

PSYCHOLOGICAL HORROR FROM THE WRITER OF SPAWN & X-MEN: CIVIL WAR!

STRANGE EMBRACE™

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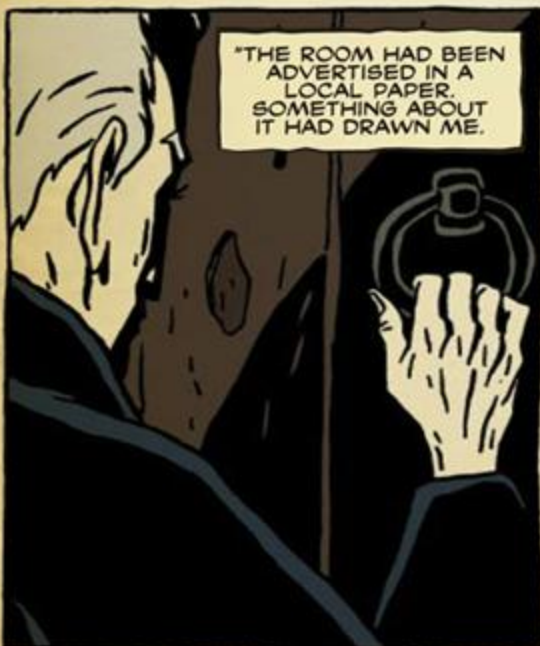
ISSUE
3 OF 8

DAVID HINE
WITH ROB STEEN
& COMICRAFT

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"IT WAS LIKE THE OPENING CHAPTER OF A NOVEL. THE NEXT DAY, I WENT OUT AND BOUGHT A SECOND-HAND TYPEWRITER."



"AS I TYPED, AN IMAGE OF THE OLD MAN BEGAN TO COME INTO FOCUS."

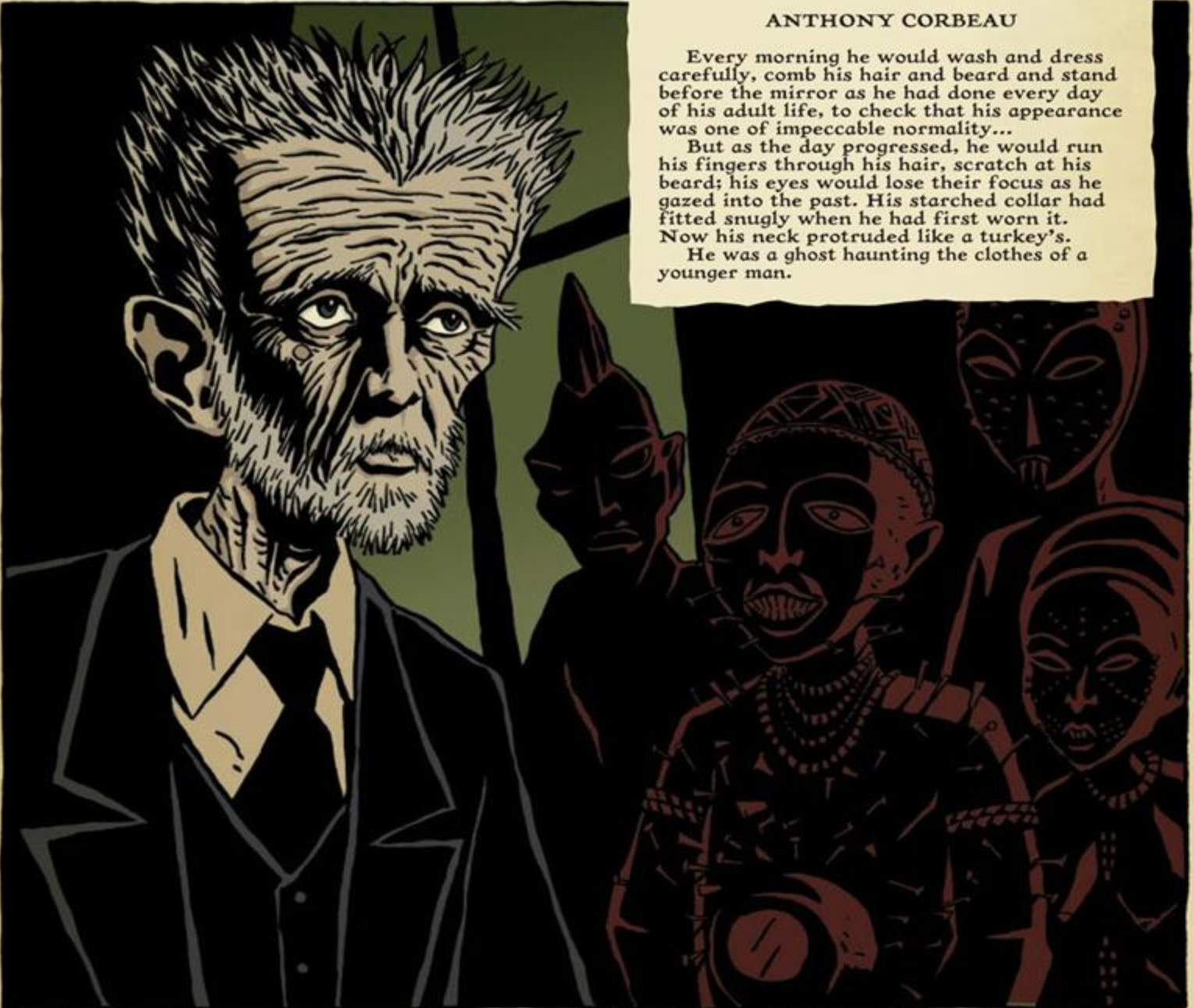


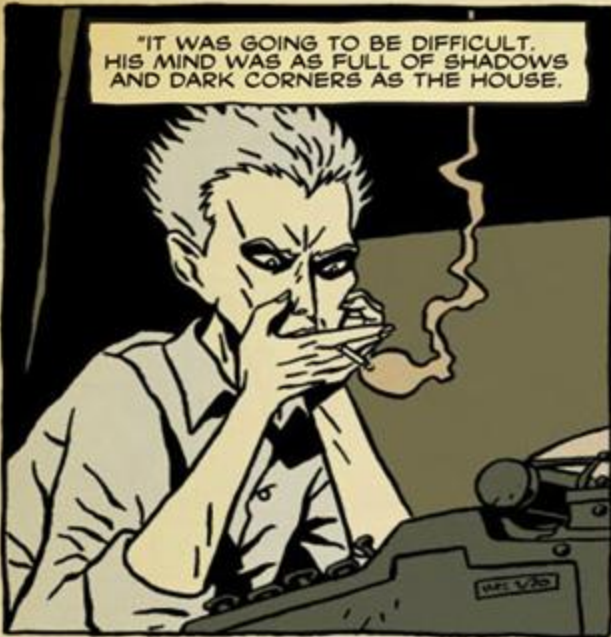
ANTHONY CORBEAU

Every morning he would wash and dress carefully, comb his hair and beard and stand before the mirror as he had done every day of his adult life, to check that his appearance was one of impeccable normality...

But as the day progressed, he would run his fingers through his hair, scratch at his beard; his eyes would lose their focus as he gazed into the past. His starched collar had fitted snugly when he had first worn it. Now his neck protruded like a turkey's.

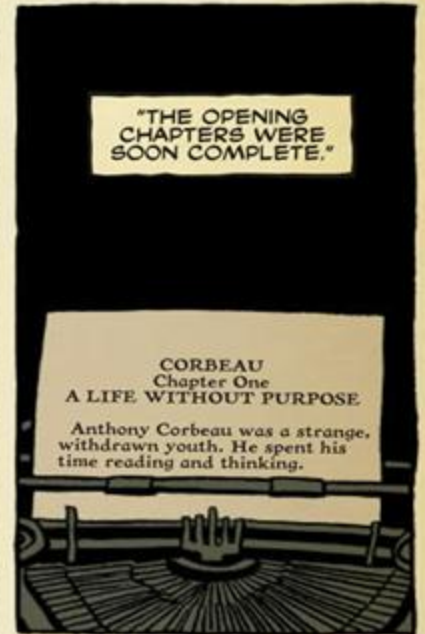
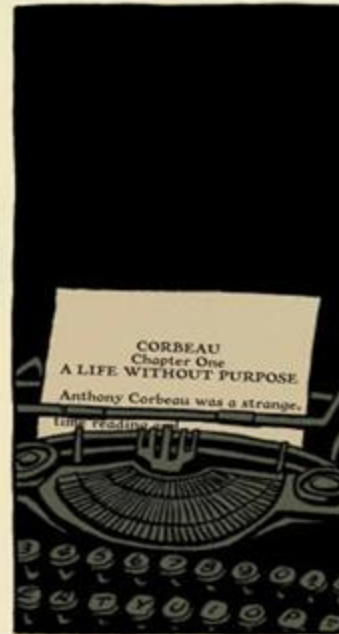
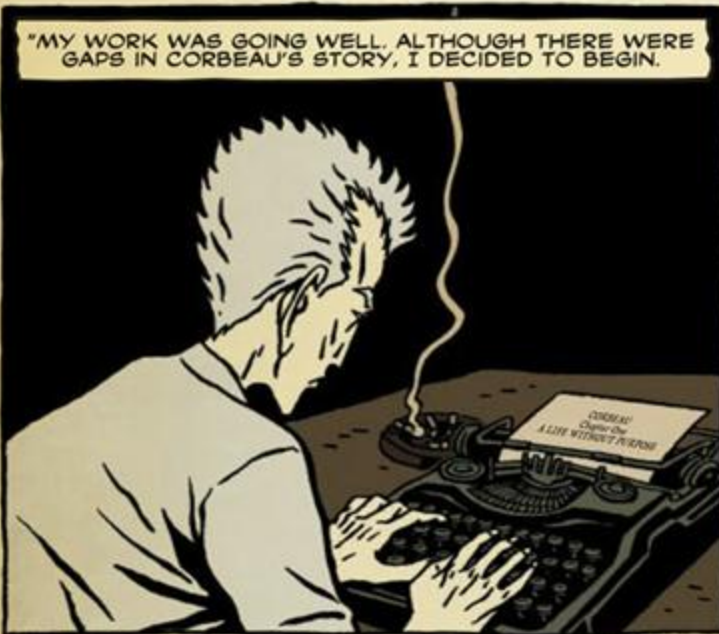
He was a ghost haunting the clothes of a younger man.



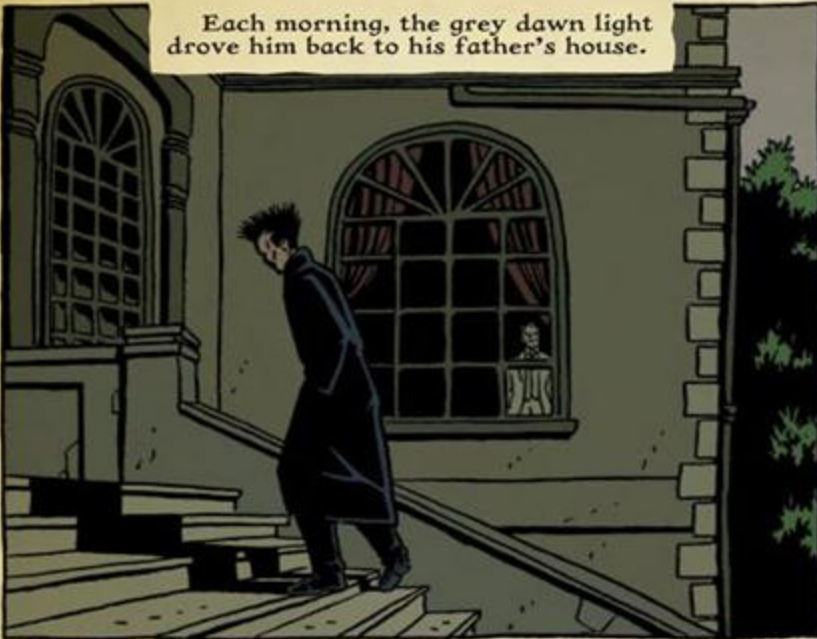




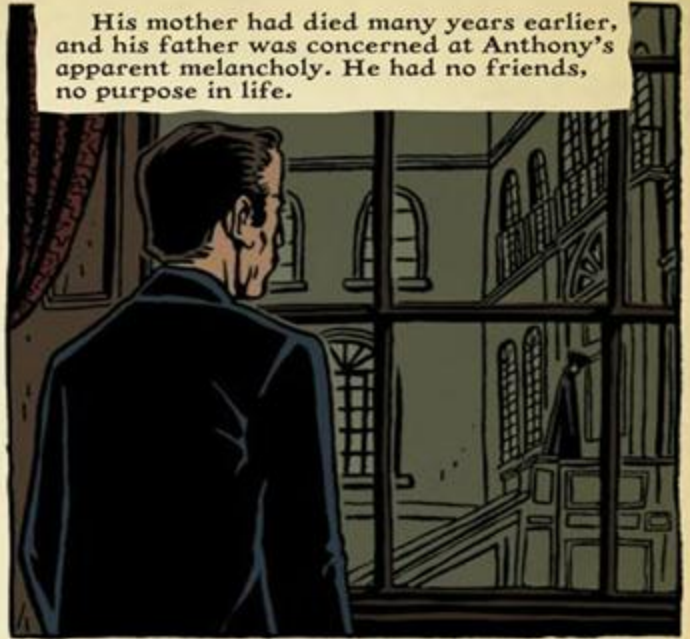




Each morning, the grey dawn light drove him back to his father's house.



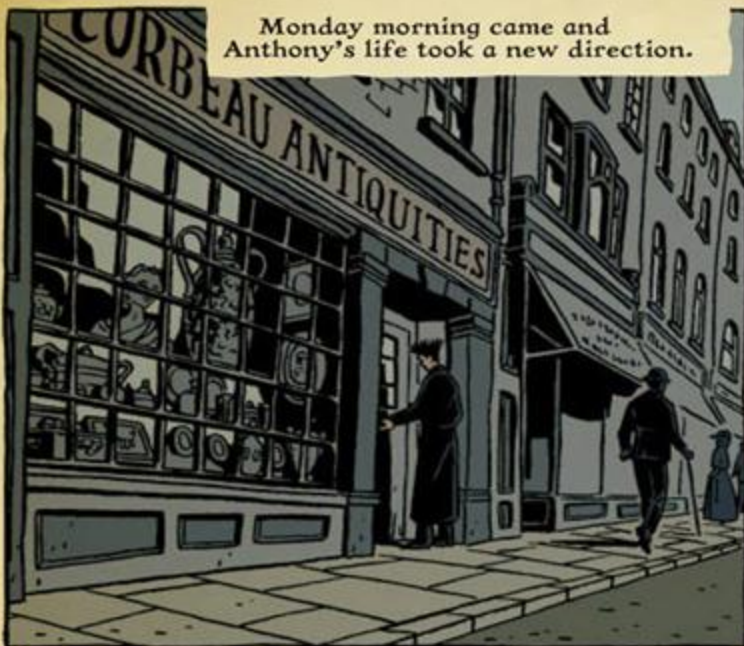
His mother had died many years earlier, and his father was concerned at Anthony's apparent melancholy. He had no friends, no purpose in life.







Monday morning came and Anthony's life took a new direction.



His heart sank as he looked about him.



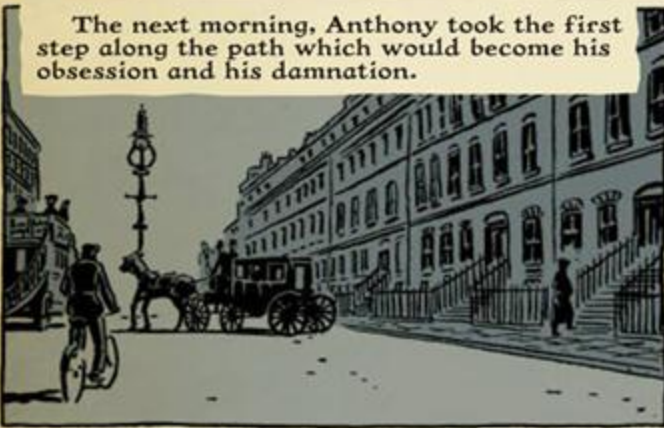
This was his father's idea of life. A musty collection of knick-knacks and curios - the flotsam and jetsam of other people's lives washed up in this backwater of the antique trade.



Then a current passed through him... a movement in the air.











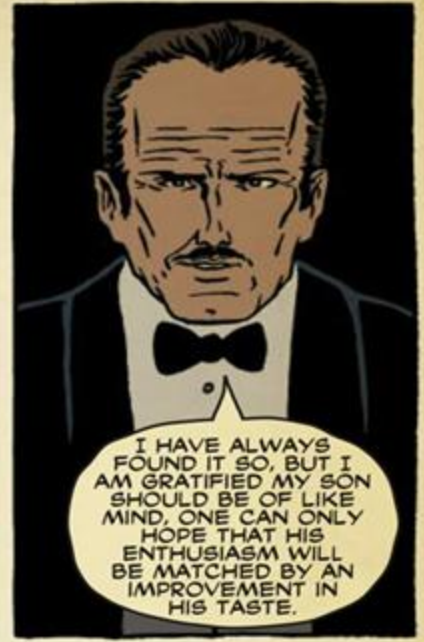
And so the wheels of fate turned. Had Sarah not met Anthony until that evening in the mundane setting of the dining room, the spark might never have been struck which was to set a fire that would consume them all.





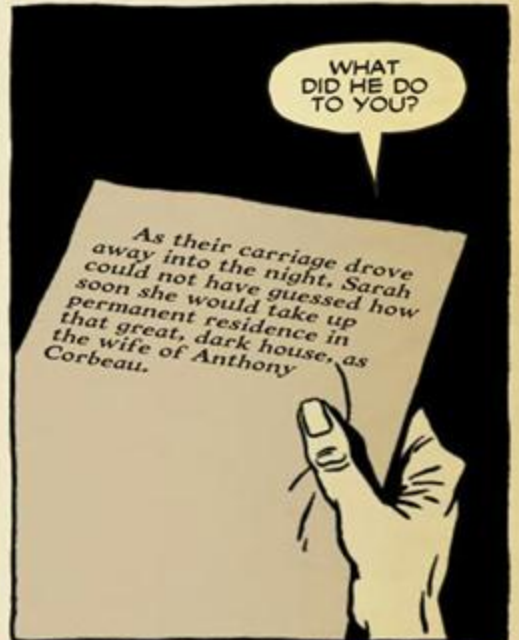






How he wished at that moment that he had the courage to take his glass and dash the wine into his father's face, to crush splintered glass into his flesh. If only he could be so free...







What was he thinking that night, as he lay awake through the long cold hours with Sarah lying at his side, an infinite distance away?



He remembered...



...a walk he had taken with his mother...



...some years before she died.



He couldn't remember why he should be out walking with her. He only ever walked in the street with his governess, and never through such a common part of the city. The street smelled of rotten meat and humanity.





By the time they returned from their disastrous honeymoon, Sarah had realised her mistake.



Anthony was no young romantic. He was a lost soul. They would never again speak as they did on the day they first met...



...and there would never again be even the pretence of love between them.



AH, THE NEWLYWEDS.



ANTHONY, WHAT--?

I HAVE A LOT OF WORK TO CATCH UP ON.



BUT DINNER IS--

I'M NOT HUNGRY. I WOULD RATHER NOT BE DISTURBED FOR THE REST OF THE EVENING.



TO BE CONTINUED

N E X T I S S U E

THE DEATH OF HIS FATHER
ONLY SEEMS TO MAKE
ANTHONY CORBEAU'S STRANGE
OBSESSIONS MORE EXTREME.
AND SARAH BEGINS TO
DISCOVER A SINISTER FAMILY
SECRET CONCERNING
ANTHONY'S MOTHER...



PLUS: A SPECIAL EXTRA SHORT STORY
"UP ON THE ROOF" BY DAVID HINE

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