

ED BRUBAKER SEAN PHILLIPS

FATALITY



Number Five

20
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Image

Previously...

Hank Raines has been seduced into a dangerous affair by a woman named Josephine, who is not what she seems. Following the brutal murder of Hank's wife, and the reveal of Jo's strange effect on men, Hank goes in search of her... only to be caught by a deadly Satanic cult. Meanwhile, Walt Booker, a crooked cop and Jo's former lover, has his own plans for Jo...



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Chapter Five

WALTER FELT HIS SHIRT STICK TO
THE BLOOD ON HIS ARM WHEN
HE GOT OUT OF THE CAR.

THE WOUNDS SHOULD'VE
BEEN DRY BY NOW.



HE HADN'T CARVED
TOO DEEPLY.



IT MUST BE
HIS DISEASE.



JUST BEFORE THE RITUAL, HE'D
COUGHED UP MORE BLOOD
THAN HE THOUGHT POSSIBLE.



IT WAS SURPRISING
HE COULD EVEN
WALK RIGHT THEN...

... BUT HE'D NEED *MUCH*
MORE STRENGTH TO DO
WHAT HE HAD TO.

COFFEE
SHOP



JOSEPHINE FELT
FEVERISH AND
SICK... EVEN EDGY.

SHE WASN'T USED TO THAT,
NOT SINCE THE EARLY DAYS
OF HER NEW LIFE.

BUT LAST NIGHT
THERE'D BEEN
POLICE AT HER
HOTEL, CORDONING
OFF A CRIME SCENE
IN THE LOBBY.

AND TODAY SHE
COULDN'T FIND
HANK, OR FEEL
HIM IN HER
THOUGHTS.

SHE DIDN'T EVEN
KNOW WHY SHE'D
COME HERE...

WHY SHE'D TRUST
THAT WALTER -


OH!

YOU'RE
HERE...
I...


I SAID
I'D MEET
YOU.

BUT SHE HADN'T FELT
HIM APPROACHING.

YES...



SHE USED TO SENSE HIM...
LIKE HE WAS A PHANTOM,
LINKED TO HER.



SO... YOU
HAVE
THE...?

YEAH.




I WAS
ONLY EVER
KEEPIN' IT
FOR YOU...




HAVE -- DID YOU
TRANSLATE
ANY MORE?




NO...



BUT HE'D STARED AT IT
SO LONG THAT HE
NEARLY LOST HIS MIND...



AN UNSPOKEN LANGUAGE
WRITTEN ON THE SKIN OF
SOME ANCIENT WYRM...



HE'D TAKEN IT AND ONE
OTHER THING FROM
THE ALTAR THAT DAY...

THE DAY HE *SAVED* JOSEPHINE THE FIRST TIME...

SO, WHAT WAS THE *PLAN*, JO?

YOUR *REPORTER* MAKES MY LIFE HELL, AN' WHILE I'M DISTRACTED...

YOU GET YOUR HANDS ON *THAT* AN' THE TWO OF YOU RACE THE SUNSET?

ESSENTIALLY... YES.

BUT YOU CAN *NEVER* COUNT ON PLANS...

OR I CAN'T, AT LEAST.

AND HOW DID *LEROY KRESSLER* FIT INTO YOUR PLANS?

WHAT? HOW DO YOU KNOW ABOUT...?

BECAUSE I'M *WORKIN'* HIS MURDER...

WHICH WAS A *RITUAL SACRIFICE*.

...WHAT...?

TRIED TO TELL YOU I *DIDN'T* SUMMON THEM, THEY WERE *ALREADY* HERE.

AN' IT WASN'T A *COINCIDENCE* I GOT THAT CASE.


THEY WERE *LOOKIN'* FOR ME.



SOMEHOW
THEY'RE TRACKING
YOUR SCENT.



OH GOD,
HANK.



THE NAME STABS
WHAT'S LEFT OF
HIS HEART.




I COULDN'T
FIND HIM...
HE'S MISSING
- HE -

HEY.



WALTER... IS
THAT *BLOOD*
ON YOUR
SLEEVE?




AND HE HOLDS ONTO
THAT FEELING.

YES.



KRAAK



DON'T WORRY...
I'LL TAKE YOU
TO HIM.

WHEN HANK AWOKE, HE FELT DRUGGED AND CONFUSED...

BUT SOON, TERROR SWEEPED THROUGH HIM AGAIN. FRESH. HOT.

IT'S LIKE COMING HOME, IN A WAY...

HE WAS TOO SCARED TO EVEN SCREAM.

I WAS JUST A BOY THE LAST TIME I WAS HERE...

JUST A PERSON.

THAT WAS WHAT, 1906? FIFTY YEARS AGO?

SURPRISED SO MANY OF THESE TUNNELS SURVIVED...

BUT YOU CAN'T IMAGINE WHAT THAT WAS LIKE...

...JUST BEING IN THEIR PRESENCE, EVEN FOR A MOMENT...

AND NOW YOU, DOMINIC HENRY RAINES...

YOU'RE GOING TO HELP ME SEE MY GOD AGAIN.

WHAT -
WHA -
WHAT -- ?


GET HIM DOWN FROM THERE.



I WANT YOU TO UNDERSTAND HOW LUCKY YOU ARE, RAINES...

YOU'VE STEPPED AWAY FROM THE RABBLE...

THANKS TO YOUR WOMAN.




ALTHOUGH YOU WON'T BE THANKING HER, I'M SURE.

WH -- WHERE... WHERE ARE WE...?




UNDERNEATH YOUR CITY.

IN ITS BOWELS.



THIS IS WHERE HER PREDECESSOR DIED, WHEN SAN FRANCISCO NEARLY FELL INTO THE SEA...

HEH HEH...



GOD, WHAT A GLORIOUS DAY THAT WAS.

...I DON'T... YOU SAID 1906...?



WALT FELT ELECTRIFIED.
THE HIDDEN MARKINGS ON
HIS ARMS WERE *PULSING*.

GOT A
LIGHT?

NO.

GOD, HE HATED
USING SPELLS.

WELL,
SHIT...

SO, YOU
MADE THE
DEADLINE...

I HOPE SHE
ISN'T TOO
DAMAGED?

SEE FOR
YOURSELF...

YEEESSSS...
GET HER
OUT.

GIVE
HER.

HOLD IT. WE
HAD A *DEAL*,
BISHOP.

WHAT
ABOUT MY
CURE?

OH, YOU'LL
GET IT... YOU
DON'T TRUST
ME?

WHAT
DO YOU
THINK?

I THINK YOU
KNOW HOW
COMPLICATED THESE
TRANSACTIONS
ARE...

AND THAT I
KEEP MY
WORD.

DAMN IT...
WHERE IS THAT
LIGHTER?

NOW,
GIVE ME
THE - OH.

IS THAT
BLOOD
MAGIC,
BOOKER?

WHY
WOULD
YOU BE
USING -

YOU --



--STUPID BASTARD.

AHHH!

BISHOP'S GRIP WAS LIKE ICE THAT BURNED.



AND WALT BEGGED FOR WHATEVER STRENGTH WAS LEFT IN HIM...

STUPID LYING CUNT... STUPID...



...AS HE REACHED FOR THE OTHER THING FROM THE ALTAR THAT DAY.



A STONE DAGGER...



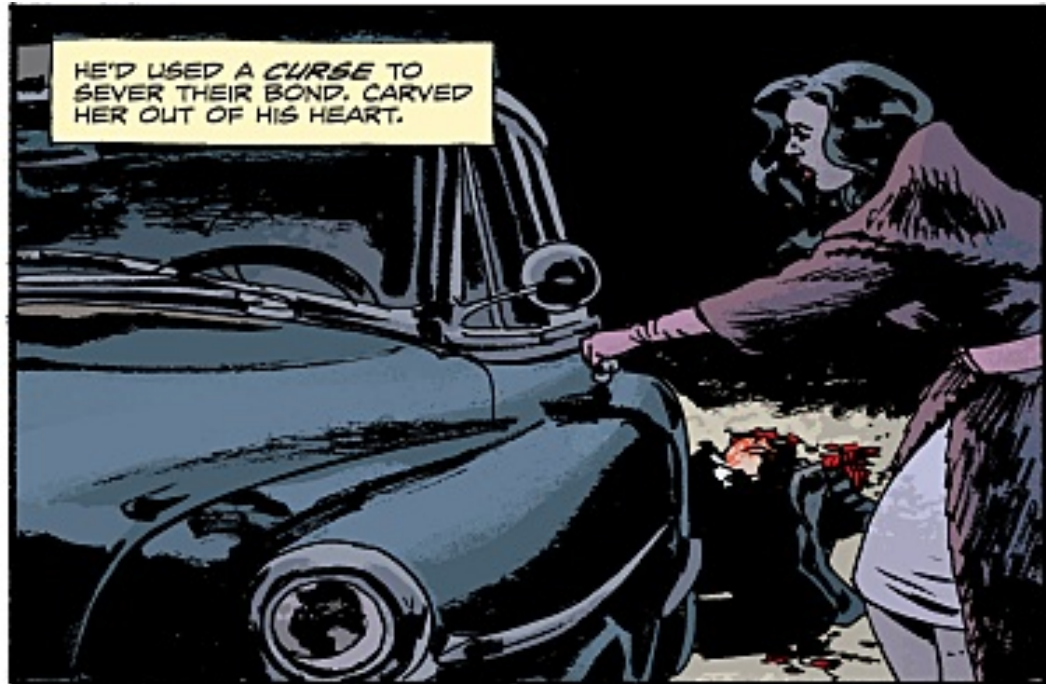
OLDER THAN HISTORY, SHARPENED BY TIME.

GYAAAA --!





HE'D USED A CURSE TO SEVER THEIR BOND, CARVED HER OUT OF HIS HEART.



IT WAS THE ONLY WAY HE COULD USE HER LIKE HE HAD, TO LURE THE MONSTER.



BUT THEN IT GOT WORSE.



...NO...



SHE FELT HANK'S FEAR REACHING OUT TO HER...



...AND SHE CURSED HERSELF FOR THE THOUSANDTH TIME.



RUN! FUCKING RUN, SHITBIRDS!

GLUH -- !



BISHOP COULD HEAR
THE ECHOED SCREAMS
AND GUNFIRE...

BUT THE WORDS
HE SPOKE MADE
NO SOUND...

PRAYERS TO AN
UNFORGIVING
FATHER...

BEGGING FOR HIS
GAZE TO FALL UPON
HIM ONE MORE TIME...

OKAY,
BISHOP...

...I GUESS
WE'RE BOTH
SHOWING OUR
TRUE FACES
NOW.

SOMETHING WAS
WRONG, HANK
KNEW THAT.

HIS CAPTOR'S PLANS
HAD GONE OFF THE
RAILS... SOMEHOW.

AND THE GUNSHOTS
WERE GETTING
CLOSER.

WHAT THE HELL
WAS HAPPENING?



HANK?



WHAT'VE THEY
DONE TO
YOU...?

NO, JO... YOU...
YOU CAN'T BE
HERE...



I COULDN'T
LEAVE YOU
HERE...

ALL OF THIS,
EVERYTHING...
IT'S MY --



THE WOMAN!
IT'S THE
WOMAN!

GET
HER!



WALT SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ABLE TO WIELD THE KNIFE.

EACH TIME IT STRUCK, HE FELT HIS ARM WANTING TO CATCH FIRE.



BUT HE'D MADE HIS SACRIFICE.



LIKE BISHOP SAID, THERE WAS ALWAYS A COST.



FOOL... PRICK... YOU CAN'T KILL ME...



I'M NOT HERE... TO KILL YOU...



BUT HE TAKES SOMETHING FROM THIS CREATURE...



...BEFORE HE TOSSES HIM INTO THE PIT.



AND THEN THE
EARTHQUAKE
BEGINS.

AAA,
SANT!

JO!
LOOK
OUT!

LNNH...
FANN...
NNHH...

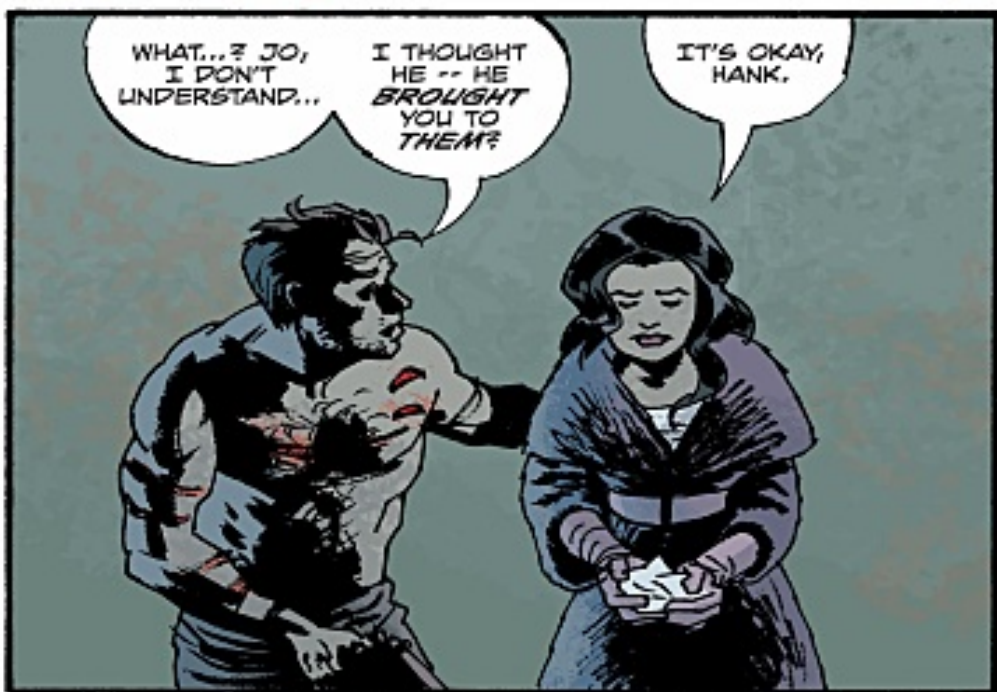
WAIT...
IS IT
OVER?

GIMME
THAT...

HEY... I
CAN'T --

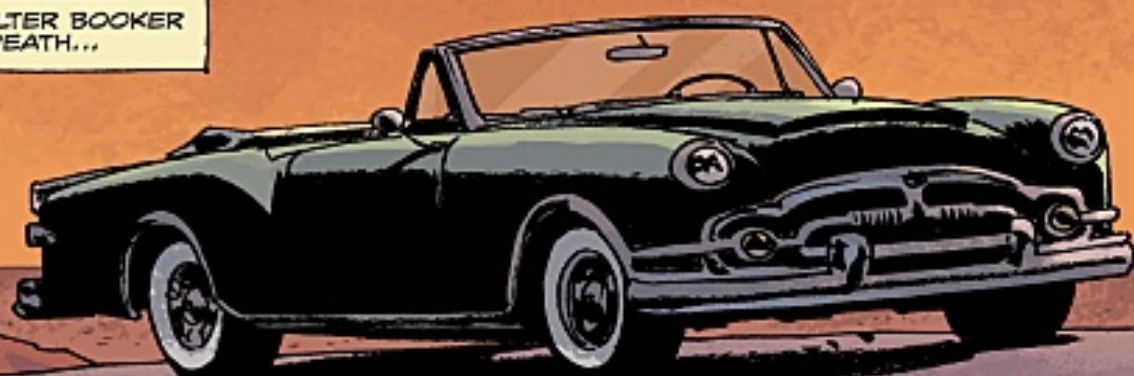






IT'S DAYS BEFORE THE BODIES ARE FOUND, IN WHAT'S LEFT OF THE TUNNELS.

AND CROOKED COP WALTER BOOKER BECOMES A HERO IN DEATH...



HE AND HIS PARTNER, VICTIMS OF THE SAME CULT THEY WERE INVESTIGATING.

WHO ARE ALSO BLAMED FOR THE MURDER OF SYLVIA RAINES AND HER UNBORN CHILD.



MORE LIES, HANK THINKS ...



...AND SHE'S THE PRETTIEST LIE OF THEM ALL.

WHAT ARE YOU THINKING?



JUST THAT I'M FREE...

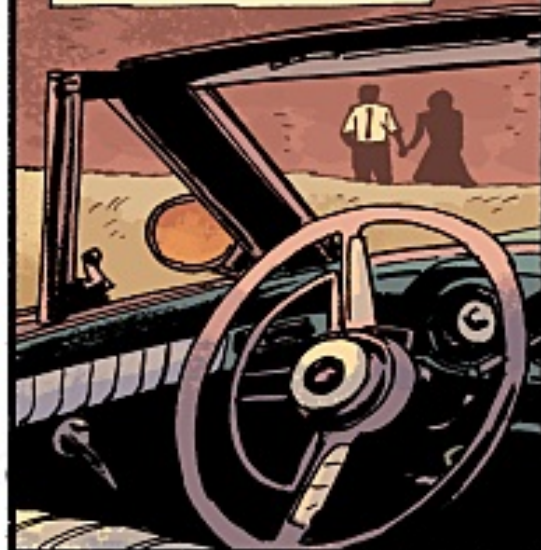
BUT IT FEELS WRONG SOMEHOW. I DON'T KNOW WHY.



HANK STILL CAN'T HELP IT. HIS HEART BREAKS JUST LOOKING AT HER.



LOST IN DREAMS OF THEIR NEW LIFE, IN A NEW CITY SOMEWHERE...



...BUT HE WISHES HE COULD CRY FOR WHAT HE LOST.



IS IT GOING TO WORK?



YES, THE BISHOP PREPARED IT HIMSELF...

IT'S BEEN OVER A WEEK SINCE HE CUT IT OUT OF THE WOMAN.

DON'T QUESTION HIS WAYS.



HAVE FAITH, BROTHER. AND SEE OUR MASTER REBORN.



WAAHHHHHHH...

FROM A DISTANT SHORE, HE HEARS THEIR CALL.



A CHANT, A CURSE, AND A BLESSING, ALL AT ONCE.



IT'S HARDER THAN HE REMEMBERS, BEING BROUGHT INTO THE WORLD.



HE MOLDS THE BODY TO SUIT HIMSELF, WITH GREAT EFFORT.



GAAHHH...
FAAAHHH...

AND IT'S ONLY THEN THAT BISHOP REALIZES WHAT THE OLD COP MEANT...



...GNNN...
AHHH...

THAT HE WASN'T TRYING TO KILL HIM.



THAT... THAT BASTARD...

HE BLINDED ME...



Epilog

I started having trouble sleeping, after that day in the library.

I'd wake from dreams of strange men prodding and poking at my limbs...

Or of me and Jo walking along the beach... Her voice washed out by the crashing waves.

And Dominic's book had begun to make me sick when I read it.

Like there was some kind of virus hidden in his words.

Still, I had the picture...

Him and the woman who I *should* have thought was Jo's grandmother...

But that isn't what I thought.

No, what I thought was *impossible*.

WINGATE
Asylum

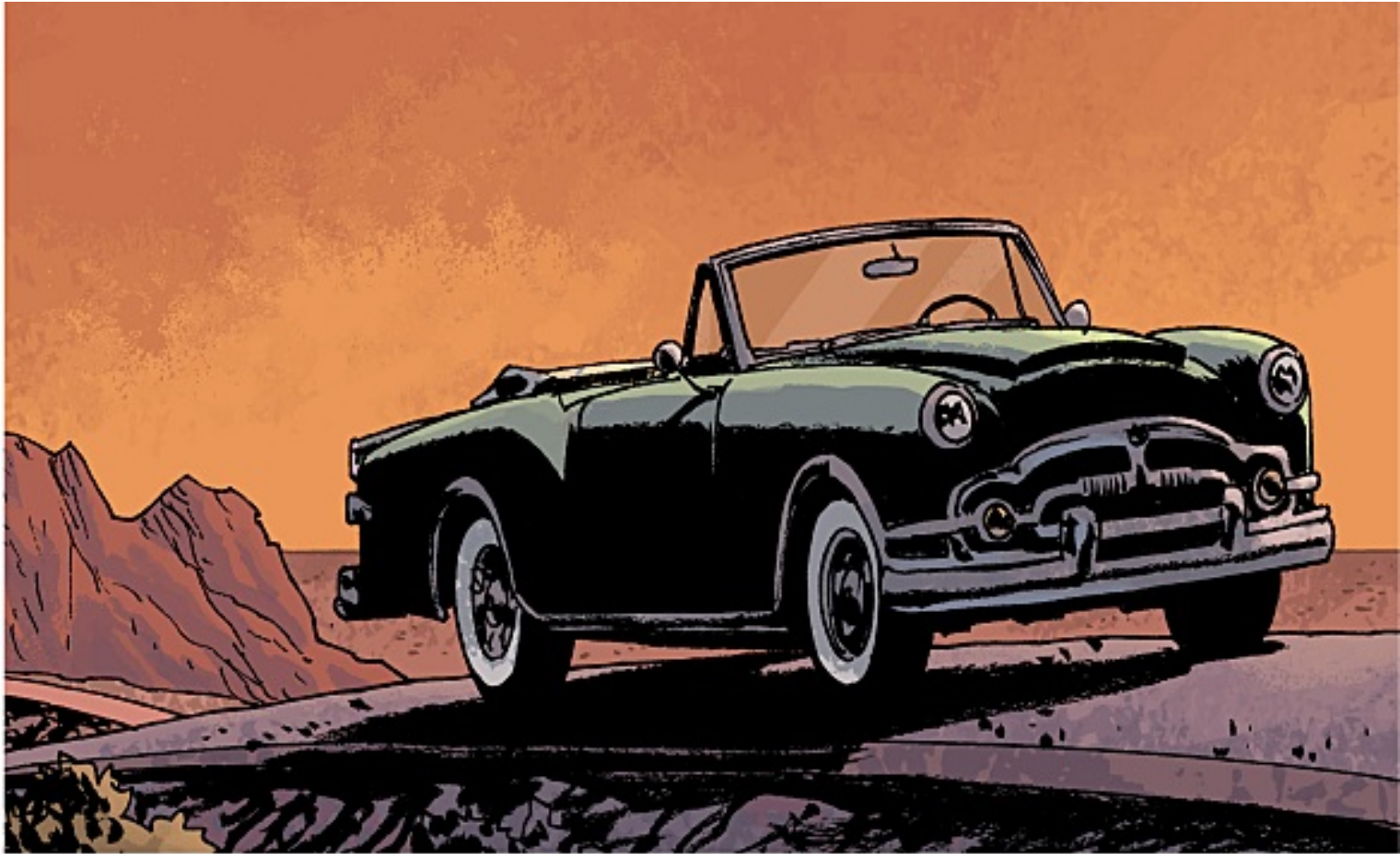




END OF BOOK ONE

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