



NUMBER 1
APR 1989
NEW FORMAT

SANDMAN

THIS IS
THE CAN
ON
SUGGESTED
FOR MATURE
READERS

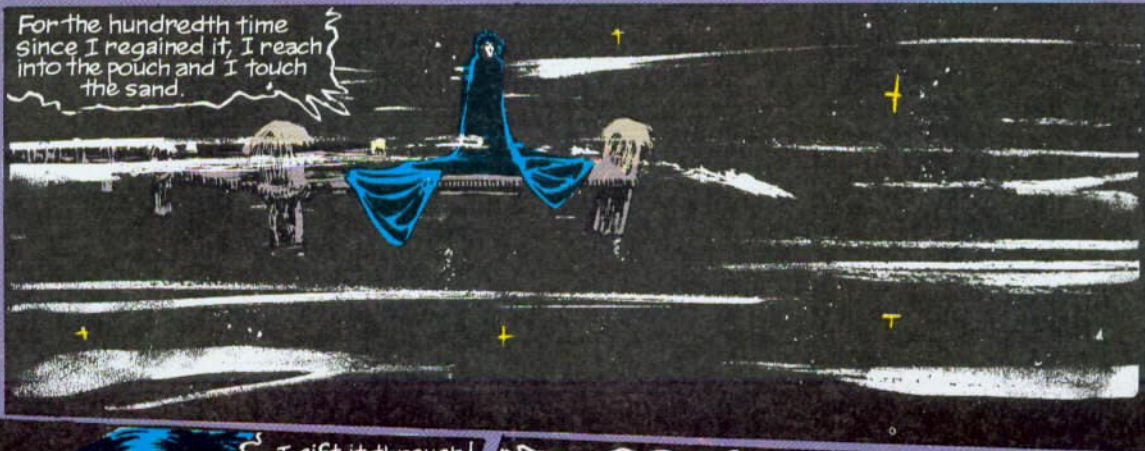
MASTER • of • DREAMS



GAIMAN • KIETH • DRINGENBERG

ALL WITH PANTING BREATH
WE LET DEATH LIVE INSIDE OUR THROATS

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.



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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.





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



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



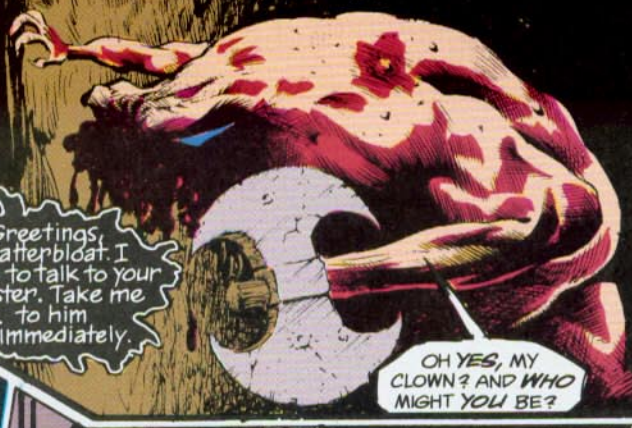
IS IT THIEF, THUG OR WHORE? THERE'S ONE AT THE DOOR...

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...

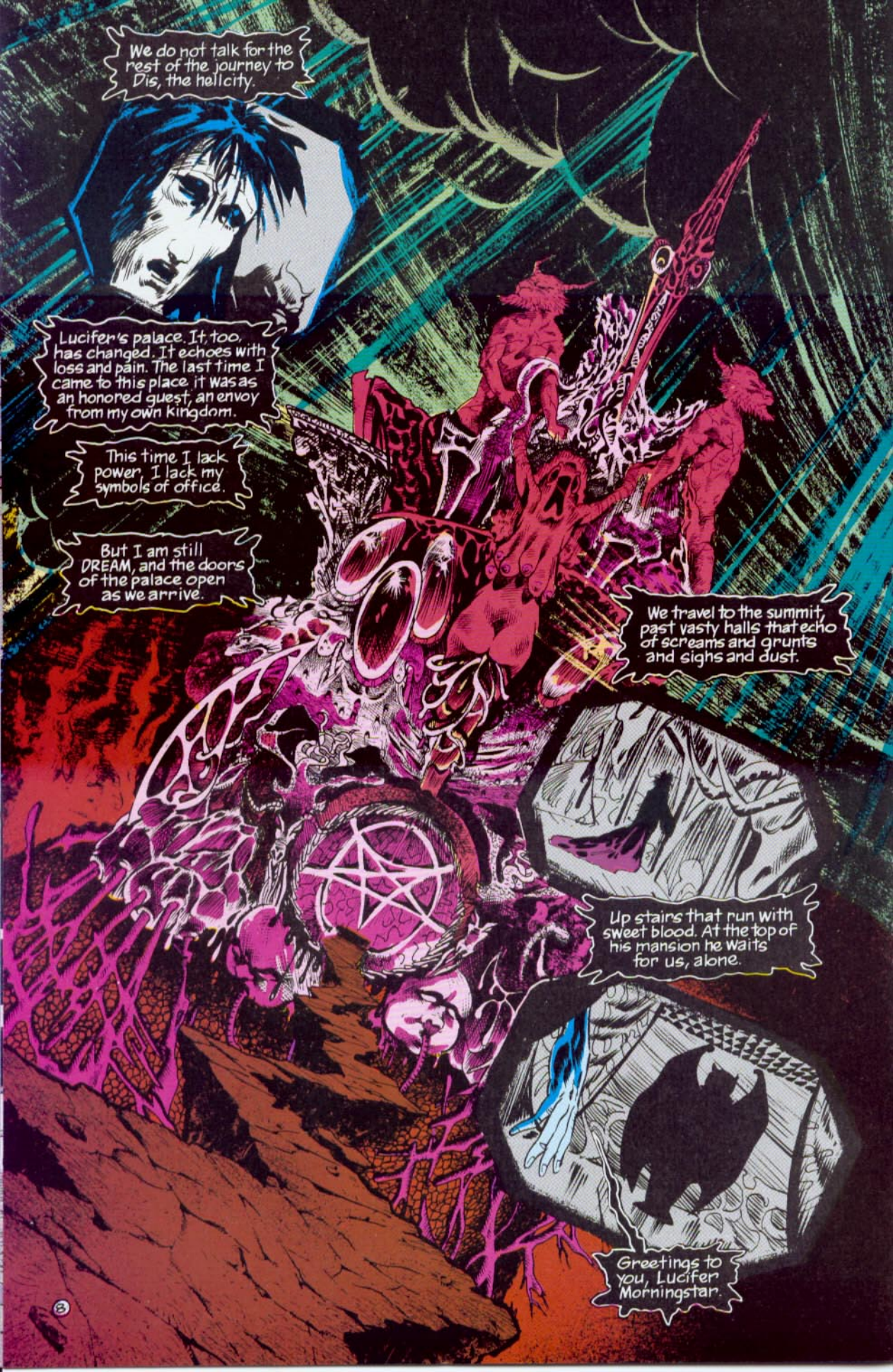
UPON YOUR RIGHT ARE SOULS, ENTOMBED, TO PITY. AN UGLY SIGHT...

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! HAHAA HAAA!



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.

Things do
not change that
much, proud
one.

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

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 ...

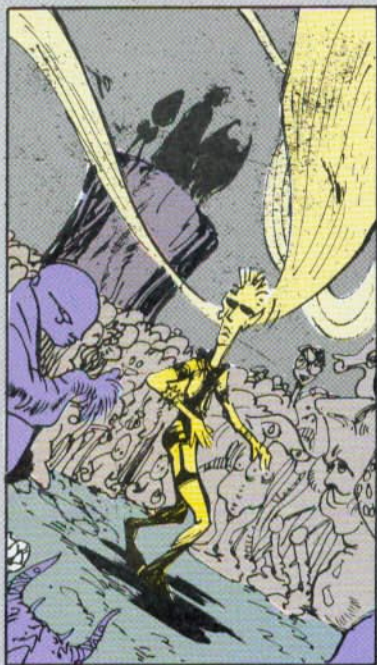
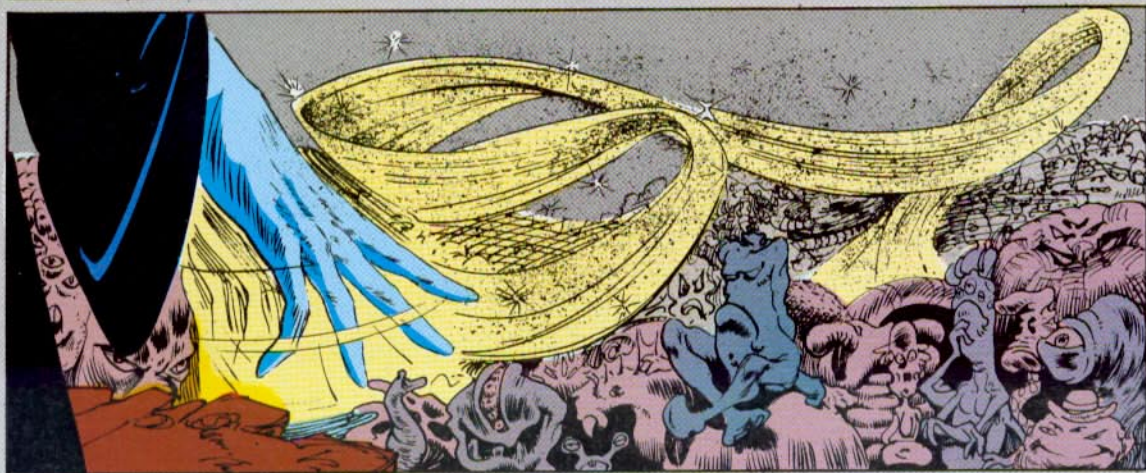
WHICH
DEMON HAS YOUR
HELMET?



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.

SSSO...

YOU KNOW THE RULES, DREAMLORD? IF YOU WIN, I WILL RETURN YOUR HELMET.

IF YOU LOSE, YOU WILL SSSERVE AS A PLAYTHING OF HELL, FOR ETERNITY. OUR SSSLAVE.

I understand.

"VERY WELL. I HAVE THE FIRST MOVE..."

I AM A DIRE WOLF, PREY-STALKING, LETHAL PROWLER.

"My move."

I am a hunter, horse-mounted, wolf-stabbing.

I smell spilt alcohol, stale smoke and cheap sex, perfume and mold. And I feel the grass beneath my hooves, the flanks between my legs.

All is real. Nothing is real. Choronzon's move.

I AM A HORSEFLY, HORSE-STINGING, HUNTER-THROWING.

There are many ways to lose the oldest game. Failure of nerve, hesitation... Being unable to shift into a defensive shape. Lack of imagination.

"I am a spider, fly consuming, eight legged."



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.



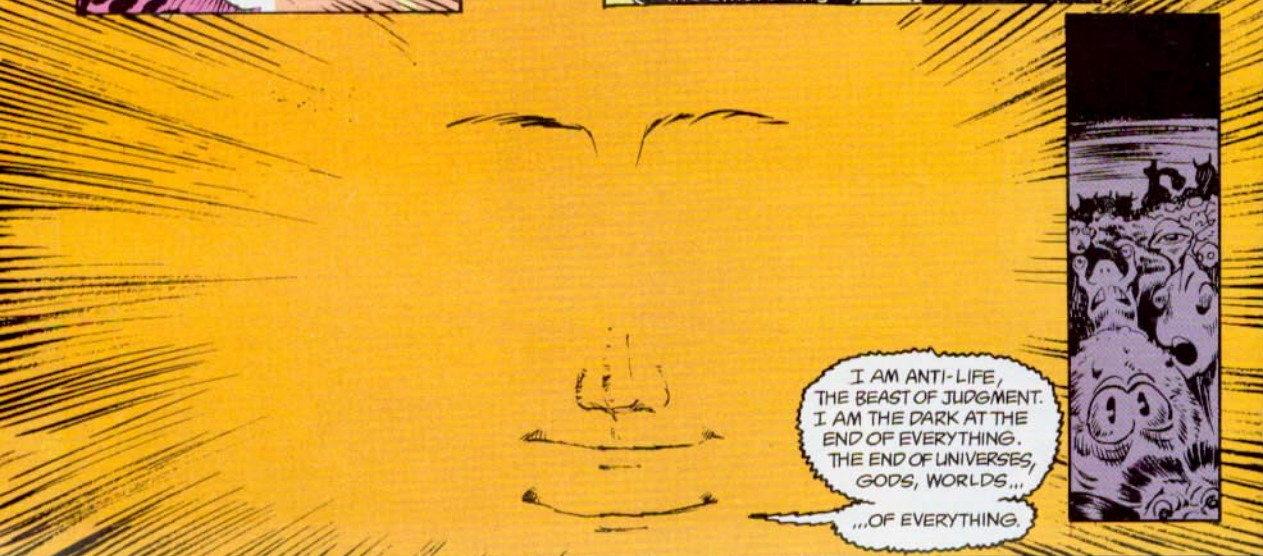
I AM A NOVA,
ALL-EXPLODING...



...PLANET-CREMATING.



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



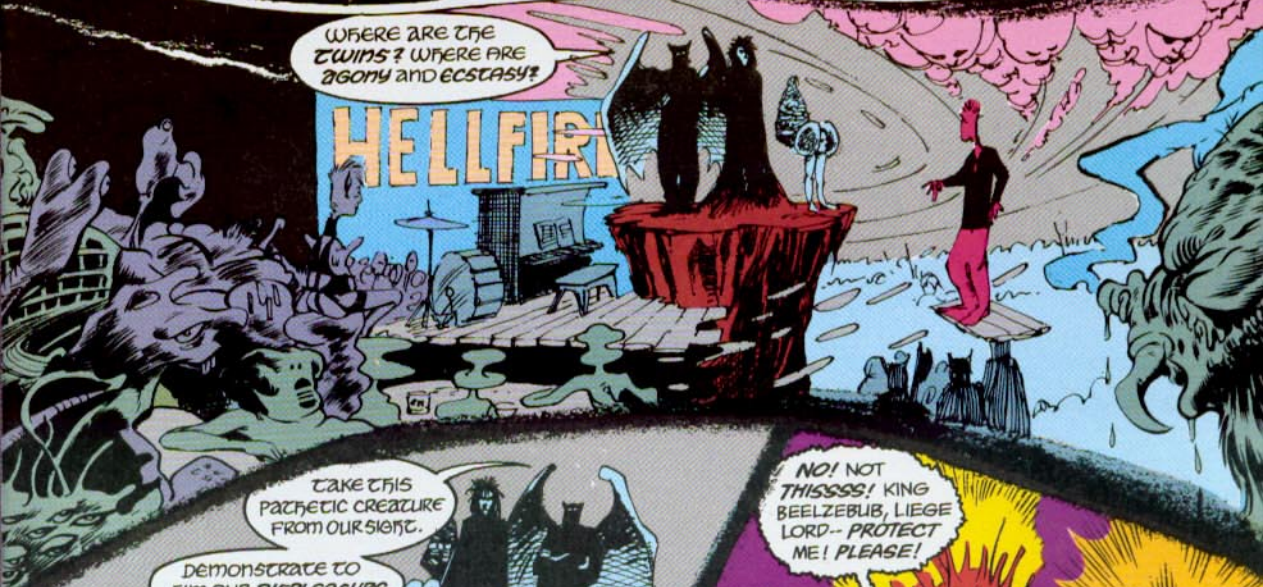
I AM ANTI-LIFE, THE BEAST OF JUDGMENT. I AM THE DARK AT THE END OF EVERYTHING. THE END OF UNIVERSES, GODS, WORLDS...

...OF EVERYTHING.



I am hope.

SSS. AND WHAT WILL YOU BE THEN, DREAMLORD?





88Z. 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.

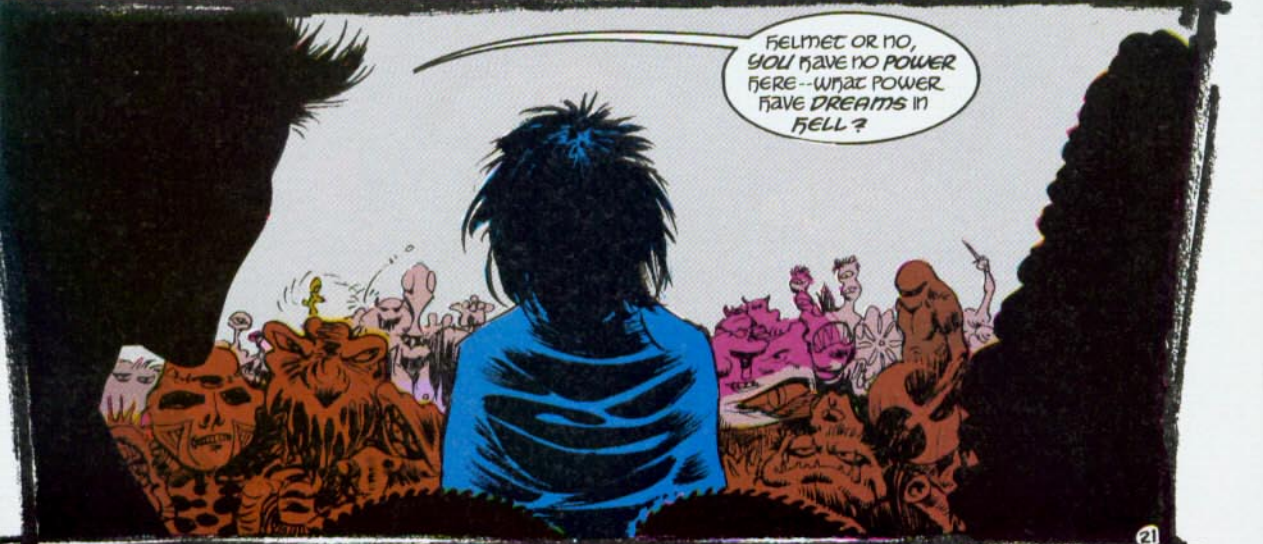
HONORABLE?
YOU JOKE, SURELY.

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?



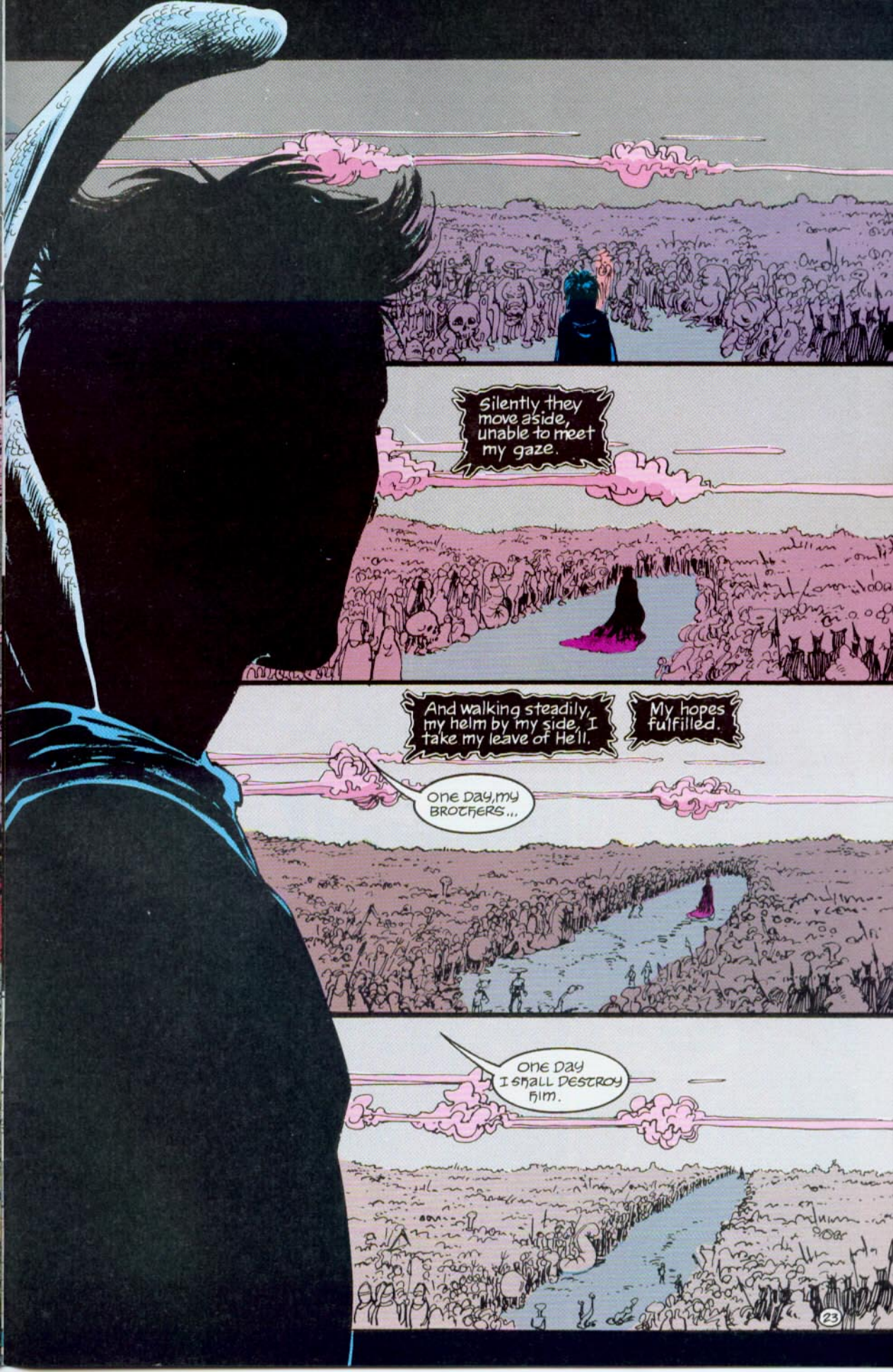
You say I have
no power? Perhaps
you speak truly...

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

