



## Brief Lives

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**Brief Lives** Neil Gaiman , Jill Thompson (Illustrator) , Vince Locke (Illustrator) , Peter Straub (Introduction)  
Dream's youngest sister, the loopy Delirium, convinces him to go on a quest for their missing brother, Destruction. But Dream may learn that the cost of finding his prodigal sibling is more than he can bear.  
collecting The Sandman #41–49

## Brief Lives Details

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## From Reader Review Brief Lives for online ebook

?????? ?????? says

*Brief Lives* was personally perfect in every way. It was the volume of *The Sandman* that solidified my love for the entire series. Not only was it a sublime story about brevity and forgiveness; it was an affirmation of what the Endless was supposed to stand for (and all seven of them too, because we finally get to meet the prodigal sibling who abandoned the responsibilities of his realm). Jill Thompson is the collaborative artist for this volume, and hers are my most favorite depictions of the Endless, their realms and the overall tone and atmosphere of Gaiman's settings.

The thematic resonance of this volume was all about mortality and endings, and how each Endless functions in their duties, knowing that even they could only do so much for the lives of the creatures they govern and have the power to influence--even destroy. There are quite a number of secondary characters whose appearances in the subplots and major arc are highly suggestive of the titular significance itself. Gaiman highlights the tragedy of choices unmade, and the wasteful quality of a human life when a person does not own up to it and deal with its milestones and corresponding consequences.

This was the first ever volume where we get to see all the seven Endless and the meaningful interactions between and among them are certainly insightful of the complex dynamics and roles of each one. Dream and Delirium (my favorite) are the central characters that readers are following over the course of the major arc, and theirs has a more disapproving-father and awkward-daughter aspect than simple sibling dynamic. While dealing with a recent break-up with an unnamed paramour, Dream travels to human world with Delirium, in hopes that he will glimpse said former lover. Meanwhile, Delirium seeks out their long-lost brother, Destruction.

The subplots that surround this quest are where the other Endless took part; the painful dichotomy of Desire and Despair was given more substance in this volume alongside Dream and Delirium's inability to completely make sense of each other. Dream will always see Del as the youngest and most unruly and unpredictable of his siblings, and would rather not have anything to do with her. Delirium, however, was inexplicably both immature and wise, alternating between seeking the approval of her elder siblings, and questioning their fixed perceptions about things, and none is more rigid and overbearing of his stifling beliefs than the Dream Lord. This created an immediate rift between him and Delirium, but it also helped both of them to exert more effort in trying to understand each other's point of view.

The appearances of Destruction in Despair, Delirium and Dream's collective reminiscence paint the kind of Endless creature he was; this was a personification not just of chaos but of creation. In fact, the only reason he was able to bear through the first centuries of his role as a destroyer was because he knew that with endings, come beginnings, and Destruction is a self-proclaimed lover of all living things. There are separate panels that showed the readers just how likable he is; his warmth and pleasantness seem to contrast how we would picture someone who destroys worlds. This was an appealing revelation then; the presence of Destruction and his awareness of his duality clearly illustrate that his other siblings have that duality as well.

Delirium was once Delight, a personification of joy and innocence but it was a mystery why she has changed, and perhaps too much optimism and light have rendered her insane and unstable, therefore shifting to Delirium. Desire and Despair are the obvious representation of dual forces that complement each other--and yet they were separate entities. Perhaps it's because they are too much of individual extremes to ever compose a one whole existence.

Destiny appeared in the later pages. Ever the walking-spoiler-alert, he reveals the pathways that Dream must take because it was an obligation he must fulfill, much to the Lord Shaper's utmost despair. No other pair of siblings feel as duty-bound as Destiny and Dream after all. The confrontation between Destruction and Dream only helped seal this deal. The climactic event that follows was one of the most bittersweet conclusions in the series. It was the most suitable and harrowing way for everything in *Brief Lives* to come full-circle.

And what of Death herself? One can say that she was the encompassing presence that we feel in *Brief Lives*. She is the mother of endings, and the one who transcends her role because she understands the meaning of life since she represents its counterpart.

### **RECOMMENDED: 10/10**

*\* A brilliant and beautifully-illustrated volume, it allows readers to appreciate the Endless and their relationships with mortals, as well as the breadth and enduring quality of life and living itself, no matter how brief they are..*

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### **Algernon says**

Fasten you seatbelts, folks! It's going to be a bumpy ride!  
Watch out! **Delirium** is behind the wheel and she's looking for **Destruction!**

She misses her brother, the one that got away: *Donde esta mi hermano?* *She stares at the world with two mismatched eyes: one emerald green, the other pale blue through which silver flecks flicker and swim like a shoal of tiny fish.* . The Endless are a family, but what's a good word for 'disfunctional'? Is **Delirium** the only one who really cares? Who's going to help her when she feels like someplace where nobody goes anymore?

*The number you dialed does not answer*

**Dream** is almost catatonic, as another of his love interests leaves him stranded in the rain. It's raining in my hometown right now as I write my review, cold and relentless autumn drizzle that echoes the general tone of this volume. **Despair** is busy looking out from behind every mirror in the world and *apathy hangs like damp mist in the chill air* . **Desire** flatly refuses to get involved in the quest to fill the empty chair at the family table, but she's the devious one, and could be plotting in secret against **Dream** . And **Destiny** as always walks the twisted paths of his labyrinth, holding his padlocked book of revelations close to his chest and speaking in riddles. **Death** is a little more helpful, but who is really eager to meet her?

The collection is titled *Brief Lives*, but what is 'brief' is all in the eye of the beholder. **Delirium** as the youngest and most volatile Endless deals in ephemera, from party-coloured leaping frogs to chocolate lovers *losing themselves in a melting frenzy of lust, spending the last of their brief borrowed lives in a spasm of raspberry cream and fear.* . Mortals are insignificant cinders, even the lucky ones who managed somehow to cheat time and history and fate :

*You lived what anybody gets, Bernie. You got a lifetime. No more. No less.*

The Gods themselves fade away and learn to adapt, to live without the daily devotion of their former faithful. Pharamond, Ishtar - can you recognize them walking among us, dreaming of past glories, of absolute powers and unquestioned faith? Older than the gods are the Endless, witnesses of the birth of the universe, relentless and unmovable for all eternity. Or are they? *the endless are merely patterns, the endless are ideas, the endless are wave functions, the endless are repeating motifs, the endless are echoes of darkness.*

*To gaze upon a cockatrice is permanent and never nice.  
For it can never be denied, life isn't pleasant, petrified.*

What's the name of the word for permanence? (view spoiler)

*For unquestioning respect and eternal devotion all one needs is a dog.* Meet Barnabas, one of the best new additions to the series, a born art critic with an acid tongue. Other guest stars flash on and off the screen, trying to escape the attention of the higher powers: *the Lapps believe that it is unwise in any way to attract the attention of the dancing northern lights, or they will carry you off into the sky, to be one with them forever.* A shaman looks upon a different landscape from us commoners, his wisdom comes from the subconscious, from deep and dark and mysterious places.

*To bite your own shadow is neither easy nor painless.*

My review is broken and directionless and obscure, but so is the journey the Endless take. Remember, **Delirium** is driving. The quest is also dangerous. After all, **Destruction** doesn't want to be found, and he has taken precautions against intruders. Deadly precautions. Pain and sadness are constant companions on the route, despite the occasional flash of humour from Barnabas or the raven. Premonitions of doom pile up on **Dream's** shoulders, but he can neither abandon the quest, nor change the path laid down in **Destiny's** book. So how did **Destruction** manage to escape?

Gaiman's poetry flies on broken wings in and out of the story:

*Unripe mind apples tumble screaming through the sky, and the stars gasp in brief flashes of pain and time.*

The artwork is often raw and jagged, but Jill Thomson always manages to capture the emotional frame of the characters. The writing is superb, carrying the story forward to an elegant and disturbing finish line.

*“What's the name of the word for the precise moment when you realize that you've actually forgotten how it felt to make love to somebody you really liked a long time ago?”*

Did I manage to muddle the waters enough? Don't give up, it will be all made clear by the end of the story arc. Don't read on if you are afraid of spoilers:

**The management cannot be held responsible for anything lost or found within the Library of Dreams.**

*Because there's no such thing as a one sided coin. Because there are two sides to every sky. Worlds don't last. and stars and galaxies are transient, fleeting things that twinkle like fireflies and vanish into cold and dust. Not knowing everything is all that makes it okay, sometimes.*

... but **Death** disagrees with **Destruction** and as usual brings closure to all debate: “*She said we all not only could know everything. We do. We just tell ourselves we don't to make it all bearable.*”

Kundera talked about the unbearable lightness of being. Gaiman sees hope in the everlasting changing nature of existence where even the Endless are revealed as dialectic principles, two sided coins:

Death defines Life, Dream defines Reality ( *One cannot begin a new dream without abandoning the last* ), Despair defines Hope, Destiny defines Freedom, Desire defines Hatred, Delirium was once Delight, and Destruction - he is now concerned with Creation - he paints, he sculpts, he writes poetry, he cooks. *Nothing new can exist without destroying the old.*

There is comfort of a sort to be found in the darkest moments, knowing the world will go on, with or without you. Old debts are paid (view spoiler) , new friends are found (view spoiler) , and Morpheus journey continues with book 8. I guess I sound like a broken record, exclaiming after each new volume : "This is the best one yet!", but that's the way I felt so far, and you'll probably hear it again in a week or so.

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## ? Sh3lly - Grumpy Name-Changing Wanderer ? says

The great thing about this volume is that it is all about The Endless, aka the Sandman's family. Death, Desire, Despair, Destruction, Delirium... they all make appearances. The main story is that Delirium asks Dream to help her find their brother, Destruction, who has disappeared for 300 years.

Delirium is like a younger version of Tori Amos on acid.

There is even a Tori Amos song playing in the background of a club Delirium goes to in the beginning, when she is trying to find family members to help her in her "quest."

I liked the illustrations and there is some cool mythology with ancient gods and goddesses (I think this is maybe where the idea of American Gods might have started to percolate in Gaiman's head?) We meet the Goddess Bast, who is no longer worshiped, and is in decline. Ishtar, who is a stripper in the modern age and literally has a meltdown, and dances into such a frenzy that she sort of supernovas or something?

The coolest part to me is after they find Destruction and he says (in so many words), "Nope, I ain't coming back. I got better things to do, off in the universe. I'm out." And then he just steps off into space, going who knows where. Badass.

I felt like this could have been better. The potential was amazing, but I found it kind of rambling and boring.

Still, I'll round up a star for the reasons I've stated. Also, Morpheus/Dream really can be a dick sometimes. He's also a stick in the mud and I guess that is his personality - dreary, apathetic, etc. He annoys me sometimes.

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## **Char says**

This entry in the series was different from the others in that the entire volume was the continuation of one story-the search for the missing member of the Endless-Destruction.

We also get to see the final story of Orpheus, Dream's (Morpheus') son. It was a very sad note to end on, or was it? I felt a little bit of hopefulness that perhaps Orpheus was finally reunited with Eurydice after years of suffering.

This volume also had a nice afterword from Peter Straub that I enjoyed.

I thought this was yet another excellent entry in the series and I'm excited to move on to the next!

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## **Wing Kee says**

Beautifully poetic.

World: The art is amazing, once again the art really drives the tone and the feel of the book, it would not be what it was without it. The world building here is great, it's interconnected and a call back from the past and the hints of the lost sibling is finally revealed. The characters and the places this place goes is consistent to the world and it being character driven is the best thing about it.

Story: The story of the lost sibling has been teased awhile so it was great for this tale to be told. However, the biggest thing about this tale is the time we actually spend with Dream and Delusion. Normally they are outside forces that come into character's lives but this time we see the direct result of things that have occurred to them and how they interact. It's really beautiful, it's quiet and emotional. It's a journey book where we get a lot of time to soak into the being that is Dream and we see the world as he see's it. The end of the journey is beautiful and the dialog is fantastic.

Characters: Dream gets a huge dose of development and that's good, Delusions too. She's absolutely fantastic and her getting that much time really makes readers connect with her. Then there's the sibling which I did not expect and his arc is interesting and his motivations and responses to Dream and Delusion are beautiful. I love the character interactions, there are a lot and there are a lot of new characters and meeting them is the best part, so I'll end on this.

A beautiful quiet road trip of a book that focuses on characters and the quiet moments.

Onward to the next book!

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## **Teresa says**

Though this volume starts and ends with a "modern" take on the Orpheus myth, it mostly deals with the Endless siblings. The rendering of Delirium is sometimes sad but mostly hilarious, and though 'change' has not been kind to her (she was once Delight), she's the impetus for a journey to find Destruction, the most "human" of the siblings.

I think I enjoyed the side-stories (the consequences of their trip) more than the interaction of the siblings themselves, though those latter scenes are the most profound. I also learned of a mythological character, new to me: Étaín. I really should brush up on my Irish mythology one of these days.

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## **Bill Kerwin says**

This volume is one tale, one quest. Delirium (one of the less frequently seen of the Endless Family) misses her brother Destruction intensely and is determined to find him. Desire and Despair refuse to join her, but she does persuade Dream. Their quest takes them from a travel office in Dublin, Ireland to a strip club called Suffragette City, from the Palace of Bast, Queen and Goddess of Cats to the Temple of Orpheus (where the head of the bard still lives), and finally toward the island retreat of the abdicated Lord of Destruction himself. Early in their journey—as Dream himself notices—the bodies begin to pile up. Could it be that there is someone (or something) that is trying to keep them from seeing their brother again?

I liked a lot of things about this story—Pharamond, god turned travel agent, and Isis' dance at Suffragette City are two which come immediately to mind—but the most delightful thing about *Brief Lives* was the character of Delirium (formerly known "as Delight". For someone whose conversation is full of , and whose appearance changes markedly from panel to panel, she is a thoroughly consistent and charming character, vulnerable, affectionate toward family and filled with a childish delight for experience and adventure. The conclusion of the tale, involving a reunion with Destruction and the fulfillment of a promise Dream once made to Orpheus, is both poignant and satisfying.

There is also a good essay by Peter Straub, sensibly placed at the end in order to avoid spoilers.

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## **Sally ? says**

*"I like airplanes. I like anywhere that isn't a proper place. I like in between."*

OKAY SO. Delirium may be my new favorite, though I do really love Death.

Both of them are just so amazing. All of the Endless together are just hilarious and adorable.

I want more of their family reunions.



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## Stuart says

### **Sandman, Vol 7: Brief Lives: Even the Endless must change**

Originally posted at Fantasy Literature

After the stand-alone story collection Vol 6: Fables and Reflections, Vol 7: Brief Lives brings the focus back on Morpheus' dysfunctional family, the Endless. For a group of avatars representing some fundamental concepts that underpin human existence (but only those that start with 'D'), they can't seem to get along or understand each other much of the time. So it's no surprise they also have trouble empathizing with mere mortals and their brief lives. In fact, as we learn from Death in this volume, each of us is only allotted a single lifetime, and whether we consider it brief or long in human terms, it is less than the blink of an eye for the Endless, who fulfill their duties according to higher rules than we can fathom, in a strange relationship with humans in which neither is ruled or ruler, master or slave, and yet they are inextricably linked.

In Brief Lives, the youngest and most unstable of the Endless, Delirium (who was once Delight) decides that she must seek after her long-lost brother Destruction, who left his duties for whereabouts unknown 300 years ago. She tries to enlist the aid of Desire and Despair with no success, and finally approaches her elder brother Dream, who is very much the opposite of her scattered madness, a cool, aloof, and overly-proud individual who takes his duties very seriously (unless he is entangled in another troubled romantic relationship). Dream agrees to help her out, but his reasons are not made clear.

What ensues is a very strange road-trip indeed, in which Delirium and Dream track down a strange list of long-lived beings, some previously divinities of note now facing hard times, who might know the whereabouts of Destruction. However, not only do they discover no viable leads, but bad things seem to happen to those around them. Eventually Death abruptly decides to end the quest, putting Delirium in a sulk, and it falls to Death to set Morpheus straight and on the path to reconciliation with his emotionally fragile younger sister.

They resume their quest, but the only viable source of information is one that Morpheus is loathe to pursue, since it will require that he face up to some harsh decisions he made in the past (see "The Song of Orpheus" in Vol 6). Nonetheless, Morpheus does soldier on, and in the process we see that even the Endless can change, for "Endless" is not the same as "Unchanging". Throughout the series we have seen Dream being forced by various circumstances and people to face up to his rigid and inflexible attitudes and brittle pride, and admit fault.

This idea that even the Endless can change is perfectly illustrated by Destruction, who abandoned his duties three centuries previous, and now leads a quiet and secluded existence painting, cooking, sculpting, and various other forms of creation. Is it a surprise that the Lord of Destruction also takes such a keen interest in creation? It's a nice literal reminder of the dual nature of creation and destruction. Who would have thought he was such an agreeable character. It's interesting that we never really see him 'on the job' on the battlefield, triggering natural disasters, etc. Even when he is briefly seen on the Earth during the Black Plague, his feelings seem subdued. Is he a classic case of burnout, perhaps?

In any case, the volume ends with the fateful meeting of Dream, Delirium, and prodigal brother Destruction. His reasons for abandoning his duties are quite compelling, and he reveals a number of insights on what the Endless themselves are, though he again dances around the topic of why they exist and who created them. This is true throughout the series - it plays fairly coy when it comes to mentioning the Creator of the

Universe, though his presence is indirectly felt. And the climactic decision of Destruction leaves plenty of room for further reflection, if not directly answering those questions. However, there is a sense that we are approaching the resolution of some major plot elements in the coming three volumes.

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### **Brooke says**

Coming off the least interesting volume in the series (The Sandman Vol. 6 Fables and Reflections), Brief Lives was a welcome high point. Delirium wants to look for Destruction, who left the Endless family and disappeared 300 years prior. Dream is the only sibling who agrees to accompany her; he doesn't want to find Destruction, but he does want to take his mind off a love affair that just ended.

Delirium was what made Brief Lives. She is absolutely charming and hilarious, and the interactions between her and Dream are just perfection. I loved how the issue titles reflected her spacey, meandering style of speaking. I loved the conversations that she and Dream and Destruction had. I don't normally give out 5 stars to just anything, but this volume had me giddy. I thought The Sandman Vol. 5 A Game of You was deep, thought-provoking, charming storytelling, but Brief Lives just leaves it in the dust.

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### **Ronyell says**

After reading the sixth volume of Neil Gaiman's famous "Sandman" series, I just had to keep reading more and more of this fantastic series! For the past six volumes of the "Sandman" series, we have been reading about mainly Dream's (Morpheus') side of the story, but now in the seventh volume, "Brief Lives," we are finally reading about Dream's other siblings, mainly the youngest sibling of the Endless, Delirium, and how she tries to convince Dream to help her find their missing brother, Destruction. This volume "Brief Lives," is full of drama, surreal fantasy moments and heartbreaking moments that will set any "Sandman" fans ablaze with excitement!

In the seventh volume, "Brief Lives," the youngest sibling of the Endless who is known as Delirium decides to drag Dream into a journey in finding their missing brother, Destruction who disappeared from the Endless many years ago. Even though the two siblings go through so many tragedies along their way, they will soon discover a startling revelation about Destruction that might change the lives of the Endless forever! There are a total of nine chapters in this volume that details the story of Dream and Delirium's journey to find their missing brother.

Wow! This volume was just so amazing beyond all reason! I will admit that even though there is not that much action in this volume as there was for the past few volumes, this volume clearly shows that you do not really need a lot of action to make an extremely interesting story! Neil Gaiman has done an excellent job at writing this volume as it was not only intense, but it provided a good insight on the relationship shared between the Endless siblings. For a long time now, we keep seeing the close relationship shared between Death and Dream, but now we see another close relationship between Dream and Delirium and it was nice seeing how Dream was willing to help out Delirium through her quest in finding their missing brother Destruction, even though Dream was hesitant about helping Delirium in the first place. I also loved the way that Neil Gaiman gave this story a dark fantasy feel as we see Dream and Delirium traveling through the real world while mysterious and frightening accidents keep happening whenever they are around. Jill Thompson and Vince Locke's artwork is gorgeous and dark at the same time as the images of the Endless siblings are

truly unique to look at. I especially love the appearance of Delirium herself as she has multicolored hair and her hair constantly changes appearances every time she is in a different world. I also enjoyed the disturbing images in this volume, especially of the image of Orpheus's severed head sitting on a desk.

Like the previous "Sandman" volumes, this volume does have some blood and gore, although it is not as explicit as the first few volumes and there is few in between. Probably some of the gory images that might disturb some readers are an image of Despair, one of the Endless, cutting herself up and you can see the blood spurt from her cuts and another image where a Cat goddess bites off the head of a rat and you can see the bloody insides of the rat.

Overall, "The Sandman: Brief Lives" is a truly wonderful volume about sibling love that fans of the "Sandman" series will easily enjoy for many years!

**Review is also on: [Rabbit Ears Book Blog](#)**

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**Alejandro says**

**A mad journey about change.**

Creative Team:

Writer: Neil Gaiman

Illustrators: Jill Thompson & Vince Locke

Covers: Dave McKean

Letterer: Todd Klein

**COINS, BUTTERFLIES, PONDS, QUESTS & FAMILIES**

In the review about the sixth volume, *Fables & Reflections*, I recommended that it was better to read the introduction after reading the TPB, and surprising enough in this seventh volume, *Brief Lives*, they just decided to put the introduction at the end of the TPB. Curiouser and curiouser. Oh, and read it, not only it's by Peter Straub, but it's helpful to recollect your own thoughts after the reading of the story.

***She was a remarkable woman.***

***All women are remarkable.***

This volume has one long storyline, so, readers who are looking for long storylines will be *delighted*, I comment it since I noticed how odd some fans of *The Sandman* aren't particularly thrilled about the volumes with collections of short stories.

I enjoy the collections of short stories, but also I can appreciate a long storyline.

*It's nothing to do with me any longer. It's theirs.*

*They can make their own destruction.*

Quite early in the run of *The Sandman* it was commented that one of the Endless, Destruction, left his realm and nobody has known about him since then. Three hundred years later, Delirium, another of the Endless, is missing him and she wants to look for him.

The Endless family isn't a tight one, it seems, since Delirium has troubles to find a partner in her quest. Desire says no. Even Despair (who was quite attached to Destruction) says no. So, in order of younger to older, Delirium goes to the next member of the family...

...Dream.

And it isn't an easy task, since Dream isn't in good mood. He was in love (mentioned in the previous volume, but there and here, is a mystery the identity of the woman), but she left him.

It's amusing that the sisters sentimentally closer to Destruction, are Despair and Delirium. Amusing and kinda obvious.

But while you will get to know about the whereabouts of Destruction, a mystery mentioned since the beginning of the second volume, *The Doll's House*, but as you may guess, the Endless family has many mysteries, and you will be introduced (but not fully disclosed) about a couple of new mysteries.

Delirium wasn't Delirium since the beginning of her existence, she was something different before and maybe she hasn't stopped about changing. And an Endless can be destroyed and its realm falling under the responsibility of another member of the Endless.

*I thought we were friends.*

*Friends, my sister? I thought we were family.*

Families are complicated. Families are full of characters. There is the dreamer, the crazy one, maybe some Goth fan, perhaps an addicted to sex, by some chance one desperate case, surely a quite one and of course that member of the family that nobody has heard since a while.

The Endless isn't different than any other family, with the only difference that they existed since the creation and each of them are responsible of realms with power over mortals. But a family at the end.

The Endless isn't a close family because hey! Destruction disappeared for 300 years and everybody else was okay with that (sure, he announced that he was gonna disappear, but hey, 300 years and nobody having to try to know if he's okay?) and Dream was trapped against his will for 72 years and none member of his family tried to look after him.

So, quests for a family member is something hard to sale between the Endless, maybe due his recent imprisonment and leaving him to his chance, provoked to Dream to be the one helping Delirium, but it's not like he was that excited about the idea.

You will learn that there aren't one-sided coins.

And the Endless are like the oldest coins ever.

Life is about change. But everybody is afraid of changing. Even the people who think that they aren't afraid of changing, that they do different things all the time, well, it's very likely that they are afraid of *changing* and stop doing different things all the time. Everything is about the angle of you are looking at it.

But definitely, changes are what enriches our lives.

It's wonderful to realize that not matter how extensive is human language, there are still some plausible situations that we don't a word to describe them. Priceless.

Also, you will learn that when some Babylonian god isn't so popular anymore, instead of just retiring to the oblivion, he can look for something else to do besides well, being a god, he only needs to find the right new market to attend to.

Maybe even you can learn that while many of us are mortals, some of us have a little longer lifespan, but at the end, well, there is indeed an end.

And not matter how long those lives may be, all of us will think that they were...

...just too brief.

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### **Javier Rivera says**

Brillante !!!

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### **Bradley says**

What is really a road trip is really a helluvalot more than just a roadtrip when Dream and Delirium search for their long lost brother of change, Destruction.

Nothing is quite as funny and quirky in these Graphic Novels like Delirium, and nobody is quite as quietly disturbing, deep down. How does one need to so completely retreat from Delight by willingly throwing oneself into deepest madness? \*shiver\*

I really loved this volume. Things change.

The other most memorable and thought-provoking stories are those of Ishtar and Bast and Orpheus, but honestly, I can't bring myself to pick which I liked the most. They all resonate deeply. :)

This is the Sandman I remember decades later, and it holds up as endlessly now as it did the first time I read it. :)

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### **Rebecca Skane says**

Of the Endless, brother Destruction is missing. Delirium has lost it (not that she ever had it) and wants to find him. Despair and Desire turn her down, but Dream agrees to go on the quest. It ends up costing him more than he expects. One of my favorite volumes.

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### **Rowena says**

This was so good! Delirium was quite the character.

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### **Alyssa says**

I hope I don't come across sounding like a fanboy, but the thesis of my review is this: WHY AREN'T MORE PEOPLE READING THIS SERIES? For that matter, why aren't more people talking about this series? Seriously, why did it take a random conversation with a Facebook friend for me to hear about this series for the first time? Especially considering that one of my most intellectual and well-read friends apparently adores this series? Or the fact that this series has won all sorts of incredibly prestigious awards and accolades?

Heck, after all the fancy degrees in English and Literature that I've gotten, I'm just wondering why this series isn't being included in "Contemporary British Literature" courses. Because I'm not kidding that it's the kind of thing that is worthy of study. Is it because people turn their noses up at graphic novels and dismiss them as juvenile or something? I don't get it.

In Vol. 7 of this series, Dream becomes the co-protagonist with his sister Delirium as they set out on a quest to find their brother Destruction---who abandoned his family duties more than 300 years ago for mysterious reasons. This series explores notions of the inevitability of mortality and change: even for apparently "endless" or unchangeable beings. I think that Peter Straub did an excellent job at dissecting these themes in the book's Afterword. It was a very thought-provoking essay and I'd encourage you to read it.

But in this review, I want to commend Gaiman for encouraging "tangential learning." Tangential learning when a book or video game or artwork inspires its readers/viewers to self-educate themselves about other important topics. That's one of the biggest draws of this series for me. Gaiman's subtle and witty allusions to centuries of mythology, history, and literature teases you into wanting to go deeper and know more. For example, after reading this series, I started studying a lot more about the hundreds of temples built to the goddess Astarte along the Tigris and Euphrates, which were destroyed by Constantine when he converted to Christianity. It also caused me to ponder some of the issues that feminists are strongly divided about.

And you know what? That's really cool. I love art that challenges your thinking, that expands your mind, that whets your appetite for knowledge.

The only (mild) criticism that I have about this series is that I'm not sure how I feel about the way the narrative is constructing a theme of loss or nostalgia for the changes brought about by the enlightenment and the age of science/reason. I'll have to see how the series develops that theme a little bit more before I decide whether I agree with Gaiman's approach on that one. Still, it should be interesting either way.

I can't wait to read the next one!

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### **Javier Muñoz says**

Otro gran tomo de Sandman. En este arco argumental Delirio, una de las hermanas de Sueño, le pide que le ayude a buscar al hermano perdido de ambos, así acompañamos a ambos en un viaje en busca de Destrucción, intentando seguir su rastro a través de antiguos conocidos, seres mitológicos o simplemente ancianos con los que compartió momentos a lo largo de la historia.

Este es un arco más anclado en el mundo real contemporáneo, aunque nos permite saber más acerca de las relaciones de los eternos entre sí, es bastante importante el protagonismo que adquiere delirio, de los eternos que menos había aparecido y que se ha convertido en uno de mis personajes favoritos.

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### **Siria says**

Oh, this is one to wallow in. I loved the interaction between Delirium and Dream - Dream's terseness and Delirium's ramblings which always seem to have an odd kind of sense to them contrast so nicely. Their two very different personalities also serve to nicely point out the Really Big Dysfunctionality of their family.

And Ishtar! With the temple prostitution! A scene in Dublin that is recognisably taking place on O'Connell Street! Hades and Persephone! And Destruction, who tries so hard to create painting and sculptures and even just a meal, but who can never quite succeed because of who he is.

I also get the feeling that this is setting up for something really big that's about to happen (i.e the thing which is introduced right at the end of 'World's End') but since I haven't reached the later volumes yet, I really can't puzzle out the clues we've been given. But I'm still a big ball of squee.

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### **Panagiotis says**

Ο Γκ?ιμαν σα να προετοιμ?ζει τον αναγν?στη για το τ?λος. ?τσι κ?πως εξ?λαβα τα λ?για ?νος απ? τους Αθαν?τους, ο οπο?ος αποσ?ρθηκε γιατ? ο ολο?να εξελισσ?μενος κ?σμος δεν ?χει αν?γκη πια τα σ?μβολα και τα υπαρξιακ? μοτ?βα που ο ?διος και τα αδ?ρφια του εκπροσωπο?ν. Κ?τι που δε?χνει να μην θ?λει να καταλ?βει ο ?ρχων των Ονε?ρων, αλλ? ο?τε κι εγ? μαζ? του.

Ο τ?μος αυτ?ς ε?ναι ποικιλοτρ?πως δραματικ?ς, περιστρ?φεται γ?ρω απ? τα θ?μα της αλλαγ?ς που δι?πει την πλ?ση, και που ?ρχεται αντιμ?τωπη με την ασφ?λεια της στασιμ?τητας την οπο?α

ενδύμυχα ?λα τα πλ?σματα επιθυμο?ν.

Η σειρ? μετ? τον δε?τερο τ?μο ?χει π?ρει την ανιο?σα. Η αφ?γηση, η εικαστικ? ποι?τητα και το ?ραμα του Γκ?ιμαν, αλλ? και φυσικ? οι συνοδοιπ?ροι καλλιτ?χνες σε αυτ? το γιγ?ντιο λογοτεχνικ? ?ργο - ?λα τ?μο με τον τ?μο, κρατο?ν μια αδιαπραγμ?τευτη ποι?τητα. Αν αναλογιστε? κανε?ς πως αυτ? το κ?μικς π?ρε ζω? υπ? την σκ?πη της DC comics, τ?τε μιλ?με για θρ?αμβο.

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