

SALLY. Professor Underdrawers?

UNDERDRAWERS. Yes, Sally?

SALLY. You seem to be the smartest person here, maybe the only person who really understands what's going on, so let me ask you – this is just a dream, right? I fell asleep reading these books, so I'm having a weird dream about them.

UNDERDRAWERS. Ah, and when the material that inspires them is so rich and involving...what dreams may come.

SALLY. I knew it! Okay, so I'm dreaming but...why do I care so much? I know this isn't real but...I really feel like Dave and Harmonica are my friends, like Ursa is really my arch rival, like Rye-bread is my...favorite big, goofy uncle. How can I feel this way about something that I know is just pretend?

UNDERDRAWERS. Is that not the power of a truly marvelous book? To make the impossible seem not only possible, but immediately real, to transport the reader to a world unknown, but imminently knowable? To make you care, against all rationality, for the creations of the author's mind?

SALLY. I guess it is. I mean, that's why I like those books so much.

UNDERDRAWERS. I must be off now, but fear not. I'm sure I will return for several pages of exposition at the end of the story.

SALLY. Professor, I'm going to have to fight Lord Murderdeath, aren't it?

UNDERDRAWERS. Well it wouldn't be much of a story if you didn't, would it? But how do you think I feel? Being a wise old man with a gray beard in these types of stories? It's like wearing a sign on your back that says "kill me for dramatic effect."