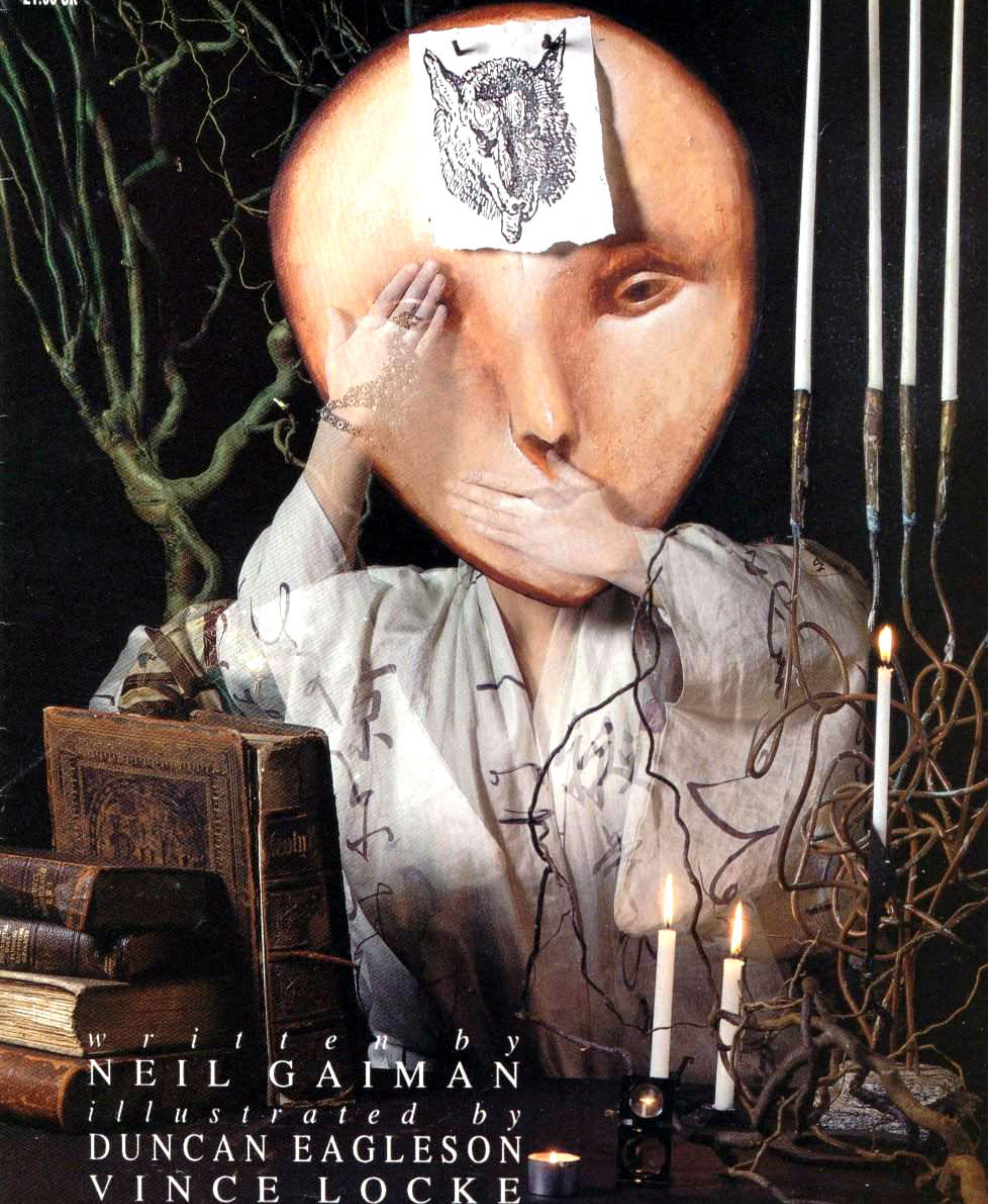


SUGGESTED  
FOR MATURE  
READERS



NO. 38  
JUNE 1992  
\$1.50 US  
\$1.85 CAN  
£1.00 UK

*the*  
**SANDMAN**  
CONVERGENCE



*w r i t t e n b y*  
**NEIL GAIMAN**  
*i l l u s t r a t e d b y*  
**DUNCAN EAGLESON**  
**VINCE LOCKE**

LONG, LONG AGO, BEFORE THE FAMILY LEFT THE OLD COUNTRY-- AND WHAT A PALAVER THAT WAS, MY CHILD-- THERE WAS A YOUNG MAN OF OUR PEOPLE.

GRANDPA. I DON'T WANT TO HEAR A STORY. I WANT TO WATCH TV.

TV... IT'S ALWAYS TV. I DON'T WANT TO HEAR ABOUT TV. YOU TALK ABOUT TV ONE MORE TIME I WON'T BE RESPONSIBLE FOR MY ACTIONS--

FER CHRISSAKES GRANDPA.

ENOUGH!

YOUR PARENTS, WHAT KIND OF THINGS ARE THEY TEACHING YOU? IN THE OLD COUNTRY YOU'D NEVER HEAR ANY OF THE FAMILY TAKING THAT NAME IN VAIN.

GRANDPA, IT'S JUST SOMETHING THEY SAY OVER HERE. EVERYBODY SAYS IT.

OH? AND I SUPPOSE IF EVERYBODY CUT OFF THEIR HEADS AND STUFFED ASAFOETIDA INTO THEIR MOUTHS AND BURIED THEIR HEARTS AT CROSS-ROADS, THEN YOU'D DO IT TOO?

GRANDPA...

FINE. FINE, FINE. IT'S MY FAULT. I'M OLD, I REMEMBER THE OLD WAYS, SO WHAT DO I KNOW? I DON'T WATCH THIS MTV, I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING. SO WHO LISTENS TO CRAZY STORIES...

GRANDPA. GRANDPA, I'M SORRY.

LOOK, I'LL LISTEN TO THE STORY.

OHH. SO NOW YOU'RE DOING ME A FAVOR. IS THAT IT?

GRANDPA, I WANT TO HEAR THE STORY. I REALLY DO. GRANDFATHER? PLEASE?

HMM.

GRANDFATHER?

I'VE FORGOTTEN IT.

YOU WHAT?

I'VE FORGOTTEN IT.

YOU HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN IT. COME ON, GRANDFATHER. IT BEGAN "LONG, LONG AGO, BEFORE THE FAMILY LEFT THE OLD COUNTRY..."

# THE HUNT

NEIL GAIMAN: WRITER  
DUNCAN EAGLESON: PENCILS  
VINCE LOCKE: INKS  
TODD KLEIN: LETTERS  
DANIEL VOZZO: COLORS  
ALISA KWITNEY: ASST. EDITOR  
KAREN BERGER: EDITOR

FEATURING CHARACTERS CREATED BY  
GAIMAN, KIETH AND DRINGENBERG

YES. THERE WAS A YOUNG  
MAN OF OUR PEOPLE.

HE WAS POOR, BUT HE WAS HONEST  
AND HE LIVED IN THE FOREST, WITH HIS  
FATHER.

THE FORESTS TODAY ARE POOR THINGS.  
THESE WERE THE REAL FORESTS OF THE  
OLD COUNTRY: MANY ENTERED THEM WHO  
NEVER CAME OUT AGAIN.

TREES THERE WERE, OLD AS TREES CAN  
BE, HUGE AND GRASPING WITH HEARTS  
BLACK AS SIN. STRANGE TREES THAT SOME  
SAID WALKED IN THE NIGHT--

OKAY. IT WAS A FOREST. IT HAD  
TREES IN IT. I'M NOT STUPID.  
I GOT IT.

SO YOU WANT TO TELL THE  
STORY? MAYBE I SHOULD LISTEN,  
YOU TELL IT SO WELL...

I DIDN'T  
SAY THAT.  
IT'S YOUR  
STORY. YOU  
TELL IT.

IN THE SUMMER THE FOREST WAS  
WARM AND THE TRUE BEARS ROAMED.  
IN THE WINTER IT WAS COLD, COLD  
ENOUGH TO FREEZE THE SKIN OFF  
YOUR FACE AND FREEZE YOUR  
PISS BEFORE IT TOUCHED  
THE GROUND.

IN THE WINTER THE TRUE WOLVES  
WOULD COME DOWN FROM THE  
STEPPEES, DRIVEN SOUTH BY HUNGER;  
AND THERE WAS SOMETIMES PRECIOUS  
LITTLE FOOD FOR THEM--AND LESS  
FOR US.



THERE WERE FEW TRUE FOLK IN THE FOREST. HERE AND THERE PERHAPS A WOODCUTTER OR A CHARCOAL BURNER AND HIS BRATS; HUNTERS WERE FEW, BUT DANGEROUS.



THERE WERE CLEARINGS, AND IN SOME OF THE CLEARINGS SMALL SETTLEMENTS HAD SPRUNG UP: NERVOUS MEN AND WOMEN AND CHILDREN HUDDLED AROUND FLICKERING BONFIRES, HOPING SOMEHOW TO KEEP THE DARKNESS AT BAY...

THE YOUNG MAN'S MOTHER HAD DIED BRINGING HIM INTO THE WORLD; SHE GAVE HIM LIFE, A SMALL WOODEN FINGER-RING, AND THE NAME VASSILY. THERE HAVE BEEN WORSE LEGACIES.



VASSILY? BUT THAT'S...

IT'S A PRETTY COMMON NAME. ANYWAY...



VASSILY AND HIS FATHER LIVED FAR, FAR FROM ANY OTHERS DEEP IN THE FOREST, AND SAW NO ONE, OR ALMOST NO ONE, FOR TRAVELLERS IN THOSE PARTS WERE FEW, AND FOOLHARDY.

THE LAD WAS SIXTEEN WHEN A PEDDLER WOMAN CAME TO THEIR PART OF THE FOREST.

WAS SHE ONE OF US?



NO, GIRL. SHE WAS GYPSY. ROMANY STOCK. A WISE WOMAN.

SHE HAD TWO GOOD TEETH IN HER HEAD, TWO EYES BRIGHT AS A BIRD'S, AND SHE SAW THE YOUNG MAN SITTING IN THE UNDERGROWTH, STILL AS A STUMP.



YOU CAN COME OUT OF THERE, BOY. DON'T THINK I DON'T SEE YOU, BECAUSE I DO.



AND WHAT DO THEY CALL YOU, THEN, WHEN YOU'RE AT HOME?





BUT GRANDPA. HOW DID AN OLD GYPSY WOMAN GET HOLD OF ALL THOSE WONDERFUL TREASURES?



ARE YOU CRAZY? AN OLD GYPSY WOMAN'S GOING TO BE WALKING AROUND A FOREST WITH THE EMERALD HEART OF KOSCHEI THE DEATHLESS IN HER PACK? OR THE DRUM INESCAPABLE?

BUT YOU SAID--

SHE WAS ROMANY, HE WAS GAJÉ -- AN OUTSIDER. IT'S NO CRIME FOR THEM TO CHEAT THE GAJÉ.



HE'D NEVER SEEN SO MANY BEAUTIFUL THINGS IN HIS LIFE.

WHAT... WHAT DO YOU WANT FOR THESE?



GIVE IT BACK, SON.

HE HAS NOTHING TO PAY FOR YOUR BAUBLES, OLD WOMAN. WE ARE POOR FOREST FOLK, AND HAVE NOTHING TO SPARE.



YOU WERE MEANT TO BE HUNTING.

I... I WAS, FATHER.

HE'S A GOOD BOY. DON'T BE HARD ON HIM.



MY SON. YOU MUST NOT TALK TO FOLK IN THE FOREST. THEY MEAN US HARM.

SHE WAS JUST AN OLD WOMAN. SHE SEEMED WELL-INTENTIONED.

SHE IS NOT OF THE PEOPLE.



HIS FATHER SAID MANY THINGS TO HIM THAT NIGHT ABOUT THE PEOPLE, AND THE FOLK OUTSIDE THE FOREST, BUT VASSILY DIDN'T LISTEN.

HE WAS THINKING ABOUT THE OLD PEASANT WOMAN AND HER PACK.



MY FATHER SAYS THAT THE THINGS YOU SHOWED ME ARE VALUELESS. GEWGAWS AND TRINKETS.



YOU STARTLED ME. I DIDN'T HEAR YOU COMING. NOT THAT MY EARS ARE WHAT THEY WERE.

VALUE'S IN WHAT PEOPLE THINK. NOT IN WHAT'S REAL. VALUE'S IN DREAMS, BOY.



BUT YOU WERE GOOD TO ME, YESTERDAY. ROAST RABBIT LAST NIGHT, COLD RABBIT TODAY AND TOMORROW.

THAT'S GOOD DEEDS.

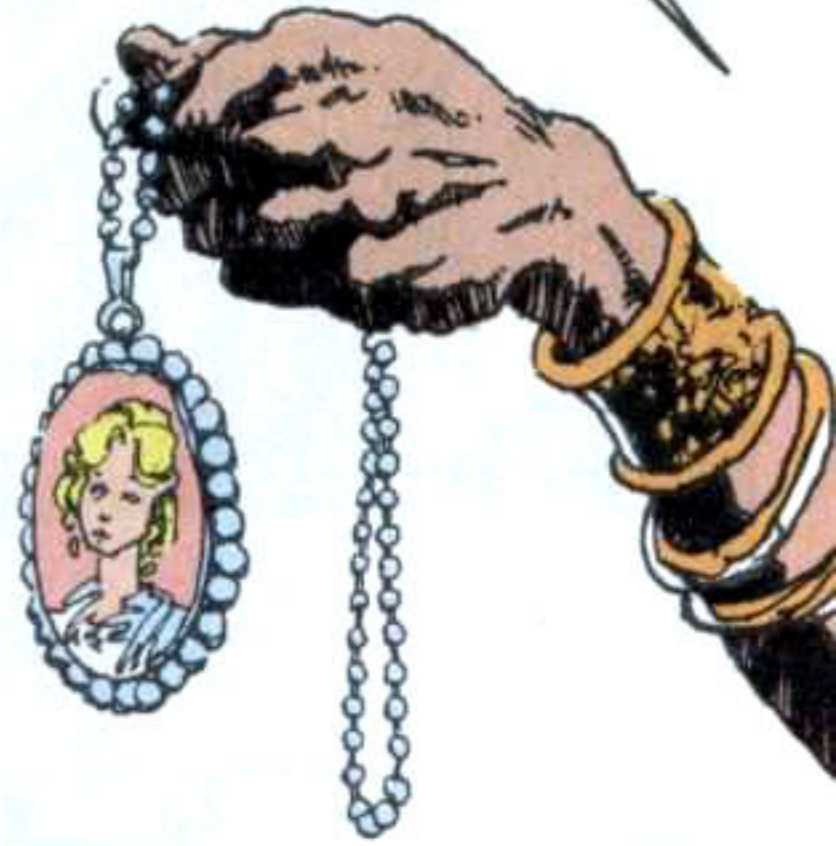


HERE.

WHAT IS IT?

IT'S A PICTURE OF THE DUKE'S YOUNGEST DAUGHTER. HERE. TAKE IT. IT'S YOURS.

YOU LOOK AT HER. ONCE I WAS MORE BEAUTIFUL THAN HER. I HAD LONG BLACK HAIR, AND I COULD WALK, AND I COULD SMILE, AND I DANCED IN EVERY TOWN FROM PSKOFF TO VYATKA.



AND EVERY YOUNG MAN WHO SAW ME LOOKED AT ME WITH FIRE IN HIS EYES. I MADE MISTAKES, I'M NOT SAYING I DIDN'T...

DA-DE-DA-DE-DUM.



MY FATHER WANTED ME TO MARRY OFF TO A FINE MAN... BUT I RAN AWAY FROM HIM, AND GOT MY HEART BROKEN. DO YOU UNDERSTAND ME?

NO.

I ALWAYS FOLLOWED MY HEART...



OHH...HH. YOU'VE A GOOD HEART. I'M ROMANY. I CAN TELL. I'M SORRY, MY DARLING: I WAS A THOUSAND LEAGUES AWAY.

HERE. GIVE ME YOUR LITTLE FINGER, LOOK INTO MY EYES, AND I'LL TELL YOUR FORTUNE.



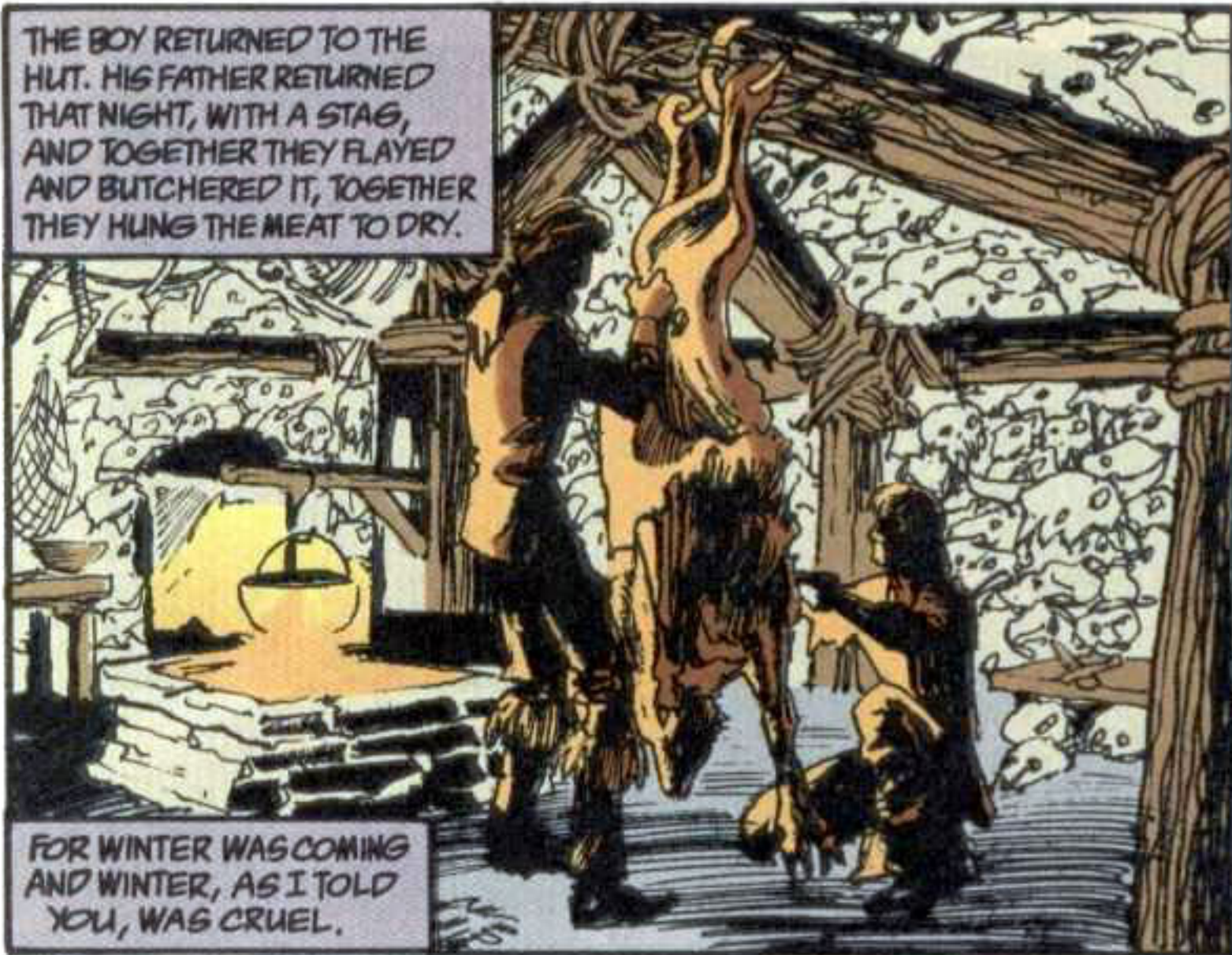
WHAT... WHAT ARE YOU?

KEEP AWAY FROM ME.

AND THE OLD WOMAN SCUTTLED OFF INTO THE FOREST LIKE A FRIGHTENED RABBIT.



THE BOY RETURNED TO THE HUT. HIS FATHER RETURNED THAT NIGHT, WITH A STAG, AND TOGETHER THEY FLAYED AND BUTCHERED IT, TOGETHER THEY HUNG THE MEAT TO DRY.



FOR WINTER WAS COMING AND WINTER, AS I TOLD YOU, WAS CRUEL.

AT NIGHT HE'D TAKE OUT THE PICTURE OF THE DUKE'S DAUGHTER, AND STARE AT IT.



WHAT DID SHE LOOK LIKE?

HM?

THE WOMAN IN THE MINIATURE.

SHE HAD EYES AS BLUE AS CORNFLOWERS, LIPS AS RED AS POPPIES, SKIN WHITER THAN MILK, HAIR AS GOLD AS THE SETTING SUN...



OKAY. YEAH, OKAY. I GET THE IDEA.

YOU ASKED, MISS OKAY-I-GET-THE-IDEA.

SORRY.

THE YOUNG MAN STALKED THE FOREST IN THE COMING DAYS BUT HIS HEART WAS NOT IN THE HUNT; THE BEASTS HE KILLED--AND BEASTS WERE GETTING HARDER TO FIND AS THE DAYS DREW IN-- WERE KILLED WITHOUT PRIDE.



HE GATHERED WOOD WITHOUT JOY. HE RAN WITHOUT DELIGHTING IN HIS SPEED OR HIS SILENCE.

ONE DAY HE TOOK A HANDKERCHIEF, AND WRAPPED UP HIS FEW POSSESSIONS -- SOME TARNISHED BRONZE COINS, A SMALL BONE THAT HE HAD CARVED INTO THE SHAPE OF A SMALL BONE, A THIN WOODEN FINGER-RING HIS MOTHER HAD LEFT HIM...



A SMALL BONE THAT HE HAD WHAT?

CARVED INTO THE SHAPE OF A SMALL BONE.

BUT IT WAS A SMALL BONE ALREADY.



HE CARVED IT INTO THE SHAPE OF A DIFFERENT SMALL BONE. ALL RIGHT?

LOOK, CELESTE, THIS IS WHAT HAPPENED. OKAY? DO I ASK YOU TO EXPLAIN MICHAEL JACKSON LYRICS?

I DON'T LIKE MICHAEL JACKSON ANYMORE. ONLY DWEBBS AND KIDS LISTEN TO MICHAEL JACKSON.



LAST WEEK, YOU LIKED MICHAEL JACKSON. THIS WEEK YOU DON'T LIKE MICHAEL JACKSON. SO WHAT AM I? A MIND READER?

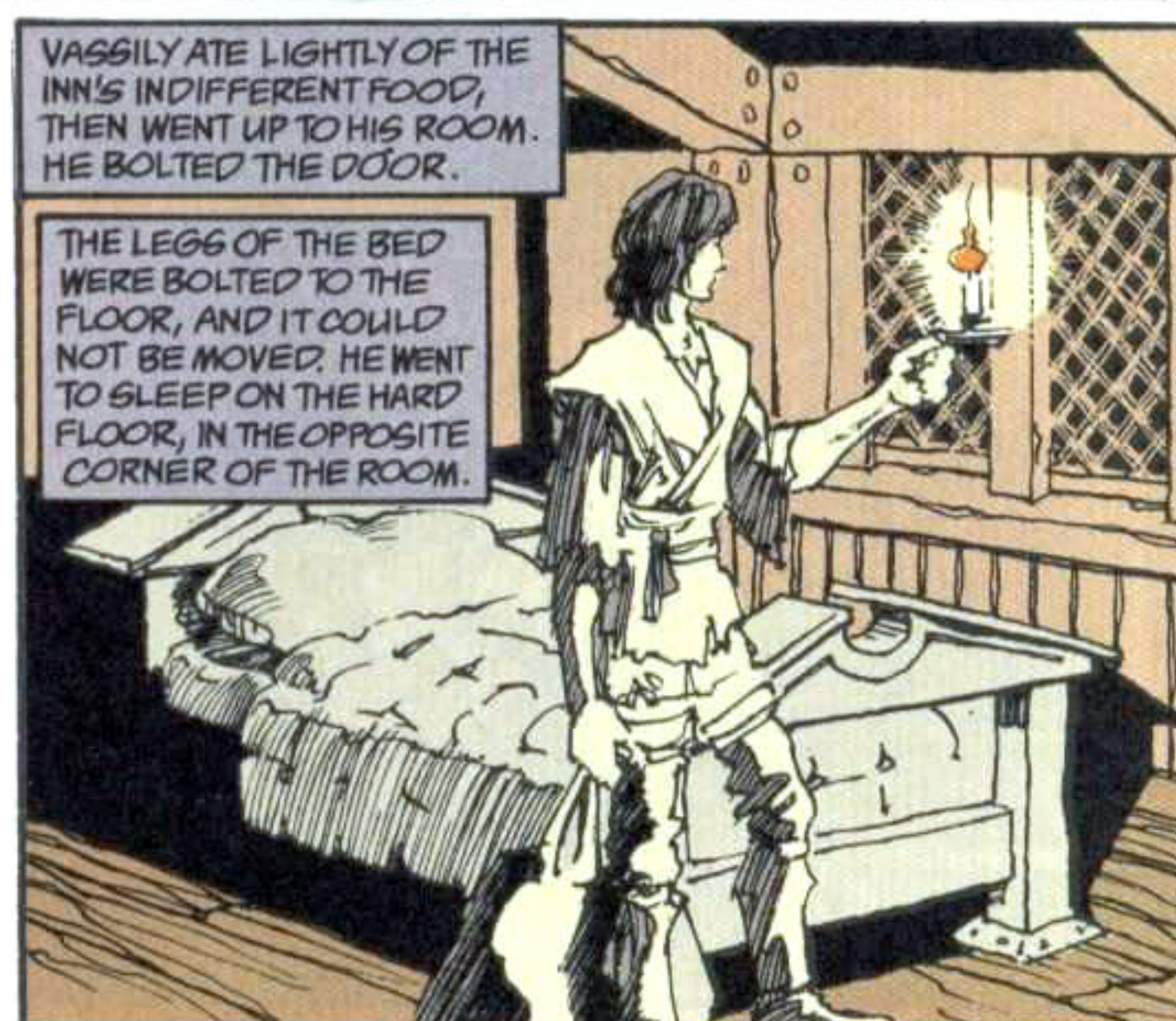
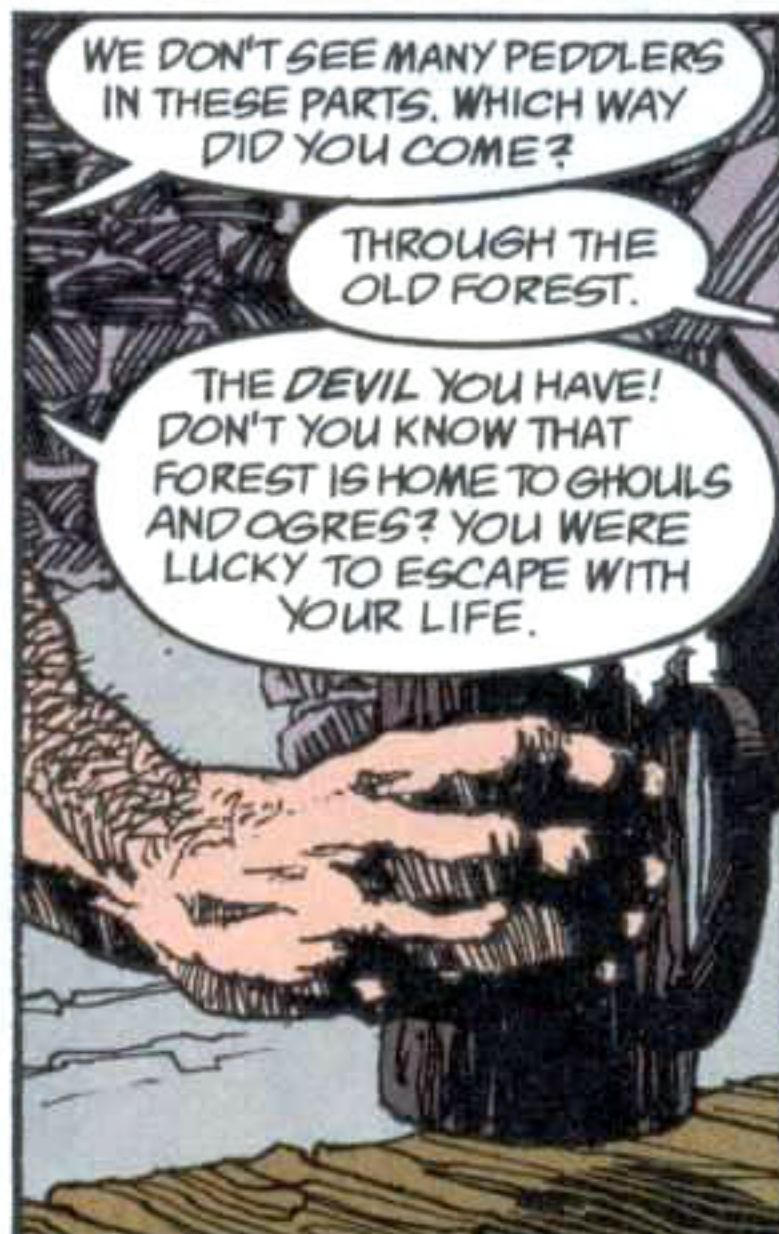
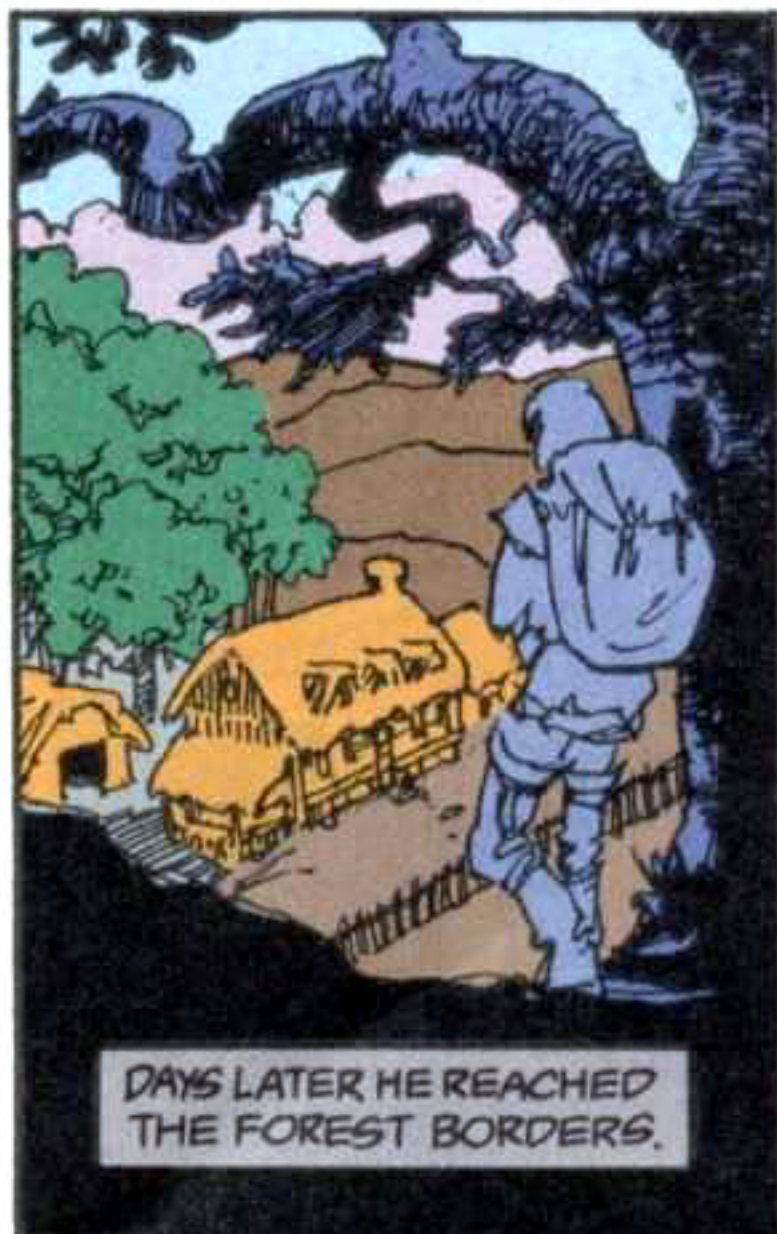
HIS FATHER WAS AWAY, HUNTING. VASSILY THOUGHT IT BEST TO LEAVE BEFORE HE RETURNED HOME.

HUH! AND MY PARENTS COMPLAIN WHEN I GET BACK LATE FROM A PARTY!



THIS WAS THE OLD DAYS IN THE OLD COUNTRY. WE DID THINGS DIFFERENTLY THEN.







THERE WAS A MOMENT OF SILENCE, AND THEN, THROUGH THE HIDDEN DOORWAY IN THE WALL, VASSILY SAW THE INNKEEPER.



BEFORE HE LEFT THE INN HE TOOK BACK THE COIN HE HAD GIVEN THE INNKEEPER FOR HIS FOOD AND LODGING, FEELING QUITE JUSTIFIED IN SO DOING.

TWO DAYS OF TRAVEL, AND AN EARLY SNOW WAS BEGINNING TO FALL, WHEN UP TO HIM ON THE ROAD COMES THE TALLEST, THINNEST MAN THAT VASSILY HAD EVER SEEN.



"WHERE ARE YOU BOUND, YOUNG PEDDLER?" ASKS THE MAN.

"I'M BOUND WHERE MY FEET TAKE ME, AND HEART WHERE MY WILLS," SAID THE YOUNG MAN.

AND WHAT DO YOU HAVE IN YOUR PACK, YOUNG PEDDLER?

ODDMENTS AND TRINKETS, SIR. NOTHING OF ANY VALUE.



VALUE'S IN THE MIND OF THE BUYER, NOT THE PEDDLER.

AND IS THERE ANYTHING YOU'D BE SEEKING?

INDEED THERE IS. I'M LOOKING FOR A BOOK. I THOUGHT PERHAPS YOU COULD SELL IT TO ME.

AND WHAT WOULD I BE DOING WITH A BOOK?



YOU AREN'T THE FIRST TO CARRY THAT PACK, YOUNG MAN, ARE YOU?

SO, HAVE YOU MY BOOK?



I HAVE MANY THINGS, INCLUDING WHAT I HAVE BEEN ASSURED IS IN ALL PROBABILITY THE EMERALD HEART OF KOSCHEI THE DEATHLESS.

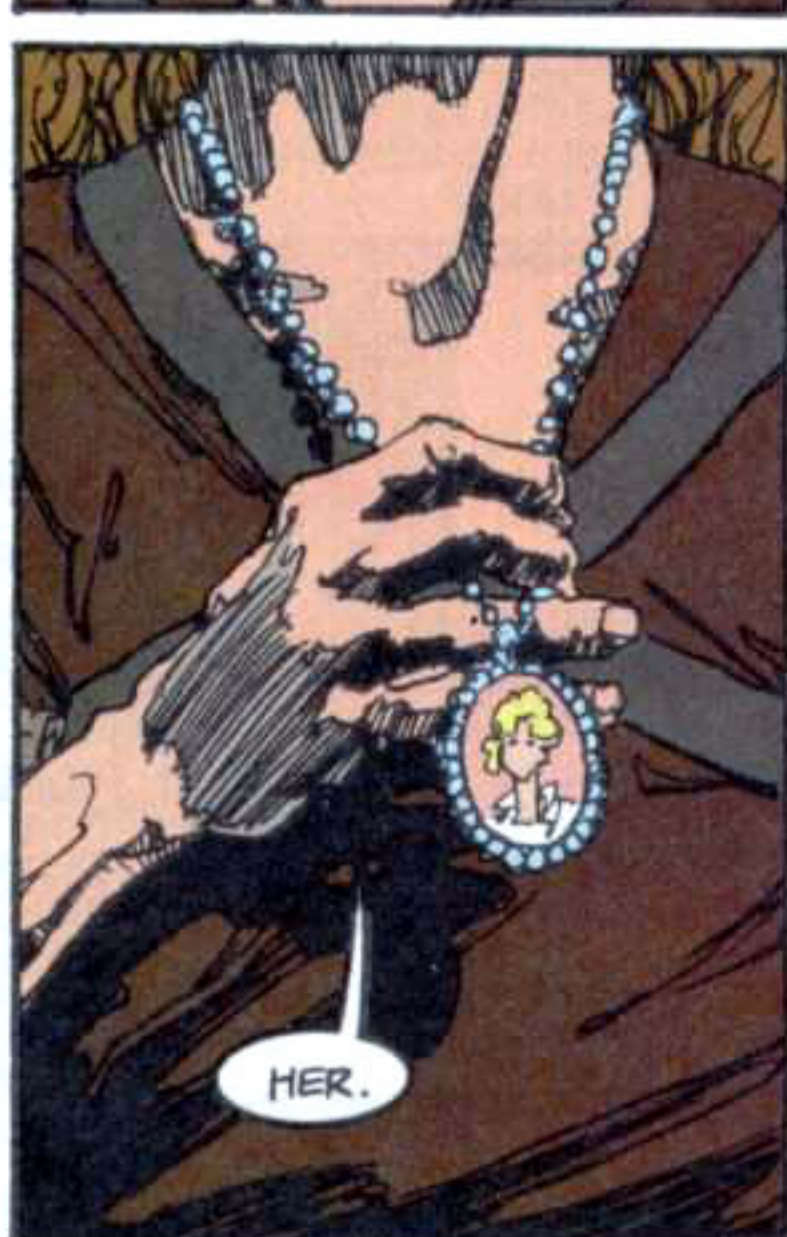


ACCORDING TO POPULAR REPORT, KOSCHEI THE DEATHLESS KEPT HIS HEART IN A DUCK EGG; AND IT WAS DESTROYED BY A YOUNG GALLANT, TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

NO, IT'S THE BOOK I'M INTERESTED IN. WHAT'S YOUR PRICE?



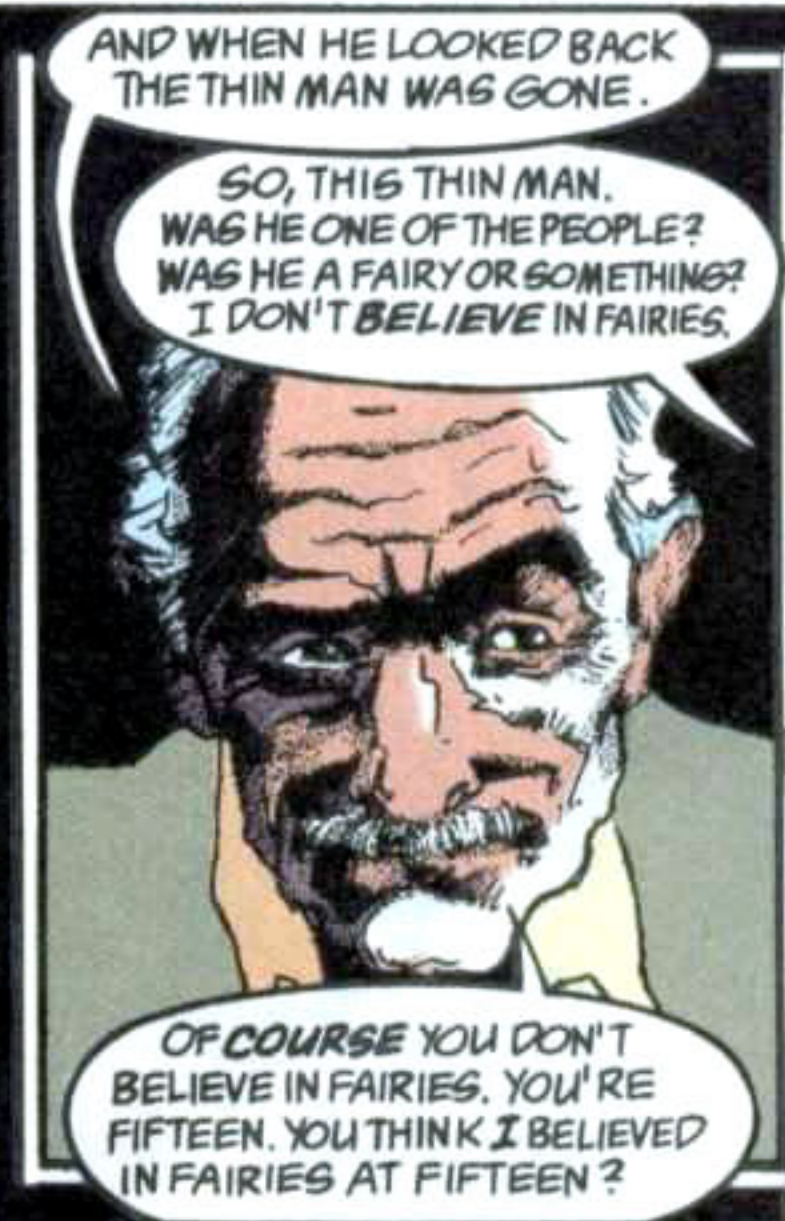
HER.





OH, DEAR ME. GOOD GRACIOUS, NO. I CAN'T PAY ANYTHING LIKE THAT. I'M JUST A LIBRARIAN. A LIBRARIAN WHO LOST A BOOK.

VERY WELL.



AND WHEN HE LOOKED BACK THE THIN MAN WAS GONE.

SO, THIS THIN MAN, WAS HE ONE OF THE PEOPLE? WAS HE A FAIRY OR SOMETHING? I DON'T BELIEVE IN FAIRIES.

OF COURSE YOU DON'T BELIEVE IN FAIRIES. YOU'RE FIFTEEN. YOU THINK I BELIEVED IN FAIRIES AT FIFTEEN?



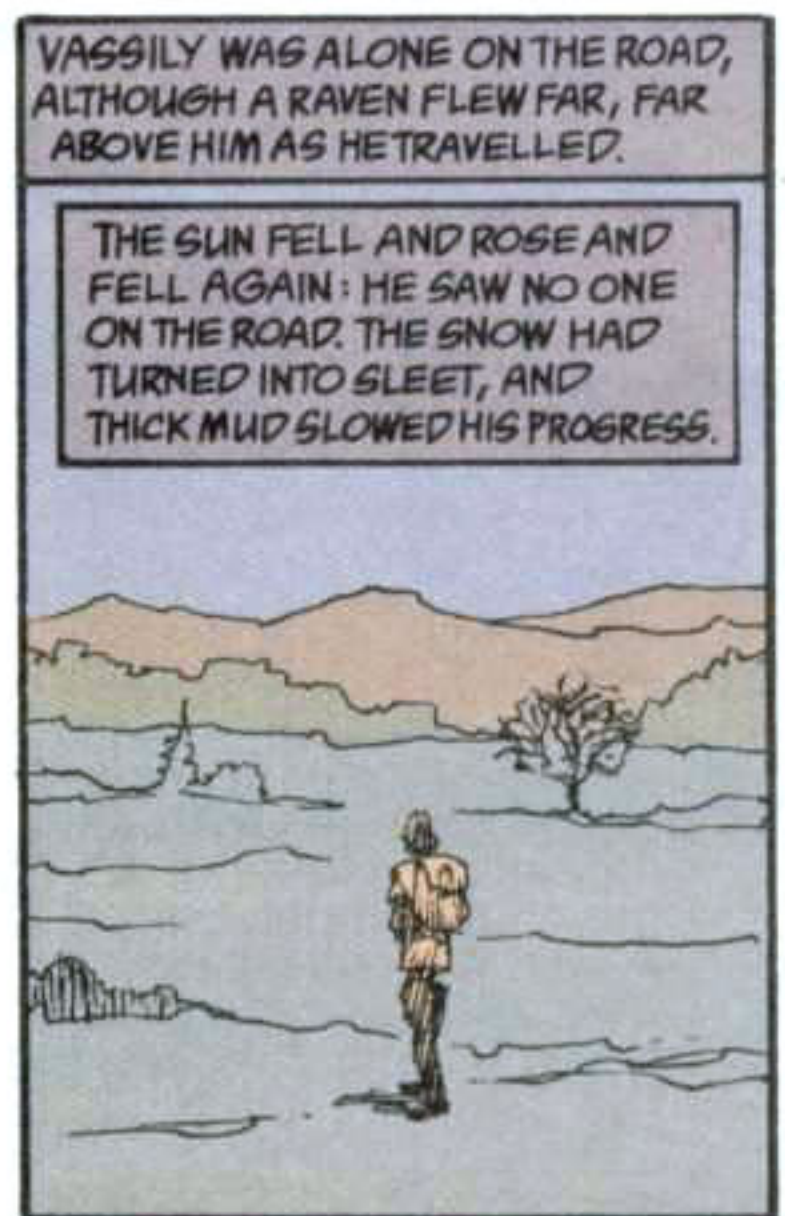
TOOK ME UNTIL I WAS AT LEAST A HUNDRED AND FORTY. HUNDRED AND FIFTY, MAYBE. ANYWAY, HE WASN'T A FAIRY. HE WAS A LIBRARIAN. ALL RIGHT?

MM. IT ALL SOUNDS SUSPICIOUSLY POST-MODERN TO ME, GRANDPA. ARE YOU SURE THIS IS REALLY A STORY FROM THE OLD COUNTRY?



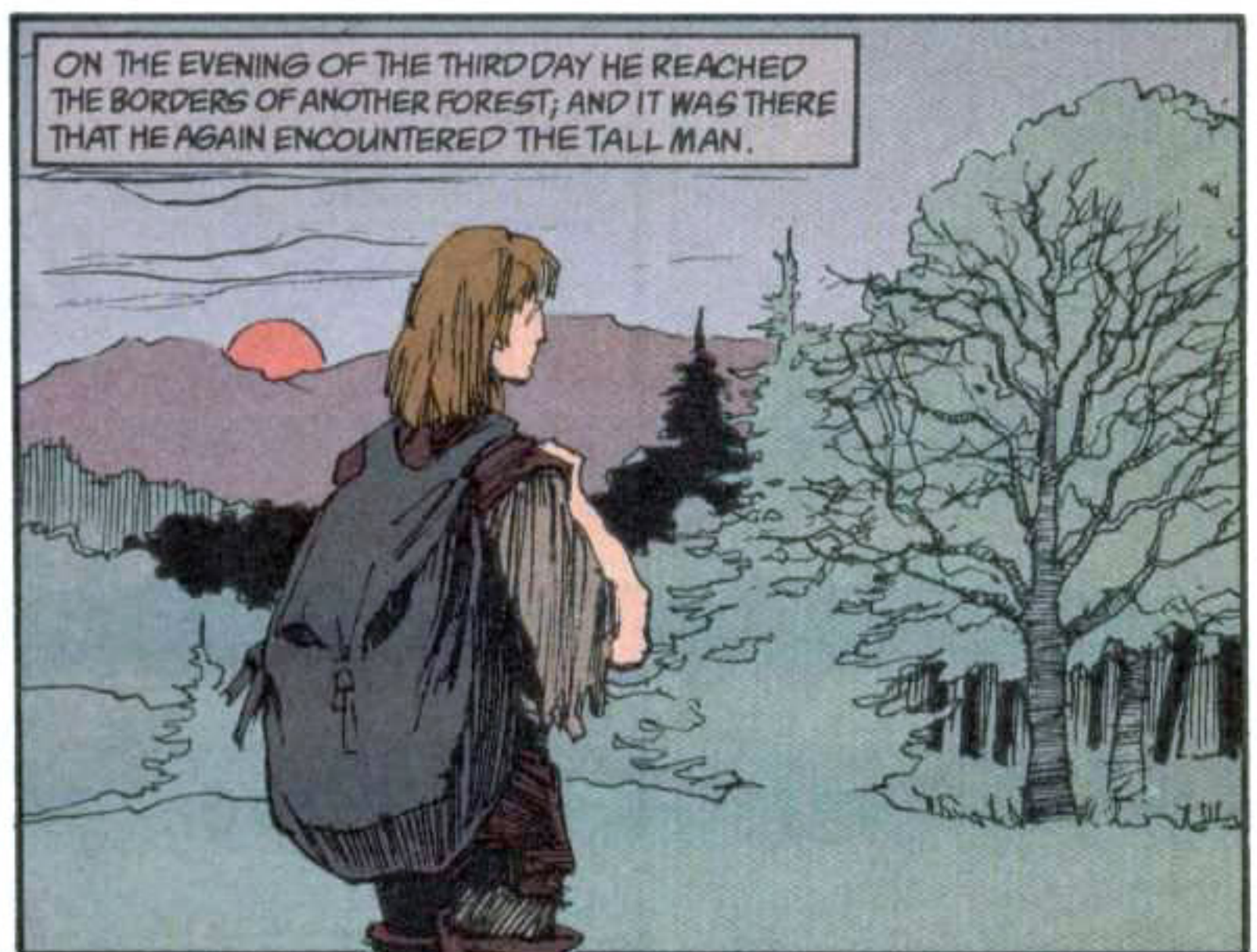
LISTEN, BLOOD OF MY BLOOD. ALTHOUGH I'M A HARD MAN TO ANGER, AND I LOVE YOU DEEPLY, IF YOU INTERRUPT ME AGAIN SO HELP ME I'LL RIPOUT YOUR THROAT WITH MY TEETH.

SORRY, GRANDFATHER.

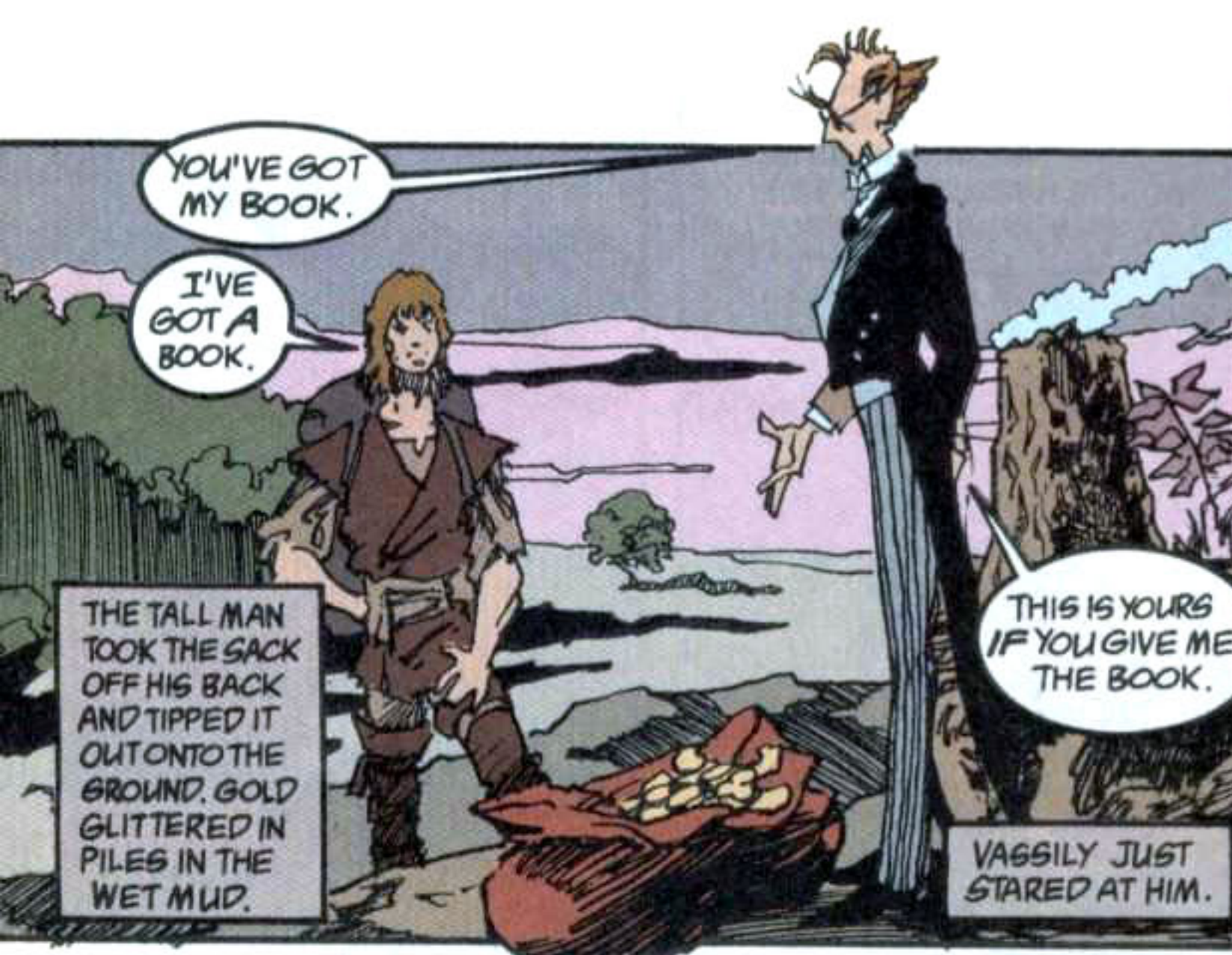


VASSILY WAS ALONE ON THE ROAD, ALTHOUGH A RAVEN FLEW FAR, FAR ABOVE HIM AS HE TRAVELLED.

THE SUN FELL AND ROSE AND FELL AGAIN; HE SAW NO ONE ON THE ROAD. THE SNOW HAD TURNED INTO SLEET, AND THICK MUD SLOWED HIS PROGRESS.



ON THE EVENING OF THE THIRD DAY HE REACHED THE BORDERS OF ANOTHER FOREST; AND IT WAS THERE THAT HE AGAIN ENCOUNTERED THE TALL MAN.



YOU'VE GOT MY BOOK.

I'VE GOT A BOOK.

THE TALL MAN TOOK THE SACK OFF HIS BACK AND TIPPED IT OUT ONTO THE GROUND. GOLD GLITTERED IN PILES IN THE WET MUD.

THIS IS YOURS IF YOU GIVE ME THE BOOK.

VASSILY JUST STARED AT HIM.



I DON'T WANT GOLD.

NO?

YOU KNOW MY PRICE.



I'M NOT GETTING YOU THE WOMAN, AND THAT'S FINAL. DO YOU KNOW THE BOTHER I HAD GETTING THE GOLD WITHOUT ANYONE NOTICING?

I'M A PEDDLER. I HAVE A BOOK FOR SALE--IF YOU CAN MEET MY PRICE. IF NOT...

YES?

I CAN BURN IT.



IT WON'T BURN.

THEN I WON'T BURN IT. BUT IT WON'T BE YOURS UNLESS YOU MEET MY PRICE.



OH DEAR.

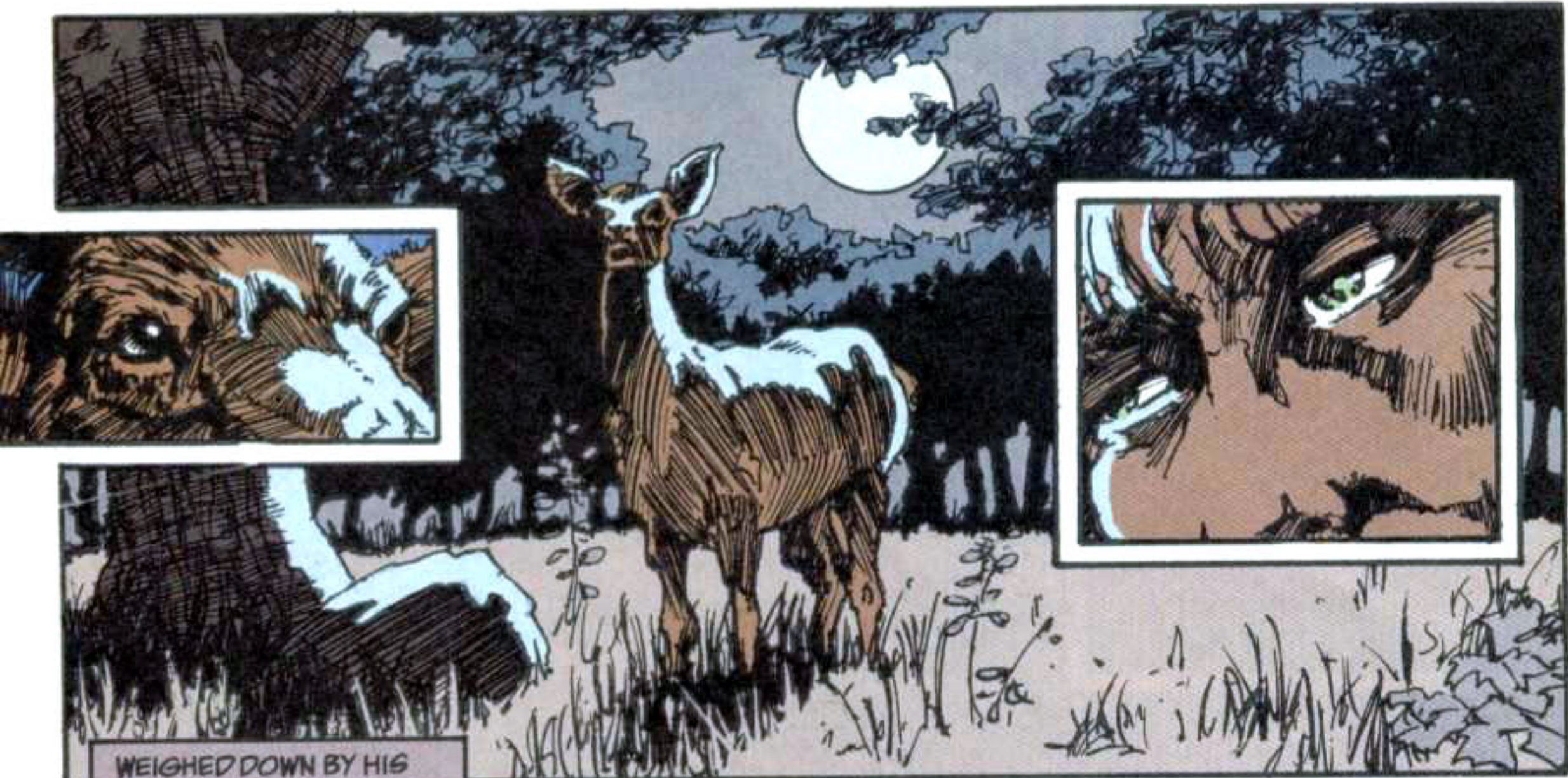


CAN I GET BACK TO YOU ON THIS ONE?

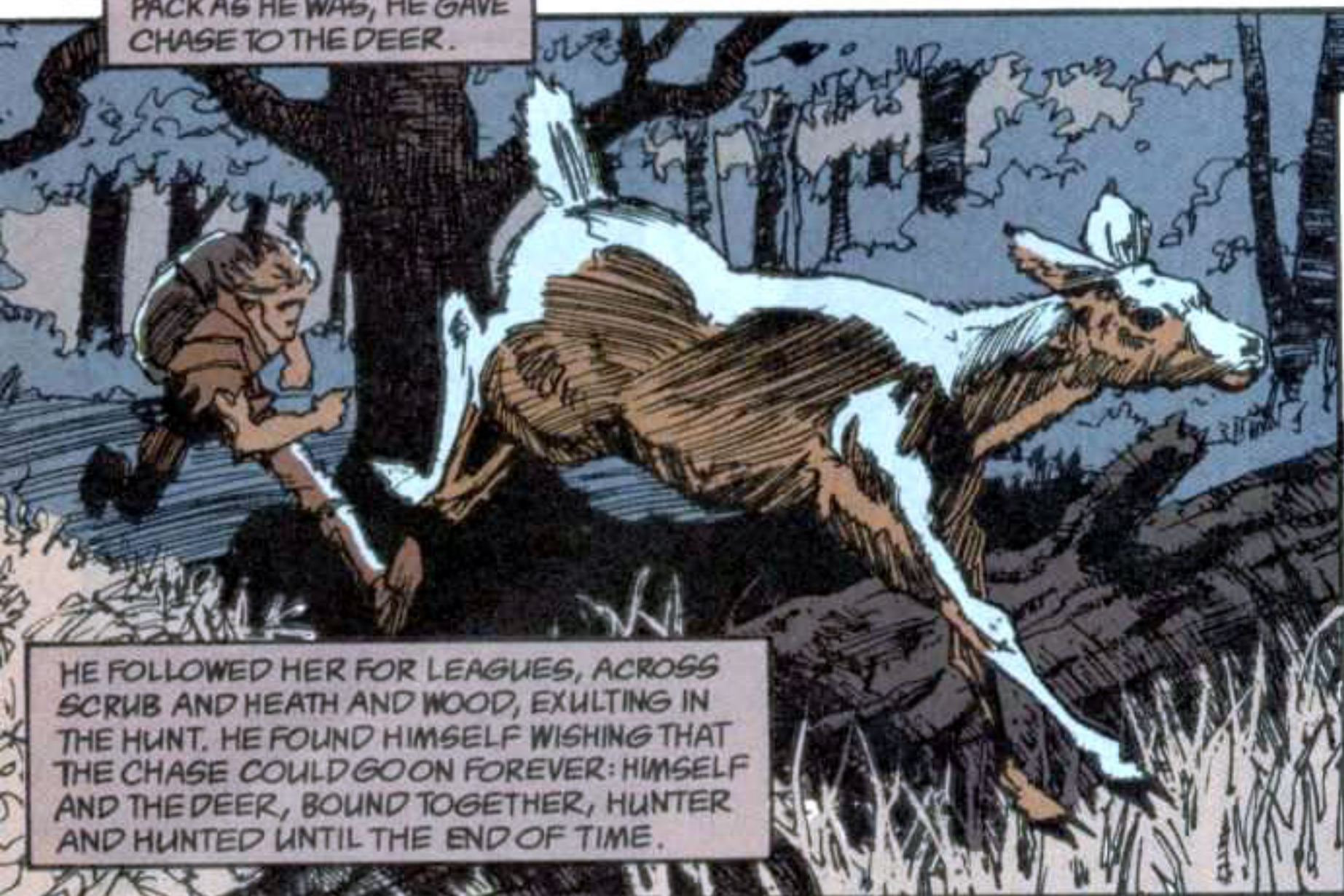


THAT NIGHT THE CLOUDS CLEARED, THE MOON WAS FULL AND VASSILY MADE GOOD TIME.

AFTER A WHILE HE LEFT THE PATH AND RAN THROUGH THE FOREST, LOPING GENTLY IN THE MOONLIGHT. HE SCENTED A HIGH SCENT IN THE AIR: THE SMELL OF DEER.



WEIGHED DOWN BY HIS PACK AS HE WAS, HE GAVE CHASE TO THE DEER.



HE FOLLOWED HER FOR LEAGUES, ACROSS SCRUB AND HEATH AND WOOD, EXULTING IN THE HUNT. HE FOUND HIMSELF WISHING THAT THE CHASE COULD GO ON FOREVER: HIMSELF AND THE DEER, BOUND TOGETHER, HUNTER AND HUNTED UNTIL THE END OF TIME.



BUT ALL THINGS MUST END. AND HE TENSED FOR THE FINAL LEAP...





A GOOD EVENING TO YOU, KINSMAN.

IF YOU HAD BEEN FASTER YOU WOULD HAVE CAUGHT HER, NOT I.



I AM CARRYING A PACK ON MY BACK. WERE IT NOT FOR THE PACK I WOULD BE FASTER. I HAVE CHASED HER FOR MANY, MANY LEAGUES.

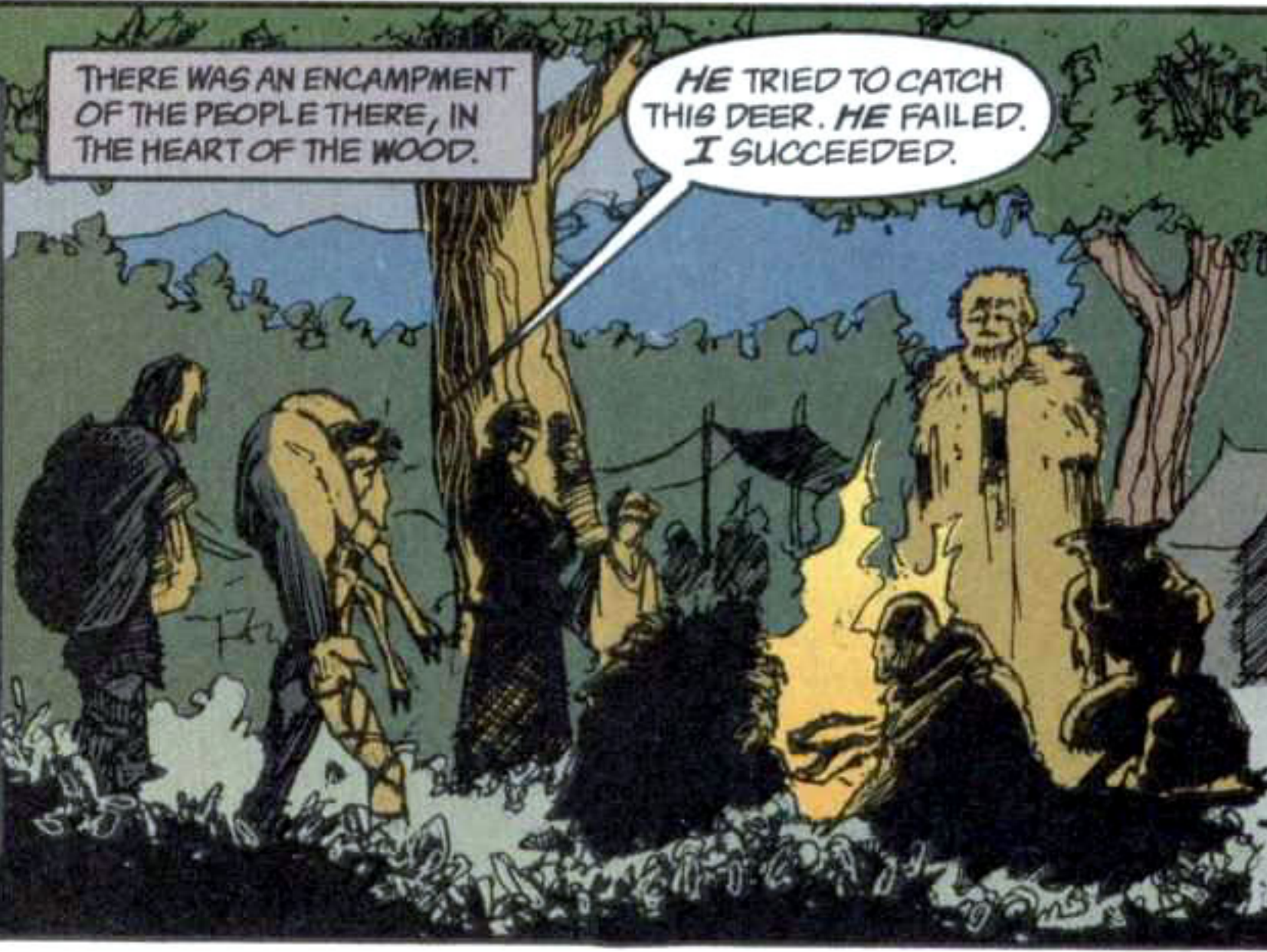


YOUR PEOPLE ARE NEAR HERE?



CAN I ACCOMPANY YOU?

IF YOU WISH.



THERE WAS AN ENCAMPMENT OF THE PEOPLE THERE, IN THE HEART OF THE WOOD.

HE TRIED TO CATCH THIS DEER. HE FAILED. I SUCCEEDED.

THEY ASKED HIM NO QUESTIONS. HE GAVE THEM NO ANSWERS. HE HAD NEVER SEEN SO MANY OF THE PEOPLE BEFORE; BUT THEY WERE HIS KIN, AND HE WAS NOT AFRAID.



A GOOD EVENING TO YOU, GREAT LADY.



BEHIND THE CAMP WAS A SMALL HUT ON CHICKEN LEGS, SCRATCHING IDLY IN THE DIRT.

WELL SPOKEN, LITTLE COUSIN. AND WHAT HAVE YOU IN YOUR LITTLE BAG FOR YOUR OLD AUNTIE, THEN?



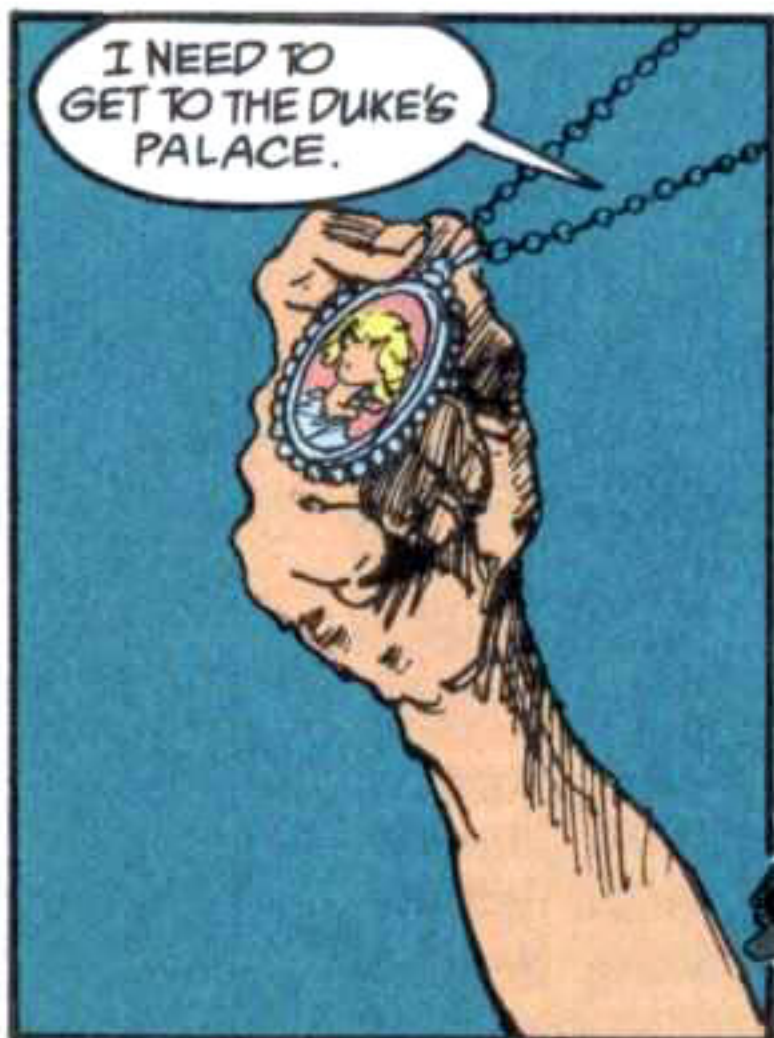
I HAVE SOMETHING YOU'VE ALWAYS WANTED, GOOD GOSSIP. THE EMERALD HEART OF KOSCHEI THE DEATHLESS.

BABA YAGA GRINNED THEN, AND HER TEETH GLINTED IRON IN THE MOONLIGHT.



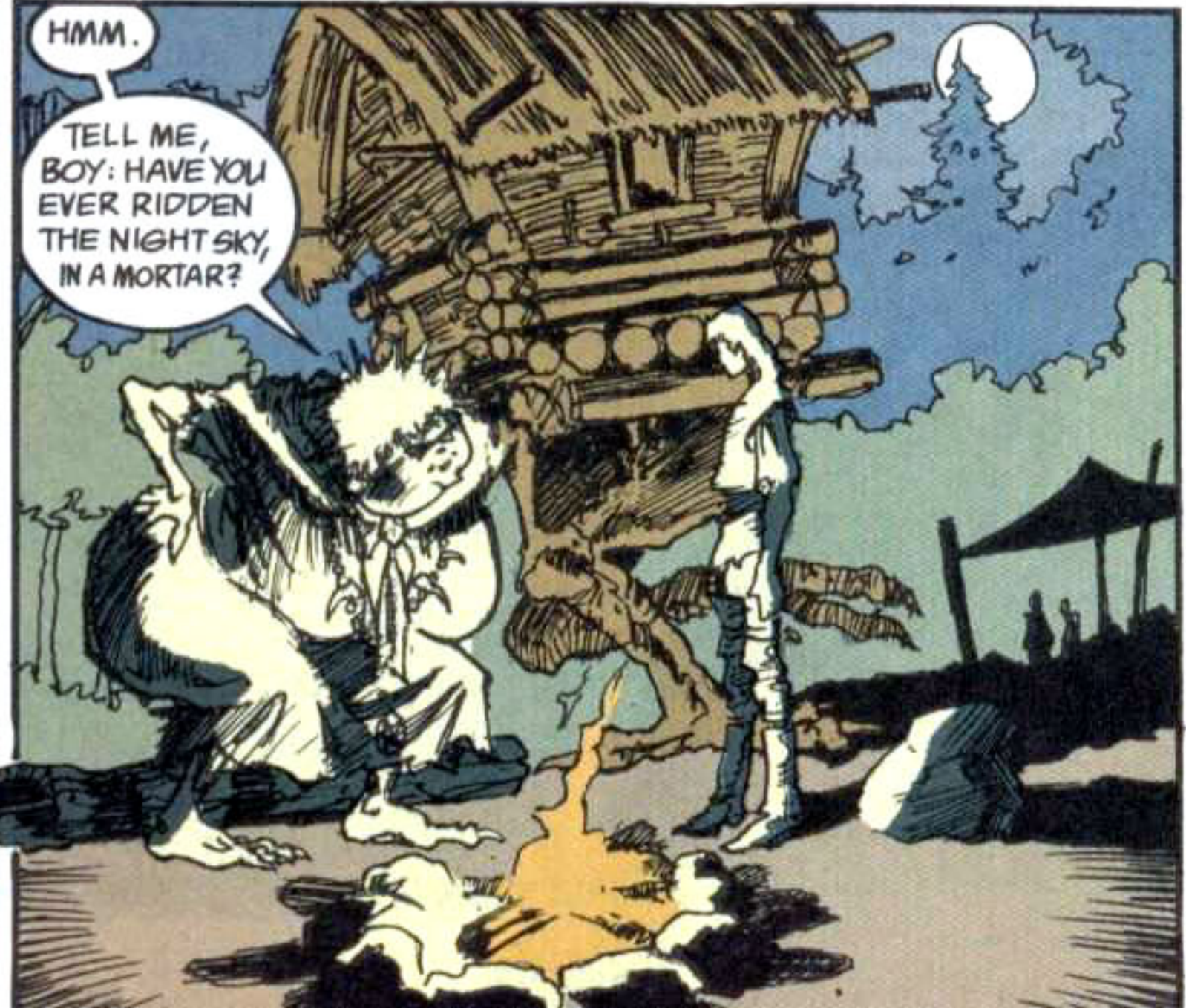
AYE, THAT WOULD BE A TREASURE INDEED. AND WHAT WOULD YOU WANT FROM YOUR OLD AUNTIE FOR THAT?

I NEED TO GET TO THE DUKE'S PALACE.



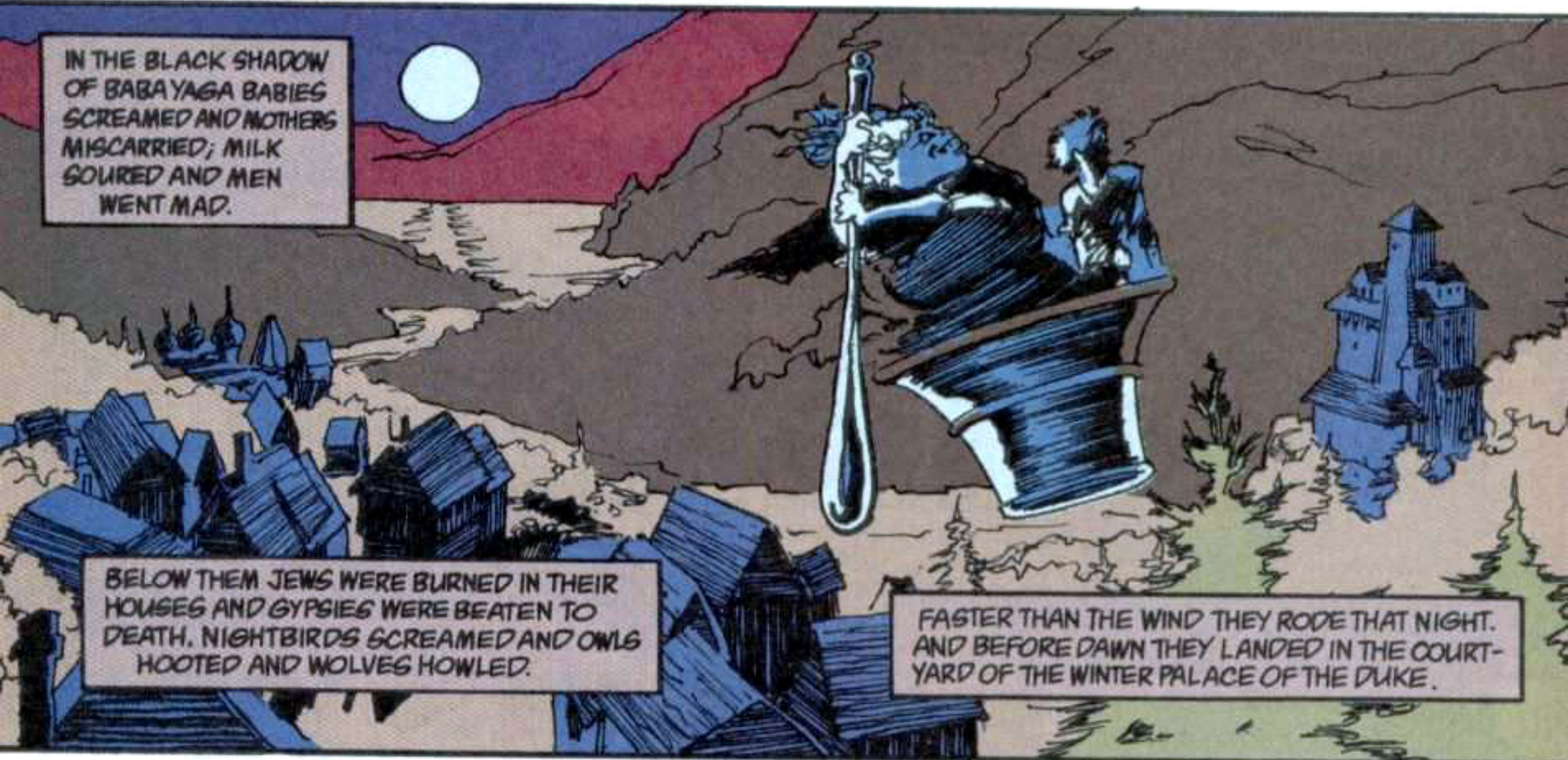
HMM.

TELL ME, BOY: HAVE YOU EVER RIDDEN THE NIGHT SKY, IN A MORTAR?





IN THE BLACK SHADOW OF BABAYAGA BABIES SCREAMED AND MOTHERS MISCARRIED; MILK SOURED AND MEN WENT MAD.



BELOW THEM JEWS WERE BURNED IN THEIR HOUSES AND GYPSIES WERE BEATEN TO DEATH. NIGHTBIRDS SCREAMED AND OWLS HOOTED AND WOLVES HOWLED.

FASTER THAN THE WIND THEY RODE THAT NIGHT. AND BEFORE DAWN THEY LANDED IN THE COURTYARD OF THE WINTER PALACE OF THE DUKE.



WELL? MY PAYMENT?



WITH GOODWILL, GREAT LADY.

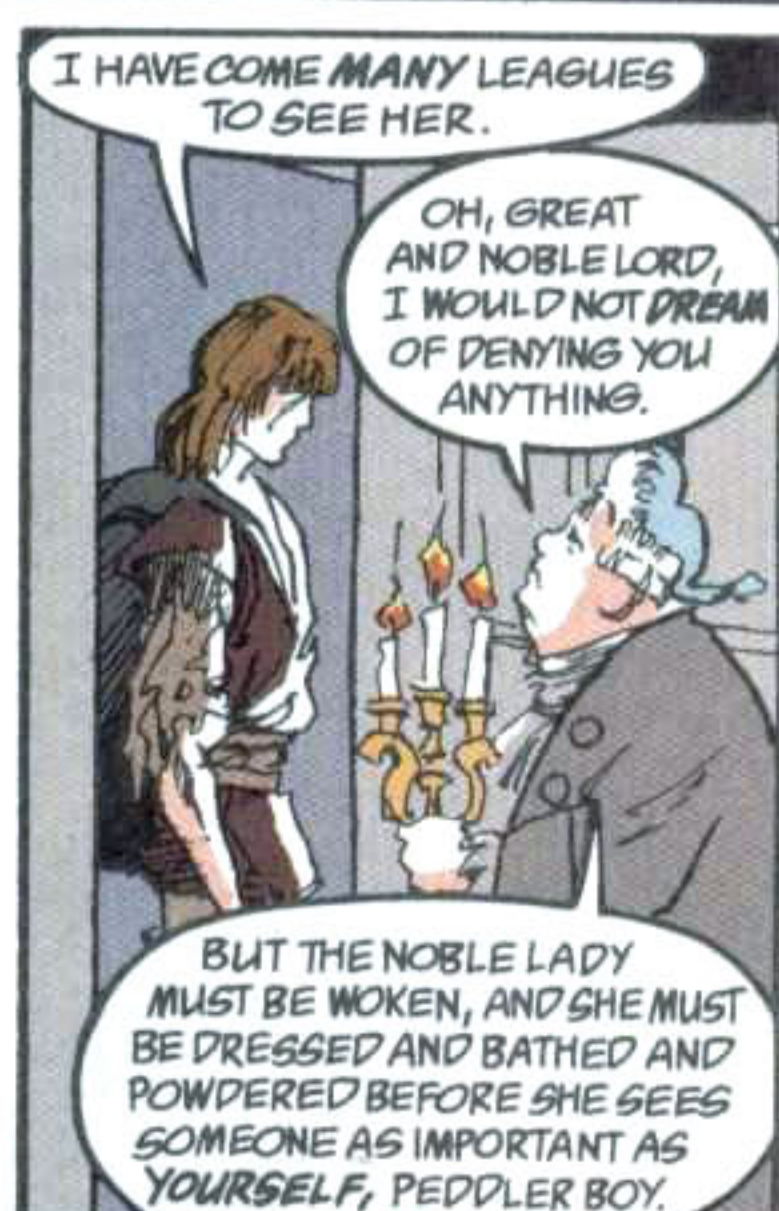
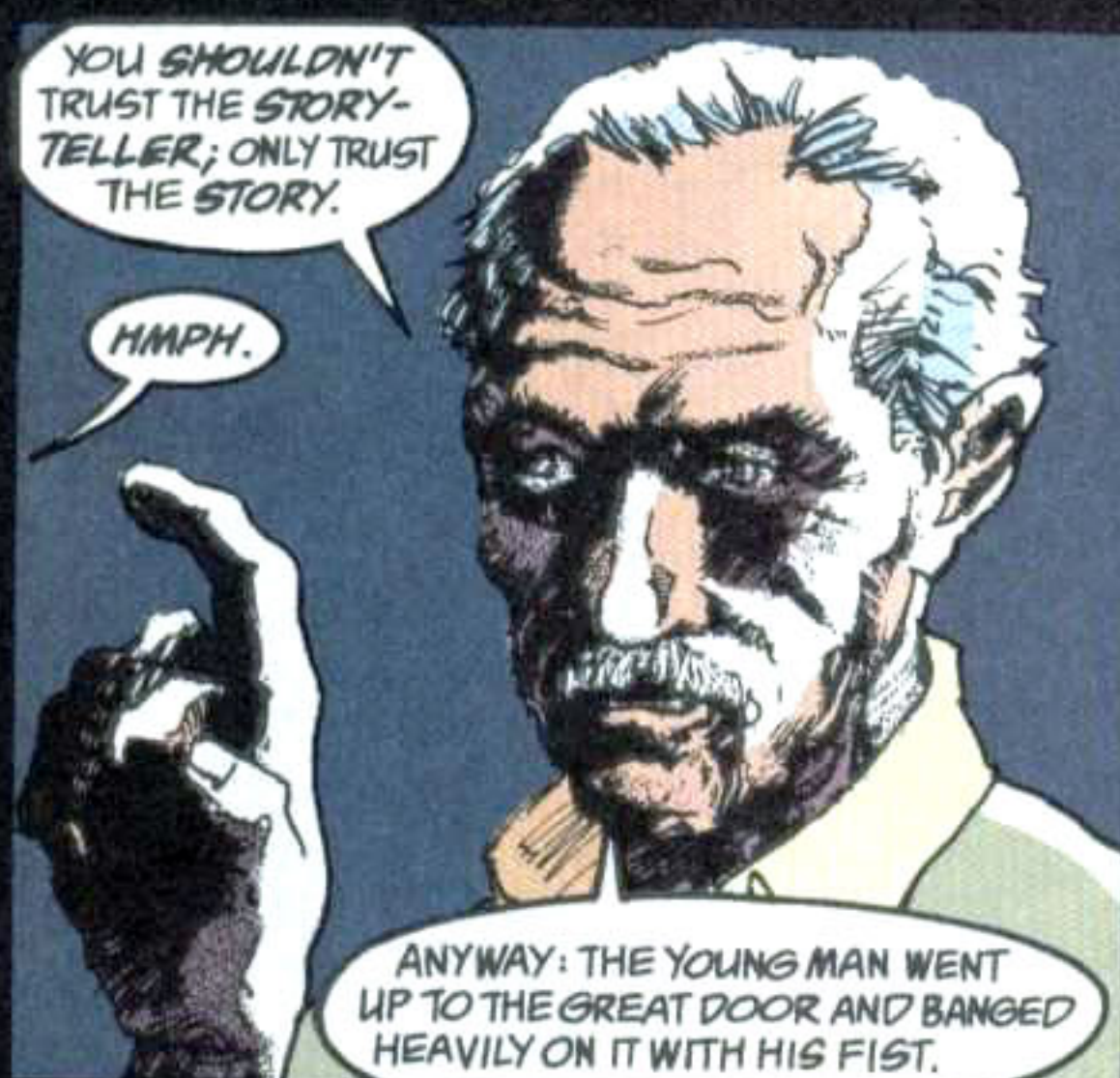


AYE. THIS IS THE EMERALD HEART OF KOSCHEI THE DEATHLESS.

WELL, GOOD LUCK TO YOU, BOY.



SHE BEAT HER PESTLE THREE TIMES AGAINST THE SIDE OF HER MORTAR. CHURCHES FELL DOWN, ROADS CRACKED, TOWERS CRUMBLLED, AND BABA YAGA ROSE HIGH INTO THE AIR, SCREECHING LOUD ENOUGH TO WAKE THE DEAD.



AT THE BOTTOM OF THE CELLAR STEPS WAS AN IRON DOOR.

HERE. WAIT IN HERE, MY LORD.

THE NOBLE LADY WILL SEE YOU SHORTLY.

OR WHEN HELL FREEZES OVER.

AND THE YOUNG MAN WENT IN.

VASSILY SPENT THE NEXT FEW HOURS HUNTING FOR A WAY TO ESCAPE.

HE WAS HUNGRY, NOW. HE OPENED HIS PACK, AND TOOK FOOD FROM IT, EATING IT BUT SPARINGLY.

GRANDPA. MY EYES ARE FINE.

OKAY. OKAY. SO YOU CAN BLAME AN OLD MAN FOR BEING CONCERNED? SO YOUR EYES ARE GOOD TOO. THAT'S GOOD. HIS EYES WERE BETTER.

HE TRIED TO FORCE THE DOOR, BUT IT WAS COLD IRON. THERE WAS NO WINDOW, AND THE CELL WAS LINED WITH MORTARED STONE.

HE WAS OF THE PEOPLE, AND HE COULD SEE IN FULL DARKNESS BECAUSE HE HADN'T RUINED HIS EYES WITH TELEVISION--

HE DRANK THE WATER IN HIS PACK, MEASURING IT OUT A MOUTHFUL AT A TIME.

EVENTUALLY THERE WAS NO FOOD LEFT.

WE OF THE PEOPLE ARE HARD TO KILL, AND HARDER TO KILL THE OLDER WEGET; BUT HE WAS YOUNG, AND WITHOUT FOOD OR WATER OR MOONLIGHT HE WOULD DIE THE TRUE DEATH.

A SLOW DEATH, AND FAR FROM NOBLE.

VASSILY RESIGNED HIMSELF TO HIS PASSING. HE SAT IN HIS CELL, UNDER EARTH, UNDER STONE, GUARDED BY COLD, COLD IRON; AND HE WAITED, HUNGRY, THIRSTY, AND WEAK, FOR THE END...

AT FIRST HE THOUGHT HE WAS IMAGINING THE LIGHT.



HELLO, YOUNG MAN. I'VE COME FOR MY BOOK.

IF YOU HAD WAITED ANOTHER WEEK THEN YOU WOULD NOT HAVE TO ASK.

YOU COULD SIMPLY HAVE TAKEN IT FROM MY CORPSE.

IT'S NOT THAT SIMPLE. AT THIS POINT THE BOOK IS YOUR PROPERTY. WHEN YOU DIE, TECHNICALLY IT BECOMES THE PROPERTY OF THE DUKE.

AND I REALLY HAVE NO DESIRE TO OPEN NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE DUKE...

IT WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY ATTRACT ATTENTION, WHICH IS SOMETHING I'M DOING MY BEST TO AVOID.

GOODNESS KNOWS WHAT MY LORD WOULD SAY IF HE LEARNED I'D LET A BOOK BE STOLEN FROM HIS LIBRARY.



DO YOU KNOW HOW LONG IT'S BEEN SINCE I MISLAID A BOOK?



WELL, LET'S JUST SAY THE CONTINENTS WEREN'T IN THEIR CURRENT SHAPES, NOT THAT THAT MEANS ANYTHING TO YOU.

NO.



SO, SUPPOSE WE DO A DEAL. YOUR FREEDOM FOR THE BOOK. YES?

NO.

I AM OF THE PEOPLE, MAN. WHAT I SEEK, I FIND. WHAT I HUNT, I TAKE. I CAN HIDE IN A SHADOW. MY TEETH ARE SHARP ENOUGH TO CUT BONE. I RUN ON FOUR LEGS AS EASILY AS TWO.



I AM KIN TO DWARROW AND NIGHTGAUNT. I OWE ALLEGIANCE TO NONE BORN AND I FEAR NOTHING. I WANT THE WOMAN.



OH DEAR.

WELL. YOU'D BETTER COME WITH ME, THEN.

HE FOLLOWED THE THIN MAN THROUGH A DOOR THAT HADN'T BEEN THERE A MOMENT BEFORE, AND FOUND HIMSELF IN A LIBRARY. IT SEEMED TO GO ON FOREVER--A BEAUTIFUL CORRIDOR LINED WITH BOOKS.

NOW, QUIET THROUGH HERE. VERY, VERY QUIET. I CAN TAKE SHORTCUTS ... BUT ONLY THROUGH THE LIBRARY. WE MUSTN'T DO ANYTHING TO ATTRACT HIS ATTENTION.

BE VERY, VERY...

QUIET.

Lucien? You did not tell me we had a guest.

Stop that.

Well, Lucien? I'm waiting.

AH. WELL, LORD. I MUST ADMIT I WAS HOPING THAT YOU WOULDN'T FIND OUT ABOUT THIS.

GRRRRRR.

Your newfound habit of bringing home strays?

UM, NO, NOT EXACTLY...

THERE IS A **BOOK** MISSING FROM THE LIBRARY, LORD. IT IS IN THE POSSESSION OF THIS YOUNG MAN.

BUT EVERYTHING'S ALL RIGHT. I'VE SORTED IT ALL OUT, AND HE'S GOING TO GIVE IT BACK TO US. FOR AN, UM, PRICE.

SO THE YOUNG MAN SHOWED HIM THE MINIATURE. AND THE LORD OF DREAMS LISTENED TO HIS TALE.

AND THEN HE SMILED.

I see

I see. And what is his price?

Give Lucien the book.

Very good. Now, let us visit your lady friend.

*The Merrie of Comedie of The Redemption of Doctor Fuustus Christopher Marlowe*

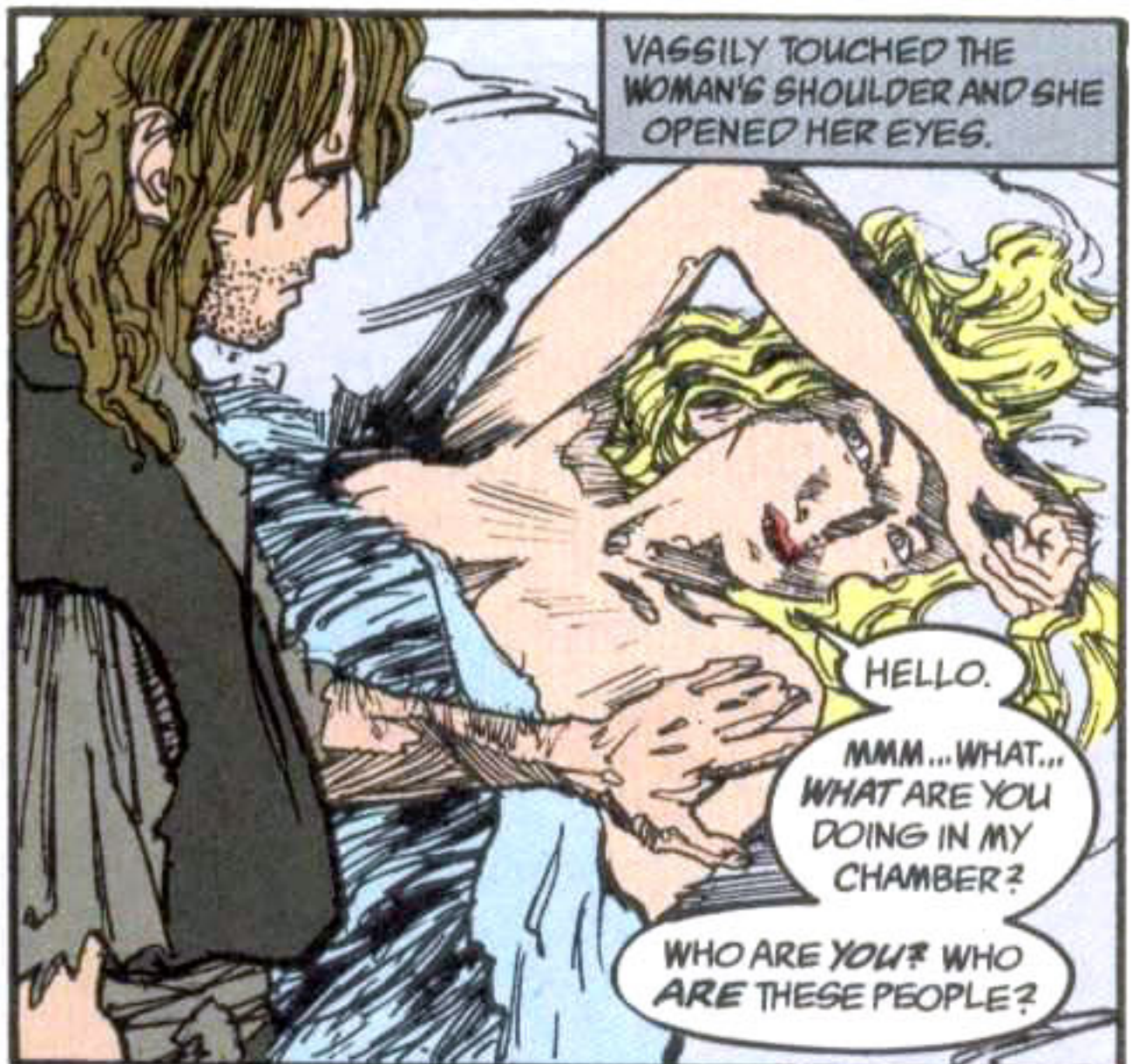
ONE STEP FORWARD AND THEY WERE IN THE BEDROOM OF THE DUKE'S YOUNGEST DAUGHTER WHOSE NAME WAS... I DON'T REMEMBER. NATASHA, SOMETHING LIKE THAT.

SHE WAS ASLEEP IN HER BED.



She dreams of walking through a covered market, looking for cornflowers and finding only goblets of sour blood.

Well? Do you dare wake her up?



VASSILY TOUCHED THE WOMAN'S SHOULDER AND SHE OPENED HER EYES.

HELLO.

MMM... WHAT... WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN MY CHAMBER?

WHO ARE YOU? WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE?

VASSILY LOOKED AT HER. SHE WAS BEAUTIFUL, INDEED. AND PALE. AND FRAGILE.



SHE WAS EVERYTHING HE HAD DREAMED OF.

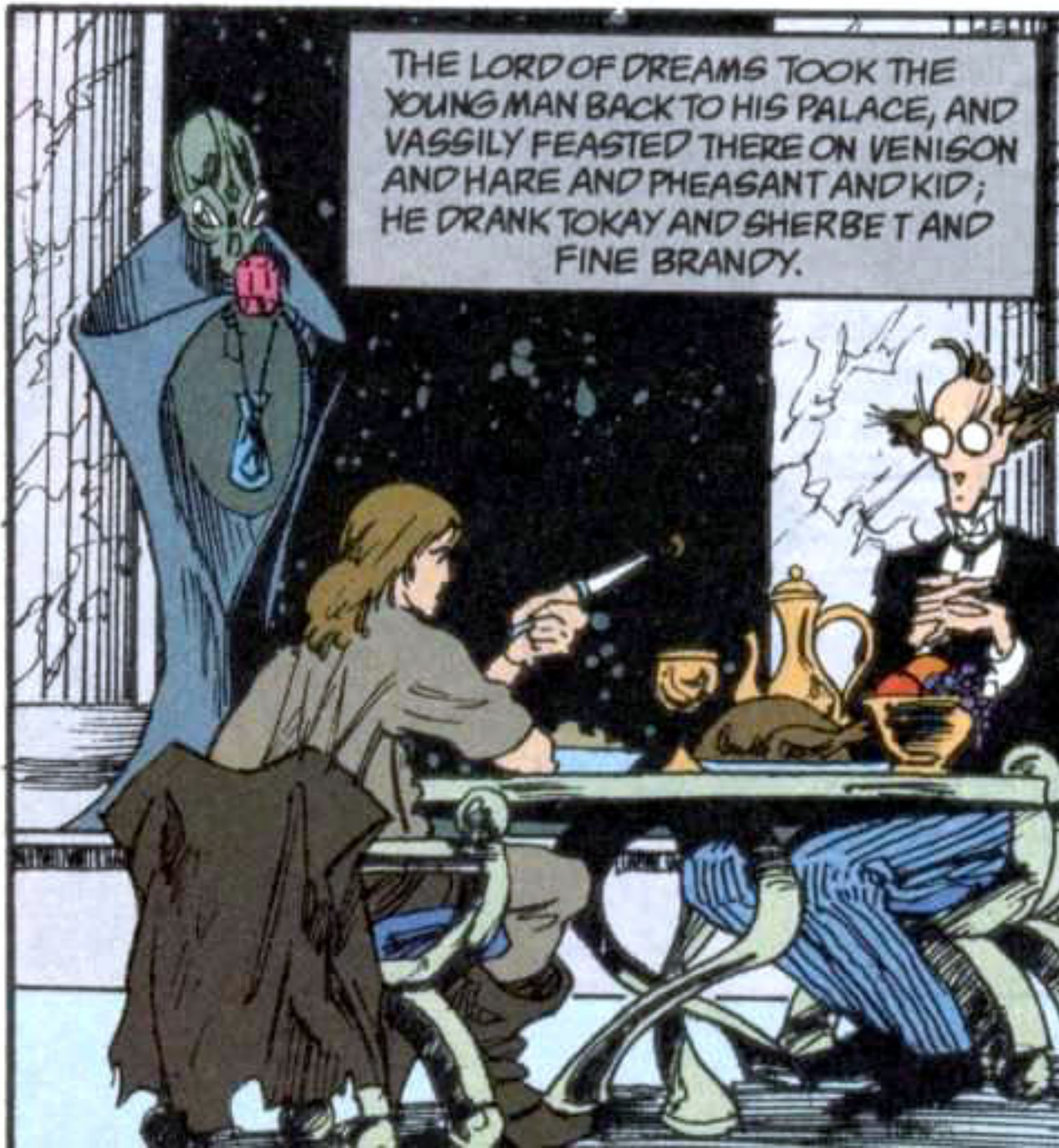


THIS IS YOURS.



I'M HUNGRY. TAKE ME AWAY FROM HERE.

PLEASE.



THE LORD OF DREAMS TOOK THE YOUNG MAN BACK TO HIS PALACE, AND VASSILY FEASTED THERE ON VENISON AND HARE AND PHEASANT AND KID; HE DRANK TOKAY AND SHERBET AND FINE BRANDY.



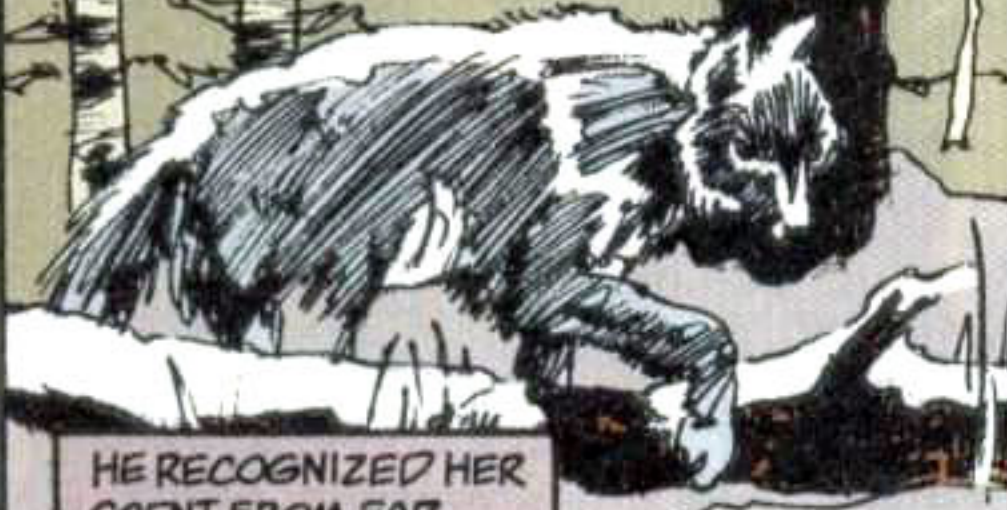
BUT THE LORD OF DREAMS KNEW THAT WISHES ARE SOMETIMES BEST LEFT UNGRANTED; AND HE DID NOT NEED TO ASK.

WHEN LUCIEN ASKED VASSILY ABOUT THE DUKE'S DAUGHTER HE SHOOK HIS HEAD AND SAID NOTHING.

VAGSILY AWOKE IN THE FOREST.



AND ONE NIGHT IN EARLY SPRING, WHEN THE CRESCENT MOON HUNG SHARP AND WHITE IN THE SKY, HE RAN THROUGH THE WOODS IN THE SHAPE OF A WOLF.



HE RECOGNIZED HER SCENT FROM FAR ACROSS THE WOOD.

THE HUNT LASTED FOR HOURS: UNTIL, AT THE END, HIS TEETH CLOSED, GENTLY, ON HER NECK, NOT BREAKING THE SKIN, AND SHE LAY STILL.



AND THEN, FLICKERING AND SHIFTING FROM WOLF-SHAPE TO MAN-SHAPE, THEY CELEBRATED THEIR UNION.



AND THE PEOPLE CAME FROM HUNDREDS OF LEAGUES AROUND FOR THE WEDDING. AND THEY LIVED HAPPILY TOGETHER UNTIL DEATH PARTED THEM.

AND THAT'S IT, HUH?

YES, THAT'S THE STORY.

IT'S KIND OF SEXIST.



IT'S NOT SEXIST AT ALL. IT'S THE CUSTOM OF THE PEOPLE. OR IT WAS, BEFORE WE CAME HERE.

HMPH. SO HOW DID THE DREAM-KING'S BOOK GET INTO THE OLD PEDDLER WOMAN'S SACK IN THE FIRST PLACE?

THE DREAM KING TELLS ME HIS SECRETS? IT JUST WAS, THAT'S ALL.



THERE ISN'T ANY DREAM KING. JUST ANOTHER MADE-UP PERSON IN ANOTHER DUMB STORY.





I KNOW WHAT THIS STORY IS ABOUT. MY PARENTS PUT YOU UP TO THIS DIDN'T THEY? IT'S ABOUT CHRISTOPHER, ISN'T IT? IT'S ABOUT MY BOYFRIEND.

WHY WOULD IT BE ABOUT YOUR BOYFRIEND?

BECAUSE HE'S NOT ONE OF THE PEOPLE. HE'S ONE OF THEM.

JESUS! YOU'RE SO TRANSPARENT, GRANDPA.

IT WAS A TRUE STORY.

TRUE? GIVE ME A BREAK.

IT'S A STORY OF THE PEOPLE. DON'T YOU WANT TO KNOW WHERE YOU COME FROM? WHO YOU ARE?

NOT REALLY.

IT'S SEXIST, IT'S INSULAR, AND THE MORAL IS THAT THE PEOPLE ARE HAPPY WITH THE PEOPLE. BIG SURPRISE.

BUT IT WASN'T ABOUT YOUR BOYFRIEND. IT WASN'T REALLY EVEN ABOUT THE PEOPLE.

IT WAS ABOUT WHAT HE SAW WHEN HE LOOKED AT THE SLEEPING WOMAN...

MY FAULT. I THOUGHT YOU'D WANT TO HEAR THE STORY. YOU WATCH YOUR TELEVISION. YOUR PARENTS WILL BE HOME SOON.

G'NIGHT, GRANDPA.

I KNEW I SHOULD HAVE WATCHED TV. AT LEAST THAT DOESN'T TRY TO PRETEND THAT WE'RE STILL LIVING FIVE HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

WHY HE TURNED HIS BACK ON HER.

IT WAS ABOUT DREAMS...

I WISH YOU COULD HAVE KNOWN YOUR GRANDMOTHER. SHE WAS AN AMAZING WOMAN. SHE KNEW THE VALUE OF THINGS.

BUT SHE NEVER LET ME FORGET THAT SHE HAD BEATEN ME TO THE DEER.

GRANDFATHER?

GOODNIGHT.