

GILLEN MCKELVIE WILSON COWLES

THE
WICKED
+
DIVINE
THE



ISSUE 1

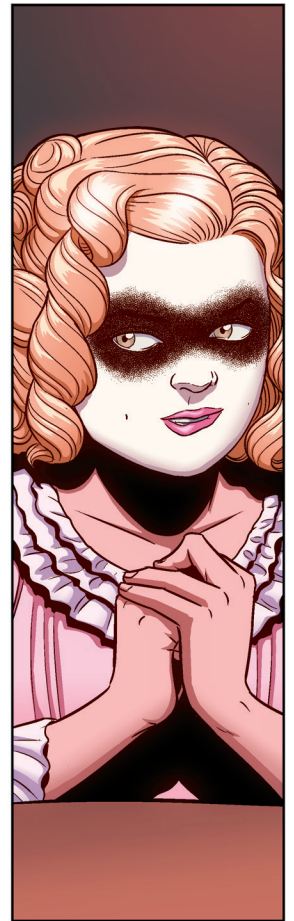
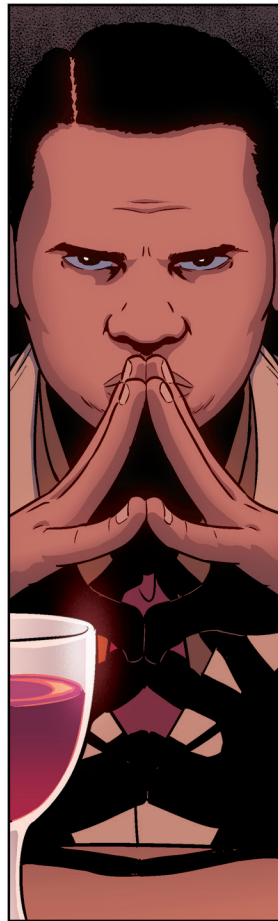
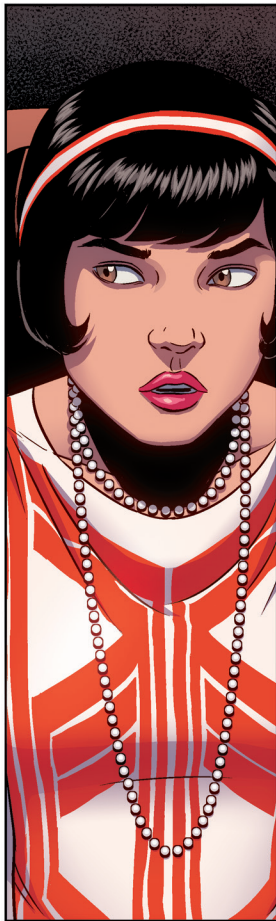


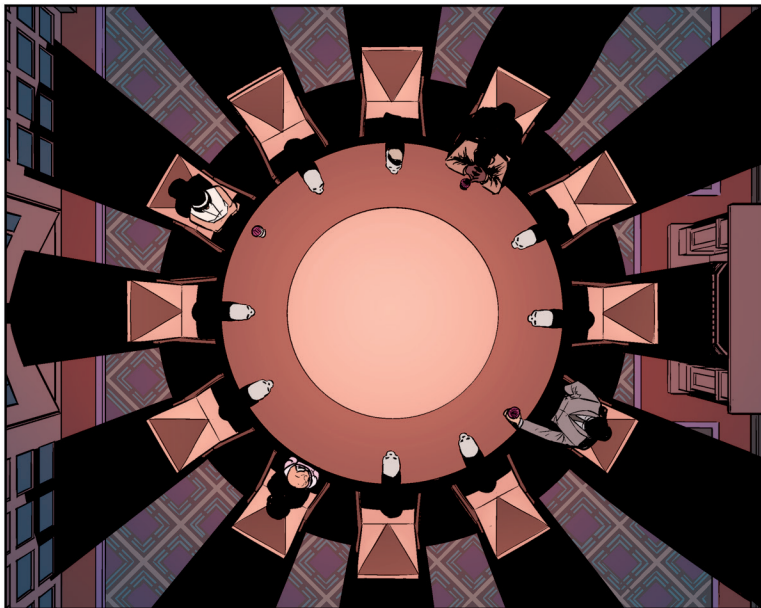
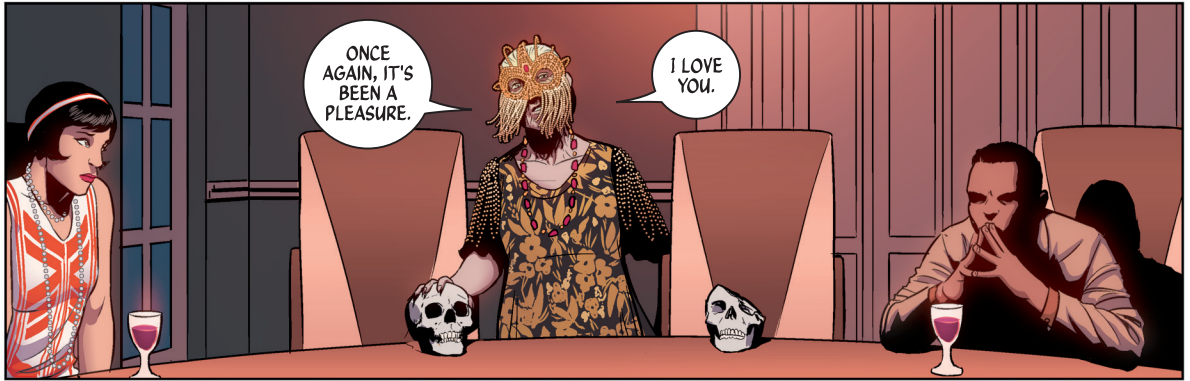
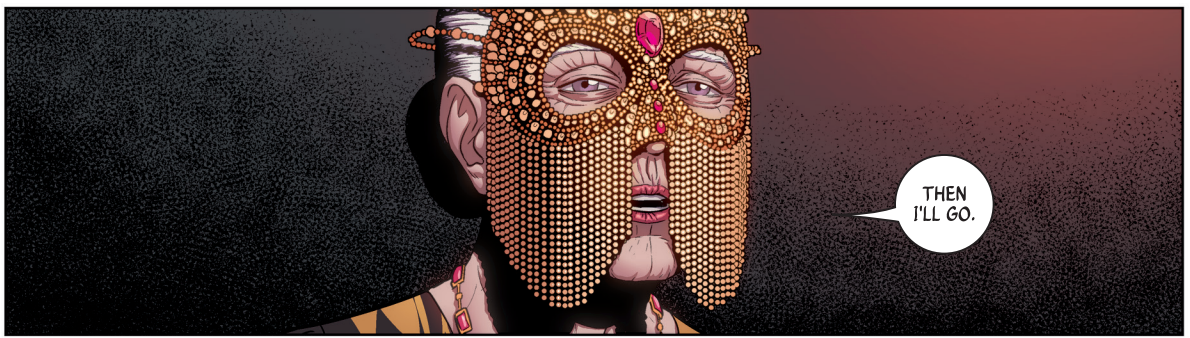
ONCE AGAIN

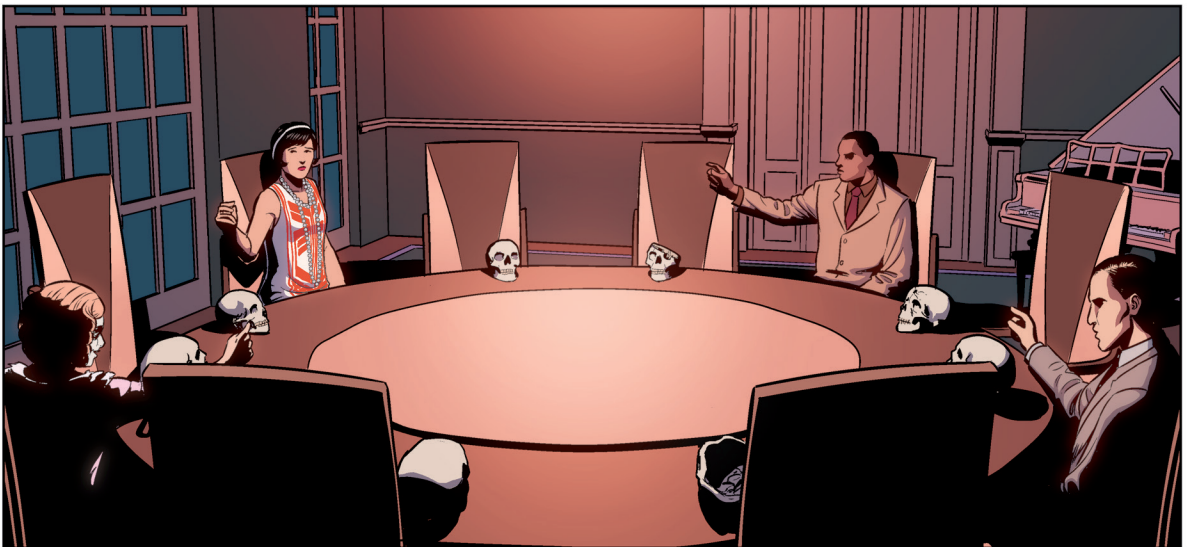
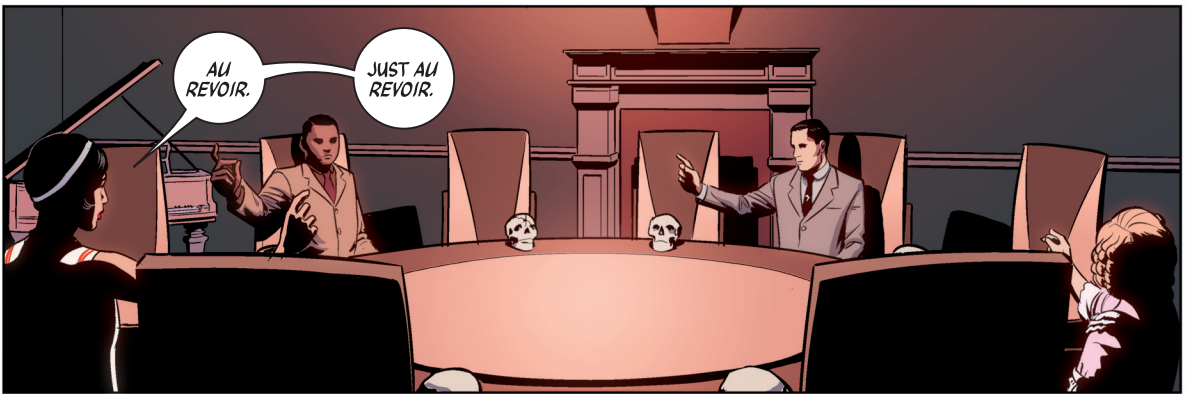
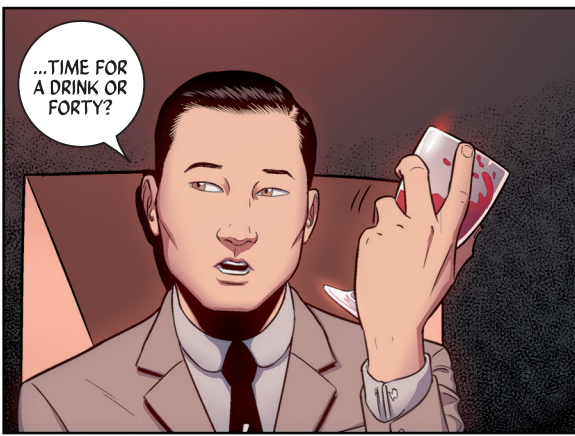
31 DECEMBER 1923

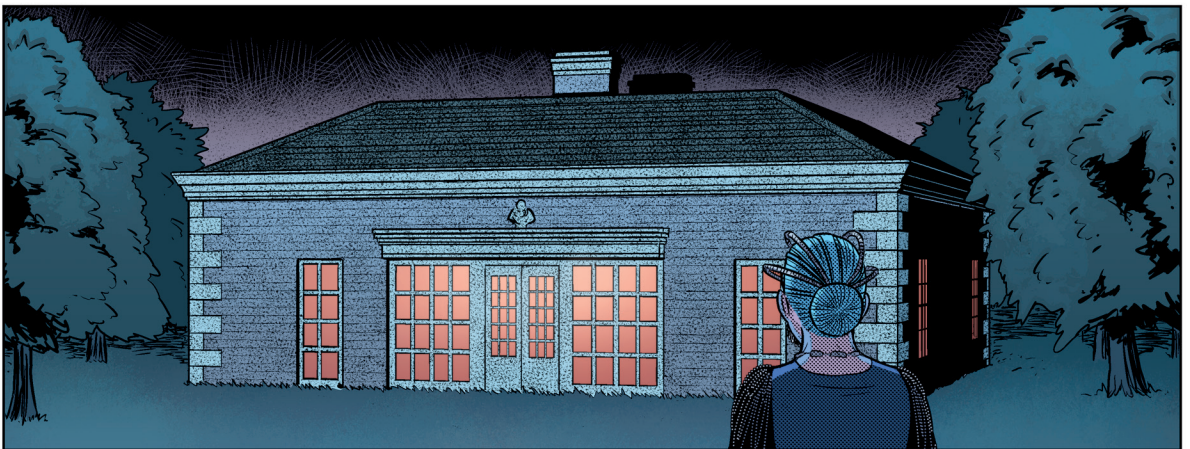
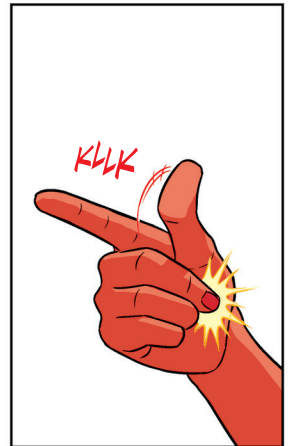
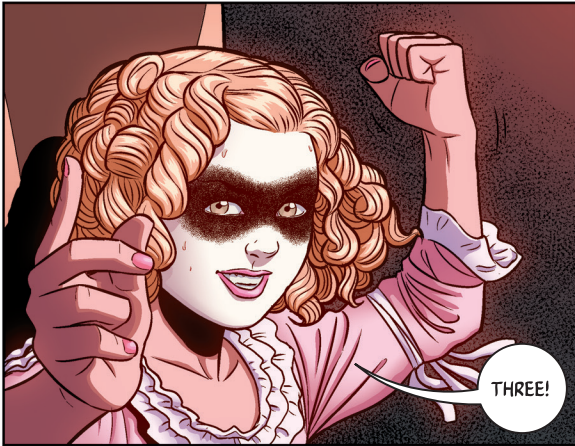
AND ONCE
AGAIN, WE
RETURN
TO THIS.

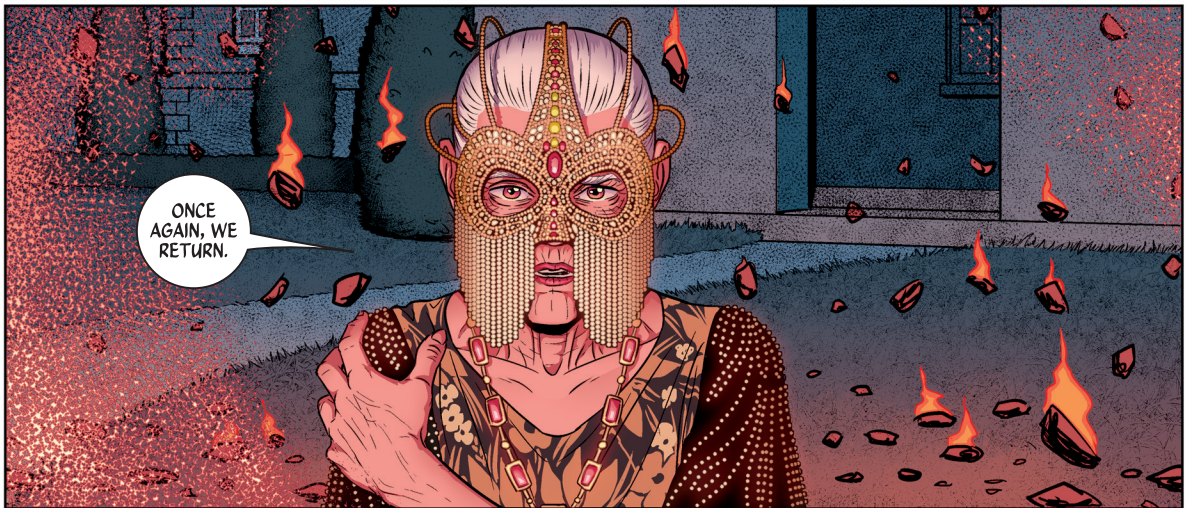
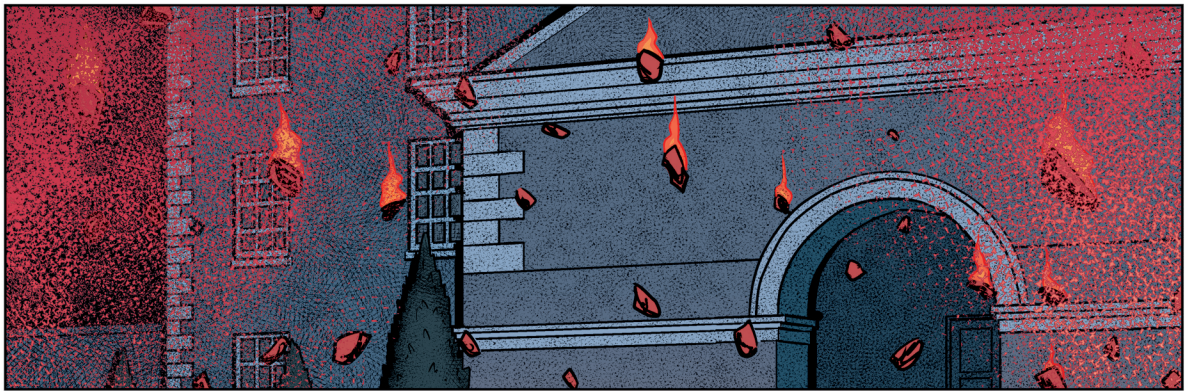














1-2-3-4

1 JANUARY 2014

BROCKLEY,
SOUTH LONDON.



1

It's not that I'm afraid my parents wouldn't approve.

I'm afraid they *would*.



I want this to be all mine.



2

Amaterasu's only been around for a couple of weeks.

How many of these girls have even *seen* her?



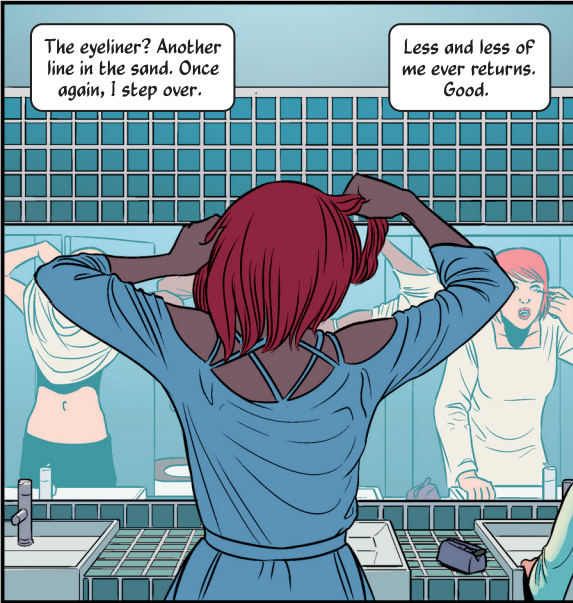
Yet here we are.



3

The eyeliner? Another line in the sand. Once again, I step over.

Less and less of me ever returns. Good.



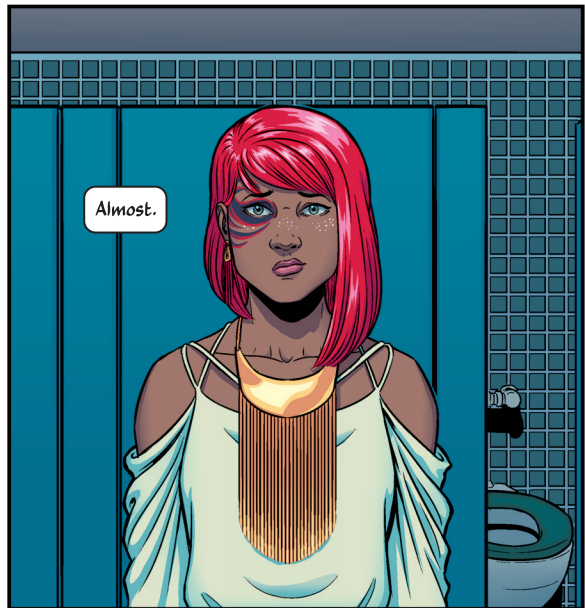
The stranger in the mirror looks back. I wish I was her.

She looks like a god.



4

Almost.

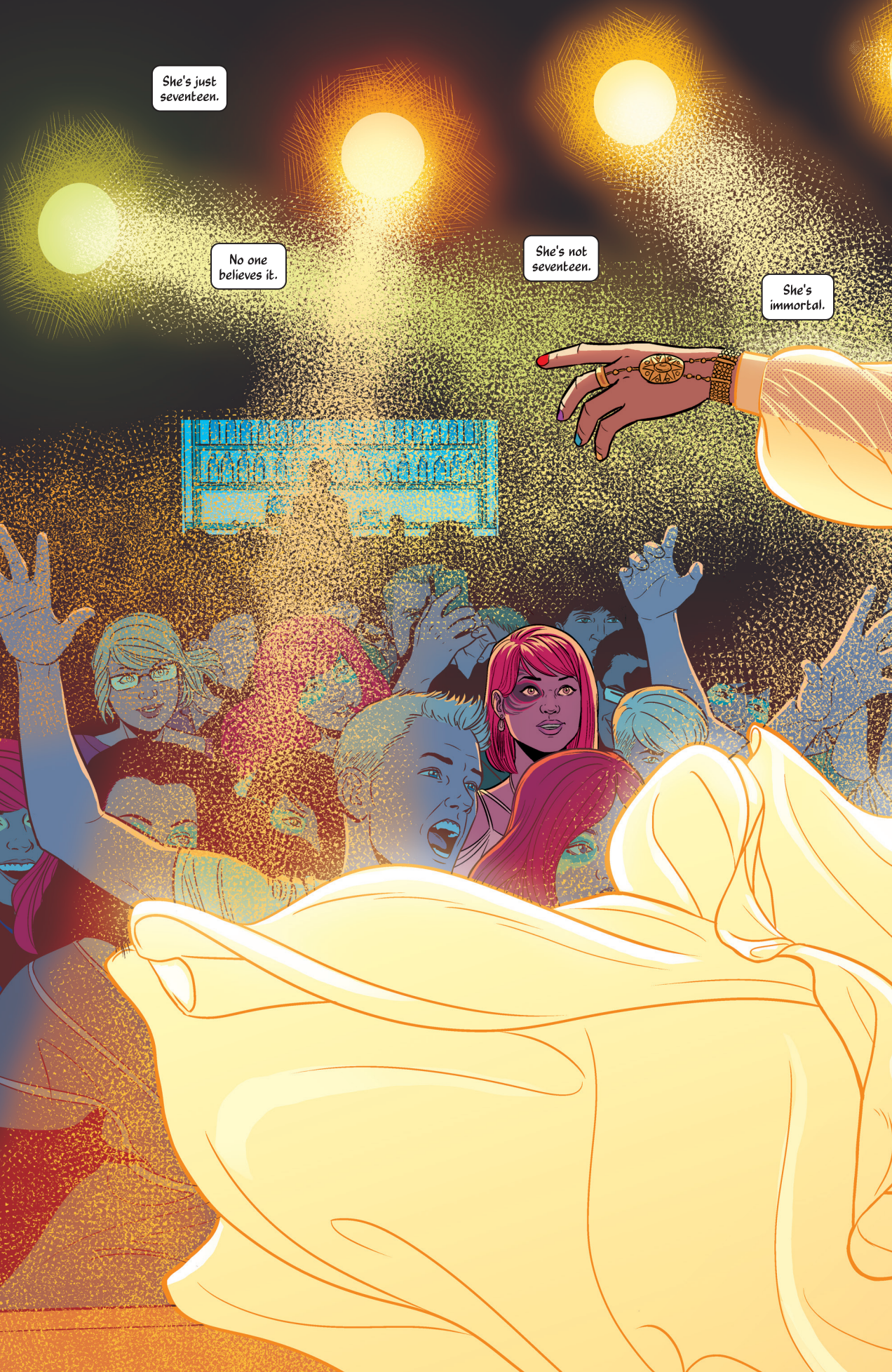


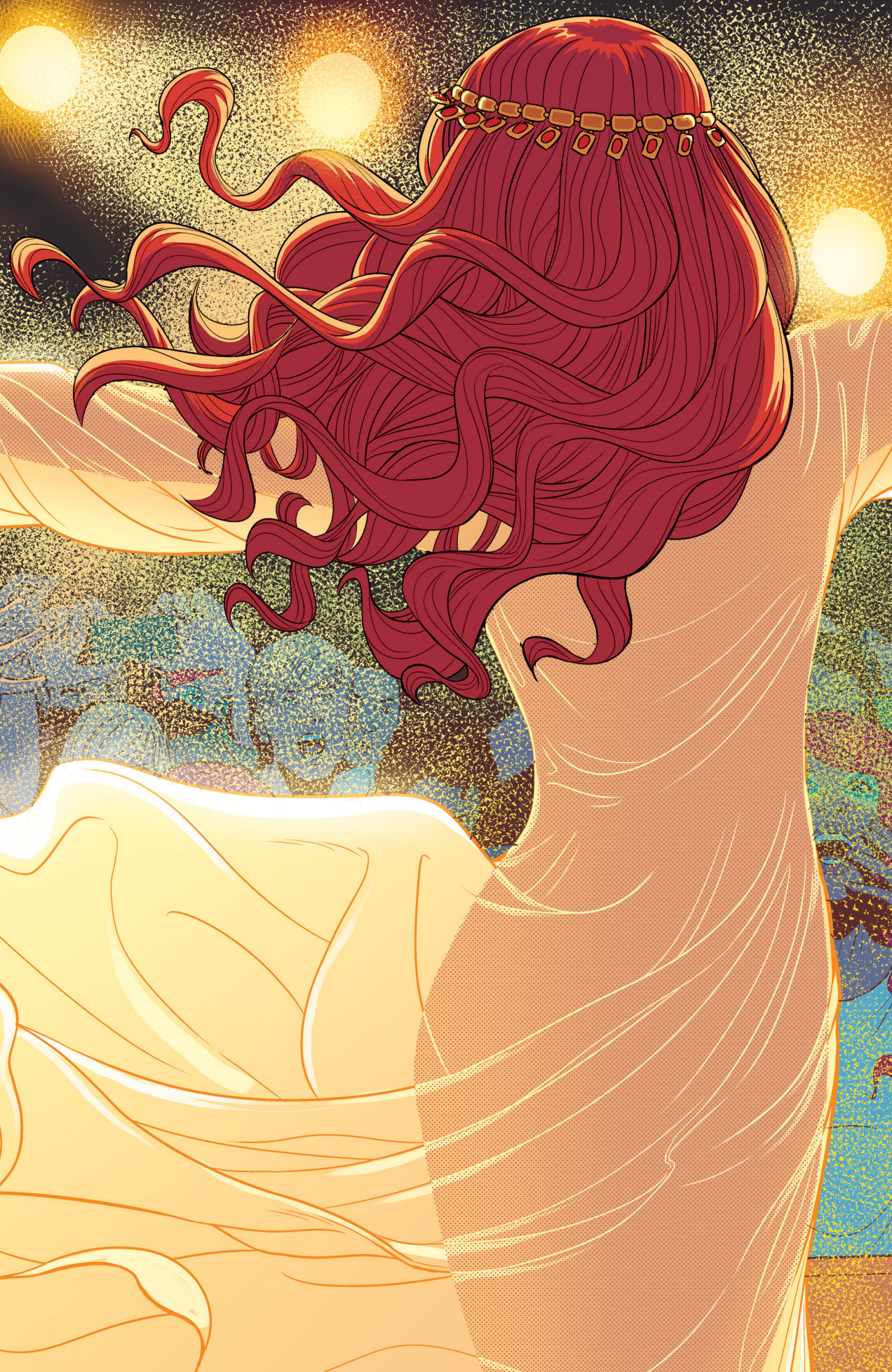
She's just
seventeen.

No one
believes it.

She's not
seventeen.

She's
immortal.





I don't understand
a word she's saying.
Nobody does.

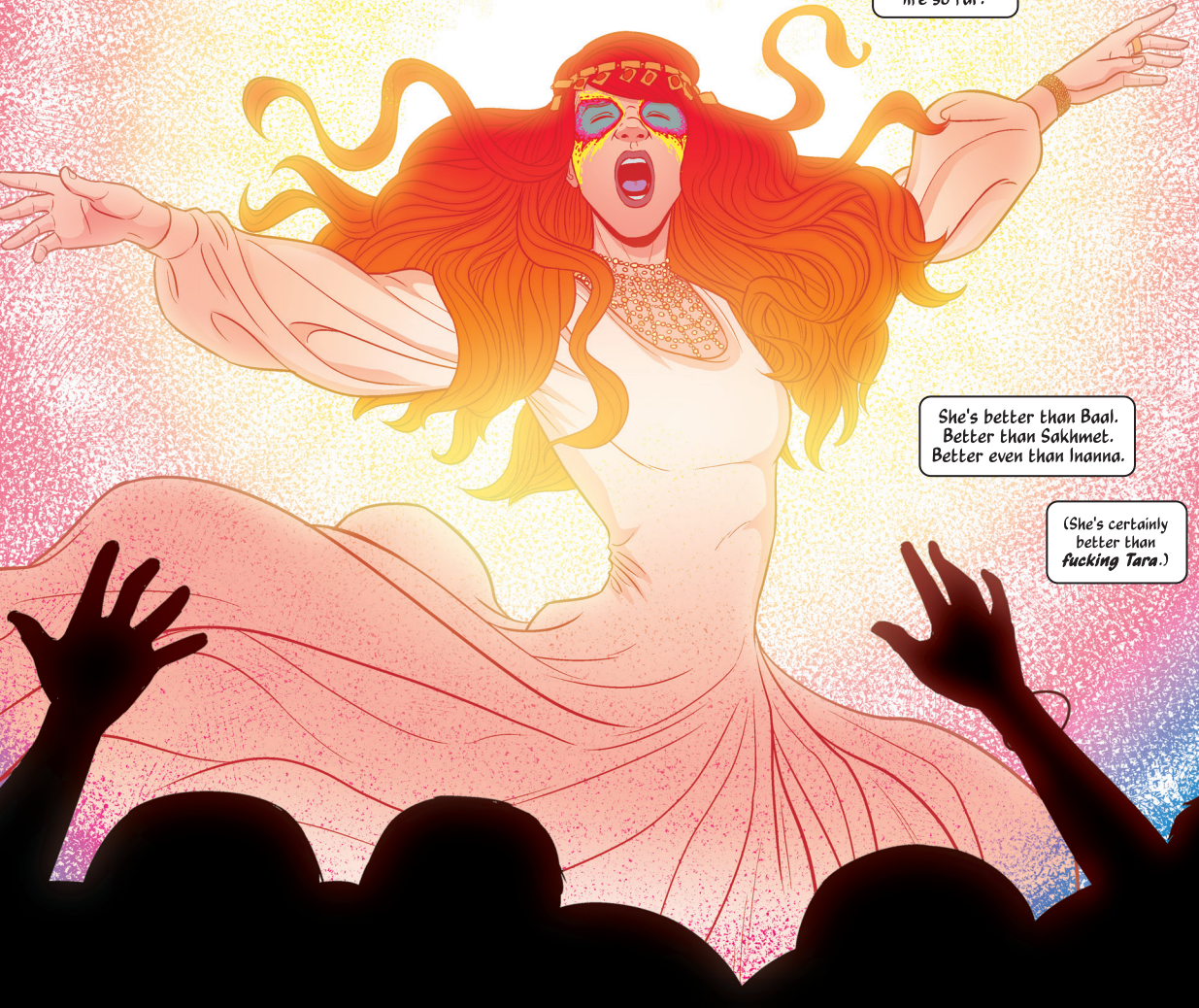
All we know
is that it means
everything.

She's been doing this
for an hour, and it's
been *all climax*.

Every second is
the best of my
life so far.

She's better than Baal.
Better than Sakhmet.
Better even than Inanna.

(She's certainly
better than
fucking Tara.)



It's not
a mass.

It's what
masses aspire
to be.

(It's what orgasms
aspire to be.)

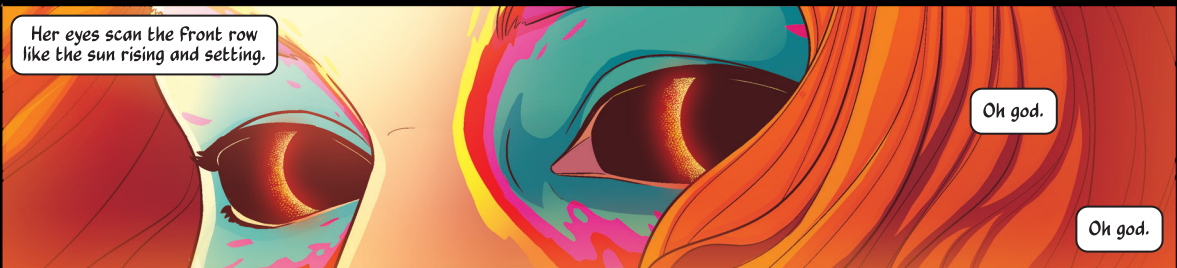
(Mine,
anyway.)

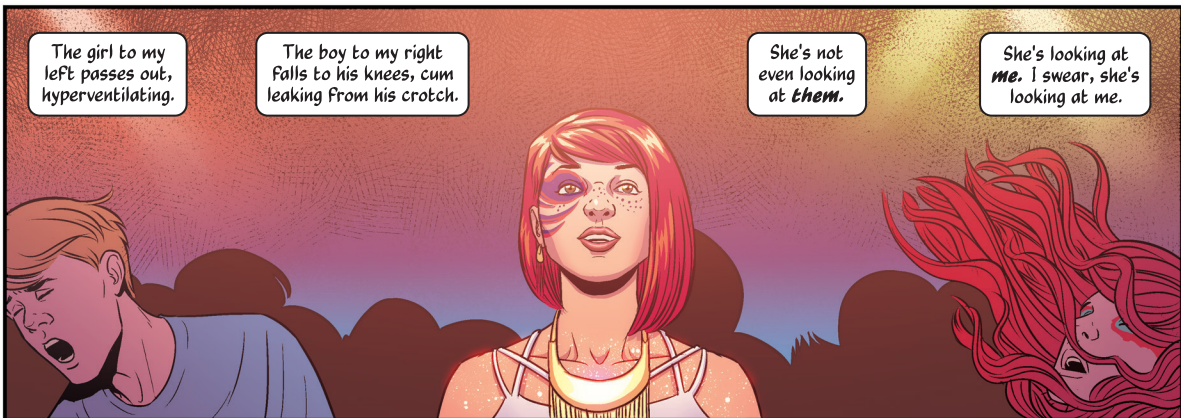


Her eyes scan the front row
like the sun rising and setting.

Oh god.

Oh god.



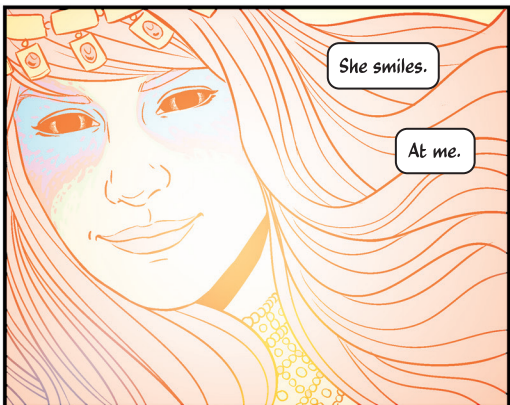


The girl to my left passes out, hyperventilating.

The boy to my right falls to his knees, cum leaking from his crotch.

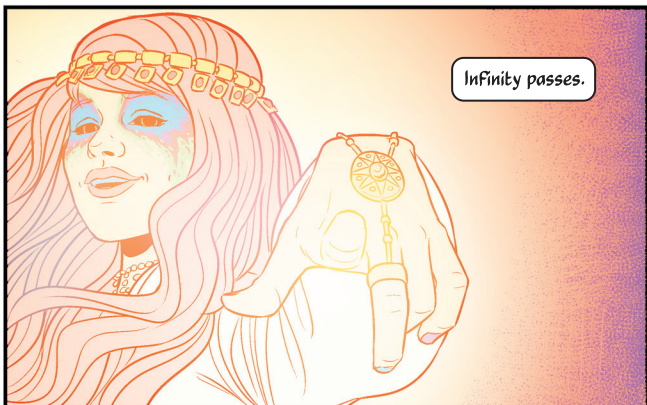
She's not even looking at **them**.

She's looking at **me**. I swear, she's looking at me.

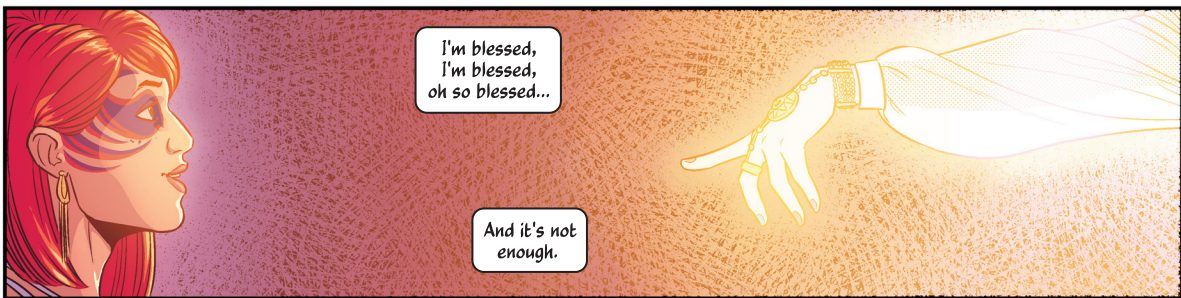


She smiles.

At me.

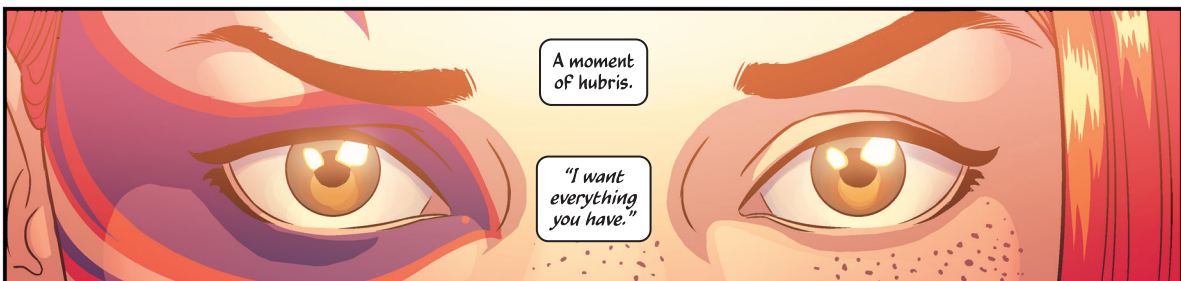


Infinity passes.



I'm blessed, I'm blessed, oh so blessed...

And it's not enough.



A moment of hubris.

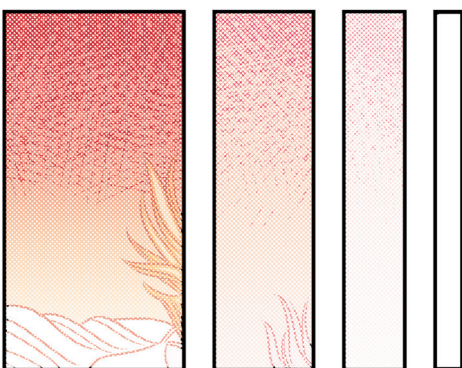
"I want everything you have."

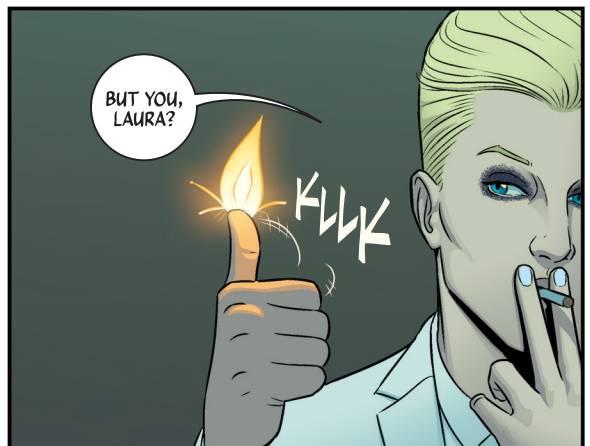
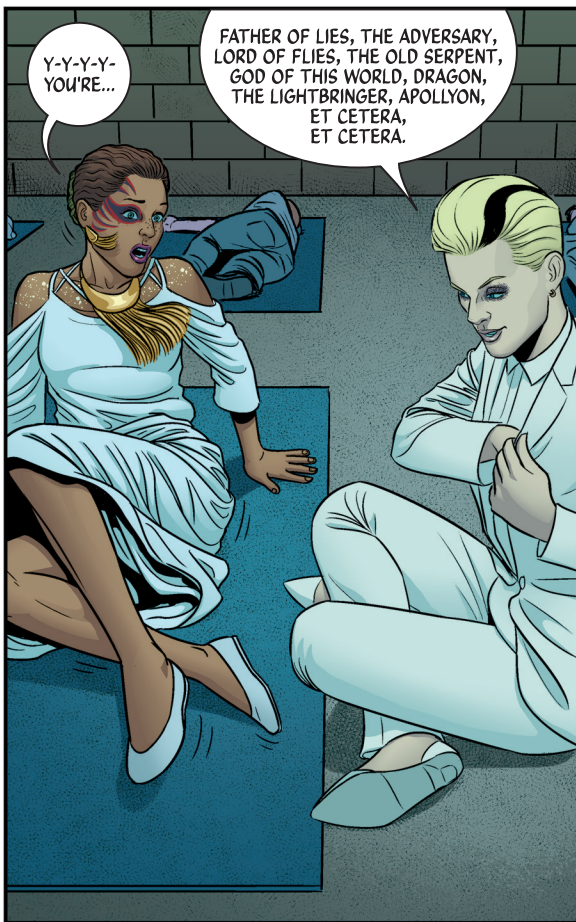
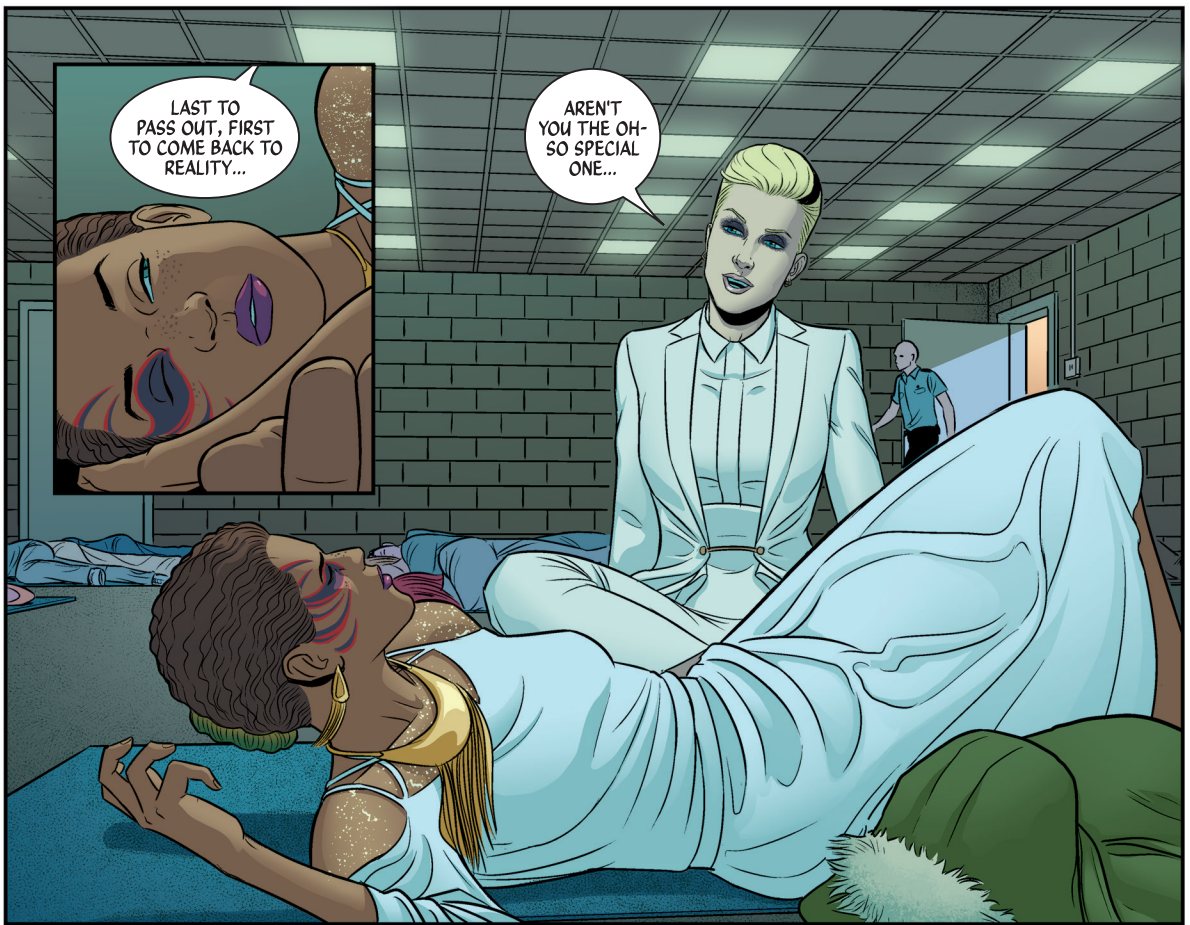


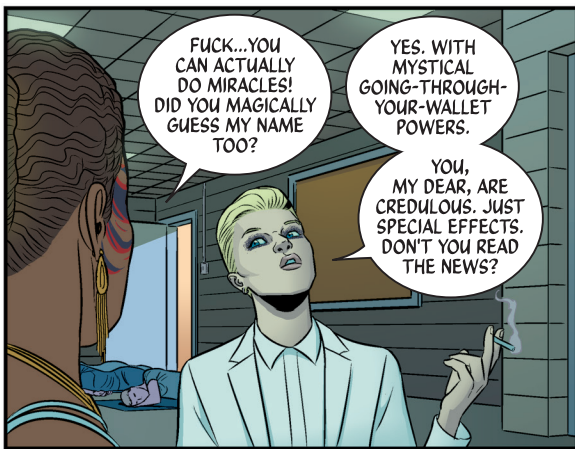
And then I'm gone.



(Best gig ever, FYI.)



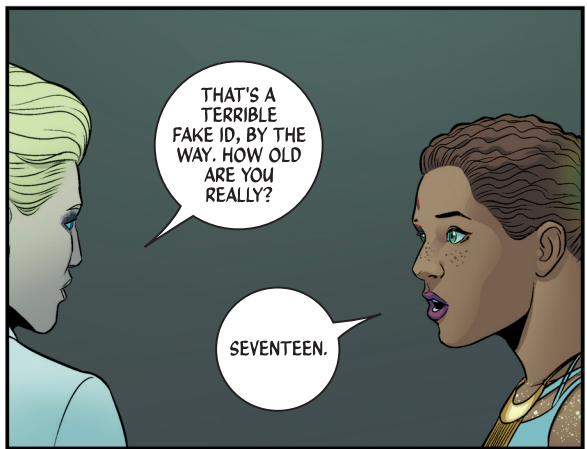




FUCK...YOU CAN ACTUALLY DO MIRACLES! DID YOU MAGICALLY GUESS MY NAME TOO?

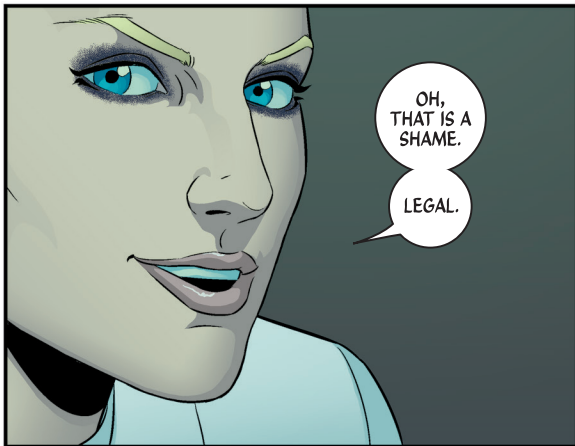
YES. WITH MYSTICAL GOING-THROUGH-YOUR-WALLET POWERS.

YOU, MY DEAR, ARE CREDULOUS. JUST SPECIAL EFFECTS. DON'T YOU READ THE NEWS?



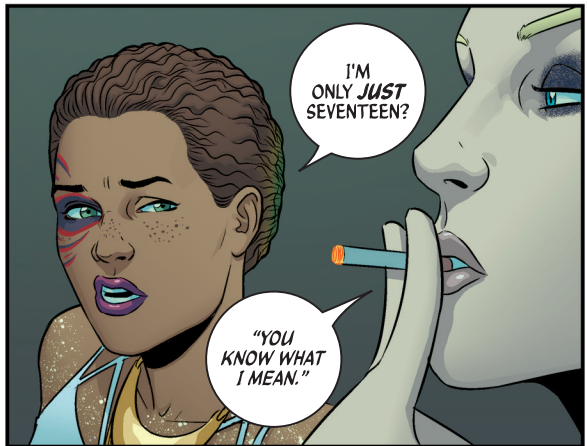
THAT'S A TERRIBLE FAKE ID, BY THE WAY. HOW OLD ARE YOU REALLY?

SEVENTEEN.



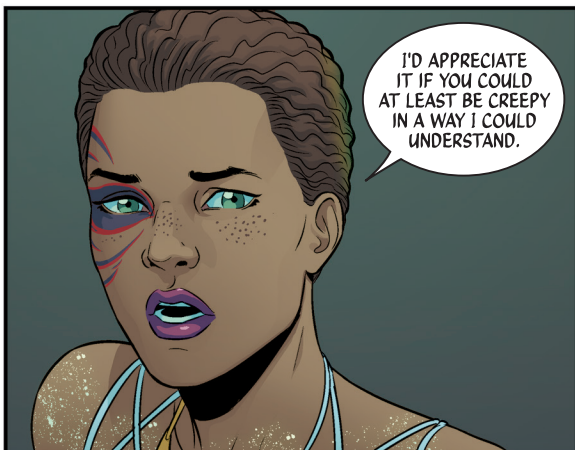
OH, THAT IS A SHAME.

LEGAL.



I'M ONLY *JUST* SEVENTEEN?

"YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN."



I'D APPRECIATE IT IF YOU COULD AT LEAST BE CREEPY IN A WAY I COULD UNDERSTAND.

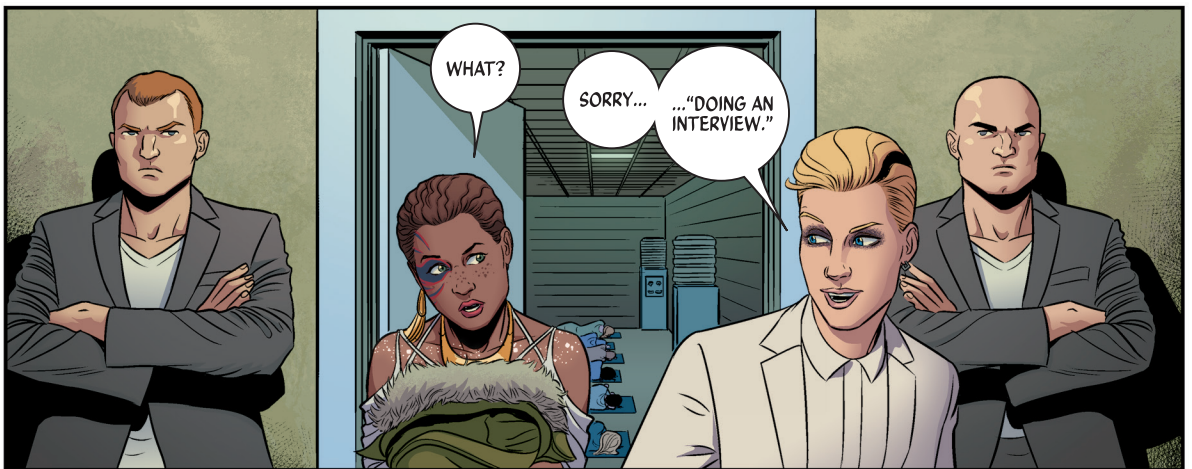
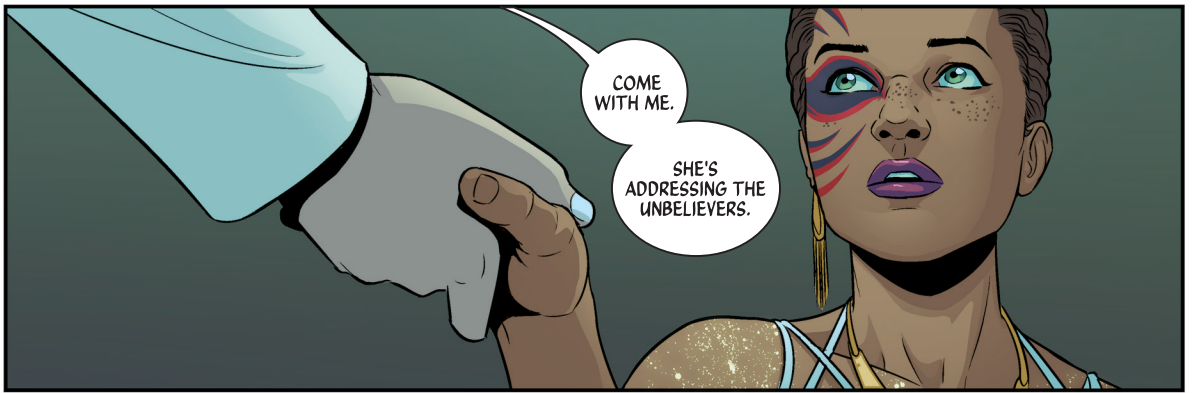
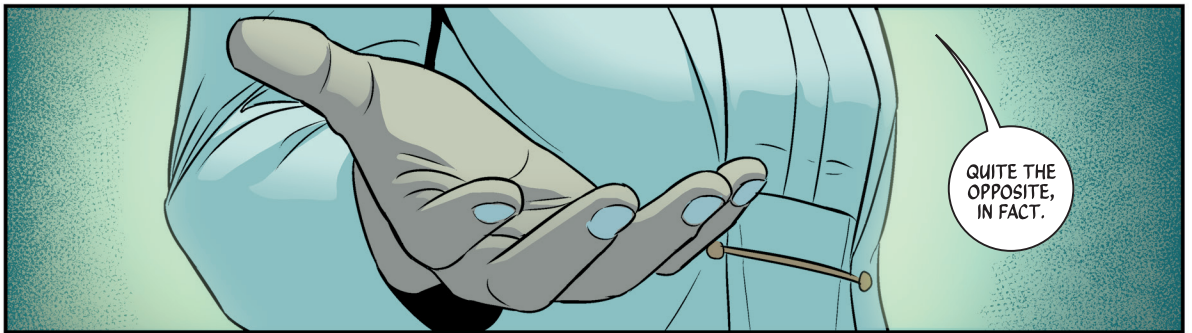


SORRY, I... LONG STORY. BROUGHT UP ON THE BEATLES. SHAMEFUL.

"THEY FUCK YOU UP, YOUR MUM AND DAD" AND ALL THAT.



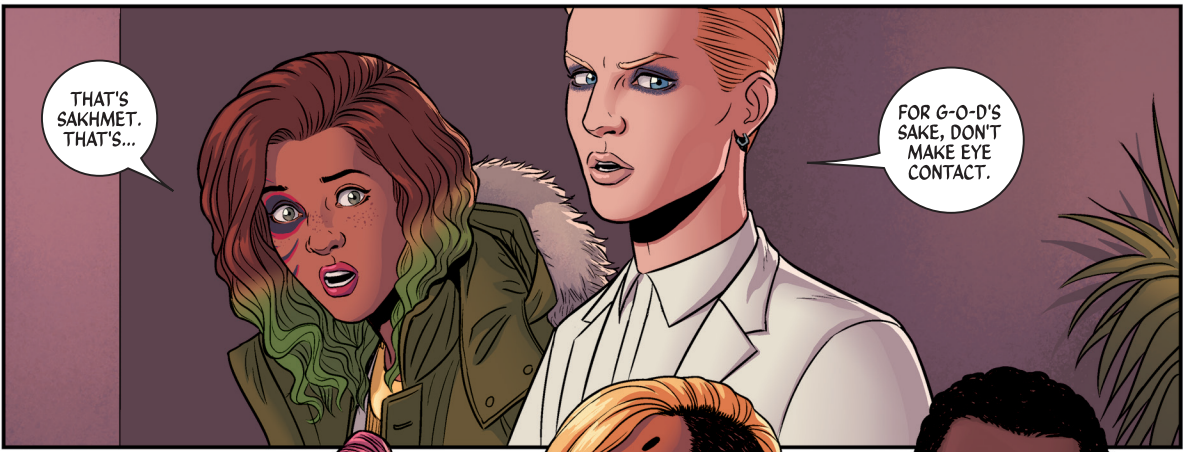
DO YOU WANT TO MEET AMATERASU?





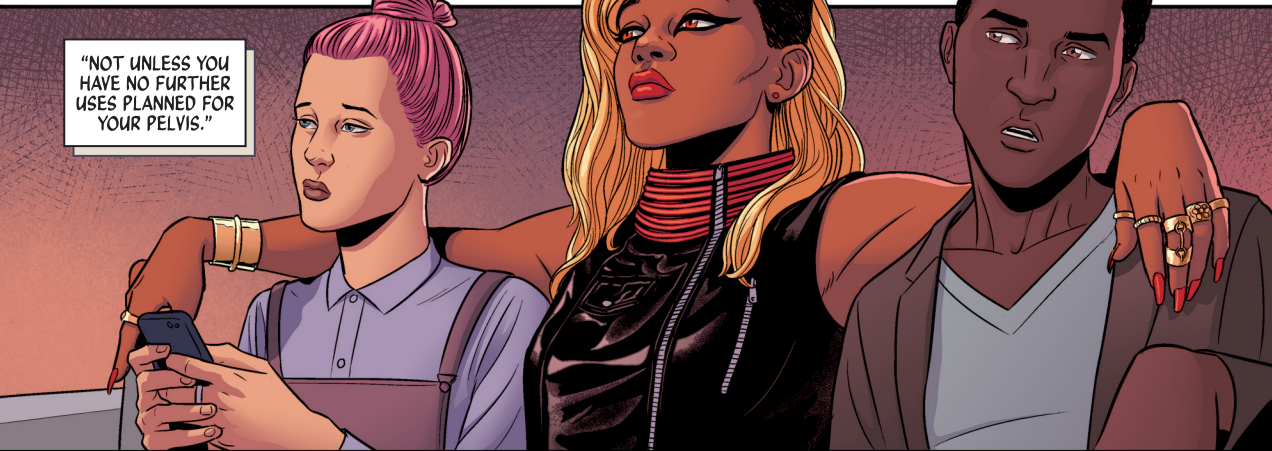
BEFORE YOU TAKE A SEAT, PICK UP YOUR JAW, LAURA.

YOU'RE MY GUEST. DON'T EMBARRASS ME.

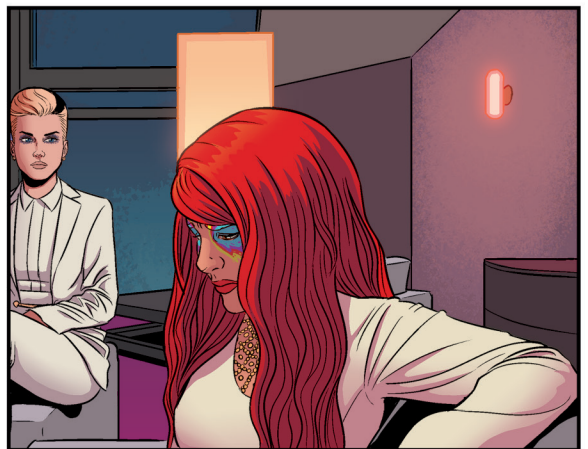
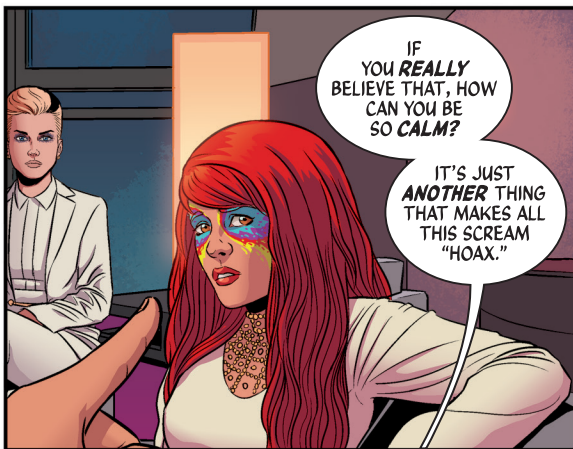
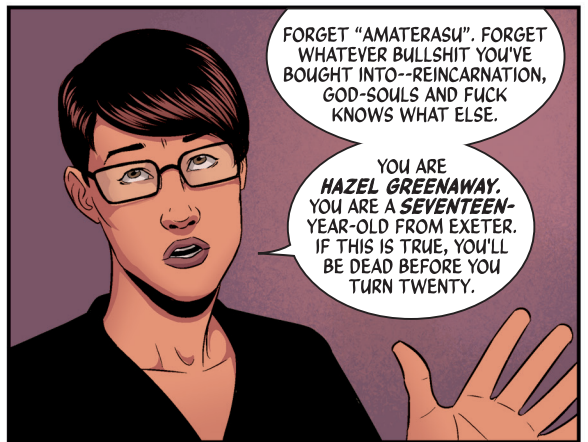
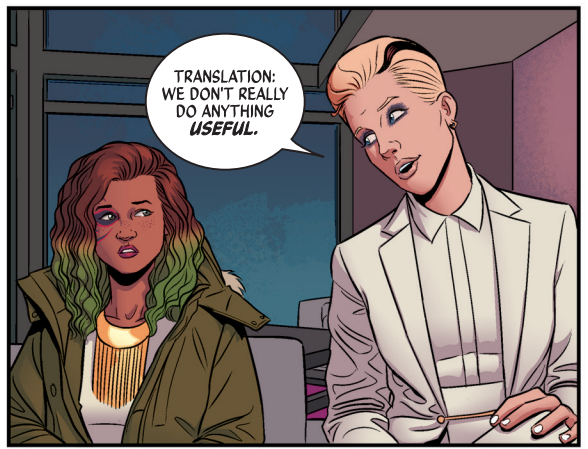
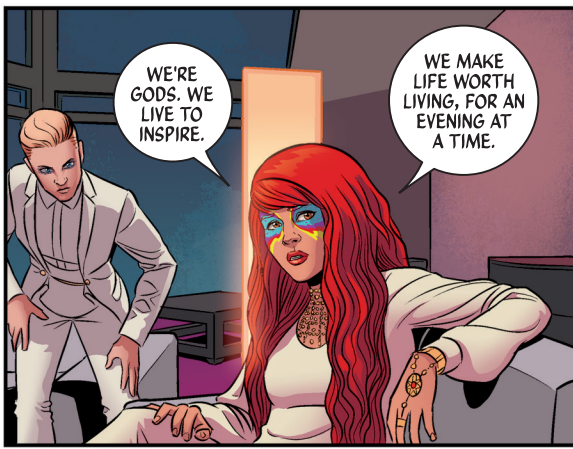


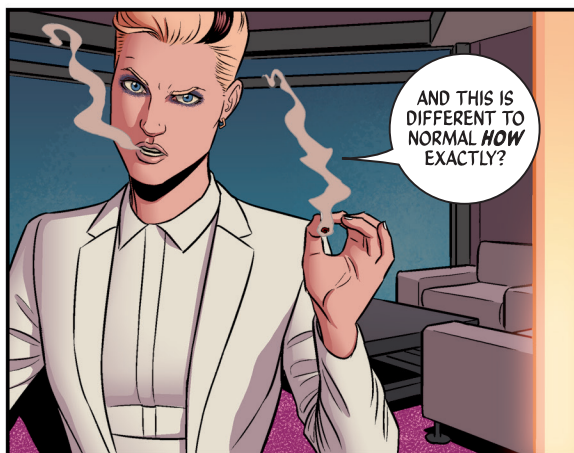
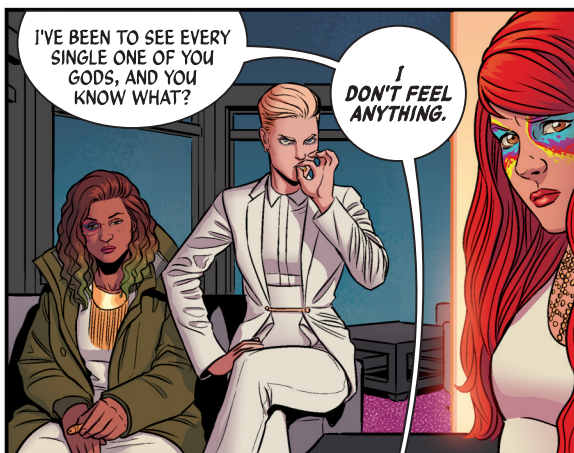
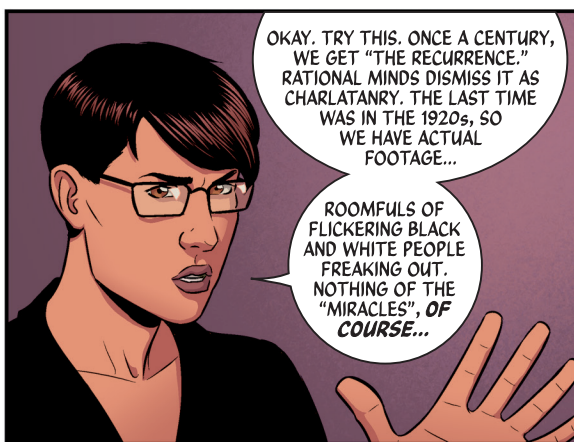
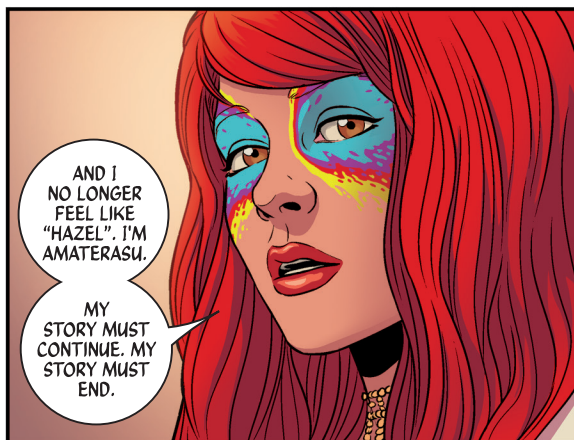
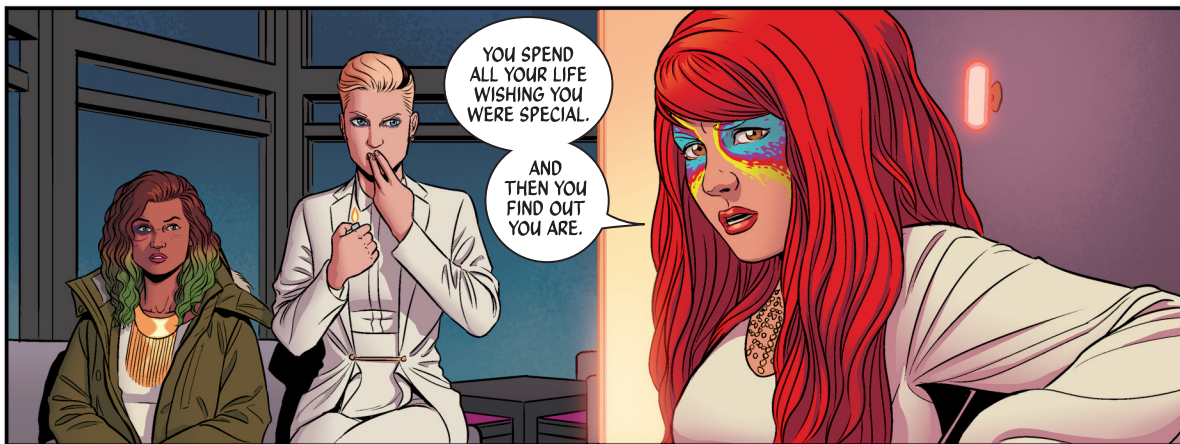
THAT'S SAKHMET. THAT'S...

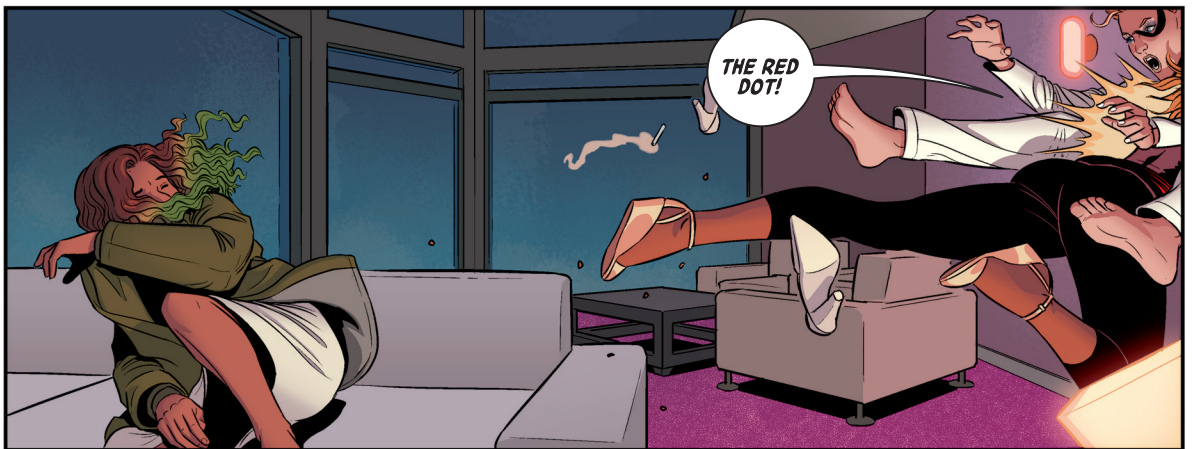
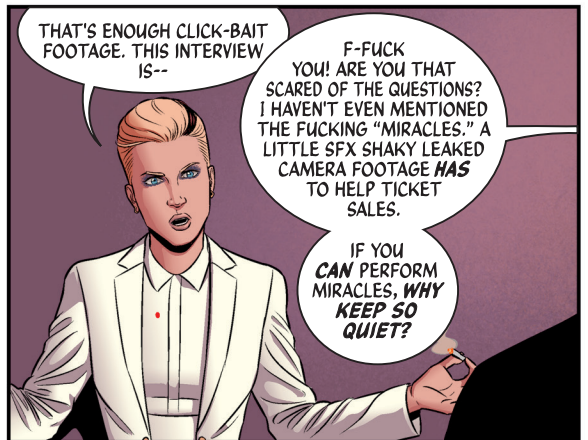
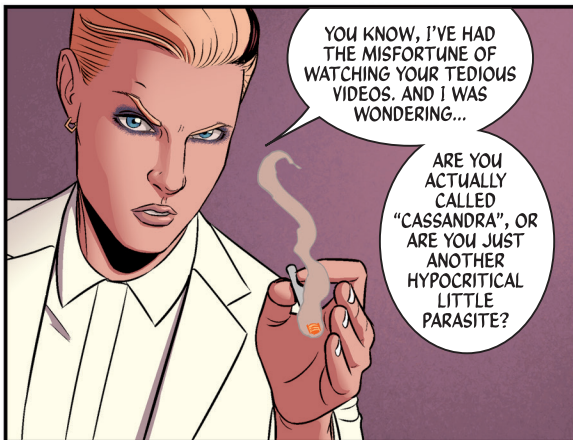
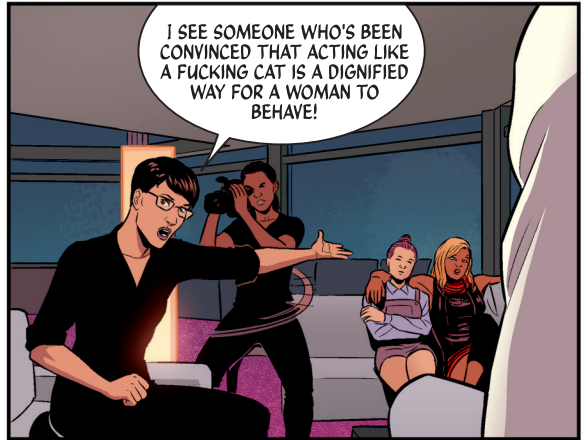
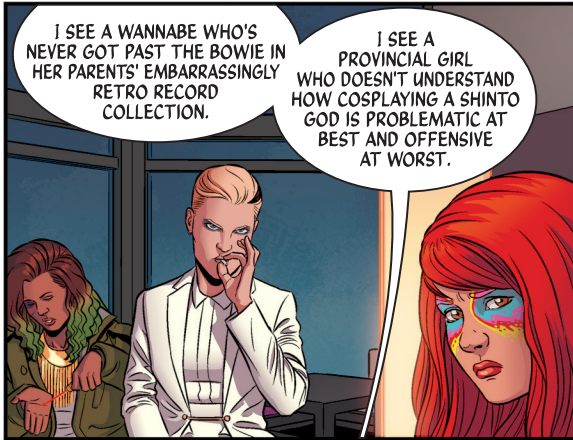
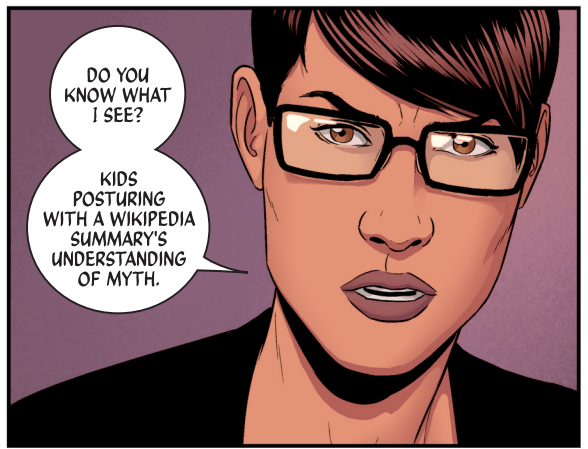
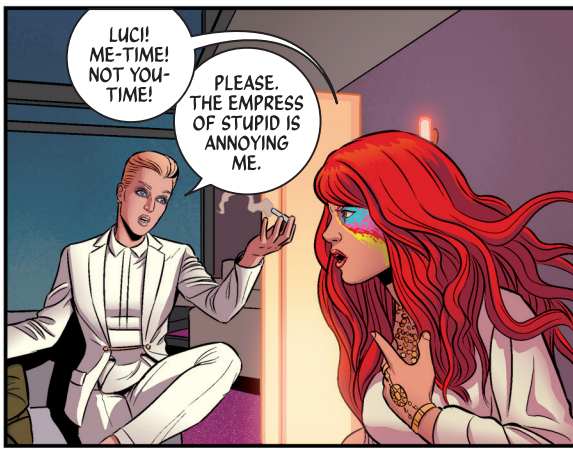
FOR G-O-D'S SAKE, DON'T MAKE EYE CONTACT.

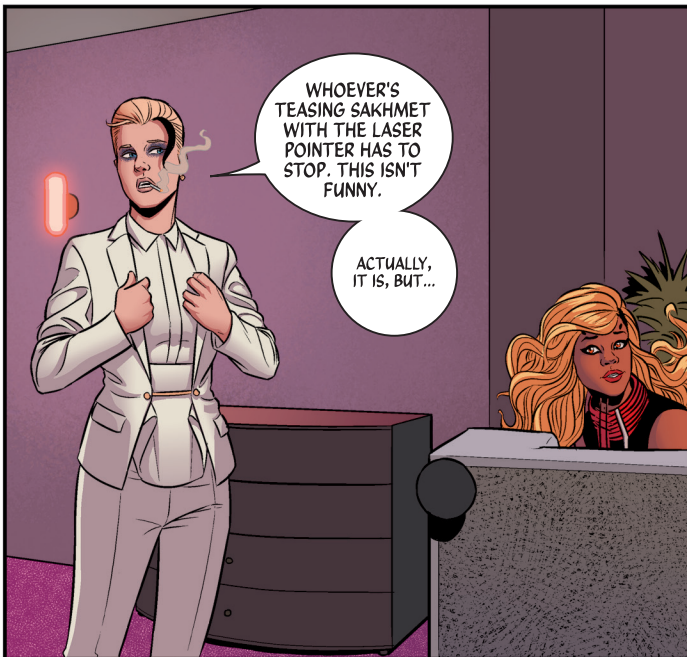
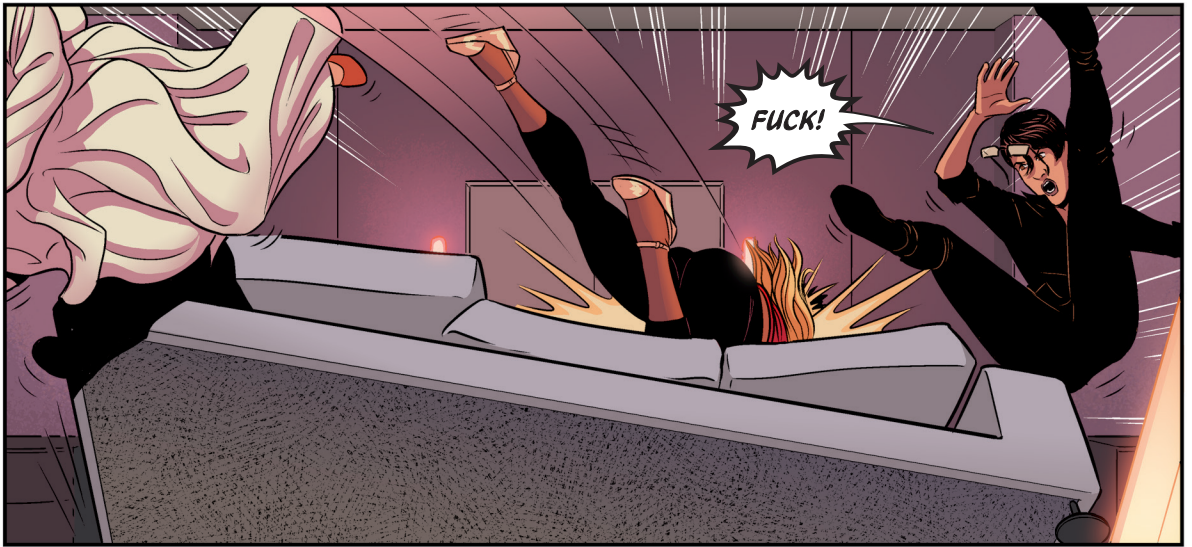
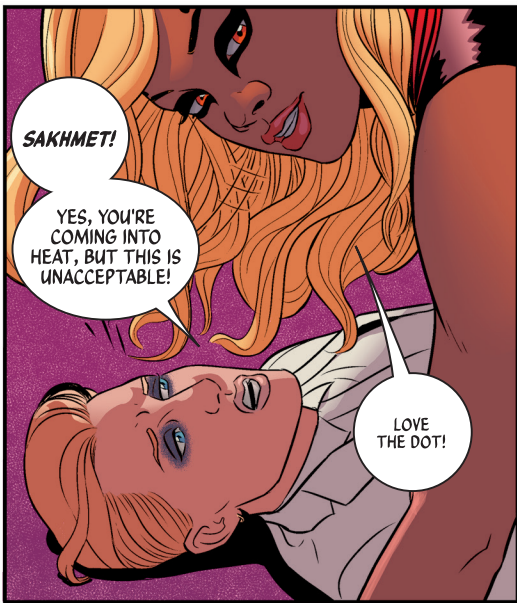


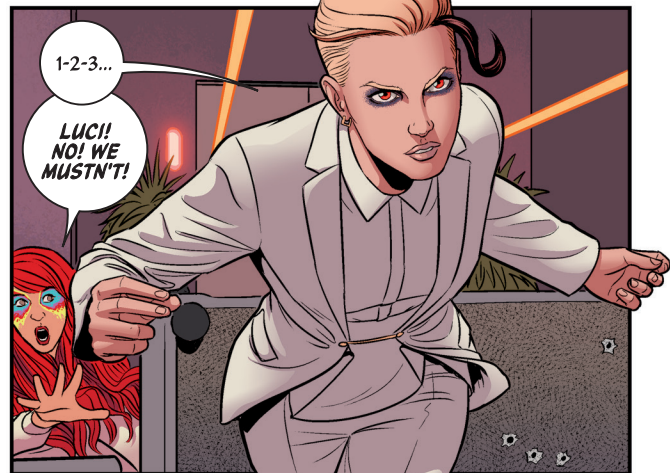
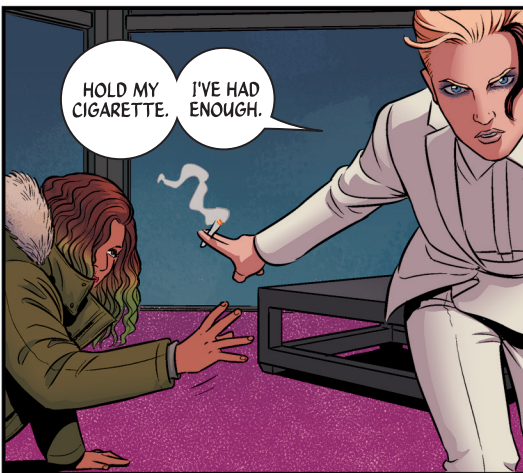
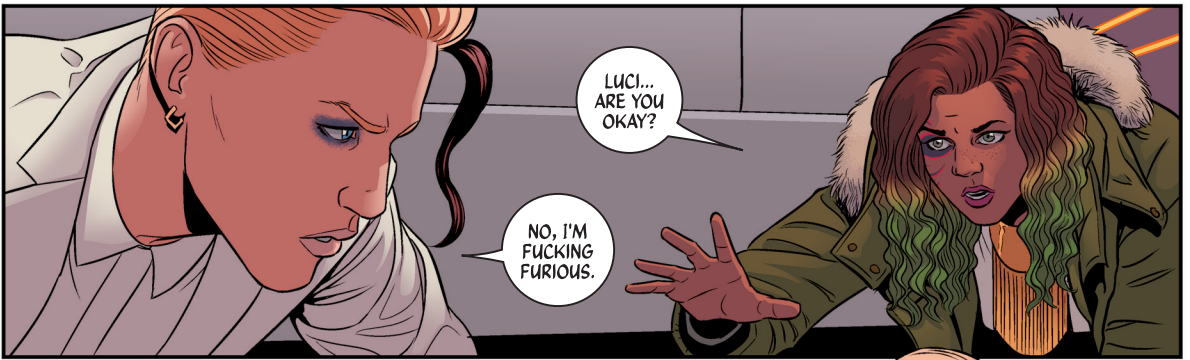
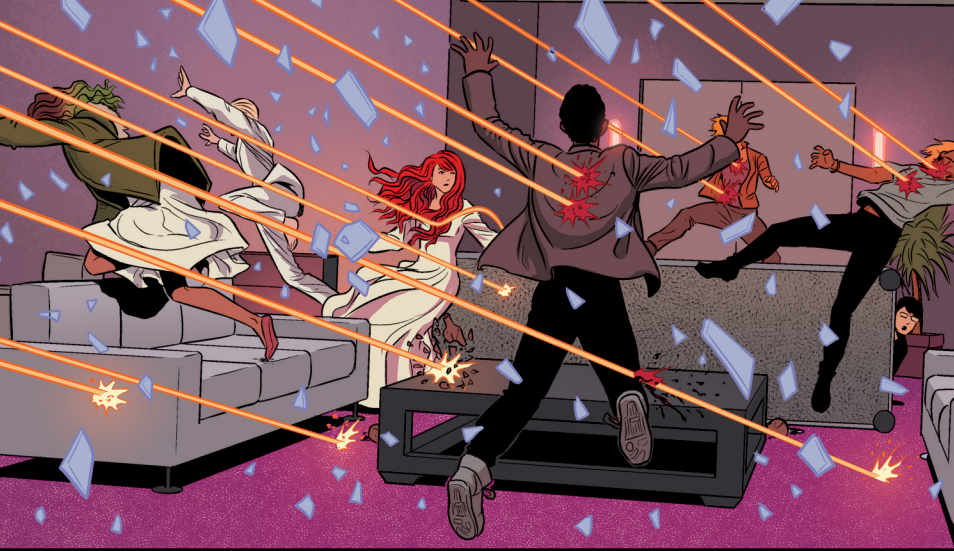
"NOT UNLESS YOU HAVE NO FURTHER USES PLANNED FOR YOUR PELVIS."

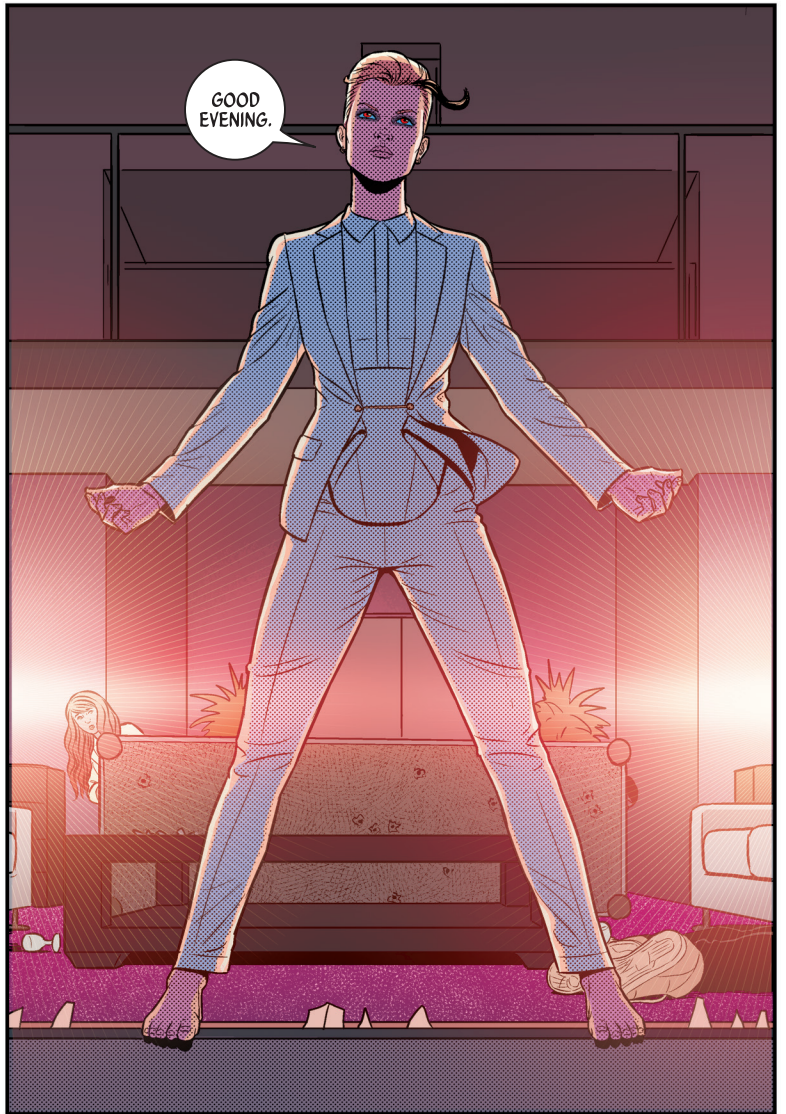
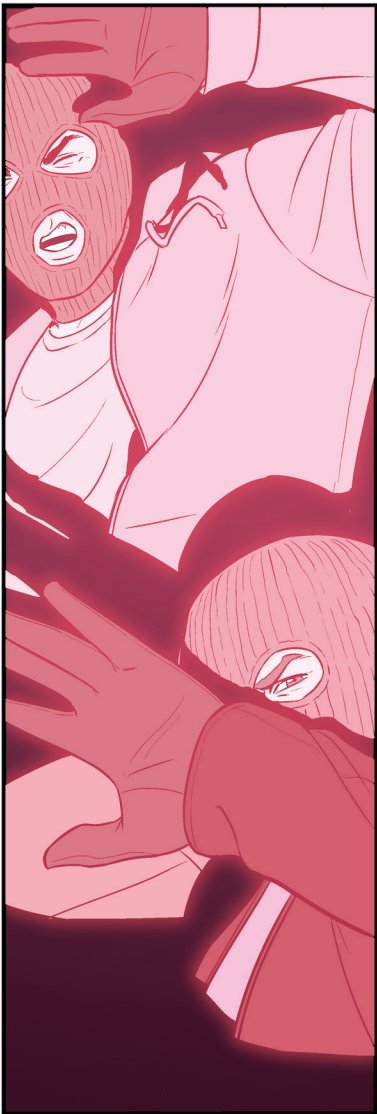


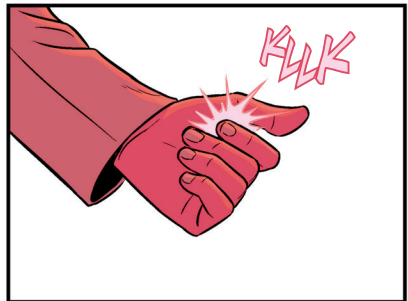
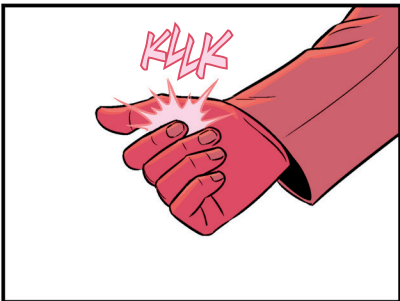
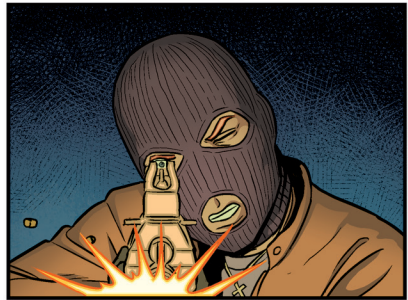
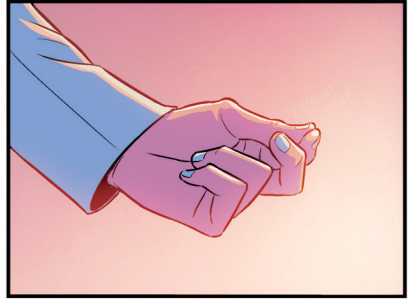
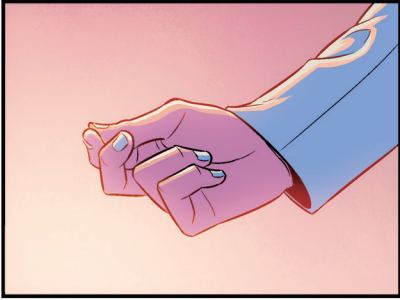
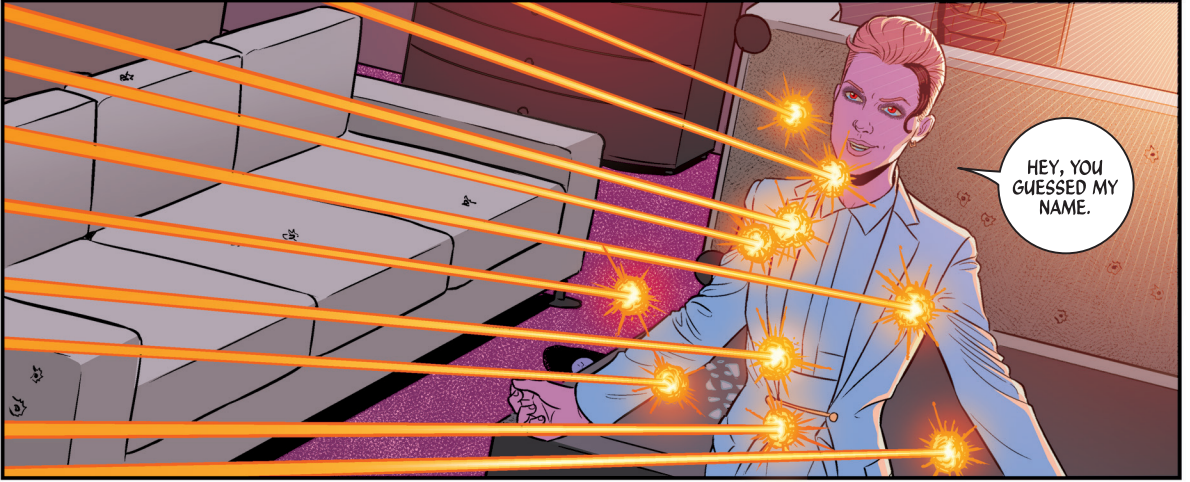
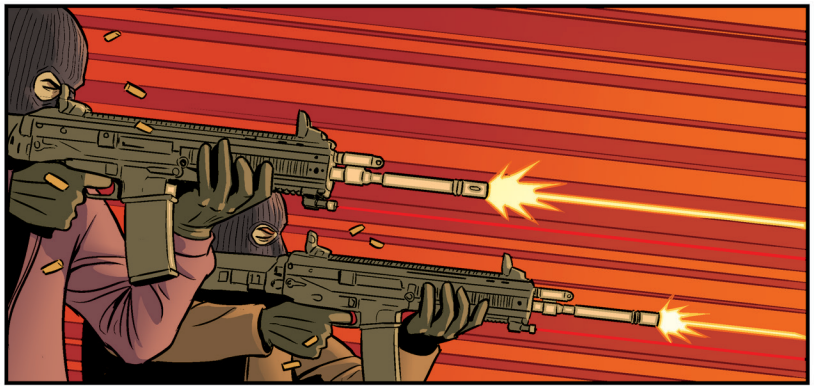














Though not exactly *quietly*.

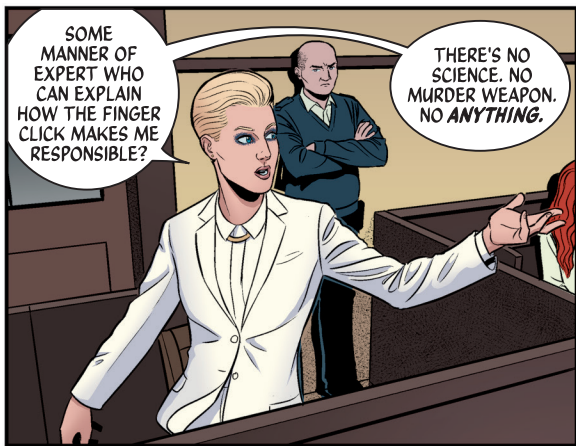
WHAT **PRECISELY** AM I MEANT TO HAVE DONE, YOUR HONOUR?

MS. RIGBY.

YOU ARE FULLY AWARE OF WHAT YOU HAVE DONE.

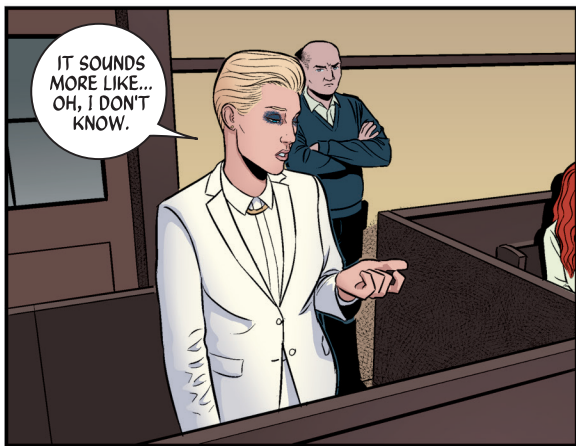
ALL I DID WAS CLICK MY FINGERS!

SURELY IT'S FOR THE COURT TO PROVE A CAUSAL LINK BETWEEN MY ACTIONS AND THOSE POOR, MURDEROUS MEN'S UNTIMELY DEATHS?

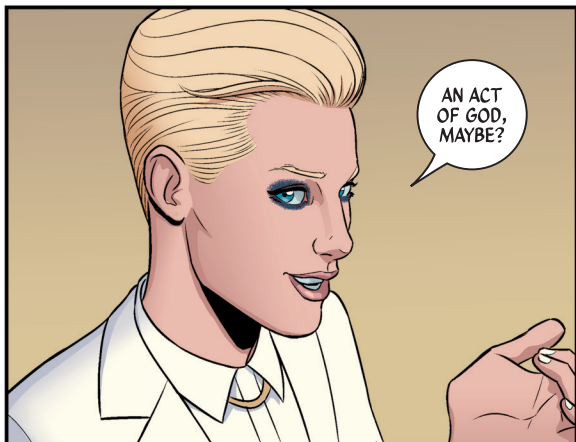


SOME MANNER OF EXPERT WHO CAN EXPLAIN HOW THE FINGER CLICK MAKES ME RESPONSIBLE?

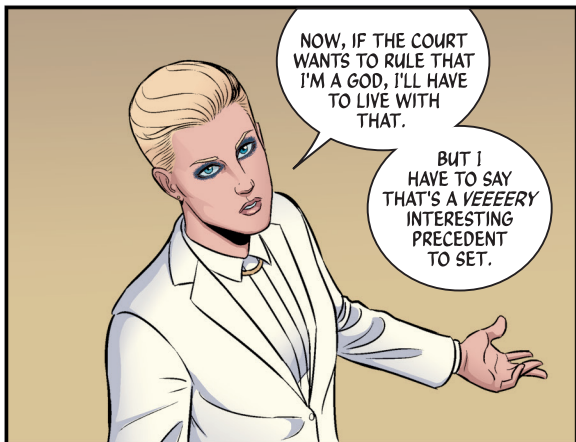
THERE'S NO SCIENCE. NO MURDER WEAPON. NO *ANYTHING*.



IT SOUNDS MORE LIKE... OH, I DON'T KNOW.

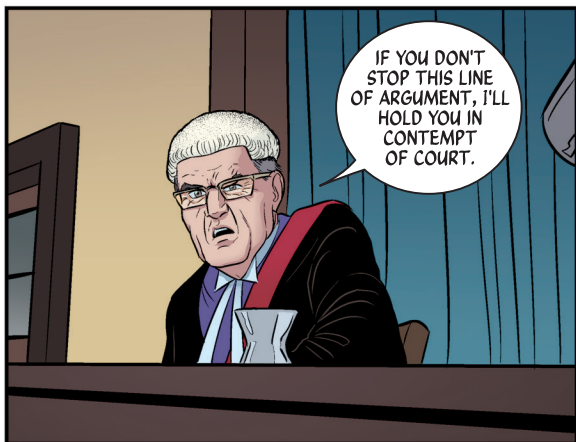


AN ACT OF GOD, MAYBE?

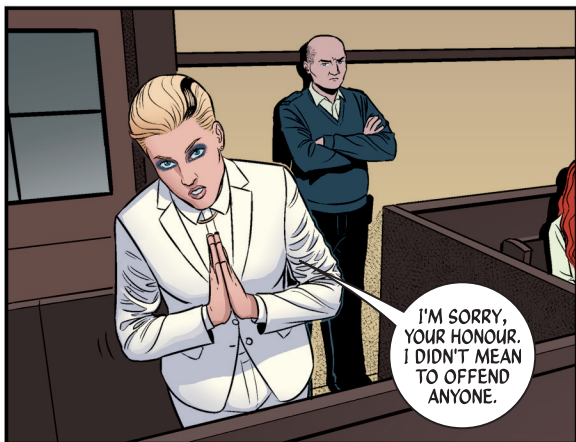


NOW, IF THE COURT WANTS TO RULE THAT I'M A GOD, I'LL HAVE TO LIVE WITH THAT.

BUT I HAVE TO SAY THAT'S A *VEEERY* INTERESTING PRECEDENT TO SET.



IF YOU DON'T STOP THIS LINE OF ARGUMENT, I'LL HOLD YOU IN CONTEMPT OF COURT.



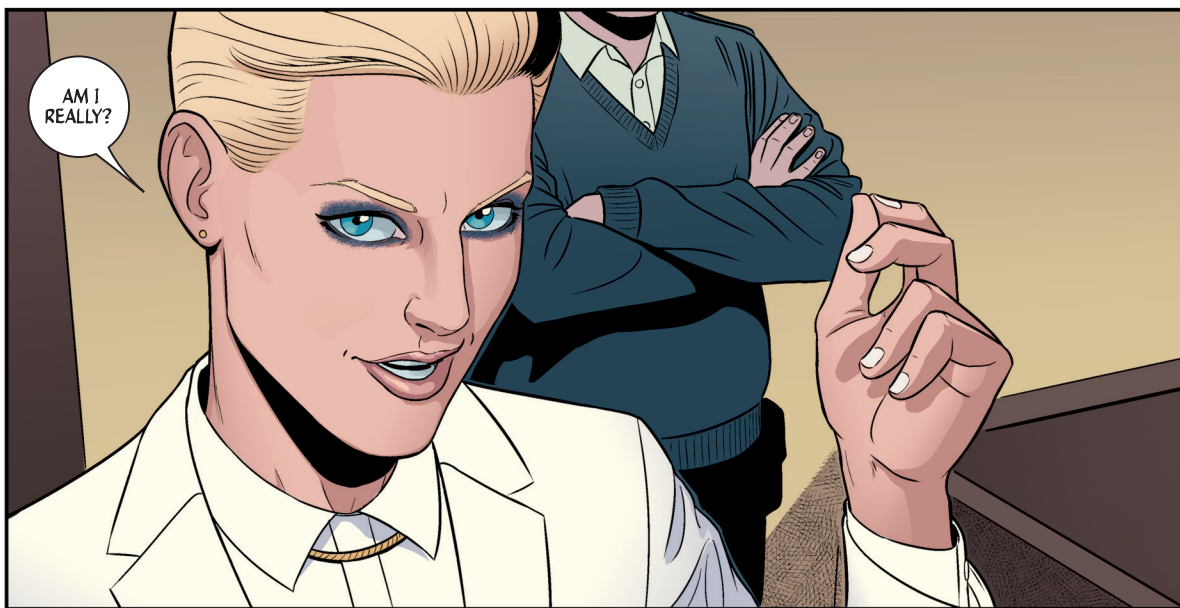
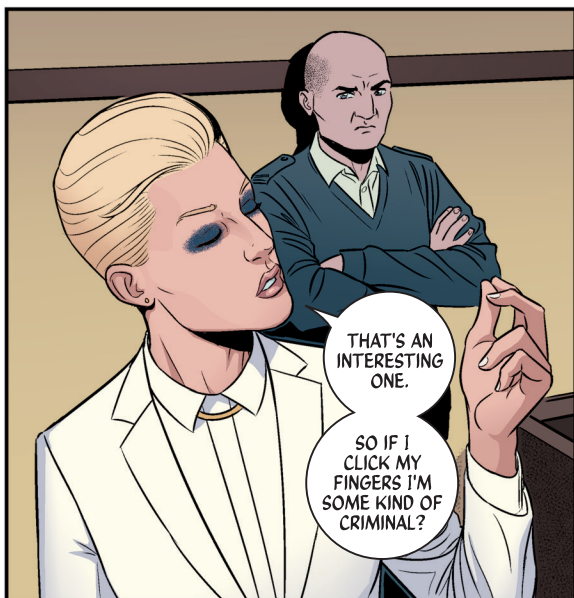
I'M SORRY, YOUR HONOUR. I DIDN'T MEAN TO OFFEND ANYONE.

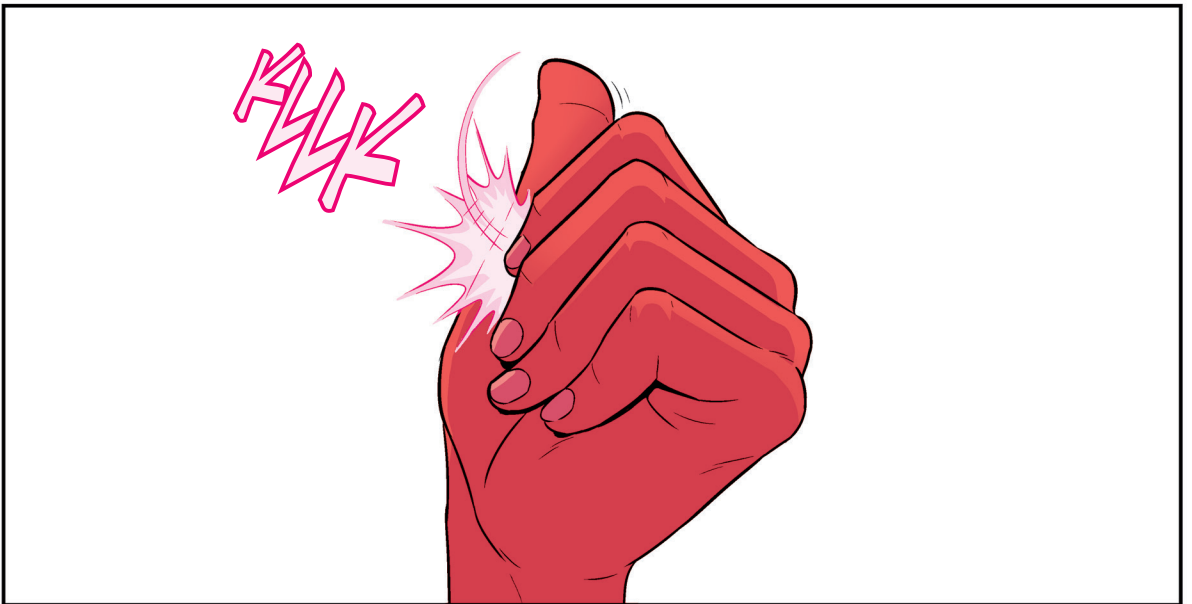
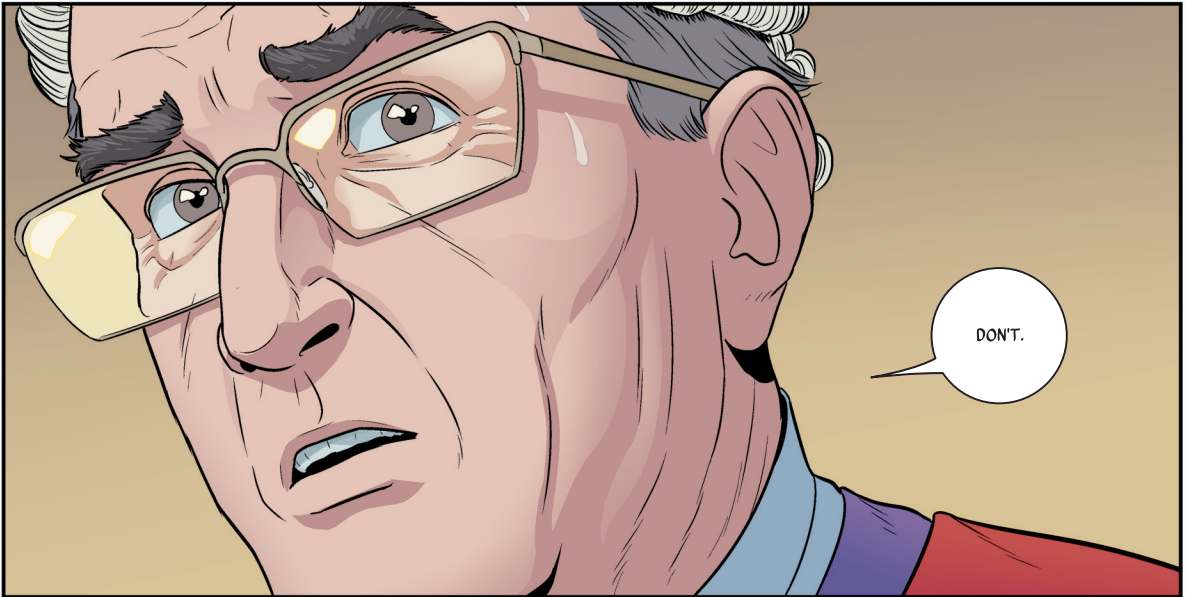
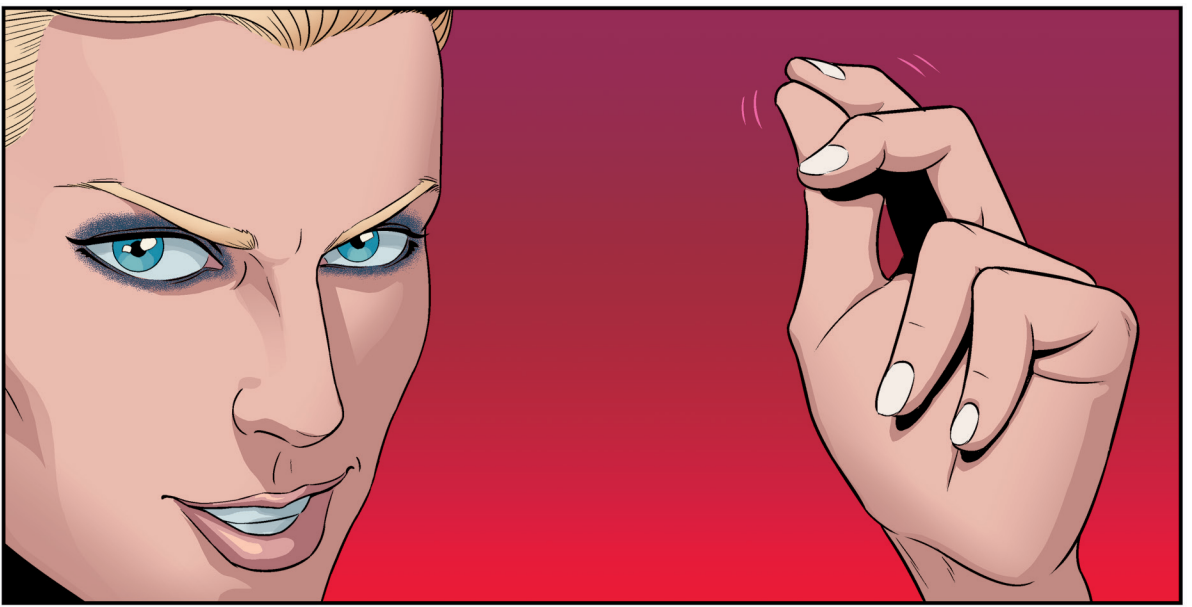


DECLARE ME A GOD AND CRUCIFY ME.

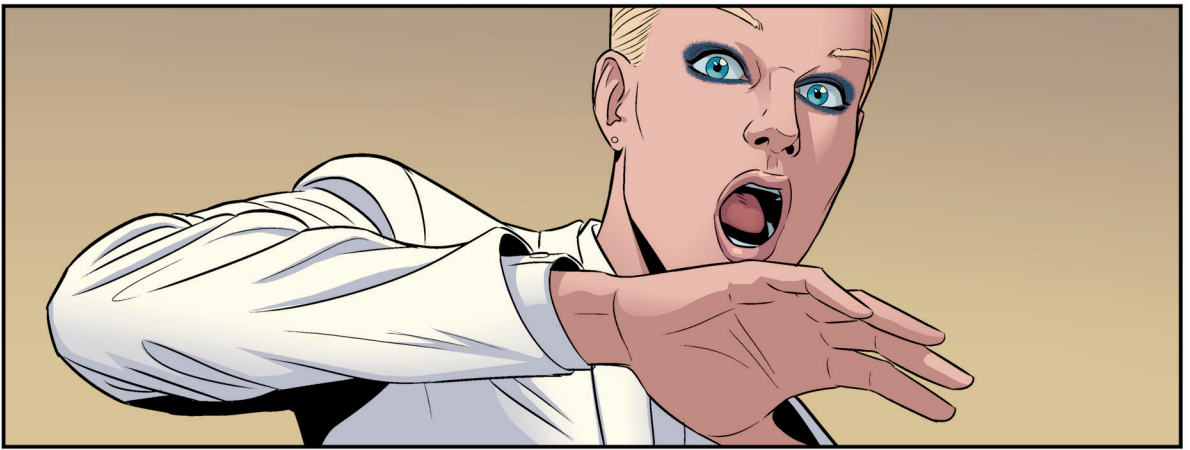


PRECEDENTS ARE INTERESTING FOR THAT TOO.









I WAS
PLAYING.
IT WAS JUST
A FINGER
CLICK.

I DIDN'T
DO THAT.



But apart from me,
who was going to
believe her?

THE WICKED + THE DIVINE

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THE WICKED + THE DIVINE

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL YABBER

This is my second attempt at writing this letter.

The first was probably the most depressing thousand words I've ever hammered out in my life.

I'll probably put it out there eventually, but not now, not when the blood is flowing and everything is new. It's all true though, and nothing I said in it would be a surprise to anyone who reads their fine comics entertainment at anything other than a surface level. I felt *The Girl from Phonogram: The Singles Club* leaning close to my ear and whispering: "Hey, Kieron. What's your favourite time you ever cried?"

Basically, *The Wicked + The Divine* is an attempt to turn the most confusing and upsetting two years of my life into a pop song. And you don't walk on stage with floor-filling hands-in-the-air material and shout: "Hey, New York! Is everybody ready to die?!"

We ask you if you're ready to rock.

You are? Hey, we are too! Good. Let's move on.

There's been some people disappointed this isn't the third volume of *Phonogram*, this team's book about pop music and magic. We understand that. We'll get to *The Immaterial Girl* eventually. It's all written and on the schedule.

The first person to read this comic outside of the creative team was Matt Fraction. He wondered why this *isn't* the third volume of *Phonogram*.

Good question. I suspect it's a question some of you may be wondering after reading it too. They're evidently sister books. Evil twins. As in, twins who are both evil.

Phonogram is a little post-punk in its attitude. It requires a certain hard ideological purity. For all the fantasy and magic in *Phonogram*, it's fundamentally in our world. It's outside your window. The bands are real, the people are real, it's all real. The point is that the fantasy is not a fantasy. The fantasy is a lifestyle. It's how I lived for the best part of a worst decade.

The Wicked + The Divine, while possessed by all sorts of emotional issues

and touching on some similar terrain, *is* a fantasy. This isn't our world. The fact "The Recurrence" has been going on alters things. You'll see more as we go on. I've plans to bounce back to the Renaissance gods, certainly. You'll see the nineteenth-century ones next issue. It's about our world – all fiction is about our world – but it's not our world. It's a world we've created to lose yourself in, to become addicted to, to find yourself in. *The Wicked + The Divine* can't be a *Phonogram* story, just because of that.

(That said, there was an idea McKelvie and I played with a few times, which was basically an *ULTIMATE PHONOGRAM*, in the manner of the Marvel line of comics. After we'd finished our third volume – *The Immaterial Girl* – we'd do a complete reboot, jettison the bleak ideological aspects and embrace the pure thrill of the core concept. We'll never do it. I suspect *The Wicked + The Divine* is the closest we'll ever come.)

The Wicked + The Divine also flips *Phonogram's* core concern. *Phonogram* was about how individuals interact with the art that inspires, recreates and destroys them. It's primarily about consumers. There is little or no interest in the artists, except in the idea of the artists that exists inside the consumers' heads. *The Wicked + The Divine* is primarily about the creators of art – and specifically the journey, choices, compromises and general fuckery one makes along that road, the people they meet and how they help, fuck and destroy one another.

Phonogram was a device for me to examine why I love art so much, and where that got me. *The Wicked + The Divine* is a device for me to examine why I decided to create art, and where it got me. The ten-year gap between their conception seems meaningful. It's about everything that's happened in that space. It's about everything.

Finally, *The Wicked + The Divine* is also unlike *Phonogram* in that it's actually got a plot. Look, there's even an actual

cliffhanger. This is the most un*Phonogram* thing imaginable.

This is an ongoing. We know the end, but it's years off. Stick with us. Want to write to us? Try wicdiv@gmail.com. It'll be worth it. You like this kind of yabber? Following [@kierongillen](#) and [@mckelvie](#) gives you a front row seat to our ongoing trolling campaign of each other. [@COLORnMATT](#) and [@ClaytonCowles](#) are far more dignified. We've got a website (thewickedandthedivine.com) and a tumblr (wicdiv.tumblr.com) which are actually the same place. Follow if you're specifically after all news *Wicked + Divine*. Jamie and I also have our own tumblrs, where you can get an epic dose of our general nonsense (kierongillen.tumblr.com and mckelvie.tumblr.com, respectively.) I've got a habit of doing supplementary writer notes there too, which could be interesting to those of you who like knowing craft-based issues. We're using [#WicDiv](#) as a general twitter hashtag too. Use it, meet new friends, fall in love, get tattoos of each other. You know you want to.

Phew.

I think this letter went better than the first one. Scratch it and you can see the darkness, but hopefully you see everything else as well. The desire to be the ultimate party at the end of the world means accepting both "the ultimate party" and "end of the world" simultaneously, and letting them feed one another. The emotions behind the series are frenzied. The execution has to be something else. The necessary tension between the two is the book.

The reason the first attempt was so ludicrously emo is because, in a typically *me* way, it means far too much. In that sense, it's about as *Phonogram* as it can get.

Thanks for reading.



KIERON GILLEN
South London

GILLEN MCKELVIE WILSON COWLES

THE
WICKED
+
DIVINE

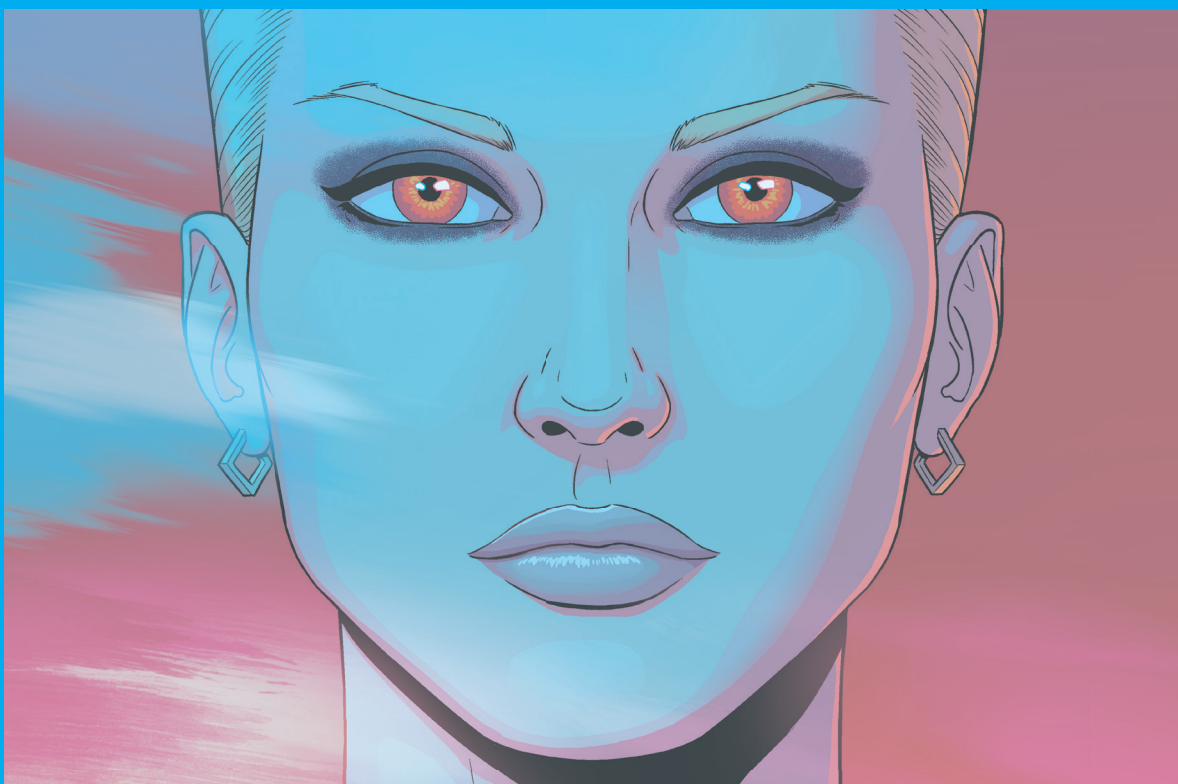
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“I WANT
EVERYTHING
YOU HAVE.”

- LAURA -

RATED M/MATURE

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