

THE DARK TOWER

THE
DRAWING
OF THE
THREE

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My name is Susannah. See that free-falling woman? Her name is Odetta Holmes. Once upon a time, she was me. Or perhaps I should say she was part of what would become me.

And this story I'm going to tell you? It's half Odetta's story. But the other half, the nightmare half, that belongs to somebody else. But you'll learn about her soon enough.

Stories. Fact and fiction always seem to blend in them. It's hard to determine where one starts and the other stops. Kind of like me and Odetta.

It's so easy to jump around and get trapped in the byways of narrative. So easy to get lost in the byways of the mind.

But I'm getting ahead of myself. Let me think. That's such a challenge sometimes, thinking.

Right now I'm thinking about ka. Ka, like a mad train, hurtling forward, rushing us toward destinies not of our choosing.

Like that train, rushing towards me as I fall onto a train track.

Part of me, the Odetta part, is terrified. She doesn't want to die.

But the other part? She leaves fear to other folks. Especially the ones that cross her.



Honky mah'fah trying to kill me? Gonna rip his balls off!



In Mid-World, they say that time is a face on the water. But right now, with that train bearing down on me, those waters heave and swell.

It's not like my whole life flashes before my eyes, but like I'm cast upon little islands of time.

Right now, I'm in a Greenwich Village coffee house on August 19, 1959.

I'm with my boyfriend, Ben Green, and we're watching a white blues shouter named Dave Van Ronk.

I'm dressed down so the kids surrounding me won't guess how damned rich I am.

God, we look so happy together. So comfortable.

We've gotten good at appearing that way. Less good at actually being that way.

Ookay, Ben. Out with it. What're you upset about now?

You have to ask me, Odetta? Seriously?

This is the first day you've been around for a week! No one in your family knows where you disappear to!

Your dad doesn't know, your friends... not even your chauffeur, for God's sake!

If you're carrying on with some other guy, just tell me already!

Ben, I swear, I have no idea what you're talking about.



How can you keep telling me that? How can you not know?!

I swear, it's like you're two people! One I know and love, but the other...the other I don't know at all!



I can't live like this, Odetta. I'm worried and angry and jealous and scared for you all of the time. It's killing me.

Right, and of course *your* feelings are all that matter.

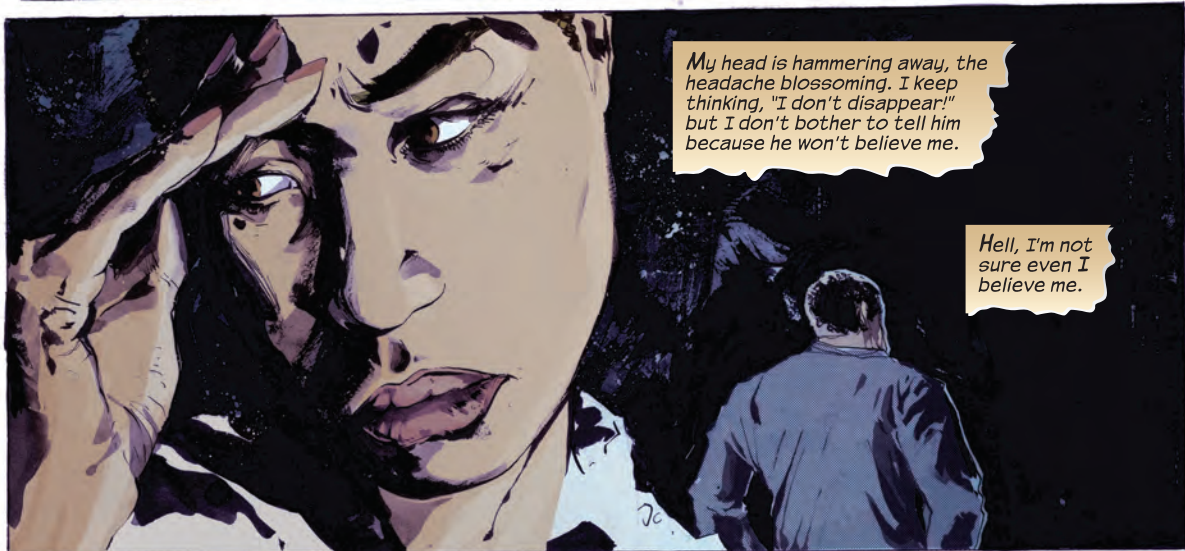


So this is...what? An ultimatum? Is that it?

Yeah. When you're ready to share where you go and what you do...

...when you're ready to be honest with me...

...call me.



My head is hammering away, the headache blossoming. I keep thinking, "I don't disappear!" but I don't bother to tell him because he won't believe me.

Hell, I'm not sure even I believe me.

Odetta-that-was can't possibly understand what is going on. How can she? All she knows is that her head is ready to split.



And then, it does.

Som'bitch. We don't need your skinny ass anyway.



Standin' there, judging me, coming off all holier-than-thou.

Since when do I have to answer to his dumbass face? Since when does he get to know where I am every freaking second?

Screw him.