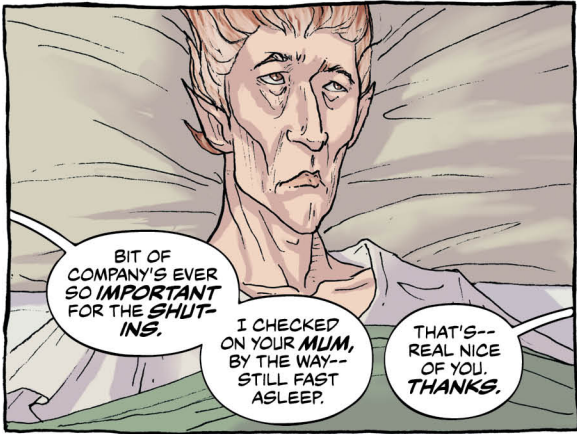




BRIGHTON, ENGLAND.

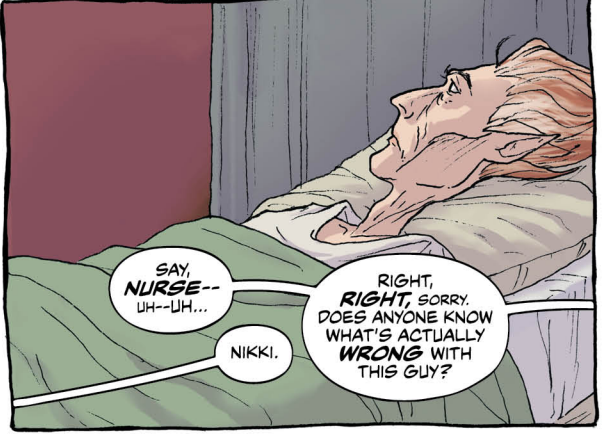
STILL HERE, EH? GOOD FOR YOU, LOVE.



BIT OF COMPANY'S EVER SO IMPORTANT FOR THE SHUT-INS.

I CHECKED ON YOUR MUM, BY THE WAY-- STILL FAST ASLEEP.

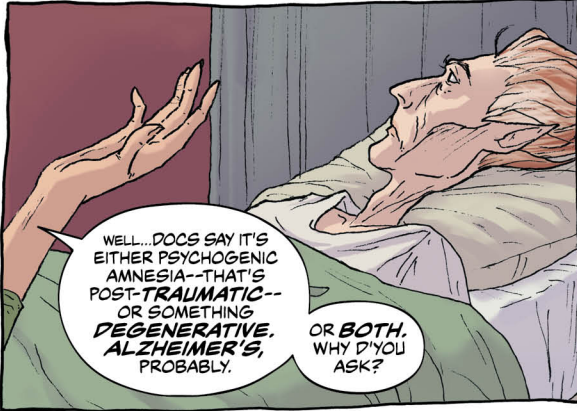
THAT'S-- REAL NICE OF YOU. THANKS.



SAY, NURSE-- UH--UH...

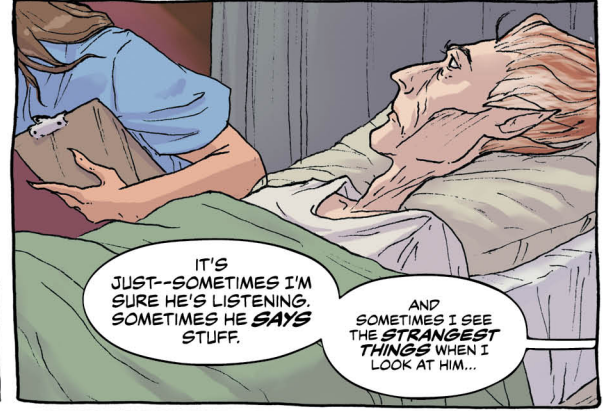
NIKKI.

RIGHT, RIGHT, SORRY. DOES ANYONE KNOW WHAT'S ACTUALLY WRONG WITH THIS GUY?



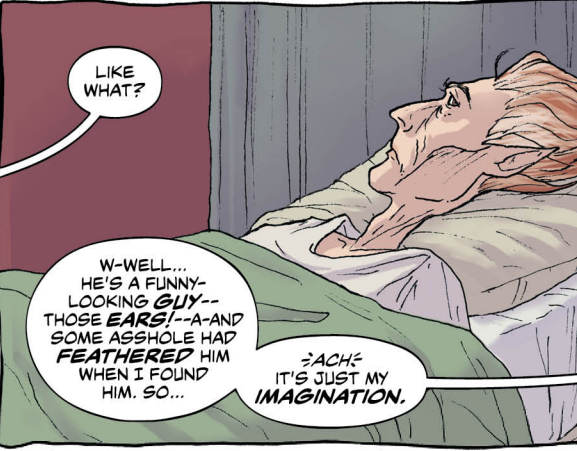
WELL... DOES SAY IT'S EITHER PSYCHOGENIC AMNESIA-- THAT'S POST-TRAUMATIC-- OR SOMETHING DEGENERATIVE, ALZHEIMER'S, PROBABLY.

OR BOTH. WHY D'YOU ASK?



IT'S JUST-- SOMETIMES I'M SURE HE'S LISTENING. SOMETIMES HE SAYS STUFF.

AND SOMETIMES I SEE THE STRANGEST THINGS WHEN I LOOK AT HIM...



LIKE WHAT?

W-WELL... HE'S A FUNNY-LOOKING GUY-- THOSE EARS!-- A-AND SOME ASSHOLE HAD FEATHERED HIM WHEN I FOUND HIM. SO...

ACH? IT'S JUST MY IMAGINATION.



Y'KNOW, ROSE... PRETTY OFTEN?-- AND I SAY THIS AS A MEDICAL PRACTITIONER--

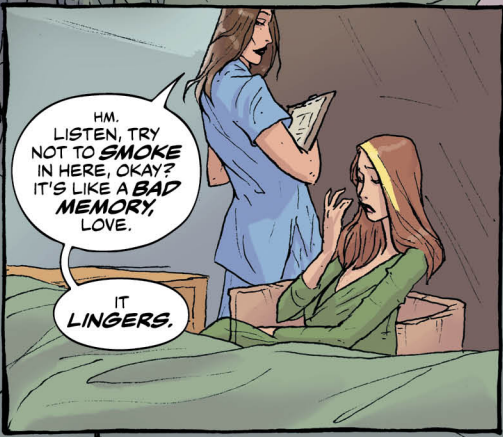
--WHEN IT COMES TO GETTING TO THE HEART OF A PROBLEM?



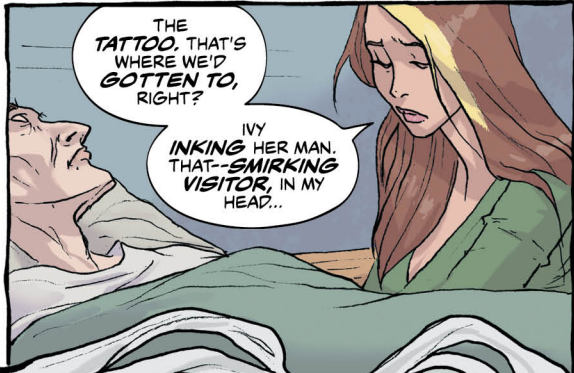
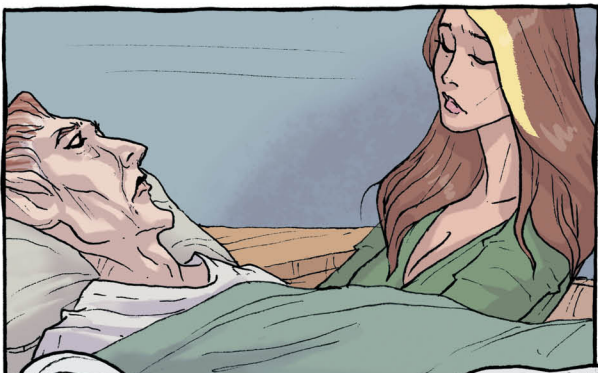
WHAT YOU IMAGINE'S WORTH MORE THAN WHAT YOU KNOW.



IT'S--IT'S NOTHING.
I'M JUST TIRED.



HM. LISTEN, TRY NOT TO **SMOKE** IN HERE, OKAY? IT'S LIKE A **BAD MEMORY**, LOVE.
IT **LINGERS**.



THE TATTOO. THAT'S WHERE WE'D GOTTEN TO, RIGHT?

IVY INKING HER MAN. THAT-SMIRKING VISITOR, IN MY HEAD...

"WELL--A WEEK PASSED. I TOLD MYSELF IT WAS JUST A DREAM-- I'M GOOD AT THAT."

"COURSE, NOBODY COULD DENY THE SCREAMING PATIENTS OR THE SKY FEELING HEAVY ENOUGH TO CRACK, BUT..."

"DISTRACTION STICKS WHERE DENIAL WON'T. I WAS DONE PUTTING IT OFF."

IVY? WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT YOUR GRANDMA.

"SHE TOOK IT PRETTY WELL, CONSIDERING. YOU COULD TELL HER MIND WAS ELSEWHERE."

"THAT'S THE PROBLEM WHEN YOU HELP SOMEONE OPEN UP, I GUESS."

"YOU JUST CAN'T STOP THINGS FROM SPILLING OUT."

IVY?

S-S-SOMETHING'S CHANGED.

"SO SHE TOLD ME ABOUT THE **TATTOO** (AND I REMEMBERED TO ACT SURPRISED). A **SYMBOL OF HER LOVE**, SHE'D TOLD HIM."

Who--
nng!--who
t-taught you
this shape?

NOBODY.
I JUST--I
THOUGHT IT WAS
Pretty.

D-DON'T
YOU **LIKE**
IT?

"HE DIDN'T
ANSWER. DIDN'T
COMPLAIN. I'VE SAID
HE JUST SEEMED
SOMEHOW--"

--HURT.

A-AND IT
WAS LIKE THE
WORLD FELT
IT TOO.

"ONE NIGHT SHE SAW A
HERD OF **DEER** RUN INTO
TRAFFIC. SHE SAID IT WAS
LIKE EACH ONE TRIED TO
HIT A DIFFERENT CAR.

"SHE SAID SHE
WATCHED A WOMAN
SCREAM AT A
PILE OF **BABIES'**
SHOES UNTIL HER
THROAT BLED.

"SHE SAID HIS
BREATH TASTED
LIKE **BURNING**
PLASTIC WHEN
THEY MADE LOVE.

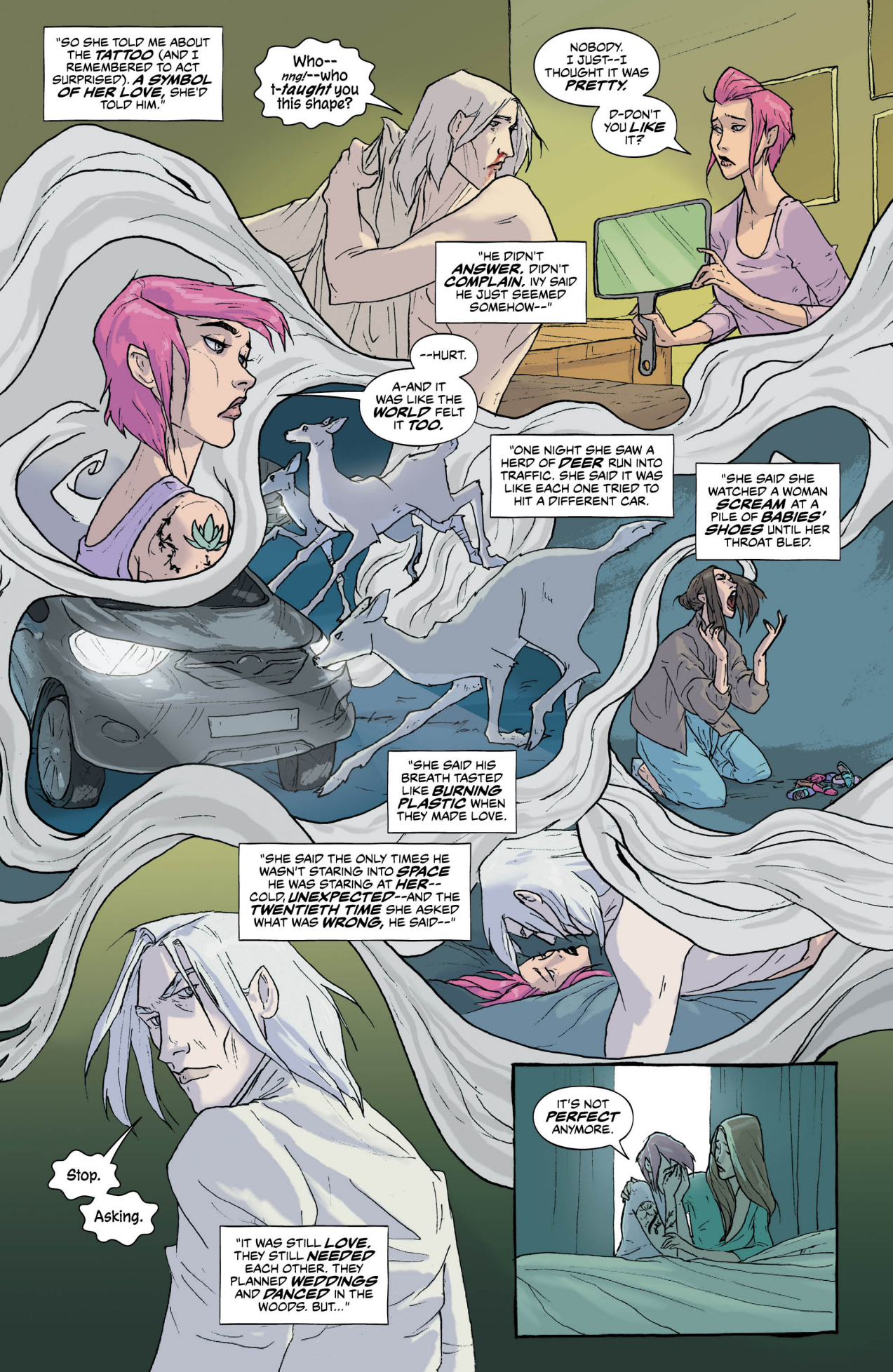
"SHE SAID THE ONLY TIMES HE
WASN'T STARING INTO **SPACE**
HE WAS STARING AT **HER**--
COLD, UNEXPECTED--AND THE
TWENTIETH TIME SHE ASKED
WHAT WAS **WRONG**, HE SAID--"

Stop.

Asking.

"IT WAS STILL **LOVE**.
THEY STILL **NEEDED**
EACH OTHER. THEY
PLANNED **WEDDINGS**
AND **DANCED** IN THE
WOODS. BUT..."

IT'S NOT
PERFECT
ANMORE.

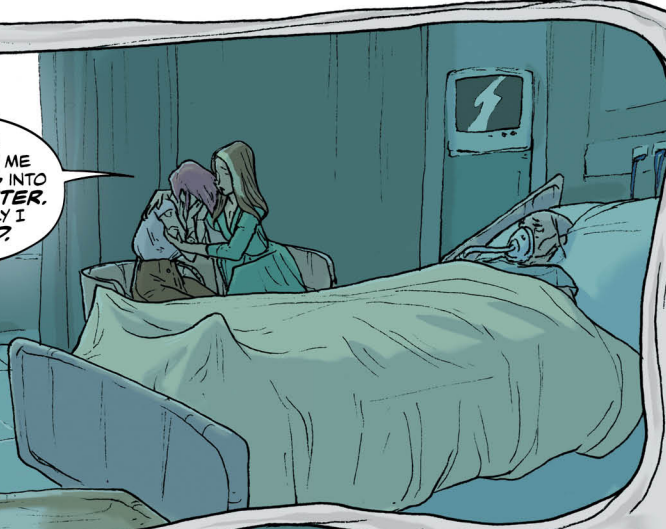


Y-YOU DON'T KNOW. YOU **CAN'T** KNOW. THE WAY HE LOOKED AT ME WHEN WE MET. THE **WARMTH**, MOM!

"...I KNEW."

LIKE--LIKE EVERY PART OF ME WAS DISSOLVING INTO SOMETHING **BETTER**. LIKE SUDDENLY I **MATTERED**.

BUT N-NOW...



...DO YOU THINK THERE'S SOMEONE **ELSE**?

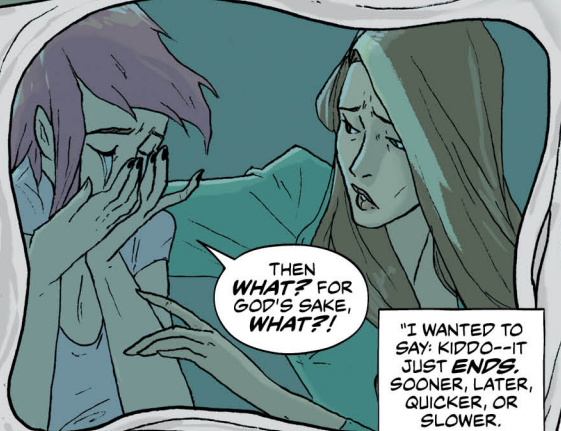
WHAT? HONEY, NO.

LOOK, DON'T TAKE THIS WRONG, BUT HE'S LIKE A **KID**. HE'S EVEN MORE **AWKWARD** THAN YOU ARE.

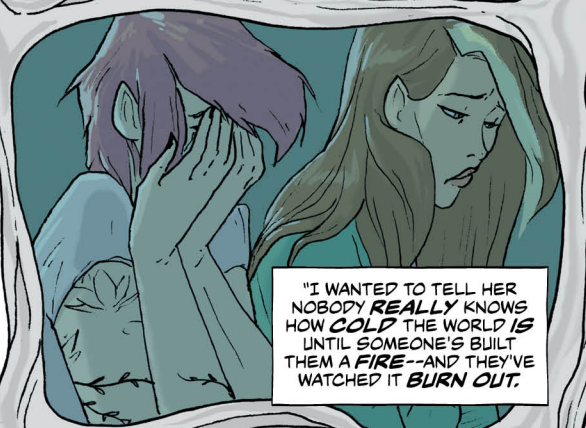


THEN **WHAT?** FOR GOD'S SAKE, **WHAT?!**

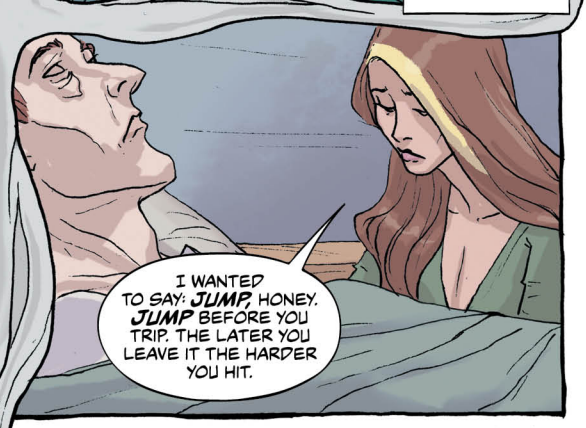
"I WANTED TO SAY: KIDDO--IT JUST **ENDS**. SOONER, LATER, QUICKER, OR SLOWER.



"I WANTED TO TELL HER NOBODY **REALLY** KNOWS HOW **COLD** THE WORLD IS UNTIL SOMEONE'S BUILT THEM A **FIRE**--AND THEY'VE WATCHED IT **BURN OUT**."



I WANTED TO SAY: **JUMP, HONEY. JUMP** BEFORE YOU TRIP. THE LATER YOU LEAVE IT THE HARDER YOU HIT.



IT WAS TOO **BEAUTIFUL** TO THROW AWAY.

AND I COULDN'T BEAR TO **ADMIT** I'D SET HER UP FOR THE **FALL**.

STICK WITH IT, SWEETIE. GET SOME **PUMB TEA** AND TALK IT OUT.

REAL LOVE TAKES **WORK**.

