

SANDMAN

by
Carly B. Young

Based on the graphic novel by Neil Gaiman

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Justonthehorizon@yahoo.com
808 895-3528

OVER BLACK

TITLE: WYCH CROSS, ENGLAND

MAN

Wake up sir. We're here.

FADE IN:

EXT. CONVERTIBLE CAR - DAY.

JON HATHAWAY, a white-haired professor in a tweed suit, lifts his head from his chest. His eyes blink open. He yawns.

HATHAWAY

(to the driver)

Already? I must have dozed off.

Bleary-eyed, Hathaway looks up at the -

BURGESS MANSION

A large building, imposing and Gothic.

Hathaway clutches a BRIEFCASE to his chest. He takes a deep breath, and opens the car door.

INT. BURGESS' STUDY - MANSION - DAY

RODERICK BURGESS, 50's, dressed well but comfortably, leans forward in his chair. He's a troll of a man, and this is his cave - where he hordes all his precious knowledge and artifacts of the arcane.

RODERICK

Dr. Hathaway, what an unexpected pleasure! Please take a seat.

Hathaway sits down rigidly, still clutching the suitcase. Roderick waits, smiling.

RODERICK

I was under the impression you wanted nothing to do with ole' Burgess and his Ancient Mysteries.

HATHAWAY

I-I know what I said that night, at the museum. But... my son, Edmund...

Hathaway struggles to continue. Burgess seems inappropriately eager.

HATHAWAY

He's dead.

RODERICK

My deepest condolences for your
loss.

His eyes wander down to Hathaway's briefcase. Hathaway notices the direction of his gaze, and their eyes meet.

RODERICK

So. I take it you've reconsidered?

Hathaway knows what Roderick is waiting to see. He reaches into the suitcase, brings out:

A BOOK

Old and musty-looking, bound in ancient leather.

HATHAWAY

If what you were telling me is
true, then... it is true, isn't it?
(quietly)
About Death?

RODERICK

Quite true, Doctor.

Hathaway hesitantly hands it to Burgess, who looks it over, pouring through the pages of esoteric knowledge. Satisfied that it's authentic, Burgess looks back to Hathaway.

RODERICK

The Magdalene Grimoire was all we
needed. The Order will hold the
ceremony tonight.
(looks at Hathaway)
No one...will ever die again.

Hathaway lets out his breath, smiling gratefully. Roderick closes the book.

RODERICK

Unless I wish it.

Two dark men come up behind Hathaway's chair. They grab either side of him.

HATHAWAY

Let go of me! Burgess!

RODERICK

You stood by while I was mocked by
Aleister and his lot for 10 years.
All that time, you had the proof of
my claims locked away. Now, I am
the Magus. And this is your reward.

Hathaway is dragged off, screaming out Burgess' name. He
doesn't listen - he's preoccupied with the book.

CUT TO:

INT. CASTLE - THE DREAMING - ETERNAL TWILIGHT

Dark fabric rustles against the stone floor in the darkness.
It's the end of a cloak, trailing behind a shadowy figure
with wild black hair.

He's headed for a balcony, illuminated by sunlight...or the
equivalent of it here in the The Dreaming, realm of Dreams.

He leans a hand against the wall for balance. To say the hand
is pale would be understatement: it's stark white, like
marble. A large RUBY DREAMSTONE hangs from a pendant around
his neck.

His face comes into the light: equally pale, handsome, with
pitch-black eyes. This is DREAM, lord and personification of
dreams.

Thunder rolls. Dream pays no heed as he staggers out. He
rests his hands on the balcony railing, as the rain pelts him
and the wind blows his cape behind him, billowing.

PULL BACK TO SHOW

The balcony: there's a storm cloud, right above Dream.
Drenching *only him*. For the rest of the Dreaming, it's clear
blue skies.

LUCIEN, a very tall pointy-eared librarian, comes out of the
dark hall. He approaches Dream, peering at him through his
spectacles.

LUCIEN

Lord? She's gone now. The uh,
palace staff was wondering... what
would you like done with the suite
of rooms created for her?

DREAM

Erase them.
(looks at Lucien)
(MORE)

DREAM(cont'd)

And Lucien? I would appreciate it if the palace staff would refrain from mentioning her in my presence.

LUCIEN

Very good Lord.

Lucien goes back inside, wiping the rain off his glasses.

INT. MAIN HALL - DAY

Lucien continues into the main hall. It's like a cathedral, lined with colorful stained-glass windows. At the end of the hall is a long, winding staircase, leading to a whimsical tall-backed THRONE.

Two servants watch Lucien enter: NUALA, a scrawny faerie dressed in rags, is cleaning Dream's HELMET. The Helmet looks like the skull of some insect-like creature...or a deceased ancient god.

MERVYN, a Pumpkin-headed scarecrow with a cigar, mops the floors.

MERVYN

Well? What's the scoop, Loosh?

LUCIEN

He wants the rooms erased. Mm, to be on the safe side...better dismantle that whole wing of the castle.

Mervyn makes a sound of irritation. He takes a puff of his cigar, and blows the smoke out his eye and nose cutouts.

MATTHEW, a raven, flies down from the throne to Lucien's shoulder.

MATTHEW

It's been a whole week, for Chrissakes. Isn't he tired of rain? Does this always happen when a girlfriend walks out on him?

LUCIEN

Not at all. After the Nada affair he razed The Dreaming. It was a bleak desert for centuries.

MATTHEW

Wow.

NUALA

Poor Lord Dream...

MERVYN

Poor Dream? Us Ordinary Joes have
broads walk out on us all the time.
We shrug it off, hey that's life.

(puffs on cigar)

But he's gotta be the tragic figure
in the rain, mournin' his beloved.
So down comes the rain, right on
cue.

(voice rising)

He's not the one who has ta
dismantle a whole wing. He could
vanish it in a blink! Gone!

LUCIEN

Perhaps you should take your
complaint to Lord Dream.

Thunder rolls. Lightning. Mervyn shudders.

MERVYN

I'll go gather the wrecking crew.
Later Loosh. Seeya Toots.

Mervyn ambles off.

LUCIEN

I'll be in the library.

DREAM

Lucien.

Nuala and Lucien turn to see their master.

LUCIEN

Yes Lord?

DREAM

I'm going on a short journey. If
any matters arise requiring my
attention, feel free to contact me.

NUALA

May I accompany you, Lord Dream?

Dream looks, and in Nuala's place appears a voluptuous blonde
faerie in a beautiful gown. He scowls.

DREAM

Stop that.

She shrivels back into her previous form. Her ears droop.

DREAM

I told you before. I do not abide
faerie glamour in my realm.

NUALA

Yes Lord.

DREAM

Did you bring my Helmet, as I
requested?

Nuala brings out the Helmet from behind her back. Dream takes it from her.

LUCIEN

(to Dream)

Forgive my asking, but are you sure
this is a wise idea?

DREAM

Yes. I have things to attend to.
(kinder)
You worry too much, Lucien. What
could possibly go wrong?

Dream pulls out a POUCH from the folds of his cloak. He turns it over, dumping out DREAMSAND. It swirls around him.

CLOSE ON: his eyes. They're dark and black, but if you look deeper they sparkle with lights. We FALL into them, and the lights become --

EXT. BURGESS ESTATE - NIGHT

-- Stars against the night sky, above the Burgess Mansion.

INT. BASEMENT - BURGESS MANSION

Men in hooded robes stand in a circle around --

A CIRCULAR DIAGRAM

On the floor. Occult markings and complex shapes, symbols. Roderick stands at the head of it, and next to him is his 6 year-old son ALEX.

RODERICK
Watch closely Alex. Tonight we will
achieve what no one has ever
attempted before - to capture and
imprison Death. Are you excited to
see our triumph?

Alex swallows. Excited isn't the word - it's more like
terrified.

ALEX
Yes, father.

RODERICK
Father?

ALEX
...Magus.

Roderick smiles. He kneels on the ground.

RODERICK
(to the congregation)
Let it begin.

He has the Magdalene Grimoire, open in front of him, as well
as a BOWL full of objects.

RODERICK
I give you a coin I made from a
stone. I give you a song I stole
from the dirt.

Alex trembles, his heartbeat thumping loudly in his ears.

RODERICK
I give you a knife from under the
hills, and a stick I stuck through
a dead man's eye. I give you a claw
I ripped from a rat, I give you a
name, and the name is lost. I give
you the blood...

Roderick takes a DAGGER and a FEATHER from the bowl, one in
each hand. He takes the dagger and makes a small cut in his
arm, letting the blood drip on the feather.

RODERICK
...from out of my vein, and a
feather I pulled from an angel's
wing. We summon you.

THE CONGREGATION

Come.

Alex presses his lips together - he doesn't want Death to come. He shuts his eyes tight, bracing himself...

RODERICK

Coin and Song, Knife and Stick,
Claw and Name, Blood and Feather...
here in the darkness, we summon
you. Come!

An explosion of smoke... and sand. Alex opens his eyes, hesitant.

The smoke and sand clears. A floating figure in a dark cloak falls slowly to the ground in the middle of the circle, his head covered by the helmet.

CULT MEMBER 1

We did it. I don't believe it...

Dream groans, disoriented, and collapses to the floor.

RODERICK

No. This isn't Death. Damn it to
hell...

Roderick carefully reaches into the circle, pulling off the Helmet.

It's DREAM. These strange hooded figures look like hazy blobs to him.

RODERICK

Even so...I think this will prove a
profitable evening's work.

They take the Pouch from his hand. They yank the ruby pendant from his neck, breaking the chain. They pull off his cloak, his clothing, leaving him naked.

Roderick stands, raising his arms - as he does, a translucent ectoplasmic wall rises from the circle and forms a bubble over Dream. Roderick lowers his arms. The bubble hardens, becoming a glass-like dome.

RODERICK

...Pleasant dreams. Sandman.

Roderick and his group silently filter out. Alex stands there, staring at Dream, as the strange being gathers the strength to huddle against the side of the dome.

RODERICK
Come along, Alex.

Alex turns, and follows his father. The heavy doors slam.
Dream is alone.

EXT. BURGESS ESTATE - MORNING

The sun rises.

CUT TO:

INT. HOME - AMERICA - DAY

A MOTHER enters a boy's room, approaches her young SON
sleeping soundly in bed.

MOTHER
Wake up, sleepyhead. You'll be late
for school.

The boy moans, turns over. The mother sighs, pulls off the
covers. No reaction. She sighs.

MOTHER
I mean it now. Get up.

Again, nothing. His mother shakes him - he doesn't rouse.

MOTHER
(calling)
Honey...! Come quick, something's
wrong!

ROSE WALKER
(V.O)
They called it the 'Sleepy
Sickness.' A cute name, for a
serious condition.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - LONDON - MORNING

UNITY WALKER, covered in sweat, dressed in a hospital
nightgown. The NURSE is presenting a new baby girl to her.

Unity takes the baby in her arms, with teary eyes.

NURSE
What are you going to name her?

UNITY

Rose. Her name's Rose.

Unity lays back. She's exhausted. Slowly, her eyes close.

ROSE

(V.O)

For no reason, random healthy
people...like my mother...all fell
asleep.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - YEARS LATER

TITLE: 20 YEARS LATER

Unity Walker still sleeps, in her hospital bed. Her hair has
gotten grey, there are lines in her face.

ROSE

(V.O)

And never woke up.

We see a grown up Rose, sitting by her mother's bedside. It's
difficult to tell what she's feeling as she gets up and
leaves. She's wearing a black dress.

INT. BURGESS MANSION - DAY

In the main room of the mansion, Roderick Burgess himself
lies in repose. The result of his failure to capture Death.

Standing next to his coffin is Alex, age 26 and surprisingly
handsome. His emotions are unclear as the coffin lid is
closed, sealing his father inside forever.

Rose walks up to him.

ALEX

(smiles)

Hey Rose.

ROSE

I'm sorry.

ALEX

Nah, don't be. He was...old.

(looks her over)

When's the last time you had a good
night's sleep? You look almost
zombie-fied.

ROSE
I don't need to sleep.

Alex looks at her with concern. It makes Rose uncomfortable.

ROSE
...It's Paul. I've been having
trouble sleeping since he left. You
know. Eating ice cream and watching
TV kind of stuff.

ALEX
Ah. Well, I warned you about that
guy.
(pause)
You should get something to help
you sleep.

Rose looks around for something else to talk about.

ROSE
So. The big house is yours now?

ALEX
Yeah...I'm putting it up for sale.

Rose surveys the house - antique paintings and treasures
covering the walls. She walks slowly, admiring them.

ROSE
Your father was quite the
collector.

ALEX
He had an obsession for the occult.
Spent years getting his hands on
anything rumored to be 'magic' or
whatnot.

ROSE
What're you going to do with all of
it now?

ALEX
Same as the house. There's tons of
people offering to take everything
off my hands.

ROSE
So the spoils go to the highest
bidder, then? You don't want them
to be in nice museums?

ALEX

I hadn't thought about it. Truth be told, I don't care where they end up.

Rose stops at a large ruby, displayed in a glass case. It's the Dreamstone.

ROSE

Wow. That's the biggest ruby I've ever seen.

(peers closer)

If it *is* a ruby. It's got a weird...sheen to it...

Rose stares at it. It seems to pull her gaze ever closer.

ALEX

Do you like it?

Rose looks at him incredulously.

ALEX

You can have it...really.

ROSE

Alex, don't be silly. A London flat is no place for huge, ancient gemstones.

Alex shrugs - he doesn't care. Rose looks back at the ruby, the glint of it dazzling her.

Alex lifts the glass case off.

ALEX

Take it. It's yours.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - ROSE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The Dreamstone now rests atop Roses' dresser.

Rose, with dark circles under her eyes, sits on her bed watching TV. A bowl of popcorn next to her, several cans of soda on her nightstand. She's in the process of opening another one.

ON THE TV

A nature program in progress. A cuddly bear curled against its mother, both asleep.

Rose changes the channel.

Now it's a soap opera. A woman crying.

WOMAN

No! Charles, don't leave me! You can't leave me!!

Ouch. Rose changes the channel again. This time it's an old Wile E. Coyote vs. The Roadrunner cartoon.

Rose watches the antics for a while, smiling faintly. Her eyes flutter.

A man comes into the room. Wiry, dark sunglasses.

MAN

Hello Rose.

She jumps off the bed, crouching, prepared to defend herself.

ROSE

Who are you?

MAN

Why darling, I'm hurt...don't you recognize me?

Rose stares at him. Can't quite remember. The man grins, takes off his sunglasses. Rose gasps, because:

He has no eyes. His eyes are black pools of darkness, lined with tiny sharp teeth in place of lashes. They're mouths!

MAN

How about now? I'm your CORINTHIAN, love...

Rose opens up the dresser, pulls out a .22, aims it at him.

ROSE

Get out!!

He just stands there. Smiling. Rose fires, and he goes down. Rose runs past him, out the door --

But then his hand grabs her shoulder, spinning her around to face him. The Corinthian.

CORINTHIAN

You have such lovely eyes. Just like your mother.

ROSE

No! Get away from me!

CORINTHIAN

I can make it so you never wake up again. You and me and your mum, all living together in the land of nod...

ROSE

I remember now! Every night it's the same dream. I'll wake up...

Rose shoves him away.

CORINTHIAN

Go ahead. You'll fall asleep again. I can wait.

ROSE

(whispering)

Wake up...wake up...

The Corinthian steps toward her.

ROSE

Wake up, damn it!

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Rose JERKS AWAKE.

She's on the bed, in her room. The TV is still going. No Corinthian.

The radio by her bed starts playing.

THE CHORDETTES

(singing, on radio)

*Mr. Sandman... bring me a dream...
make him the cutest that I've ever
seen...*

Rose swings violently at the radio, knocking it right off the dresser. It clatters to the floor, silent. Rose sinks back into her pillow, tears springing to her eyes.

Rose gets up from the bed, and picks up the Dreamstone. It seems to calm her as she turns it over in her hands. She stops crying.

INT. BASEMENT - BURGESS MANSION

Dream sits in the glass bubble. Waiting.

An unshaven, SLOVENLY MAN in his 40's reads porn and drinks coffee in the corner of the dark room. Deep dark circles under his wide, bloodshot eyes.

A large door opens up. A secret tunnel. Another man, weasel-like, enters.

SLOVENLY MAN

Bout time you showed up. Three days, no sleep. Beat that.

WEASLY MAN

You haven't heard the news, have you? The old man's dead. We don't have to watch 'im anymore.

Slovenly man looks at Dream, motionless.

SLOVENLY MAN

No kidding? That's great. So we can just...leave?

Weasly man nods. Slovenly man grins, but then his smile falls.

SLOVENLY MAN

Hey uh...I just thought of something. What if he escapes?

WEASLY MAN

He won't.

Weasly man approaches the bubble.

We see from Dream's perspective. The bubble has a fun-house mirror effect, making the man look like an absurd cartoon.

WEASLY MAN

Oi. Dream man. We're leaving now. Old man's dead...nobody but us knows you're down here.

Slovenly man continues 'reading'. His eyelids start to close.

WEASLY MAN

If you want to get out, this is your last chance. So I suggest you start playing genie. Capiche?

DREAM

Your master asked for many things that were neither humanity's right to have nor mine to give. I will give you nothing, just as I gave him, nothing.

WEASLY MAN

Alright...I dunno know when yer ever gonna get out then.

DREAM

Soon.

The slovenly man snores. Weasly man spins, panicked. When he looks back, Dream has his hand against the glass, absorbing something through the ectoplasm. It looks like...sand.

Weasly man looks down, seeing a trail of sand coming from his sleeping partner.

WEASLY MAN

No!

Slovenly man jerks awake. He sees his partner on the floor, trying unsuccessfully to stop the flow of sand. Weasly man bangs on the glass, yelling in frustration.

Suddenly, Dream collapses in a heap. The two guards look at him, not daring to breathe.

SLOVENLY MAN

Is he dead?

WEASLY MAN

I...I think we should go...

Dream rises abruptly, to his full height. The two guys scream, as:

A whirling VORTEX of sand erupts from Dream. It SHATTERS the glass-like dome, knocking down the two men.

Dream looks at the two guys, unconscious.

Slovenly man slowly comes to. He looks around: Dream is gone.

EXT. THE DREAMING

Dream is floating in a dark void. He absorbs the dark, making it tangible material. It wraps around him, becoming his cloak. There is a door near him. He goes through it.

A bombardment of ideas: images, sounds, all blending together. Dream keeps moving. He finds another door, goes through it.

It leads to a sun over green pastures. He finds yet another door. Goes through it.

Again. A moonlit landscape. He continues on. One more door.

This time, he's in a realm of grey dust. The wind is high, whipping around him.

DREAM

(V.O)

The Dreamworld, the unconsciousness, is as much a part of me as I am a part of it. I know the old paths.

He keeps walking, until he sees massive gates. There are two giant statues on either side: a GRIFFIN and a WYVERN. Their stone heads bob, acknowledging Dream.

DREAM

(V.O)

And the gates I built when the world was new. Almost home...

Dream pushes against the gates. They open. He looks inside, and his face falls with shock when he sees:

His magnificent castle. It lies in ruins, and is half-buried in sand. Mervyn and Nuala sift through the rubble. They catch sight of Dream, and wave half-heartedly.

Stunned, Dream walks slowly toward them. He doesn't believe his eyes.

LUCIEN

(O.S)

Breaks your heart, doesn't it Lord?

DREAM

Lucien...?

Dream looks at Lucien by the gate, resting on a shovel.

LUCIEN
One and the same.

Lucien lays down the shovel and kneels.

LUCIEN
And at your service, as always.

DREAM
Get up. Please get up Lucien.
(looks at the castle)
What happened here?

LUCIEN
You are the incarnation of this
Dreamtime. With you gone, the place
began to decay.
(quietly)
Can you rebuild it, Lord?

DREAM
...I cannot. Much of my power I
placed in the tools. Too much. And
they are gone.

LUCIEN
Regardless, it's good to have you
back.

DREAM
No Lucien. I must reclaim my tools.

LUCIEN
Lord, you are tired and weakened. A
trip to the waking world would be-

DREAM
I will not be king of a broken
Dreaming. I must go.
(picks up some sand from
the ground)
One man has all the answers I need.
It will not be difficult to find
him.

LUCIEN
Who is that?

The sand in his palm becomes the miniature of a man.

DREAM
Alex Burgess.

CUT TO:

INT. ROSE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A computer screen shows the slightly pixelated face of Alex, via webcam.

ALEX
It's really late Rose...

Rose sits in the chair, holding her knees.

ROSE
I know, I'm sorry. I just needed to talk to someone.

ALEX
Can't sleep?

ROSE
No...

ALEX
Rose, are you...afraid to go to sleep?

Rose trembles. She starts to cry.

ALEX
Because of your mum?

ROSE
It's so stupid. I keep having this nightmare that tells me I'll never wake up, like her.

ALEX
It's only a dream. Dreams can't hurt you.

ROSE
I know. I just wonder sometimes...

ALEX
Rose. I promise, you can go to sleep and wake up. I know because I do it every night.
(leans in closer)
Get some sleep. Please.

ROSE
Okay. I'll try.

INT. BEDROOM

Rose lays in bed, playing with the ruby absentmindedly. Her breathing slows. She falls asleep.

THE CLOCK

By her nightstand reads 10:00.

EXT. ROSE'S DREAM - DAY

A beautiful, sunlit park. Rose wanders through the crowd of playing children.

There's a woman standing nearby, facing away from her. She appears to be looking for someone.

ROSE
Looking for your child?

The woman turns. It's Unity, her mother.

UNITY
Yes.

ROSE
Mum...

UNITY
Rose, I wish you could stay. But I
have a feeling...you're in danger.

We see what Unity sees: a black shadow, approaching Rose from behind.

INT. BEDROOM - ROSE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Rose wakes up. She looks at the --

CLOCK

It's 6:00 AM now. She gets up, feeling pretty good. She's still clasping the ruby.

INT. KITCHEN - ROSE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Rose goes to the refrigerator, opens it. Nothing good. She turns on the light.

SOMEONE

Is there. Sitting at her table. She turns, sees him, and startles. It's the Corinthian, sunglasses on, eating some jam on toast.

CORINTHIAN

How do you eat this? It tastes terrible.

(smiles at her)

Nothing like the taste of eyes.

Rose tries to look brave.

ROSE

You're a dream. Dreams can't hurt me.

CORINTHIAN

I'm not a dream. I'm a *nightmare*.

ROSE

I don't care. It doesn't matter what you do to me, I can wake up.

CORINTHIAN

Not this time, pet. This time, you really are awake. I'll show you.

He gets up, and SMACKS Rose. Blood oozes from her nose.

CORINTHIAN

Did that feel real to you?

Rose tries to dash past him, but the Corinthian grabs her from behind. She struggles.

CORINTHIAN

(whispers)

Listen to me. You set me free. You can set others free, and they will serve you...

Rose elbows him in the stomach. Not expecting it, he doubles over. As she pulls away, he grabs her wrist.

CORINTHIAN

Oh no you don't...

Then the Corinthian stops. He sees the ruby in her hand.

Seeing his fascination with it, Rose drops the ruby and makes a run for it. He lets her go, and instead bends down to pick up the jewel.

The Corinthian stares at it, awed. Then he grins again.

CORINTHIAN

The Dreamstone. This keeps getting better.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE APARTMENT - NIGHT

Rose, in her sleepwear, gets into her car. She's shaking, fumbling with getting her key out from under the floor mat into the ignition.

Then she puts her fuzzy-slippered foot on the pedal, and FLOORS IT, squealing out onto the road.

Rose zips by a cop car. Naturally, it starts to follow her.

Inside the car, Rose hears the siren and sees the lights in the rear-view mirror. She pulls over. In a few moments, the cop reaches her window. She rolls it down.

ROSE

Yeah, I know. Speeding.

COP

Can I see some ID?

Rose looks around, realizes she took nothing with her. She shakes her head.

COP

I'm going to have to-

ROSE

Arrest me. Take me in to the station, right now.

COP

I was only gonna give you a ticket.

Cop looks in closer. He sees the red mark on her cheek.

COP

Somebody hit you?

Rose touches her face, just now realizing.

ROSE

...Yes.

COP

I see. Well then, I can take you to the station so you can file a report.

Rose opens the door, and he offers her his hand. When their hands touch, something happens:

INT. COP'S SUBCONSCIOUS - THE DREAMING

Rose is suddenly in the cop's subconscious mind. Murky images, ebbing like a reflection on the water's surface, she sees his dreams of the future, the present, the past...

Of being promoted to police commissioner...

Losing the girl he loves to another man...

The serial killer with a chainsaw and a hatchet, from a movie he watched late one night...

Of his buddy being shot by a fleeing criminal. Cop kneels over him, trying to staunch the wound....

Is any of it true? It's impossible to tell. Everything this man thinks about or dreams about is here. And then --

EXT. REALITY - NIGHT

-- She's back. The cops yawns, and falls right into her lap. She pushes him off, and he crumples to the pavement. Snoring.

ROSE

Sir? Sir, are you alright?

Something leaks out of the cop: Dreamsand. It filters out and floats up into her hand. She looks: there's a little mound of sand right in the middle of her palm.

EXT. BURGESS MANSION - NIGHT

Rose gets out of the car and runs up the steps to the Burgess Mansion.

ROSE

Alex!!

INT. ALEX'S ROOM - NIGHT

Alex sleeps, fitfully.

INT. ALEX'S DREAM

Alex climbs up a long, spiraling staircase. The rest is darkness around him. He's holding a candle, his only light source.

Alex reaches the top, and sees:

DREAM

In his tall-backed throne.

DREAM

Hello.

Alex gapes at him.

DREAM

What's the matter?

ALEX

You. It's you!

DREAM

That's right. It's me.

Dream gets up, stands over him. Menacing.

DREAM

Confined in a glass box for 20 years. Time moves no faster for my kind than it does for humanity.

(harsher)

Do you have any idea what it was like? Do you have any idea?!

ALEX

No! No I...if I could take it back - if I could undo what my father did-

DREAM

Your father barred me from my realm with his foolish circle and hedge-magicking, with no thought for the harm it might bring to your world.

INT. BASEMENT - FLASHBACK

Roderick, 70, just before his death.

RODERICK

You! It's your fault, damn you! You aren't Death, but you live forever. You haven't aged a day since we caught you.

He points his cane at Dream, from the other side of the bubble.

RODERICK

You could have given me power beyond my wildest dreams...
(chokes, weeping)
...I-I shouldn't have had to get old...

Roderick sobs, crumpling. A NURSEMAID rushes to his side.

INT. ALEX'S DREAM - PRESENT

DREAM

There are offenses, Alex Burgess, that are unpardonable.

ALEX

It was a mistake. He didn't want you. He wanted to capture Death...

DREAM

What? You wanted to capture Death? Then count yourself lucky for the sake of your species and planet you did not succeed!

ALEX

It wasn't me I tell you! You can't condemn me for my father's sins!

DREAM

Tell me then, why did you not free me? You read the books in your father's library, and you knew how to reverse the enchantment.

Alex looks away. Ashamed.

DREAM

Have you no excuses? No reasons I should not take reprisal?

ALEX

...I thought it was a dream.

DREAM

No: you thought I was dead. Do not lie to me again, Burgess. Where are my tools?

ALEX

S-sorry?

DREAM

A Pouch, a Helmet and a Ruby. Your people stole them from me. Where are they?

Alex hesitates. *The image of Rose, beautiful Rose, staring at the ruby flashes through his mind.*

ALEX

Take it. It's yours.

Rose looking at him, that incredulous smile and shining eyes.

Alex assesses the man before him - cold, pitiless black eyes, the angry scowl, the dark cloak with red, flame-like ends. Who knows what this man - if he could be called one - would do to Rose. He swallows.

ALEX

...I don't know. I never saw them again after that night.

DREAM

(quietly, to himself)
Lord, what fools these mortals be...
(to Alex)
Very well. Your punishment then...

EXT. BURGESS MANSION - NIGHT

Rose pounds on the door.

ROSE

Alex! Please open the goddamn door!

Rose pounds some more. No use. She reaches for the doorknob -

ANGLE ON HER HAND

Her palms shines with residual sand. As she grasps the doorknob, it twists and turns like molten metal.

Rose lets go of it. She peers closer at the doorknob - it moves with her. She experiments, swaying side to side...so does the doorknob.

Rose looks at her hand, sparkling with the sand, looks between it and the doorknob. A possible connection?

She reaches out to the doorknob...almost close enough to touch it...and then drops her hand. The doorknob pops off, turning into a molten puddle on the ground.

Rose brushes her hands off over a flower bush, and pushes on the door. It opens. She goes inside.

The flowers that were sprinkled with the sand close, the petals folding in on themselves.

INT. BURGESS MANSION - NIGHT

It's dark. She hears a SCREAM.

ROSE

Alex?!

Rose searches blindly, finds a staircase. She runs up, as fast as she can.

INT. ALEX'S ROOM - NIGHT

Rose comes into the room, sees --

--Alex, writhing on the floor. He's fallen out of his bed, and appears to be having a terrible nightmare. Rose runs and kneels beside him.

ROSE

Alex! Alex wake up...

DREAM

He won't.

Rose looks up and is surprised to see Dream, standing over them. She rises - too much has happened tonight to be scared.

ROSE

And who the hell are you?

DREAM

I am Dream of the Endless.

ROSE

Really. I thought you were the Devil or something.

DREAM

I assure you, we look nothing alike-

ROSE

What did you do to Alex, you
bastard?!

DREAM

Rewarding him for his hospitality
to me, these past 20 years.

INT. ALEX'S DREAM - NIGHT

Alex wakes up, gasping. Sunlight pours in through the window.
Rose looks at him fondly.

ALEX

God...oh god...

ROSE

Bad dream?

ALEX

Yeah...ever had one o'those dreams
where you think you've woken up,
but you haven't?

He stops - Rose's skin is DRIPPING off.

ROSE

Can't say I have. But I think
you'll be having quite a lot of
them from now on...

INT. ALEX'S ROOM - NIGHT

Alex groans in his sleep.

DREAM

You should leave, Rose Walker.

Rose stares: how does he know her name?! She covers her
shock, trying not to let it show.

ROSE

...Not gonna happen. But you're
welcome to.

Sand filters out from Alex, floating into her hand. She looks
at it, and then has an idea - she flings it back onto Alex.
She bends down and pulls him into a sitting position.

ROSE
Alex, wake up!

Alex's eyes snap open. He tries to push her away.

ALEX
Get away! Get away from me!!

ROSE
Alex, shhh! It's me.

He looks at her with wide-eyed suspicion. Meanwhile, Dream stands by. Dumbfounded.

DREAM
What did you do...?

ROSE
I don't have a clue.

Dream picks her up by her collar, forcefully.

DREAM
That was Dreamsand. Where did you get it? Do you have the Pouch?

ROSE
Let go of me, psycho! I don't know what you're talking about!

Rose grabs his hand. Dream throws her down and weaves, suddenly faint.

ROSE
Ouch! Sonofabitch...!!

DREAM
(hoarse)
You...control Dreamsand? I do not understand...

ROSE
Join the club! First mouth-eyes, now you-

DREAM
Do you mean the Corinthian?

Rose looks at him. She nods. Off Dream, thinking.

INT. PARLOUR - LATER

Alex is slouched over on a sofa, confused and disturbed. Nearby, Dream and Rose sit at a table. Dream is in deep concentration. Rose is calmer, but is still wary of Dream.

DREAM

The Corinthian has the Ruby. And, it seems, you have absorbed my powers as the replacement Dream.

ROSE

I guess. Whatever. Will this 'Corinthian' come after me?

(Dream nods)

So what do we do about it?

DREAM

I will rest, and then go to reclaim my tools. You may come with me, if you like.

ROSE

'Tools' huh? There are others besides the Ruby?

DREAM

Indeed. I had a Pouch, which gave me access to Dreamsand...

ROSE

So that you don't have to steal it from sleeping people?

DREAM

Yes. It gets tiresome, as you can imagine. I also owned a Helmet that protects the wearer from harmful magic, such as the force that can be emitted from the Ruby.

ROSE

Didn't you just say you were captured by a bunch of occultists while wearing the helmet?

DREAM

Capture and imprisonment are conditions that do not fall under the category of 'harm', I'm afraid.

ROSE

If you succeed in getting your stuff back, what happens then?

DREAM

I will defeat the Corinthian, and you will return my power.

ROSE

And how would I do that?

DREAM

It should revert back...at the moment your life ends.

Rose gets up, slamming the table with her hands.

ROSE

You're gonna kill me?!

DREAM

Not until I have to. I will discuss it with my siblings, but that is the most probable outcome.

(soothingly)

Death is my sister, and very amiable company. You'd like her.

ROSE

I don't believe this.

DREAM

I am trying to be fair, Rose. I could reclaim my tools much faster if I killed you now.

CORINTHIAN

(O.S., disembodied voice)

You've always been suave with the ladies, Dream Lord...

A large window SHATTERS as the Corinthian jumps through, landing in a shower of glass. He's got a bag slung around his shoulder.

DREAM

Rather brave of you to come here.

CORINTHIAN

And you're as arrogant as ever. But you'll learn, soon enough.

(sees Rose)

Rose, darling! How are you?

ROSE
Keep away from me!

CORINTHIAN
Ouch. That's some way to say hello.

He takes an EYEBALL out of his bag, pops it into his mouth. Yucky, squishy noises as he chews.

DREAM
Give back the Ruby, Corinthian.
This does not have to end in your erasure.

CORINTHIAN
You didn't say please.
(to Rose)
Seeing as how he's gonna kill you,
have you reconsidered joining me?

The Corinthian is KNOCKED DOWN. Alex stands over him, wielding a table lamp.

ALEX
She ain't going anywhere!

CORINTHIAN
This your boyfriend, Rose? You have
good taste...such nice eyes...

The Corinthian takes the Ruby out of his bag, and raises it high. Two small, winged nightmares appear.

CORINTHIAN
BRUTE! GLOB!

BRUTE & GLOB
You called?

CORINTHIAN
The human! Get him!

Brute and Glob sink their claws into Alex's shoulders, lifting him off the ground - Alex can't fend them off.

DREAM
Rose, give me your hand. We can
combine our strength.

Rose and Dream link hands, and despite the pain Dream raises his other hand out toward the Corinthian.

DREAM

You were the greatest nightmare I ever created. But you leave me no choice, Corinthian. I am sorry.

Dream sends a vortex of sand at the Corinthian. The sand avoids him, as if he's surrounded by a barrier. The Corinthian laughs. Dream lets go of Rose's hand.

CORINTHIAN

You can't erase my existence, Dream. Not while I have the Ruby.

Brute and Glob carry the screaming Alex out of the large broken window. The Corinthian takes the Ruby and BLASTS Dream backward, right into the wall. Rose rushes to Dream's side.

DREAM

Rose. We must go to my home. If you care about Alex, you must wish to go there. Now.

Dream grabs her hand. Reality CHANGES --

EXT. CASTLE - THE DREAMING

We're back to the ruins. Mervyn, Nuala and Lucien have managed to partially rebuild it.

Rose and Dream appear. Rose gasps from the overwhelming shock of traveling through The Dreaming. Once she gets a hold of herself, she looks around in wonder. Meanwhile, Dream lets go of her hand and crumples down to the grey sand.

ROSE

Dream?

Dream raises his head.

DREAM

Yes?

ROSE

Just checking.
(looks at ruins)
This is your home?

DREAM

It's but a shadow of its former self.

ROSE

Uh, yeah... it needs some serious remodeling.

(turns, serious)

How the hell does coming here to this shambolic disaster zone help save Alex?!

DREAM

It doesn't: it saves you and I. We are the only ones who can help him.

ROSE

Oh god...Dream, is the Corinthian going to...?

DREAM

Alex won't be harmed yet. The Corinthian needs a hostage. One with eyes, to help him locate my tools.

Rose breathes a sigh of relief.

ROSE

Okay...we just need to hurry before that changes.

The servants comes rushing to Dream's side.

LUCIEN

Lord! Good heavens!

DREAM

I'm alright Lucien. It seems I misjudged the danger of the waking world. Again.

Rose props Dream up. The servants look at her in surprise. The raven flies up to Rose, peering hard at her.

MATTHEW

Who the hell...I mean, who's the young lady?

DREAM

A temporary inconvenience.

Rose shoots him a look.

DREAM

Please prepare rooms for us.

MERVYN

Lord Dream, uh...ya see...

DREAM

Oh yes.

(turns to Rose)

I'd be much obliged if you'd rebuild my castle.

ROSE

I thought I was the *inconvenience*?

Rose lets go of him, forcing him to regain his balance himself. The servants stiffen, looking to Dream with fear.

DREAM

I did not mean it that way.

ROSE

Wow thanks, I feel better now.

DREAM

I'm glad.

ROSE

Jesus! Are you dense?

DREAM

Rose, what is it you want from me?

MERVYN

(whispering to Matthew)

Sounds familiar, don't it?

ROSE

Why don't you just kill me and rebuild it yourself, oh mighty 'Dream Lord'? That way I don't have to be such a damn *nuisance* to you.

Dream rubs his temple.

DREAM

I am very weary, Rose. If you wish for an apology, I shall grant you one: I am sorry.

The servants react - they're not used to hearing their master apologize to a mortal. A moment of silence.

ROSE
Now that's more like it.

CUT TO:

Rose and Dream stand in the center of the ruins, facing each other.

DREAM
Sculpt the Dreamspace, as if it were clay. The Dreaming remembers the castle, so let it guide you. You should have enough power left from me to do it on your own.

ROSE
You mean when we touched? Why does that happen, by the way?

DREAM
Because your body tries to absorb my powers. The effect should lessen as time goes on.

Rose laughs.

DREAM
What is it?

ROSE
No, never mind.

Rose closes her eyes: the sand whirls around her.

INT. CASTLE - DREAMING

When the dust settles, Rose and Dream are standing in the main hall, good as new.

DREAM
Excellent. Now, I shall tell you how to locate Alex.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Alex is tied up in a corner, as the Corinthian sits on the bed, gazing at the Ruby.

CORINTHIAN
If you hadn't raised such a fuss, it wouldn't have come to this.

ALEX
I can't let you hurt Rose.

CORINTHIAN
Hurt her? I'm trying to help her.
(looks at the ruby)
I am but her faithful servant.

The Ruby glows.

ALEX
What are you doing?

CORINTHIAN
Breaking down the barrier between
worlds. It's taking all my bloody
life-force to do it though...

ALEX
I don't get it.

CORINTHIAN
I'm freeing my mates back in the
Dreaming.
(off Alex's look)
We nightmares have our purposes. We
make people face things they don't
want to see.

A small moment of silence.

CORINTHIAN
I was once the nightmare of your
darling Rose's mum. 20 years ago, I
was slated to retire.
(smiles)
But lucky me, Dream got himself
captured.

ALEX
So you started picking on Rose.

CORINTHIAN
Helping. Rose had doubts about
marrying that bastard Paul, and for
good reason. I made myself look
like him, and scared her silly til
she had the guts to cut him loose.

ALEX
How kind of you.

CORINTHIAN

Ah well, it's my job. I enjoy it,
and I want to keep doing it.

(pause)

Tell me where the Pouch is. I gotta
get to the Dreamworld.

Alex glares at him, silent.

CORINTHIAN

He's gonna kill her, you heard him.
I might have trouble saving her if
Dream regains his tools.

ALEX

I don't see any difference between
you and Dream. You both want this
'Dreamworld', and you don't care
who you hurt to get it.

(emphatic)

I won't help either of you.

CORINTHIAN

Tch. Well, I suppose I don't blame
you for being unreasonable at the
moment, being tied up and all.

The Corinthian stands up.

CORINTHIAN

You know what? Maybe you should
sleep on it.

The Corinthian aims the jewel at Alex.

EXT. ALEX'S DREAM - DUSK

Alex is hanging off a tall, thin rock spire. He looks down:
the spire pierces a bank of clouds. Alex can't see the
bottom, but he must be very high up.

Alex panics - he's too afraid to climb down.

MEANWHILE

Rose and Dream walk in through a dimensional door. Rose
realizes she's stepped into nothing, falls. Dream grabs her
by the waist.

DREAM

Careful.

ROSE
 Thanks.
 (looks around)
 Where are we?

DREAM
 Alex's dream, I suspect.

ROSE
 Good. Then he should be around
 here, somewhere.

They soar a few moments, over the clouds.

ROSE
 Say, Dream? You know what Freud
 said about dreams of flying? It
 means you're really dreaming about
 having sex.

DREAM
 Indeed? Tell me then, what does it
 mean when you dream of having sex?

Rose smiles. Then she gasps, spotting something.

ROSE
 Look, there he is!

She points out Alex, clinging to the spire.

DREAM
 I see him.

Dream and Rose swoop in close to Alex.

ALEX
 H-help me!!

ROSE
 Grab my hand, Alex.

His hands slips a little - he's got a precarious grip.

ALEX
 I can't...

ROSE
 Yes you can. It's just a dream.

Rose looks at Dream, and he nods. Rose takes a tentative step
 out - her foot holds in place. She lets go of Dream.

ROSE
See? Just believe it.

Alex just hugs the spire tighter, teeth chattering. Rose goes over to him, and pulls at him.

ROSE
C'mon...trust me!

ALEX
Stop! No, don't do that! I'll fall!

ROSE
Then you'll land on those nice, big cotton-balls down there.

ALEX
Those are clouds, Rose!

ROSE
Cartoon clouds. The solid kind.

ALEX
The mass of precipitation kind! I paid attention in science class!

ROSE
Dream, help me!

Dream isn't looking at them - he's looking up.

Rose follows his gaze to a pretty young-looking GOTH woman, standing on the very tip of the spire, bent over to watch them.

She has wild black hair and pale skin like Dream, and an ankh pendant around her neck. The makeup on one eye resembles the Eye of Horus. She's DEATH.

She waves.

DREAM
Death is here. We don't have much time.
(to Alex)
Would you kindly tell me where the Pouch is?

ALEX
Go to hell!

ROSE
What're you doing? Help me save
him!
(to Alex)
Tell him where the Pouch is!

Alex softens as he looks into her eyes.

ALEX
My ex, Rachel...I think she stole
it...

Alex's hand slips again, and this time he keeps sliding. Rose
cries out, grabbing for his hand, but he's falling too fast.

He sinks into the abyss.

ROSE
(screaming)
No!!

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Alex stumbles to his feet, not tied up anymore. He looks over
himself in amazement.

ALEX
Still alive...

FEMALE VOICE
Mmm, I'm afraid not.

Alex turns. He sees Death standing there, smiling.

DEATH
Hey there. I'm Death.

Alex looks down: his body lies slumped over on the floor.

DEATH
Your heart stopped, when you fell
in the dream.

ALEX
So I'm...?

DEATH
Uh-huh. As a *dodo*.
(takes his hand)
Let's hang out at my house.

Dream and Rose appear amidst a storm of dreamsand. Rose sees Alex's lifeless body, and his transparent soul being led away by Death.

ALEX (SOUL)

Rose...

ROSE

Alex, get away from her!
 (to Death)
 What did you do to him?!

CORINTHIAN

It's too late love. He's dead.

She turns: the Corinthian still sits on the edge of the bed.

CORINTHIAN

Dream got what he wanted and then let him drop. He does that to everyone, eventually.

Rose looks at Dream with angry tear-filled eyes.

ROSE

Dream...is that so?

DEATH

Corinthian, stop it. Dream couldn't have saved him. That's why I was summoned.

CORINTHIAN

No. You came to watch, Death.
 (to Rose)
 The morbid little witch loves this stuff.

Rose is still looking at Dream - he stares at the floor.

CORINTHIAN

Think about what I've said Rose:
 are you really on the correct side?
 (raises the jewel)
 Ta.

The Corinthian disappears. Silence.

DEATH

Don't believe anything the Corinthian says.

ROSE
Shut up, bitch.
(goes up to Alex)
I'm so sorry...

ALEX (SOUL)
It's okay. Rose, don't cry. I'll
wait for you, wherever I go.

Rose nods, crying.

ROSE
I love you.

Alex smiles. Death leads him away, a sad look in her eyes,
and they disappear in a flurry of black feathers. Rose stands
there a few moments, stunned. She turns to Dream.

ROSE
How could you?!

DREAM
I'm sorry for your loss, Rose.

ROSE
That's all you have to say?!

Rose goes up to him and smacks him across the face. Dream
doesn't deflect or dodge.

ROSE
Damn you!!

Rose's voice chokes, grief overcoming her anger. She falls to
the floor, sobbing. Dream watches her, uncertain what to do.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - DAY

Rose pulls a sleeping driver out of his car, and takes his
place. Dream stands on the other side of the door, waiting to
be let in.

ROSE
You're not going anywhere dressed
like that.

Dream TRANSFORMS - his cloak and other strange garments are
replaced by a regular coat and pants.

DREAM
Is this better?

Rose presses the button, unlocking the door. Dream gets in.

DREAM
Do you know where Rachel is?

ROSE
(nods)
We were friends. Sort of.

As they drive off, the sun is setting.

INT. RACHEL'S BEDROOM - DUSK

Curtains flutter. The dim light from a window is the only source of light in the room.

On a dresser is a picture of Rachel and Alex together. She's dressed for a night on the town, and glowing as she looks at an embarrassed but smiling Alex.

Next to the picture is --

The Pouch, laying on its side with some of its contents spilled. A weak, raspy voice sings:

FEMALE VOICE
Dream dream dreeeam...whenever I
want you...

A shriveled hand reaches toward the sand, fingering it with ragged, yellow nails ...

FEMALE VOICE
All I have to do...is...dreeeam...

EXT. RACHEL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Rose and Dream approach Rachel's perfectly ordinary-looking suburban home. Dream opens the door with a wave of his hand.

Rose walks past him, but he lays a hand gently on her pajama-covered shoulder, stopping her.

DREAM
Rose...this place is not safe for
you. Things are free in this house
that should not be loose upon the
earth.

ROSE
Why doesn't that surprise me?

Rose shrugs off his hand and goes inside. He sighs, and follows her into --

INT. RACHEL'S HOUSE

There's mail on the floor, from the mail slot. Rose looks concerned, but presses on. The house is dark, foreboding.

She goes up the stairs, places her hand on the banister - there's something oozy there. She yanks her hand off.

ROSE
Yechh...

Suddenly Rose is --

EXT. SKY - NIGHT

-- *falling fast through clouds...she can see a city below, a hundred twinkling lights, and she's headed straight for it. She flails, and screams... and Dream appears above.*

He's falling too, reaching out to her --

DREAM
Rose!

INT. RACHEL'S HOME - NIGHT

-- Rose gasps as she comes back to reality. She's sweating.

ROSE
Alex!!

She turns, and sees Dream looking at her imploringly.

DREAM
Are you alright?

ROSE
I'm fine...just a dream...no. It's never 'just a dream', is it?

DREAM
No. Here less than other places...

Dream raises his hand, and creates an orb of light. Rose looks at the banister: it's covered in a disgusting, greenish-red pulsating mass.

She moves aside and lets Dream go first, following right on his heels.

INT. 2ND FLOOR HALLWAY - RACHEL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

More of the mass...and it seems even more alive. Arm-like tendrils stretch across the hallway. Little BLOB faces shift in the mass as well.

ROSE
Rachel? Are you there?

A dozen little voices whisper back, simultaneously:

BLOB 1
Leave...leave here...

BLOB 2
Do not disturb her...

BLOB 3
She is ours...

One of the blobs oozes out to look at Rose.

ROSE
Get away! We're going to see Rachel!

BLOB 1
Foolish meat things...

BLOB 2
Hear it posture?

BLOB 3
Hear it threaten?

DREAM
Let us through.

BLOBS
(in unison)
Master...?

DREAM
You have far exceeded your bounds, nightmares.

The little voices start wailing, panicked.

DREAM

I shall clean this up. Please
continue on.

Rose nods and heads down the hallway, as the blobs' apologies
and pleas for mercy all mingle together.

BLOB 1

We thought you long gone master...

BLOBS

Yes yes...spare us...

Rose goes through the door at the end of the hall...

EXT. RACHEL'S DREAM - DAY

...and finds herself in an unfamiliar landscape. It's a
sunny, beautiful trail in the woods. Rachel is sitting under
a tree.

ROSE

Rachel...?

Rachel looks up.

RACHEL

Rosie...I haven't seen you in such
a long time...

ROSE

Yeah...Rachel, I have to ask you
something. You have a Pouch. Full
of sand, right?

Rachel's expression darkens.

RACHEL

I dunno what you're talking about.

ROSE

I know it's here. I need it.

Rachel gets to her feet. She laughs, like a hyena.

RACHEL

Of course...everyone wants it...you
can't have it, it's mine!

ROSE
I'm just trying to help.

RACHEL
No, he sent you didn't he? He wants
it back...

ROSE
Who, Dream? You know of him?

RACHEL
Alex! He always...he wants to give
it to you, doesn't he? He wants to
share everything with you, he
always did...

ROSE
No, he...I need to give the Pouch
back to its original owner. The
King of Dreams.

Rachel steps back. Reality SHIFTS...

Rose finds herself in the middle of a vast ocean. It's
storming.

RACHEL
(V.O.)
It was a dark and stormy
nightmare...

Rose struggles to keep her head above water. The waves crash
down on her, forcing her under.

Rose sinks. She grasps toward the surface, but she continues
sinking into the depths.

Rose closes her eyes.

ROSE
(V.O.)
It's a dream. I can make it
whatever I want. Sculpt the
dreamscape like clay...

The water swirls around Rose's form. She brings her fists
down - a mountain of rock shoots upward from the sea floor,
pushing her up --

-- and past the surface. Rose looks around: nothing in sight.

ROSE
You can't hide from me, Rachel!

Reality shifts again. Now she's on the slopes of a snow-covered mountain.

The ground shakes. Rose looks and sees an AVALANCHE coming down at her. Rose starts running, but the snow and rocks tumble over her.

When the debris settles, Rachel, wrapped in a fur coat walks over the fresh snow. She smiles.

Suddenly, a hand shoots up from under the snow, grabbing Rachel's ankle. Rachel shrieks, as Rose pulls herself up.

ROSE
Give it back.

RACHEL
(sobbing)
You're ruining my dream! I have such lovely dreams...except he's never there...I want to see him...

ROSE
Please. Alex wouldn't want you to be like this.

Rachel falls against Rose's shoulder.

ROSE
You need to wake up.

INT. RACHEL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Rose finds herself in Rachel's bedroom.

RACHEL
(O.S)
Rosie...?

Rose looks in horror at --

RACHEL

On the bed. Naked and corpse like, green spots of necrosis all over her skin. Rose covers her mouth, stifling a cry.

Behind her, Dream comes into the room.

ROSE
Dream, look...

DREAM

I see. The sand was the only thing
keeping her alive.

RACHEL

(groans)
It...hurts...

DREAM

Where is the Pouch?

Rose looks around. The Pouch is no longer on the dresser. In
its place is an envelope.

ROSE

What's this...?

Rose bends to pick it up, but Dream gets it first. He opens
it, and pulls out a letter.

DREAM

It's from the Corinthian. We're too
late.

Rachel turns in the bed, groaning. Dream turns the envelope
over into his hand - there's sand inside.

ROSE

We can't leave her like this.

Dream looks at Rachel.

DREAM

I will take care of it.

Rose heads out, glancing behind her shoulder. Dream sprinkles
the sand on Rachel, who stops tossing and turning.

EXT. RACHEL'S DREAM - DAY

Rachel, as her young beautiful self, looks bewildered. She's
sitting on a park bench. A man approaches her.

MAN

Hi there, love.

She looks up. It's-

RACHEL

Alex!

Alex pulls her up, smiling too. He embraces her tightly.

RACHEL
Did you miss me?

ALEX
Nah.

RACHEL
Bastard.

Rachel and Alex walk off on the park trail, holding hands.
On the park bench, Death watches them. She smiles.

INT. RACHEL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

In reality, Dream pulls the sheet over Rachel, covering her.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

The hallway is now clear of the blobs, as if they were never there.

DREAM
It is done.

Rose nods.

EXT. ROSE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Rose heads to the neighboring house. She kneels by the door, and sand filters out from the bottom into her hand. Dream is still behind her, keeping his distance.

ROSE
I'm sorry we didn't get the Pouch
back.

DREAM
(shakes head)
The Corinthian was here before we
left the hotel. It was folly to
think we could make it in time.

INT. CASTLE - THE DREAMING

Rose and Dream reappear in the castle. Rose stumbles, caught by Dream. He looks at her face - she's fainted.

Mervyn and Nuala rush over to them, lifting Rose out of Dream's arms.

NUALA

Is something the matter with her?

DREAM

Just tired, I think. Take her to her room.

MERVYN

Sure thing, boss.

Mervyn and Nuala carry her off. Matthew the raven flies onto Dream's shoulder.

MATTHEW

It's cute how she swoons around you now.

Dream gives him a look.

MATTHEW

So uh, where's the Pouch?

Dream brushes him off his shoulder. Matthew squawks in indignation.

INT. GALLERY - DREAMING

Dream walks into a room where framed objects are displayed on the walls - a book, and ankh, a mirror, a heart, and a painting of swirling color. There are two empty frames - they are between the ankh and the mirror.

Dream picks up the book, which is chained to the frame.

DREAM

DESTINY. I stand in my gallery and I hold your sigil. Will you answer me?

INT. DESTINY'S GARDEN - DAY

A labyrinthine, Grecian villa style garden. The winding, innumerable paths are lined with hedges. Parts of Destiny's garden are pristine, while other sections resemble ruins.

Destiny, a man in a hooded cloak, carries a large, thick book as he walks through his realm. A chain dangles from his wrist: he's chained to the Book of Fate.

Destiny enters his Gallery, where the very same 'portraits' of the ENDLESS are displayed. He looks at the frame after the ankh, through which he can see Dream's face.

DESTINY
What do you seek, brother?

BACK IN THE DREAMING:

In the frame where the book once was, Destiny's face emerges.

DREAM
I wish to ask your advice. Many things have happened since I was imprisoned...I must reclaim my helmet before I can face the Corinthian.

DESTINY
I cannot help you reclaim your tools. It is not my place.

Dream lowers his eyes.

DREAM
...I see.

DESTINY
About this mortal girl, Rose-

DREAM
She is no problem.

DESTINY
You know what comes of the union between a mortal and an Endless.

DREAM
Yes. You have warned me.

DESTINY
The power is not destined to be shared. If you do not take action soon, Rose will become the Endless and you the mortal.

DREAM
I am aware.

Destiny's image fades. Dream replaces the book in its frame. He looks at the ankh, decides to skip it. He goes to the mirror, and places his hands on it.

DREAM

DESPAIR. I stand in my gallery and
I hold your sigil. Will you answer?

EXT. DESPAIR'S REALM

Despair's realm is a blank, empty mist. Countless mirrors hang suspended in the air. Rats scurry on the grey stone floor. One of them is snagged by a HOOK.

Despair pulls the hook in and grabs the rat up into her fist.

She is naked, pasty, and grossly overweight. Her hair is a tangled mess on top of her head. Her eyes are brooding and bloodshot, and her teeth are tusks.

She looks up, as if she hears something. She drops the rat and approaches one of her mirrors.

BACK IN THE DREAMING:

DREAM

Sister. Do you know where my helmet
is?

DESPAIR

No.

DREAM

Ah.

DESPAIR

You should give up.

DREAM

That's not an option, sister.

DESPAIR

It's always an option. Let the
Corinthian have the Dreaming. Give
up your dreams of reclaiming your
place. Dreams are nothing.

DREAMS

Dreams are nothing, sister? Without
dreams, there could be no despair.

Despair snorts, and turns away from the mirror. Her image fades.

Dream goes to the next frame: a heart, made of red crystal. He lifts it up.

INT. DESIRE'S REALM

Desire's realm looks like the inside of a human body. Desire himself (or herself, as he is both) sits on a bed that looks like a kidney.

The androgyne looks up at Dream's portrait, and flashes a cruel grin framed by red lips.

DESIRE

Dream, is that you? I haven't seen you in twenty years. You still remember me, don't you? Of course you do.

A young girl bounces onto the kidney, looks up at Dream. She has wild, rainbow-colored hair, a strange coat, and torn fishnet stockings/gloves. One eye is green, the other blue.

YOUNG GIRL

DrEEAam? yOu're bAck, Ohh mY gOsh
yOU're bAckk...a lOnG looong tIme,
YAY! Do yoU remEmBER mE toO?

Her voice is garbled, like she's speaking underwater.

DREAM

DELIRIUM?

DELIRIUM

ThAt's MYself. ME. I wAnt to sEE
yOU, I mEAn, *REally* sEE yOU, YOu
knOw...nOt like thIs seEIng youu...

DREAM

Just a moment. I have business with Desire.

DESIRE

Is this about your little affair and its messy ending? I'm afraid you managed to screw that one up all on your own.

(smiles)

Though I did find it extremely amusing.

Dream bristles.

DREAM

No. It concerns my helmet. Do you know where it is?

Desire puts a cigarette in his mouth, uses a heart-shaped lighter on it. Delirium plays with colorful butterflies.

DESIRE

I didn't take it. Such an ugly thing, after all.

DREAM

I'm not accusing you. I'm-

DELIRIUM

I wAnnA gO sEE my brOTHer aNd plAy all dAy with hIm iN the...um whAt's-it-cAlled '*Dreaming*' thAt's rIght...Is thAt o-kAy? it's okAy riiight, DrEAm?

DREAM

No, Delirium I don't have time-

DELIRIUM

I lOst sOme tIme, oNce...alwAys fOund In the lAst plAcE I lOOk for It. i dOn't...like thAt...nOt At aLL.

(sing-songy)

I'm coo-mmming tO plAy...

BACK IN THE DREAMING

Delirium pops out of the swirly portrait, multi-colored frogs coming with her. She throws her arms around Dream, nearly knocking him over.

DELIRIUM

YAYHOO! BrOthEr!!

Dream pulls her off of him.

DREAM

Go back to your realm.

Delirium looks at him, heartbroken.

DELIRIUM

WhAt...??

DREAM

I have things I must do.

DELIRIUM

Ohh. OkAy. Um. WEll...

Delirium starts to cry.

DELIRIUM

I knEw it... thAt yOU'd wAnt to bE
aLL hOrrible to mE...yOU alwAys are
trYing to gEt rid of mE...aNd iT's
nOt jUst yOU eithEr...

DREAM

Delirium...

Dream creates a tissue and hands it to Delirium. She blows into it, hard. She offers it back, rainbow-colored snot and all.

DREAM

Keep it.

DELIRIUM

I wAs gOing to bE soo gOOd, cuz I
knEw yOU'd bE liKe thIs iF i wAsn't
aNd nOw iT's aLL a mEss. I sEE hOw
iT iS...I'll gO, bE in mY rEAlm if
yOU wAnt mE. If anYone wAnts mE...

Delirium turns back to her portrait.

DREAM

I'm not angry with you. I'm sorry.
You can stay, if you wish.

Delirium looks at him with suspicion.

DELIRIUM

YoU're mAking *fUn* of mE, i knOw it.
YOU *never* apOlogize. YOU prEtEnd
yOU knOw stUff I dOn't knOw thAt
mAKes stUff yOU dO okAy.

DREAM

I meant it. Go to the dining hall
and ask TARAMIS for something to
eat.

Delirium instantly brightens and skips away, humming. Dream turns to Desire's portrait.

DESIRE

Now that you're baby-sitting the
little headache, I feel I owe you
one: go ask ORPHEUS. He'll know.

Dream's face falls. Then it hardens.

DREAM

I like being made fun of less than
Delirium.

DESIRE

Ah well, just a suggestion. I know
you don't want to visit your son,
but then again...I could always
make you want to. Like butterflies
to a flame.

DREAM

You mean moths.

IN DESIRE'S REALM

Delirium's butterflies float around him. Desire opens the
lighter, and a butterfly floats right into the flame. It
burns to a crisp.

DESIRE

(smiles)
Butterflies.

Desire looks up: Dream's image is gone from the portrait.
Desire chuckles to himself.

INT. DINING HALL - CASTLE - DREAMING

Rose wanders, bleary-eyed, into the dining hall. She looks
somewhat lost, and miserable.

She spots Delirium squirming at the table, as a servant with
large eyes and long curling whiskers, Taramis, approaches.

DELIRIUM

HAve yOU gOt anY little miLk
chOcOlAtE pEOple? AbOUt thrEE
inchES hIgh, gUYs and gIRls, fiLLed
wIth rAspbERRY crEAm...

TARAMIS

Very good ma'am. And to drink?

DELIRIUM

FrESH mAngO jUIce, plEEze.

Taramis nods and heads off. Rose walks closer to the table,
and Delirium takes notice of her.

DELIRIUM

HIyA! WhO're yOU?

ROSE

I'm Rose.

DELIRIUM

I'm, uM. DELirIUm, little sISTER.
Of DrEAm. ActUALLY aLL the EndlEss.

Delirium gets up from the table and runs over to Rose. She looks her over, like some fascinating sculpture.

DELIRIUM

YoU're DrEAm's gIrlfrIEnd, rIght?

ROSE

No, I'm not.

DELIRIUM

Uh-hUh. I'm nOt aLL toGethEr i
know, i usEd tO bE and nOw I'm nOt.
BUt i stiLL, uM. KnOw thIngs.

Delirium takes her hand and pulls her over to the table.

DELIRIUM

SIt nExt to mE, o-kAy? WE're gOIng
tO bE bEstEst oF frIEnds.

Taramis reappears, with the tray of chocolate people.

DELIRIUM

Oh lOOkIE! ThEY've aLL gOt little
eyEbrOws...

TARAMIS

(to Rose)

Would you like something, miss?

ROSE

Oh. Uh... oatmeal?

Delirium makes a rude noise.

DELIRIUM

YoU cAn hAve anYthIng yoU cAn thInk
oF, rEAlLY. I'Ve spEnt dAys n' dAys
mAkIng Up flAvOrs oF ice crEAm
nObOdY's EAteN, liKe chIckEn aNd
tElEphOne ice crEAm...hAve yoU evEr
dOne thAt?

ROSE
 Not really.
 (to Taramis)
 Oatmeal would be fine. Thanks.

Almost out of nowhere, Dream enters and sits down.

DREAM
 A light salad and a glass of white
 wine for me, Taramis.

TARAMIS
 As you will, sir.

Taramis leaves.

DELIRIUM
 ThEre yOU aRE, DrEAm...

DREAM
 Hello.
 (to Rose)
 I hope she is not bothering you.

ROSE
 Oh no, not at all.

DELIRIUM
 VERy gOOD frIEnds, mE n' ROse.

DREAM
 Wonderful. Rose, I believe I've
 found a lead in our search for the
 helmet-

DELIRIUM
 (reproving)
 ShE's mUch pREttIEr thAn the
 gIrlfrIEnd bEfOre. ThAt oNe wAs
 mEAn. I wIsh sHE hAd bUGs crAwLIing
 on hEr fOrEvEr aNd evEr...

DREAM
 Delirium, You're mistaken: Rose is
 merely a guest, nothing more.

Taramis places food and wine in front of Dream. Delirium
 forgets they were talking, and plays with the chocolate
 people.

DELIRIUM
 FIRSt i bite thEIr liTTle hAnds
 OFF, and thEn thEIr liTTle nOsES...

ROSE
 (to Dream)
 You've had women stay at the castle
 before?

Dream looks uncomfortable, nods.

ROSE
 Mortal women?

DELIRIUM
 YeAh, prETTY mUch mOstly...excEpt
 fOr fAErIE quEEens and gOddsESes aNd-

DREAM
 Delirium, please.
 (to Rose)
 Is there a reason you are pursuing
 the subject?

ROSE
 Just curious...is it painful to
 talk about?

DREAM
 Indeed.

ROSE
 I'm sorry. How did she die?

DREAM
 She's not dead.
 (stares into wine glass)
 She decided she no longer loved me.

ROSE.
 Oh.

Rose looks at him with sympathy. Silence. Delirium takes two
 of the chocolate people, a man and a woman, and smooshes them
 together.

DELIRIUM
 LOOK, thEy're mAking lO-Ove...K-I-S-
 S-I-N-G...

Rose gets red. Dream's fingers tighten over his wine glass.

DREAM
 Stop that.

DELIRIUM
 SOrrY...Um, thEy WEREn't rEAlly
 kIssIng. ThEy wErE uM... sqUIdgIng.
 Yechhy, kIssIng...

Delirium drops the chocolate people, only to realize they've come to life...copulating desperately on the plate.

Delirium, sheepish, takes her napkin and discreetly covers them.

Another silence. Dream gets up from the table. Rose goes with him. Delirium looks puzzled, then bounces off her chair.

DELIRIUM
 HeY, wAit fOr mE!

INT. MAIN HALL - CASTLE

ROSE
 So. This 'lead' you mentioned...?

DREAM
 We shall ask Orpheus.

ROSE
 Alright. Who's he?

DREAM
 My son.

DELIRIUM
 (licking chocolate off her
 fingers)
 Oh yEAh, aNd mUsEs. CALLiOpe's hiS
 mOthEr. I wAnnA gO sEE OrphEUS tOO.
 I mEAn tAlk aLsO, nOt jUst sEE. cAn
 i?

DREAM
 If you must.

The three of them exit the castle.

EXT. CASTLE - DREAMING - ETERNAL TWILIGHT

Rose and Dream join hands. Delirium offers one of her messy ones - Rose can't conceal her disgust looking at it.

Delirium licks her hand, wipes it on her coat, and offers it again. Rose resigns her hand to its fate.

Sand whirls around them.

EXT. CLIFF- GREEK ISLAND - DAWN

An old, balding man with a long beard, ANDROS, climbs up stone steps, carved in the face of a cliff. He gets to the top, rests his hands on his knees, breathing hard.

The top of the cliff is beautiful - windswept cherry trees and an old, white marble pavilion. From the arch of the pavilion's entry-way, a younger man with dreadlocks and a gun goes over to help him.

YOUNGER MAN

Papa, you're getting too old to be doing this.

ANDROS

Nonsense.

(waves him off)

My father made the trek every morning until he was 80.

Younger man just smiles.

ANDROS

How was he tonight?

YOUNGER MAN

He slept for a few hours. Then he wanted to look at the moon. And now he sleeps once more.

ANDROS

Good, good. Go down and eat, KRIS. Get some sleep. See you at dusk.

They switch places - Andros' destination is the pavilion, while Kris climbs down the stone steps.

INT. PAVILION - DAWN

We see a pale face, closely resembling Dream's... Orpheus. He opens his eyes - they are grey and seem contemplative. He hears the old man's footsteps.

ORPHEUS

Good morning.

ANDROS

And to you, lord. Kris thought you were asleep.

ORPHEUS
 No, merely thinking. Please
 Chrestos, the East window. I'd like
 to see the sun rise.

PULL BACK TO SHOW:

ORPHEUS

Is a disembodied head, on a table next to a flower vase.

ANDROS
 I'm Andros, lord.

ORPHEUS
 Did I say...? I'm sorry. I was
 thinking of your father.

Andros picks up the head and places it on the window sill.

ANDROS
 Grandfather.

ORPHEUS
 Ah, I'm growing forgetful... a good
 thing that my company is not the
 reason for your diligence.

ANDROS
 Then what is?

ORPHEUS
 The song.

ANDROS
 (indignant)
 That's not the only reason. You're
 a good friend.

ORPHEUS
 But you'd still like the song.

ANDROS
 ...If your lordship would grace me
 with it.

Orpheus smiles.

ORPHEUS
 Today will prove an unusual day.

He opens his mouth and SINGS, softly and wonderfully.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Kris reaches the bottom of the steps. Nearby is a hammock strung up between two trees, where a young boy sleeps. Kris looks at his son fondly, and goes into a BEACH SHACK.

Before he can even get inside, sand whirls against his back. He turns around wide-eyed, seeing -

DREAM, ROSE AND DELIRIUM

Standing there. Kris raises his gun, pointing it at them.

ROSE
Whoa, easy!

KRIS
Stay where you are! How did you get here?

ROSE
We came through your son's dream.

DREAM
We hope you don't mind.

DELIRIUM
I miNd...shOUld've tAkEn tHe cAr, i think. I'm a rEAlLY gOOD drivER...

KRIS
There are no roads that lead here, little girl.

DELIRIUM
I mEAnt a *fly*ing cAr, i'm nOt stUpid yOU knOw...

ROSE
Just put the gun down. We're not here to cause trouble.

DREAM
I have come here to speak with my son. I believe he is here. Please lead me to him.

KRIS
Your son?

DREAM
Orpheus.

Kris lowers the gun.

INT. TOP OF THE CLIFF - DAY

The four of them approach the pavilion. Rose looks over at Dream - he's looking at the ground, and appears to be deeply disturbed.

ROSE
Something wrong, Dream?

DREAM
No. I am in fine spirits.

ROSE
You're shivering.

Dream pulls his cloak tighter around him. Rose places her hand on his shoulder. He can see in her face he hasn't convinced her.

DREAM
I gave my word I would not come here.

ROSE
To Orpheus?

DREAM
To myself.
(pause)
I'm afraid I'll have to ask the two of you to stay outside.

ROSE
Alright.

DELIRIUM
BuT I wAnt tO sEE hiM, hE's mY...cOUsin? No, nEphEW! I wEnt tO hiS wEdDiNg...

ROSE
(to Delirium)
We'll see him later. Let's go play. Those trees look nice, don't they?

DELIRIUM
YoU wAnt tO pLAY...? WOw.
(grins)
NObodY evEr aSKs tO pLAY wITH mE...

Dream gives Rose a faint-hearted smile of gratitude.

Kris yells into the pavilion:

KRIS
Papa! We've got company!

Kris waves Dream on - he goes inside. Delirium runs off for the trees, and Rose follows her.

INT. PAVILION

Andros, sitting in a chair, looks puzzled.

ANDROS
Who are you?

ORPHEUS
He's my father, Andros. I've been expecting him.

Andros takes his leave, muttering:

ANDROS
You warned me today would be unusual...you didn't say how much...

The two are alone. Father and son. A long silence passes.

ORPHEUS
Do you remember what you last told me, father? "Your life is your own. Your death, likewise. Farewell. We shall not meet again."

DREAM
I believe I said something like that, yes.

ORPHEUS
Those were your exact words. I have had plenty of time to think on them.

DREAM
At the time, I meant it.

ORPHEUS
You have changed, since the old days.

DREAM
I doubt it.

Dream goes over to the window sill, and lifts up Orpheus' head. He places him back on the table, facing him.

DREAM

I have something to ask of you.

ORPHEUS

Your helmet. I will tell you where to find it. But before that, you must promise to do something in return.

Dream turns away from him.

ORPHEUS

You know what I ask.

DREAM

Yes. How I wish it were otherwise.

EXT. TOP OF THE CLIFF - DAY

Dream wanders out of the pavilion - a weary shadow. Rose, sitting against a tree with Delirium tugging at her arm, rises as she sees him.

ROSE

Dream?

He turns, slowly.

DREAM

I have the information we need.

Delirium appears beside Rose.

DELIRIUM

DiD...iT. Um. I dUnnO. CoST yOU anYthING mAYbE?

DREAM

It cost me a great deal.

Dream avoids Rose's eyes, walks and disappears behind the pavilion.

Rose takes Delirium's hand.

ROSE

C'mon, let's go.

BEHIND THE PAVILION

Dream sits down on a boulder, a loaf of bread in his hands. He tears off pieces and lets them fall in front of several eager pigeons.

Death walks up to him, casually, and sits down on the grass beside him. She waits a few moments.

DEATH

Have you watched Mary Poppins?

DREAM

Mary Poppins?

DEATH

Yeah. You've seen it right? There's this song she sings...

(sings)

'Feeeed the birds, toppins a bag-'

DREAM

No. I cannot say I have.

DEATH

You really ought to - it's supercalifragilisticexpialidocious! Y'know, great. Wonderful. Peachy keen!

Death smiles, but Dream just hangs his head again and tears off more bread pieces.

DEATH

Maybe not everybody's thing, but y'know. Cute.

(sighs)

Dream? Are you alright? What are you feeling?

DREAM

I feel like nothing.

DEATH

I don't believe you. Your son's gone now, it'd be natural to mourn.

DREAM

You misunderstand. My realm is no longer under my control. My power is scattered.

(MORE)

DREAM(cont'd)

I no longer have the resolve to
kill Rose. What will I be, when I
am no longer Dream?

DEATH

Dream, let me tell you something.
And I'm only going to say it once,
so you'd better pay attention.

Death takes the loaf of bread out of his hands.

DEATH

You are utterly the stupidest, most
self-centered excuse for an
anthropomorphic personification on
this or any other plane!

She throws the loaf of bread at him. It bounces off his head.

DEATH

Feeling all sorry for yourself,
because your little game might be
over, and you don't have the...the
balls to go find a new one! Didn't
it occur to you that I'd be worried
silly about you?

DREAM

I didn't think -

DEATH

That's exactly it, you never think.
You're my brother, you lummoX! I
care about you no matter what you
are. And you know what? So does
Rose.

INT. LOFT - BEACH SHACK - NIGHT

Delirium is fast asleep on a cot, mumbling something
incoherent and twitching every so often. Rose, next to her,
is not. She gets up, and goes down the ladder.

She passes Andros in a chair, snoring.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Rose walks barefoot on the sand, wrapping her arms around
herself against the cool night breeze.

Dream is just ahead, standing and looking toward the ocean -
he's wearing his cloak.

He removes and places his boots on the rocks, and wades into the water a bit. She goes up behind him. He's aware of her presence.

DREAM
Unable to sleep?

ROSE
Yeah.

DREAM
I am able to fix that, if you wish it.

ROSE
No, uh...it's a *self-imposed* insomnia. No offense, but I have a thing against sleep.

DREAM
Mm, I understand. It has always seemed ironic to me, that those who fear Death's realm should travel so confidently in *mine*.

(pause)
Do you find me callous, Rose?

ROSE
I don't know.

DREAM
I have lived for thousands of human lifetimes, and seen countless worlds. I suppose certain things are easier to accept if one does not care.

ROSE
I think you do. Care.

DREAM
You would say that, even after what happened to Alex?

Dream looks at her a long moment, distressed.

ROSE
It doesn't matter now.
(pause)
I don't know what it's like to be you. How can I possibly judge?

DREAM

Your powers are growing. Very shortly, you will know exactly what it is like.

ROSE

Really? Because I was wondering... if maybe it was possible for us to rule the Dreaming together...?

DREAM

Is that what you would wish for?

ROSE

Sure, why not? I have nothing left here. Alex...he was the last...

Rose stops, her voice trembling. She tries to brighten.

ROSE

Think about it, I could give you a break from your duties sometimes.

DREAM

I do not need a *break*.

Dream turns away again, violently.

DREAM

(harsh)

You think...that being an Endless will make your life more fulfilling?

ROSE

Well, I don't know. I'm kinda getting used to it.

Dream covers his face with his hand. Rose goes very close to him, and slips her arms around him. Dream reacts.

DREAM

What are you doing?

ROSE

Tell me what Orpheus said.

DREAM

Only that I owed him a boon.

ROSE

What did he ask of you?

DREAM

His death.
(pause)
...I granted it.

A long silence as this sinks in with Rose.

ROSE

Oh god.

Rose holds him tighter, feeling and hearing his labored breathing.

ROSE

You loved him, didn't you?

DREAM

Yes. As any father loves his son.
(hangs his head)
Rose...I have become dreadfully
inept at being callous.

ROSE

Then don't try to be.

Dream places a hand on hers. He winces, in pain.

ROSE

Dream...!

Rose tries to pull away, but Dream holds her hand tighter.

DREAM

It does not hurt that much.

He lets go and turns around, to embrace her. Rose holds him close, stroking him.

He pulls back slowly, and gazes at her. He brushes her cheek with his hand, smoothing her hair back from her face.

She touches his lips, and leans in to kiss them. He kisses her deeper, and draws her tightly into his cloak.

As Dream kisses down her neck, articles of clothing fall down around Rose's feet. She steps out of them, and kicks them aside.

Dream lifts Rose up in his arms, and they fall backward on the sand, grasping each other tightly, and exchanging passionate kisses.

Dream rolls her onto her back, pressing down on top of her. Rose entwines her fingers into his dark hair.

The waves ebb along the sand. Rose and Dream seem to move in time to it.

ON ROSE

Her reality twisting...

She sees Dream as others have seen him, in other times and places... Victorian Dream, tribal Dream, cat-Dream...

Dream sits on his throne, in his helmet. He takes it off, revealing the face she knows, and smiles at her.

Stars, flowing past her...glimpses of the countless worlds he's seen...

A LITTLE WHILE LATER

They lie side-by-side. She's covered only by his cloak.

ROSE

Wow. That was really...trippy.

The tide comes in farther, almost right up to them - the water pools around her clothes, and then washes them down the beach and out to the sea.

ROSE

Dammit.

DREAM

Leave them. Take the cloak.

Rose does, tying it like a toga around her.

ROSE

Let's get back. Delirium might wake up and wonder where we are.

Rose stands up, and grabs Dream's arm, pulling - he struggles to get up, but fails.

DREAM

Seems I shall be going nowhere, for the time being.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Rose helps shoulder Dream's weight as they walk to where Delirium is playing with Kris' son on the beach. Dream is clothed again, in a new outfit.

DREAM
(to Rose)
You look quite happy.

Rose grins.

ROSE
Shouldn't I be?

Dream frowns. Delirium sees them.

DELIRIUM
ThEre yOU twO aRE...

DREAM
We are leaving.

Delirium looks at Rose, in her cloak-tunic.

DELIRIUM
DrEAm, hOW cOMe yOU're hObblING
arOUNd...? WhAt wErE yOU gUYs, uM,
dOIng...?

DREAM
None of your concern.

Delirium giggles.

DELIRIUM
Ooooh, i thINK i knOW...yOU pLAYED
toO hARd wITh hiM ROse....

DREAM
Delirium, I have had quite enough
of your nonsense. Quiet!

Delirium looks at him, hurt. She runs to Rose, burying her face in Rose's chest.

DELIRIUM
MEAn! AlwAYS sO mEAn, evEn whEn i
dOn't dO *anYthIng* aT aLL! I dIdN't,
dID i...?

ROSE
No, it's okay.

Rose shoots a look at Dream. He looks away.

DREAM
We have been delayed long enough.
We must find a man named SYKES. He
has the Helmet.

EXT. BAR - DAY

RUTHVEN SYKES, an older black gentleman, leads three SUITS around a bar, empty except for a female bartender cleaning the counter, ETHEL.

SUIT 1
Well kept little place, Ethel.
(to Sykes)
Yes, I think it has potential.

One of the suits notices something on the wall. Sykes knows what he's looking at --

THE HELMET

On a display mount.

SUIT 1
What is that? A gas-mask?

SUIT 2
Freaking strange, whatever it is.

The suits crowd around for a closer look.

SYKES
It came into my possession while I
was second in command of the Order
of Ancient mysteries. Now it's a
memento of sorts.

SUIT 3
I believe I've heard of it... some
kind of rumor, about it being worn
by a creature Burgess summoned?

Sykes hesitates, then smiles.

SYKES

Well, the Order certainly would've liked to summon extra-dimensional beings. But truth be told, it was more of a men's club. We all had secret names...and secret handshakes.

The suits laugh.

SYKES

But no secret monsters. If Burgess had one under his control, he would've made no secret of it.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Sykes sees the suits out, smiling.

SYKES

Thank you for coming.

The doors close. Ethel looks up.

ETHEL

Do you think they'll buy?

SYKES

I dunno. I get the feeling they're thinking about it.

He looks at the Helmet, goes closer to it.

SYKES

I wish I hadn't left this up.

ETHEL

Gives the place some character, if you ask me.

SYKES

Maybe. But perhaps not the right kind.

Sykes takes it down off the mount, goes to a storage closet and sets it inside.

As he does, the doors open. Two MEN in trench coats and hats come in, walking in a stiff, awkward fashion. Their hands are in their pockets.

SYKES

Sorry boys, we're closed.

They lift their faces, revealing cruel red eyes... they're not men at all. The trench coats open, revealing Brute and Glob. They were operating human guises with stilts for legs, and sleeves filled with straw.

Brute spreads his wings, and soars right at Sykes, pinning him to the wall with his demonic claws.

BRUTE
Where is it, Sykessss?!

EXT. ALLEY - LONDON - NIGHT

Dream, Rose and Delirium appear in a whirl of sand, next to an old HOMELESS WOMAN.

ROSE
You didn't tell me we were going to the city. I'm not dressed properly.

Rose concentrates, and the cloak shifts into a skintight uniform.

ROSE
I did it!
(looks at herself)
Hm. Not what I had in mind, but it'll do.

DREAM
It looks fine. We must go.

The homeless woman blinks at them quizzically as they move from the alley into --

THE STREET

Delirium skips ahead. Dream pulls away from Rose and staggers on his own.

ROSE
What's with you?

DREAM
Nothing. I am simply weary from last nights'...indiscretion.

Her eyes widen.

ROSE
What?

DREAM

It was a mistake. An error in judgement.

Rose is crushed.

ROSE

...If it was, it was *your* error.

DREAM

Regardless, I am in no condition to face the Corinthian.

ROSE

Well I've never felt better. So just let me handle everything. Okay?

DREAM

It is your stolen power. You can do with it as you see fit.

ROSE

You *bastard*.

Delirium pops up next to them.

DELIRIUM

NEVER eVER hAVE sEx WITH hIM agAIn!
YoU've mAde hiM wORse thAn usUAl!

Rose shushes her.

Suddenly, a SCREAM. They look - Ethel runs out the door of the bar.

ETHEL

HELP! SOMEBODY, HELP!!

They exchange looks and run toward her.

ROSE

Ma'am, what's wrong?

ETHEL

There are creatures in there!
Demons!

Dream turns to Delirium.

DREAM

Is she mad, sister?

DELIRIUM
NO, sHE rEALLY sAW sOmethING.

They rush inside.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Sykes pulls out the Helmet, handing it to Brute. Brute eyes it greedily, but just before his claws grasp it...

DREAM
Brute. Glob.

Brute whirls around, hissing.

BRUTE
Master?!

DREAM
Give it to me, Brute.

BRUTE
Let me think about that...um...no!

ROSE
You may want to reconsider.

DREAM
Rose, do not-

He doesn't get a chance to finish - Rose charges the nightmare, giving him a kick. Glob claws at her face, as Brute grabs Sykes from behind. He points a razor-sharp claw at his throat.

BRUTE
Make one more move and the old man gets it! You can't unmake us before I stab him. The Corinthian is my master now. He will set us free.

DREAM
I have changed my mind. Rose, please unmake them.

Rose hesitates - Brute shifts his gaze from Rose to Dream, then laughs.

BRUTE
I forgot...you have no power, do you 'Dream Lord'?

DREAM

Rose. Do it.

ROSE

No, they'll kill him. There has to be another way.

Rose and Dream lock gazes - from the fire in her eyes, it's clear Rose will not waver from her decision.

BRUTE

This is silly. As we speak, the Corinthian is entering the Dream realm. Let us go, and your precious mortal will be spared.

DREAM

We are going nowhere. Nightmare, it seems we are at a stalemate in this game.

DELIRIUM

GAme! OoH lEt's pLAY a gAme, yEs.

DREAM

Quiet, Delirium.

GLOB

I think she has a point...a game could break the tie...

BRUTE

Yesss... Dream, would you challenge me to a duel for your Helmet?

DREAM

That would depend upon what kind of duel it is.

BRUTE

A game of Reality.

DREAM

Very well, I challenge you. The terms?

BRUTE

Simple: whoever loses dies. Whoever wins, gets the Helm. Fair?

Rose goes to Dream, whispering quietly:

ROSE

What is this game?

DREAM

A mental duel. The players take
turning conjuring things, until
their imagination fails them.

BRUTE

5 seconds per round. No more, no
less. We must do it in neutral
territory - the little one's realm
would do.

DELIRIUM

OH, uM rEALLY? My rEAIm? OkaY!

Delirium makes a swirling gesture with her hands, and REALITY
twists. They find themselves --

EXT. DELIRIUM'S REALM

-- floating in a dimension of pure chaos. There is no up or
down here, no day or night. It's a flood of various colors
and shapes and sounds and ideas, like a collage.

Random objects float in bubbles all around them. Sykes is
nowhere to be found, but Delirium is swimming laps in the
air.

BRUTE

We must make it a binding contract.

Brute holds out his claw. Glob puts his claw on top of his
partner's. Dream places his hand in the pile, and looks to
Rose - she has a strange expression on her face.

DREAM

Rose...

Rose places her hand on top of Dream's. Light envelopes their
hands, and snakes up their arms.

DREAM

It is done.

BRUTE

As the challenged, I have the first
move: I am a dire wolf, prey
stalking, lethal prowler.

Just as he describes, a monstrous wolf with slavering jaws appears, glaring at Dream.

DREAM

I am a hunter...horse mounted...

A proud-eyed primeval warrior on a horse rides up, spear in hand.

DREAM

...Wolf-stabbing.

The warrior plunges his spear into the wolf, which howls in pain before collapsing.

BRUTE

I am a horsefly, horse-stinging...

The wolf transforms into a horsefly, and stings the horse. The horse rears.

BRUTE

...Hunter-throwing.

The hunter falls back on the horse, landing on some sort of invisible 'ground' with a sickening crunch of bones. Both the horse and the hunter disappear.

A giant web appears, with a giant spider.

DREAM

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

The fly is caught in the web. The spider sinks its fangs into it.

BRUTE

I am a snake...

A snake rips through the web, snatching the spider in its own fangs.

BRUTE

Spider-devouring, poison-toothed.

DREAM

I am an ox, snake crushing, heavy-footed.

An ox appears and tramples the snake. There are SNAPPING sounds as the snake's spine is crushed.

BRUTE

I am an anthrax, butcher bacterium,
warm-life destroying!

The ox becomes a rotting corpse, falling.

Delirium stops swimming, and looks at Rose - they're both concerned.

DREAM

I am a world. Space-floating, life-nurturing.

A miniature Earth appears between them.

BRUTE

I am a nova, all-exploding...planet cremating!

Intense light blasts from all directions, obliterating the little earth.

DREAM

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

The light fades. Planets, stars and galaxies appear all around them.

BRUTE

I am anti-life, the beast of judgement....

A large, demonic beast appears, made of pure shadow. It engulfs the planets, stars and galaxies.

BRUTE

...the darkness at the end of everything, the end of universes, gods, worlds...of everything.

The beast becomes a black hole, sucking everything in Delirium's realm into the abyss.

DELIRIUM

DrEAm!!!

Rose grabs Delirium, and they hold each other tightly. They wait to see what Dream will do - he stands there calmly and folds his arms.

DREAM

I am hope.

Everything stops - the realm is a black void of nothing, but they still remain. Brute gapes.

BRUTE

Oh.

(pause)

Then I am...I...

He looks at Glob, who is trembling greatly.

BRUTE

I don't know...

DREAM

Your time is up. Goodbye,
nightmares.

Brute and Glob watch in horror as they start to disintegrate - pieces of flesh coming off, tissue, muscle. They SCREAM.

BRUTE & GLOB

NO! NO...!!!

They are stripped to their skeletons, and then the skeletons turn to ash.

The darkness fades. And they are --

INT. BAR - NIGHT

-- back where they started. Sykes looks around: the nightmares are gone. Dream takes a step toward Sykes, who stares at him with horror.

SYKES

Oh my god. You're...?

DREAM

I am Dream. The one you helped
capture.

Sykes backs away.

SYKES

I have not practiced magic for 20
years. Please-

DREAM

What? Spare you?

SYKES

I left the Order, after that night.
We were dabbling in forbidden
things...I wore this Helmet for 20
years, in fear of what magicks
Burgess might cast...

DREAM

You believe you are redeemed, then.

Dream takes another step, backing Sykes against the wall. A moment passes, as Sykes trembles. Dream reaches out, and takes the Helmet out of his hands.

DREAM

(quietly)

I no longer thirst for vengeance.
You have nothing to fear from me.

Delirium tugs on Dream's cloak.

DELIRIUM

Um, DrEAm? ThERe aRE mONstERS
oUtSide...

Rose and Dream look: through the windows, they can see strange creatures chasing people.

EXT. THE STREET - NIGHT

Rose, Dream and Delirium head out of the building to see what's going on.

It's absolute chaos. The noise is deafening as people run out of their homes to escape their brought-to-life nightmares.

Some are covered in spiders, screaming desperately. Others are chased by demons, zombies, grotesque mutants with multiple heads...

ROSE

Oh my god...

DREAM

The Corinthian has unleashed the
Nightmares. It is time for us to
leave.

ROSE

Can't we do anything about it?
These people are in trouble!

Dream puts on his Helmet.

DREAM

I know. That is why the Corinthian must be defeated.

Dream grabs Rose and Delirium's hands.

DREAM

Delirium. We have no dreamsand. Can you take us to DESTRUCTION's gallery?

DELIRIUM

YeS. WeLL, uH i thINK sO anYwAY...oOH i'VE wANTEd TO sEE DEStRUctION FOR a LONG tIME!

DREAM

Do it.

Delirium concentrates, and the three of them shift into blotches of colored light. And then they fade away.

From the rooftop of a tall building, The Corinthian looks down and smiles at the devastation he's created.

INT. DESTRUCTION'S GALLERY - NIGHT

Destruction's gallery has all the usual sigils on the wall, but also a pool in the middle. It sloshes around, violently.

Destruction, a large burly man with red hair and scruffy stubble, sets a painting on the wall. His clothes have almost as much paint on them as the canvas.

DESTRUCTION

Well? What do you think?

He looks down, having directed his question to a DOG.

DOG

I'm not much of an art critic.

DESTRUCTION

I'm not asking for art criticism, BARNABAS. Merely a few words of appreciation.

BARNABAS

Honestly? The perspective's shot to hell, the 'ocean' looks like toxic waste, and that olive tree looks like an overgrown stinging nettle.

DESTRUCTION

Hmph. There are those who claim that for unquestioning respect and devotion, all one needs is a dog.

BARNABAS

Devotion you've got, schmuck. Lying isn't in the job description.

Destruction chuckles heartily at that.

DESTRUCTION

Well, I suppose I won't take it with me then.

Destruction takes a SWORD, his sigil, off the wall. It shrinks in his hands, becoming no bigger than his fist - he places it on a spotted handkerchief next to the pool.

Then, he grasps the pool's edge, and lifts it up out of its foundations. It also shrinks, and he places it in the handkerchief too.

DESTRUCTION

What did you do with the stick?

BARNABAS

Nothing. It's right over there.

Destruction turns around, and sees it lying against the wall.

DESTRUCTION

Ah.

Destruction picks up the stick, and ties the handkerchief around it.

DESTRUCTION

That oughta do it.

Suddenly, three figures tumble out of Delirium's picture frame, landing on the ground.

Barnabas bounds toward them. He stops close to Delirium, sniffing her.

DELIRIUM

HuLLO DOggY. YoU'RE a vErY nICe
dOggY aREn't yOU? My nAMe's
DELIrIUm, aNd i'M gOIng tO bE a
kAngArOO whEN i grOW uP. WhAT's
yOUr nAMe?

DESTRUCTION

His name's Barnabas.

Dream takes off his Helmet, and Delirium runs up and hugs
Destruction.

DESTRUCTION

Ah, let me look at you lass. Pretty
as ever you were. And yes, I do
believe you've grown.

DELIRIUM

MaYbE a lITtle...

Destruction looks at Dream.

DESTRUCTION

And you, my brother. You also seem
different. Perhaps you too have
grown.

DREAM

I think not.

Destruction peeks around Dream, his eyes on Rose.

DESTRUCTION

And who's this one?

ROSE

I'm Rose Walker.

DREAM

I have a favor to ask of you.

DESTRUCTION

Dream, you know I'm out of the
family business. And I haven't
missed it, not for...what is it
now, 300 years?

DREAM

It is not what you think. Rose
needs a place to stay. Someone to
look after her.

Rose whirls on Dream.

ROSE

Say, what?

DESTRUCTION

I'm not sure I understand either, brother. Why does she need looking after?

DREAM

One of my Nightmares has escaped, and now he has unleashed the rest of his brethren upon the waking world. I was imprisoned, for a time, and Rose absorbed my powers. She will not be safe.

ROSE

Dream, what are you talking about? You can't face the Corinthian alone.

DREAM

I can, and I will.

DESTRUCTION

Centuries ago you would've told me she was simply mortal, and would die sooner or later.

DREAM

I doubt I have changed that much.

DESTRUCTION

Whatever you say, my brother. At the very least, you've finally discovered there are other people in the world.

DREAM

I have never needed you to instruct me on my duties. Now less than ever. I still perform my responsibilities, after all.

DESTRUCTION

People and things are still destroyed. Things still change. The only difference is that no one's running it. It's not my fault. And now, I'm ready to leave.

DELIRIUM
 WhAT...? WhERe aRE yOU gOIng?

DESTRUCTION
 (waves toward the ceiling)
 Ohh, out there. Somewhere. Up, out.

Destruction exits the gallery. Dream goes after him, the two others tag along followed by the dog.

INT. DESTRUCTION'S HOME - NIGHT

DREAM
 But you are the embodiment of
 Destruction. You are of the
 Endless. We...we have
 responsibilities.

DESTRUCTION
 The Endless are nothing more than
 ideas. Repeating motifs. Even our
 existences will not outlast this
 version of the universe. We have no
 right to play with their lives, to
 order their dreams and their
 desires.

(shrugs)
 Things change. Even you have
 changed - I know what you did for
 Orpheus.

(to Delirium)
 I'm glad I saw you again, my
 sister.

Destruction heads toward the front door of the house.

DESTRUCTION
 I'm sorry I can't be of more help.
 Your young lady can stay in the
 house. Barnabas can keep her
 company.

BARNABAS
 I can't come with you?

DESTRUCTION
 You could not survive in the places
 I'll be traveling to.

BARNABAS
 Oh. I see.

DESTRUCTION
Goodbye. All of you.

They watch as he exits out the door, out onto the grassy hills. He walks upward, toward the sky, as his body fades away.

BARNABAS
I'm going to miss him. Poetry readings and all.

Rose glares at Dream.

ROSE
You brought me here, just to dump me?

DREAM
I was trying to protect you. But now I am running out of time. You belong here, in the waking world.

ROSE
Who the hell are you to decide that?

DREAM
This is no longer your fight - we have gone as far as we will go. Farewell.

Dream puts his Helmet on.

ROSE
(screaming)
Dream, no! He'll kill you!

The Helmet glows, and in a flash Dream is gone. Rose is alone with Delirium and Barnabas.

INT. DREAMING - ETERNAL TWILIGHT

Dream appears in the main hall. The servants are huddled by the door, with various weapons in their hands - Lucien has a sword, Nuala has a bow, and Mervyn has a shotgun. The whole castle TREMBLES.

LUCIEN
Lord, there you are. We were worried.

DREAM

I know. Put those weapons down - he
will never get as far as the gates.

Dream climbs the twisting steps, up to his throne. The palace
rumbles again, and the servants exchange apprehensive
glances.

Matthew the raven is sitting on the armrest as Dream sits
down.

MATTHEW

Lord Dream! Good to see you.
Uh...where's the girl now?

Dream removes his helmet.

DREAM

We won't be seeing her again.

INT. DESTRUCTION'S HOME - NIGHT

Rose paces around the room, angrily.

ROSE

What in god's name is he thinking?
How's he supposed to defeat the
Corinthian with, at best, half his
power? No, that's too
optimistic...it's more like one
third of his power. He can barely
keep on his feet let alone fight.

Barnabas and Delirium watch her.

BARNABAS

Could you sit down? You're making
me dizzy.

DELIRIUM

ME TOO.

ROSE

Just go away, will you? I want to
be alone.

Delirium and Barnabas decide to oblige. Rose wipes tears away
from her face, and sits down at the dining room table.

There's a drinking glass there. She glares at it and angrily
knocks it off with her hand. It shatters, and she puts her
head down on the table to sob.

EXT. DESTRUCTION'S HOUSE

Delirium stands with Barnabas outside. She picks up a stick, waving it around.

BARNABAS
She seemed really upset.

DELIRIUM
YeAH...sHE aNd DrEAm wEre tOgETHER.
LiKe dAtING. FoR a liTTle whILe.
(looks at the stick)
HeY dOggY, wANT tO pLAY fETCh?

Delirium throws, and Barnabas bounds after it.

As he does, Delirium sees something coming toward her: It's the Corinthian. He's got his sunglasses on, and the Pouch tied to his belt.

CORINTHIAN
Hullo little girl. Is Rose home?

DELIRIUM
Um, sHE wANTs tO bE lEft alOne
rIGHt nOW.

CORINTHIAN
Is that so? Well, I'll have to go
cheer her up then.

The Corinthian tries to move past Delirium. She blocks him with her body, frowning.

DELIRIUM
I dUnnO wHO YOU aRE mIstER, bUT YOU
sEEm crEEpY. I cAN't sEE tHE iNsIde
oF yOUR hEAd.

Barnabas drops the stick and bounds toward the Corinthian, barking.

BARNABAS
Delirium, get away from him! He
isn't a human!

The Corinthian grabs Delirium by the hair, and shoves her aside. He raises the Ruby and aims it at her. Delirium's eyes go wide.

DELIRIUM
Th-That's mY bROther's...!

The Ruby glows - but before the blast appears, Barnabas bites the Corinthian's ankle. The Corinthian turns, and blasts him instead. Barnabas is debilitated with a whine.

DELIRIUM
NO, dON't hURt hIM!

The Corinthian takes off the Pouch, and grabs a handful of dreamsand.

CORINTHIAN
How about a nap, little Endless...

INT. DESTRUCTION'S HOME

Rose hears the commotion and gets up from the chair. She runs for the door, and sees the Corinthian enter.

CORINTHIAN
Why hullo again, Rose...

Rose answers with a kick. It sends him sprawling... but it only makes him chuckle as he gets up.

CORINTHIAN
Ooh, you've gotten stronger.

Rose backhands him viciously, and throws him against the wall. The Ruby slips out of his hand. Rose sees it, and takes her opportunity - she lunges, and grabs it.

Power ZAPS her hand! She cries out, and drops the Ruby. The Corinthian laughs some more.

CORINTHIAN
Did I not tell you? The Ruby is mine now. It's become a part of me... sort of like how a shoe conforms to your foot. I'm afraid you can't use it anymore.

The Corinthian grabs her shoulders and pushes her down. Rose has lost all strength, and crumples to the floor.

The Corinthian raises the Ruby. A beam of light comes out of it, and snakes around Rose. It materializes into ropes. Rose struggles, as he kneels down next to her.

CORINTHIAN
Tut tut, such a fuss for nothing.
I'm actually not here for you.

ROSE

What?

CORINTHIAN

That's right. I finally have you all to myself...yet now, I don't even want you. Ironic, isn't it?

ROSE

I don't know what you're talking about, but I don't care! If you don't want me, let me go!

CORINTHIAN

You have no idea the plans I had for you. The wedding, the guests, I had everything planned out. Down to the color of the napkins and the new carpet for the castle floor.

(sighs)

But no, you had to get frisky with Dream. How *repulsive*.

The Corinthian leans over her, placing a hand on her stomach.

CORINTHIAN

But now you have something even better. Something that won't be so uncooperative. And once I take it, your half of the power will be under my control.

The Corinthian plunges his hand into her lower stomach. Rose SCREAMS --

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Barnabas and Delirium sit up, groaning as they come back to their senses. They look at each other.

BARNABAS

What happened?

DELIRIUM

UM...I rEALLY DON't KNOW...

They hear Rose scream again, from inside the house.

INT. DESTRUCTION'S HOME

The Corinthian brings his hand out again, very quickly, and looks at his bloody fist.

Rose looks at her stomach, expecting to see a horrifying mess, but there isn't even a sign of a wound.

The Corinthian opens up his fist, and inside is a translucent, shrimp like thing squirming slightly on his palm. Rose looks at it with a mixture of shock, confusion and disgust.

CORINTHIAN

Close your mouth love. It's just your son.

ROSE

What the hell did you do? I...I can't be pregnant!

CORINTHIAN

Not anymore, naturally.

The Corinthian raises the Ruby in the air for her to see. The Corinthian puts it in his bag.

CORINTHIAN

Such an interesting trinket. I had no idea how many wonderful things it could do...for example, I don't have to wait to see the product of your dalliance with an Endless.

The Corinthian smiles at the little shrimpy fetus, which is rapidly growing into a full-blown infant. The Corinthian now has to hold the baby with both hands and then must adjust his arms to compensate for the weight of the growing child.

CORINTHIAN

What do you think his name should be? Perhaps we should keep with the tradition of Dream's family all having 'D' names, shall we?

(thinks)

Something like...DANIEL.

Daniel is on his way to becoming a toddler. The Corinthian sets him down - Daniel wavers on his feet a little, but grasps the concept of standing upright as fast as his unnatural growth.

CORINTHIAN

Say goodbye to your mum, Daniel.

Daniel looks straight at Rose, as soft baby hair grows on his head and turns into little curls. He lifts his hand and waves, but seems very puzzled.

The Corinthian grabs his hand, and leads him out the back door. Daniel looks back at his mother for a moment, but then he's gone.

Barnabas and Delirium run in.

DELIRIUM
ROSE ROSE! WHAT IS GOING ON?!

Rose is sobbing on the floor. Delirium immediately unties the ropes.

BARNABAS
What happened, Rose? Who was that weird man?

ROSE
The Corinthian! I...I think he took my child...

DELIRIUM
WHAT? YOU'RE A PARENT, ALREADY...?

ROSE
I don't know...I don't know anything...

Rose pushes the last of the ropes off her, angrily.

ROSE
Delirium, I have to get into the Dreaming.

BARNABAS
Lady, I don't know much about you or what's going on, but I don't think you should be going anywhere.

DELIRIUM
YeAH...iSn't THE COrInthIAN gOIng TO THE DrEAmING tOO...?

ROSE
Exactly! If that was my son he took, I've got to get him back!

Rose stands up, but falters. Delirium props her up.

BARNABAS
See? What did I tell you?

DELIRIUMS
 YoUr enERgY iS gOne...tHE COrI-
 WHAtEvER mUSt've tAkEn iT aLL.

ROSE
 I don't care! Take me to the
 Dreaming, Delirium!

BARNABAS
 I wouldn't do that...

Delirium looks between the dog and the angry Rose, torn.

ROSE
 You want to see Dream, don't you?

DELIRIUM
 BuT...

ROSE
 Take me to the Dreaming right now,
 or so help me I'll never play with
 you again!

Delirium looks alarmed at that.

DELIRIUM
 OkAY, okAY i wiLL!

Delirium squeezes her eyes shut, and they both dissolve into
 colored lights.

BARNABAS
 Oh hell...wait up!

Barnabas jumps into the colored lights, and they disappear.

EXT. CASTLE - THE DREAMING - ETERNAL TWILIGHT

The Corinthian walks down a row of Nightmares, his head held
 high. He looks at each one of them.

CORINTHIAN
 I am proud to see before me an army
 of Nightmares, here in defiance of
 tyranny-

NIGHTMARE 1
 When do we fight?!

The Nightmares roar in approval. The Corinthian is taken
 aback, but recovers.

CORINTHIAN

If you're so hasty, why don't you
lead the Nightmares out of bondage?

The Corinthian pseudo-casually examines the Ruby in his hand. The Nightmare backs down, getting the point. The Corinthian coughs, and then starts again:

CORINTHIAN

Our goal is to find Dream and
destroy him. Don't kill any
servants until I've had a chance to
interrogate them.

(thinks)

Yeah, that's about it.

INT. CASTLE

Matthew the raven twitches on Dream's armrest. Dream, on the other hand, reclines on his hand with his eyes closed.

DREAM

You are distressed, Matthew?

MATTHEW

I'd feel a lot better if you'd let
me in on the plan to keep them out.

DREAM

I have no such plan.

MATTHEW

(squawks)

What?!

DREAM

It's true. I have decided to let
them in.

(looks at Matthew)

You forget: this is my castle.

EXT. CASTLE

Meanwhile, the Corinthian turns toward Daniel beside him. He now looks about 8 years old.

CORINTHIAN

Are you ready to see your father?

DANIEL

Yes. Yes, I should very much like
to meet him.

CORINTHIAN

Splendid.
 (to the Nightmares)
 Now!

The Nightmares throw themselves against the gates. The Griffin and the Wyvern statues at the top of the gates look at them, with nervous stone eyes.

The Corinthian steps through the crowd...

CORINTHIAN

Allow me.

...and uses the Ruby to blast the gates open.

INT. DREAM'S GALLERY - THE DREAMING

Rose, Delirium and Barnabas appear in the gallery. Rose bends over in pain.

ROSE

Oh god... I feel sick...

DELIRIUM

ReAlly? CuZ i fEEL fInE...

BARNABAS

(groans)

That's because you consider gravity one of a number of suggested options, rather than a rule.

Rose hears a CRASH, followed by many terrible sounds of monstrous joy: shrieks, roars, cries.

ROSE

What was that?

Three figures rush into the room. It's Lucien, Mervyn and Nuala, still in their 'battle gear'.

NUALA

Rose! Whatever are you doing here?

ROSE

I must find Dream. Something terrible's happened.

MERVYN

Whatever it is, can't be worse than what we're dealing with right now.

LUCIEN

Ms. Walker, it is entirely out of the question to see Lord Dream.

ROSE

Why? What's he doing?

MERVYN

Workin' on a way to save our asses, I hope!

Rose runs for the door. All three of them grab her.

MERVYN

The Nightmares just busted in, toots! Goin' out there now is plain suicide!

Rose pushes them off and runs out. Delirium and Barnabas follow.

MERVYN

Dames and mutts. They never listen.

Lucien sighs and shuts the doors. He pulls the brace down over it.

INT. CASTLE HALLS

Rose, Delirium and Barnabas run through the dark, labyrinthine halls until they reach a crossroads of sorts - three different directions to turn.

From the right, they hear footsteps and see approaching shadows.

ROSE

(whispers)

We gotta go back!

DELIRIUM

Um nO iT's okAY...I'll mAKE iT sO
thEY cAN't sEE...

Delirium holds out her arms and spins around. A multi-colored shield appears around them.

It turns out to be the Corinthian, leading Daniel by the hand. Rose looks at her son, so many emotions swelling - but knowing if she calls out to him now, they're doomed.

CORINTHIAN

Now, just where could ole' dad be
hiding...?

The Corinthian goes past where Rose and Delirium stand.
Daniel looks right at Rose.

CORINTHIAN

What're you looking at, Daniel?

Just as Rose and Delirium begin to worry, a dark figure comes
out from directly ahead of the Corinthian, to Rose's left.
It's Dream, who stops short when he sees the Corinthian.

CORINTHIAN

There you are, old chap.

Dream turns and goes back the way he came, down a dark
corridor. The Corinthian looks puzzled, but follows, pulling
Daniel (who is still staring at Rose) along with him.

Rose and Delirium creep forward, cautiously going down the
dark corridor too.

BARNABAS

That's strange...

DELIRIUM

WhAT iS iT, DOggY?

BARNABAS

I couldn't smell Dream...

Rose shushes them.

MEANWHILE

The Corinthian reaches a door around a corner, out of sight
of the three following. As he grasps the handle and pulls it
open, he notices Daniel is hyperventilating.

CORINTHIAN

What is it?

DANIEL

I don't want to go in here.

CORINTHIAN

Why not?

Daniel breaks away from his grasp, and runs down another
corridor. The Corinthian chases after him.

CORINTHIAN
Come back here!

Once they're gone, Rose and Delirium come around the corner. Rose sees the open door.

ROSE
That's it! They must have gone
through here!

Rose throws the door open wider and goes inside.

For a few moments, there is only darkness.

ROSE
Daniel!! Daniel, can you hear me?!

Rose looks back - the door has disappeared. Her panic rises.

ROSE
Delirium? Barnabas...?

Her voice echoes back to her. Then the blackness fades away, and she is --

INT. HOUSE - INDETERMINATE

-- in some sort of dwelling. It looks like a regular apartment: there's a fish in a bowl on a stand, and a green couch with a teddy bear on it... and next to it, sits DEATH.

Delirium and Barnabas are on each side of Rose.

DEATH
Oh. Hi - you're not who I was
expecting.

DELIRIUM
Sister!

ROSE
Where are we? Where's the
Corinthian?

DEATH
You're in my realm. As to the
Corinthian, I dunno - Dream
informed me *he'd* be the one showing
up.

Off Rose's puzzlement.

INT. CASTLE HALL

The Corinthian chases Daniel into the main hall, where the child proceeds to run up winding steps.

The Corinthian attempts to scramble after him, but the second his foot touches the first step energy arcs around it, zapping him much like the Ruby did to Rose earlier.

CORINTHIAN
Bugger and blast!!!

NIGHTMARE 1
(O.S)
Sir Corinthian-

CORINTHIAN
What do you want?!

He looks: the Nightmares lead the three servants in, bound tightly with rope. The Corinthian smiles, a little.

CORINTHIAN
Well done.

He glances back as young Daniel runs up the spiraling steps, before turning his attention to the servants.

CORINTHIAN
As I am in an increasingly bad mood, would you be so kind as to tell me how to get to your master? If you oblige...

The Corinthian looks at Lucien closely.

CORINTHIAN
I'll leave your lovely pairs of eyes in their sockets.

He looks at Mervyn next.

MERVYN
I ain't got eyes!

CORINTHIAN
No matter. *You* I'll make into fertilizer.

The Corinthian pulls the cigar out of Mervyn's mouth and steps on it.

He moves on to Nuala.

CORINTHIAN

I think I'll start with this one...

The Corinthian looks at the pendant hanging down from her neck.

CORINTHIAN

What is this? It looks magical.

NUALA

I-It's nothing!

Nuala tries to back away, however she runs into one of the Nightmares who pushes her back toward the Corinthian.

CORINTHIAN

Really? Why is there fear in those tasty little faerie eyes of yours?

The Corinthian grabs her pendant in his hand.

CORINTHIAN

Yes, I can feel the power in it.
It's his power. You're going to tell me what it is.

NUALA

No!

The Corinthian raises the Ruby. Nuala screams, as she is zapped with painful energy.

CORINTHIAN

What was that? Did you say you would tell me all about it?

NUALA

I shall never tell you!

The Corinthian zaps her again. Mervyn and Lucien watch helplessly as Nuala's anguished cries fill the hall.

INT. DEATH'S HOUSE

Back in Death's domain, she patiently explains to the pacing Rose:

DEATH

Dream set up one of his rooms to be a portal into my realm. He was going to send a phantom to lure the Corinthian here.

ROSE

And we fell right into the trap
instead.

DEATH

Looks like it. I'll send you back
into the human realm-

ROSE

No! I have to get my son back! I
have to help Dream!

DEATH

Honey, you can't. You're not an
Endless anymore. Not even a little
bit. All of it went to your son.

ROSE

I don't care! I have to - I love
him! Both of them...

Death looks at her with deep sympathy.

DEATH

Yes, I know. But they belong in
this world. You don't.

ROSE

I have nothing left where I came
from! I might as well be dead if
you send me back!

DEATH

(to Delirium)

Delirium, you and the dog should go
to your realm.

DELIRIUM

But-

DEATH

I mean it. Go.

Delirium sighs and hugs Rose.

DELIRIUM

GoOdbYE i gUEss... cAN yOU plEAsE
gO jUst a liTTle bIT crAzY, sO i
cAN tAlk tO yOU agAIIn iF i wAnt...?

DEATH

Delirium. That's not nice.

Delirium sadly disappears in multi-colored lights, along with Barnabas.

DEATH

Come with me Rose.

Death goes to two doors. One's white, and the one beside it is black.

DEATH

You have two choices: go through the white one and you're back to your regular life. Go through the black one, and you stay here in the sunless lands.

Off Rose, caught in the no-win choice.

ROSE

(V.O.)

Love is horrible.

INT. CASTLE

Daniel, running up the steps. He has grown into a teenager.

ROSE

(V.O)

You build up all these defenses, so nothing can hurt you. Then one person, seemingly no different from any other person, wanders into your worthless life...

Daniel reaches the top of the steps. He looks at --

-- his father, sitting at his throne. Dream looks up... Daniel's clear blue eyes and Dream's starry onyx eyes meet.

ROSE

(V.O)

It hurts.

We switch to Nuala, as she continues to scream.

ROSE

(V.O.)

Not just in the imagination. Not just in the mind. It's a soul-hurt, a body-hurt, a real gets-inside-you-and-rips-you-apart hurt.

Mervyn shouts something at the Corinthian, and gets punched by one of the nightmares. He falls, and his pumpkin head is smashed.

In between bouts of torture, Nuala cries out for the broken Mervyn. The Corinthian grabs her, pulling her away, and raises the Ruby.

ROSE

(V.O)

Nothing should be able to do that.
Especially not love.

Back to Dream and Daniel. Daniel approaches, a look of wonder in his eyes, as Dream rises from the throne.

DREAM

Who are you?

DANIEL

I am your son, I think.

DREAM

I have no son. My son is dead.

DANIEL

My mother is Rose. I was taken from her. By the Corinthian.

There is a long silence as they regard one another.

DREAM

...Interesting. I am greatly pleased to meet you.

EXT. DREAMING

The Corinthian reappears with Nuala, out in the dreamsand dunes. The Corinthian threatens Nuala with the Ruby.

CORINTHIAN

Well?! You're trying my patience.
Refuse one more time and I'll tear your eyes out before I kill you.
The necklace, it holds a boon, yes?

Nuala agonizes a few moments.

NUALA

(sobbing)

...I'm sorry, Dream Lord...

Nuala reaches for and holds the pendant in both hands.

NUALA
Here and now do I call you, Lord
Dream...

INT. THRONE ROOM - CASTLE

Dream hears the echo of her call.

DANIEL
The Corinthian. He's taken one of
your servants.

DREAM
Yes. It seems so.

Dream puts on his Helmet. Daniel looks at him with alarm.

DANIEL
Father, you cannot possibly go-

DREAM
I must.

DANIEL
This is what the Corinthian wants.

DREAM
It is what I want too.

DANIEL
He wants to kill you. Must I meet
you, my father, only to lose you?

DREAM
Let this be your first lesson:
rules and responsibilities, these
are the ties that bind us. We do
what we do because of who we are.
If we did otherwise, we would not
be ourselves. I will do what I
must.

(upbeat)
I do not think I will die. We will
converse later, my son.

Dream's helmet glows. Matthew lands on his shoulder, and disappears with him.

EXT. DREAMING

Dream and Matthew reappear, not far from Nuala and the Corinthian.

NUALA

Dream! I'm so sorry!

DREAM

Do not apologize, Nuala.

NUALA

Yes, of course. Sorry. Um, that I said sorry I mean.

The Corinthian takes off his glasses. He licks his lips like a hungry wolf, and grins.

CORINTHIAN

So good of you to join us, Dream Lord! At last!

DREAM

Let Nuala go. She is no longer your concern.

CORINTHIAN

Certainly.

He lets go of Nuala, letting her collapse to the ground.

DREAM

Are you prepared to give back my tools?

The Corinthian laughs - a long, cruel laugh.

DREAM

I fail to see what is so funny.

CORINTHIAN

I don't want to fight you, Dream Lord. Why should I?

The Corinthian raises the Ruby. It GLOWS.

Suddenly, the ground beneath Dreams shifts...and rises. It shoots up into the air, a tall spire of earth, taking Dream with it. Matthew flies off.

Dream is now on a small platform. The sky darkens. Lightning flashes, thunder rolls, bringing with it spitting rain.

DOWN BELOW

The Corinthian laughs again. He walks away from the spire.

CORINTHIAN

Now I've got you.

The Corinthian spreads his arms, in ecstasy.

CORINTHIAN

Nightmares, I call you! Come and
devour your former master!

ON THE SPIRE

Dream peers down at the ground, far below. Matthew hovers nearby.

MATTHEW

Oh shit...

Dream takes off his Helmet.

MATTHEW

Whoa, boss are you crazy?!

DREAM

No. But I appreciate your concern.
Matthew, I have need to speak with
my sister. Take this to her, and
ask her to meet me here.

Dream shrinks the Helmet and offers it to Matthew.

INT. DEATH'S HOUSE

Rose still stares at the two doors, as Matthew flies in and lands on the back of the couch. He drops the helmet from his beak, which grows back to its original size.

DEATH

Matthew? What are you doing here?

MATTHEW

(out of breath)

Dream. He's in trouble.

DEATH

I'm forbidden from intervening.

MATTHEW

He just wants you to go to him.

Rose and Death lock gazes. Death goes to a coat-stand and pulls a jacket off.

ROSE

Death, please. Let me go to him.
You can at least do that.

Death considers it.

EXT. DREAMING

Death appears on the spire, next to Dream, sitting on the ground.

DEATH

What are you doing?

DREAM

Waiting for you.

DEATH

I've been worried about you.

Death sits down next to Dream.

DREAM

The last time we talked like this,
you threw a loaf of bread at me.

DEATH

I remember.

Dream pulls something out of his cloak. It's a loaf of bread.

DREAM

Here.

Death looks at it, and at him. She takes it, glumly.

DEATH

There's no pigeons up here.

DREAM

I was expecting you to throw it at
me. To tell me off, to shout at me.

DEATH

(softly)

It's too late for that, brother.

A long pause. Lightning strikes again. The Nightmares cry out: the winged ones are flying toward the spire.

DEATH

There's someone who asked to see
you.

Death waves her hand, and Rose appears.

ROSE

Dream...?

Dream stands up, looking at her. Rose embraces him.

DREAM

Hello Rose.

ROSE

Leave this place...please?

DREAM

No, I cannot leave my realm. And I
cannot defeat the Corinthian.

ROSE

What makes you believe that?

Dream shakes his head.

DREAM

The power has not returned to me.
While the power of dream is split,
the Dreaming has no master that can
compete against one with two of the
tools.

Dream looks at his sister.

DREAM

Which leaves only one option
available to me.

Death closes her eyes. Rose is puzzled for a moment, but then
she is alarmed.

ROSE

Dream, no!

DREAM

I'm afraid so.

He kisses her, tenderly.

DREAM

I never truly expressed my feelings
for you.

(MORE)

DREAM(cont'd)

I remedy that now: I suppose I love you. Thank you for coming to me. Please live the rest of your life, and remember me.

Dream nods at Death. She waves her hand.

ROSE

No!!

Rose's cry fades away as she disappears.

The Nightmares are nearly upon them. The ugly monsters gnash their teeth at Dream.

DEATH

Dream? Give me your hand.

Dream reaches out to her. Where his fingers touch hers, light emanates.

The light glows brighter, and brighter...until everything is awash in bright light.

CUT TO:

INT. DEATH'S HOUSE

Rose finds herself between the two doors. Death walks up beside her.

ROSE

He's...

DEATH

Yeah. He's gone.

Rose nods, the tears falling silently.

DEATH

Which will you choose?

Rose walks up to the white door.

ROSE

He asked me to live. I love him too much to refuse.

Rose opens the door.

ROSE

I hate love.

INT. CASTLE

Daniel cries out, writhing on the floor as power surges into him. A bright blinding light and then, silence.

Daniel slowly gets up, but he looks different. He looks exactly like a young Dream.

But not quite. He's now marble white all over, from his wild hair to his cloak.

DOWNSTAIRS

The Corinthian comes into the hall, swaggering. He sees Daniel coming down the spiral steps, and stops in his tracks.

CORINTHIAN

Daniel...?

DANIEL

No. Not anymore.

The Corinthian covers up his shock, following it with a grin.

CORINTHIAN

You look fantastic. I assume you've got all your powers then? You are now the Lord of Dreams?

DANIEL

Yes.

The Corinthian kneels, bowing his head. Daniel comes to the end of the stairs.

DANIEL

Give me the Ruby.

The Corinthian looks up.

CORINTHIAN

What? But Lord...

DANIEL

I will not ask again, Nightmare. You have done great harm to this realm.

The Corinthian gets up, backing away.

CORINTHIAN

I have not harmed you. I brought you here to claim your rightful-

DANIEL

Do not play games with me. Your cause was never a righteous one.

CORINTHIAN

...what will you do?

DANIEL

Unmake you.

CORINTHIAN

You will not!

The Corinthian raises the Ruby over his head.

CORINTHIAN

I will break it! I will break the Ruby!

DANIEL

Do not do that...

CORINTHIAN

What will breaking it do? Hurt you?
Kill you?

The Corinthian throws the Ruby down to the floor. Daniel braces himself as it shatters.

There is an immense glow. The Corinthian can't see anything for a while...but when the glow dissipates, he sees clouds. He looks up, right at --

DANIEL

His enormous face peering at him. The Corinthian stumbles back - he's in Daniel's palm.

DANIEL

I had no idea so much power was stored in the Ruby. It's overwhelming.

Daniel brings up his other hand. It holds the shattered Ruby shards.

DANIEL

But it should be contained.

Daniel forms the shards into a jewel. It turns green... emerald green. Daniel looks closer at it.

DANIEL

How cool...

CORINTHIAN

Daniel! I am your loyal servant!
Have mercy upon me!

DANIEL

I pity you, Nightmare. I would have let you live. But you took my parents away from me. For that, I must not forgive you.

Daniel closes his fist. The Corinthian's life goes out, in a puff of smoke that filters through Daniel's fingers.

INT. HOSPITAL

Rose opens her eyes. She's in the hospital.

Sitting on the bedside of her mother. Unity. Rose gazes at her mother, forlorn. She rises from the bed to smell the flowers in a vase on the nightstand.

ROSE

Hey mum. You'll never guess what's happened to me.

Unity's eyelids move. Slowly, ever so slowly, they OPEN...

ROSE

I guess I came back here because you're the only person I have. I've never been able to talk to you, but I love you. I really do.

Rose looks back at her mother. She sees an awake face, and can't believe her eyes - Rose goes pale.

UNITY

....Rose? Are you...are you my Rose?

Rose struggles to speak, to form the words...

ROSE

Mum...?

Unity smiles.

UNITY
I dreamed of you.

ROSE
I dreamed of you too.

ROSE
(V.O)
When Dream's life ended, everything
went back to normal. All the
victims of 'sleepy sickness' woke
up. Including my mother.

INT. CASTLE

Daniel sits down upon the throne. Matthew perches on his arm.
Lucien and Nuala rise from a kneeling position.

EXT. DREAMING - NIGHT

Rose walks along the beach, in the moonlight. She looks up.

ROSE
(V.O)
Every night, from that point
onward, I dreamed of only one
thing...

A shadowy figure stands not too far away. He turns to look at
her...it's Dream.

FADE OUT:

THE END