESIDUE FROM THE WORLD WAR, SOME SUGGESTED. OTHERS, DOCTORS AND SCIENTISTS, MORE SENSIBLY ATTRIBUTED IT TO A VIRUS.

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

HE WAS SIXTEEN.

STEFAN WASSERMAN 1902-1918





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.

PROTECTIONS COMES DEAR, MORTAL. THE THINGSZ YOU OFFERSZ ISSS PALTRY TRIFLESS...

HAVE YOU NOSZSING ELSSSSSE...?



PERHAPS THIS HELMET SIRE?

AAAH. YESSSSSSSS. FOR THISSS I WOULD GIVE YOU WHAT YOU ASKS... SSSSSO SSPLENDID...



THISSS AMULET WILL MAKES SAFE FROM ANYESSZINGGGS...

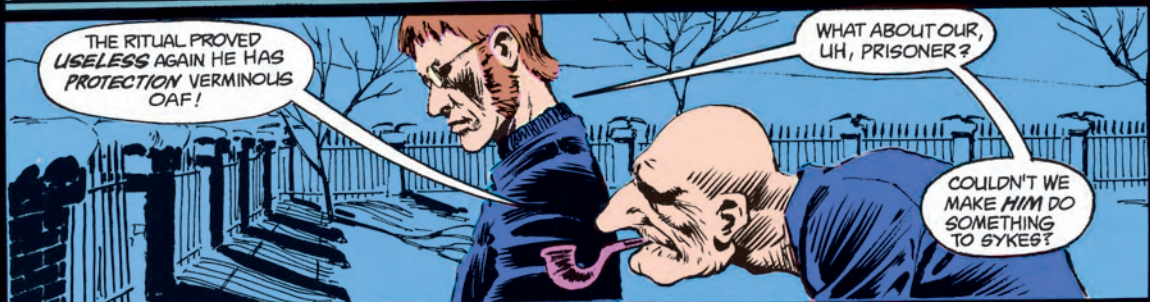


WYCH CROSS, ENGLAND.

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 SYKES?



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...

VERTIGOBOOKS.COM

MATURE READERS

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 SUCCEED TO SLEEPY SICKNESS, END OF 1926. HE'S NOW BEEN ASLEEP FOR THIRTEEN YEARS.

HIS WIFE AND CHILDREN MISS HIM.

UNITY KINKAID WAS RAPE, 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.

1947.

FATHER, DO YOU THINK
THIS IS WISE? AT YOUR
AGE?

MY AGE? *Khoff!*
DON'T BE SO BLOODY
INSOLENT! OPEN
THE DAMN DOOR!

YOU! IT'S YOUR
FAULT! YOU!

DAMN YOU!

YOU AREN'T DEATH.
BUT YOU LIVE FOREVER.
YOU HAVEN'T AGED
A DAY SINCE WE
CAUGHT YOU.

YOU COULD HAVE
GIVEN ME POWER
BEYOND MY WILDEST
DREAMS.

=SNF.=

I-*ahhah*-I
DIDN'T HAVE TO
GET SO OLD.

I SHOULDN'T
HAVE HAD TO
GET OLD.

UKT

Watch my captor grow
old and die. No satisfaction.
Still here.

Waiting.

1955.



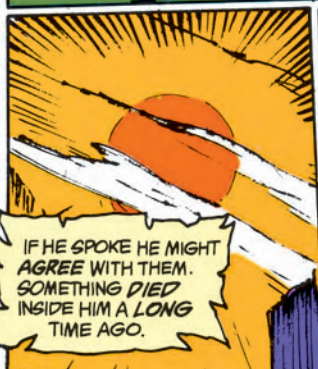
ELLIE MARSTEN IS DIAGNOSED AS SUFFERING FROM ENCEPHALITIS LETHARGICA. SHE NOW WAKES FOUR OR FIVE TIMES A YEAR...



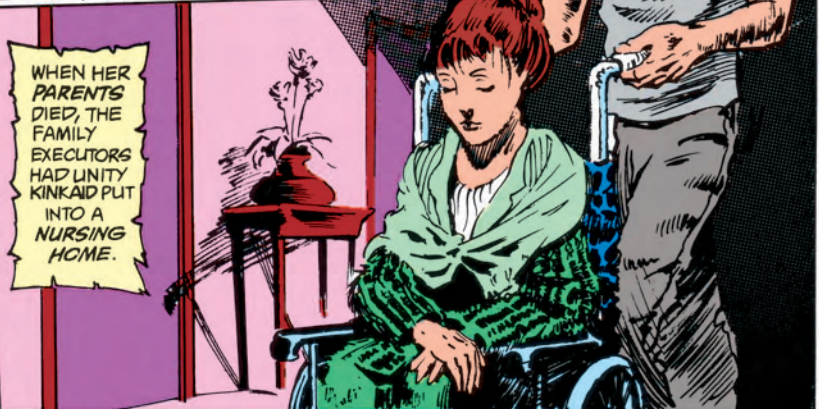
DANIEL BUSTAMONTE IS AWAKE MUCH OF THE TIME. HE DOESN'T SPEAK, THOUGH.

SHE WANTS SOMEONE TO READ HER A STORY.

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



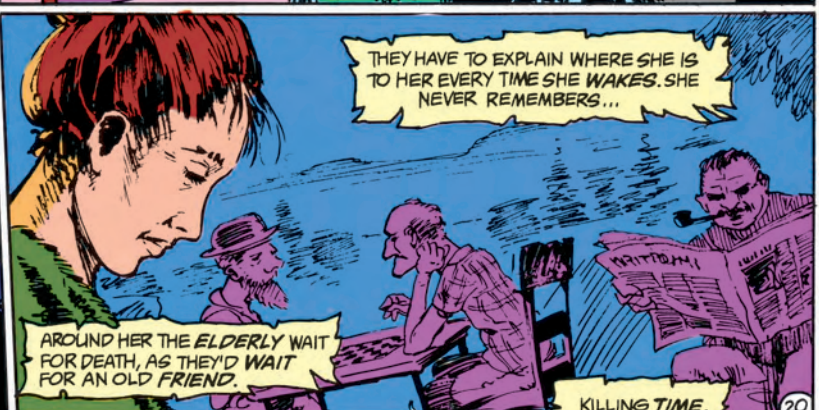
IF HE SPOKE HE MIGHT AGREE WITH THEM. SOMETHING DIED INSIDE HIM A LONG TIME AGO.



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



A CASTLE MADE OF CLOUDS.



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

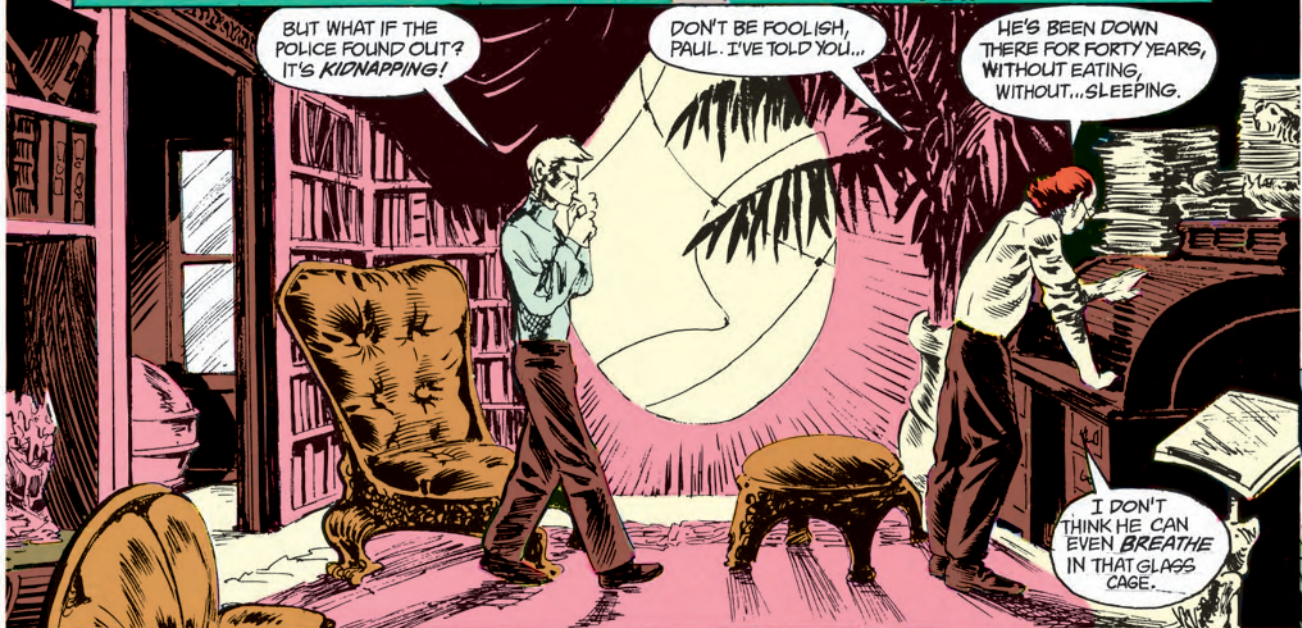
AROUND HER THE ELDERLY WAIT FOR DEATH, AS THEY'D WAIT FOR AN OLD FRIEND.

KILLING TIME.



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

"WHAT ELSE CAN I **DO**?"

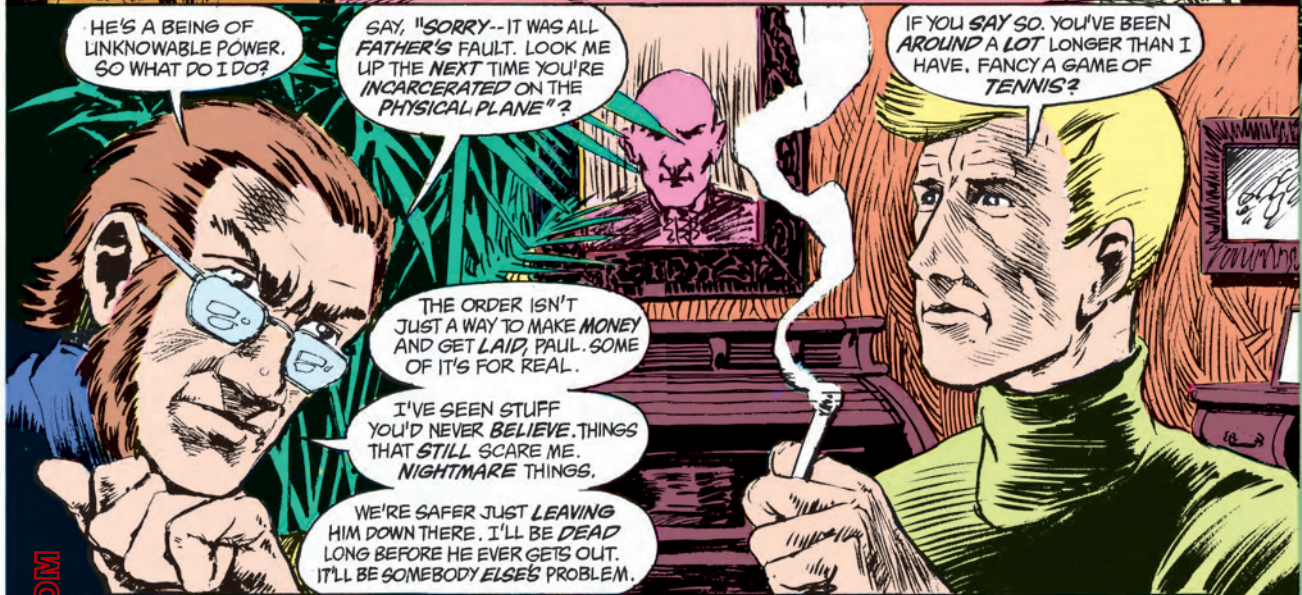


BUT WHAT IF THE POLICE FOUND OUT? IT'S **KIDNAPPING**!

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 LINKNOBABLE 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 LINGERING THROUGH HIS WORLD.

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

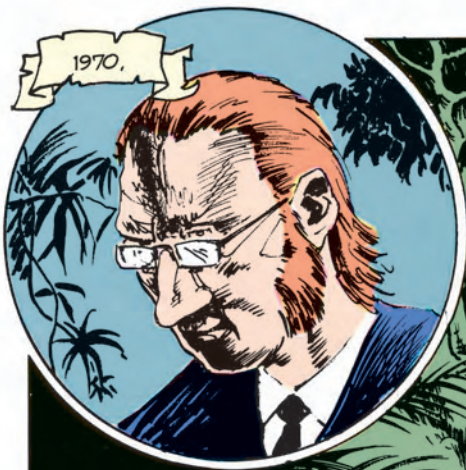
THE NURSING HOME STAFF PRETEND THAT UNITY IS AWAKE. THEY WHEEL HER FROM ROOM TO ROOM WITH THE OTHER PATIENTS.

ASLEEP SHE WATCHES TELEVISION.

ASLEEP, SHE RELAXES IN THE SUN.

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

DO WHAT THEY WILL, BUSTER!



1970.

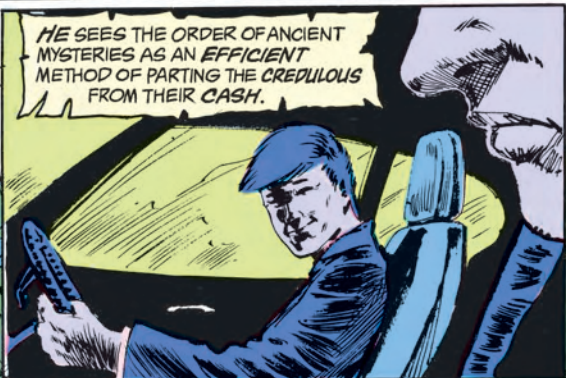
THE YOUNG PEOPLE
HAVE DRIFTED AWAY.



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



PAUL DOESN'T BELIEVE
IN MAGIC.



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

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



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



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



AND OVER ...

1972.



1978.



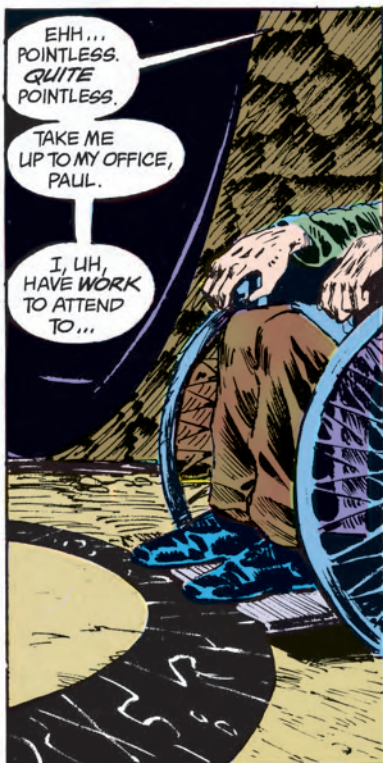
1982.



1988.



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 STROPPY
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...

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

HE'S THINKING ABOUT HIS HOLIDAY...

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

HARDLY A NIGHT'S

It begins.

STRAIGHT OUT OF A HOLIDAY *BROCHURE*.

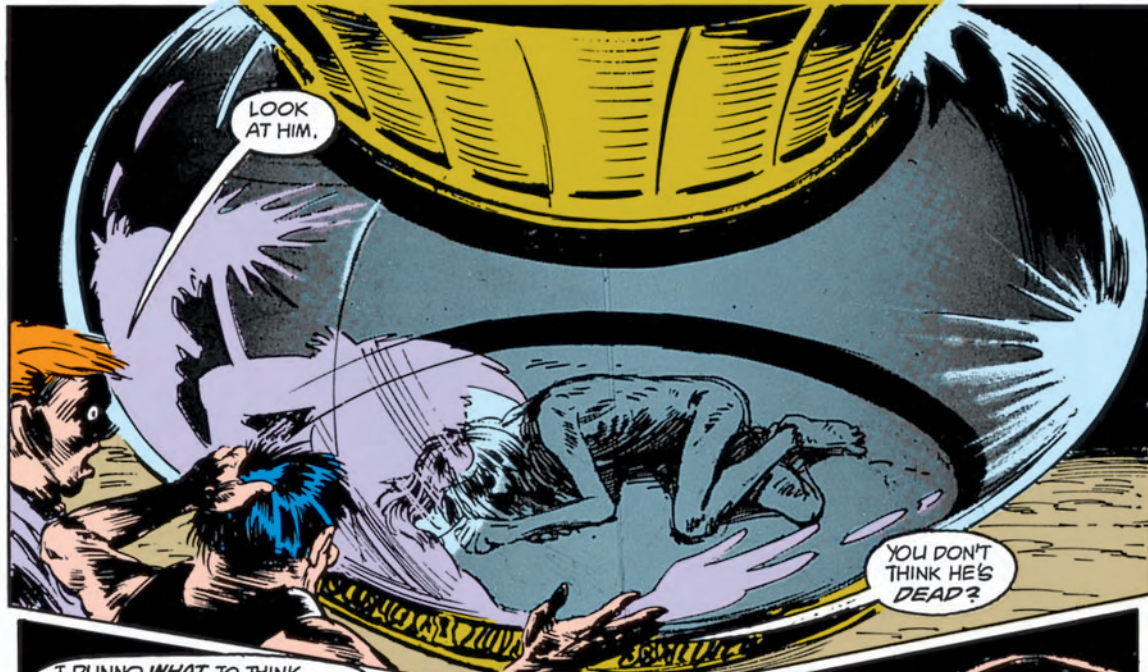
SUN... SEA...

...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!

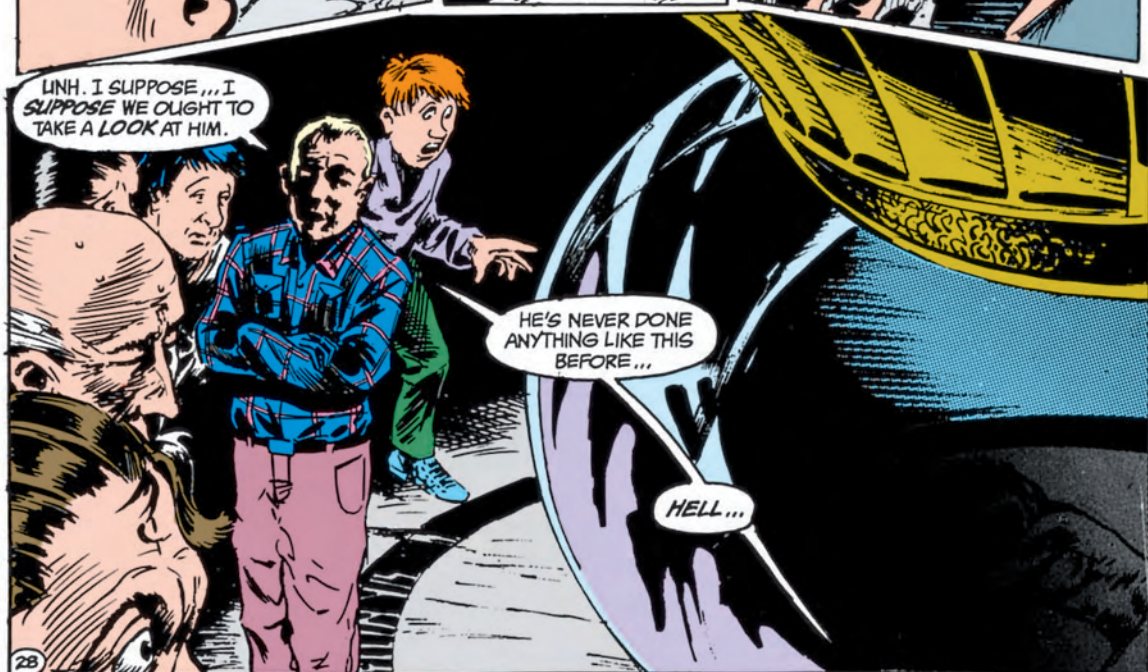


WAIT HERE--I'LL
GET MCGUIRE!

DEAD. I BET
HE'S DEAD.



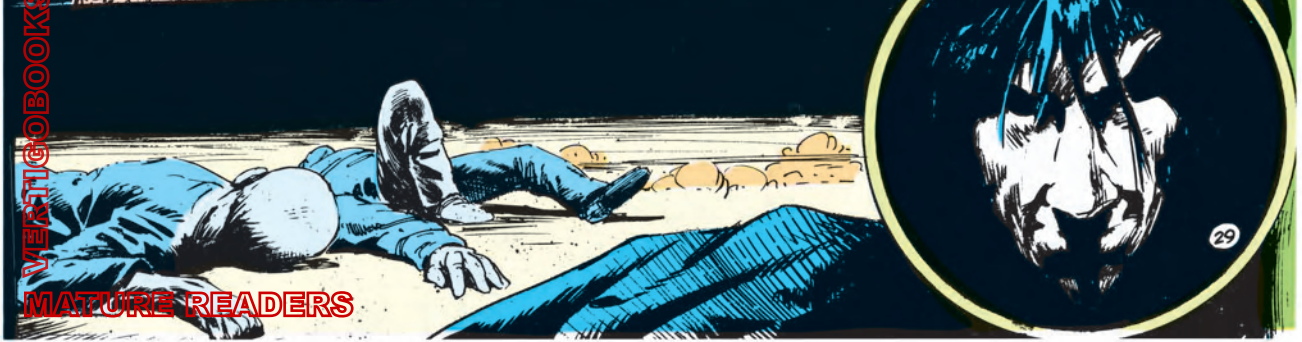
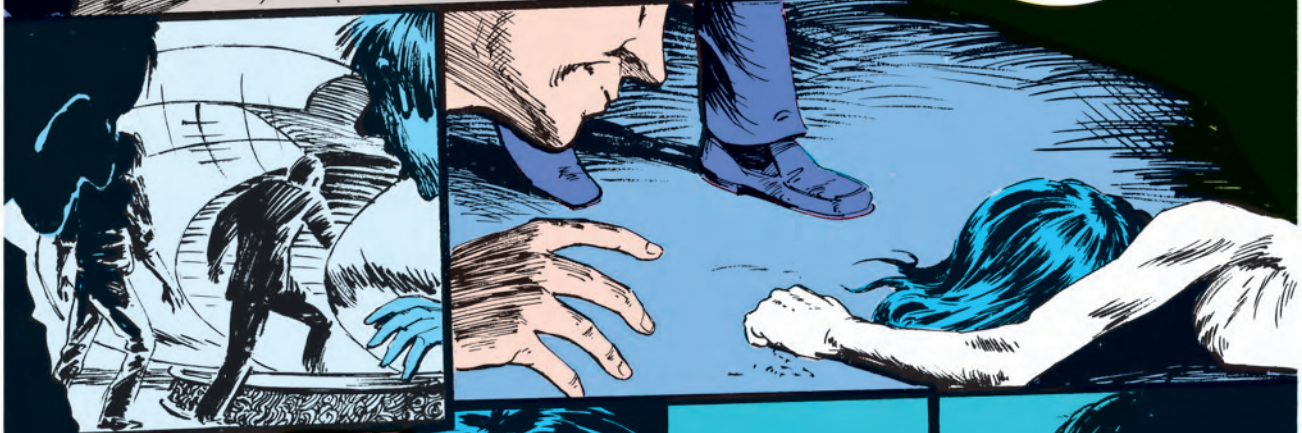
HOW LONG'S HE
BEEN LIKE THIS?



LIH. 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.

DREAMS. GO
FIGURE THEM.

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

First, food;

then
clothing...

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



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.

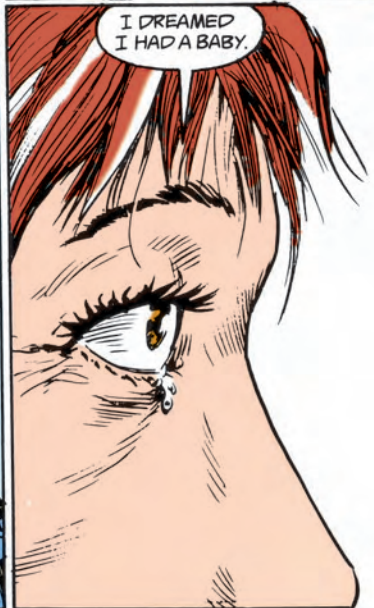
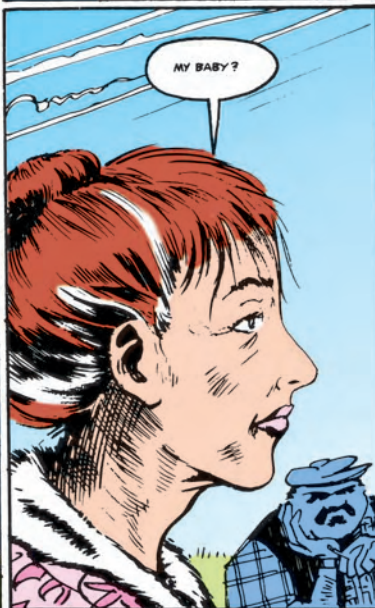
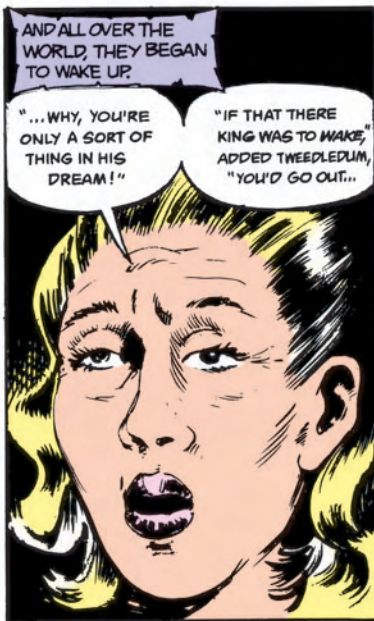


I have food and raiment.
I need the tools stolen
from me by my former
captor. He will give them
to me.

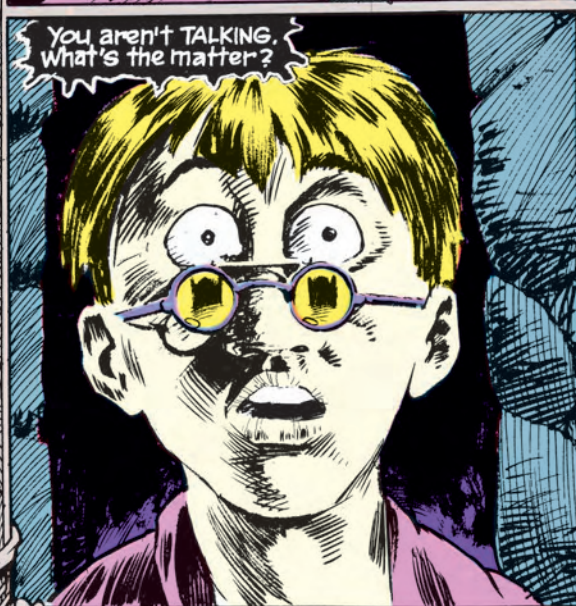
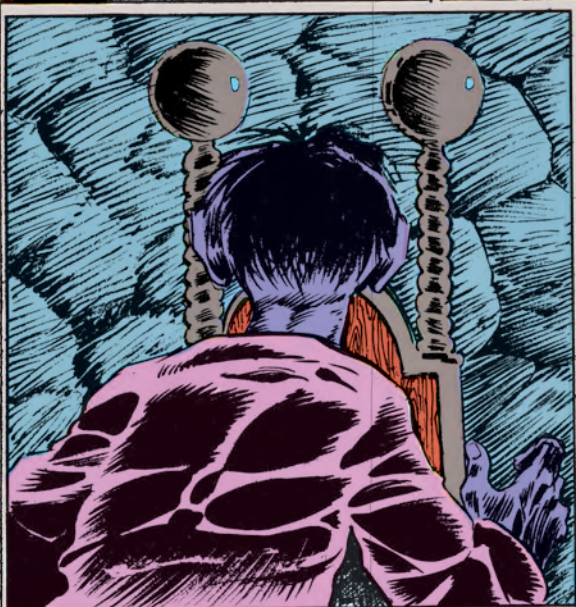


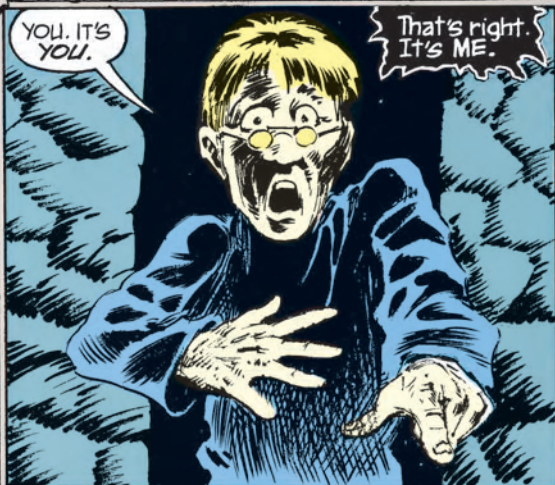
And he will give me
the other thing I
crave...

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--



Shushhhh... 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 twopehny 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.



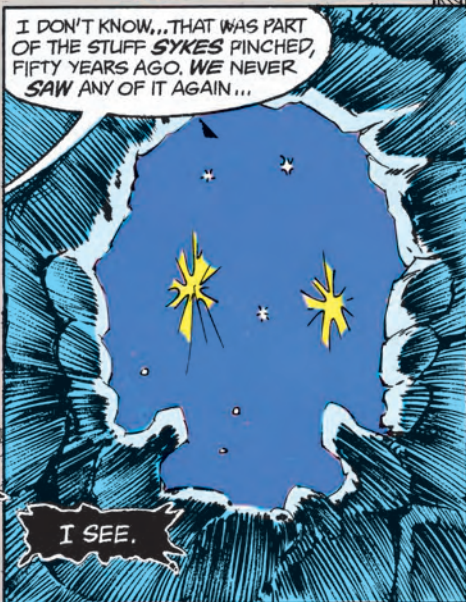
...that instead
you snared
Death's younger
BROTHER ...



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.

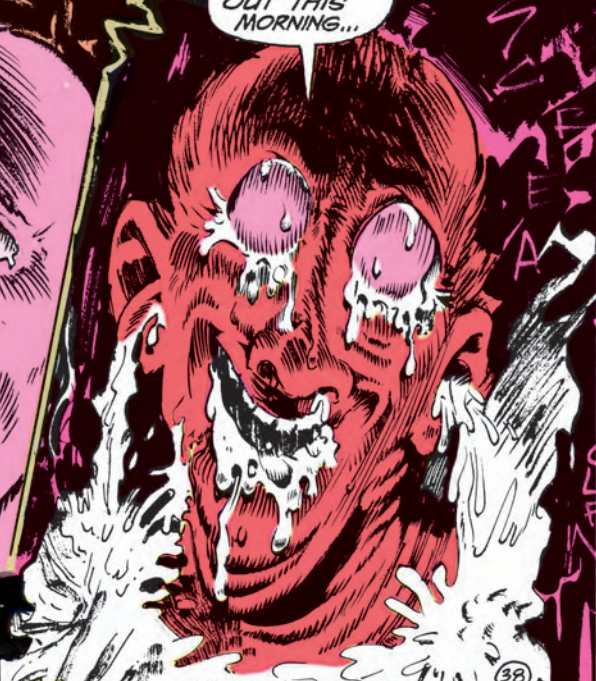
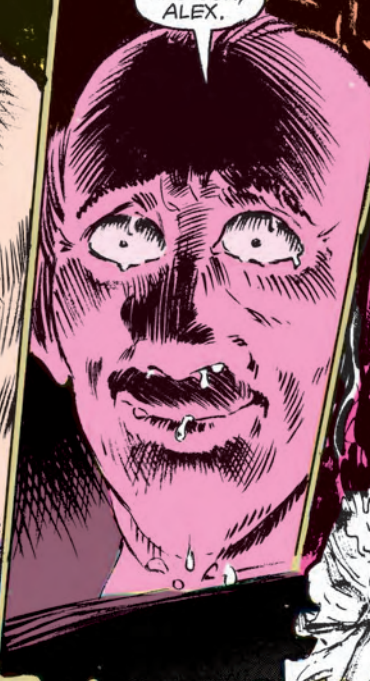
I DREAMED THAT OUR
PRISONER HAD ESCAPED.
IN THIS TOWER, HE WAS...
HE SAID...

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 TERRIFYING, 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.

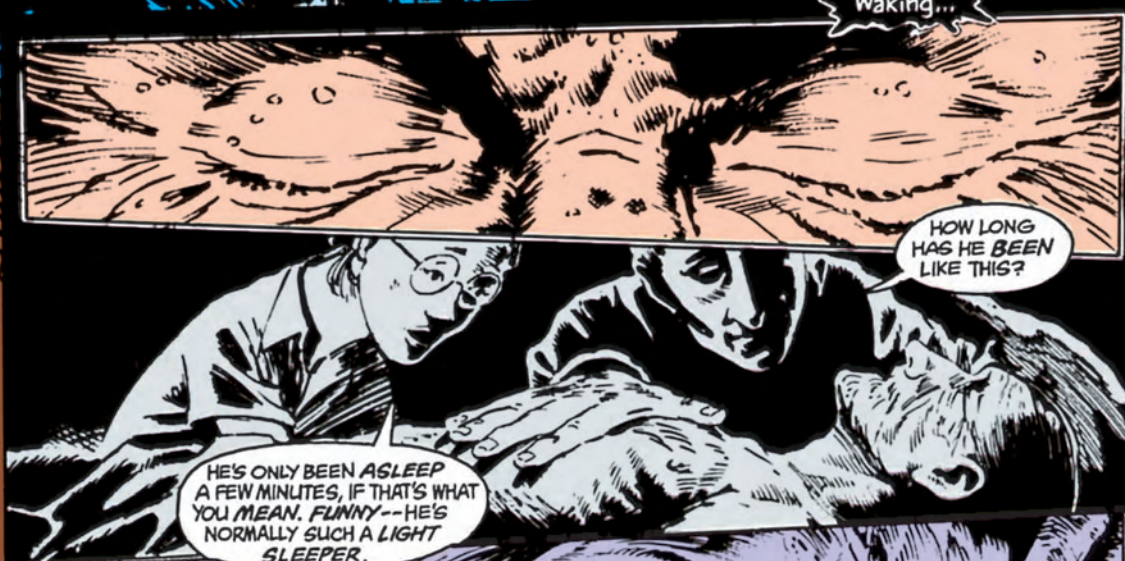
HAWAHA-HA-HA...



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.

SHUR. NO. NO...NO... PLEASE. URF. SHIT. JM.



And I have stowed 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...?"

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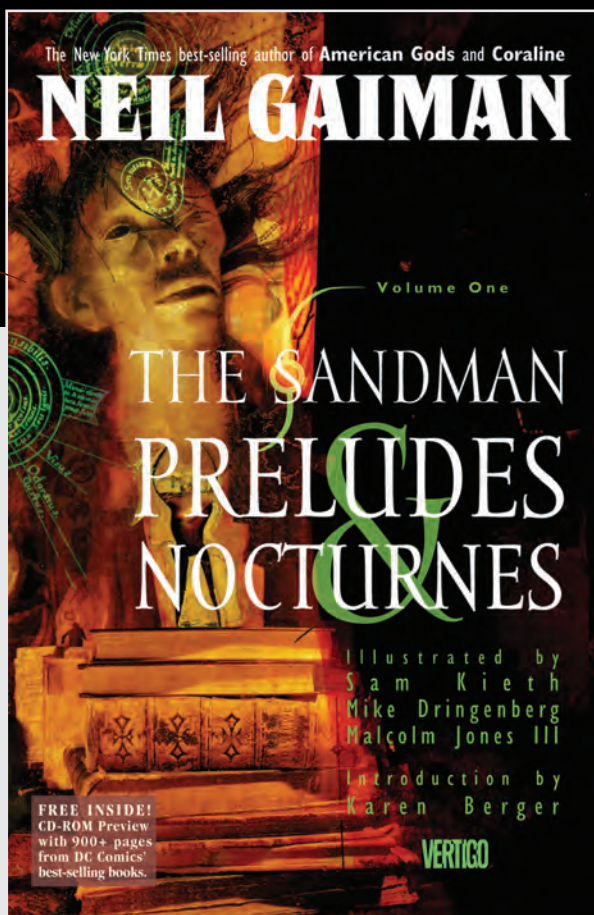
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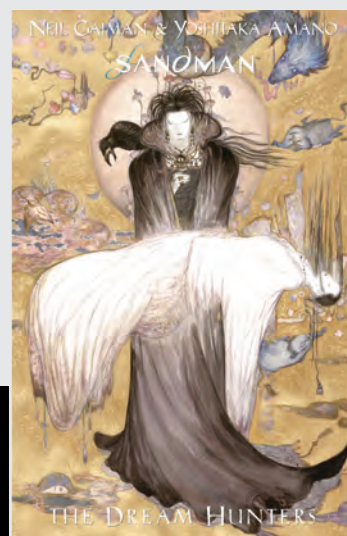
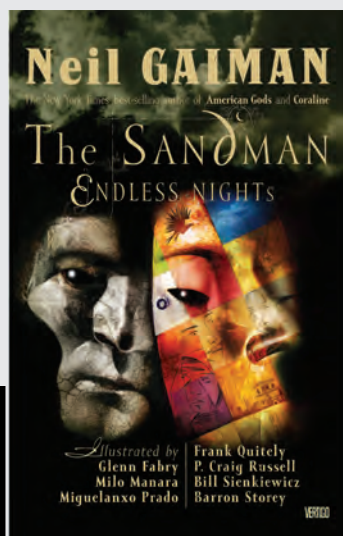
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