

ED BRUBAKER SEAN PHILLIPS

# FATALE™



Number Ten

**Previously...**

Seriously, this is the last part of a five part arc, so there's only so much I can say. Miles and Josephine are plotting against the Method Church, with a stuntman named Rat. But they don't know the church has followed them back to Jo's hideaway. You should really just read the previous 9 issues, because that's just like two things... but it's where we begin this time...



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## Chapter Five



THE NIGHT BEFORE,  
JO HAD TOLD HIM  
THINGS HE HAD  
TROUBLE BELIEVING...

SO, WHAT... YOU  
HYPNOTIZE  
PEOPLE... ?

THINGS THAT MADE  
NO SENSE, EVEN TO  
SOMEONE WHO'D  
DONE A LOT OF  
DRUGS.

NO, LOOK,  
JUST READ  
THIS...  
YOU'LL  
SEE.

WHAT IS  
IT? YOUR  
DIARY?

NO, IT'S AN  
ACCOUNTING...  
AS BEST AS I  
CAN DO...

IT TOOK HIM A FEW  
PAGES TO UNDERSTAND  
WHAT HE WAS READING...

*His hands trembled as he touched  
me. That's how I knew he'd never give  
me up, no matter what it cost him.*

THE STORIES WERE ALL  
DIFFERENT, THESE MEN WHO'D  
CROSSED JOSEPHINE'S PATH...

*His partner was a member of the  
Bund, and he'd sent a telegram  
to an SS commandant in Berlin,  
describing me in detail.*

*Hal didn't hesitate to act,  
and I didn't try to stop him.*

... BUT THEIR ENDINGS WERE ALL UNHAPPY. DEATH, INSANITY, PRISON.

*It was just a ride to town, but the poor kid was trying to impress me. I never learned his name.*



SHE'D LEFT A PATH OF DESTRUCTION IN HER WAKE.

I'VE BEEN TRYING TO REMEMBER THEM ALL...



... BUT THE EARLY YEARS, I DIDN'T KNOW ENOUGH. DIDN'T PAY ATTENTION.



JO... THIS IS CRAZY... YOU'RE NOT CONTROLLING ALL THESE --

I AM, MILES. EVERYTHING IN THERE IS TRUE.



YOU HAVE TO BELIEVE ME.



SO, IT'S ALL FAKE... ?





YOU FIND WHAT THE LADY WANTED?

THINK SO...



WELL GRAB IT, THEN, MAN... LET'S BOOK.



HANG ON, I DON'T WANNA TOUCH IT...



WHAT, IS IT BOUND IN HUMAN SKIN OR SOMETHIN'?

SHUT UP.



THOUGHT YOU SAID THEY HAD LIKE TWENTY PEOPLE OUT HERE...

THEY DO, USUALLY... BUT BETWEEN GAVIN BRAGGING TO HIS PALS...



...AN' US LEAKING WORD TO OTHER "COLLECTORS" THAT SOME SERIOUS SHIT WAS CHANGING HANDS TONIGHT...



...LOOKS LIKE OUR DISTRACTION WAS BETTER THAN EXPECTED.

I DUNNO... IT'S WEIRD THEY WOULDN'T LEAVE A FEW MEN TO GUARD THEIR CASTLE...



WAIT... THINK I SAW...



OH, JESUS... *SUZY.*

FUCKIN' A...



MILES THOUGHT HE WAS GOING TO SCREAM AND RUN FOR HIS LIFE.



BUT HIS ANGER OVERPOWERED HIS FEAR.

HELP ME CUT HER DOWN.



WHAT?

WE'RE *NOT* LEAVING HER HERE.



THEN HE SAW THE PHOTO OF JO...



...AND REALIZED *WHY* THE WHOLE COMPOUND WAS DESERTED TONIGHT...



...AND HIS FEAR TOOK ITS PROPER PLACE.

OH SHIT.

SOMETIMES IF HE GOT STONED ENOUGH, JORGE COULD SLEEP AT HOME, IN HIS OWN BED.



BUT MOST NIGHTS, HE SAT WATCHING JOSEPHINE'S WINDOWS UNTIL HE PASSED OUT.



PRAYING FOR JUST ONE MORE VISION OF HER... TO HOLD HIM OVER...



BUT HE DIDN'T KNOW HE WAS PRAYING TO THE *WRONG* GODS.



HEY! WHERE YOU FREAKS GOING?!



HEY!





JO THOUGHT SHE'D FEEL BETTER AFTER TELLING MILES THE TRUTH... BUT SHE HADN'T.

IF ANYTHING, SHE FELT *MORE* REMOVED FROM THE WORLD...

...AND LESS HUMAN THAN SHE HAD IN YEARS.

AND SHE HADN'T TOLD HIM THE WHOLE TRUTH, EVEN.

...?

THAT WAS A GUNSHOT. SHE WAS SURE OF IT.

NOT A CAR BACKFIRING, NOT A FIRECRACKER.

THE STREET IS NOTHING BUT SHADOWS AND SILENCE, BUT SHE CAN FEEL IT.

THE WORLD IS WATCHING HER.



ABOUT TEN  
MINUTES INTO  
THE DRIVE...

JESUS!  
WATCH  
OUT!



...MILES REALIZES  
THERE'S SOMETHING  
WRONG WITH RAT.

ALMOST  
GOT US,  
MAN! YOU  
FUCKIN' SEE  
THAT?



EVER SINCE HE  
TOUCHED SUZY...



...IT WAS LIKE HE'D  
BEEN DOSED.

FUCK!  
IT STILL  
SEES  
ME!



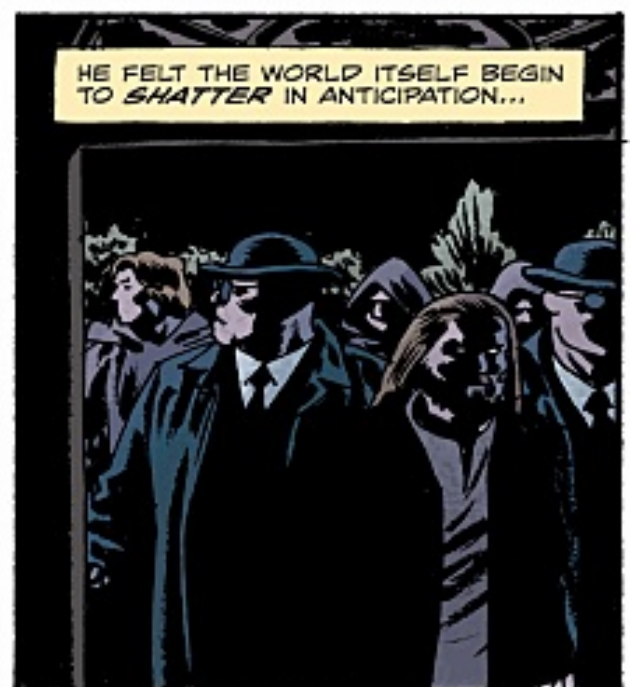
AND HE WASN'T JUST  
SPEEDING BACK TO  
JOSEPHINE'S PLACE...

...HE WAS  
RUNNING FROM  
SOMETHING.

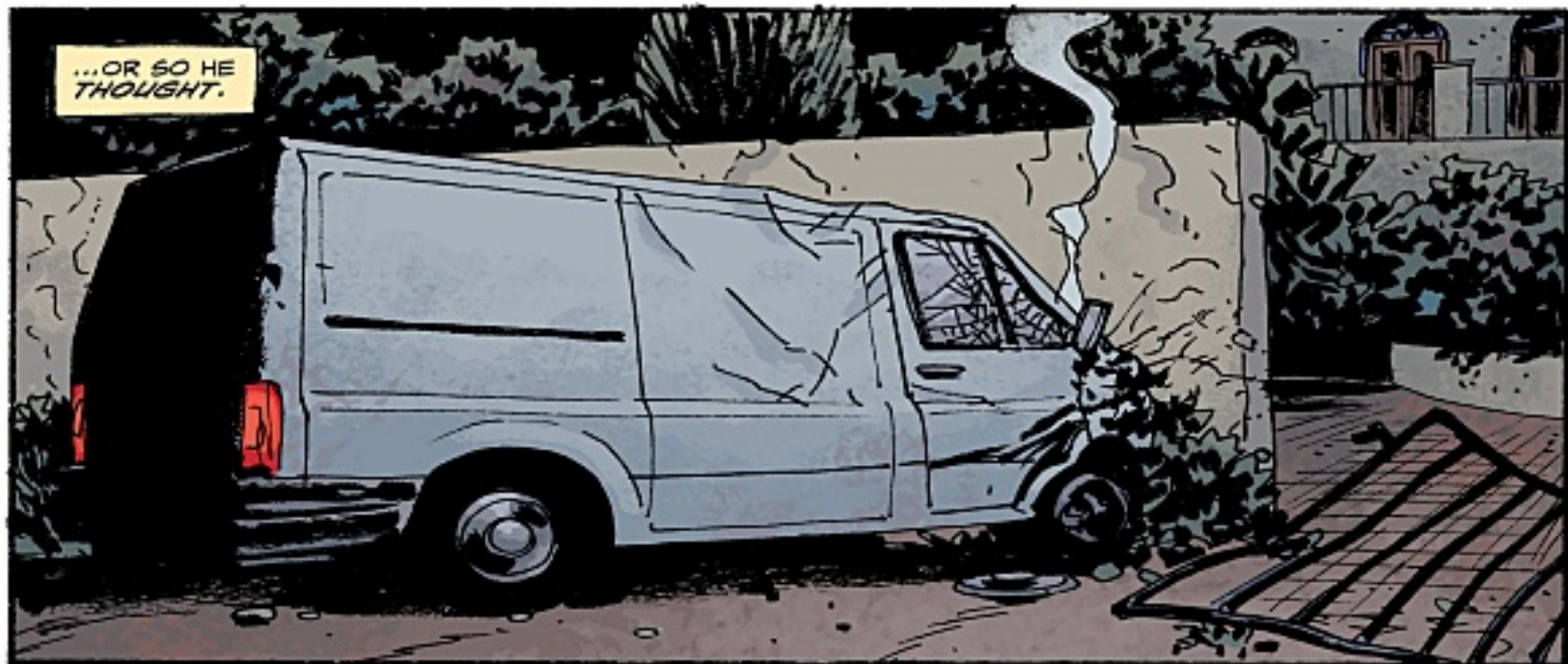








...OR SO HE  
THOUGHT.



SHIT...  
AHHH...



...RAT, YOU  
STUPID...



...FUCK...



IT HURTS *INSIDE* WHEN  
HE MOVES, BUT HE BLOCKS  
IT OUT... SOMEHOW...



HALF-BLINDED BY  
HIS OWN BLOOD...  
STAGGERING TO  
THE RESCUE...









MILES HAD BEEN DEAFENED BY RAT'S MAGNUM WITH THE FIRST SHOT...



...SO HE DIDN'T HEAR THE GUNFIRE INSIDE THE HOUSE.



NOT THAT HE COULD'VE MOVED ANY FASTER.



THE ONLY THING KEEPING HIM ON HIS FEET AT ALL...



...WAS A DRIVING NEED TO SAVE JOSEPHINE.



BUT IF HE'D HEARD THE SHOTS, HE MIGHT'VE SEEN THE MONSTER COMING...



...BEFORE IT WAS TOO LATE.

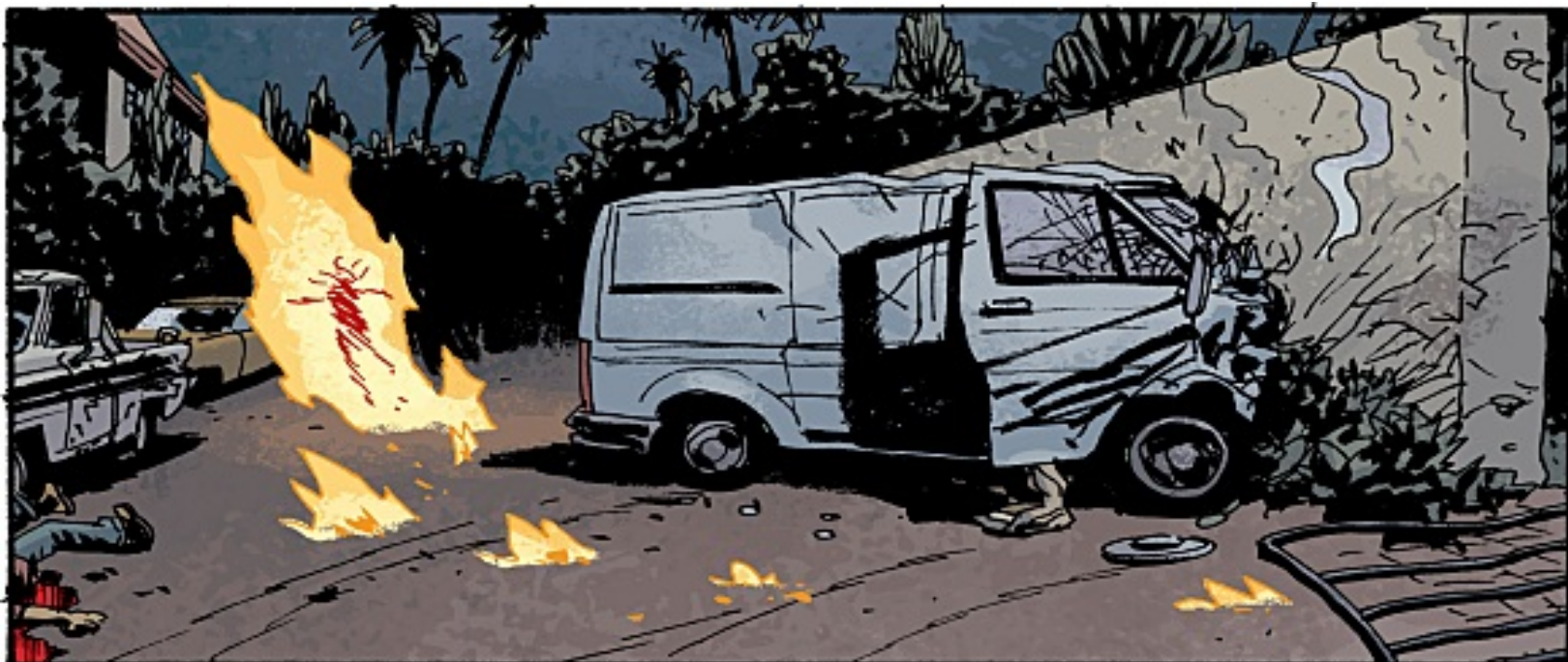
AHHH -- !



GULI -  
AHHH - !  
NAA -- !

AND THEN IT WAS.





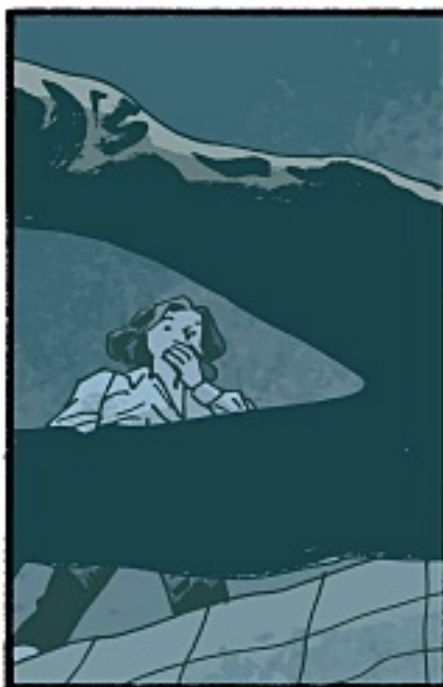
SHE MANAGES TO SAVE A FEW PRECIOUS THINGS...



... BEFORE THE WHOLE HOUSE CATCHES FIRE.



BEFORE HER VICTORY TURNS TO ASH ALONG WITH IT.



SHE DIDN'T EVEN KNOW HE'D COME BACK.

POOR MILES...  
POOR FUCKING  
MILES.

SHE'S ASHAMED AT HOW  
EASY IT IS TO GET A  
MAN TO KILL HIMSELF.

OH MILES...  
YOU BEAUTIFUL  
FOOL...

YOU DID  
IT...

YOU  
SAVED  
ME.

WHEN THE POLICE AND  
FIRE TRUCKS ARRIVE,  
THERE'S NO TRACE OF  
HER TO BE FOUND.

New Mexico —  
Two Months Later



SHE CHARTS THE RIPPLES  
SHE'S MADE, SHE'S NOT  
EVEN SURE WHY.



BUT LIKE HANK ALWAYS  
SAID, NO ONE KNOWS  
WHY THEY WRITE.



IN THE WAKE OF THE  
MASSACRE AT HER HOUSE,  
MILES HAD BECOME A  
POSTHUMOUS CELEBRITY.



THE *ACTOR* CAUGHT IN THE  
CROSSFIRE OF ANOTHER  
*HELTER SKELTER*.



THE ONE GOOD MOVIE HE'D  
HAD BEEN IN WAS PLAYING  
TO SELLOUTS AT THE  
*MIDNIGHT MOVIE* HOUSES.



AND CLAUDIA CONSTANCE  
WAS GIVING INTERVIEWS  
ABOUT THEIR "TRAGIC  
LOVE" ON THE TALK  
SHOW CIRCUIT.



THE POLICE HAD RAIDED THE METHOD CHURCH'S COMPOUND AND FOUND NOTHING BUT A FEW DAZED AND CONFUSED HIPPIY GIRLS.

SHE'D HURT HIM, BUT JO KNEW HANSEL AND HIS INNER CIRCLE WERE STILL OUT THERE.

ESPECIALLY WHEN GAVIN WILDER HAD BEEN FOUND *CHOPPED UP* AND *BURIED* IN THE DESERT.

THEY'D BE COMING FOR HER AGAIN, ONE WAY OR ANOTHER...

HEY, HEY...  
ALLOW ME,  
PLEASE...

OR MAYBE...  
SHE'D BE COMING  
FOR THEM.

THANKS.

HEY, UH...  
YOU LOOKIN'  
FOR A RIDE  
SOMEWHERE?

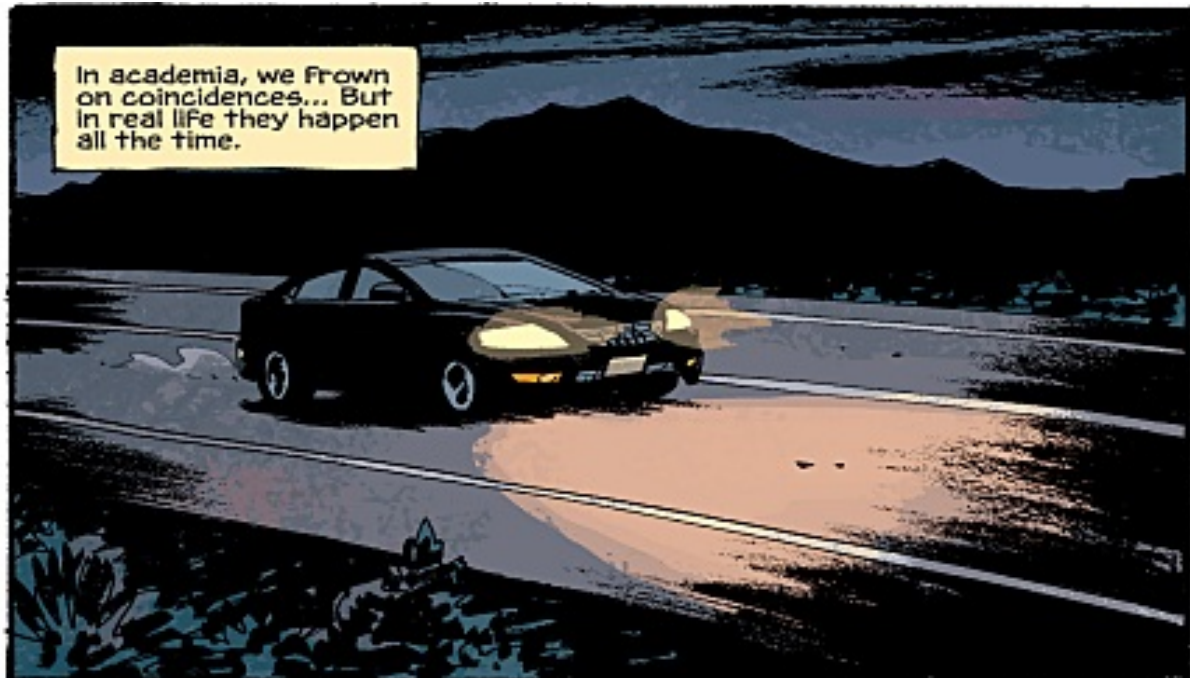
I MEAN, I  
SEE THE  
BAG AN'  
ALL...

YOU NEED  
A RIDE?  
BECAUSE I'M  
OFFERIN'.

ACTUALLY,  
HOW ABOUT I  
JUST TAKE  
THE KEYS?

# Epilogue

In academia, we frown on coincidences... But in real life they happen all the time.



They happen so often you barely even notice, really.

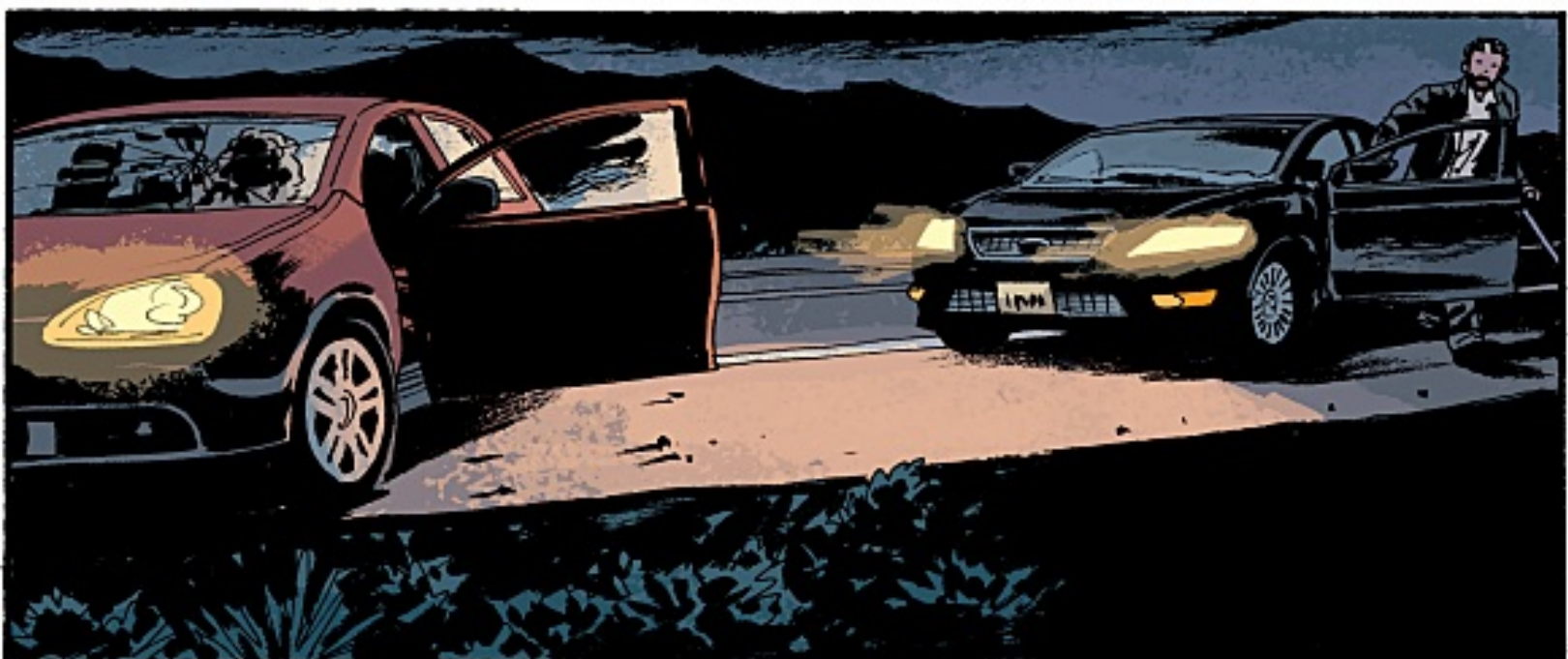


Religious people, people who *believe* in things, they call that Fate.



...WHAT THE HELL...?

And the problem with *Fate*, these same people will tell you... is it can kill you...







And it's horrible, I *know*, but my reaction to finding this *dead* woman... Who'd been *placed* in my path somehow...

...Wasn't shock.

It was *relief*.

She hadn't just stolen my money and cards, she'd taken my only *link* to Josephine.

Uncle Dominic's *manuscript*.

I was more desperate to get it back than you can understand.

So when I didn't find it in her bags, I started tearing the car apart.

Which is how the cops found me...

Covered in blood, searching the car of a woman I'd been very publically tracking.

The cop at the station tells me that again and again, like he can't get over it.

...I MEAN, NOT EXACTLY A CRIMINAL MASTERMIND, ARE YA?

He tells me how much I'm going to like *jail*, too, and he's right.

They put me in *isolation*, for my own protection.

After *eight months* waiting for trial, I'm not sure if I'm grateful.

But that's where I am when the library cart guy comes by...

...And hands me my own worst nightmare.

HEY, NICKY... CHECK IT OUT...

DIDN'T YOU SAY THIS GUY WAS YOUR UNCLE OR SOMETHIN'?

Trapped in a cell.

**A Lost Masterpiece!**  
**THE LOSING SIDE OF ETERNITY**  
BY DOMINIC RAINES

I start *screaming* ten minutes later.

**END OF BOOK TWO**



**FATALE Number Ten Ed Brubaker Sean Phillips**

**Rated M / Mature**