



THEN.

OR NOW. OR
TOMORROW. IT'S
ALL THE SAME IN
THIS PLACE ABOVE
THE MARCH OF TIME,
WHERE THERE IS
NO CONCEPT FOR
WHERE.

IT EXISTS.

A SINGLE
POINT.

IN ALL PLACES,
FOREVER AT ONCE.

IT IS CONTENT. OR
IT WAS. BUT THAT
HAS CHANGED.


ITS MATE IS
GONE. AND IT
IS ALONE.

IT REMAINS IN ONE
PLACE, TOUCHING
ALL THAT EXISTS,
PONDERING A POINT.

FROM THE POINT, AN
ASPECT OF ITS LOST MATE
EMERGES. IT SMELLS OF
LESSER GEOMETRIES.

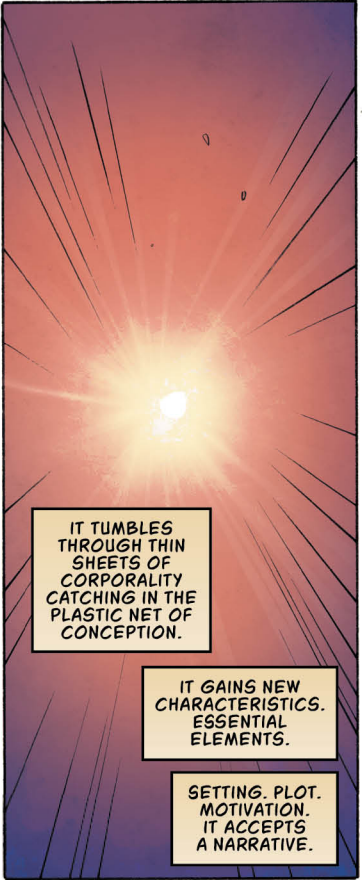
"COME WITH ME.
SHARE THIS STORY,"
ITS MATE SAYS.

IT HAS NO
REASON TO DISTRUST.
IT HAS NO CONCEPT OF
A LIE. INFORMATION IS
ABSOLUTE.



AND SO IT REACHES
THROUGH THE VEIL.
AND IS PULLED.

AS IT FALLS, IT SHEDS
ANGLES. IT COMPRESSES
AND CONTORTS, UNLEASHING
ENERGY ENOUGH TO
SHATTER STARS.



IT TUMBLES
THROUGH THIN
SHEETS OF
CORPORALITY
CATCHING IN THE
PLASTIC NET OF
CONCEPTION.

IT GAINS NEW
CHARACTERISTICS.
ESSENTIAL
ELEMENTS.

SETTING. PLOT.
MOTIVATION.
IT ACCEPTS
A NARRATIVE.



HERE, IN THIS
LEVEL OF LESSER
DIMENSIONS, IT
GAINS A NAME.

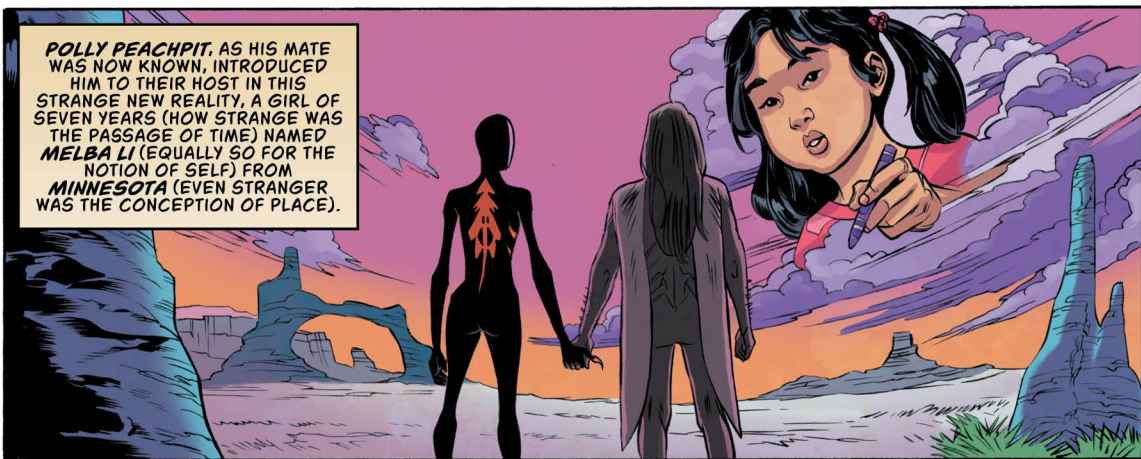
CHARLIE
CHOCHECHERRY.

WELCOME TO
THE FALLS, MY
LOVE.

IMAGINARY FIENDS THE CAT'S PAW PART 3

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POLLY PEACHPIT, AS HIS MATE WAS NOW KNOWN, INTRODUCED HIM TO THEIR HOST IN THIS STRANGE NEW REALITY, A GIRL OF SEVEN YEARS (HOW STRANGE WAS THE PASSAGE OF TIME) NAMED **MELBA LI** (EQUALLY SO FOR THE NOTION OF SELF) FROM **MINNESOTA** (EVEN STRANGER WAS THE CONCEPTION OF PLACE).



SHE SHOWED HIM THE WORLD MELBA HAD CREATED, EQUALLY BEAUTIFUL AND TERRIFYING, AND THE MINOR, UNANCHORED CONCEPTS SHE HAD AUTHORED.

SHE INTRODUCED HIM TO THE BIZARRE ENERGIES THAT COULD BE HARNESSSED FROM THIS REALM.



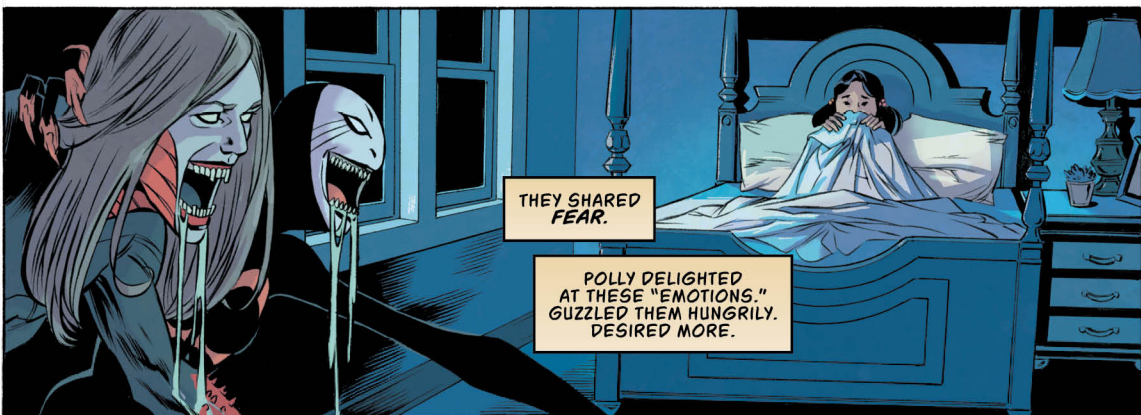
POLLY AND CHARLIE SHARED JOY AND EXCITEMENT.

LUST AND PASSION.



THEY SHARED FEAR.

POLLY DELIGHTED AT THESE "EMOTIONS." GUZZLED THEM HUNGRILY. DESIRED MORE.





AND AS SHE CONSUMED, SHE GAINED A NEW BELIEVER IN MELBA'S FRIEND, BRINKE CALLE. POLLY'S NARRATIVE STRENGTHENED AND BLOSSOMED AT THE EXPENSE OF OTHER CREATIONS.



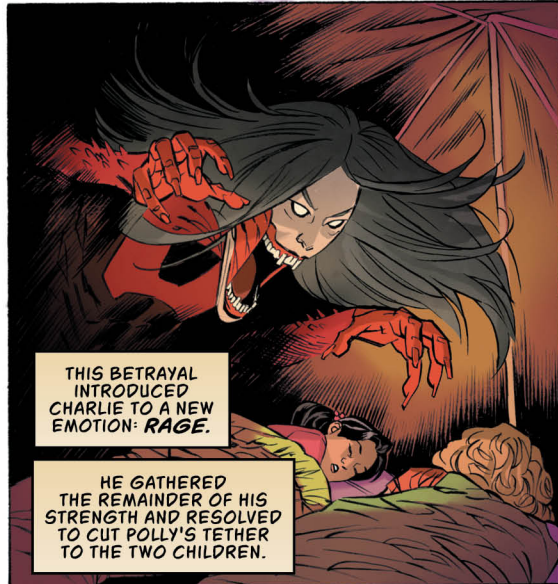
EVEN CHARLIE. AS HIS NARRATIVE DIMINISHED HIS PAST WAS ERASED OR MADE IRRELEVANT.

HE WAS BECOMING A MINOR CONCEPT...



A BIT PLAYER IN A STORY THAT WAS BECOMING INCREASINGLY POLLY'S.

HE WAS NOTHING TO HER IN THE FACE OF HER HUNGER. AND SOON HE WOULD BE NOTHING AT ALL.



THIS BETRAYAL INTRODUCED CHARLIE TO A NEW EMOTION: RAGE.

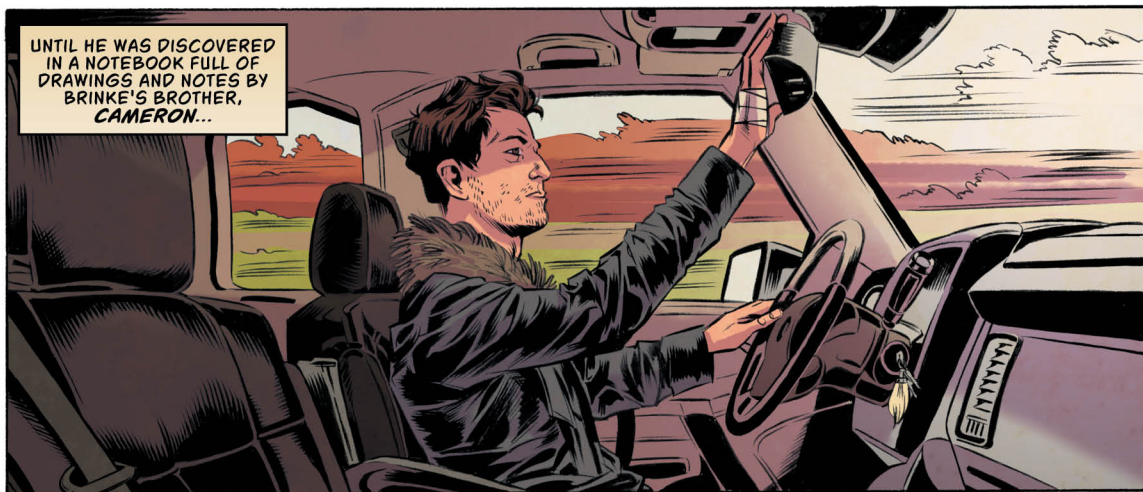
HE GATHERED THE REMAINDER OF HIS STRENGTH AND RESOLVED TO CUT POLLY'S TETHER TO THE TWO CHILDREN.



BUT POLLY WAS TOO POWERFUL, AND CAST HIM OUT OF THE FALLS, SENDING HIM TUMBLING THROUGH THE ABYSS OF ABANDONMENT.



UNABLE TO RETURN TO THE PLACE WHERE HE HAD CONTENTEDLY EXISTED IN ALL PLACES AT ONCE, FOREVER, CHARLIE WAITED ALONGSIDE FORGOTTEN PLAYTHINGS AND CASTAWAY NOTIONS.



UNTIL HE WAS DISCOVERED IN A NOTEBOOK FULL OF DRAWINGS AND NOTES BY BRINKE'S BROTHER, CAMERON...



A CONFUSED AND GUILT-RIDDEN BOY SEARCHING FOR A REASON WHY MELBA LI WOULD TRY TO MURDER HIS SISTER, HER BEST FRIEND, SEARCHING FOR ANY REASON AT ALL.



AS THE COURT CASES UNFOLDED AND MELBA BLAMED HER "INVISIBLE IMAGINARY FRIEND" FOR THE ATTACK, CAMERON'S ANGER FED CHARLIE, CREATING A MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP.

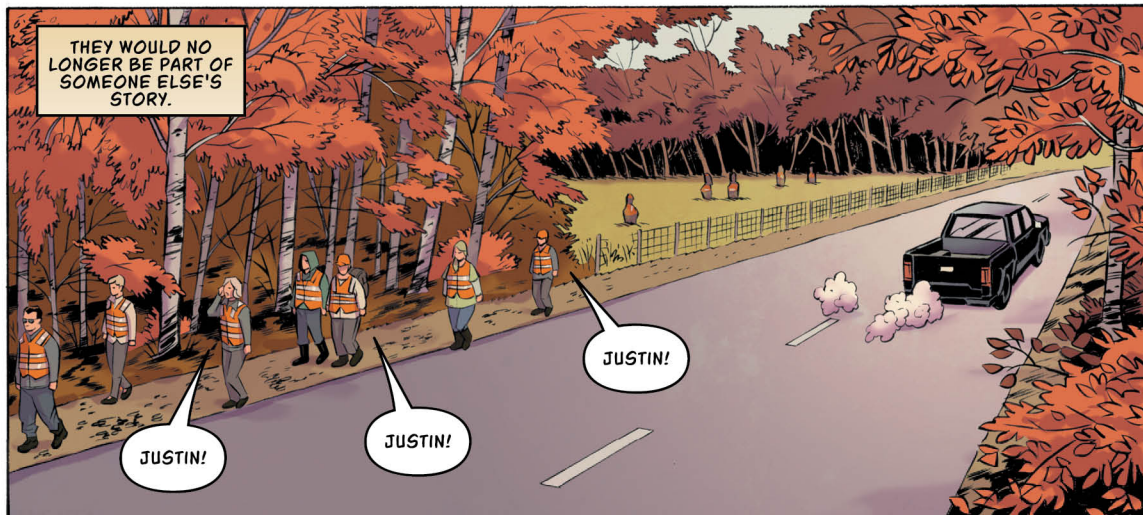
IS MAIDEN SPRINGS UP AHEAD THIS WAY?



YUP, ABOUT THREE MILES, PAST THE RIVER. JUST WARNING YA, IT'S A GHOST TOWN. EVERYBODY'S OUT LOOKING FOR THE KID THAT GOT PLUCKED FROM FOGGY BOTTOM CAMPGROUNDS A FEW DAYS AGO.

THANK YOU. AND, HEY...GOOD LUCK.

THAT PARTNERSHIP HAD LED THEM HERE, WITH ONLY ONE DESIRE BETWEEN THEM.



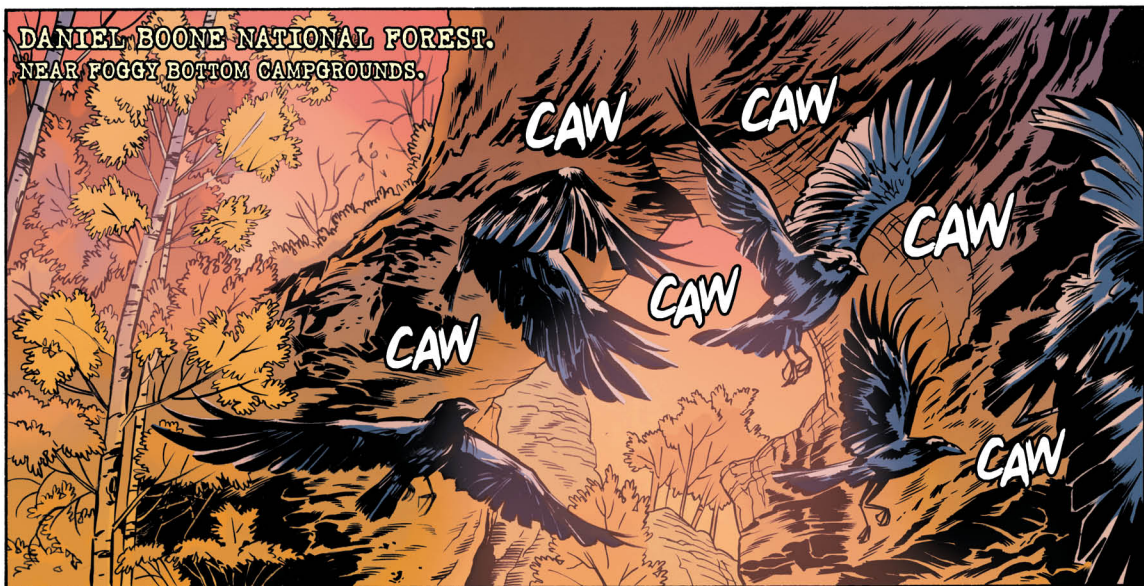
THEY WOULD NO LONGER BE PART OF SOMEONE ELSE'S STORY.

JUSTIN!

JUSTIN!

JUSTIN!

DANIEL BOONE NATIONAL FOREST.
NEAR FOGGY BOTTOM CAMPGROUNDS.



HUH.
USUALLY THE
MAGPIES ARE
HAPPY TO SEE
ME. SOMETHIN'
SPOOKED
'EM.



HM.
I WONDER
WHAT.

BEAUTIFUL,
SOFT NIGHT
BUGS! COME PLAY
WITH POLLY
PEACHPITI!



NOT SURE HOW MUCH
FARTHER YA WANNA GO INTO
THE WOODS HERE, AGENT
CROCKETT, BUT I CAN
TELL YA AGAIN.

AIN'T BEEN A
CATAMOUNT OR ANY OTHER
BIG CATS IN *SOUTHERN
KENTUCKY GOIN'* ON AT
LEAST A HUNDRED YEARS.
I SWEAR MY RANGER
BADGE ON IT.