

King Charretier Hollingsworth Cowles

LOVE issue 1 EVERLASTING

I LOVE
YOU, JOAN...
AND I ALWAYS
WILL!

AND I
LOVE YOU,
GEORGE! AND
TOMORROW
I'LL BE YOUR
BRIDE!

POOR
GEORGE! WHY DO
I HAVE TO LIE TO HIM?
WHY CAN'T I TELL HIM THE
TRUTH? THERE IS NO
TOMORROW!!



I KNEW IT WAS WRONG. HE WAS MY BOSS AND MY BEST FRIEND'S STEADY. STILL, EVERY TIME I LOOKED OVER AT GEORGE, I COULDN'T STOP MYSELF FROM THINKING HE AND I WERE...

MEANT TO BE

Tom King
writer

Elsa Charretier
artist

Matt Hollingsworth
colorist
Clayton Cowles
letterer

HE'S EVERYTHING I EVER WANTED AND EVERYTHING I CAN NEVER HAVE!

AFTER SCHOOL ENDED, I GOT UP THE COURAGE TO MOVE FROM INDIANA TO NEW YORK CITY, AND I WAS ROOMING WITH MY BEST FRIEND MARLA...



MARLA WAS NICE ENOUGH TO HELP WITH THE RENT AS I SETTLED IN, BUT I KNEW I HAD TO FIND A JOB EVENTUALLY!

THERE'S **NOTHING** IN HERE FOR ME! EVERYONE WANTS EXPERIENCE. WHAT EXPERIENCE DO I HAVE?



JOAN PETERSON, YOU COME TO THE CITY FOR EXPERIENCE!

I WAS **JUST** WHERE YOU ARE A YEAR AGO, NO JOB AND NO MAN. **NOW** LOOK AT ME!



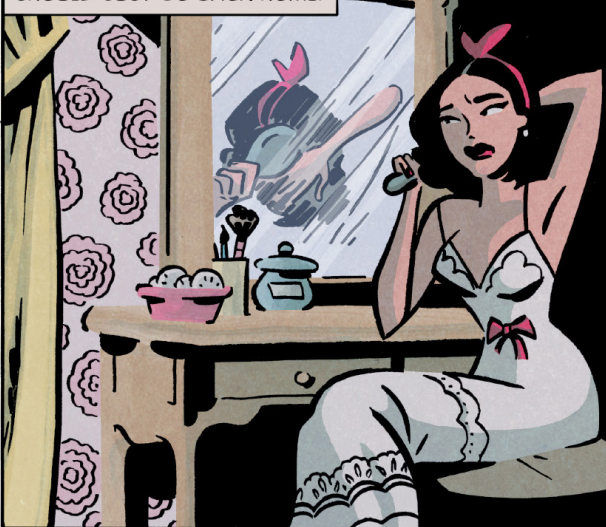
GEORGE MIGHT ASK ME TO **MARRY** HIM TONIGHT!

I HOPED MARLA WAS RIGHT, BUT I COULDN'T HELP THINKING THAT THE WORLD IS SO LARGE AND NOT EVERYTHING ALWAYS TURNS OUT FOR THE BEST.

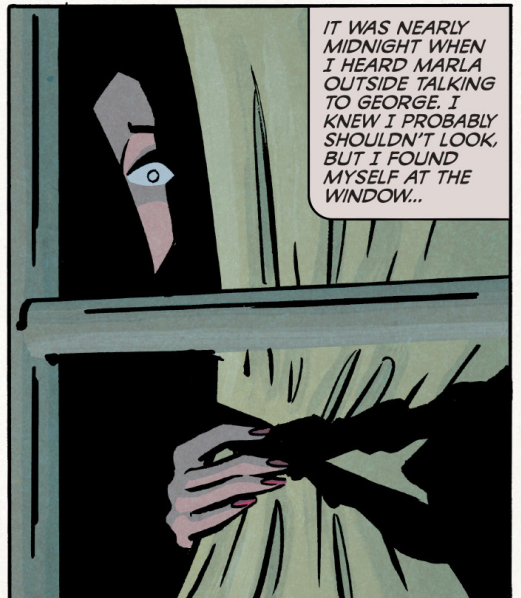
WHAT DO **YOU** THINK? WON'T HE **LOVE** IT?!



I COULDN'T SLEEP THAT NIGHT. WORRY RAN THROUGH ME, UP AND DOWN. MAYBE I CAN'T DO THIS, MAYBE I SHOULD JUST GO BACK HOME.



IT WAS NEARLY MIDNIGHT WHEN I HEARD MARLA TALKING TO GEORGE. I KNEW I PROBABLY SHOULDN'T LOOK, BUT I FOUND MYSELF AT THE WINDOW...



BY THE TIME I SAW THEM,
GEORGE HAD MARLA IN HER
ARMS. I WONDERED WHAT
IT WOULD BE LIKE TO BE
HELD LIKE THAT.



AND SUDDENLY HIS LIPS
WERE ON MINE, AND
THEY WERE WARM AND
KIND.



I LOOKED AWAY, ASHAMED
OF WHERE MY MIND HAD
TAKEN ME.



I HAD JUST
MANAGED TO
GET BACK IN
BED AND
CLOSE MY
EYES, WHEN
MARLA
UNEXPECTEDLY
BURST INTO
MY ROOM,
HER FACE
STILL FLUSHED.



I HEARD THE FEAR IN MY
VOICE, AND I HOPED
MARLA DIDN'T NOTICE.



OH NO, SILLY, BUT I WAS TELLING GEORGE ALL ABOUT
YOU AND YOUR TROUBLES, AND GEORGE
SAID HE NEEDED A NEW SECRETARY
AT THE OFFICE!



AND
HE SAID HE'D
LOVE TO HIRE
YOU!



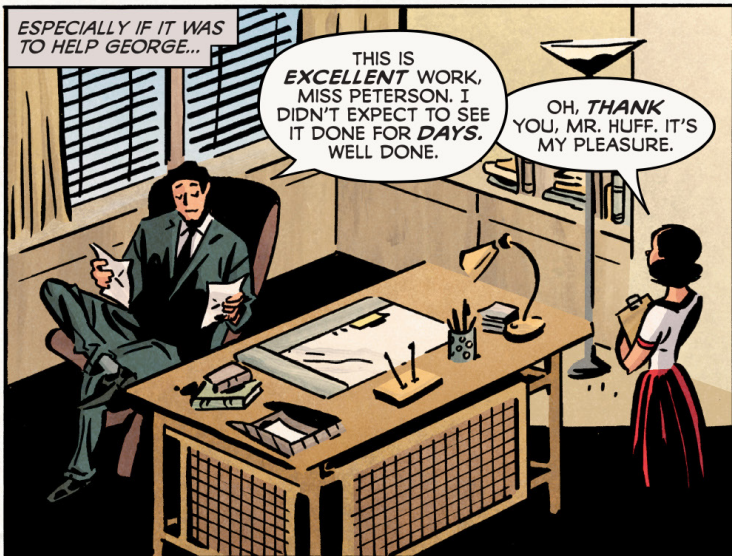
GEORGE'S HANDSHAKE WAS LIKE THE MAN HIMSELF: STRONG, YET WELCOMING. THOUGH I WAS VERY NERVOUS ON MY FIRST DAY, HE MADE IT ALL SO EASY.



SOON I WAS BUSY AS A BEE. I KNEW I WASN'T THE FASTEST TYPIST IN THE POOL, BUT I ALSO KNEW I COULD OUTWORK ANYBODY ELSE THERE!



ESPECIALLY IF IT WAS TO HELP GEORGE...



THIS IS **EXCELLENT** WORK, MISS PETERSON. I DIDN'T EXPECT TO SEE IT DONE FOR **DAYS**. WELL DONE.

OH, **THANK** YOU, MR. HUFF. IT'S MY PLEASURE.

PLEASE, CALL ME **GEORGE**. I KNOW YOU WORK FOR ME, BUT WE'RE **MORE** THAN BOSS AND SECRETARY, AREN'T WE?



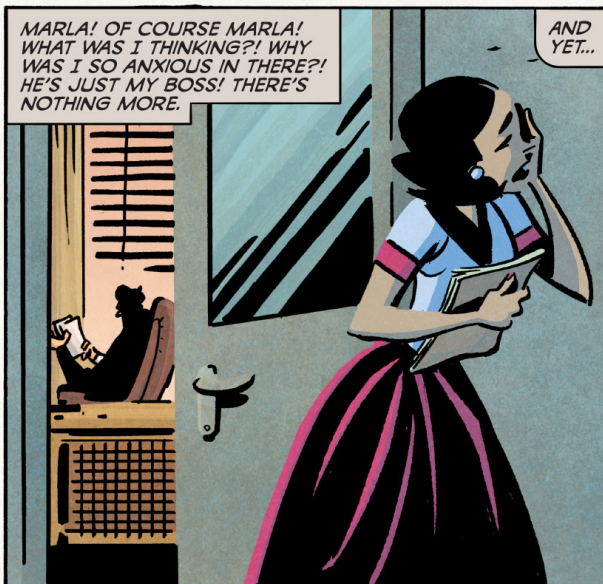
WITH HIS WORDS, MY HEART JUMPED OUT OF MY CHEST AND INTO MY THROAT. I COULD HARDLY GET EVEN A SOUND OUT.



YOU KNOW, BECAUSE OF **MARLA**.

AND IS IT ALL RIGHT IF I CALL YOU **JOAN**?





MARLA! OF COURSE MARLA! WHAT WAS I THINKING?! WHY WAS I SO ANXIOUS IN THERE?! HE'S JUST MY BOSS! THERE'S NOTHING MORE.

AND YET...

EVERY DAY THAT WENT BY, EVERY TIME I SAW HIM, I COULDN'T HELP BUT FEEL SOMETHING.



IT WAS AS IF THERE WAS A STRING ATTACHED TO BOTH OF US, AND WHEN WE WERE APART THE STRING PULLED AT ME, AND EVERYTHING WAS TENSE.



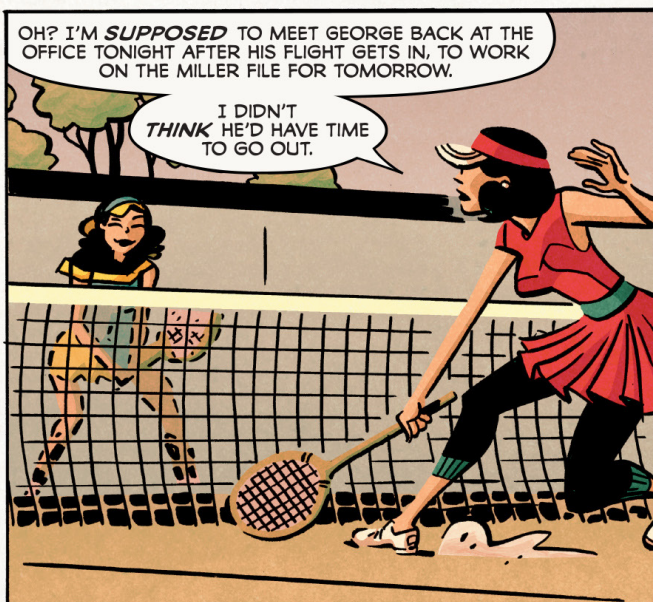
AND WHEN WE WERE TOGETHER, THE STRING RELAXED AND EVERYTHING WAS JUST AS IT SHOULD BE.

EVERYTHING WAS JUST PERFECT.

I TRIED MY BEST NOT TO THINK ABOUT IT. BUT WHATEVER I DID, IT SEEMED EVERYTHING WOULD POINT AGAIN TO GEORGE.



I CAN'T PLAY TOO LATE TODAY, I HAVE A **BIG** DATE TONIGHT.



OH? I'M **SUPPOSED** TO MEET GEORGE BACK AT THE OFFICE TONIGHT AFTER HIS FLIGHT GETS IN, TO WORK ON THE MILLER FILE FOR TOMORROW.

I DIDN'T **THINK** HE'D HAVE TIME TO GO OUT.



OH, THIS ISN'T **GEORGE**. THIS IS **JACK**.

HE'S A **REALLY NEAT** GUY I'VE BEEN SEEING.

I'M GOING OUT WITH **GEORGE** ON SATURDAY.

THAT NIGHT,
WE WERE
ALONE IN
THE OFFICE.



AS HIS
LIPS FELL
ON MINE,
I THOUGHT
THIS MUST
BE ANOTHER
DREAM
AND I LET
MYSELF
FLOW INTO
IT, KNOWING
I WOULD
SOON
WAKE.

BUT IT WAS ALL
TOO REAL!



I TUSSELED AND TURNED ALL NIGHT. MY HEAD
WAS FLOODED WITH GUILT AND LONGING. I
KNEW IT WAS WRONG! AND JUST AS MUCH,
I KNEW I NEEDED MORE!



DAYS PASSED,
AND THEN
WEEKS, AND
THEN MONTHS.
IN THE WORLD,
I WAS A GOOD
SECRETARY
AND A GOOD
ROOMMATE. IN
MY HEART, I
WAS DYING.

FINALLY, I ADMITTED DEFEAT. I HAD FOUGHT
THE CITY AS BEST AS I COULD AND THE CITY
HAD WON. IT WAS TIME TO GO HOME!



JOAN,
WHAT ARE YOU
DOING?



I'M LEAVING!

I THOUGHT
I WAS **MEANT** TO
COME HERE! I THOUGHT
I WAS BIGGER THAN
WHATEVER **DESTINY** ALL
THOSE PEOPLE BACK
HOME HAD PLANNED
FOR ME!

BUT I WAS **WRONG!**
THERE ARE SOME PLACES
YOU JUST **BELONG**, AND
YOU SHOULD JUST
STAY THERE!



BUT YOU **CAN'T**
LEAVE NOW,
YOU'LL MISS MY
WEDDING!

HE FINALLY ASKED
ME! AND I SAID
YES!



AND THERE
IT WAS, THE
FINAL BLOW,
BRINGING
ME DOWN.
EVEN AS I
RETREATED,
THE ENEMY
ARMY JUST
KEPT
MARCHING
OVER ME.

THAT'S AMAZING. I WISH YOU AND
GEORGE ALL THE BEST.

MAY
YOU HAVE THE
HAPPINESS SO...
SO FEW OF
US GET.



BUT
THEN.

BUT
THEN!

**BUT
THEN!!!**

GEORGE? WE BROKE UP **WEEKS** AGO.
I THINK HE'S IN **LOVE** WITH
SOMEONE ELSE.

NO, THIS
IS **JACK!** HE'S
SO SHARP, I CAN'T
BELIEVE I GET TO
BE WITH HIM!





THOUGH I LOVED HIM, I COULDN'T STAY. I WAS THE GOOD GIRL, THE GOOD DAUGHTER WHO WOULD MARRY THE MAN HER PARENTS CHOSE. AND KIT WAS JUST A DOWN-AND-OUT SINGER FROM THE VILLAGE. AFTER THIS I KNEW I'D RUN, BUT FIRST I HAD TO HAVE...

One Last Kiss

Tom King
writer

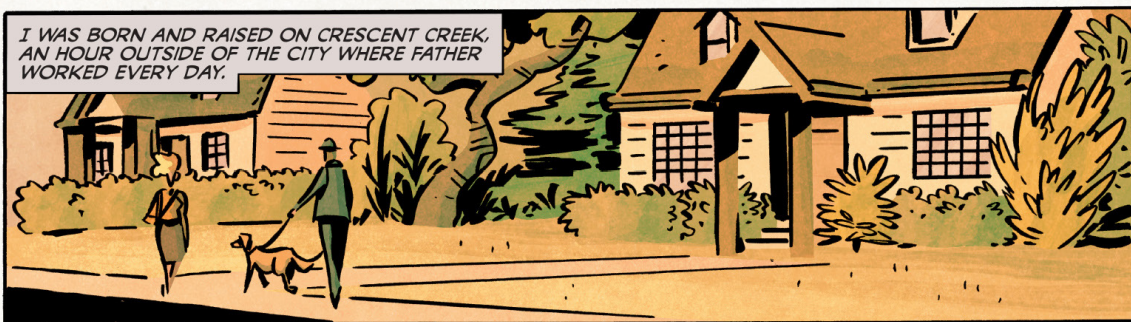
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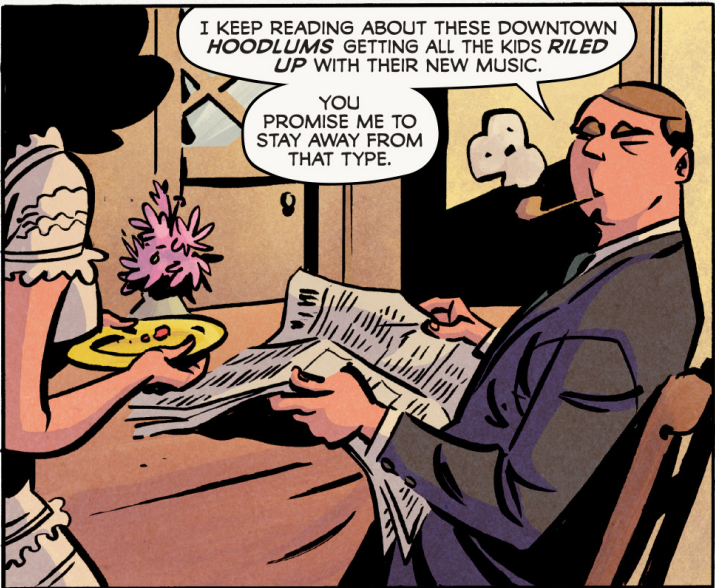
I WAS BORN AND RAISED ON CRESCENT CREEK, AN HOUR OUTSIDE OF THE CITY WHERE FATHER WORKED EVERY DAY.



JOAN PETERSON,
PROMISE ME ONE
THING.

YES,
DADDY?





I HATED TO LIE TO FATHER, BUT I COULDN'T BEAR TO BREAK HIS HEART AND TELL HIM THAT I'D ALREADY BEEN SNEAKING OUT AT NIGHT AND GOING "DOWNTOWN."





AND THAT NIGHT MY FATE CERTAINLY TWISTED! FOR THAT WAS THE NIGHT I FIRST LAID EYES ON KIT!

HELLO, I'M KIT MYERS. THANK YOU FOR COMING OUT.

THIS SONG IS CALLED "WHEN THE LUCK RUNS OUT."

I HOPE YOU DIG IT.



THERE'LL BE HANGIN' AND BANGIN' AND SHUFFLING AND BUSTLING...

THERE'LL BE KILLIN' AND THRILLIN' AND DYING AND LYING...

THEY'LL ALLLLLL COME ON BOOOOARD AND GIVE OUT THEIR SHOOOUT...



WHEN THE LUUUUCK RUNS OUT.

IF I STAYED OUT TOO LATE, I'D MISS THE LAST TRAIN BACK TO CRESCENT CREEK, BUT SOMEHOW I FOUND MYSELF WAITING BEHIND THE CLUB, HOPING...



NO... THIS ISN'T... WHERE'S...



GEORGE?

DID... DIDN'T I MARRY GEORGE?

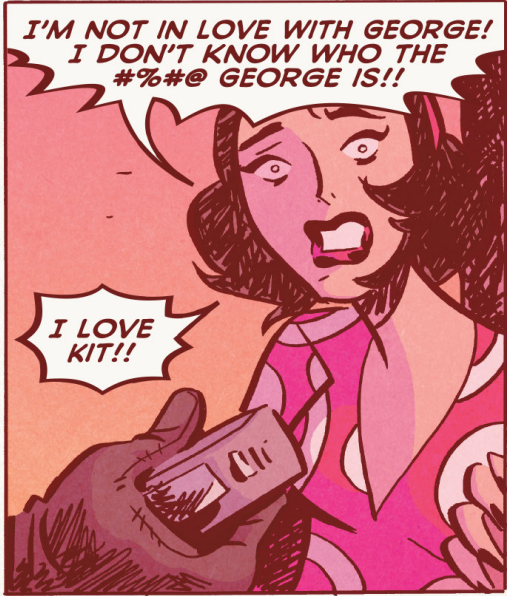
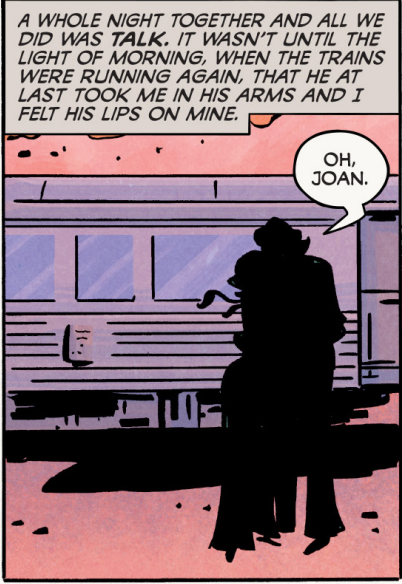


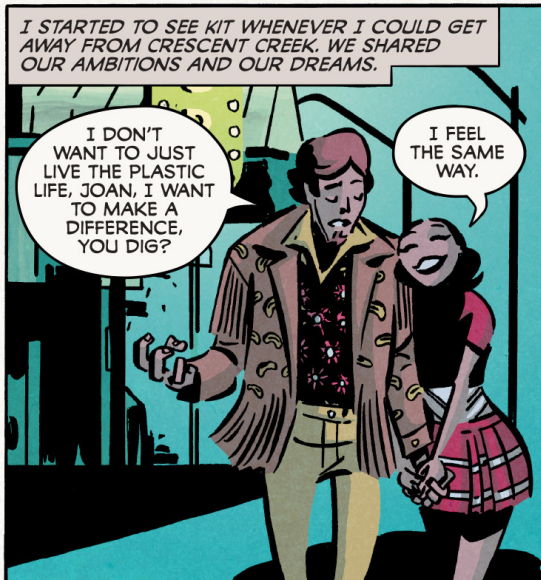
AND JUST WHEN I WAS GETTING READY TO RUN, THE DOOR SWUNG OPEN AND THERE HE WAS, A SMILE ON HIS FACE THAT SEEMED TO FLY RIGHT TO MY HEART.

WELL, WHO ARE YOU, BEAUTIFUL?

SHOULD YOU BE HERE?

WE TALKED ALL NIGHT. HE WAS INSPIRING AND INTERESTING. UNLIKE ANY MAN YOU MIGHT MEET AT THE CRESCENT CREEK COUNTRY CLUB ON A SUNDAY GOLF TRIP.



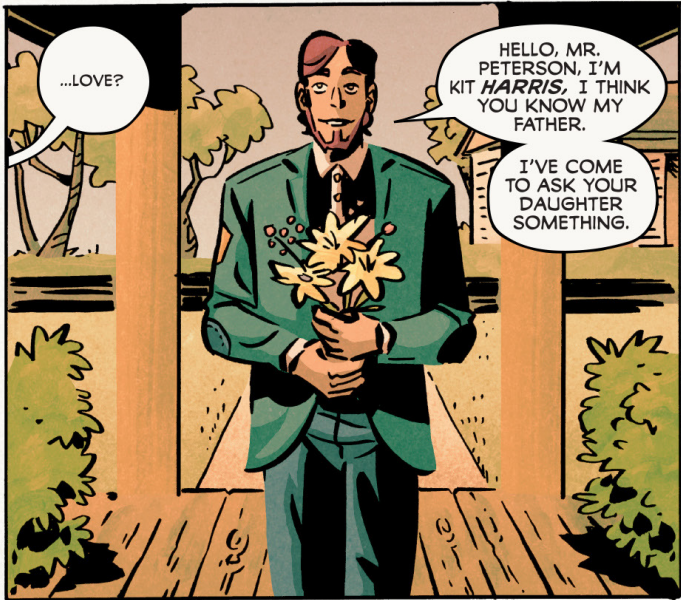
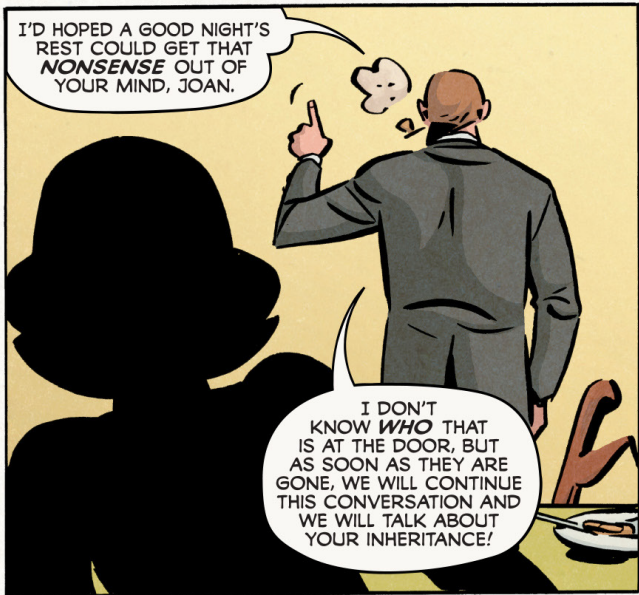
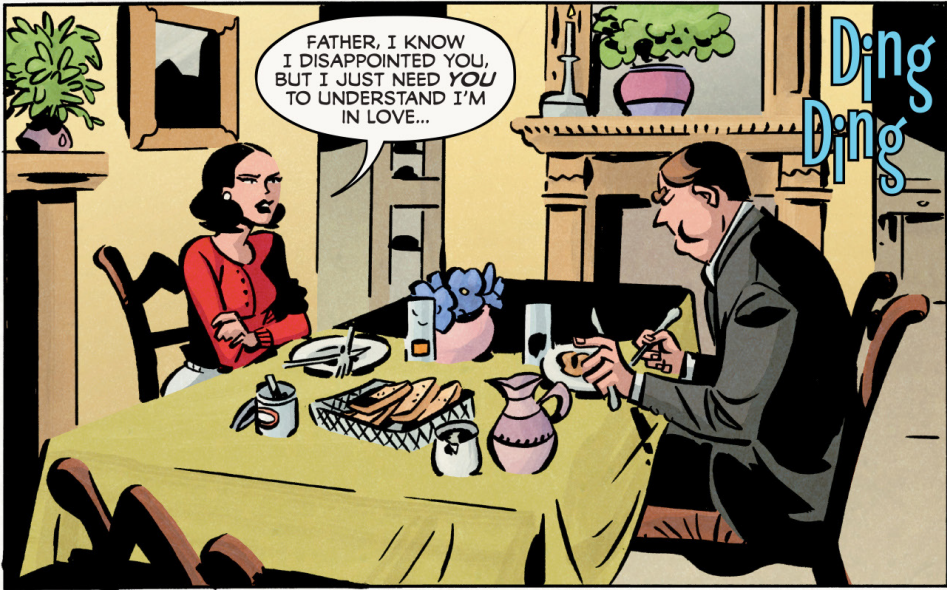


SOON I WAS WATCHING EVERY ONE OF HIS PERFORMANCES ON STAGE, IN AWE OF HOW HE POURED HIMSELF INTO HIS MUSIC AND LYRICS.





THE NEXT DAY AT BREAKFAST, I RESOLVED TO TELL FATHER I WAS THROUGH WITH KIT, THAT I COULD REJECT LOVE, BUT WHEN I SPOKE, THE WRONG WORDS JUST CAME OUT!





THIS WAS IT, THE MOMENT I'D WAITED MY WHOLE LIFE FOR, THE MAN I NEEDED, THE ARMS I NEEDED, THE LIPS I NEEDED, THE LIFE I NEEDED...



EVER SINCE I WAS A GIRL AND HE WAS A BOY, I KNEW I'D MARRY CHAD HESTLE, SON OF THE TOWN SHERIFF. IT WAS MY FATE AND I WAS HAPPY TO EMBRACE IT. BUT ONE DAY MY FATHER HIRED A NEW RANCH HAND, BILL HARPER, AND SUDDENLY IT FELT LIKE FATE HAD OTHER PLANS, THAT MAYBE THERE JUST HAD TO BE A...

NO! CHAD! BILL! THEY'LL KILL EACH OTHER. I NEED TO HELP ONE OF THEM! BUT WHICH ONE?!

TOM KING WRITER
ELSA CHARRETIER ARTIST

MATT HOLLINGSWORTH COLORIST • CLAYTON COWLES LETTERER

Fight FOR LOVE



IT WAS JUST ANOTHER DAY ON OUR HUMBLE MARICOPA RANCH. I EXPECTED TO DO MY CLEANING AND COOKING AND THEN TAKE DUSTY ON A RIDE THROUGH THE PLAIN.



JUST ANOTHER DAY.



JUST ANOTHER DAY.



JUST ANOTHER DAY.



JUST ANOTHER DAY.

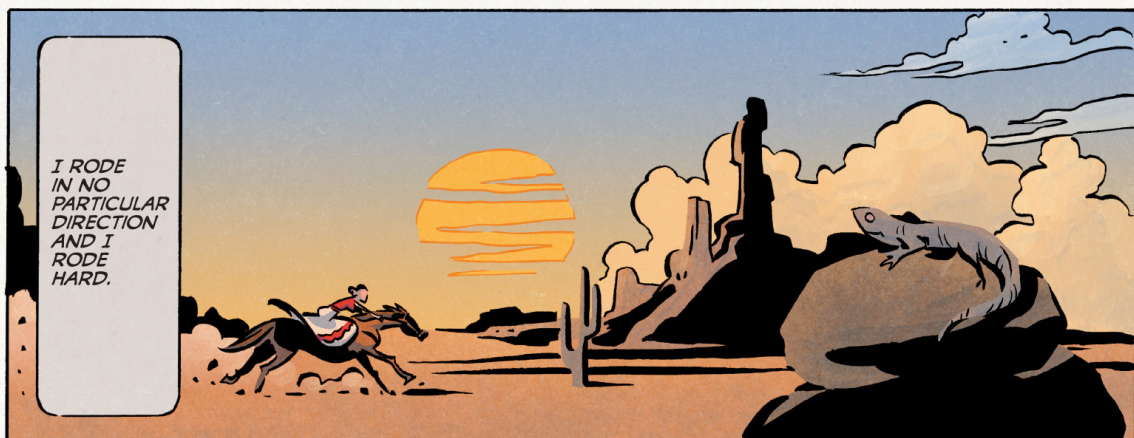


JUST ANOTHER DAY.

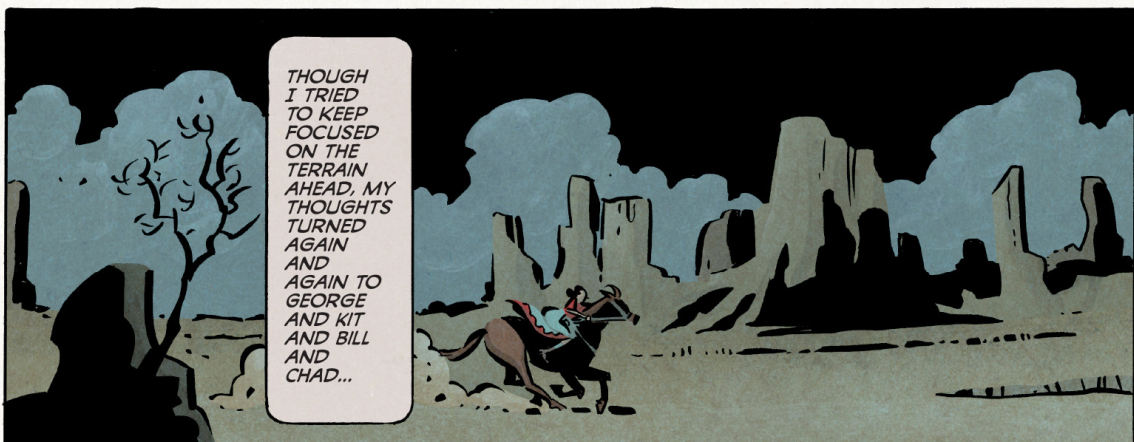




I RODE
IN NO
PARTICULAR
DIRECTION
AND I
RODE
HARD.

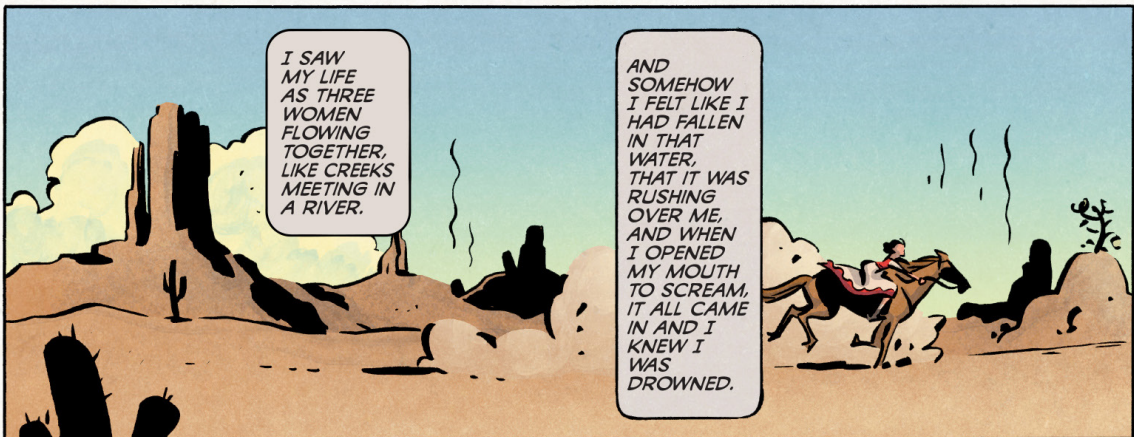


THOUGH
I TRIED
TO KEEP
FOCUSED
ON THE
TERRAIN
AHEAD, MY
THOUGHTS
TURNED
AGAIN
AND
AGAIN TO
GEORGE
AND KIT
AND BILL
AND
CHAD...



I SAW
MY LIFE
AS THREE
WOMEN
FLOWING
TOGETHER,
LIKE CREEKS
MEETING IN
A RIVER.

AND
SOMEHOW
I FELT LIKE I
HAD FALLEN
IN THAT
WATER,
THAT IT WAS
RUSHING
OVER ME,
AND WHEN
I OPENED
MY MOUTH
TO SCREAM,
IT ALL CAME
IN AND I
KNEW I
WAS
DROWNED.



DAYS
AND
NIGHTS
PASSED. I
CANNOT
RECALL
HOW
MANY.

I ENCOUN-
TERED NO
ONE AND
KEPT
RIDING.



AT SOME POINT, DUSTY COULD TAKE NO MORE AND FELL BENEATH ME. USING A KNIFE, I CUT THE BEAST'S THROAT, NOT WANTING TO LEAVE IT SUFFERING.

I WALKED FROM THEN ON.



WHAT WATER AND FOOD I HAD I DOLED OUT IN HUMBLE PORTIONS, BUT THE JOURNEY WAS ENDLESS AND MY SUPPLIES WERE NOT.



EVENTUALLY, THE PAIN IN MY FEET CAME INTO MY LEGS AND MY BACK AND MY HEAD, AND I FELL TO THE BROILING DESERT FLOOR.

THOUGH THE SUN SHINED DOWN BRIGHT...



...THE WORLD CREPT TO BLACK.



I SLEPT.



I DREAMED.



WHEN I WOKE, I WAS NEXT TO A FIRE, LYING ON A THICK BLANKET. THERE WERE TREES ABOVE ME. I COULDN'T REMEMBER SEEING TREES FOR DAYS.



AND I WAS NOT ALONE.

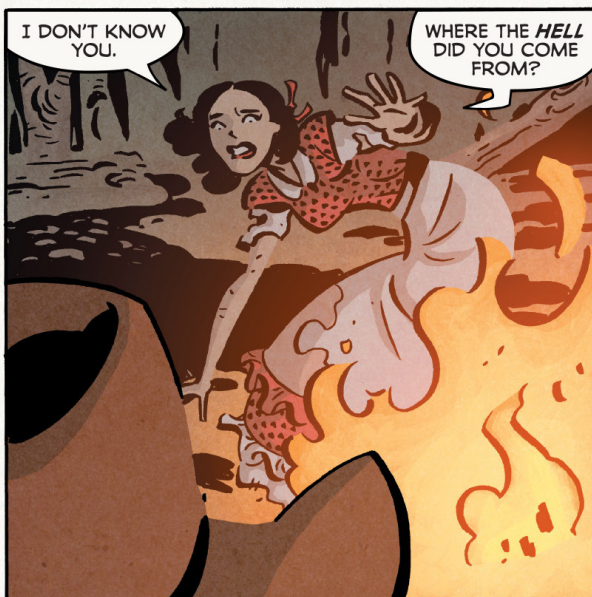


YOU JOAN PETERSON?



I DON'T KNOW YOU.

WHERE THE HELL DID YOU COME FROM?



I GOT A MESSAGE FOR A MISS JOAN PETERSON.

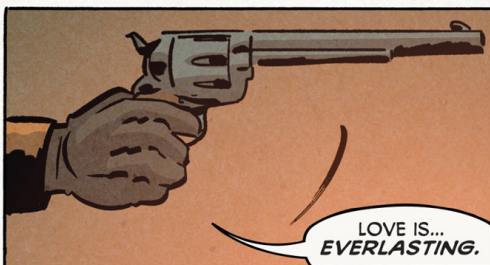
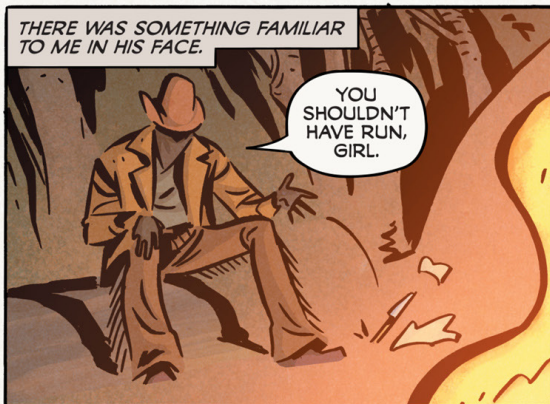
IF YOU WOULD PLEASE CONFIRM THAT IS YOUR *MONIKER*, I WOULD HAPPILY DELIVER SAID MESSAGE AND BE ON MY GOOD WAY.



WELL, I'M JOAN PETERSON.

WHAT'S YOUR *DAMN* MESSAGE?





B
E
L
I
E
V
E

SAL CAME TO OUR HOSPITAL TO DIE. HE'D GIVEN UP ALL HOPE OF FIGHT THE DISEASE RAVAGING HIS BODY. THAT'S WHEN I MET HIM. THAT'S WHEN I DISCOVERED THAT I TOO COULD BE...

SICK WITH LOVE!

TOM KING writer
ELSA CHARRETIER artist
MATT HOLLINGSWORTH colorist
CLAYTON COWLES letterer



WHEN I GOT READY FOR WORK THAT DAY, I HAD NO IDEA THAT I WOULD MEET--

