

THE DARK TOWER

THE DRAWING OF THE THREE

STEPHEN KING

ODETTA HOLMES WAS BORN IN MISSISSIPPI IN 1938 TO DAN AND SARAH WALKER HOLMES. THE HOLMES FAMILY WAS WELL TO DO, THANKS TO DOCTOR DAN HOLMES' SUCCESSFUL DENTAL PRACTICE. ODETTA LED A HAPPY CHILDHOOD—THAT IS, UNTIL THE FATEFUL EVENTS OF MARCH 1944.

ON A JOURNEY TO HER AUNT BLUE'S WEDDING, THE HOLMES FAMILY WAS ATTACKED BY A GROUP OF WHITE SUPREMACISTS LED BY A MYSTERIOUS MAN CALLED WALTER. WALTER TRIED TO KIDNAP THE YOUNG ODETTA AND SPOKE OF SOMETHING CALLED THE KA. THANKFULLY, ODETTA AND HER FAMILY WERE SAVED BY THE LEAGUE OF THE GILEADITES, LED BY BERT ALBUENO. BUT WALTER CALLED HIM BY A DIFFERENT NAME: CUTHBERT ALLGOOD.

ON HER TRIP BACK HOME FROM THE WEDDING, HOWEVER, ODETTA FOUND HERSELF IN DANGER AGAIN. A SERIAL KILLER NAMED JACK MORT DROPPED A BRICK FROM A WINDOW IN A TALL BUILDING AND HIT ODETTA ON THE HEAD, SENDING HER INTO A DEEP COMA.

WHILE ODETTA WAS UNCONSCIOUS IN THE HOSPITAL, SHE RECEIVED A VISIT FROM NONE OTHER THAN WALTER—THE SAME WALTER THAT TRIED TO KIDNAP HER ONLY WEEKS BEFORE. HE SPRINKLED A MAGICAL DUST ON ODETTA'S EYES WHILE SHE SLEPT—A DUST HE SAID WOULD GIVE HER NIGHTMARES ABOUT A MAN NAMED ROLAND.

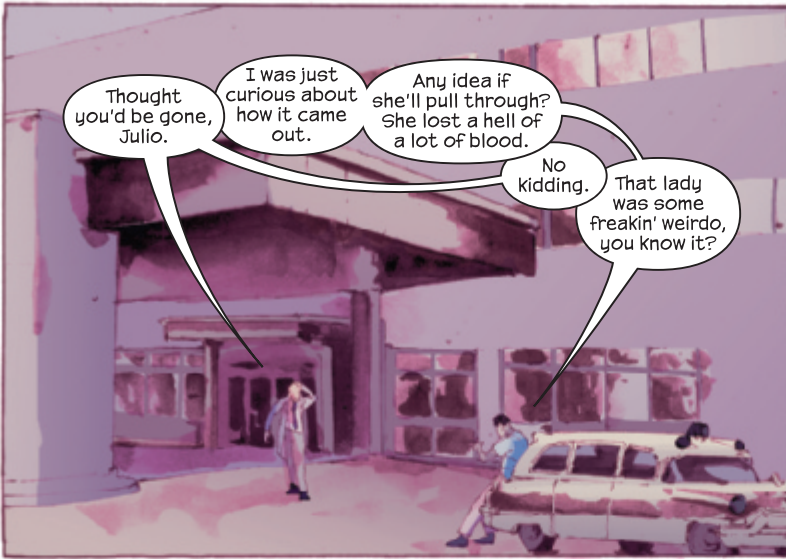
THE NEXT DAY, THE HOLMES FAMILY DISCOVERED THAT THEIR DAUGHTER HAD WOKEN UP—BUT SOMETHING WAS VERY WRONG...SHE WAS NOT ODETTA ANYMORE.

ODETTA WAS NOW TWO PARTS: DETTA WALKER, FULL OF RAGE AND PRONE TO ACTS OF VIOLENCE, AND ODETTA HOLMES, POLITE, REFINED, AND ACTIVE IN THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT.

AFTER HER BOYFRIEND, BEN, TOLD HER HE COULD NO LONGER HANDLE HER FREQUENT, UNEXPLAINED DISAPPEARANCES, DETTA WALKED AWAY, ANGRY AND BITTER. SUDDENLY, SOMEONE PUSHED HER IN FRONT OF AN ONCOMING SUBWAY TRAIN, DISMEMBERING HER LEGS.

SHE IS RUSHED TO THE HOSPITAL, CLINGING TO SURVIVAL...

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Thought you'd be gone, Julio.

I was just curious about how it came out.

Any idea if she'll pull through? She lost a hell of a lot of blood.

No kidding.

That lady was some freakin' weirdo, you know it?



She was weird, all right. It was like she was two people.

You got it, doc. Hunnert percent. So what'choo think?



About who's gonna be in the Series? White Sox. I got 'em in the pool.

I think she might be schizophrenic.

I don't know.

What'choo think about that lady?

Yeah, I know *that*. I mean, what's gonna happen to her?



She needs help, man. Who's gonna give it?

Well, I already did what I could for her.



If you already gave her all the help you can give her, you shoulda let her die, Doc.



It is late spring, 1962. Typically the weather warms up by this point in the year, but instead it's unseasonably cold.

I imagine to myself that even God is in mourning.

How quaint that after all the random cruelty that was visited upon me, I still believe in God.



They say the Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away.



He took my mind. He took my legs. And now...

He has taken my father.

Clearly He has the taking away part down cold.



Shouldn't have had Reverend Murdock give the service.

Why not, Odetta? He was fine. Respectful.

Papa never trusted ministers, even the respectful ones.

I remember Murdock once sermonized that "God Speaks to Each of Us Every Day."

Papa laughed. He said folks put words into God's mouth and heard what they wanted.



It...it was my fault. Mose. The stress of my...

...accident...

His heart gave out because of--



Because of his *work*, Odetta. Your pop worked too damned hard and that's the truth of it.

And I won't hear you claiming anything else. Now, let's go.



Andrew, care to help Miss Odetta into the car...?

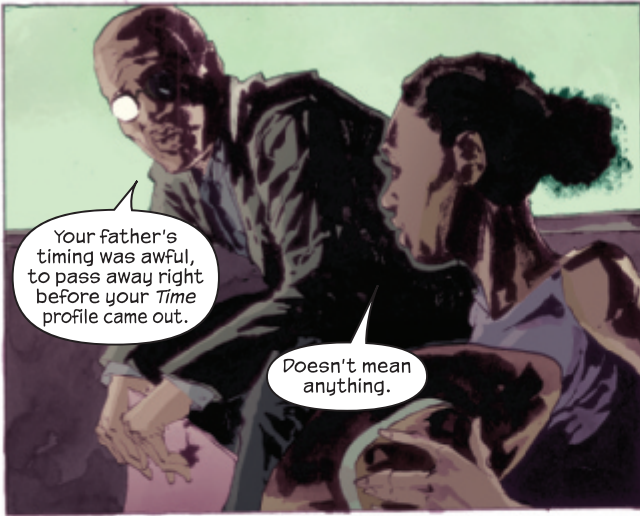


No, no, that's all right. I can do it myself.



God knows I've had enough practice at it. Learned how to do it in rehab and I've gotten rather good at it.

I don't know whether to be proud of it or abashed that I've fallen so far that getting into a car is something I take pride in.



Your father's timing was awful, to pass away right before your *Time* profile came out.

Doesn't mean anything.



It means a great deal, Odetta. You're one of the most famous--and now that your dad is gone, the richest--black people in America.



Mose, it's *nothing*. The Civil Rights Act, *that's* important. We need to get it to the White House. We need JFK to sign it.

I should be in Mississippi with the Voter Registration people...



Odetta, you can't. Your father's business needs your attention. And you're in a wheelchair...

The world needs my attention. Not one business.

And if I don't care about my wheelchair, neither should anybody else.



We're here, sir.

Thanks, Andrew.

Odetta... be careful with this civil rights business.



There are plenty of people, especially in the South, prepared to do violence over it.



Anyone tries anything, I'll bite 'em in the kneecap.