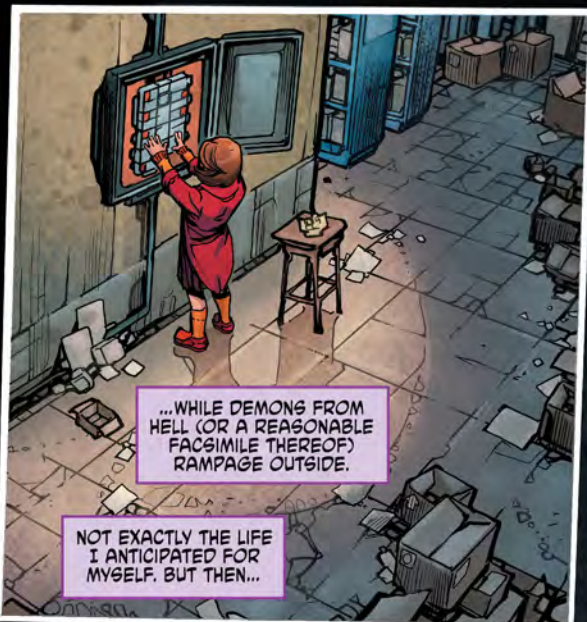


MALL-MART,  
SOMEWHERE IN  
NEVADA...

TRAPPED IN A  
BIG-BOX STORE  
IN THE MIDDLE  
OF NOWHERE...



...WHILE DEMONS FROM  
HELL (OR A REASONABLE  
FACSIMILE THEREOF)  
RAMPAGE OUTSIDE.

NOT EXACTLY THE LIFE  
I ANTICIPATED FOR  
MYSELF. BUT THEN...



...NOTHING IN MY LIFE  
HAS EVER GONE  
AS ANTICIPATED.

STILL, THIS  
PARTICULAR CHAIN  
OF EVENTS HAS  
TRANSCENDED THE  
BOUNDARIES...



...OF EVEN MY  
MOST EXTREME  
SPECULATIONS.

RELMA...?  
REVERYTHING  
ROKAY?

NOT NOW,  
SCOOBY-  
DOO.

I'M TRYING TO  
RESTORE THE POWER  
SO THAT I CAN REBOOT  
MY LAPTOP AND ACCESS  
THE COMPLEX'S  
SERVERS.



IF I CAN CONTACT  
A TEAM AT ONE OF OUR  
SECONDARY INSTALLATIONS,  
THEY MAY BE ABLE TO HELP  
US SOLVE THE MYSTERY OF  
WHAT'S HAPPENED  
TO THE WORLD.

IF THEY'VE  
SURVIVED,  
THAT IS.

I'M TALKING TO A DOG, WHO  
UNDERSTANDS WHAT I'M  
SAYING. AND TALKS BACK!



THIS IS PURE  
INSANITY.

AND I'VE GOT NO  
ONE TO BLAME...

...BUT  
MYSELF.

# The Secret History of VELMA DINKLEY



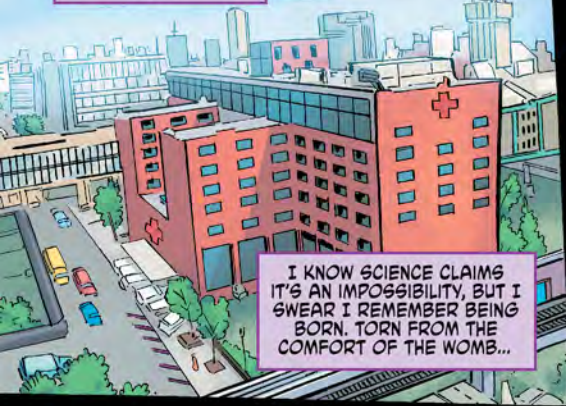
**KEITH GIFFEN & J.M. DeMATTEIS: writers**   **HOWARD PORTER: pencils/inks p.1, 17**  
**WELLINGTON ALVES: pencils p.2-16**   **SCOTT HANNA: inks p.2-16**

**HI-FI: color**   **TRAVIS LANHAM: letters**   **HOWARD PORTER and HI-FI: main cover**  
**DAN PARENT: variant cover**   **BRITTANY HOLZHERR: asst. editor**   **MARIE JAVINS: group editor**  
Based on a concept by **JIM LEE**

I WONDER WHAT MY FATHER WOULD SAY IF HE  
COULD SEE ME NOW? PROBABLY THE SAME THING  
HE'S BEEN SAYING MY ENTIRE LIFE. "VELMA--"

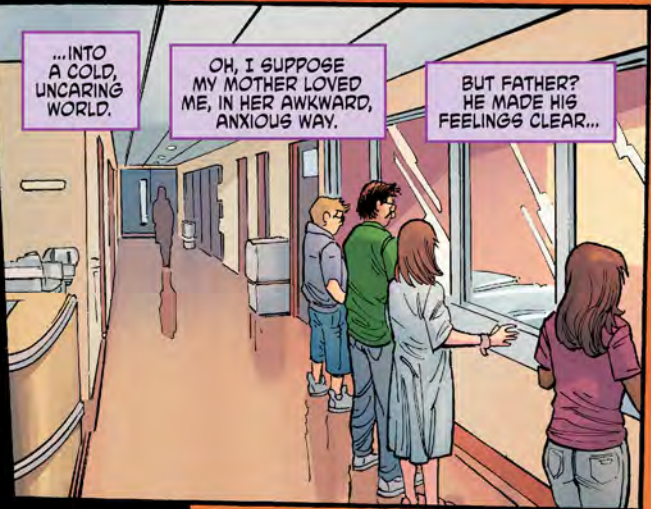


"--YOU'RE A TERRIBLE DISAPPOINTMENT TO ME."



I KNOW SCIENCE CLAIMS IT'S AN IMPOSSIBILITY, BUT I SWEAR I REMEMBER BEING BORN. TORN FROM THE COMFORT OF THE WOMB...

...INTO A COLD, UNCARING WORLD.



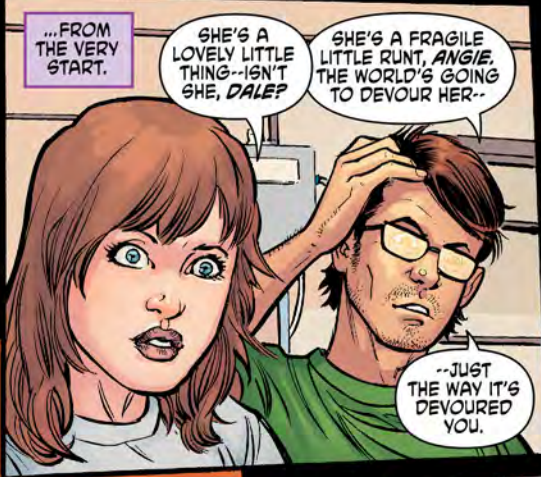
OH, I SUPPOSE MY MOTHER LOVED ME, IN HER AWKWARD, ANXIOUS WAY.

BUT FATHER? HE MADE HIS FEELINGS CLEAR...

...FROM THE VERY START.

SHE'S A LOVELY LITTLE THING--ISN'T SHE, DALE?

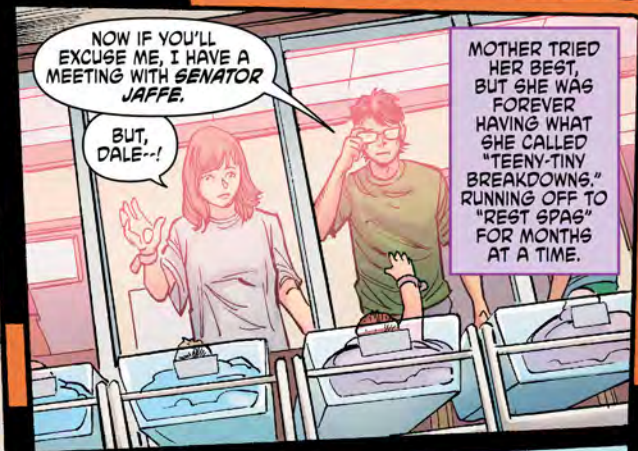
SHE'S A FRAGILE LITTLE RUNT, ANGIE. THE WORLD'S GOING TO DEVOUR HER--



--JUST THE WAY IT'S DEVoured YOU.

NOW IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME, I HAVE A MEETING WITH SENATOR JAFFE.

BUT, DALE--!

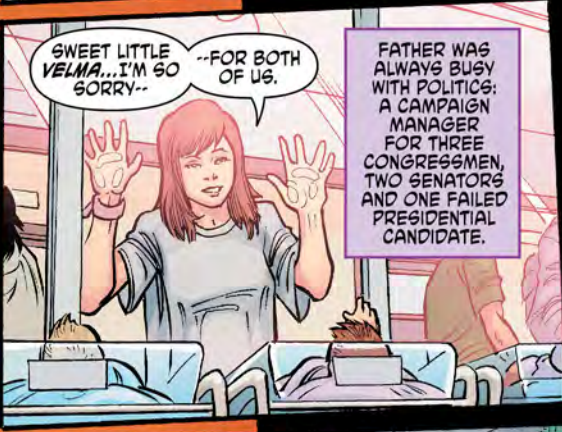


MOTHER TRIED HER BEST, BUT SHE WAS FOREVER HAVING WHAT SHE CALLED "TEENY-TINY BREAKDOWNS," RUNNING OFF TO "REST SPAS" FOR MONTHS AT A TIME.

SWEET LITTLE VELMA...I'M SO SORRY--

--FOR BOTH OF US.

FATHER WAS ALWAYS BUSY WITH POLITICS: A CAMPAIGN MANAGER FOR THREE CONGRESSMEN, TWO SENATORS AND ONE FAILED PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE.



HE BELIEVED THAT IT WAS A PERSON'S DUTY TO SERVE THE GREATER GOOD. STRANGE, OF COURSE, THAT THE GOOD HE SO OFTEN LECTURED US ABOUT...

...RARELY EXTENDED TO HIS OWN FAMILY.



THAT LEFT ME IN THE CARE OF NANNIES (MOST OF WHOM COULD HAVE CARED LESS) AND, ON THE RARE OCCASIONS WHEN THEY DEIGNED TO LOOK AT ME...

...MY BROTHERS. OR AS I CAME TO CALL THEM (WITH BOTH MOCKERY AND ENVY)...





...THE FOUR.

THEY WERE LIKE ONE MIND IN A QUARTET OF BODIES, WITH A COLLECTIVE WILL AND PURPOSE THAT NEVER INCLUDED ME.



COULD I BLAME THEM? NOT COMPLETELY. I ALWAYS FELT DIFFERENT. APART. PERHAPS IT WAS MY GENIUS (I DO, AFTER ALL, HAVE AN IQ OF 161)...

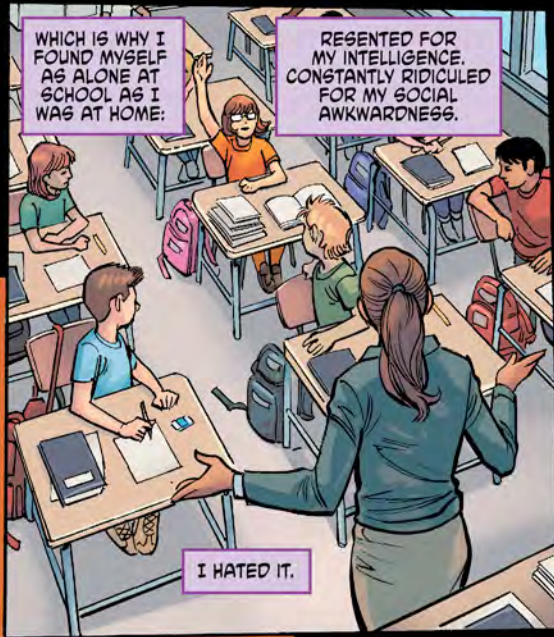
...OR PERHAPS IT WAS SOMETHING DEEPER: I WAS NEVER COMFORTABLE (AND THAT'S PUTTING IT MILDLY) INTERACTING WITH OTHERS.

INTERPERSONAL EXCHANGES WERE ALWAYS CONFUSING, EMBARRASSING-- AND, FRANKLY, NOT WORTH THE EFFORT.



WHICH IS WHY I FOUND MYSELF AS ALONE AT SCHOOL AS I WAS AT HOME:

RESENTED FOR MY INTELLIGENCE. CONSTANTLY RIDICULED FOR MY SOCIAL AWKWARDNESS.



I HATED IT.

AND I HATED THEM.



SO I RETREATED EVEN MORE...

...INTO MY BOOKS. INTO MYSELF.

AND, IN MY OWN PECULIAR WAY...

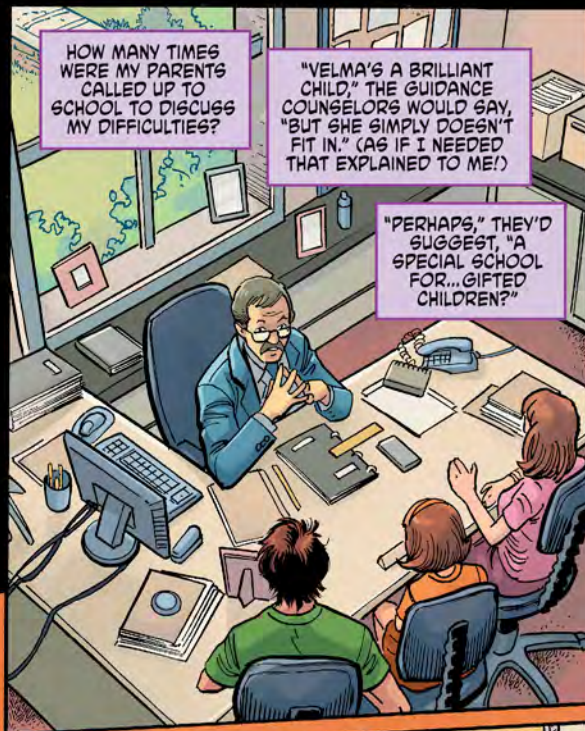


...I WAS HAPPY. OR PERHAPS...

...I SIMPLY CONVINCED MYSELF I WAS.







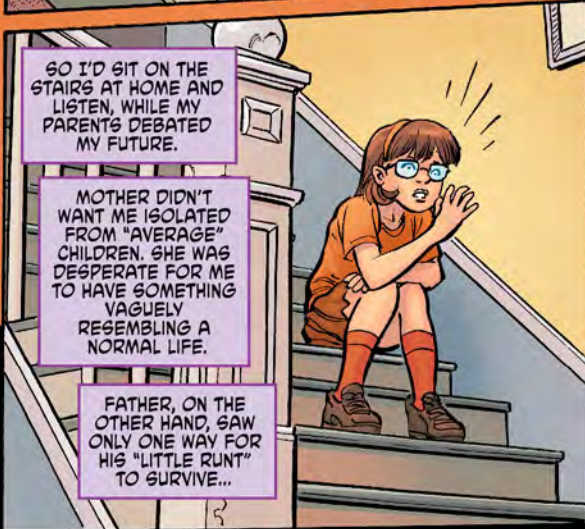
HOW MANY TIMES WERE MY PARENTS CALLED UP TO SCHOOL TO DISCUSS MY DIFFICULTIES?

"VELMA'S A BRILLIANT CHILD," THE GUIDANCE COUNSELORS WOULD SAY, "BUT SHE SIMPLY DOESN'T FIT IN." (AS IF I NEEDED THAT EXPLAINED TO ME!)

"PERHAPS," THEY'D SUGGEST, "A SPECIAL SCHOOL FOR...GIFTED CHILDREN?"



IT CERTAINLY DIDN'T FEEL LIKE A GIFT.



SO I'D SIT ON THE STAIRS AT HOME AND LISTEN, WHILE MY PARENTS DEBATED MY FUTURE.

MOTHER DIDN'T WANT ME ISOLATED FROM "AVERAGE" CHILDREN. SHE WAS DESPERATE FOR ME TO HAVE SOMETHING VAGUELY RESEMBLING A NORMAL LIFE.

FATHER, ON THE OTHER HAND, SAW ONLY ONE WAY FOR HIS "LITTLE RUNT" TO SURVIVE...



...AND HE ALWAYS WON IN THE END.

SO IT WAS ANNOUNCED THAT I'D SOON BE SENT OFF TO A VERY ELITE, AND VERY EXPENSIVE, BOARDING SCHOOL.

I SHOULD HAVE BEEN ELATED...



...BUT I WAS TERRIFIED.

PERHAPS BECAUSE I KNEW THAT, EVEN IN THAT RARIFIED ENVIRONMENT, AMONG CHILDREN WHOSE IQS AT LEAST APPROACHED MY OWN...



...I'D STILL BE AN OUTCAST.