

NILE
Plot for 36 pages
Jodi Davis

Page 1

***Splash* -**

An exotic woman's face (NILE) Her hair, masses of it,
streams up and away --

NOTE: It's not obvious from this but she is in free fall
from a great height

CAPTION: I can never be too drunk, never too much in love.
I never have to die. I am a goddess. There is a river
named for me. An ancient name almost faded from the world,
but for the river, Nile .

Page 2

***Panel 1* -**

Nile and an equally attractive man sit opposite each other
at a bar table. The bar is old dark wood, rock walls,
barred windows near the top that the legs of by-passers can
be seen through, from the knee down. She has a glass of
dark wine, he a tall mug of beer.

CAPTION: This is the true name; the ones from the stories,
parables and legends are what people remember. They do not
realize that we are the same cast of characters, given
different names by the storytellers, protecting the
innocent, as if there still were any.

***Panel 2* -**

Closer on the couple, there's a daredevil's romance here,
more danger than love... He takes a sip of his beer. Their
eyes never leave each other.

CAPTION: I was old when he was young, no matter what the
myths and legends say there can be no Reede without Nile.
He attracts me and he bores me with his neediness and want,
his craving for love, but he wants more than love.

REEDE: So, tell me...

***Panel 3* -**

Closer on their intensity -

CAPTION: He smells like a summer thunder storm, fraught with peril, heady in its own rushing nature, cool in its desire.

NILE: No, I can't tell, Love. That would be breaking my oath.

REEDE: As if an oath holds meaning for you.

Panel 4 -

Reede drinking.

NILE: Oh, but it does, sweet boy, it does.

Page 3

Split Panel 1 -

He wipes the beads of the cool beer from his lip. Using her fingertips, held in his hand to do it - this is foreplay / He licks the beer off her finger tips.

Panel 2 -

Closer - their faces are kiss close, yet no kissing.

CAPTION: His breath in my face reflects his link to land, orangey and alcohol strong, dark and cocoa bitter with the promise of sweetness.

REEDE: You swore an oath to me once.

NILE: I must have been awfully drunk at the time.

REEDE: Yes, you were.

Panel 3 -

Her hand is out of his and there is more distance between them.

NILE: Then it is not an oath, just foolery.

REEDE: An oath.

Panel 4 -

Widen to include the window and the bar. The bartender looking at them suspiciously.

CAPTION: A basement dive, my place in Chicago, my place so that occasionally, if someone is looking, they can find me.

NILE: What do you want, Cupid?

Page 5

Panel 1 -

Reede glares.

NILE: Sorry, Eros? So what is it this decade?

Panel 2 -

His eyes are off her for the first time, he looks up to the window.

NILE: Judas.

Panel 3 -

Nile laughing - the faces of other patrons are disturbed...

they won't know why, but they are hearing a god laugh...

NILE: Oh, dear, why not go for Jesus Christ? You're a great pretender and it makes the same point.

REEDE: And what point would that be, my dearest one?

Panel 4 -

Nile stands beside the table prepared to leave.

NILE: That you deny your heritage and crave the old ways at the same time, it stands for indecisiveness, Reede, and I find it not at all appealing.

CAPTION: He catches some secret latch within me. It's nothing but a sigh, but it's enough, strong and sure as bourbon in the morning.

Panel 5/6 -

She reaches her hand back to him without looking / his hand slides into it.

Page 5

Panel 1 -

Up a narrow stairwell, full frontal of Nile, Reede barely shown behind her, except for his hand which has come up around her hip.

Panel 2 -

Up into the heat, the sidewalk, amongst those people of the knees we've seen from below.

Nile and Reede don't fit in, they're too amazing.

They're still holding hands, but his other one roams discreetly.

Panel 3 -

Still with the strange stand-out from the crowd, a dark cool alley, that Reede is pulling her into, they are part shadow as they disappear into it.

CAPTION: His hands, that is the other thing, oh, the other thing, if only it were not the craving.

Panel 4 -

They are face to face close, just by their faces it should be obvious they are having sex standing in the alley.

CAPTION: Then there are only his eyes and their color and his scent, sweet and hard, poisoned candy.

Page 6

Panel 1 -

They finally kiss - but it's voracious, about power, not love.

CAPTION: I hiss the breath of my release through clenched teeth, before he takes my mouth with his to do a taking of his own, but he has given, so it is all right.

Panel 2/3 -

His hands are wrapped in her hair / Her head slammed against the wall.

CAPTION: Sometimes the goddess must be cruel, but she may also be kind, if it is desired. Then may not the god be kind as well? No. Not this time.

Panel 4 -

Nile lies, half prone in the alley, in the distance, Reede is just exiting the alley, back into the hustle and bustle of the street.

CAPTION: Those eyes cannot be denied and I whisper the name of death, the name that goes to death, for my power always has been one of passing from one realm to another.

Panel 5/6 -

Dark, mostly shadow, the tragic Nile / yet, a closer reveal on her face, a smile on her lips.

CAPTION: Most often along the arc of desire is betrayal created, and within a betrayal nothing may bloom. Little did I know what kind of trouble an oath would be. Humanity works in strange and mysterious ways.

Page 7

NOTE: The border for these pages - flash back, should be something French, fancy, Renaissance-ish...

Panel 1 -

A bar - 1793 France - The Revolution...

CAPTION: Business is slow for goddesses, not much call for us anymore. I make my living another way. What you might call an assassin, a hired killer. I'm good at my job.

Panel 2 -

Two men at the bar in earnest conversation - different from the rest of the raucous, decadent crowd.

CAPTION: This is how I fell into what could be considered an unsavory line of work. I was in a bar, having spent most of the Eighteenth century in a bar, drunk off my immortal ass. I overheard a conversation. Your typical bar conversation if a touch more bitter. It was about a Queen.

Panel 3 -

One of them is tapped on the shoulder, his eyes widen in alarm before he turns.

CAPTION: Now, I did look into that as a profession, but once I did a little research, I realized that it's not what you might think. No real power goes with the title and I'm

used to having both, too set in my ways to change now, eternity will do that to you. But this made me curious about whom could be so angry with a mere figurehead. That is when I realized the power of perception.

Panel 4 -

An older, bearded man, (Comus - also a god) with the same attractive grace and power of both Nile and Reede, direct the two men to a shaded alcove table, where two shadowed figures sit.

CAPTION: If someone perceives you as powerful, then you are. This was news to me. It seems obvious, but when you have true power it just never occurs to you that one might still hold the same sway if you didn't have that power and only pretended that you did.

Page 8

Panel 1 -

Smokey air and hubbub around, seems to die out in this circle, Reede and Nile at the table, sitting within each other's space, that heat between them, but none of the bitterness.

CAPTION: Comus was still with us. He had not become King of the Mardi Gras, a man afraid to venture away from his sacred and safe territory. He was still full of adventure and life and he was more daring then ever I thought was within me.

Panel 2 -

Comus joins Reede and Nile - a threesome.

CAPTION: I loved them both, and I thought they loved me. It was about now that I was coming to understand how alone we all really are.

Panel 3 -

The men are nervous, sitting with these three - the strange power of the gods affect them, they just don't realize it.

CAPTION: Full of that false courage that comes from the strength of your convictions. Would that I had ever had that, then maybe I could understand. But I don't understand it, that ability to give your life to something as amorphous as a cause.

Panel 4 -

Comus nuzzles at Nile's neck, but her eyes are laser sharp on the two men, although Reede is the one huddled in conversation with them.

CAPTION: Reede told me that he didn't understand it either, but I'm not so sure he wasn't lying to me then, he has before.

Page 9

Panel 1 -

Now it is obviously Nile who has taken charge of the conversation - Reede looks on with bemused awe, Comus in amusement.

CAPTION: I offered these men a chance to get rid of their burden. It is not the way with us that they would not take me seriously, even then, when women were not real for them. They knew enough to know real power. They could sense enough to feel the depth of my desire.

Panel 2/3 -

An alley, carriage and horse, the two men speak through the window, handing money inside / It is Nile inside the carriage.

CAPTION: I agreed to rid them of her, but I wanted to get to know her. That's become an obsession for me now, part of it.

Panel 4 -

The carriage sits outside a modest palace - Marie Antoinette's prison palace.

CAPTION: Reede was game, Comus was up for it and we became her best friends, advisors and compatriots.

Panel 5 -

Nile and Marie Antoinette snuggle near the fire, chastely.

Comus plays at fencing with pastry with eight year-old Louis Charles.

Reede plays cards with nineteen year-old Marie Therese but his eyes are on Nile and Marie-Antoinette.

CAPTION: I found her harmless and because of that I couldn't do it myself, so I manipulated the situation to achieve the desired result.

Page 10

Panel 1 -

Reede gives Marie-Antoinette a diamond necklace, placing it around her neck.

CAPTION: There are four kinds of humans, the doers and the done to, the makers and the unmakers. Gods are different, we are all four, with manipulation thrown in for good measure. We want to be loved, be adored, but we want to love as well, to adore as well. We need to, like a drug, like destiny.

Panel 2 -

Nile rides alone in her carriage, the diamond necklace in her lap.

CAPTION: I never saw that Reede was her addict. The discovery sealed her fate. It's hard to love a god. None survive it.

Panel 3/4 -

Nile steps out of her carriage, the guillotine looming above and behind / delicately stepping over the rivulets of blood that pour across the flag stones.

Panel 5 -

The diamond necklace sits alone on the seat, the door to the carriage left open as Nile deserts it, further away, the crowd about to swallow her.

CAPTION: Reede left for the first time. I was laughing, I remember, when I told Comus he had gone, and Comus hadn't laughed with me. I didn't notice at the time, but it came back to me later. It was shortly after that when he left as well. I was alone then, for the first time in my existence. It was exhilarating. It was frightening.

Page 11

NOTE: The border for this set would be Faberge, baroque, classical czarist Russian

Panel 1 -

Close up of a gun - the kind of weapon to be had in Russia in 1918.

NOTE: A Carbine Mosin-Nagant M. 1907 - I have pictures - don't ask.

Held in Reede's hands.

CAPTION: I had drowned myself in absinthe and vodka but of course I recognized him.

Panel 2 -

Nile in tangled fun heap with four little girls of various age, a little boy stands sadly by, no rough housing for him. Nile's legs and arms are askew - pure fun here, no attempt to look good at all.

CAPTION: It had taken me years to find my laughter again.

Panel 3 -

A garden chess game, where the little girls and servants are checker pieces on a large grass board.

Nicolai and Alexandra sit in chairs, Nile on the grass with the little boy. It couldn't be more idealic.

CAPTION: In Nicolai and Alexandra's court I found it. Their red cheeked girls, who smelled of lavender and attar of roses, and their sweet boy, who smelled of blood and tears and whose little heart was that of a fierce and proud tiger.

Panel 4 -

Nile, Alexandra, Nicolai, sit next to a roaring fire, silver and glass mugs of tea before them, it's a cozy family, familiar, yet not carnal.

CAPTION: At night, long and quiet in that Northern land, I talked of my life and my dreams and my hopes with a man and a woman who had the amazing ability to see beyond their own mortality, who had the selflessness to not envy me forever.

Page 12

Panel 1 -

A dark bedroom, the little boy illuminated on the bed by the lamp in Nile's hand as she checks him from the doorway.

CAPTION: Most miraculous of all, they understood me. More than I understood myself I think, and they loved everything I ever was and everything I ever would be. Maybe it's good that they did not live long enough to see me now.

Panel 2 -

Reede appears over her shoulder - Very Rasputin in dress and beard, but still Reede.

CAPTION: Inside of him there was a revenge I hadn't even known how to prepare for; a bitterness I hadn't even suspected existed. Reede had known. He had prepared for and lived with it all these years in between, the killing of his love and the killing of mine.

Panel 3 -

Nile stands to one side, it is obviously Reede/Rasputin who reigns in this parlor gathering, Alexandra fawns over him, and Nicolai hangs on every word, the children at his feet.

Panel 4 -

The family, scared, in the dark, being pushed down a hallway at gunpoint. Nile is with the family, Reede beside her, but one of the revolutionaries, Cossack dress, beard shaved, his hands on her reminiscent of their walk in Chicago.

Page 13

Panel 1 -

A velvet black night, the stars like ice above. The river below the bluff only a pale reflection of it all. Nile, Alexandra and Nicolai try to shelter the children, all around them, Cossacks with guns.

CAPTION: He murdered them all.

Panel 2 -

The bullets fly, hitting the adults.

CAPTION: That was the difference between us, he was always more hands on than I. I never would have held the gun that did it myself, but for him, it was the only way.

Panel 3 -

Nile's bloody face, half in the mud, eyes open.

CAPTION: I felt it all, the bullets, the screams, the silence.

Panel 4 -

The dead and tangled bodies, mud and blood, Nile among them, the gunmen all gone, save one, Reede. His hand in her hair, lifting her face out of the mud.

CAPTION: He asked for the oath then and I gave it to him.

Page 14

Panel 1 -

Reede is using his foot to finish pushing Nile over the embankment into the river.

CAPTION: I would have given anything to him, everything to him, but by then it was too late for everything or even anything.

Panel 2 -

Nile floats down the river, face down, the embankment massacre, and Reede on the bank, distant.

CAPTION: What good to strip me of my salvation if I couldn't live to enjoy it.

Long Panel 3 -

Full length Nile, from underwater, her eyes open.

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NOTE: This border should be antique French, fleur-de-lis.

Panel 1 -

Nile's hand reaching from a swift moving stream.

CAPTION: I lived without my memory for a long time after that.

Panel 2 -

Nile on a muddy shore, naked, reborn, crying.

Panel 3 -

Widen to include the legs and feet of Comus in the foreground, waiting for her. The Eiffel tower on the far shore behind her...

CAPTION: Comus came for me. I think it was the last time he left New Orleans.

Panel 4 -

Comus and Nile, together in that rampant sexual way the gods have - even in public, especially in public - walking off a steamer onto the docks of New Orleans.

CAPTION: It still was new then too, a plague and water infested land of strange people and stranger customs. The Acadians, and the Creoles, with their religions and sadness, the Cajuns with their carefree take-the-devil-for-a-ride souls that hid the steel of their characters.

Page 16

Panel 1 -

Close on Nile's face, Comus' hands over her eyes, but she can peek through his fingers.

CAPTION: Comus brought me to a house there in that rough swamp of a city.

Panel 2 -

A brass plaque is set in a cobblestone walk: Jalous Maison.

CAPTION: Jealousy House. I never asked about it. Never even thought about it, but I guess he had a point.

Panel 3 -

Jalous Maison is a humungous anti-bellum home in the Garden District, columns, porticos, verandas, old live oaks...

A wild and raucous costume ball is going on, in the house and spilling out into the yard.

CAPTION: Comus had created the celebration known now as Mardi Gras, but we refined it together, our desire for activity, for fun, for stimulation, anything to revive us for eternity.

Panel 4 -

Daylight and yet, there is still a party at Jalous Maison, the champagne fountain flows in the front yard.

Page 17

Panel 1 -

From the backyard, things are more decadent, nearly naked and debauched guests play skipping stone games in a large still pool, from a stack of what looks like rare gems, diamonds, emeralds...

Panel 2 -

Inside the front parlor - the most opulent furnishings and decorations from around the globe. Nile sits on the floor in the center of the room, stacking rubies and diamonds.

Panel 3 -

Widen on the parlor to reveal a castle (The Winter Palace in St. Petersburg), taking up the entire room, wall to wall, floor to ceiling, emerald river in front.

Comus looks on, unable to do anything.

Panel 4 -

Nile from the back, walking out the front door, the castle behind her....

CAPTION: I started the leaving then. A little at a time, trips that kept me away longer and longer, until finally it was many years before I came back.

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Splash -

Nile stands in the entryway to the parlor - it's empty, no furniture, no guests, no diamond palace.

CAPTION: It was as vacant as my heart and almost as cold. Comus was still the presence of New Orleans, he just didn't live in that house anymore.

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NOTE: The border for this section is art deco...

Panel 1 -

A piano bar - Seattle, 2003

Three man shapes, shadowed. Illuminated only by a light that originates elsewhere and only by some odd twist of fate had found itself here, shining off of white faces and glimmering like need along the polishing of the piano and the bald head of the old piano player.

CAPTION: That was a long time ago, and I have been doing this now for longer then a human life, so I could spot them right away.

Panel 2 -

Nile sits at a small dark table, a glass of amaretto and ice in front of her, deadly gorgeous.

The men make their way toward her - two wear suits, one, jeans and a t-shirt.

Panel 3 -

Nile's fingers taking an ice cube from the amaretto. A fat envelope smacks on the table in front of her.

Panel 4 -

Nile licks the amaretto off the ice cube, the man in jeans lifts a chair around to straddle it.

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Panel 1 -

The envelope sits, the two men in suits, stare at it, fixated, as the meeting continues.

NILE: You've seen too many movies.

Panel 2 -

Nile and Blue stare each other down.

BLUE JEANS: There absolutely must be casualties. That is imperative.

CAPTION: As if he were saying the sun is yellow, sometimes orange.

SUIT ONE: It is for the better good.

Panel 3 -

Nile continues the ice cube fellatio, but she's annoyed.

NILE: The greater good.

SUIT TWO: Pardon?

Panel 4 -

His beautiful denim covered ass forefront, her visible past him to one side.

NILE: How do you all get the followers to believe that crap?

CAPTION: He shrugs and stands, hard to do at the same time, but he pulls it off admirably well.

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Long Panel 1 -

Torch song - Nile reclined across the piano, singing her little heart out.

CAPTION: Long after they leave, but while the night is still young, I let Oscar play one for me, the one he likes to play, the song I like to sing.

Panel 2 -

Cash from the envelope on the piano, Nile's hand with the envelope still in frame, Oscar doesn't even bat an eye.

Panel 3 -

Nile from behind as she leaves the bar, shadowed, gorgeous body.

CAPTION: In the summer in Seattle it gets dark late, but it is a real darkness, not just a memory.

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NOTE: The border for this section should be modern New Orleans - tackiness, drawn elegantly - beads, coins, cups.

Panel 1 -

A wrought iron gate in brick that has seen better days.

CAPTION: My place in New Orleans is a dark and deceitful dive that doesn't even open until after midnight.

Panel 2 -

That opens into a small dingy brick courtyard with a heavy wooden door on the far side.

CAPTION: It sits like a tumor in the dark recesses of an old French warren in the heart of the Quarter.

Panel 3 -

Inside the wooden door - a glass alcove, much like in a museum, only a mannequin in bondage gear dominates this display case.

Panel 4 -

A series of these displays along a long walkway that has a bar along the opposite wall.

Page 23

Panel 1 -

Past the bar - Some of the alcoves are not glassed and hold real tables and real people.

Nile in the first one, a brandy snifter of some dark frothy gooey drink.

CAPTION: I'm trying to decide what ingredient could cause such bitter sweetness, and revolting stickiness of the froth that adheres to the inside of the glass, when I feel him come in.

Panel 2 -

Comus - A pair of tan chinos and a navy denim shirt, a cloud of gray hair that defies gravity and will not, has not ever been tamed, haloes his head.

CAPTION: He is well into his cups already, but really, when has he not been.

Panel 3 -

The long expanse of bar, Nile wraps herself around Comus from behind.

CAPTION: I reach him before his just ordered drink can be delivered to him and take full advantage of the fact that his mouth is unoccupied by its favorite pastime.

Panel 4 -

Full body kiss - No hesitation from Comus, mouth or hands - this kiss is merely sex in public with clothes on.

Page 24

Panel 1 -

Nile, shaken by desire - pulled back, stealing his whiskey off the bar

NILE: You old fool. Where did you learn to kiss like that?

Panel 2 -

Comus touches her cheek, a delicate gesture.

COMUS: My darling, Psyche, you taught me, in Havana, remember.

NILE: No.

Panel 3 -

She sips. Lips on glass.

CAPTION: It is a different trembling I seek to control now.

COMUS: Surely, it was you, but maybe Calcutta?

Panel 4 -

Comus alarmed.

NILE: No, not that name.

COMUS: Is he around then?

Panel 5 -

Comus downing the drink completely.

NILE: I think so, yes.

COMUS: Then you must leave New Orleans, I don't want any trouble, least of all the kind of trouble that brews between the two of you.

Page 25

Panel 1 -

Nile steering Comus toward the booth at the end of the bar, near a jukebox.

NILE: Dammit, Comus, I need you. I thought I could count on you, if none of the others.

Panel 2/3 -

He jerks his elbow from her hand / slides into the booth.

CAPTION: He motions for another drink with all the skill that you'd expect from one who has spent millennia perfecting the call for alcohol.

NILE: He is doing something, over on Prytania, trafficking in mortal women--

Panel 4 -

He tells her around the refilled glass that has already found its way to his mouth.

COMUS: So our boy wants to pimp for awhile? What do you care about mortals, don't you kill them for a living?

Panel 5 -

Comus belches but nothing more.

NILE: It's not the same thing.

NILE: I only work when I get paid, and only when other mortals would have killed them anyway. My way is better.

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Panel 1 -

COMUS: What a load of shit, Nile, Goddess of rivers, of passing, of the flow. You do it because you like it, it's in you.

NILE: It's in us all, Comus, don't fault me for that, but all that business in Hyannis Port, in New Guinea, in California, in Germany. He's insane.

Panel 2 -

She looks at him, stunned.

COMUS: Oh, what about Nagasaki?

CAPTION: I'm hurt that he would even bring that up, but the bastard actually waits for an answer.

Panel 3/4 -

He laughs. / The bar is goes quiet for a moment, the faces of other patrons stunned.

NILE: You know that was an accident.

CAPTION: It's not often you hear a god laugh, you remember when you do.

Panel 5 -

A bondage dressed waitress delivers more drinks to their table.

COMUS: An accident? Ah, Nile, you are too much. These are always the accidents that happen when you two are together in the same town, which is why I want you out of New Orleans.

Page 27

Panel 1 -

The glass in her hand is slammed onto the table.

NILE: Want me out of New Orleans?

NILE: Me? I am trying to work, he is here only to worry and harass me. When did you become this... thing? An old man who sits in one grimy, desperate city, you never go anywhere anymore, never do anything fun.

Panel 2 -

Comus snorts his amusement as he drinks.

CAPTION: A difficult feat even for a god with as much practice as he has had, but he pulls it off. I admire that.

Panel 3 -

He is dead serious now.

COMUS: Just because I don't cause mass destruction, mayhem, or murder, doesn't necessarily rule out all the fun aspects of my life, Nile. You have always been such a petulant child, and you know how I love you, but get out of New Orleans.

Panel 4 -

He has leaned across the table in all earnestness and beseechment. His hand to her cheek.

COMUS: The both of you can not be here, come back when you are not on business, come for fun, come for me, but I will not have this vendetta played out between the two of you here in my home.

Page 28

Panel 1 -

She slaps his hand away.

NILE: He made me give him my oath.

CAPTION: There is a hurt there too deep for me to even look at now, maybe ever.

Panel 2 -

He leans back away from her. She's going already.

COMUS: I know all that, old story. You two following each other around the planet, trying to atone, trying to destroy. It's old, Nile, all right? It's old already.

Panel 3 -

She's walking away, past the mannequins.

NILE: Fine, but this should never be blamed wholly on me, he is the one.

CAPTION: I attempt to stomp out in righteous indignation, and though I have had lots of practice, I just can't quite carry it off. I can clearly hear his last remark.

Panel 4 -

Comus has his glass raised to her - pure sadness in his face.

COMUS: No, you know that blame is never assigned to either of you, it is just the way of the world.

Page 29

Panel 1 -

The spindly, metal frame tower rises above the factory that stretches around her, pinpoints of light in a sea of darkness.

CAPTION: One of the many factories along the Mississippi, crowded close to the metropolitan areas, perhaps too close, maybe not, depending on the fire fighting abilities of the city, and which way the wind blows tonight.

Panel 2 -

This far up, the illumination is crippled by the night. It glints off an edge of steel, pools on a slab of cement, woefully unable to complete its purpose. The industrial complex stretches far to the north, the city cupping it like a pair of hands and sprinkling it out into the night like tossed stars. The chimneys spew a mist that looks like they are making clouds.

Nile near the edge, her hair whips about her.

CAPTION: The night shift, busy but silent, present but unseen from my vantage, my required casualties, my job, my atonement, my revenge.

Panel 3 -

Close on Reede as he steps out onto the platform.

Nile does not turn around to actually look at him.

REEDE: I like your hair long.

Panel 4 -

Reede at a garden in front of an old house - There are women, in various states of tired and reoperating, beaten, recovering, jonesing, serene.

CAPTION: I saw him yesterday, at his place on Prytania Street, with those women he has there, his halfway house. Half way to what, I wonder, and what pathetic specimens he surrounds himself with that can not just go the whole way.

Page 30

Panel 1 -

His fingers on the base of her neck.

REEDE: Thank you. In her ear.

CAPTION: If only there were no pause in between these moments, I would not have to be alone, not need to be lonely. Forced to defy him and acquiesce, not able to step off the merry-go-round.

Panel 2 -

His palm lower, along her spine...

REEDE: The building has been evacuated.

CAPTION: I can smell the earth in him, the foliage, the dirt, and the honey green of life.

Panel 3 -

...moving out of line across his body to follow the curve of her right hip with the back of his hand.

CAPTION: He can be reborn anywhere, anytime he needs. His wedding to the mud and rot and strength of the earth is beyond any reproach or divorce. He cannot be questioned or denied, not I.

Panel 4 -

The pair of them, twined. Far below the Mississippi sparkles in the night.

CAPTION: I must have the flowing water; a tenuous grasp to immortality is my reliance on him to always bring me to this cusp next to the source of my forever. He never fails me, never lets me down. But maybe one day he will not be able to save me.

Page 31

Panel 1 -

Their faces, his over her shoulder - their expressions convey that actual sex is happening, eyes closed - even though it's not.

CAPTION: My eyes were always the navy blue of the swiftly, coldly flowing waters of my birth, but over the eon, the ages of man, they have darkened and faded to brown.

Panel 2 -

While his eyes are still closed, hers are now open.

CAPTION: The accursed damn drowns my waters, drowns the tide of my life. We both know that the end may be near for me anytime. Yet, I am powerless to stop it, the endless cycle of love and anger and revenge.

Panel 3 -

She turns to face him, their stand on the narrow platform precarious.

REEDE: You need to do this, don't you?

CAPTION: Those eyes have always owned me.

Panel 4 -

Over Reede's shoulder - The young environmentalist sits bound, Reede has brought him here.

NILE: No more then you need to do this.

CAPTION: It is not in me to admit defeat, especially to one who left me, and so my very nature dictates that I push to the edge one more time, one more death to see if there will be a rebirth.

Page 32

Panel 1 -

Wide again on how high up they are - the danger.

CAPTION: On the dawn that I don't come back, will he breath a sigh of relief or cry a bitter tear? The truth is, I don't know.

NILE: I do this because this one here believes that an accident the likes of this one will promote wide spread environmental reform, it will open the doors, so to speak.

Panel 2 -

Reede and Nile, face to face, the environmentalist in blue jeans over their shoulder.

REEDE: You care nothing for that crap.

NILE: Of course not, it's just what I do.

Panel 3 -

Blue squeaks as he struggles at his bonds.

REEDE: Well, quit, there is no point to it, you only let your destructiveness run rampant. It is a release to you, a pleasure.

BLUE JEANS: How did you know?

Panel 4 -

Reede's eyes never leave Nile's.

REEDE: She always tells me, she made an oath to always tell me, if she didn't, how would I stop her?

Page 33

Panel 1 -

The would-be-revolutionary gapes.

NILE: Stop me?

Panel 2 -

Reede's eyes close, a denial, an acceptance.

Panel 3 -

The explosion begins at the base of the tower, rippling air chased before it.

NILE: You never stop me.

Panel 4 -

Nile falls. The airborne hair the same as the first page splash. The swan dive.

Far below to the dark waters of the Mississippi, black and cold, hungry for warmth, confused by the tide and choked by the human filth and the gray brown silt.

Page 34

Panel 1 -

Reede and in the background Environment Boy, are enveloped by flame. Reede's head back, face rapturous - EB in stark terror and agonizing pain.

Panel 2 -

The flame laps at Nile in free fall...

CAPTION: The exquisite path of pain and memory.

Panel 3 -

Nile is on fire and executes a perfect dive into the water.

CAPTION: Not this time, this time I return to the river, as I sense his return to the earth. Memory of other deaths that caused this thrilling rejuvenation, and beyond that, I foiled him, again, and even completed my job assignment.

Panel 4 -

Underwater - shadowed and dark as her edges seem to become the water around her.

CAPTION: Casualties were imperative. Damn, arrogant man that I love.

Page 35

Splash -

Nile underwater - nearly a form of water, her transformation to river almost complete.

CAPTION: Comus will be angry with me, very angry.

Page 36

Panel 1 -

Legs pass by the barred windows, ending where it began.

CAPTION: Another saga, unsung, unknown, but I know and I remember and my memory is long.

Panel 2 -

Nile sits at her table, dark wine in front of her - breathtakingly, amazingly beautiful.

CAPTION: Time slowly loops back through itself, making its sorry way through the dust of humanity, through the loves that were never meant to be and the inability to know what will harm you and what will keep you safe.

Panel 3 -

A frosted mug of beer is set down on the table in front of her, she doesn't even bother to look away from the window.

Panel 4 -

Her profile.

NILE: Hi, love. (a whisper)

CAPTION: He laughs, almost too low for me to hear. His breath is hot and smells of sweet cream, magnolias, and chicory.