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CHAPTER 5:

# SECOND BEST

"WHEREIN LUCIFER RIDES A FERRIS WHEEL AND TAKES A LEAP OF FAITH."



EXPECTATIONS. THAT'S ALL YOU REALLY NEED.

GET READY. THEY'RE HERE.

EXCUSE ME?



IF YOU KNOW WHAT PEOPLE ARE EXPECTING, ALL IT TAKES IS A LITTLE CONFIDENCE TO EXPLOIT THOSE EXPECTATIONS.

NO, I'M NOT DEALING WITH THE A&R GUY TONIGHT. I'VE GOT A SHOW TO RUN. HAVE HIM CALL BRUNO.



IF YOU CAN DO THAT...

YEAH, AT THE GINGER PRINCE. NICE VENUE. EVEN NICER SECURITY.

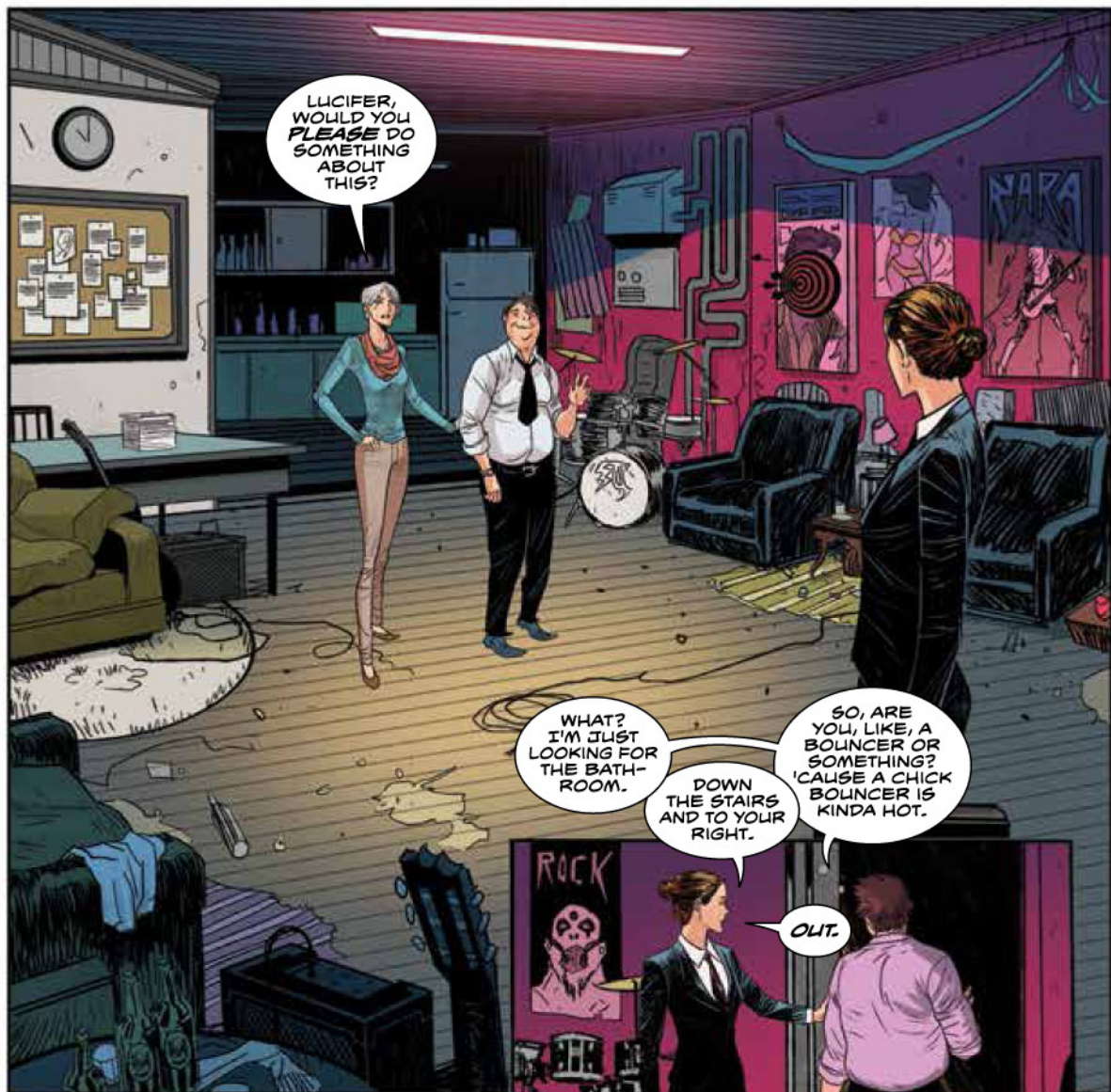


YOU CAN FOOL ANYONE.

WHO WAS THAT?

DON'T KNOW. MUST BE WITH THE CLUB.





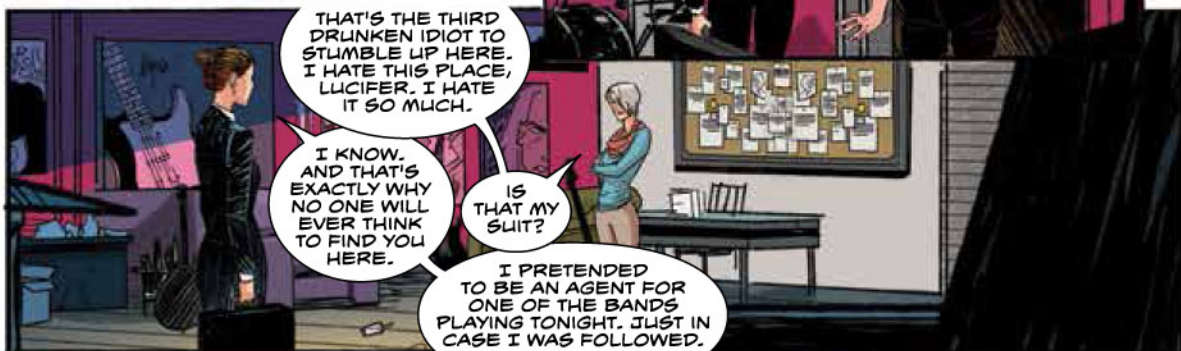
LUCIFER, WOULD YOU PLEASE DO SOMETHING ABOUT THIS?

WHAT? I'M JUST LOOKING FOR THE BATH-ROOM.

DOWN THE STAIRS AND TO YOUR RIGHT.

SO, ARE YOU, LIKE, A BOUNCER OR SOMETHING? 'CAUSE A CHICK BOUNCER IS KINDA HOT.

OUT.



THAT'S THE THIRD DRUNKEN IDIOT TO STUMBLE UP HERE. I HATE THIS PLACE, LUCIFER. I HATE IT SO MUCH.

I KNOW, AND THAT'S EXACTLY WHY NO ONE WILL EVER THINK TO FIND YOU HERE.

IS THAT MY SUIT?

I PRETENDED TO BE AN AGENT FOR ONE OF THE BANDS PLAYING TONIGHT. JUST IN CASE I WAS FOLLOWED.



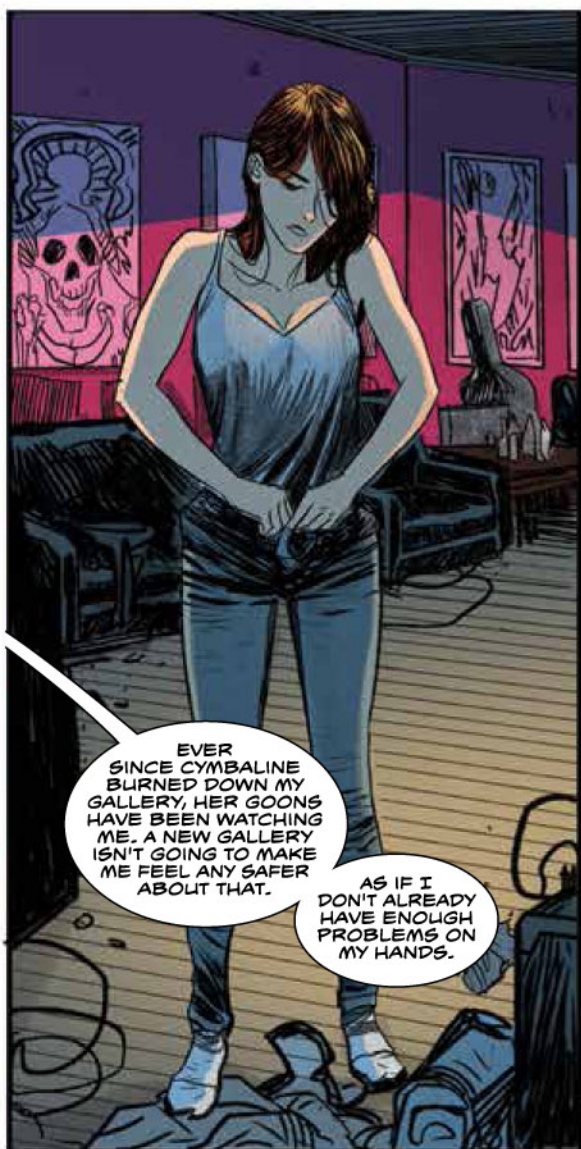
I'M NOT BEING PARANOID, THEN. MY PLACE IS BEING WATCHED?

SOMEONE EVEN PAID YOUR DOORMAN TO RAT YOU OUT. BUT DON'T WORRY. YEARS OF TIPPING HIM WELL HAS MADE HIM VERY LOYAL TO YOU.

BUT YOU DID IT?

I WOULDN'T BE HERE OTHERWISE.









I'LL GET IT ALL BACK, VAL. DON'T WORRY.

AND WHERE ARE WE GOING TO HIDE THEM? WE DON'T HAVE A BASEMENT ANYMORE, AND YOUR LITTLE CONTRAPTION THERE DOESN'T EXACTLY FILL ME WITH CONFIDENCE.

THIS IS A ROCK CLUB, VAL...



I DOUBT ANYONE IS GOING TO RANDOMLY PLAY THE OPENING LINE FROM MARCHÉ SLAVE.

TCHAIKOVSKY?

JUST FOR YOU.



WHERE'S LITTLE MISS NECROMANCER?

GETTING READY. AND BE NICE TO HER. RAINA HAS BEEN A TROOPER THROUGH ALL THAT'S HAPPENED RECENTLY.



I KNOW, BUT MESSING WITH HER IS ONE OF THE FEW JOYS I HAVE IN LIFE. PLEASE DON'T MAKE ME GIVE THAT UP--

WAIT. GETTING READY FOR WHAT?



OH, HELL NO.

OH, HELL YES. SHE NEEDS TO LEARN AS MUCH ABOUT THE MYSTICAL UNDERWORLD AS QUICKLY AS SHE CAN. SHADOWING YOU IS THE BEST WAY TO EDUCATE HER.

EDUCATE WHOM?

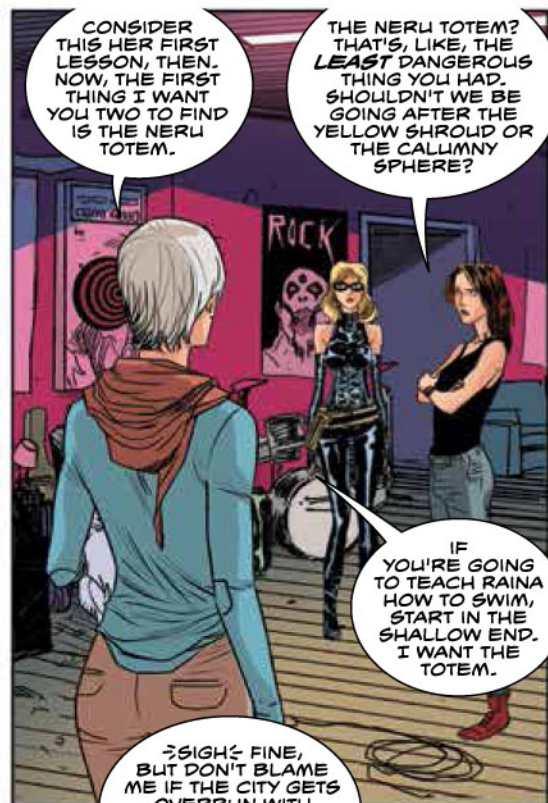




...WHY ARE YOU DRESSED LIKE A ROCKY HORROR EXTRA?

VAL SAID I WAS GOING ON A JOB WITH YOU. I THOUGHT I SHOULD WEAR SOMETHING THAT WOULD MAKE IT EASY TO HIDE.

THE IDEA ISN'T TO NOT BE SEEN. IT'S TO NOT BE **NOTICED**. THAT IS GOING TO GET YOU NOTICED.



CONSIDER THIS HER FIRST LESSON, THEN. NOW, THE FIRST THING I WANT YOU TWO TO FIND IS THE NERU TOTEM.

THE NERU TOTEM? THAT'S, LIKE, THE **LEAST** DANGEROUS THING YOU HAD. SHOULDN'T WE BE GOING AFTER THE YELLOW SHROUD OR THE CALUMNY SPHERE?

IF YOU'RE GOING TO TEACH RAINA HOW TO SWIM, START IN THE SHALLOW END. I WANT THE TOTEM.

>SIGH< FINE, BUT DON'T BLAME ME IF THE CITY GETS OVERRUN WITH FILCHER DEMONS. C'MON, INTERN. LET'S GET YOU CHANGED.



LUCIFER...



NO DYING. WILLINGLY OR OTHERWISE. THAT GOES FOR BOTH OF YOU.

DON'T WORRY, VAL. NO ONE'S GOING TO DIE. PROMISE.

DON'T WAIT UP.

