

The Sandman: A Game of You Study Guide

The Sandman: A Game of You by Neil Gaiman

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Plot Summary

The Sandman: A Game of You written by Neil Gaiman is volume five in a series of graphic novels. Barbie is a young woman who is plagued by her involvement in a dream world called the land. Other inhabitants of the building she occupies get involved in an effort to save Barbie and themselves from the mischief of the Cuckoo. The Sandman: A Game of You is a look of the inner fantasies within a person and a suggestion that perhaps everyone has more going on inside than can be seen from the outside.

Luz fears they will all perish and the Cuckoo will reign, but Martin Tenbones believes that Princess Barbara is just lost in her other world and plans to find her. Wanda wakes Barbie to go shopping, and Barbie insists that she does not dream. They encounter a beggar woman who is scared of dogs on their way to breakfast, where Wanda insists that everyone dreams, and Barbie remembers that in her old dream, her best friend was a large dog and the land was in terrible danger. Wanda admits that she was born "Alvin". A big dog on the street searches for Barbie; he sees her and gives her the Porpentine as he is shot and killed. Wanda takes Barbie back to her room where Barbie tries to convince herself that it is only a dream. Meanwhile, George says that the children of the Cuckoo know all about Princess Barbara.

Hazel comes to Barbie for advice because she fears she is pregnant. Hazel thinks that Barbie looks like she needs sleep, but Barbie is scared to sleep and watches television. Barbie dreams and has hallucinations, such as Nuala warning her that something bad is coming, before she finally falls asleep and pushes through curtains to find Wilkinson, Luz and Prinado. George waits patiently until one o'clock in the morning when everyone is asleep before cutting open his chest and releasing birds that land on Wanda, Hazel and Foxglove causing them to have nightmares. One bird lands on Thessaly, but it wakes her and she kills it. Thessaly dresses and goes to George's apartment with a knife concealed behind her back. Barbie is greeted by Wilkinson, Luz and Prinado and tells them that she kind of remembers the dream. She confirms Martin Tenbones' death, but she remembers that she must get to the Brightly Shining Sea so they had better get going.

As Foxglove and Hazel wake from their nightmares, Thessaly knocks on their door to ask if they are alright and asks them to help her check on Wanda and Barbie. She says "stuff" is happening. Wanda cries over her nightmare, but Thessaly says she is worried about Barbie. Wanda uses her spare keys to get them into Barbie's apartment where she finds Barbie asleep, holding the Porpentine. Thessaly tells them not to touch the jewelry and asks Wanda to carry Barbie to George's room. Wanda, Foxglove and Hazel think Thessaly and George are weird and think so even more when they learn that Thessaly killed George. Thessaly will not allow them to leave, and Wanda finds that she is unable to leave. Thessaly explains that George was sending birds to cause their nightmares and she needs to talk to him about it. To the other girls' confusion, Thessaly cuts the skin from George's face and calls him to speak the truth, asking who he is and why he tried to harm them.



Thessaly learns that the Cuckoo from Barbie's dream sent him to try to destroy the Porpentine. Thessaly wants revenge against the Cuckoo for trying to harm her while the others are upset that it tried to hurt Barbie. Thessaly uses Foxglove's menstrual blood to call down the Moon in order for them to enter Barbie's dream. At first, the Moon refuses to assist Thessaly but agrees at her insistence. Meanwhile, the beggar woman worries that the Moon looks strange and disappears. Wanda stays to guard Barbie and tells her friend that she cannot handle this, and George asks to talk to Wanda.

Barbie is at the most dangerous part of her journey. She remembers the Hieromancer and the Tantoblin whose corpse they find carrying a message for them. They bury him and take shelter in a cave to read his message, which includes notes about the European Cuckoo laying eggs in other birds' nests and pictures of Barbie as a child. The Black Guard passes closely. Barbie sleeps but does not remember dreaming as Nuala admits to Morpheus that she tried to warn Barbie. Barbie and the others gather food for breakfast and discuss the fact that no one knows what to do with the Hierogram. They tell Barbie that the land is old and Barbie comes there to dream. Luz notices someone watching them in the woods. Prinado scouts their way, but one day, he does not return. Barbie wakes to Prinado's corpse and the Tweeners' threats.

The Porpentine lights their way to an old path that leads them to the city and the sea. Luz goes to seek the resistance while Wilkinson guards Barbie. In New York, George tells Wanda that she was left behind because chromosomes dictate that she is a man. He also says that messing with the Moon is dangerous and Wanda should worry about the weather. As Thessaly is gone, her commands no longer hold, but Wanda will not leave Barbie. Barbie worries about Luz and is sad about Prinado, but Wilkinson tells her that they have good luck. Luz returns with the Black Guard who kill Wilkinson and capture Barbie, taking her to the Citadel of the Cuckoo, which looks like the house in Florida where she grew up.

As Barbie recognizes the Citadel of the Cuckoo as her childhood home, a young girl joins Barbie who reveals herself to be Barbie as a child and the Cuckoo. The Cuckoo explains that Barbie lived a dull childhood and imagined a land where she was a princess. It introduces Barbie to the toys from her childhood: Prinado, Wilkinson, Luz and Martin Tenbones. The Cuckoo bewitches Barbie to agree that it has a right to live and be happy even if that means killing Barbie. Thessaly, Foxglove and Hazel walks the Moon's Road into Barbie's dream where they find Wilkinson's body, and Thessaly revives it for directions to the Cuckoo and Barbie. Foxglove yells at Hazel about her pregnancy. In New York, the storm rages, and George worries Wanda when he points out that Barbie's necklace is flickering. Wanda hears the beggar woman outside in the storm and takes her upstairs. Luz is happy for the Cuckoo but will miss it. The Cuckoo takes Barbie to the Isle of Thorns and expresses impatience for the moon to rise so that it can fly. When Thessaly, Foxglove and Hazel approach, the Cuckoo runs to Thessaly and claims that Luz is the Cuckoo, causing Thessaly to kill Luz.

After the Cuckoo bewitches Thessaly, Foxglove and Hazel, it wakes Barbie and explains that as long as the Hierogram and Porpentine exist, the world lives so they must be destroyed them in order for the Cuckoo to fly. The beggar woman tells Wanda about her



cross-dressing grandson who was murdered but refuses to talk to George. The Cuckoo tells Barbie it is time, and as Barbie destroys the Porpentine, it disappears from around her neck in New York, worrying Wanda. A radio announcer declares that a hurricane has hit New York. In the land, Morpheus, the Dream King, arrives, realizes the Cuckoo did not call him, and releases Barbie from its mind control. He puts the land to rest by calling the people into his robes and crumbling the land in his hand. Then, Morpheus chides Thessaly, Foxglove and Hazel for the trouble they have caused, telling them they are there as trespassers. He refuses Thessaly's demand of the Cuckoo's life. Thessaly acknowledges that they are in big trouble because they have no way to get home. George no longer feels the land and does not know if the girls are alive. The hurricane arrives and the beggar woman throws herself on Barbie as the building crumbles.

Barbie, dressed in mourning, gazes in the mirror. Barbie learns that Morpheus is not going to kill the Cuckoo. Morpheus is displeased with Thessaly, Foxglove and Hazel and threatens to leave them there. He tells Barbie that she may ask a boon of him, and after thinking, she asks him to send them home safely. This means the Cuckoo can fly; it thanks Barbie, turns into a bird, and flies away. Mourning Barbie laments her dream. Morpheus says that it will be a while before they can return safely, and he leaves them all with some advice. Mourning Barbie recalls sitting on the sand for a long time and then the sensation of waking. She walks out of the bathroom through the diner and sits with Dora who calls Wanda a sinner and requests that Barbie tell the Manns about their son, Alvin. Barbie tells Dora that she dreamt through the hurricane and woke wet, saved only by the beggar woman on top of her.

Barbie is pulled out of the rabble in front of a television crew. Then, she sees Wanda and has hysterics. Dora reminds Barbie that it is time for the funeral though Barbie misses the open coffin. Barbie mourns for Wanda's hair, her pride, when Dora says that they cut it. Dora introduces Barbie to Mrs. Mann who says that the hurricane was God's judgment on a city of sinners. Barbie does not mind when she learns that Mrs. Mann does not want her in their home because Barbie wants to talk to Wanda. She wishes Wanda could tell her what happened and expresses her newfound belief that everyone has secret worlds inside of them. She crosses "Alvin" off the tombstone and writes "Wanda" in Wanda's favorite lipstick. When Barbie tells Dora about her dream world, their ride continues in silence. Barbie remembers dreaming on the bus of seeing a perfect Wanda waving to her, but Barbie woke before she could wave back. She gets off the bus and waves to it because she believes you should always say goodbye before it is too late.



Chapter 1, Slaughter on Fifth Avenue

Chapter 1, Slaughter on Fifth Avenue Summary

The Sandman: A Game of You written by Neil Gaiman is volume five in a series of graphic novels. Barbie is a young woman who is plagued by her involvement in a dream world called the land. Other inhabitants of the building she occupies get involved in an effort to save Barbie and themselves from the mischief of the Cuckoo. The Sandman: A Game of You is a look of the inner fantasies within a person and a suggestion that perhaps everyone has more going on inside than can be seen from the outside.

In the land, Luz fears that they will all perish and the Cuckoo will reign but she has a plan. Prinado disagrees, counting on Tantoblin's promise. Luz insists that she felt the Tantoblin die, murdered by the Black Guard. Wilkinson complains that he is hungry, cold and miserable, and that they are all going to die. Martin Tenbones gives his opinion that the princess has not forgotten them, but Prinado believes she has forgotten them or is dead. Martin Tenbones believes she is lost in her other world and decides to use the Porpentine to find her; else, all is lost.

In New York, Wanda wakes Barbie to go shopping. Wanda apologizes for disturbing Barbie's dreams, but Barbie insists that she does not dream. Despite their lack of money, Wanda convinces Barbie to go shopping. Barbie needs a few minutes to "put her face on" and asks Wanda to make coffee. There is no cream so Wanda asks Thessaly for cream, but Thessaly only has soymilk. Wanda goes upstairs and asks Hazel and Foxglove for cream. Wanda teases them about how much they smoke and jokes about milking a soybean as Hazel pours cream into a cute frog mug that Wanda is reluctant to be seen with in public.

Wanda sarcastically thanks Hazel and Foxglove and returns to Barbie's apartment. On her way, she greets the weird, grumpy George. Wanda gives Barbie the coffee and comments on her makeup, which is drawn on Barbie's face to look like a chessboard. Wanda decides that they are going to Tiffany's since they are broke and cannot afford anything anyway. Barbie thinks the coffee is "yechy". In another land, a crow asks what is happening, and Morpheus tells him that he does not know; he dreams that one of the skerries is dying, but it happens and he is not going to do anything about it.

In a subway in New York, Barbie and Wanda are accosted by a beggar woman asking for change. Wanda refuses to give the woman anything, but Barbie provides her with fifty cents. The beggar woman sees a dog and runs off, frightened. Barbie feels bad for the woman, and Wanda tells her to get used to it and toughen up. The beggar woman is frightened by a huge dog in the street. Barbie and Wanda go to breakfast, and Barbie is excited to get real coffee. Wanda asks about Barbie's dream, saying everyone dreams and Barbie just does not remember her dreams. Barbie says she used to dream every night but stopped around the time she split up with Ken. Wanda has terrific dreams, but



they have not been about sex since she was twelve and dreamt that she was making out with Weirdzo Lila Lake.

Wanda reminds Barbie of the Weirdzos from the Hyperman comics, a species that lived on a square planet in outer space and did everything backwards. When Wanda notes feeling woozy, Barbie tells her to eat or drink something. Barbie remembers her old dreams that ended about two years ago; a big dog thing was her best friend and the whole land was in terrible danger. After one weird night, she would not talk to Ken, and he started bringing Sindy home. Barbie's landlord in Florida, Hal, got in touch with Scarlett who found a room for Barbie in New York. Wanda admits that she wanted to be Weirdzo Alvin when she was growing up. Wanda admits to Barbie that she was born "Alvin" and forbids Barbie to tell anyone.

The big dog in the street reassures itself against the light and pain, reminding itself that it must find Princess Barbara and not be afraid. Barbie tells Wanda that she was not allowed to read comics as a little girl because she was forced to be daddy's little lady. She wonders what he would say if he could see her now, especially since sometimes she does not recognize herself. Wanda believes that her parents tell their friends that she is dead. Wanda's aunt, Dora, who talks to her and prays for her to repent her wicked ways, says that her parents keep her room the same way she left it, almost like a shrine to their lost son. They walk upon a blocked street, and Barbie wonders what is going on. The large dog in the street, Martin Tenbones, recognizes Barbie and calls for Princess Barbara. Barbie recognizes him as he is shot down by the police. She rushes to him, and he apologizes for failing her as he gives her the Porpentine and tells her that the land needs her.

The police pull the crying Barbie away from the dog. In the land, Luz feels Martin Tenbones die. Wilkinson dejectedly says that if that is so, and he did not first find Barbie, they will think he is the lucky one. In New York, Wanda takes Barbie back to her apartment where Wanda rebuffs George's inquiries about Barbie. Barbie sits in her room alone, holding the Porpentine, remembers her dreams, and tries to convince herself that they were only dreams. George sits in the hallway with a bird, but suddenly he eats the bird and states that Princess Barbara does not know them, but the children of the Cuckoo know all about her.

Chapter 1, Slaughter on Fifth Avenue Analysis

Luz's fear that they will all perish and the Cuckoo will reign foreshadows the destruction of the land. Luz's insistence that she felt the Tantoblin die foreshadows the discovery of his death. Wilkinson's complaints of hunger, cold and misery parallel Barbie's later complaints of the same. Martin Tenbones' decision to use the Porpentine to locate Barbie foreshadows his journey to New York. Barbie's insistence that she does not dream foreshadows the discovery of her dream world. Wanda goes to ask cream from Thessaly, Hazel and Foxglove, and she greets George on her return, introducing the other inhabitants of the building. Morpheus' dream that one of the skerries is dying foreshadows the destruction of the land. The introduction of the beggar woman on the



subway foreshadows her later involvement in the plot. The mention of dogs foreshadows Martin Tenbones' appearance, particularly when Barbie remembers her best friend in her dreams being a large dog. The large dog in the street identifies itself as Martin Tenbones when it expresses its desire to find Princess Barbara.

Wanda reminds Barbie of the Weirdzos from the Hyperman comics, demonstrating masculinity and foreshadowing her dream and Barbie's posthumous gift. Barbie tells a little bit of her history in her relation of when she stopped dreaming. Wanda shares her secret with Barbie: she was born a man, "Alvin", and her death is foreshadowed when she tells Barbie that she believes her parents tell their friends that she is dead. An example of the monotony of Barbie's childhood is provided when she discusses how she was forbidden to read comics. Barbie begins to remember her dreams when she sees Martin Tenbones. Her receipt of the Porpentine foreshadows her journey to the dream world. Wilkinson's belief that if Martin Tenbones did die without finding Barbie, they will think he is the lucky one changes the tone to foreboding. Barbie meditates in her room, trying to convince herself that the dreams were only dreams foreshadows her reentrance into them while demonstrating her fear of the dreams. George's declaration that the children of the Cuckoo know all about Princess Barbara foreshadows his attempts against Barbie.



Chapter 2, Lullabies of Broadway

Chapter 2, Lullabies of Broadway Summary

Hazel knocks on Barbie's door, wanting to talk. She is afraid that she is pregnant, because she had sex with a waiter from work six weeks ago when she was drunk, and her period is late. Hazel thought she would be fine because they had sex standing up. When Barbie suggests that Hazel get a pregnancy test, Hazel states that she was told you have to kill a rabbit, but Barbie assures her that modern pregnancy tests are just a blue line. Hazel asks if Barbie was ever pregnant, and Barbie confesses that she had an abortion in high school. She advises Hazel to never let a guy stay the night unless she plans on sleeping with him. Hazel asks Barbie to return the frog mug since that is the reason she gave Foxglove for going to see Barbie. Hazel thanks Barbie for the advice and tells her that it looks like she needs sleep. Barbie is scared to sleep and watches television. The news relates Martin Tenbones' death.

Barbie imagines seeing Foxglove and Hazel with their baby, and dreams that Nuala visits her and warns her of something bad that is coming. Barbie wakes up and makes herself watch television, seeing a delusional of Ken on a talk show mocking her. Barbie pushes her way through curtains, and Wilkinson greets her, accusing her of taking her time. George waits patiently as Foxglove reads, Hazel sleeps and Thessaly brushes her hair. Wanda wakes to the noise from Barbie's television but falls back to sleep quickly. Meanwhile, Barbie dreams.

At one in the morning, George notes that everyone is asleep, cuts open his chest and releases birds. Wanda dreams that she is given many beautiful dresses that make the boys from school jealous, but she shares with them. One of George's birds lands on Wanda's shoulder, and she dreams that Weirdzo Lila visits her, calling her Al. When Wanda claims that she is a woman, Weirdzo Lila calls Weirdzo Number 1 who ties Wanda down to perform sex change surgery. Wanda is scared and cries in her sleep. Hazel dreams that she is on a train, but something is wrong with her ticket. The inspector directs her to the cellar beneath the train to her prize in a box. The prize is a baby that has been dead for seventy years and smells of formaldehyde. Foxglove has a baby boy, and Foxglove and Hazel put the babies in a crib together. Hazel's baby moves and then devours Foxglove's baby as Foxglove keens.

Hazel knows the baby will come for them next as she fights George's bird in her sleep. Foxglove is not dreaming, but then a bird lands on her. She dreams of someone calling her Donna and she argues that she is not Donna anymore. When she asks who it is, she learns Judy is talking, but Judy is dead. Judy blames Foxglove for leaving her, asking if she is with anyone and if they make her feel like Judy did. Foxglove says she is with someone and that Hazel does not make her feel like Judy did, but she does not hit her either. Foxglove questions whether Judy is a ghost or a dream. Judy wants them to be together always as they were. As Thessaly sleeps, a bird lands on her, waking her. She catches the bird and burns it. George kneels on the ground as Thessaly puts a



robe over her nightgown. Thessaly knocks on George's door with a knife concealed behind her back.

In the land, Barbie is greeted by and introduced to Luz, Wilkinson and Prinado. When Wilkinson asks Barbie if she remembers, she says "kind of". Wilkinson and Luz remind Barbie that she is their heir and savior. Wilkinson doubts Barbie since she cannot remember who she is. Wilkinson reassures himself since Martin Tenbones knows what they are doing, but when Barbie tells them that Martin Tenbones is dead, Luz states that their situation is hopeless. Wilkinson chides them; they must not give up. Barbie remembers that she must get to the Brightly Shining Sea and asks if it is far. When they tell her it is very far and difficult to reach, Barbie optimistically states that they had better get going then.

Chapter 2, Lullabies of Broadway Analysis

Hazel's desire to talk to Barbie and her fear of pregnancy foreshadows the discovery of her pregnancy. Hazel's thought that she would not get pregnant because they had sex standing up shows the perpetuation of the myths about sex as well as her naïveté about sex. In addition, her belief that she would have to kill a rabbit as part of the pregnancy test emphasizes her inexperience with men while foreshadowing the witchcraft that is an integral part of this story. Barbie's confession that she had an abortion in high school provides information about Barbie and her past that is sparsely given throughout the story.

Barbie's fear to sleep along with Hazel's statement that it looks like Barbie needs sleep foreshadows Barbie's journey into her dream world. Nuala's visit foreshadows the danger awaiting Barbie in the land. Barbie's delusions as she fights sleep serves as a means of examining her innermost fears and feelings. Barbie finally falls asleep and meets Wilkinson, Prinado and Luz, fulfilling the foreshadowing of the event. George's patient waiting foreshadows his malice, which is fulfilled when he cuts open his chest and the malevolent projections cause nightmares. Thessaly's habit of brushing her hair one hundred times before bed each night perpetuates the reader's image of Thessaly as a very mundane character that is quickly overthrown.

Wanda's nightmare shows her irritation and confliction about her sexual identity. Hazel's dream reveals her anxieties about her possible pregnancy. Foxglove's dreams provide information about her past. Thessaly awakes when the bird lands on her and burns it, showing that she has magical abilities. When Thessaly knocks on George's door with a knife behind her back, it foreshadows George's murder. Luz, Wilkinson and Prinado's despair and hopelessness when they learn of Martin Tenbones' death demonstrates their lack of knowledge about the situation and how to help Barbie. Wilkinson and Luz's reminder that Barbie is their heir and savior serves as an indication of her destiny, and she begins to remember her dreams and what she must do. Barbie's statement that they had better get going indicates that she is strong willed and foreshadows her future adventures in the Land.



Chapter 3, Bad Moon Rising

Chapter 3, Bad Moon Rising Summary

At three in the morning in New York, Foxglove and Hazel wake from their nightmares, turn on the light, and comfort each other. Nightmares frighten Hazel because of being unable to control what is going on in her own head. Thessaly knocks on their door and asks if they are all right. She sees the fear on their faces when she asks if they have had any bad dreams. Thessaly asks one of them to join her to check on Wanda and Barbie, but both join her because neither wants to be alone. Foxglove asks what is going on, and Thessaly ambiguously replies "stuff". They wake Wanda who cries over her bad dream. Thessaly says that she is worried about Barbie, inducing Wanda to near panic as she bangs on Barbie's door. They can hear the television, and Wanda acknowledges that she has spare keys to Barbie's apartment if Thessaly thinks something is wrong. Thessaly insists, and Wanda lets them in. They turn on the lights to see Barbie, sleeping and holding the Porpentine.

Thessaly forbids them to touch or try to remove the jewelry from Barbie, because she thinks it is all that is keeping Barbie alive. Thessaly asks Wanda to carefully carry Barbie to George's room while she gets stuff from her room. Wanda, Hazel and Foxglove discuss their thoughts that Thessaly is weird and nerdy, and Wanda tells the others that Thessaly is studying art history. The girls consider calling a doctor for Barbie but decide against it since Thessaly seems to know what is going on. Hazel comments that George is creepy. When Hazel notices Wanda's "thingie", Wanda rebukes her for noticing a "lady's shortcomings". Hazel exclaims that it is turning into a weird evening.

Hazel, Foxglove and Wanda take Barbie to George's apartment, where they find his picture of Barbie rather creepy, and place her on the couch. Thessaly enters the apartment, and the girls ask for an explanation, particularly regarding George's whereabouts. When Thessaly says he is in the bathtub, they are shocked that he is taking a bath. Thessaly elaborates: she killed him and placed him in the bathtub. The girls do not believe her and rush to the bathroom to be disgusted with the view of George's corpse. They want to call the police to report the murder and a doctor to care for Barbie. Thessaly forbids the girls to call anyone or leave the apartment, stating that George has some explaining to do. Wanda insists on leaving but finds herself unable to budge. She worries that Thessaly will kill them too, but Thessaly assures her that she means them no harm and may need their help.

Thessaly explains that George was sending malevolent projections in the form of birds that were causing everyone's nightmares. She thinks that Barbie is tied up in this somehow, but she has not figured out how yet. Thessaly has a bad feeling about it all and needs to talk to George. The girls think she is joking, but Thessaly assures them that she does not joke and tells them to make themselves comfortable because she has stuff to do.



The girls ponder on why they cannot leave the room and what Thessaly is doing. Thessaly cuts off George's face as Foxglove suggests that it is witchcraft. When Hazel asks if it is new age stuff, Thessaly replies that it is the opposite actually, as she enters the room with the skin from George's face which she nails to the wall. Wanda grows nauseous, but she is afraid to vomit in the bathroom because of the corpse in the bathtub. Thessaly has George's ears to hear and his eyes to see, but she needs to get his tongue to speak. She goes back to the bathroom and bites the tongue out of his mouth. Thessaly calls on George to speak the truth. Wanda goes to the bathroom to vomit and pinches her arm, trying to wake up. Thessaly asks George who he was and why he tried to harm him, and he tells her that he is Gwa-y-Gogg, a servant of the Cuckoo. He sent the birds to consume Thessaly, Wanda, Foxglove and Hazel because he needed to destroy Princess Barbara's bauble, the Porpentine. Thessaly asks George where she can find the Cuckoo and learns that it is in its realm, Barbie's dream.

Thessaly bids George be quiet but does not dismiss him. Wanda is confused and frightened. Foxglove asks if this is witchcraft, and Thessaly affirms her suspicions. Foxglove admits that she used to dabble in witchcraft. Hazel is confused about everything going on so Thessaly explains: George's master, the Cuckoo, invaded their dreams in an attempt to get them to destroy the jewelry, which Thessaly believes is a Dream Stone. Wanda is outraged that the Cuckoo tried to hurt Barbie, and she, Hazel and Foxglove agree to help Thessaly. Thessaly wants revenge against the Cuckoo for trying to harm her. She asks Foxglove for menstrual blood, and Foxglove questions why she was chosen. Thessaly states that she has not menstruated in a long time, Wanda is a man, and Hazel is pregnant. Foxglove does not believe that Hazel is pregnant and turns to her girlfriend for confirmation, but Hazel just states "not now". Foxglove's flow is not very heavy, but Thessaly assures her that a few drops will be enough.

There are two ways to get into another's dreams: through the Dream King, who has little time for women and even less for Thessaly's kind, or by the Moon's Road. Thessaly says it is time to draw down the Moon. Foxglove has done something like this before, calling on the goddess in her aspect as the Moon. Thessaly instructs Foxglove to stand opposite her and Hazel to stand beside her; Wanda is told to stand by Barbie because she is not biologically a woman.

Thessaly calls the Moon who responds that Thessalian should be dead. The Moon asks Thessaly if she knows what she has done and refuses to do anything for her. Thessaly says the Moon will do as she commands, causing the Moon to chide her for commanding it. The Moon tells Thessaly that the rest of her kind is dead and Thessaly will soon follow them. Thessaly insists that the Moon will send her, Foxglove and Hazel to Barbie's dream. The Moon argues at first but then concedes, promising that Thessaly's day of reckoning will come. The beggar woman sits in the street and worries about the Moon because it looks strange and then disappears. Thessaly tells Wanda to guard Barbie since she cannot take this route. Wanda is angry because she wants to help Barbie and calls Thessaly a lunatic.

The beggar woman complains that no one listens to her; the Moon disappearing "ain't natural". Wanda tells Barbie that she cannot handle this; she worries that she is not the



woman she thought she was since she vomited when she saw George's body while Hazel and Foxglove "fell into it". Wanda assures Barbie that the cavalry is coming and refuses to go back into the bathroom, promising to relieve herself out the window first. George asks to talk to Wanda.

Chapter 3, Bad Moon Rising Analysis

Hazel's fear of her nightmare because of being unable to control what is going on in her own mind reveals her need for control, which is ironic when Thessaly bewitches her and the others, restraining them from leaving George's room. Thessaly knocking on Foxglove and Hazel's door foreshadows her magic, as does her need for stuff from her room and her desire to talk to George after revealing his murder. Thessaly tells Wanda that she is really worried about Barbie, revealing that Thessaly knows more about what is going on than she has unveiled so far as well as showing Wanda's love and friendship for Barbie when she displays her anxiety over Barbie's wellbeing. When Thessaly says "stuff" is happening and she seems to know about the Porpentine, it emphasizes her oddity, as well as her desire to keep things a secret until the proper time to reveal them.

Wanda's possession of Barbie's spare keys and Wanda's outrage that the Cuckoo tried to harm Barbie shows how close they are. Wanda's secret manhood is revealed when Hazel notices her "thingie". Wanda's declaration that it is turning into a weird evening is ironic since the weirdness of the evening has barely begun. It is ironic and puzzling that Thessaly is studying art history since she is very old and was alive when the art was being created. George is seen as creepy when his apartment is found to include a picture of Barbie on the wall. Thessaly's admittance that she killed George fulfills the foreshadowing of his death. Wanda being unable to leave and George's reanimation demonstrates Thessaly's magical abilities which is confirmed when she admits to using witchcraft. Wanda's nausea demonstrates her manhood since the others are barely affected by George's corpse.

George explains his part in the affair by stating that he is a servant of the Cuckoo. Thessaly learns that the Cuckoo is in Barbie's dream, which foreshadows her journey there. Thessaly's revelation of what has occurred is imparted to the others who share in her outrage and desire to help her, showing their loyalty to Barbie.

Thessaly's desire for vengeance against the Cuckoo and her demands on the Moon show her pride. Hazel's foreshadowed pregnancy is revealed when Thessaly claims that Hazel is pregnant. Hazel's confusion and frustration are shown when she declines discussing the matter with Foxglove at the moment. Thessaly's revelation that there are only two ways into another's dreams foreshadows her calling down the Moon and their encounter with the Dream King. Wanda's exclusion due to her sex is shown when she is unable to join them. Her exclusion also further emphasizes her confusion about her sexual identity. The Moon asks Thessaly if she knows what she has done, foreshadowing the hurricane. The Moon's declaration that Thessaly should be dead already foreshadows the discovery of Thessaly's advanced age.



The beggar woman's fear of the Moon's disappearance foreshadows her place in the story as well as the hurricane. Wanda admits her confusion when she laments that she vomited over George's corpse while Foxglove and Wanda "fell into it." George speaks to Wanda, foreshadowing the revelation that Thessaly's commands dissolved when she left.



Chapter 4, Beginning to See the Light

Chapter 4, Beginning to See the Light Summary

Barbie has been told that they are at the most dangerous point in their journey, and she is miserably hungry and cold. Wilkinson stops singing when Luz chides him for the noise. Wilkinson mentions the Hieromancer, and Barbie, remembering him, asks what happened to him. Wilkinson responds that the Hieromancer is dead if he is lucky. Wilkinson hopes that Barbie will know what to do once they reach the Hierogram because the rest of them have no idea. They stumble upon the corpse of the Tantoblin, and Luz, after reminding them that she knew he was dead, points out that he is still holding a message for them. Barbie remembers the Tantoblin and mourns for him. Once, Barbie and Martin Tenbones were traveling to the Arch of Porpentine when they came across a room that they entered, and when they exited, they were nearer their destination. There was a man waiting there who served them breakfast and Barbie liked him.

Luz tells Barbie that the Tantoblin became a courier after the Cuckoo crushed the rest of the room patrol. Barbie insists upon burying the man, against Wilkinson's objections. After the burial, they take shelter in a cave to read the Tantoblin's scroll. They find pictures of Barbie and notes about the European Cuckoo laying eggs in other birds' nests. Luz warns Barbie to be quiet because she hears danger approaching; thirty soldiers from the Black Guard pass so close that Barbie could touch them. After the soldiers pass, they continue their journey, sleeping huddled together for warmth. Barbie does not remember dreaming. Nuala admits to Morpheus that she tried to warn Barbie that bad stuff was coming, and Morpheus tells her that she did the right thing.

Barbie wakes, smiling; she is warm but hungry. Wilkinson tells her that the others are gathering food for breakfast, and he and Barbie gather food as they talk. Wilkinson insists that he is not scared of the guards and would have hurt them if he had not been protecting Princess Barbara. Barbie does not believe him. They worry since no one knows what the Hierogram is or what to do with it. After breakfast, Barbie tells the others that she enjoyed the meal, but she is confused because she should not be able to taste in dreams. They tell her that this is a dream but not a dream; the land is older than Barbie is, but she comes here to dream. Barbie is very happy, happier than she can ever remember being. Wilkinson talks about being raised in a household where he was one of seventeen children with the same name.

Barbie is an only child. Luz mentions that someone has been watching them since they entered the forest, but they are all secure in their belief that it is not the Cuckoo's people or they would have been attacked already. They keep going, and Barbie gets used to being watched though it makes her feel like Bilbo in Mirkwood where the giant spiders attack. She asks if there are giant spiders around here, and Wilkinson and Luz tell her the giant spiders live in the forest to the west and are very loyal to Princess Barbara. During their journey, Prinado scouts the way, but one day, he does not return. Wilkinson,



Luz and Barbie look for old paths or a stream since they are heading to the sea. Barbie worries about Prinado until she wakes one night to see his corpse hanging above her. The Tweeners threaten them, and they run. The Porpentine illuminates and guides them to an old path that leads to the sea and the city. Luz leaves Wilkinson to guard Barbie while she goes to find the resistance.

In New York, George offers to tell Wanda things that are not hidden once you die. Wanda asks why the others left her behind and is very angry when she learns the reason is because she is a man. She argues that nothing is left but a lump of flesh that is unimportant. George says it matters to the Moon, but it is not the flesh that matters as much as the chromosomes. Wanda is angry; she knows what she is. George tells her that messing with the Moon as Thessaly did is very dangerous, because it disturbs the tides and the weather. Wanda should be worried. Wanda wonders why George can talk despite Thessaly bidding him be quiet, and he tells her that since Thessaly is gone, her commands do not hold. Wanda realizes she can leave now but will not leave Barbie who is her only friend and the only person who does not treat her like a freak. Wanda asks George if Thessaly, Hazel and Foxglove are in Barbie's dream yet and learns that they are still walking the Moon's Road. George tells Wanda not to worry about them; she should worry about Barbie and the weather. In the land, Barbie worries about Luz and mourns for Prinado, but Wilkinson says they have had good luck in finding the Brightly Shining Sea and that everything will work out.

Barbie hears someone coming and hears Luz. As Barbie sees Luz, she also notices the Black Guards behind Luz. Luz points out Barbie, and Wilkinson tells Barbie to run. When he tries to protect her, the guards kill Wilkinson and capture Barbie. Luz serves the Cuckoo. Barbie is taken through the town, where she notices the people's dejection and hopeless expressions, to the Citadel of the Cuckoo, which looks like the house in Florida where she grew up. Barbie's bonds are loosened, and she enters the Citadel.

Chapter 4, Beginning to See the Light Analysis

Barbie's complaints of being hungry and cold repeat and parallel Wilkinson's earlier complaints to the same effect. Wilkinson's declaration that the Hieromancer is dead if he is lucky is foreboding as well as foreshadowing the discovery of the Hieromancer's death. Wilkinson admits that they have no idea what Barbie is supposed to do with the Hierogram, fulfilling the foreshadowing that occurred when Barbie first found herself in the Land. Foreshadowing of his death is fulfilled when they find the Tantoblin's corpse. Barbie's recollection of meeting him demonstrates that she is recalling more about the land as time progresses. His possession of pictures of Barbie as a child, combined with his notes that cuckoos lay their eggs in other bird's nests, foreshadows the identity of the Cuckoo. The land is explained when Barbie learns that it is old and she only comes there to dream. It is comically ironic when Barbie asks if there are giant spiders around and learns that they are in the other woods and loyal to her. She asks out of fear while Luz and Wilkinson, meaning to reassure her that the spiders are loyal to her, only increase her fears by acknowledging the spiders' existence.



Morpheus tells Nuala that she was right in trying to warn Barbie, showing that he is not an evil character. Barbie's fears for Prinado after his disappearance foreshadow his death. Foreshadowing also occurs when they discover they are being watched, and it is fulfilled when the Tweeners threaten them after killing Prinado. Barbie's fears and Wilkinson's answers about the giant spiders are comically ironic. The Porpentine shows its power when it lights their path to the sea. Wanda's exclusion and confusion about her sexual identity is further demonstrated by George's statement that chromosomes matter to the Moon. The hurricane is foreshadowed when George states that messing with the Moon is dangerous and warns Wanda to worry about the weather. Foreshadowing is fulfilled when Wanda learns that Thessaly's commands are dissolved, but Wanda shows her love and loyalty for Barbie by refusing to leave her friend. Wilkinson's argument that they have had good luck so far is ironic, as shortly afterwards, he is killed. Luz's betrayal presents a Judas Iscariot motif as the traitor in their midst or the loyal follower turned informer to the enemy. The realization that the Citadel of the Cuckoo resembles Barbie's childhood home foreshadows the Cuckoo's identity.



Chapter 5, Over the Sea to Sky

Chapter 5, Over the Sea to Sky Summary

Barbie recognizes the Citadel of the Cuckoo as her childhood home and the Brightly Shining Sea as the Atlantic Ocean. A little girl enters the room and echoes Barbie's thoughts. To Barbie's enquiry concerning the girl's identity, the girl shows Barbie the scar on her knee that Barbie obtained as a child. The girl is Barbie as a child as well as the Cuckoo. Barbie created her. Barbie blames the Cuckoo for Wilkinson and Martin Tenbones' deaths, but the Cuckoo rebuffs her accusations, claiming it is both of their faults. Barbie fears that this will lead to the recognition of repressed childhood abuse, but the Cuckoo tells her that she lived a dull childhood with an overactive imagination which worried her parents.

Barbie began to defend herself. While boys imagine themselves stronger, faster and better, girls make up lands where they are lost princesses whose real parents, the king and queen, retrieve them. Once they return to their lands, the "little cuckoos are happy forever". The Cuckoo introduces Barbie to her toys that Barbie forgot but that never forgot her; they are stuffed images of Martin Tenbones, Luz, Prinado and Wilkinson. The Cuckoo says that she has a right to live and be happy because she is so cute, and Barbie agrees. The Cuckoo asks if she can kill Barbie since it would make her very happy; Barbie consents. The Cuckoo commands her guards to take Barbie to the Isle of Thorns.

In New York, a radio personality rebuffs a caller who is worried about the high waves and fears a hurricane. Thessaly, Hazel and Foxglove walk the Moon's Road and deal with their identity confusion. They arrive in Barbie's dream. Thessaly guesses that the dream is much older than Barbie, and when asked how old she is, Thessaly simply states that she is very old. She wants to search for the Cuckoo, promising that it will lead them to Barbie. They find Wilkinson's body, and Thessaly brings him to life to ask him about the Cuckoo and Barbie. He tells her that the Cuckoo is in the city and that he failed Barbie, asking Thessaly to apologize to Barbie for him. Thessaly asks Hazel and Foxglove what they know about cuckoos, but since they know nothing, she informs them that they lay their eggs in other birds' nests.

Foxglove asks Hazel if she is pregnant, and Hazel's abashment answers the question. Foxglove yells at Hazel for her betrayal, complaining about the cost of a baby; when Hazel says she loves her, Foxglove answers "damn straight you do!" In New York, Wanda complains about the weather. When George points out that Barbie's necklace is flickering, Wanda worries about her friend. Wanda hears a person outside and looks out the window to see the beggar woman who is hurt. Wanda assists the beggar woman into the apartment and upstairs.

In the land, the Cuckoo talks to Luz. Luz is happy for her but will miss her. The Cuckoo insists that she must grow up and is anxious for the moon to rise so she can fly away to



other lands. The Cuckoo takes Barbie to the Isle of Thorns at the place of the Hierogram. She remembers that the Hieromancer looked like Barbie's grandfather, but the Cuckoo killed him because he said she spoiled everything. The Cuckoo notes that only Luz and she are left. When Luz tells her that they have company, the Cuckoo runs to Thessaly, claiming that Luz is the Cuckoo. Thessaly kills Luz, stating it is a bad idea to let that type of creatures talk. The Cuckoo bewitches Thessaly, Foxglove and Hazel, commanding them to sit as she ponders about the lands inside of them because she has never met people like them before.

The Cuckoo wakes Barbie and tells her that as long as the Hierogram and Porpentine exist, the world lives; the destruction of either signals the death of the land, but the destruction of both guarantees it. The Cuckoo wants to fly. In New York, Wanda talks to the beggar woman who refuses to talk to George because she does not like hoodoo. The beggar woman asks if Wanda is a man or woman and tells Wanda the story of her grandson, a cross dresser who was saving for surgery but was found murdered in a hotel room. The Cuckoo tells Barbie it is time; Barbie destroys the Porpentine, and the Cuckoo rejoices. In New York, Wanda grows fearful when the Porpentine smokes and disappears. The radio warns of an approaching hurricane and advises everyone to stay at home.

In the land, Morpheus, the land's creator, arrives and asks why he was called. With the Cuckoo's confusion, Morpheus realizes that Barbie called him, and he frees her from the Cuckoo's mind control. Barbie is confused about Thessaly, Hazel and Foxglove being there, but she learns that the strange man is nicknamed Murphy, the one on whom everyone in the land swears and prays. Morpheus releases Thessaly, Hazel and Foxglove from their mind control and introduces himself as the Dream King. Morpheus needs silence to "uncreate" the land because it is old and it is time for the land to rest. Morpheus talks, and Luz rises and disappears into his robe. As he continues murmuring, thousands come to the Isle of Thorns and disappear into his robe. The last and saddest is Alianora who Morpheus tells it has been a long time since her day.

Alianora curtsies, Morpheus bows, and Alianora disappears. Morpheus picks up the land and crumbles it in his hand. Barbie notices his sadness and asks him if he is all right; Morpheus says that all endings accompanied by mixed emotions. Morpheus chides Thessaly, Hazel and Foxglove for the trouble they have caused. Then, he recognizes Thessaly who demands the Cuckoo's life since it tried to harm her. Morpheus refuses, stating the Cuckoo's life is her own. He tells the three girls that they are there as trespassers without his consent because the moon in this land has fallen into the sea. Thessaly admits that they are in great trouble because they have no way to get home. In New York, George says he cannot feel the land anymore and does not know if Barbie, Hazel, Thessaly and Foxglove are still alive, but he has worse news. He warns Wanda that the storm is now more than a storm and the building is very old. The windows burst and the building crumbles as the beggar woman throws herself on top of Barbie.



Chapter 5, Over the Sea to Sky Analysis

The little girl appearing and echoing Barbie's thoughts foreshadows the identity of the Cuckoo which is revealed when the little girl explains that she is Barbie as a child and the Cuckoo. It is ironic with the facts about cuckoos that were revealed when Barbie found the Tantoblin's scrolls: the cuckoo is a creature that was laid as an egg in Barbie's nest or dream. The name of the Cuckoo is an extended metaphor throughout the story. The Cuckoo compares the differences between boys' and girls' imaginings, showing that girls dream of worlds where they are princesses, which explains Barbie's involvement in the land. The toys being the origination of Luz, Prinado, Martin Tenbones and Wilkinson is ironic and shows why they are loyal to her.

Barbie's agreement to die for the Cuckoo's happiness demonstrates enchantment and foreshadows the end of the land. The caller who fears a hurricane and the radio announcer's declaration of a hurricane foreshadow the hurricane and Wanda's death. Thessaly brings Wilkinson to life, demonstrating her magical abilities, and learns the direction of the Cuckoo predicting that it will lead them to Barbie also, foreshadowing their finding the Cuckoo and Barbie. Thessaly's statement that Cuckoos lay their eggs in other birds' nests is ironic since Hazel is pregnant and someone laid their egg in Foxglove's nest, which is Hazel's womb. Their ensuing argument foreshadows that Foxglove will get over her anger and forgive Hazel. The Porpentine's flickering reveals the danger that Barbie is in with the Cuckoo. Wanda bringing the beggar woman inside foreshadows the beggar woman's involvement in the plot.

The Cuckoo admits to killing the Hieromancer, fulfilling the earlier foreshadowing concerning his death. The fact that the Hieromancer looked like Barbie's grandfather reveals that he was her creation. Luz's death is foreshadowed when the Cuckoo notes that they are the only two left, and it is fulfilled when Thessaly, believing Luz to be the Cuckoo, kills Luz. It is ironic that Thessaly says that a few words with the Cuckoo would have been dangerous as the Cuckoo puts them under its enchantment. Magic is present again when the Cuckoo bewitches Thessaly, Foxglove and Hazel. The Cuckoo explains the reasons for the destruction of the land, explaining the majority of the book. The Cuckoo's desperation to be free is demonstrated by her desire to destroy both objects to ensure the death of the land.

Barbie's destruction of the Porpentine foreshadows the destruction of the land, as does Morpheus' arrival that also fulfills the foreshadowing that occurred earlier in Thessaly's description of the methods of entering another's dreams. Alianora's extreme grief over the destruction of the land suggests that she was the one for whom Morpheus originally created it, and his reverence to her seems to suggest that they have a very close relationship. The destruction of the land is fulfilled when Morpheus crumbles it in his hand. Barbie's concern for Morpheus' sadness shows her character as a caring person. Morpheus' anger at Thessaly, Foxglove and Hazel foreshadows his threats to leave them in the land. When Morpheus refuses to allow Thessaly to kill the Cuckoo, it foreshadows the Cuckoo's release. George's warning that the storm is bad and the building is old foreshadows the building crumbling which foreshadows Wanda's death.

The beggar woman throwing herself on top of Barbie foreshadows her being seen as Barbie's savior, ironic since Barbie is supposed to be the savior of the land.



Chapter 6, I Woke Up and One of Us Was Crying

Chapter 6, I Woke Up and One of Us Was Crying Summary

Barbie, wearing mourning clothes, gazes in the mirror and complains to herself about bus hopping for three days as she draws a veil on her face with makeup. In the land, Barbie asks Morpheus if he is going to do anything about the Cuckoo, but he says he has done everything he came to do except granting a boon. Barbie argues that the Cuckoo is evil; Morpheus points out that it is Barbie's fault that the Cuckoo was bound to the land, Barbie and Rose Walker's faults. Foxglove knows Rose Walker as Judy's "token straight friend". The girls want to know if Morpheus will do anything to them since he is displeased. As he says he will not, Thessaly points out that "sometimes inaction is action", and Morpheus declares that they must pay the price for coming into Barbie's dreams without his consent, threatening to leave them on the patch of land that remains. Morpheus tells Barbie that she may ask a boon of him, and when she asks, he tells her that it could be to kill the Cuckoo or to rebuild and restore the land. Barbie needs time to think, and as she thinks, Thessaly tells her to ask Morpheus to kill the Cuckoo, promising to find them a way home.

Barbie refuses and asks Morpheus to send Thessaly, Foxglove, Hazel and herself home safe and sound. This means the Cuckoo can fly; she thanks Barbie, turns into a bird and flies away. Barbie, gazing in the mirror again, laments the scab-like dream. Morpheus says that the Cuckoo is gone and it will be a while before the girls can return home safely. He advises Foxglove and Hazel to choose their traveling companions more wisely. He suggests that Thessaly be less foolish or she will not live much longer. In the mirror, Barbie remembers sitting on the sand for what seemed like a long time after he left, during which Thessaly complains that he is not cool or attractive, and Hazel asks Thessaly's age, learning that she was born in the year the bear totem shattered.

Barbie remembers the sensation of waking from her dream as she walks out of the bathroom through the diner. She is disgusted by the men who say lewd things to her. She sits with Wanda's Aunt Dora who dislikes the veil on Barbie's face. Dora says that her late nephew was a sinner and asks how close Barbie was to him. When Barbie says they spent their time together shopping and engaging in "girl talk", Dora asks Barbie to tell Wanda's parents about their son, Alvin. The waitress brings their food and expresses her opinion that Alvin was weird. When asked about the hurricane, Barbie tells Dora that she slept through it. Dora bets that Barbie had bad dreams; Barbie dreams and wakes wet with rubble on top of her. She is saved only because a beggar woman, Maisie Hill, is on top of her. Maisie Hill, George and Wanda are killed when the building crumbles. Rescue workers pull Barbie out of the rabble, and the first thing she sees is a television



crew. Then she sees Wanda in a body bag and goes into hysterics, demanding that they get Wanda out of the bag before she suffocates.

Foxglove, Hazel and Thessaly are fine, and Scarlett, the landlady, is out of town that week. Dora is glad that Alvin died now instead of later by AIDS, expressing her disapproval of Wanda's lifestyle choices. Dora announces that it is time for the funeral and apologizes that Barbie missed the open coffin, praising the mortician who cut Wanda's hair; Barbie laments because Wanda was so proud of her hair. Barbie admits that she has no home and no money, except alimony from Ken when he remembers to pay it, but she believes that home is a state of mind. Hazel and Foxglove move upstate with Hazel's mom while Thessaly will get another room because she is a survivor and Barbie thinks that Thessaly has more going on inside that one would imagine.

At the cemetery, Dora introduces Barbie to Wanda's mother, Mrs. Mann, who says that the hurricane was God's judgment on a city of sinners. Mrs. Mann tells Dora that she does not want Barbie at her house because she seems weird due to her makeup veil. After the service ends, Dora relays the rejection to Barbie who is fine with it because she wants to say a few words to Wanda. Barbie talks to Wanda's tombstone, admiring the beautiful names of the towns on the journey. Barbie wishes Wanda were there because Barbie is unsure what happened. She has an idea and needs Wanda to help her sort through it: Barbie believes that everyone has secret worlds inside of themselves. Barbie bought a present for Wanda, an issue of Hyperman, and she recounts the perverted salesman she encountered in order to procure the gift. Barbie wishes Wanda had been there to put him in his place. Barbie uses Wanda's favorite lipstick to cross out "Alvin" on the tombstone and write "Wanda". Dora drives Barbie to the bus station, and on the drive, Barbie expresses her desire to be like a kid, going nowhere and doing nothing. She tells Dora about her dream world, which induces a silent drive. During the drive, Barbie remembers falling asleep on the bus yesterday and dreaming of a perfect Wanda with another girl. The girl points Barbie out to Wanda, and Wanda and the girl wave. Barbie wakes before she can wave back because the bus stops. She gets off the bus and, seeing the moral as to say good-bye before it is too late, waves to the bus as it pulls away.

Chapter 6, I Woke Up and One of Us Was Crying Analysis

The appearance of Barbie dressed in mourning clothes foreshadows Wanda's death. An "it's a small world" motif is presented when Morpheus mentions Rose Walker and Foxglove knows her, though the connection is no further expanded upon. Morpheus' granting Barbie a boon foreshadows her decision to send herself and the other girls home safely. Morpheus' refusal to kill the Cuckoo, stating that its actions are partially Barbie's fault, emphasizes that the Cuckoo is not evil. The Cuckoo's gratitude to be able to fly shows that it is not evil. Morpheus threatens to leave the others stranded in the land, fulfilling the earlier foreshadowing. Thessaly asking Barbie to request the Cuckoo's death and that she will find a way home for the others shows her pride and arrogance. Barbie considering asking for the restructuring of the land shows her attachment to it,



but ultimately, she chooses to send herself and the others home, demonstrating her loyalty. Morpheus stating that it will be a while before they can return safely foreshadows the devastation that occurred to their building and Wanda's death. Thessaly saying Morpheus is not cool or attractive demonstrates her pride and disdain and suggests that she may be interested. Her age is somewhat revealed.

Barbie's conversation with Dora is full of judgmental statements about Wanda, which offends Barbie who loved Wanda as she was. Barbie's statement that they did "girl things" together shows her acceptance of Wanda while her family prefers Alvin. It is ironic when Dora suggests that Barbie had bad dreams during the hurricane since it was during the hurricane that everything occurred as well as since it was because of Barbie's dream that the hurricane occurred by Thessaly calling down the Moon. Barbie's salvation at the hands of the beggar woman explains the beggar woman's position in the story and fulfills the foreshadowing that occurred when she threw herself over Barbie's body. Barbie's confusion over the alienation of her neighbors reveals her confusion about the events that occurred concerning them and their inability to accept them. Barbie's new mentality is expressed as "home is a state of mind", showing her acceptance of herself and her life for what they are.

The cutting of Wanda's hair shows one of the many ways that her family hid who she was. Mrs. Mann shows herself to be judgmental by her refusal to allow Barbie back to her house after the funeral due to her dislike of Barbie's makeup veil. Barbie shows her love for Wanda when she talks to her in the cemetery and explains how much she misses her. Barbie demonstrates her reliance on Wanda by her need to have Wanda explain what happened to her. Barbie's belief that everyone has secret worlds inside of themselves shows her acceptance of the events that happened in the land. The gift of a Hyperman comic shows how well Barbie knows Wanda and is somewhat ironic since Wanda's bird induced nightmare was about the Weirdzos from those comics forcing her into a sex change operation. Barbie crossing "Alvin" out and writing "Wanda" on the tombstone demonstrates Barbie's acceptance of Wanda that sharply contrasts Wanda's family's views. Barbie decides that the moral of her dream is to say goodbye before it is too late; this is very reminiscent of all the losses Barbie sustained throughout the story.



Characters

Barbie

Barbie goes shopping with Wanda and insists that she does not dream. Barbie designs her face as a chessboard, and they take the subway where they encounter a beggar woman who is afraid of dogs. Barbie feels bad for the woman, but Wanda tells her to toughen up. At breakfast, Barbie says that she stopped dreaming around the time she split with Ken and moved from Florida to New York, but she still remembers some parts of her former dreams. As a child, she was not allowed to read comics, because she was expected to be daddy's little lady. She notices a blocked street and sees Martin Tenbones who gives her the Porpentine. Wanda takes Barbie back to her apartment where she sits in her room alone, holding the Porpentine and remembering her dreams. She tries to convince herself they were not real. Hazel comes to seek advice because she thinks she is pregnant. Barbie admits to having an abortion in high school and tells Hazel to take a pregnancy test. Hazel thinks Barbie looks like she needs sleep, but Barbie is too scared to sleep. She watches television, dreaming and hallucinating until she finally falls asleep.

Barbie pushes her way through curtains to Wilkinson, Luz and Prinado who help her start to remember the situation in the land. She remembers that she needs to get to the Brightly Shining Sea and suggests that they start their journey. On their journey, Barbie remembers the Hieromancer and insists upon burying the Tantoblin when they come across his corpse. She does not dream when she sleeps in the land. She wakes and enjoys her breakfast with the others, though she is confused about the dream. Barbie learns that the land is older than she is, and she comes there to dream. Barbie is an only child. She gets used to being watched in the woods but worries about Prinado when he disappears. When the Tweeners threaten them, the Porpentine lights up and guides them to the sea. At the sea, Barbie waits with Wilkinson while Luz goes to find the resistance. The Black Guard returns with Luz and captures Barbie, taking her to the Citadel of the Cuckoo.

Barbie recognizes the Citadel as her childhood home. She meets the Cuckoo, a reflection of herself as a child who she created. Barbie is bewitched by the Cuckoo into agreeing that the Cuckoo can kill her, and the Cuckoo takes her to the Isle of Thorns. She is wakened by the Cuckoo who forces her to destroy the Porpentine. Barbie is released from her stupor by Morpheus and wonders why Thessaly, Foxglove and Hazel are there. She watches as Morpheus "uncreates" the land. She asks him to destroy the Cuckoo, but he refuses. When Morpheus tells her that she can request a boon of him, Barbie requests that she, Foxglove, Hazel and Thessaly be sent home safely.

Barbie, dressed in mourning, thinks of the dream as she prepares for Wanda's funeral. She discusses Wanda and the hurricane with Dora before attending the funeral. She is upset that Wanda's hair was cut for the open coffin. At the funeral, Barbie stands in the back and stays after to talk to Wanda. She misses Wanda and wishes she were there to



explain what is going on to her. Barbie bought a copy of Hyperman as a gift for Wanda, and she crosses "Alvin" off of the tombstone and writes "Wanda". She bothers Dora when she begins explaining her dream world and relapses into contemplation on her dream of Wanda, perfected, waving to her.

Thessaly

Thessaly is unable to loan Wanda cream for Barbie's coffee because she only has soymilk. She brushes her hair one hundred times before going to bed. As Thessaly sleeps, a bird lands on her, waking her. She catches the bird and burns it. She puts a robe on and knocks on George's door with a knife concealed behind her back. The others think she is weird and nerdy, and Wanda informs them that Thessaly is studying art history. Thessaly goes to Hazel and Foxglove's apartment to see if they are all right and asks them to join her in checking on Barbie and Wanda. She tells Wanda she is worried about Barbie, and when they see Barbie sleeping, forbids anyone to touch the Porpentine. She asks Wanda to take Barbie to George's apartment where she joins them before long and admits to killing George. She forbids anyone to leave or call anyone and uses her magic to reinforce her command. She promises that she will not hurt the others because she may need their help. Thessaly explains that George was sending malevolent projections in the form of birds that were causing everyone's nightmares, and she needs to talk to him. She cuts off George's face, nails it to the wall and animates him to ask who he was and why he tried to harm them.

Thessaly decides to find the Cuckoo in Barbie's dream and calls down the Moon, using Foxglove's menstrual blood, so that they can enter the dream. Thessaly calls the Moon who responds that Thessalian should be dead. The Moon asks Thessaly if she knows what she has done and refuses to do anything for her. Thessaly says the Moon will do as she commands, causing the Moon to chide her for commanding it. The Moon tells Thessaly that the rest of her kind is dead and Thessaly will soon follow them. Thessaly insists that the Moon will send her, Foxglove and Hazel to Barbie's dream. The Moon argues at first but then concedes, promising that Thessaly's day of reckoning will come. Thessaly tells Wanda to guard Barbie since she cannot take this route.

Thessaly, Hazel and Foxglove walk the Moon's Road and deal with their identity confusion. They arrive in Barbie's dream. Thessaly guesses that the dream is much older than Barbie is, and when asked how old she is, Thessaly simply states that she is very old. She wants to search for the Cuckoo, promising that it will lead them to Barbie. They find Wilkinson's body, and Thessaly brings him to life to tell her that the Cuckoo is in the city. Thessaly asks Hazel and Foxglove what they know about cuckoos, but since they know nothing, she informs them that they lay their eggs in other birds' nests.

As they approach, the Cuckoo runs to Thessaly, claiming that Luz is the Cuckoo. Thessaly kills Luz, stating it is a bad idea to let that type of creatures talk. The Cuckoo bewitches Thessaly, Foxglove and Hazel, commanding them to sit as she ponders about the lands inside of them because she has never met people like them before. When he arrives, Morpheus releases Thessaly, Hazel and Foxglove from their mind



control and introduces himself as the Dream King. Morpheus chides Thessaly, Hazel and Foxglove for the trouble they have caused. Then, he recognizes Thessaly who demands the Cuckoo's life since it tried to harm her. Morpheus refuses, stating the Cuckoo's life is her own. He tells the three girls that they are there as trespassers without his consent because the moon in this land has fallen into the sea. Thessaly admits that they are in great trouble because they have no way to get home. When Morpheus says he will not do anything to the girls because of his displeasure with them, Thessaly points out that "sometimes inaction is action", and Morpheus threatens to leave them on the patch of land that remains.

While Barbie is deciding what boon to ask of Morpheus, Thessaly tells her to ask Morpheus to kill the Cuckoo, promising to find them a way home. Barbie refuses and asks Morpheus to send Thessaly, Foxglove, Hazel and herself home safe and sound. After he leaves, Thessaly complains that Morpheus is not cool or attractive. When Hazel asks Thessaly's age, Thessaly says she was born in the year the bear totem shattered. After the hurricane, Barbie believes that Thessaly will get another room because she is a survivor and has more going on inside that one would imagine.

Wanda

Wanda is Barbie's cross-dressing friend who wakes Barbie to go shopping. She makes coffee for Barbie and borrows cream from Hazel and Foxglove. On the subway, she tells Barbie to get used to weirdoes like the crazy-dog-lady. Wanda insists that everyone dreams and discusses her dreams about the Weirdzos from the Hyperman comics when she was a child, admitting that she wanted to grow up to be "Weirdzo Alvin". Wanda forbids Barbie to tell anyone that she was born a boy; she is pretty sure that her parents tell their friends that she is dead. Her Aunt Dora talks to her and prays for her to repent her wicked ways. When Barbie falls into the land, Wanda wakes from Barbie's television but quickly falls back to sleep.

Wanda dreams that she is given many beautiful dresses that make the boys from school jealous, but she shares with them. One of George's birds lands on Wanda's shoulder, and she dreams that Weirdzo Lila visits her, calling her Al. When Wanda claims that she is a woman, Weirdzo Lila calls Weirdzo Number 1 who ties Wanda down to perform sex change surgery. Wanda is scared and cries in her sleep. Thessaly, Foxglove and Hazel wake Wanda who panics when she hears Thessaly is concerned about Barbie.

Wanda uses her spare keys to let them into Barbie's apartment, and at Thessaly's insistence, Wanda carries Barbie to George's apartment. Wanda vomits when she sees the corpse in the bathtub. She is very angry when she is not allowed to join the others on the Moon's Road because she is a man.

Vomiting makes Wanda question if she is the woman she thought she was. She is not particularly thrilled when George asks to talk to her. George explains that chromosomes matter to the Moon so regardless of what she thinks, Wanda is not a woman; Wanda insists that she knows what she is. When she realizes that she could leave the



apartment now that Thessaly's command no longer holds, she still refuses to leave Barbie. She ignores George's ominous instructions to worry about the weather. Wanda worries about Barbie when the Porpentine starts to flicker. She hears the beggar woman downstairs in the storm and brings her upstairs to keep her warm and dry. Wanda is killed in the hurricane that destroys the building, and Barbie attends her funeral and misses her friend very much.

Hazel

Hazel is Foxglove's girlfriend, and both live in Barbie's building. They loan Barbie cream for her coffee in the beginning of the story. Hazel knocks on Barbie's door, wanting to talk. She is afraid that she is pregnant, because she had sex with a waiter from work six weeks ago when she was drunk and her period is late. Hazel thought she would be fine because they had sex standing up. When Barbie suggests that Hazel get a pregnancy test, Hazel states that she was told you have to kill a rabbit, but Barbie assures her that modern pregnancy tests are just a blue line. Hazel asks if Barbie was ever pregnant, and Barbie confesses that she had an abortion in high school. She advises Hazel to never let a guy stay the night unless she plans on sleeping with him. Hazel asks Barbie to return the frog mug since that is the reason she gave Foxglove for going to see Barbie. Hazel thanks Barbie for the advice and tells her that it looks like she needs sleep.

Due to George's bird projection, Hazel dreams that she is on a train, but something is wrong with her ticket. The inspector directs her to the cellar beneath the train to her prize in a box. The prize is a baby that has been dead for seventy years and smells of formaldehyde. Foxglove has a baby boy, and Foxglove and Hazel put the babies in a crib together. Hazel's baby moves and then devours Foxglove's baby as Foxglove keens. Hazel fears the baby will come for them next as she fights George's bird in her sleep. She joins Foxglove and Thessaly along the Moon's Road into Barbie's dream. In the dream, she is frightened when Morpheus threatens to leave them there. Barbie's boon grants them safe passage home. After returning home, Hazel avoids Barbie and moves with Foxglove to Hazel's mom's house upstate.

Foxglove

Foxglove is Hazel's girlfriend, and both live in Barbie's building. They loan Barbie cream for her coffee in the beginning of the story. Foxglove is not dreaming, but then one of George's birds lands on her. She dreams of someone calling her Donna and she argues that she is not Donna anymore. When she asks who it is, she learns Judy is talking, but Judy is dead. Judy blames Foxglove for leaving her, asking if she is with anyone and if they make her feel like Judy did. Foxglove says she is with someone and that Hazel does not make her feel like Judy did, but she does not hit her either. Foxglove questions whether Judy is a ghost or a dream. Judy wants them to be together always as they were.



In George's apartment, Thessaly asks Foxglove for menstrual blood, and Foxglove first hears and disbelieves that Hazel is pregnant. Foxglove joins Thessaly and Hazel on their journey along the Moon's Road into Barbie's dream. In the dream, she is frightened when Morpheus threatens to leave them there. Barbie's boon grants them safe passage home. After returning home, Foxglove avoids Barbie and moves with Hazel to Hazel's mom's house upstate.

The Cuckoo

The Cuckoo is the evil usurper of power in the land. It is actually a manifestation of Barbie as a child. The Cuckoo is angry that it cannot leave the land and plots the destruction of the land in order to enable itself to fly and explore other lands. The Cuckoo accosts George in his dreams in order to gain his aid in destroying the Porpentine. It also uses mind control on Barbie, Thessaly, Foxglove and Hazel to get them to assent to everything that it asks. The Cuckoo claims that Luz is the Cuckoo in order to evade Thessaly's murderous rage and redirect it to Luz. The Cuckoo causes Barbie to destroy the Porpentine, initiating the end of the land. It is confused when Morpheus comes and fears its death. The Cuckoo is very grateful to Barbie when she claims her boon of Morpheus to be sending her and her friends to New York. The Cuckoo thanks Barbie, turns into a bird and flies away.

Morpheus

Morpheus is the Dream King who created the land. He can feel a skerry dying, but he says, "it happens" and refuses to do anything to change it. After the Porpentine and Hierogram are destroyed, he arrives in the land and releases Barbie, Thessaly, Foxglove and Hazel from the Cuckoo's mind control. Morpheus "uncreates" the land, which makes him sad. He admonishes Thessaly, Foxglove and Hazel for disturbing the order of things, and recognizes Thessaly. He grants Barbie a boon, which she chooses to be sending the four girls home safely. Morpheus advises Thessaly to be wiser and Foxglove and Hazel to choose better traveling companions before disappearing.

Maisie Hill

Maisie Hill is the beggar woman that Barbie and Wanda encounter on the subway. She is scared of dogs. She worries when she sees the Moon disappear, thinking it "ain't natural". When the storm rages, she ends up being near Barbie's apartment, and Wanda takes Maisie Hill upstairs. Maisie Hill tells Wanda about her grandson who was also a cross dresser and wound up dead in a hotel room. She does not like George or any of that "hoodoo". When the hurricane demolishes the building, Maisie Hill throws herself across Barbie, saving Barbie's life.



George

George lives in Barbie's building and is very creepy. He has a picture of Barbie hanging on his wall. He is a servant of the Cuckoo who persuaded him to serve it in his dreams. George releases malevolently projected birds to cause Wanda, Foxglove and Hazel to have nightmares. Thessaly kills George because of the birds, but she then cuts the skin from his face and animates it to tell her about the Cuckoo. After Thessaly leaves, George talks to Wanda and warns her about the weather.

Luz

Luz is another citizen of the land who assists Princess Barbara in her journey to the sea. Once they reach the sea and the city, she travels into the city to find the resistance. Luz presents the archetypal traitor of Judas Iscariot. She brings the Black Guard back to kill Wilkinson and seize Barbie. Luz follows the Cuckoo. When Thessaly arrives, Luz agrees with the Cuckoo's claim that Luz is the Cuckoo, and Thessaly kills Luz.

Wilkinson

Wilkinson is citizen of the land who believes in Princess Barbara to an extent. He tends to be pessimistic and sarcastic. He is one of seventeen children, all named "Wilkinson". When Luz betrays Barbie, Wilkinson tries to protect her and is killed by the Black Guard. When Thessaly revives him to ask for directions, he points her toward the Cuckoo and asks her to apologize to the princess for his failing her.

Martin Tenbones

Martin Tenbones is a citizen of the land who follows Princess Barbara. He is a big dog-like creature who travels to New York City to seek the princess. As he is shot, he sees and calls to Barbie who recognizes him as her best friend from her dreams and goes to him. He gives her the Porpentine before he dies and apologizes for failing her.

Aunt Dora

Aunt Dora is Wanda's aunt who still talks to her, though only to admonish her choice of lifestyle and to pray for her to repent. She meets Barbie at the diner to take her to Wanda's funeral. She considers herself open-minded. Dora thinks Barbie is weird and refuses to talk to her after Barbie mentions her dream world.

The Manns

The Manns are Wanda's parents who cannot accept the fact that their son is a cross dresser. They keep his room the same as he left it, as a shrine to their lost son. They do



not like Barbie when they meet her, because she has a veil drawn on her face with makeup.

Prinado

Prinado is one of the citizens of the land who believes in Princess Barbara. He scouts ahead on their journey until the Tweeners capture and murder him.



Objects/Places

The Land

The Land is the place where Barbie goes to sleep. It is much older than she is and was created by Morpheus, the Dream King. As an imaginative child, it was her escape from her dull life; she was able to pretend to be a lost princess.

Porpentine

The Porpentine is a necklace that Martin Tenbones takes from the Land to New York City where he gives it to Barbie as he dies. The Porpentine, along with the Hierogram, signifies the life of the Land. The Cuckoo destroys it to enable her release.

Hierogram

The Hierogram is a thing that, along with the Porpentine, signifies the life of the Land. The Cuckoo destroys it to enable her release.

Barbie's Apartment

Barbie's apartment is a small efficiency in New York where she lives alone. This is where she is sleeping without dreaming when Wanda wakes her to go shopping, and where she falls asleep and dreams of the Land.

George's Apartment

George's apartment is another room in Barbie's building. Thessaly knocks on George's door to kill him when she is attacked by his bird. The majority of the New York action occurs in George's apartment where George's body is in the bathtub, and his head is on the wall. When Hurricane Lisa destroys the building, it becomes George, Wanda and Maisie Hill's death site.

Subway

Wanda and Barbie travel to breakfast and window-shop at Tiffany's via the subway. On their ride, they encounter a beggar woman, Maisie Hill, who Wanda claims is crazy when she rants about her fear of dogs.



5th Avenue

After Wanda and Barbie finish their breakfast, they notice that 5th Avenue is closed off, because a huge dog is being chased by the police. As the dog is shot, Barbie recognizes it as Martin Tenbones.

Hyperman Comics

Wanda read the Hyperman comics when she was a boy, imagining that she would grow up to be Weirdzo Al. The Weirdzos were the people in the comics who lived on a square planet in outer space and did everything backwards. Barbie buys a Hyperman comic as a gift for Wanda before going to her funeral.

George's Birds

George's birds are a gift from the Cuckoo so that he will not be lonely. They lodge in his chest and he cuts himself open once everyone else is asleep so that the malevolent projections can haunt the others' dreams.

Moon

Thessaly calls down the moon when she decides to journey into Barbie's dream to seek vengeance against the Cuckoo. She chooses this road because the Dream King has little use for women. Unfortunately, this means that Wanda cannot join them since she is technically a man.

Wanda's Shortcomings

Wanda chides Hazel for noticing her shortcomings, meaning her penis. When she is unable to join the others on the Moon's Road, she refers to it as a meaningless lump of flesh, but George assures her that her chromosomes, which dictate her manhood, are more important to the Moon.

Hazel's Pregnancy

Hazel gets pregnant six weeks before the story when Foxglove is out of town. Hazel and a waiter that she works with get drunk, and he asks to stay the night. Hazel thought she was safe, because they had sex standing up. Foxglove is very angry when she finds out that Hazel is pregnant.



Tweeners

The Tweeners watch Princess Barbara, Prinado, Luz and Wilkinson as they travel through the woods. They are loyal only to themselves. They kill Prinado and hang him where Barbie sees when she awakes.

Black Guard

The Black Guard are the Cuckoo's guards who are vicious soldiers who kill everyone that is loyal to Barbie, including the Tantoblin and Wilkinson.

Citadel of the Cuckoo

The Citadel of the Cuckoo is the residence of the Cuckoo, located in a city by the Brightly Shining Sea. As Barbie enters the citadel, she realizes it is her childhood home.

Barbie's Toys

Barbie's toys are located in the Citadel of the Cuckoo, and Barbie recognizes them as Prinado, Martin Tenbones, Luz, Prinado and Wilkinson when the Cuckoo shows them to her. Although Barbie forgot her childhood toys, they never forgot her.

Brightly Shining Sea

Barbie knows that she must travel to the Brightly Shining Sea to find the Hierogram. Once she is captured and taken to the Citadel of the Cuckoo, which sits right next to the Brightly Shining Sea, she realizes the sea is the Atlantic Ocean.

Isle of Thorns

The Cuckoo takes Barbie to the Isle of Thorns, because this is where the Hierogram is located.

Hurricane Lisa

Hurricane Lisa is caused by Thessaly bringing down the Moon. It had already passed New York City, but the change in tides solicited its return which caused the destruction of the building where Barbie lives and Wanda, George and Maisie Hill's deaths.



Greyhound Bus

Barbie rides the greyhound bus to attend Wanda's funeral. On it, she dreams of Wanda as a perfect woman, waving good-bye to Barbie with another woman.

Barbie's Boon from Murphy

Murphy's compact concerning the creation and destruction of the Land includes granting Barbie a boon or favor. Barbie considers asking him to kill the Cuckoo or rebuild the land. Thessaly encourages her in the idea of killing the Cuckoo, promising to find a way to get them back to New York, but Barbie requests a safe return to New York for her friends and herself.

Barbie's Make-Up

When Barbie goes to breakfast with Wanda, she does her make-up as a chessboard. For Wanda's funeral, she draws a black veil onto her face with eyeliner.

Wanda's Hair

Wanda's parents, the Manns, have the mortician cut Wanda's hair and dress him as a boy, their son Al. When Barbie learns that they cut Wanda's hair, she laments, because Wanda was very proud of her hair.

Al's Tombstone

Barbie has her last word with Wanda at Al's tombstone. Before leaving, she uses Wanda's favorite lipstick to cross off the name "Alvin" and rewrite "Wanda".



Themes

Witchcraft

One theme of this graphic novel is witchcraft and the reaction to it. The first instance that appears is George's release of the malevolently projected birds that cause Wanda, Hazel and Foxglove to have nightmares. This is quickly followed by Thessaly, waked by a bird that lands on her, burning the bird in her hands without any sign of an instrument to induce the fire. After Thessaly gathers the girls in George's apartment and reveals his murder, she forbids them to leave the room or call anyone; Wanda disagrees and tries to leave but is unable to do so. The girls try to decipher what is happening, and Foxglove suggests that it is witchcraft. After Hazel asks if it is new age stuff, Thessaly enters the room and says it is the opposite actually before she performs a ceremony of cutting the skin from George's face and nailing it, with his eyes, ears and tongue, to the wall to make him speak.

After Thessaly learns about the Cuckoo from George, she decides to journey into Barbie's dream. In order to do so, she needs menstrual blood from Foxglove in order to call down the Moon. Thessaly, Hazel and Foxglove walk the Moon's Road and journey into Barbie's dream. Once they get there, Hazel asks how old Thessaly is but only learns that Thessaly is very old. When they come upon Wilkinson's corpse, Thessaly calls him to talk in a puddle of his blood in order to learn where the Cuckoo and Barbie have gone. Like Thessaly, the Cuckoo has magical abilities that are seen when it bewitches Barbie into agreeing with everything it says. When Thessaly, Hazel and Foxglove come, the Cuckoo bewitches them as well, making them unable to contradict it until the Dream King arrives and frees them all from the enchantment. Also, the Porpentine and Hierogram are hinted to contain magical elements that preserve the life of the land.

Dreams

Dreams play a large part in this graphic novel. The primary source of the plot is centered on Barbie's dream world, the land. This dream is very old; Barbie goes there to dream, but she did not create it. Barbie and Wanda begin the story discussing the fact that Barbie does not dream. It quickly becomes apparent that this is symbolic since Martin Tenbones believes that Princess Barbara is stuck in her other world. The Cuckoo recruits George into its service by coming to him in his dreams and convincing him that it will assuage his loneliness if he serves it. When George releases the malevolently projected birds, they cause the others in the building to dream.

Hazel dreams that she is on a train, but something is wrong with her ticket. The inspector directs her to the cellar beneath the train to her prize in a box. The prize is a baby that has been dead for seventy years and smells of formaldehyde. Foxglove has a baby boy, and Foxglove and Hazel put the babies in a crib together. Hazel's baby



moves and then devours Foxglove's baby as Foxglove keens. Hazel knows the baby will come for them next as she fights George's bird in her sleep. Foxglove is not dreaming, but then a bird lands on her. She dreams of someone calling her Donna and she argues that she is not Donna anymore. When she asks who it is, she learns Judy is talking, but Judy is dead. Judy blames Foxglove for leaving her, asking if she is with anyone and if they make her feel like Judy did. Foxglove says she is with someone and that Hazel does not make her feel like Judy did, but she does not hit her either. Foxglove questions whether Judy is a ghost or a dream. Judy wants them to be together always like they were.

Thessaly calls down the Moon in order for Hazel, Foxglove and herself to travel into Barbie's dreams. While Barbie sleeps in the land, she does not dream. The Dream King frees Barbie, Hazel, Foxglove and Thessaly from the Cuckoo's mind control before he destroys the land. In the last chapter, as Barbie wears mourning clothes and draws a makeup veil on her face in order to attend Wanda's funeral, she remembers the dream and Morpheus. When Dora suggests that Barbie had bad dreams while she slept through the hurricane, Barbie agrees. After the funeral, Barbie remembers falling asleep on the bus yesterday and dreaming of a perfect Wanda with another girl. The girl points Barbie out to Wanda, and Wanda and the girl wave. Barbie wakes before she can wave back because the bus stops.

Haunted by the Past

All of the main characters in the story are haunted by their pasts in some way. Barbie does not dream since she had one weird night that led to her separation from Ken. Once she goes into the land, she is plagued by the Cuckoo who is a manifestation of Barbie as a child. The reason that the Cuckoo exists is because of Barbie; Barbie is also the reason that the Cuckoo is imprisoned in the land and desires her destruction. As Barbie learns of and experiences the deaths that occur in the land, she constantly repines at the losses, unable to move into the present world where those who have died no longer exist. Also, in New York, she paints her face as a chessboard and, at Wanda's funeral, with a mourning veil, using this means as an escape from the dullness of her life that has plagued her since she was a child.

Wanda is haunted by the past in the form of the Weirdzos that visit her in her dream. She is also constantly harassed by her former life as Alvin. This is seen when she mentions it to Barbie, when Hazel asks her about her "thingie", and when she cannot take the Moon's Road because she does not have the right chromosomes. Later, Maisie Hill, the beggar woman, questions Wanda's gender. After Wanda's death, her parents prepare a funeral for their son by cutting Wanda's hair and writing "Alvin" on her tombstone. Barbie tries to remediate this in part by using Wanda's favorite lipstick to cross out "Alvin" and write "Wanda". In her dreams, Foxglove is haunted by her ex-girlfriend Judy who insists upon calling her Donna, though Foxglove has changed her name. Hazel is haunted by her pregnancy in her dreams and in her waking hours by Thessaly's declaration that infuriates Foxglove.

Thessaly is haunted by her past when she encounters people that she knew in the past, such as the Moon and Morpheus. They continually mention that her kind is dead, which seems a constant reminder of the past and the people that she has lost. Thessaly is very old so her past does not seem to bother her the way that it does the much younger characters; however, it is still a factor that arises continually throughout the story. When Morpheus destroys the land, he seems very sad, and when Barbie asks him about it, he says, "Endings are mixed blessings, Princess Barbara", which seems the message that it sent in this story. Every ending is a release and a sorrow because while something is gained, something is irretrievably lost.



Style

Point of View

The point of view of the graphic novel is partially first person limited and partially third person limited. Much of the novel is Princess Barbara's recollection of the events that occurred, told through a first person point of view. Other parts of the novel exclude Princess Barbara's experiences and are told through a third person point of view. Either way, the point of view is limited in that no internal actions and thoughts are revealed, with the exception of Princess Barbara's thoughts during the parts of the text that are written in first person. This point of view allows a lot of things to occur unexpectedly since the reader is not privy to character's thoughts and feelings throughout the novel.

The story is written using mostly dialogue with small areas that contain a retrospective remembrance of the events through Princess Barbara's eyes. There is not much exposition in the written portion of this novel, but since it is a graphic novel, much of the setting and description is provided through the visual images on the page, showing the land and characters rather than describing them.

Setting

The novel is set in two specific locations: New York City and "the land". New York is the modern city of New York, which is where Barbie, Wanda, Foxglove, Hazel, Thessaly and George live. They all rent rooms in a building that is owned by Charlotte. They encounter a beggar woman on the subway and go to breakfast before window-shopping at Tiffany's. Their world is divided into classes, as demonstrated by the presence of the beggar woman. It is also divided into classifications, such as normal and sinful, which is seen through Wanda who was born Al. When Thessaly calls down the Moon, chaos ensues as the tides change and Hurricane Lisa returns to New York and ravishes the city.

The other setting of the novel is "the land", the place where Barbie goes to dream. In her dream, she is the princess of the land. "The land" is much older than Barbie and was created by another, Alianora. The inhabitants are different sorts of people that inhabited Barbie's imagination when she was a child. Her childhood toys comprise many of her loyal subjects in the form of Luz, Martin Tenbones, Prinado and Wilkinson. This land is different from Barbie's other world; yet, when she comes to the Citadel of the Cuckoo, she realizes that it is actually a replica of her childhood home in Florida and the Brightly Shining Sea is actually the Atlantic Ocean. "The land" is composed of different aspects of the imaginations of children who come there to dream. When the Cuckoo destroys the Porpentine and the Hierogram, Morpheus comes and destroys "the land".

The last setting in the novel is Wanda's hometown where Barbie travels to attend Al's funeral. The setting is shown as being relatively peaceful and beautiful, while the people



are portrayed as quite the opposite. Barbie sits in a diner in the town, and then she travels to the graveyard and Wanda's tomb. Lastly, she sits in a car with Wanda's aunt, Dora, as she remembers sleeping on the bus the previous day and dreaming of Wanda.

Language and Meaning

The language of this graphic novel is modern American English. It is very casual and fragmented. The style of the novel should be very easy for a modern American to read since it tends to sound like a conversation that might be heard in the streets of any city in America. The language lends its reality to the novel as a compensation for the unreality that is found when Barbie falls asleep and wakes in "the land".

The characters that exist in the dream world talk very similar to the characters that live in New York, likely because they are formed through Barbie's imagination. Several characters' conversations tend to be slightly different than the rest, reflecting their different upbringings and age. Thessaly, the Moon and Morpheus do not tend to speak the same as the rest of the characters. Another variance occurs when Barbie journeys to Wanda's hometown and speaks to the Manns. Their judgmental and condemning language suggests a lack of tolerance to anything that is different from them. This contrasts sharply with the other characters that seemed to assimilate pretty easily into the various oddities that occurred to them throughout the novel.

Structure

There are six chapters in this graphic novel. Most of them are around twenty-five pages, with the exception of chapter five which is thirty-nine pages long. Each chapter has a title that refers to the event that spurs the majority of the action in the chapter. There is little exposition and much dialogue, supplemented by pictures. Much of the action that occurs is shown through the visual images that are presented.

The plot of the novel is fairly complex and confusing. Because of the way the story is written, the reader is fairly in the dark concerning the reasoning for much of the action. The plot is also complicated by the presence of characters that appear without their identities being explained until much later. The majority of the plot consists of Barbie living in New York City and going to "the land" to dream. In "the land", the Cuckoo is trying to assume control in order to escape, and the citizens need Princess Barbara to return and save them. The plot is also confused by the transitions between New York and "the land", which often occur with no forewarning.

The story moves rather rapidly and is very easy to read. It is interesting to try to determine what is occurring and the reasons for it. The story line appears fairly linear, but towards the end, it becomes evident that the entire story is a very long flashback of something that happened at a previous time.



Quotes

"The Tantoblin will not come. I felt him die. The Black Guard found him in the night...I felt it inside of my heart. I felt him die." Luz, Chapter 1, p. 16

"No. It's just my coffee always tastes kind of like something that's been dead for a while." Wanda, Chapter 1, p. 21

"No, it is not a foolish question. However, I am not sure that I know the answer. Past and future both cast their ripples into the dreaming, Matthew. Something is happening. That is why I have come to this place. Just wait... That was a beginning, Matthew. Something traveled from one state of existence to another. It came from one of the more distant skerries of dream. Let us observe the consequences." Morpheus, Chapter 1, p. 26

"This is a city of crazies. The art lies in not letting them get to you. I mean, Jesus, baby. If I let it get to me, I'd never go outside the door. This is the twilight zone. I'm in it, you're in it, the I-don't-like-dogs lady's in it. Shit happens. This is New York. 'We control the vertical'...Or was that the outer limits?" Wanda, Chapter 1, p. 29

"I wanted to be a Weirdzo, when I grew up. Weirdzo Alvin... Wanda's my real name, Barbie-Baby. Alvin's just the name I was born with. You ever tell anyone Barbs, you're dead meat." Wanda, Chapter 1, p. 32

"This is a bright place, filled with frightened people, and fast hard things that hurt and wound. No matter. I swore I would remain by her side forever, and until death divided us. I must walk until once more we are reunited. This place is frightening, but I am not afraid. People shout. High stone cliffs tower upon each side of me. I am brave. I am not afraid. That the land may not die, I must walk this distant land, and be not afraid. My death hovers near me, screeching and fluttering and giggling: a ghost death, in a ghost world. I tell myself I feel only ghost pain, and I will not let it hurt me. I am not afraid. O Princess Barbara, protect me now as I have protected you in days long past. O Murphy watch over me. I will not be afraid." Martin Tenbones, Chapter 1, p. 33

"The Porpentine? But that was only in my dream... It's all coming back...Martin Tenbones...and the Porpentine...and the land...and the scary thing...the Cuckoo. No. Please no. It isn't real...It was only a dream. What's happening to me?" Barbie, Chapter 1, p. 39

"I don't have to kill a rabbit, do I? I thought someone said at school that the [pregnancy] test was like, if this rabbit died or not. And I won't kill a rabbit. I'm a vegetarian." Hazel, Chapter 2, p. 46

"Hi, Barbie! Long time no see. Ex-wives, huh? One minute, they're frigid bitches who can't cook too good either. The next they go off to New York and paint dumb things on their faces in a desperate attempt to seem interesting... Hey, that's not the half of it.



She's hanging around with degenerate weirdos and probably cracking up in the bargain..." Ken, Chapter 2, p. 49

"No...I know what it's going to do. I want to hide. I want to turn away. I want to stop looking. I can't. I hear Fox keening for her son. I cannot move. And I know: once it's finished with Fox's child... then it will come for us..." Hazel, Chapter 2, p. 57

"Oh yeah. Right. Great. You're going to save the land? You're going to defeat the Black Guard, and the Cuckoo, all right. And you don't even know where you are... Well, at least Martin Tenbones knows what he's doin'." Wilkinson, Chapter 2, p. 63

"You know the really scary thing about bad dreams?...It's that something's going on in your head, and you can't control it. I mean, it's like there's these bad worlds inside you. But it's just you... It's like you're betraying yourself." Hazel, Chapter 3, p. 71

"Whatever it is, don't any of you touch it, or try to take it from her. Right now, I'd suspect it's all that's keeping her alive." Thessaly, Chapter 3, p. 74

"[George] isn't taking a bath: He's in the bathtub. It seemed the best place to put him. I killed him. He's dead." Thessaly, Chapter 3, p. 76

"No? Okay: a couple of hours ago George's boss—the Cuckoo—attempted to assume control of our dreams. It was going to use us as its hands. To destroy that piece of jewelry. I assume it planned to hurt Barbie." Thessaly, Chapter 3, p. 84

"You see, there are two ways into another's dreams. We can go through the dream king; or we can go by the Moon's Road. But the Dream King has little time for you women, and even less for my kind; while the Moon is ever ours. It's time to draw down the Moon." Thessaly, Chapter 3, p. 85

"You? You should be dead, Thessalian. What would you with us, daughter? We have not been drawn down for thousands of revolutions. Do you know what you are doing? Do you know what you have done? You you you need need need something thing thing from from from me me me? What have you given me? What have you done for me? Why should I do anything for you?... Where others ask timorously, Thessalian, your kind commanded, directed, ordered. It galled us. But the others are dust now, and less than dust. And one day you, in your turn, will join them. And then our compact will be over, and you will be ours, as they are... The realm of dreams is not our realm. Why should we meddle in the affairs of the Dream-King, Sister? You have disrupted the order of things enough this night, Thessalian. One day there will be a reckoning." Moon, Chapter 3, p. 87-88

"Well, it's just you and me, Barbie-Bubuleh. You know something weird? Well, all right. Don't talk. I don't mind. I can't handle any of this. But I don't care. I figure, what the hell. It's like we fell down the rabbit hole, woke up in... I don't know. Stephen King's basement. You know what's really spooky? Hazel and Foxglove. I mean, they just fell



into it. Like it was all natural as anything. I, on the other hand, squeal and toss my cookies. Maybe I'm not the woman I thought I was." Wanda, Chapter 3, p. 91

"I only met you once, but you fed me, and you were good to me, and you died in my service, Tantoblin. Be at peace." Barbie, Chapter 4, p. 100

"Wish in one hand, shit in the other, see which fills up first. Old Wilkinson family saying." Wilkinson, Chapter 4, p. 105

"And to be honest uh well even if you had uh had the operation it wouldn't make much different to the uh moon. It's chromosomes as much as uh anything... It's like uh gender isn't something you can pick and choose as uh far as gods are concerned." George, Chapter 4, p. 113

"I can't leave her. She's my only friend. She doesn't treat me like a freak, or a Weirdzo, or anything. Just a friend. I've got to stay with her, even if I don't understand this stuff, and the bits I do understand scare me shitless." Wanda, Chapter 4, p. 114

"Not quite. I'm part of you. Sort of. You created me. Kind of. I'm the Cuckoo." Cuckoo, Chapter 5, p. 124

"You weren't abused as a child, Barbara. Your childhood was dull, quiet and boring. You had two dull parents, and a dull house. And an overactive imagination. That worried your parents. You'd make up stories, seek out books of witches and ghosts—things that just weren't true. They couldn't understand where this fascination of your for the fantastic came from and it scare them. So you began to defend yourself. Boys and girls are different, you know that? Little boys have fantasies in which they're faster, or smarter, or able to fly. Where they hide their faces in secret identities, and listen to the people who despise them admiring their remarkable deeds. Pathetic, bespectacled, rejected Perry Porter is secretly the Amazing Spider. Gawky, bespectacled, unloved Clint Clarke is really Hyperman. Yes? Now, little girls, on the other hands, have different fantasies. Much less convoluted. Their parents are not their parents. Their lives are not their lives. They are princesses. Lost princesses from distant lands. And one day the king and queen, their real parents, will take them back to their land, and then they'll be happy for ever and ever. Little cuckoos." Cuckoo, chapter 5, p. 125-126

"Now, think carefully because this is a big thing I'm asking you. Do you like me? And I've got a right to live, haven't I? And to be happy? And I'm awful sweet, aren't I? I'm awful cute. Barbie...you wouldn't mind it, if I had to kill you? I mean completely destroy you? I need to. And it would make me really happy. Oh good." Cuckoo, Chapter 5, p. 127-128

"I suppose... It's much older than Barbie, though. My guess is that it's somewhere she comes to dream, but I doubt she created it." Thessaly, Chapter 5, p. 131

"She needed to be taught a lesson. Yes. That was the lesson. You don't get a second chance. Anyway, if she was the kind of thing I think she was, you don't want to talk to them, or let them talk to you. Just a few seconds is all they need." Thessaly, Chapter 5, p. 143



"The Hierogram and the Porpentine were left as...tokens, I think...many, many years ago. While they exist, the land still lives. The destruction of either of them signals the death of the land...the destruction of both ensures it. And then I get to leave the nest. And then I get to fly." Cuckoo, Chapter 5, p. 144

"Hush now. I need silence from all of you, while I do uncreate this land. It is an old land, and it is time for it to rest." Morpheus, Chapter 5, p. 152

"Endings are mixed blessings, Princess Barbara." Morpheus, Chapter 5, p. 157

"But you played your part in the Cuckoo's deeds also, Barbara. After all, it is your fault that she was bound to this skerry and could not leave it when her time came to fly, after the manner of her kind." Morpheus, Chapter 6, p. 164

"Oh, shut up, Thessaly. I've got a boon, huh? Okay. I'll take the Dorothy option. I want to send us all home, me and Hazel and Foxglove and Thessaly. I want us back safe and sound." Barbie, Chapter 6, p. 168

"I know that boy was a sinner. Alvin. My late nephew. How close were you? Listen, girl. When you meet Ezekiel and Joan-Ellen, well, they aren't broad-minded like me. You make sure that you talk about their son. They've been hurt enough by all this. You don't want to make things any harder for them. You understand what I'm saying?" Aunt Dora, Chapter 6, p. 173

"Well...It's probably a mercy. The good Lord taking Alvin in to his bosom when he was ready. Otherwise, he'd probably have died up the line from AIDS or somesuch—Oh, you don't have to say anything, I know what that boy was like. God gives you a body, it's your duty to do well by it. He makes you a boy, you dress in blue, he makes you a girl, you dress in pink. You mustn't go trying to change things." Aunt Dora, Chapter 6, p. 176

"I don't think home's a place anymore. I think it's a state of mind." Barbie, Chapter 6, p. 177

"I wish you werer still around. There's this idea I've got, and it's something I haven't managed to put into words properly, and I know if you were here you could help me to...Okay. Here goes. Barbie's idea. It's like, that people...Well, that everybody has a secret world inside of them. I mean everybody. All of the people in the whole world—no matter how dull and boring they are on the outside. Inside them they've all got unimaginable, magnificent, wonderful, stupid, amazing worlds...Not just one world. Hundreds of them. Thousands, maybe. Isn't that a weird thought?" Barbie, Chapter 6, p. 181

"I dream of Wanda. Only she's perfect. She reminds me of Glinda in the Oz movie, something I'm sure she'd get a huge kick out of hearing. And when I say perfect, I mean perfect. Drop-dead gorgeous. There's nothing camp about her, nothing artificial. And she looks happy. Wanda's with this woman I don't know. And the woman goes up on tiptoe and whispers something into Wanda's ear. Then Wanda turns around and she seems to see me, and she waves. They both wave. And I'm going to wave back; but the



bus pulls into the station, and they open the door, and it's freezing, and we all get off the bus and try to persuade a busted soup machine to give us something hot to drink... And if there's a moral there, I don't know what it is, save maybe that we should take our goodbyes whenever we can. And that's all." Barbie, Chapter 6, p. 185-186



Topics for Discussion

What is the significance of the Cuckoo's name?

Who is Murphy?

How does Maisie Hill figure into the narrative?

Why is Wanda forced to stay in New York to guard Barbie?

Why are Thessaly, Hazel and Foxglove stuck in Barbie's dream?

Compare and contrast Wanda and Barbie.

Who are Prinado, Luz, Wilkinson and Martin Tenbones?

Why does the Cuckoo want to destroy the Porpentine so badly?