

#1

FIRST
ISSUE

COMIC BOOK SCHOOL PRESENTS...

CREATOR CONNECTIONS PANEL ONE



COMIC
BOOK
SCHOOL

13 ORIGINAL COMICS
#8 PAGE CHALLENGE!

PLUS
FLASH
FICTION!



Comic Book School presents...

Creator Connections: Panel 1

An anthology based on the #8PgChallenge of 2020

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INTRODUCTION

This is the very first volume of the Comic Book School 8-page Anthology: Panel 1, showcasing the talents of writers, artists, editors, and dozens of supportive comic book nerds. We put together comics from new, and previously unpublished creators with some indie makers mixed in. The result is the comic book you are about to read. We are immensely proud of the work we have put together here and the community behind the scenes.

How this all started...

When Buddy Scalera ran the Comic Book School panels at New York Comic Con, he was surprised that year after year so many aspiring creators attended his panels but never broke into the industry. Each year he'd see many of the same faces at the Creator Connection networking events, but they still seemed stuck on the outside. Buddy's friends and industry professionals showed massive audiences exactly how the magic was made. And yet there weren't many new comics coming out of those amazing interactions.

I met Buddy Scalera, at New York Comic Con in 2019 at the Comic Book School Creator Connection panel. I had a great time meeting a ton of interesting people. I mentioned to Buddy my lack of confidence in my ability to produce creatively. He took the time to speak with me one-on-one about that doubt. Buddy challenged me to write an 8-page comic for New York Comic Con 2020. I wrote myself a schedule and sent it to Buddy for accountability. He thought it was great, and asked me to share it with others from the networking events. Thus, the 8-page Challenge was born. But as in any great epic, the universe had other plans..

The global events of 2020 can't be overstated: we all had a lot to deal with as our worlds turned upside down. But even with everything that happened, we succeeded and created this anthology. We built a community of creators and support for those creators. We hope to continue this 8-page challenge every year, bringing more creators into the world of published comics.

To all of our creators, your work is spectacular. I could never have guessed at New York Comic Con in 2019 that I would be reading, and reviewing such a diverse and interesting set of stories. I appreciate all of your submissions, hard work, collaboration, and determination. This anthology is for you, and I hope that it is everything you hoped it would be, because thanks to you, for me, it is.

I'd like to give a big shout out and a delayed hug to our IT support, Kevin Pei, who not only kept the council in touch but helped keep the forums up and running for this newly formed digital community. Many thanks to Arielle Lupkin for always volunteering and having something to contribute, your joy and

enthusiasm are contagious. Cathy Kirch, thank you for being available always and for helping mentor many of us with writing and storytelling knowledge to make us all better creators. Thank you to Maryam Mark for keeping our community a positive place of learning and sharing that keeps our community welcoming to new members. And thank you to Rob Andersin for being the Comic Book Advocate around the clock and teaching us the ways of live streaming and living digitally. Kyle Rose, thank you for supporting the council, always being the voice of reason and the first to support others in their own great ideas. And thank you to Kristian Stout for helping with all the legalese that makes our heads spin; your assistance remains an invaluable asset to our community. All the thanks to Kris Burgos, Bolu Oriowou, Matthew Timpanelli, and Mike Ponce, thank you for your involvement and volunteering to get our tasks complete as this year comes to a close. Finally thanks to Grant Shorter for hanging in there with us and supporting our site and our eyes with all the visuals Comic Book School has to offer. And to all the people on the council and in the community, we couldn't have done this without any of you.

To A. A. Rubin, thank you for your experience and motivation which not only kept us on track, but brought us to the finish line. Without your tireless efforts and follow-up, this anthology would not have happened. Thank you for the idea of the Flash Fiction section, and for staying up past your kids' bedtime to get this done. Thank you.

And to Buddy, we did it; we made a comic book anthology, we built a community of Comic Book Creators, and we are published. Your continued encouragement of the people in this community is inspiring, and your faith in me has helped me more than I can express in words. You are the leader we were all hoping for and didn't even know it. Let's do it again next year.

D. Alley
Editor, Comic Book School
December, 2020

“A leader is best
When people barely know he exists
Of a good leader, who talks little,
When his work is done, his aim fulfilled,
They will say, “We did this ourselves.”
-Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching

THE BATTLE OF THE BELLY OF THE BEAST

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PREVIOUSLY ON
KIP KERSTOMM:
MAN OF TOMORROW'S
YESTERDAY FROM THE
FUTURE...



A ROUTINE MISSION
FOR KIP AND VANESSA
TOOK A COMPLICATED
TURN...



WHEN THEIR RESCUE
OF THE PRINCE
OF THE SOFSERVIAN
EMPIRE WAS INTERRUPTED
BY...



AN AMBUSH
FROM THE DEADLY
INTERGALACTIC
BOUNTY HUNTERS,
THE ERADIKOR!



THE CHASE CAME
TO A SUDDEN HALT...

WHEN THE TWO
SHIPS FOUND THEMSELVES
ON THE WRONG SIDE
OF A GRUBNARIAN MUNCHER.

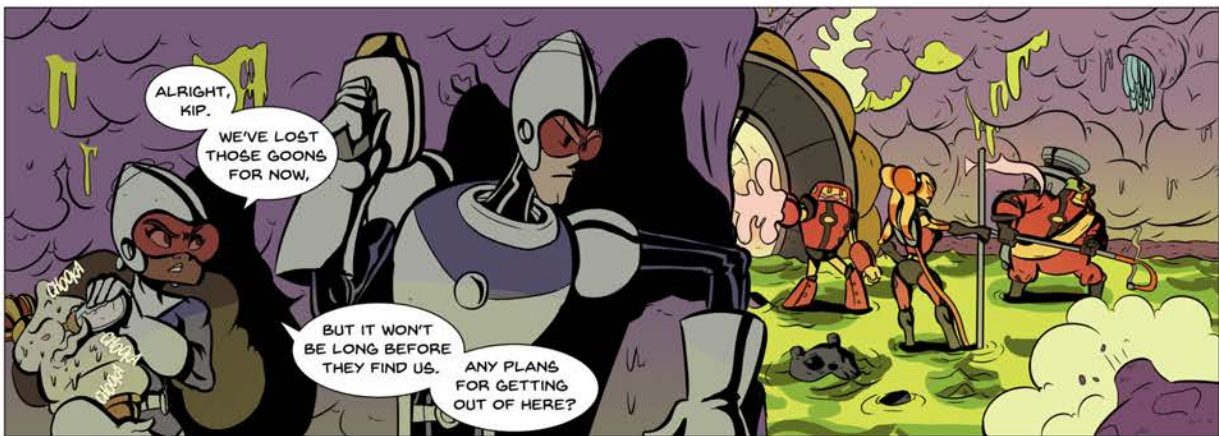


NOW OUR HEROES
MUST STRUGGLE TO
SURVIVE...

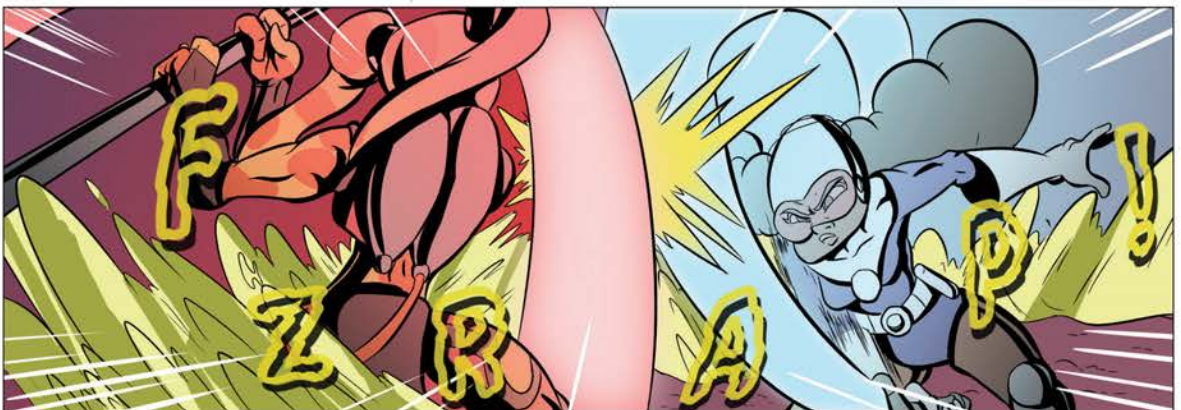
THE BATTLE OF THE BELLY OF THE BEAST

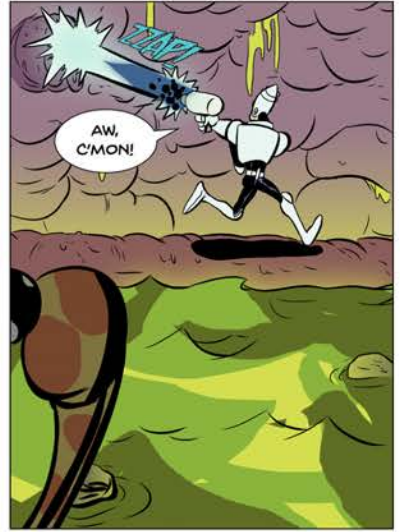
STORY AND ART BY BOLU ORIOWO

@aesderolict



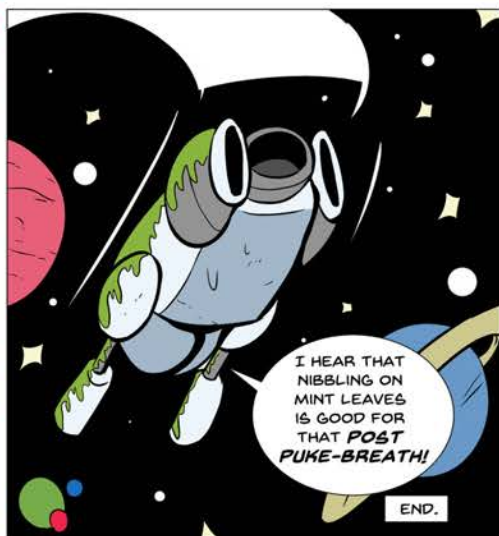
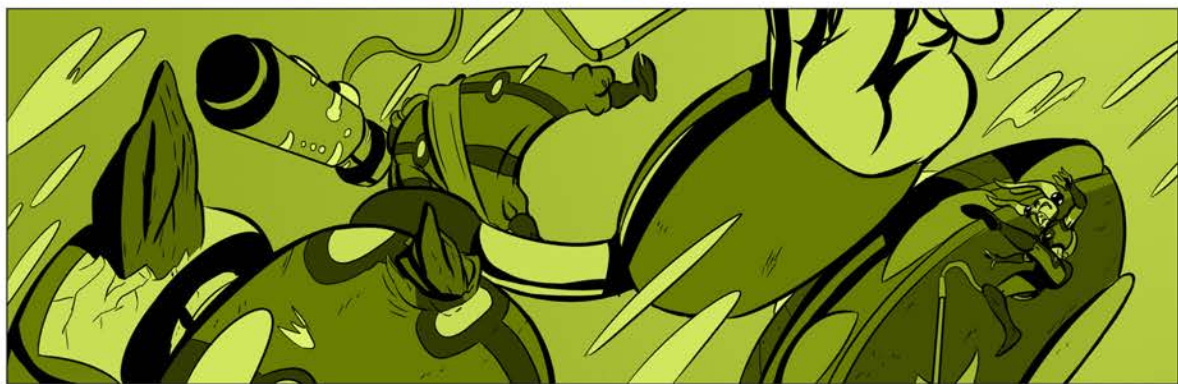












I HEAR THAT
NIBBLING ON
MINT LEAVES
IS GOOD FOR
THAT **POST**
PUKE-BREATH!

END.

BRON THE LUCKY IN... HAIL CHAOS

Written/Art/Letterer: Zach Herring

On Instagram: [@zherring](#)

Colorist: Maja Opacic

On Instagram: [@maja_colorist](#)

Story Edits: Mia Herring

For more visit: [RedherringComics.com](#)

BRON the Lucky m...

hail, chaos!

WRITTEN AND DRAWN BY
Zach herring

© @ZHERRING

COLORS BY
maja opacic

© @MAJA_COLORIST

STORY EDITS BY
mia herring

REDHERRINGCOMICS.COM





20 BITS.

OR THREE CROWNS, IF YOU HAVE THEM.



HRM.

I HAVE CROWNS.

SIT WHEREVER YOU LIKE, I GUESS. BUT DON'T SLOSH.

BLOODY TROLLS COME TO PORT AND SLOSH EVERY WHICH'WAY...



DON'T SLOSH, BUT CARRY YER OWN DRINK AND FIND A SEAT. PICK ONE OUTCOME YOU-



I am returned!

praise luck & chaos!
ha! ha! ha!

OH NO.



ho! good troll, you look in need of company!

but first, my tongue! it is bone dry!

ER, ACTUALLY, I WAS HOPING-



might I have this? I swear to you, more pints shall swiftly follow.

I GUESS I COULD USE SOME COMP-

tsk, tsk. try not to spill, friend.



I had spent weeks carousing my way across the glorious port here on world-goddess illyavana.

we live in worlds cruelly dominated by intractable fate and prophecy. illyavana's fate was to be murdered and fall into the outer darkness and endless decay.

but to quote our scriptures:

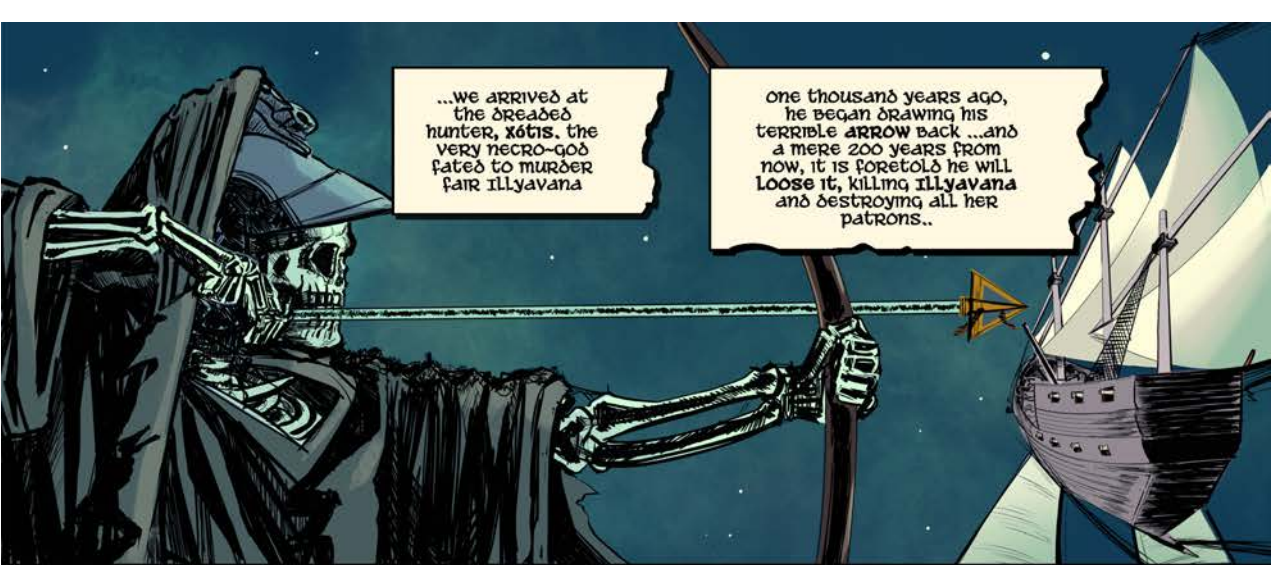
"as our clockwork universe ticks ever on, be as grains of sand in its gears."

bedlam is my order's calling, and i was looking to sow it at illyavana's behest, mayhap enough bedlam to save her.

so, guided by chance and my talisman, i was recruited for a quest to ostensibly spare her that dreadful fate.

as we set off, traversing the great void, illyavana's grandeur receded from view.

and after a fortnight of hard travel...



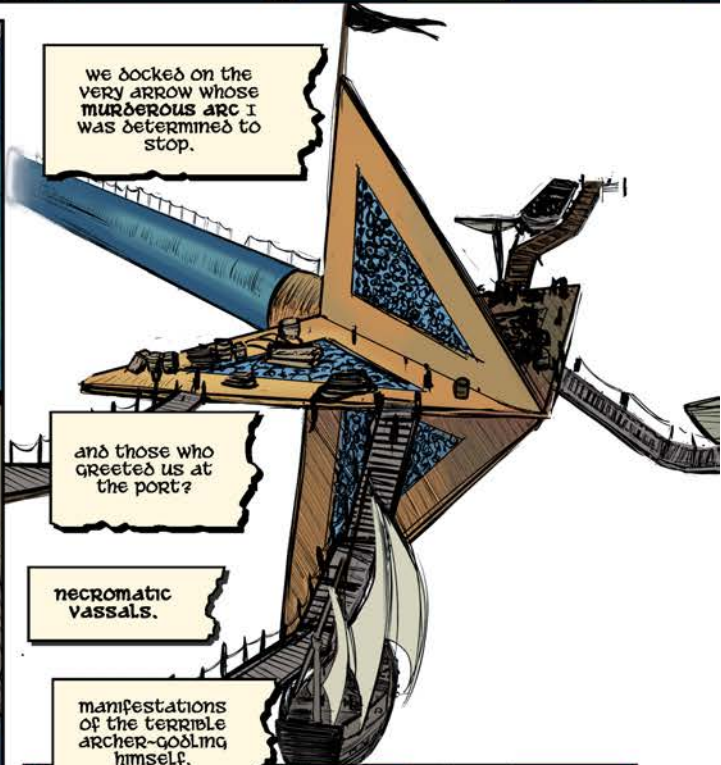
...we arrived at the dreaded hunter, xóti's. the very necro-god fated to murder fair illyavana

one thousand years ago, he began drawing his terrible arrow back ...and a mere 200 years from now, it is foretold he will loose it, killing illyavana and destroyng all her patrons..



the mad baron meismar initiated our joint adventure, and he was also my guide. though he said little on our voyage...

...I sensed that his fate mtractably tangled with illyavana and xóti's.



we docked on the very arrow whose murderous arc I was determined to stop.

and those who greeted us at the port?

necromatic vassals.

manifestations of the terrible archer-godling himself.



if such wights greeted us at our berth, what would await us at our journey's end?

through the grasping underbrush and gloom, we trekked onward towards the only light in the distance the terrible visag

i say, friend, unhand my drink!



BUT I'M THIRSTY AND THIS WAS MINE--

wench!

mayhap I could trouble you to bring four, ah, no, five draughts, posthaste?

UH, SURE.

splendid! now, sir troll, where was I?

ah yes! rescuing illyavana from prophecy. so, as our worlds are dominated by fate, so my order's power comes from introducing chance to events previously set in stone.



we introduce chance by casting lots for guidance, as a holy sacrament of our order.

at every fork in our path on xôtis, I casted lots as prayer, attempting to sow chaos, only to read the same boring answer...



"forward."



forward?

bloody forward, still? hel's.



"forward", it read, through the stinking marshes, and collapsing bridges.

"forward", until xôtis's visage blotted out the open sky.

"forward", until the brumous lights at the distance horizon revealed themselves to be a derelict sepulchre.

I wavered on casting one last time, but decided, on my own, to proceed "forward." whyever not?





Baron Meismer!

ENOUGH TITTERING.
ALL OF YOU.

Baron, you are
early. By many
decades.

Now?
Why??

And **whom**
has
he brought?

ah,
perhaps
we...

We cannot act
early any more
than we could
delay your-

FRIENDS. PLEASE. I
HAVE BROUGHT THIS
HARDY ACOLYTE OF
CHANCE. ALL THE WAY
FROM... ILLYAVANA..

...An interesting
development,
Meismer. Come with
us, both of you.



they knew my
companion.

what more, I could
sense -- another
draught, thank you
kindly -- implicit
conspiracy betwixt
the baron and those
dreadful wights.

they employed
me deeper into
their cloister. I
hesitated and
they turned my
very faith
against me.



AND SHALL WE
CONSULT YOUR
TRINKET? WHAT
DOES IT COMMAND
OF YOU?



forward.
forward! ever
forward!

Bloody thing
must be
broken...



so we
began our
descent
into the
necro-god
itself.

with each step,
I felt the
fingers of fate
tighten around
my throat,
though I knew
not why.

only when
reached the
end of our
short passage
was it made
clear...



that is...a mountain of skulls.

AYE.

AND AT THE TOP, AN ALTAR, YOU DOLT.

That mountain represents a thousand sacrifices to Xötis,



The skulls we take and pile as an offering. When we finish our labor, The Great Hunter takes another celestial for the Necrotic Hosts.

It was to be Illyavana, the Light-Bringer next. And Baron Meisner was fated to be our last sacrifice to secure her for our host.

But here he is, early, and with a substitute whom Fate accepts, that is a-



Did you tell them we need more skulls?

...I was just getting to that.

ah, mayhap one final prayer to determine if I proceed further still or-



NO!

I HAVE HAD IT WITH OUR INFERNAL DEFERENCE TO YOUR IDIOT TRINKET.



I AM TO BE FREE OF MISERABLE FATE AND AN INTRACTABLE DESTINY.

NO MORE PROPHECIES, NOR EMPTY PRAYERS TO TINPOT BAUBLES.

I WILL DEPART THIS INFERNAL PLACE, AND LEAVE YOU HERE. IN. MY. STEAD.



Meismerrrr...You will never be rid of us. On your deathbed, we will--

gakkk

WE SHOULD RUN.

OR DO YOU NEED TO ASK YOUR LUCKY CHARM FIRST?

so, we ran.

we sped through, the rapidly collapsing tomb, dry and untouched, went up like a tinderbox.

even as we lunged for safety, baron meismerr's careless taunt troubled me.

chaos is my calling.

it is my sacramental duty. and yet my subservience to it is, in and of itself, its own form of servitude.

is every man a slave to something?

we disembarked from xotis, and i shut myself in my cabin to reflect.

on reflection, i realized... hold a moment, good troll!

ho! four more! for we are only at the middle of my tale, but have completely finished our drinks!

as i was saying, loc in my cabin

SLLRRP

fm.

CAMRIDDEON AND THE LEIGHMAN LURKERS

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For more visit: <http://evanscaleart.com>

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On Twitter: [@Evan_Scale](https://twitter.com/Evan_Scale)

Letterer: Micah Myers

Camriddeon and the Leighman Lurkers

Writer: Jack Holder

Artist: Evan Scale

Letterer: Micah Myers



I MET THE TORN SOUL ONCE. I MEAN, BEFORE HE WAS THAT. WHEN HE WAS JUST CAMRIDDEON. WHEN HE WAS JUST A HERO.



WE DIDN'T KNOW WHO HE WAS. JUST THAT HE WAS A MAGE, AND HAD BEEN SENT FROM DANNISFIRE.



BUT I MEAN, DANNISFIRE, THE CAPITAL OF THE KINGDOM! TO DEAL WITH SOME LONELY BACKWATER LIKE LEIGHMAN.



ARE YOU THE ONE CALLED CAMRIDDEON?

I AM.

THANK YOU SO MUCH. THE LURKER WAS NEVER TOO MUCH TROUBLE, BUT NOW WITH A MAGE OF YOUR TALENTS...

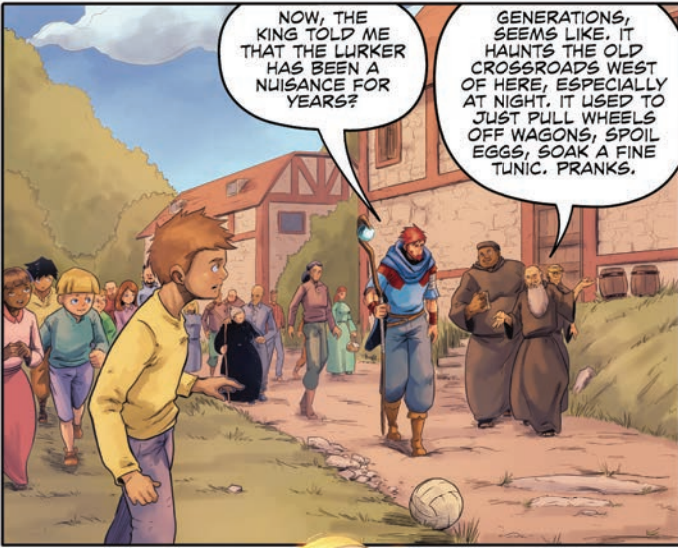
PLEASE, I'M JUST HERE TO HELP.

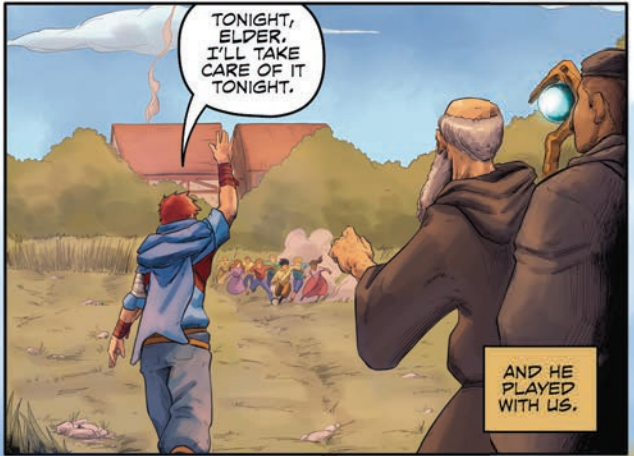
NO ONE CAME TO LEIGHMAN. NOBODY CARED ABOUT LEIGHMAN. THE BEST THING YOU COULD DO IN A TOWN LIKE OURS WAS LEAVE.



IT'S FOLKS LIKE YOU THAT MAKE LIFE WORTH LIVING. WHAT ELSE COULD I DO BUT DROP BY?









THE LEIGHMAN CROSSROADS
AREN'T ANYTHING SPECIAL. ONE
WAY LEADS TO LEIGHMAN AND
BACK OUT TO THE WESTERN
WILDERNESS. THE OTHER
CONNECTS THE NORTHERN
ICELANDS WITH SOUTHERN
ROYALTY. NOTHING FOR LEAGUES.



BUT EVERYONE KNOWS THE POWER
OF THE CROSSROADS. IT IS A
PLACE FOR DEMONS, LEGENDS,



AND
MONSTERS.



SKREEEE!



AAAGH!



SOMETIMES,
LOOKING BACK,
I FEEL A PANG
OF REGRET.



THIS LURKER THOUGHT THAT IT COULD
STEAL THE POWER OF THE CROSS-
ROADS. BECAUSE IT WAS A MONSTER.



IT FORGOT
WHERE THE
POWER FIRST
DWELLED.



IN THE
HANDS OF
DEMONS.



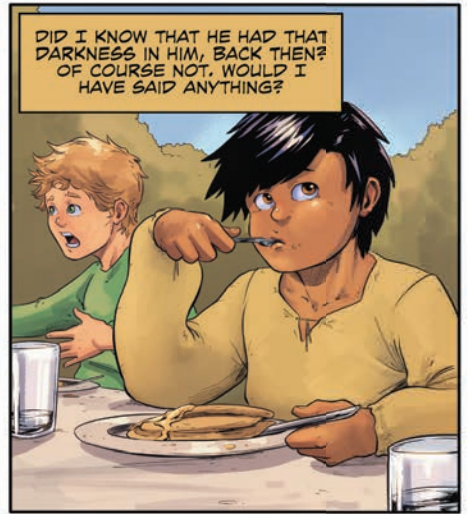
NO ONE BESIDES
THE KING KNEW OF
THE MAGE'S DARK
PARENTAGE.



IF THEY DID,
WOULD HE
BE ALLOWED
TO LIVE?



COME ON.
LET'S GET YOU
TO BED.







DON'T BE LIKE THAT. YOU KNOW WHAT THEY'LL DO IF THEY FIND YOU. IT'LL BE IRON, AND PURGES, AND DEATH. I WON'T HAVE THAT ON MY CONSCIENCE. IT'S BLACK ENOUGH AS IT IS.



BARK! RRRRAK!

HAHAHA! YES, THAT'S A POSSIBILITY TO DISCUSS.



BUT WE HAVE TO MAKE SURE THEY'RE READY, NOW DON'T WE?



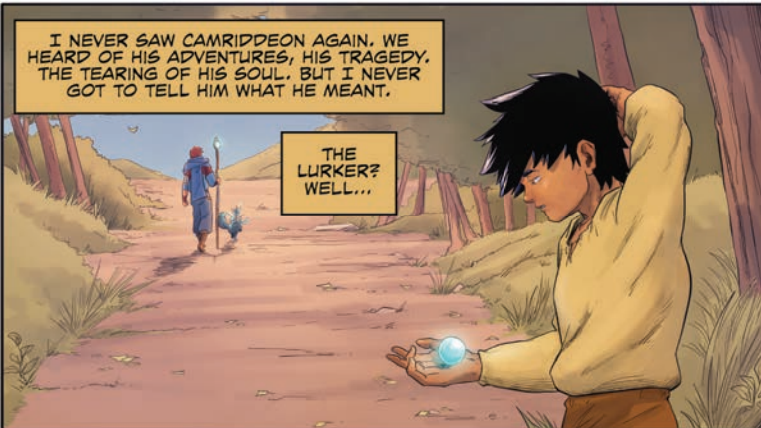
I'LL NEVER FORGET THE SIGHT OF THAT CREATURE'S EYES. IT LOOKED AT ME WITH SUCH KNOWLEDGE, SUCH REGRET. I FELT WRETCHED, LIVING DOWN TO ITS EXPECTATIONS.



IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT. SOMETIMES WE JUST AREN'T READY TO FACE THE WONDER OF THE WORLD.



BUT MAYBE, JUST MAYBE. YOU ARE.



I NEVER SAW CAMRIDDEON AGAIN. WE HEARD OF HIS ADVENTURES, HIS TRAGEDY. THE TEARING OF HIS SOUL. BUT I NEVER GOT TO TELL HIM WHAT HE MEANT.

THE LURKER? WELL...



THAT'S A STORY FOR ANOTHER TIME.

The End?

THE CREATIVE JOURNEY

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On Facebook: [@Mr.Rob.Andersin](https://www.facebook.com/Mr.Rob.Andersin)

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Criss Madd

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THE

CREATIVE JOURNEY

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ART FOR PAGE 3 BY- PETER A. DELUCA

ART FOR PAGE 4 BY- MARTHA SCHWARTZ

ART FOR PAGE 5 BY- MARTHA SCHWARTZ

ART FOR PAGE 6 BY- DANNY MCCALLUM

PAGE 7 IS THE SCRIPT OF THE PAGE AS WRITTEN

ART FOR PAGE 8 BY- CRISS MADD

MORE INFO FOR THIS PROJECT FOUND @ MRANDERSIN.WEBSITE/CBS-8-PAGE-CHALLENGE

THE CREATIVE JOURNEY by Rob AnderSiN

The ANSWER TO AN 8-PAGE CHALLENGE by COMIC BOOK SCHOOL

**WE ALL GET INTRODUCED
TO COMICS IN SOME WAY...**

**FOR SOME OF US IT BECOMES
A LIFE-LONG PASSION THAT...**



**BECOMES PART OF WHO
WE ARE WHILE COMBINING
WITH OUR VERY DNA.**



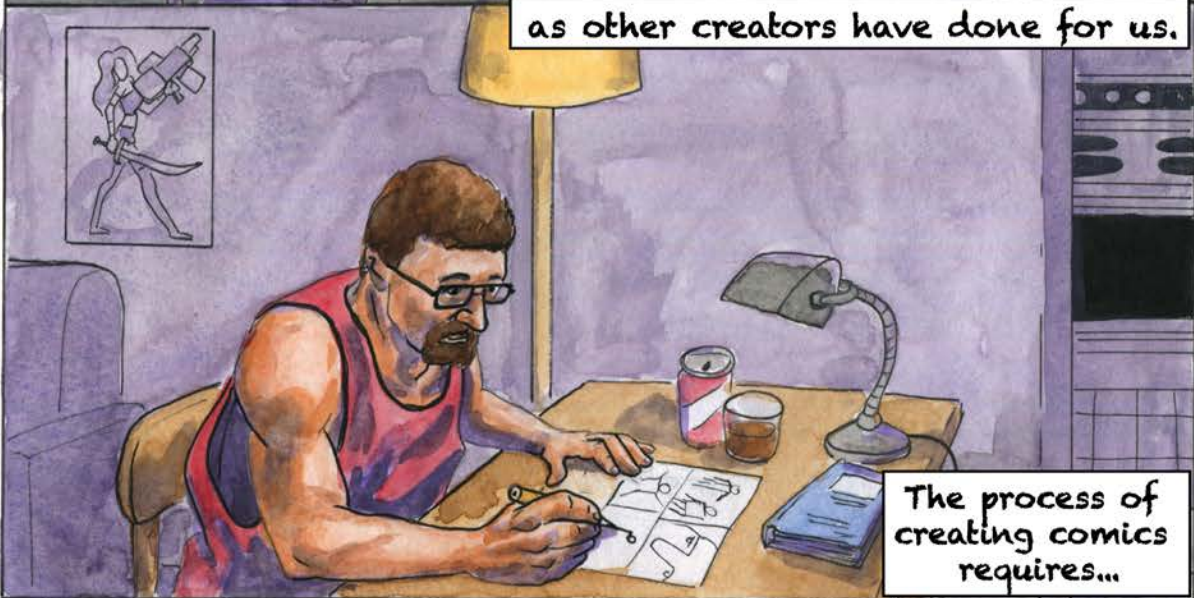
That Fandom follows us through out our Life, and for some of us, it becomes more than fandom, it turns into a need to create what we **LOVE**-our OWN comics for the world to read.



Stories told from our point of view...



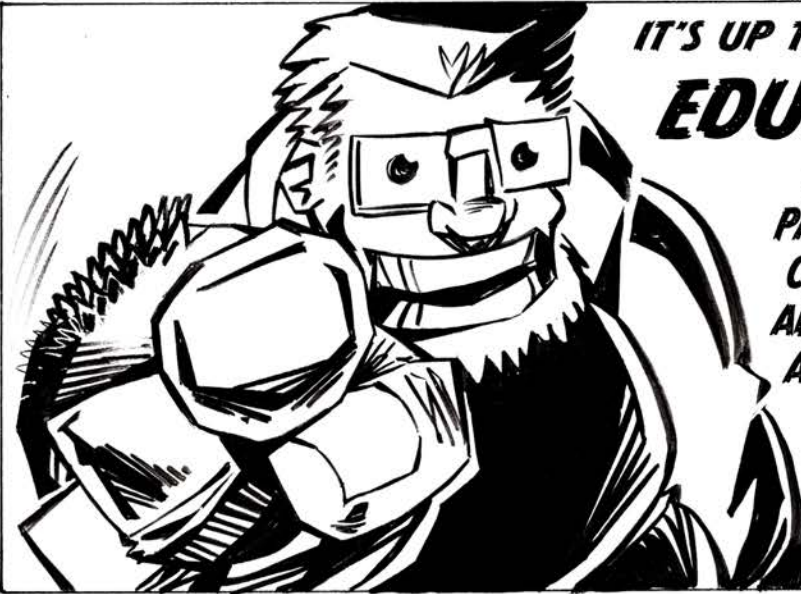
as other creators have done for us.



**A CREATIVE JOURNEY THAT REQUIRES
AN EDUCATION WITH INTENSE STUDY.**



**A STUDY OF THE CRAFT OF COMICS ITSELF
FROM MULTIPLE RESPECTED SOURCES.**



**IT'S UP TO YOU TO GET AN
EDUCATION!!**

**YOU HAVE TO ATTEND
PANELS ABOUT CREATING
COMICS, WATCH VIDEOS
ABOUT CREATING COMICS
AND YOU HAVE TO ASK
THE QUESTIONS YOU
HAVE TO THOSE
WHO CAN GIVE
YOU ANSWERS.**

**YOUR DIPLOMA WILL BE GIVEN TO YOU
BY THE FANS VIA THEIR SUPPORT
OF YOUR VARIOUS PROJECTS.**

**YOUR NEED FOR A
CONTINUED EDUCATION
WILL NEVER END!**

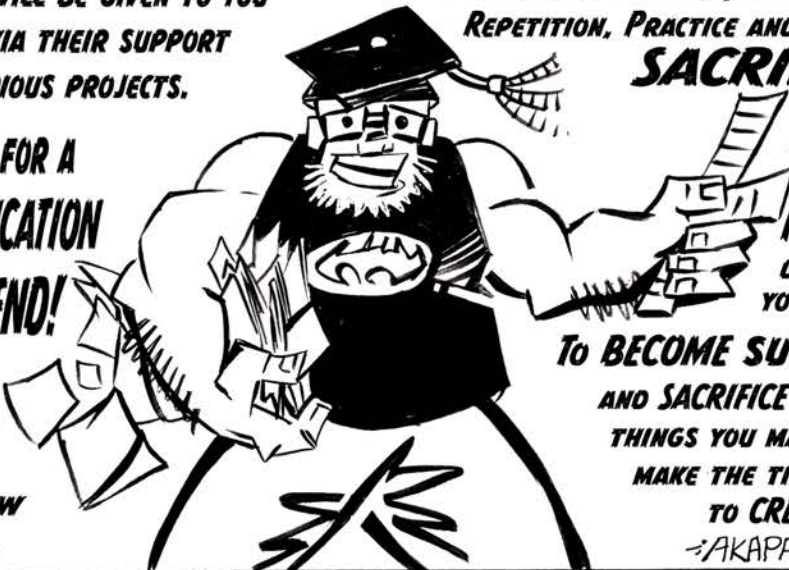
**IT WILL BE
UP TO YOU TO
CONTINUE TO
LEARN AND GROW
AS A CREATOR.**

**THE PROCESS WILL REQUIRE DEDICATION,
REPETITION, PRACTICE AND AT TIMES,
SACRIFICE!**

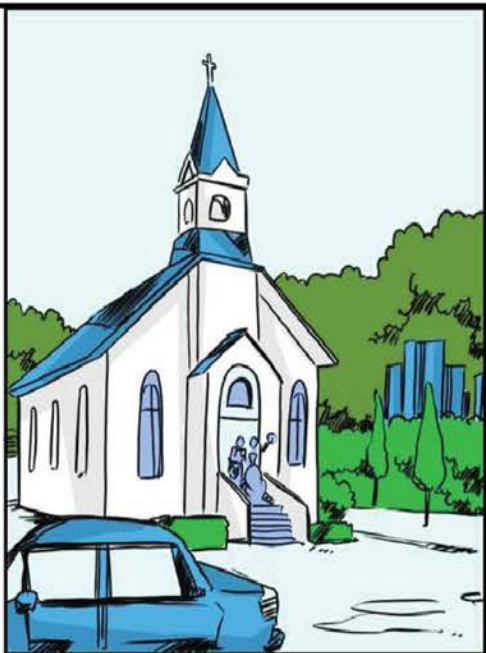
**YOU WILL
HAVE TO
PRIORITIZE
DOING WHAT
YOU NEED TO DO**

**TO BECOME SUCCESSFUL
AND SACRIFICE SOME OF THE
THINGS YOU MAY ENJOY TO
MAKE THE TIME NEEDED
TO CREATE.**

-AKAPAD2020:-



Despite how hard you work on your Creative Journey, Life will continue to move at its normal pace. Just because you are creating your Own New Worlds doesn't mean the one you live in will slow down for you so you can create. You will have to live in both the World around you and the ones you are creating at the same time and keep on track in all these worlds you belong to. Life has a way of getting in the way just like in your stories. And a lot can happen to you on this Journey You May Decide to Tie the Knot.



For many of us at the beginning, we will have to keep working a day job to pay the bills and keep us creating. That will...



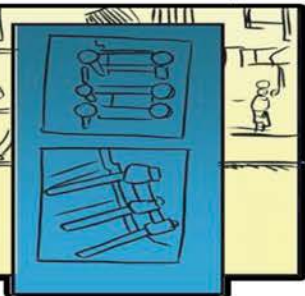
include all the stresses of having a job and coming home after to work on our Creations.



Bad things will probably happen to you, some of which may change your life in negative ways. You will have **Setbacks** and **Suffer** some **Losses** along the way. That's Life.



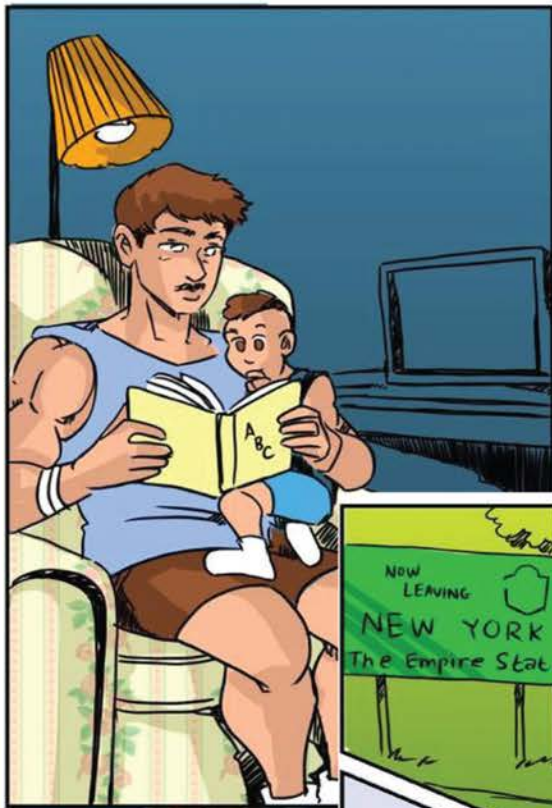
It will become about what is **NEXT** that will shape Your Creative Journey. Every experience in your life can- and often will- shape your creations. Even Crippling loss can be later used to tell a story of a broken system or even



Give Hope to Those who May NEED it MOST!



There will be moments in your Journey that will change you, motivate you, excite you and inspire you to change the world around you. You may become a parent and see the world in a new way. That moment can inspire in you a change that you never see coming, until, you hold that lil' human in your arms and feel that responsibility of making the world better for them. You may be inspired by a scientific discovery that is so interesting to you it inspires you to make something never seen before.



You may leave behind all you know and start a new life in a new place. You may be inspired by New LOVE or maybe a reconnection to the Love you already had and took it for granted for too long.

Life itself will be the thing that inspires you in ways that you will not see coming, and it will be for you to express through



your creations even when you reach a painful end. As a creator that is fuel for Creation. You have to learn to tap into your life for **Inspiration!**



**HARNESSING ALL OF THAT LIFE,
WE CREATE NEW WORLDS,
TO SHARE WITH
THE WORLD**



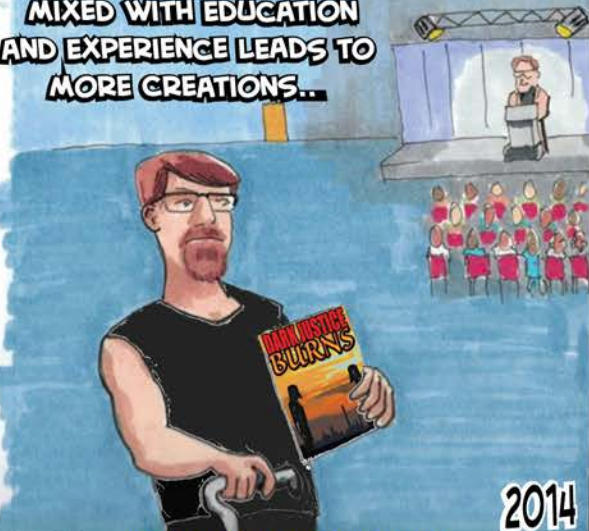
2012

**ALL THAT WORK LEADS
TO CREATION AND
SOMETHING TO SHARE
WITH OTHERS...**



2013

**AND THAT CREATION
MIXED WITH EDUCATION
AND EXPERIENCE LEADS TO
MORE CREATIONS...**



2014

**AS THE QUALITY OF THE
WORK IMPROVES...**



2015

**THE DRIVE TO CREATE
BECOMES SECOND NATURE...**



2016

**UNTIL ONE DAY WE BEGIN
TO BELIEVE IN OUR CREATIONS
AND TAKE THE NEXT STEP.**



2017

PAGE 7

NARRATION FOR TOP OF PAGE and rectangle Panels that should slash
an arrow that points toward the goal and outcome:

“All That Hard Work you do on
YOUR JOURNEY leads to big Changes”

for this page 3 rectangle splits of from fan to creator

Panel 1

row 1

Rectangle

TOP NARRATION::

“You go from From Fan to Creator...”

SCENE:

“From a computer screens buying a ticket
to buying a table.”

Panel 2

row 2

Rectangle

TOP NARRATION:

“From walking in the front door to walking Through the loading
Dock with a hand truck full of totes with my son Jaxx with me.”

SCENE:

“From walking in as a fan to walking in the back
with a hand truck full of comics to sell with your son.”

Panel 3

row 3

Rectangle

TOP NARRATION:

“You go from from standing in front of a table
to being behind one talking to your fans.”

SCENE:

Have meeting a creator from in front of the
Table shaking their hand to me standing
Behind it shaking a fans hand. Jaxx next to
me when I am behind the table and cane
in my free hand and have it so I am back
to back to myself

Panel 4

row 4

Rectangle

TOP NARRATION:

“From their Fan to their Fan, Friend and fellow creator.”

SCENE:

Show a Pic of me shaking Buddy's
Hand to giving him a pound hug.



THE JOURNEY NEVER ENDS, THOUGH YOUR ROLE CHANGES AS YOU PASS WHAT YOU LEARNED ON TO A NEW GENERATION, YOU REMAIN A STUDENT OF THE INDUSTRY BUT YOU BECOME A TEACHER, AN INSPIRATION, A LEADER AND...

THERE WILL BE ONLY ONE OF YOU IN ALL OF TIME, SO GO OUT THERE, AND TELL YOUR STORY TO THE WORLD!

YOU PASS IT ON BECAUSE WE RISE TOGETHER, IT'S YOUR PANELS & IT'S YOUR TURN TO HELP MOLD THE FUTURE OF COMICS.

SO WHAT ARE YOU GONNA CREATE?

THE LEMONADE STAND FEATURING HIBAGON

Writer: Buddy Scalera

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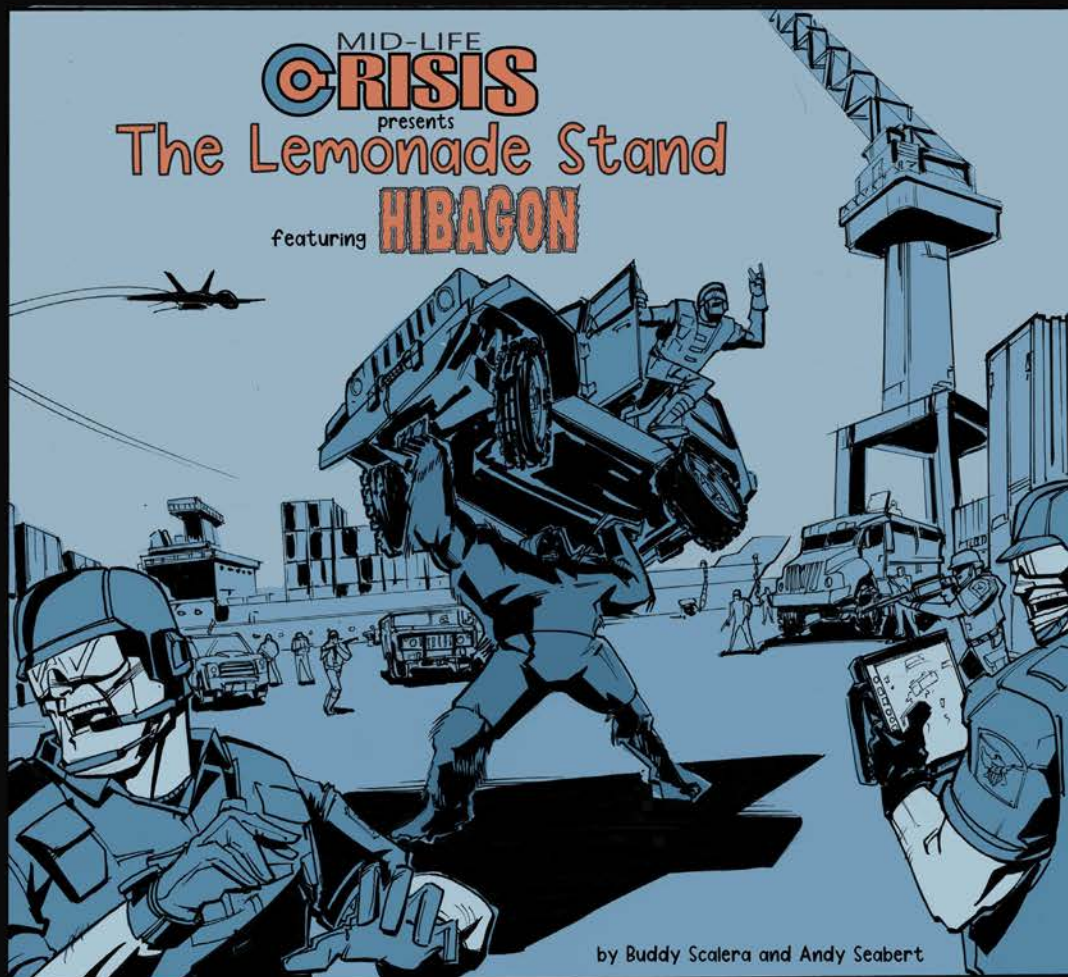
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For more visit: <https://www.comicbookschool.com/about-buddy/>

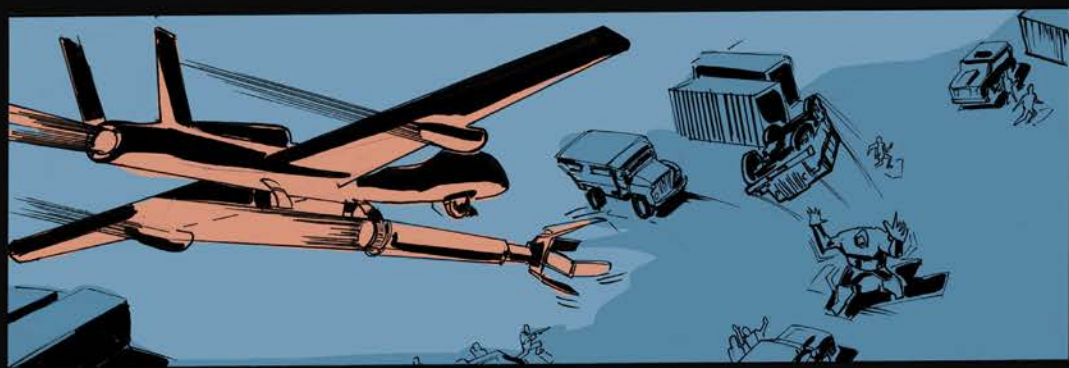
Penciller/Inker/Colorist: Andy Seabert

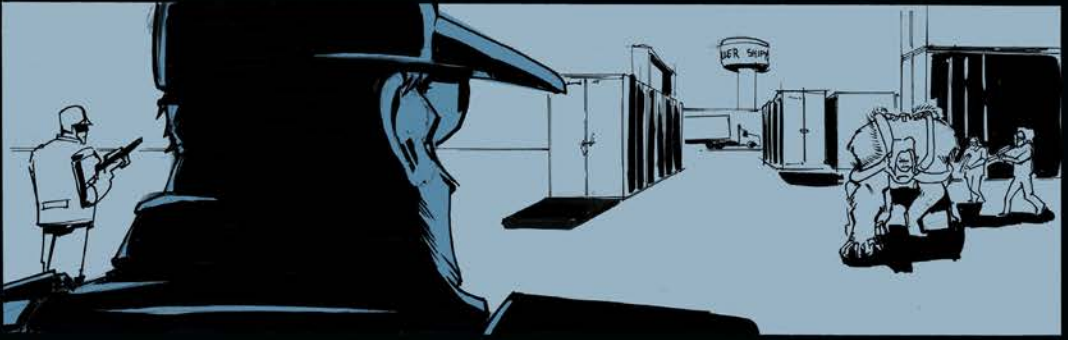
For more visit <https://andyseabert.com>

MID-LIFE
CRISIS
presents
The Lemonade Stand
featuring **HIBAGON**

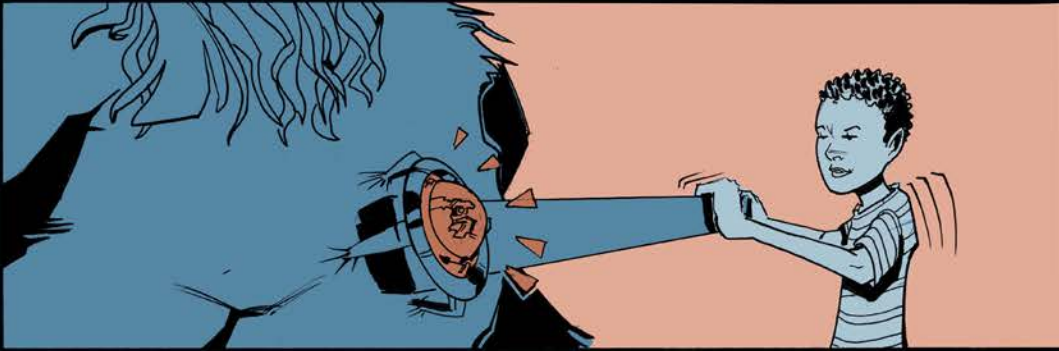


by Buddy Scalera and Andy Seabert























The End

MEATBUCKET MEGABABES IN...THE VIRUS DIMENSION

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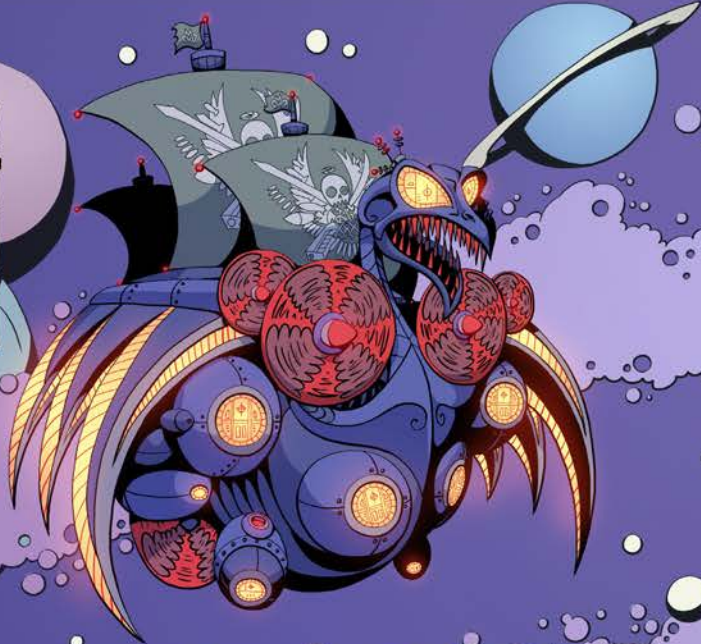
For more visit: <https://www.mick-macks.com>

PRESENTS

THE VIRUS DIMENSION.

STORY & ART BY JARROD ELVIN

SOMEWHERE AMONGST THE COUNTLESS DIMENSIONS OF THE MULTIVERSE KNOWN AS THE MEATBUCKET, THE GIGANTIC INTERDIMENSIONAL SPACESHIP, THE ARCHAEOPTERYXXX TRAVELS THROUGH THE VAST EXPANSES OF TIME AND SPACE...



THE CREW OF THIS SHIP IS THE RAG-TAG GROUP OF FEMALE MERCENARIES/PINUP MODELS, KNOWN AS THE

MEGA D
Pinups

FIDGET.

CHEMI.

DOT.

FEM FATALE.

VANESSA.

DAEMIANA.

SCYTHE.

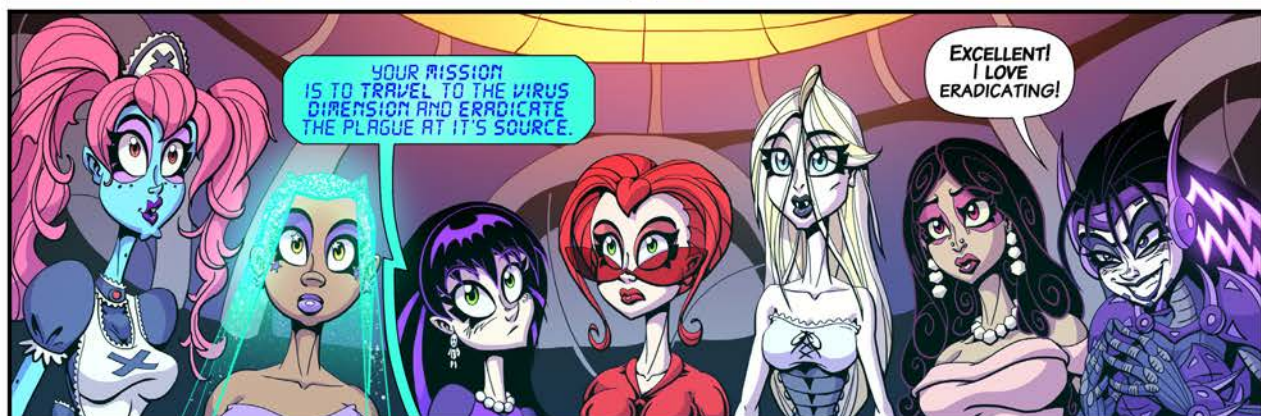
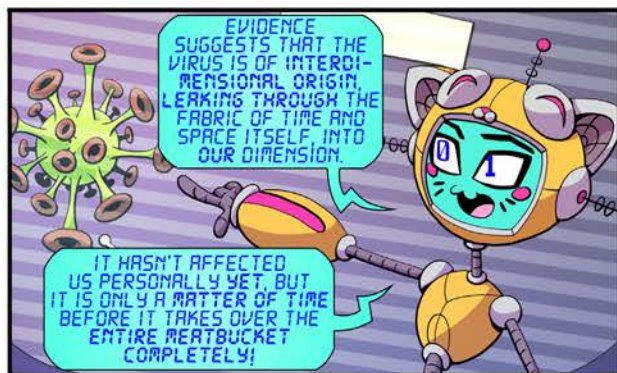
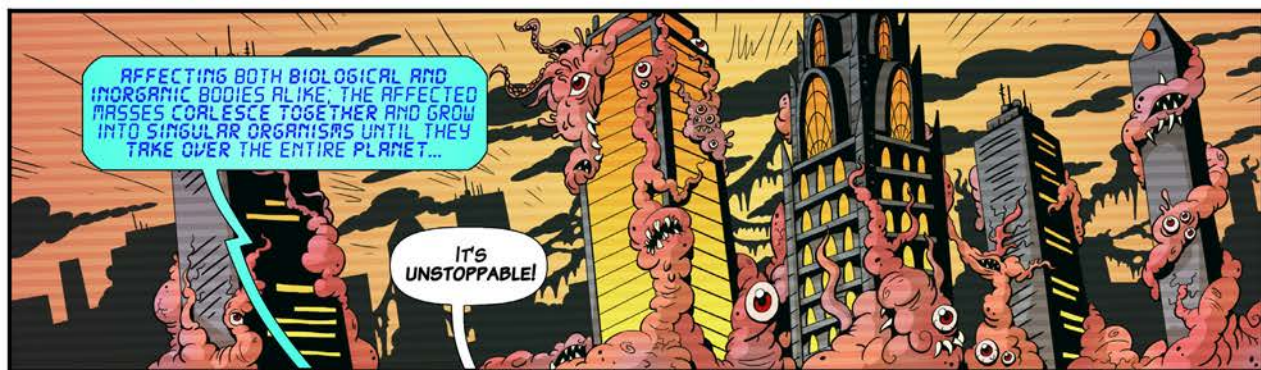
ALRIGHT IO, WE ARE ALL PRESENT.

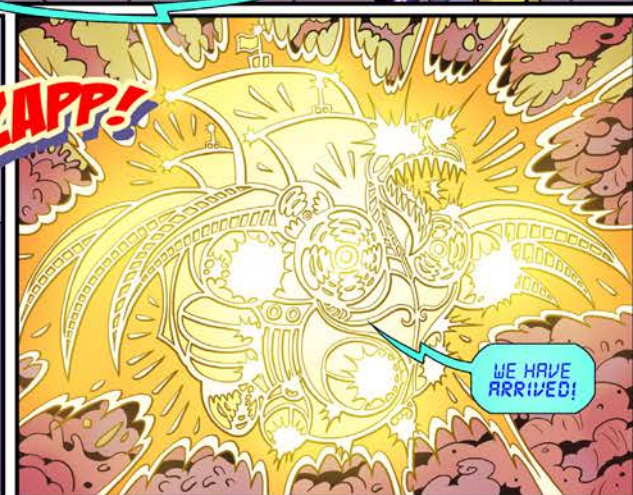
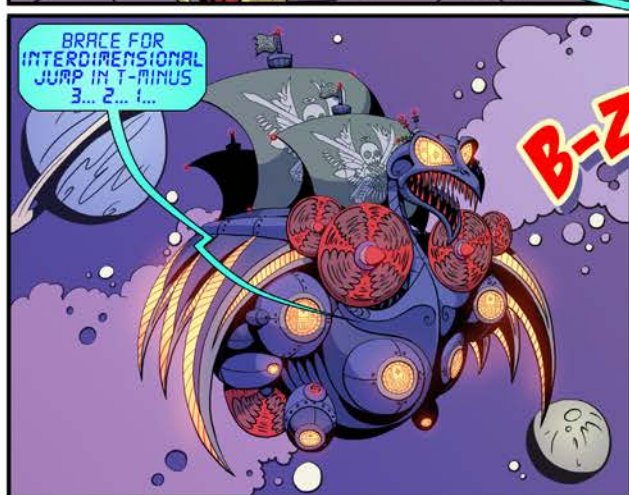
WHAT ARE WE DEALING WITH THIS TIME?

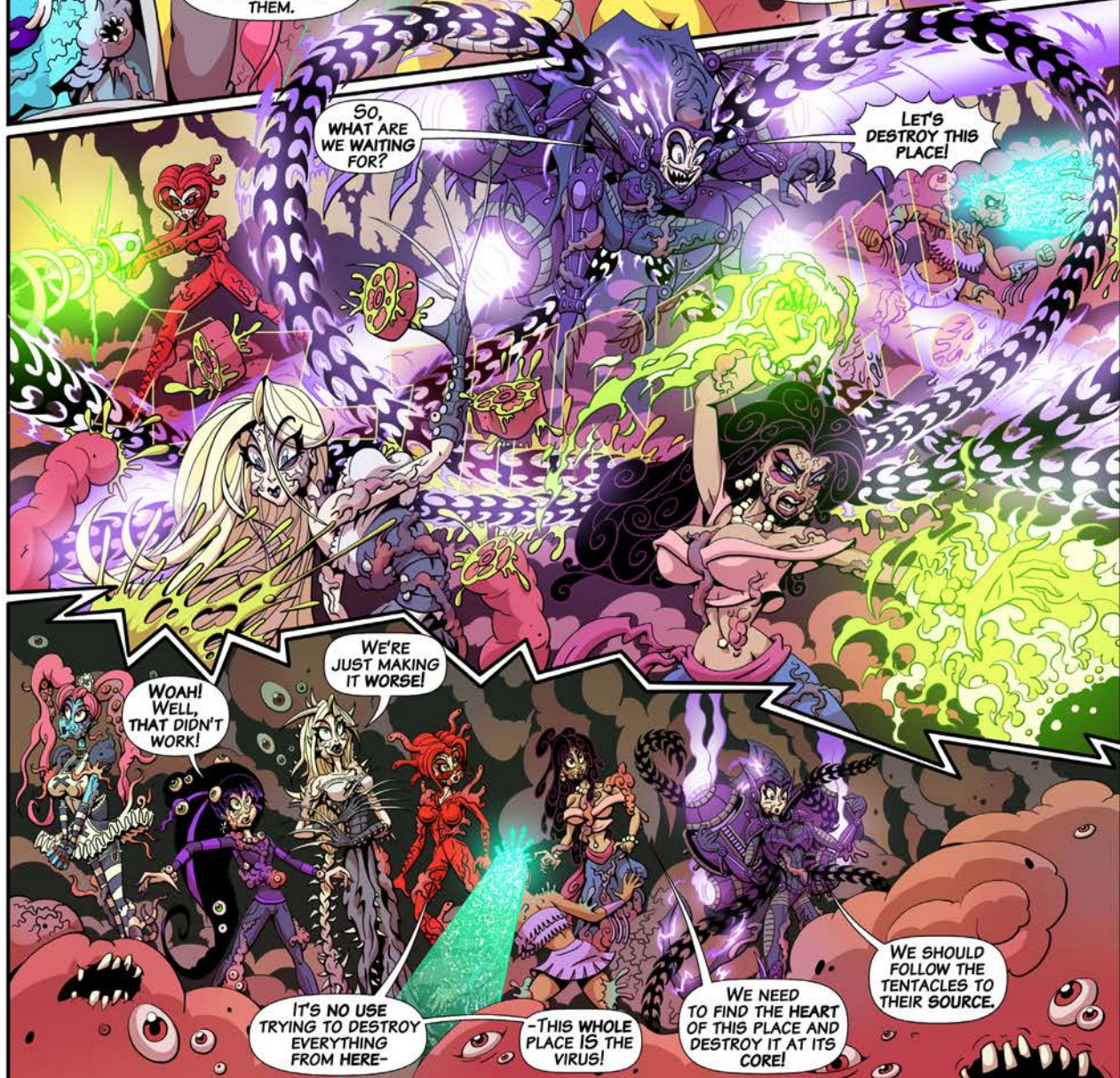
AN UNCONTROLLABLE PAN-GALACTIC VIRUS IS TAKING OVER THE MULTIVERSE!

VIRUS!









OH, WE'VE
BEEN TRUDDING
FOR HOURS! WHEN'S
IT GONNA END?

I SEE
SOMETHING!

YOU GERMS
FROM THE OUTSIDE
HAVE COME INTO
MY DOMAIN...

WHAT IS
THE PURPOSE
OF THIS
INTRUSION?

YOU ARE
THE MASTER OF
THIS REALM?

I AM
MYARLATHOPUS.
I AM THE GENESIS OF
THIS DIMENSION AND
ALL THE BEAUTIFUL LIFE-
FORMS WITHIN IT ARE
MY CHILDREN.

THEN
WE HAVE COME
TO DESTROY
YOU!



SAY CHEESE!
FANCYPANTS!!

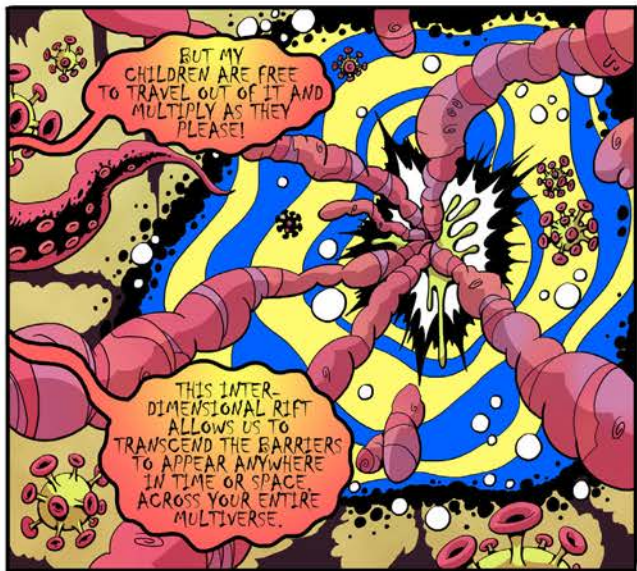




HA HA HA HAA!
YOU CANNOT DESTROY
ME! I AM THIS
REALM!

WE EXIST
OUTSIDE OF YOUR
PUNY COMPREHENSION,
AS PART OF THE VERY
CODE OF REALITY.

AND
WE SIMPLY
RESPAWN RIGHT
BACK IN THIS
DIMENSION.



BUT MY
CHILDREN ARE FREE
TO TRAVEL OUT OF IT AND
MULTIPLY AS THEY
PLEASE!

THIS INTER-
DIMENSIONAL RIFT
ALLOWS US TO
TRANSCEND THE BARRIERS
TO APPEAR ANYWHERE
IN TIME OR SPACE
ACROSS YOUR ENTIRE
MULTIVERSE.



URK!
DOES THIS
GOON EVER
SHUT UP?

IT IS RIGHT!
IT'S IRREDUCIBLE IN
THIS DIMENSION!

OUR ONLY
HOPE IS TO
STOP IT FROM
LEAKING
OUT.

WE'VE
GOTTA USE
THE BIOHAZARD
SUITS TO CONTAIN
THAT RIFT.

BUT WE
DITCHED THE SUITS!
THEY'RE FLOATING IN A
PILE OF GOO, WHO KNOWS
WHERE IN THIS
DIMENSION.

ARGK!!
AND WE CAN'T
MOVE AWAY FROM
THIS SLUDGE!



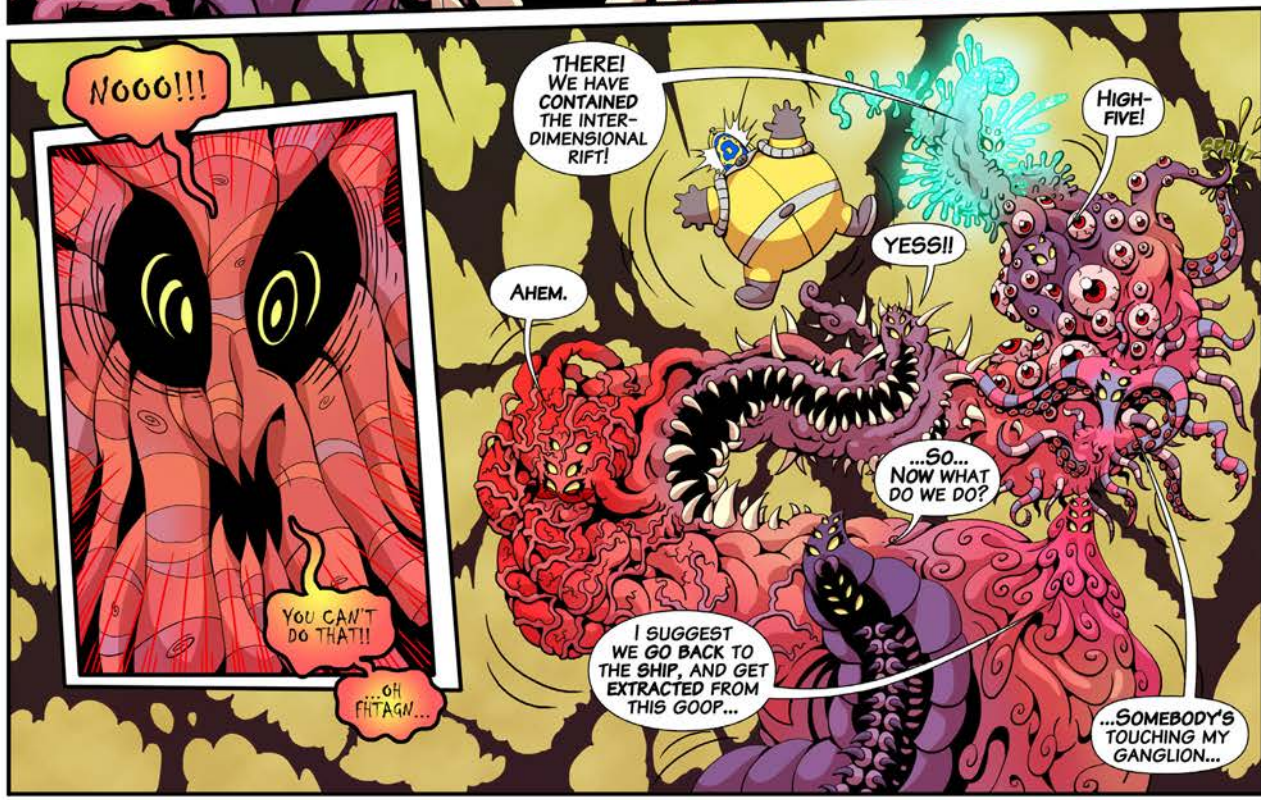
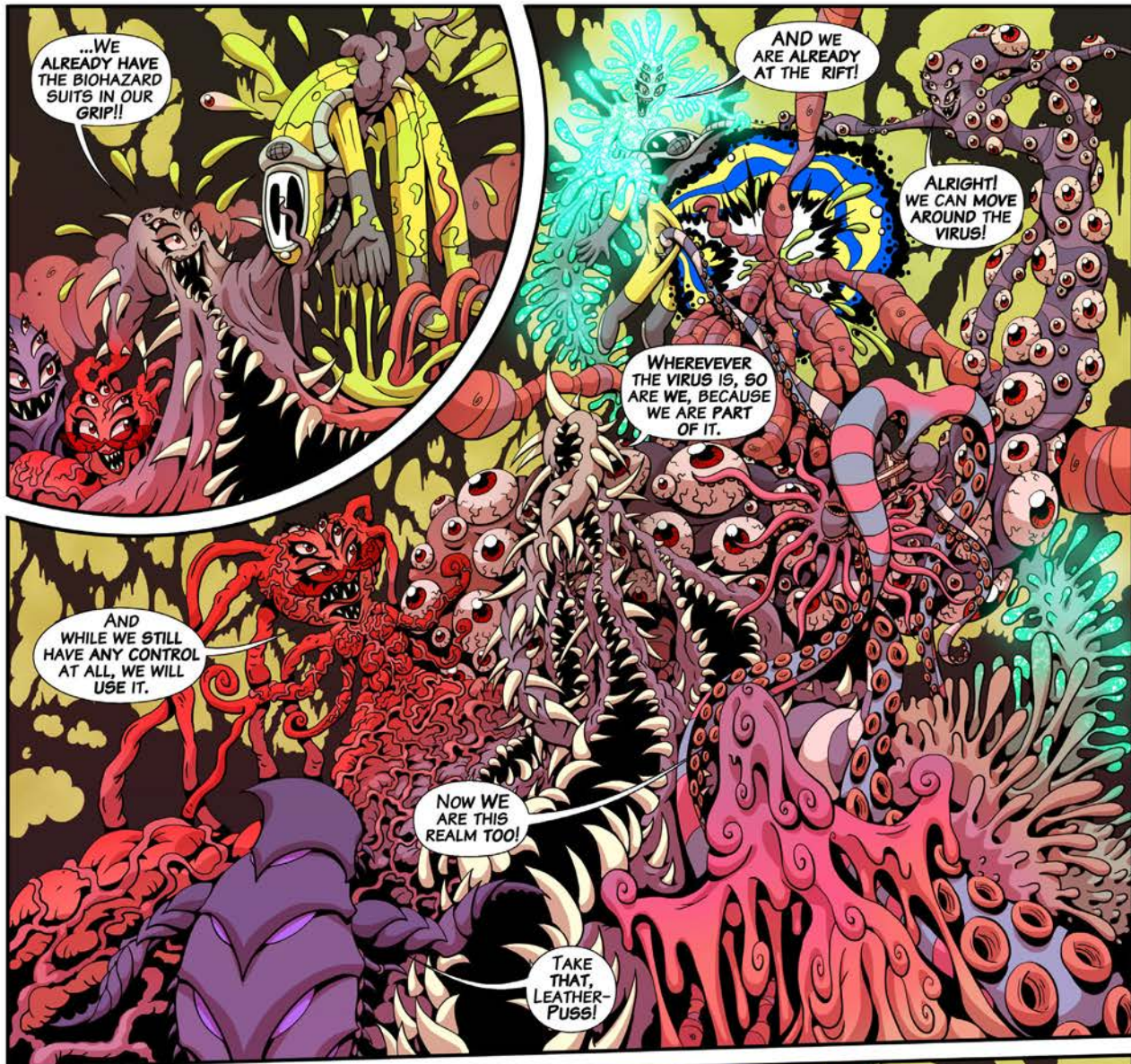
HA HA HAA!
YOU ARE TOO
LATE! ALREADY YOU
HAVE BEEN OVERCOME
BY MY VIRUS AND
ENTIRELY ASSIMILATED
INTO THE BEAUTY
THAT IS I!

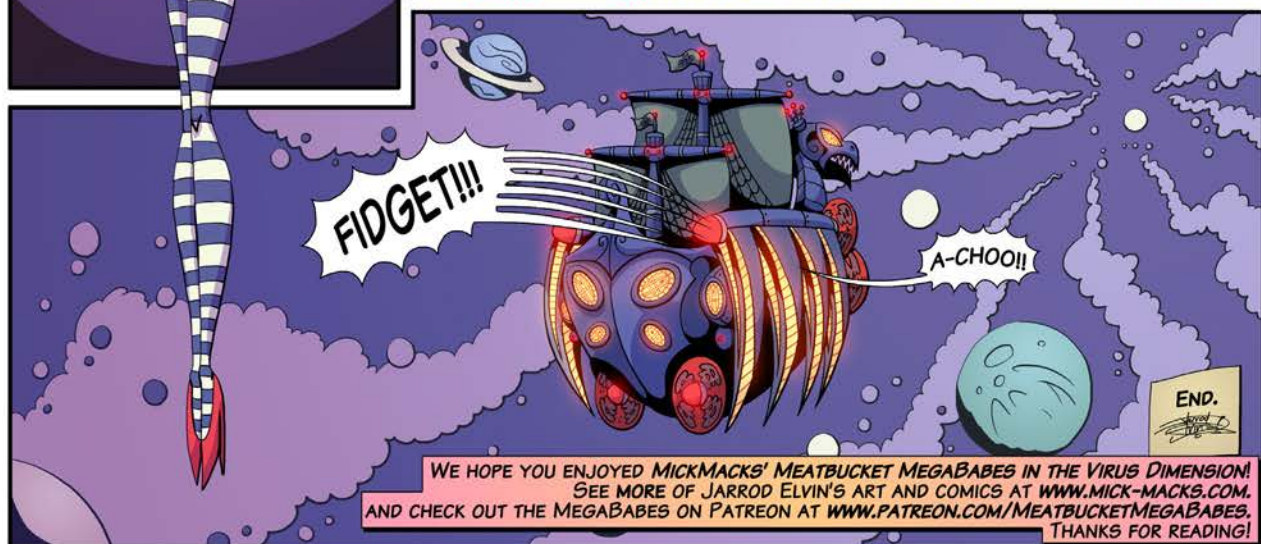


I'M GONNA
RIP THIS GOBLIN A
NEW-BLOO-BLUH
-BLUP... BLUPF...
BLUPF...

NO,
SCYTHE, WE'VE
BEEN OVER THIS, WE
CAN'T -BLUH-BLUH
-BLUP... BLUPF...
BLUPF...

BLUP... BLUP...
BLUP... WAIT!
IF WE ARE ALL
PART OF THE SAME
ORGANISM THAT
IS THIS ENTIRE
DIMENSION, THAT
MEANS...





A DAY IN THE LIFE OF MR. STUPENDOUS

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1 DAY IN THE
LIFE OF...



MR. STUPENDOUS

STUPENDOUS.

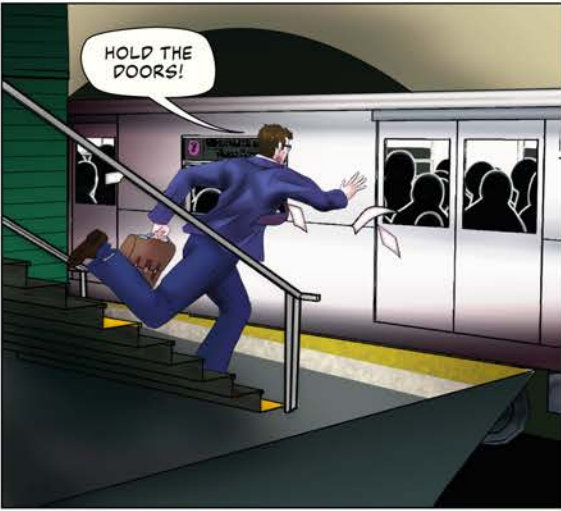


Written by
A. A. RUBIN

Illustrated by
ARIELLE LUPKIN

Lettered by
C. DOLOMANSKY





STUPENDOUS.



YOU LOOK LIKE HELL. WHAT'S CAROL DOING TO YOU?

I DON'T KISS AND TELL.

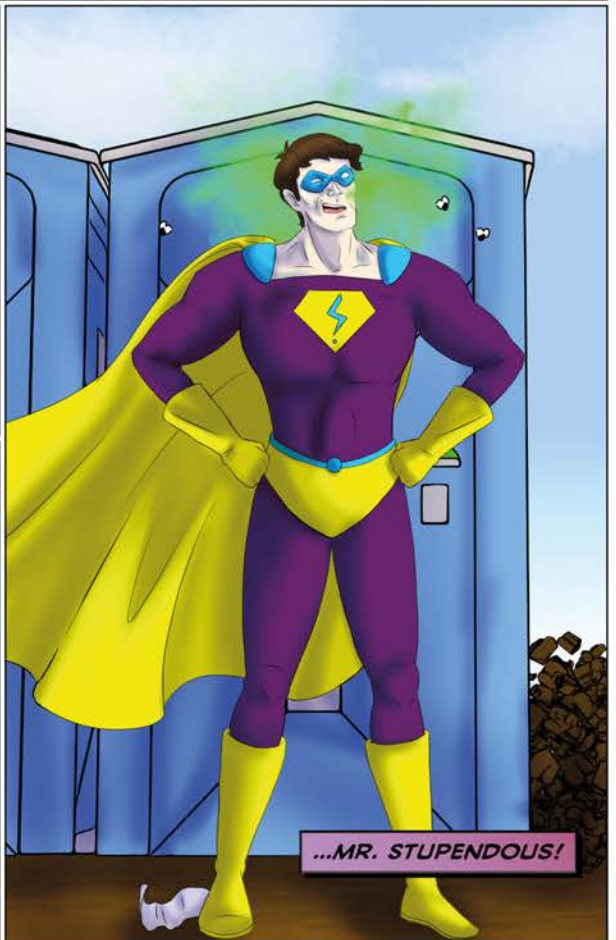


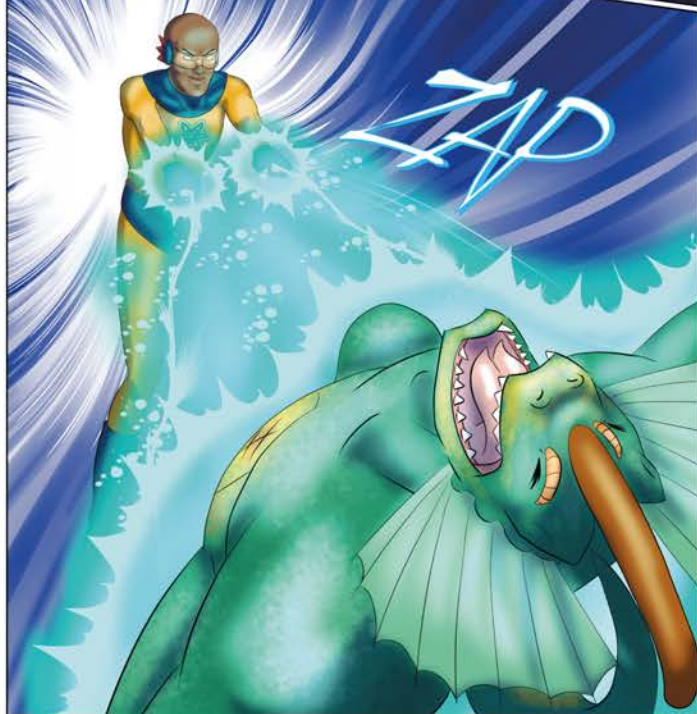
AT LEAST HE'S ON TIME TODAY.

YOU BETTER HAVE THE HARRIS FILE DONE BY FIVE.











PARASOMNIAC

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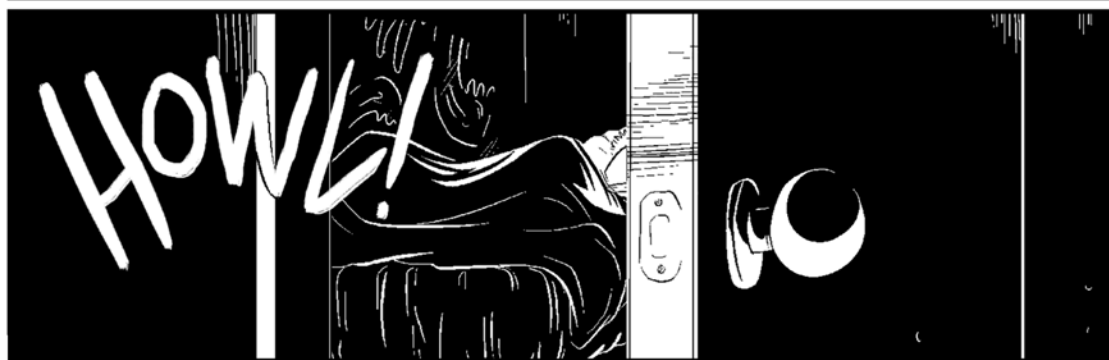
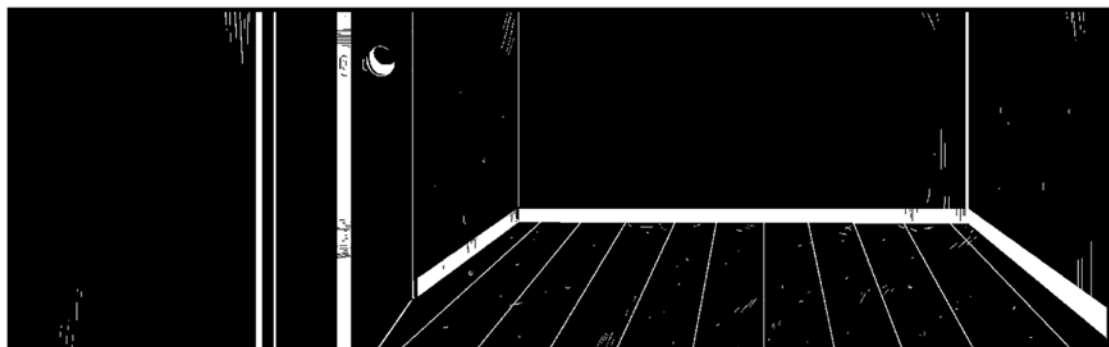
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PARASOMNIAC



MATTHEW TIMPANELLI
SAM PURATA

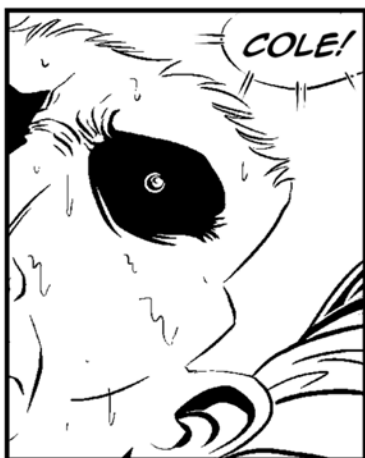
TRIGO



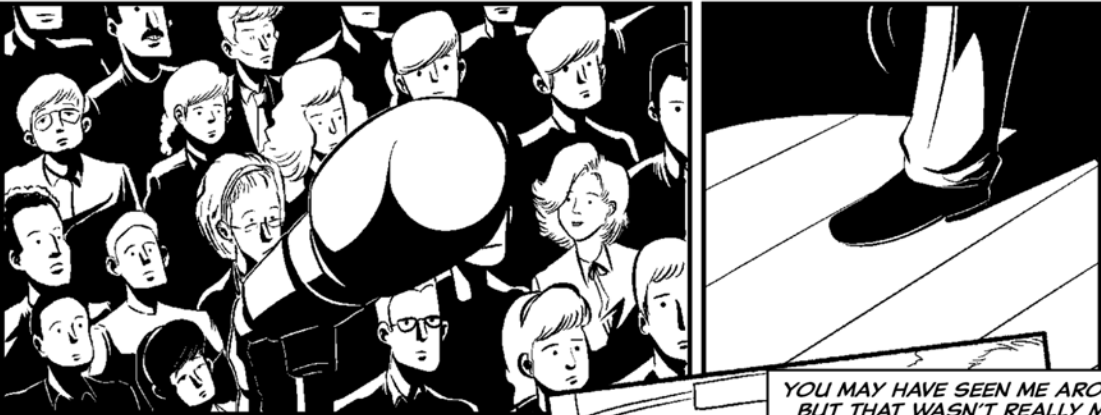
PARASOMNIAC

Written by Matthew Timpanelli
Illustrated by Sam Purata

Edited by Philip Burnette
Cover by Carlos Trigo



EARLIER THAT NIGHT AT AN OPEN MIC...



YOU MAY HAVE SEEN ME AROUND,
BUT THAT WASN'T REALLY ME...



YOU AND I HAVE
HAD A CONVERSATION,
BUT THAT WAS NOT MY VOICE...



WE HAVE BEEN CLOSE
FRIENDS FOR YEARS,
BUT I AM LIGHT YEARS AWAY...

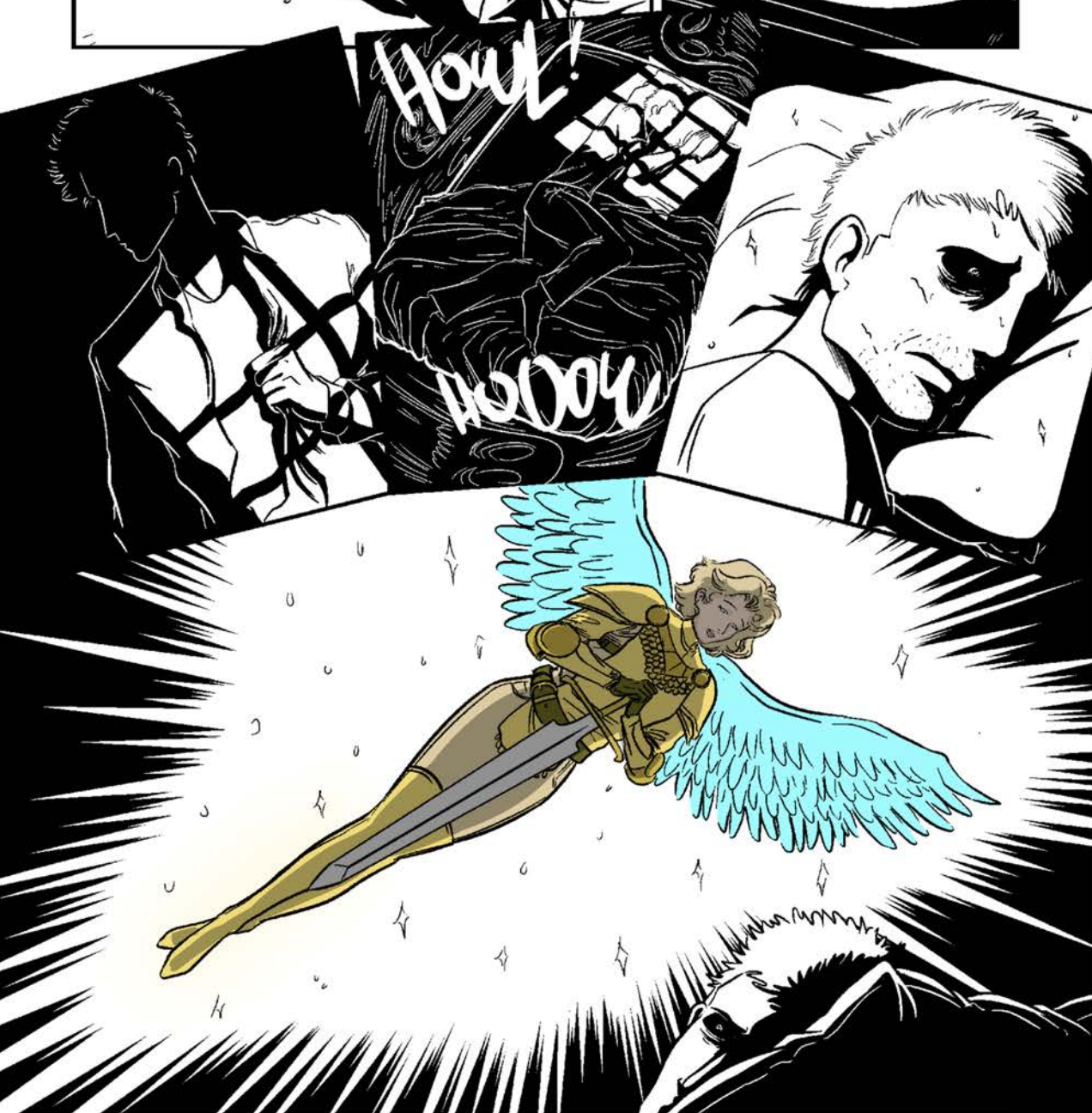


YOU HAVE SEEN RIGHT
THROUGH ME,
BUT I WAS TRANSPARENT...



I WAS NEVER ACTUALLY THERE...
I AM NOTHING,
AND SO ARE YOU.





DON'T BE
AFRAID.

THE NEXT MORNING...

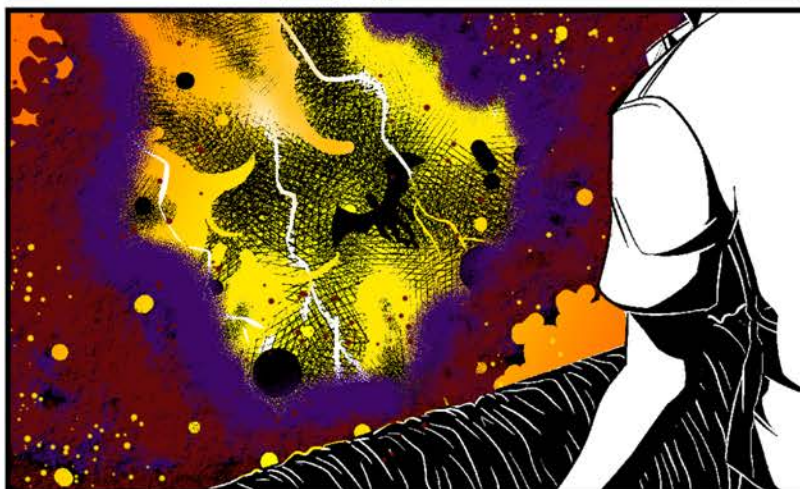
THE QUEEN'S CUP

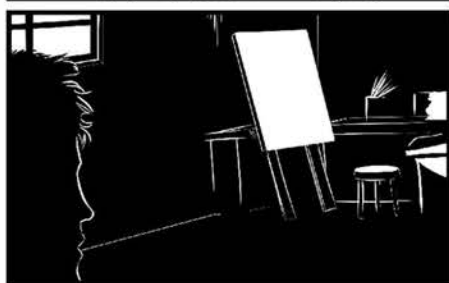


Today's Special
Cold Brew
VANILLA

4.50











TO BE CONTINUED...

RAGNAROK COME

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TALES
BEYOND

HORROR
SHORTS

RAGNAROK COME



CHAPTER:
no shelter

KRIS
BURGOS

JP
VILCHIS



this was a mistake.

this is wrong.

men have no place battling
among gods and monsters.

Ragnarok is not for us.
it's for them.

what in hel are we doing here?

forty warriors wiped out in
barely a passing of the sun.
we didn't stand a chance.

we never stood a chance.

to fight beside the gods we
should be in valhalla. no man
will even make it to valhalla
fighting these... things.

there's not enough
of a man remaining.

these creatures,
the grotesque
state they leave
even the fiercest
warriors in...

surviving the midday
has only left me alone.
no brothers in arms.
nobody to see my body
corrupted into a
ravaged corpse when
it's my time.

and now my axe is
gone, my sword
shattered, and my
shield splintered.

and once the sun
passes that
mountain peak...

tales beyond
presents...

RAGNAROK COME no shelter

when armies of dueling monsters flood
midgard to use as their battleground,
the individual tribes of northmen caught
in the middle must come together to
survive. a squad of scouts have been
sent to survey an overrun village while
the rest of their great warpack awaits
in hiding...

creator, writer
& letterer
KRIS BURGOS

title design
**MARIA
ROSAL**

pencils, inks
& colors
JP VILCHIS

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www.talessbeyond.com

wait-!

-something stirs!

who's that?!



damn the gods for this...

I will not be worn down by their taunts. this deception of Loki.

a trick of the eye, there was no hand.

there was no apple.



if the gods were kind, and offered me an apple, i'd gladly eat it.

oh, idunn, maiden of eternal life, what to do to fall for me.

i'm a fool in hel. now running toward my own end.

running to see if there is hope in a hand and an apple.

forgive me brother. i can do you no good now. pray for death to be swift.

i am fated to survive a little longer, as a coward who runs from battle would.



left alive to watch the slaughter of everyone around me. to see the deaths of those i know and those i love.

the gods will keep me alive until there are no witnesses left to see my demise.

even should i finally find help or a weapon and the courage to fight and die in battle as a northman should.

the gods will make certain there is no testament to secure my seat in valhalla.



even if there is someone, i can't do anything for them.

help~!!

i can't do anything for myself.

do i risk a battlecry and have all these monsters come down on me?

nay.



I pray that my appearance catches whoever it is unaware-

~?

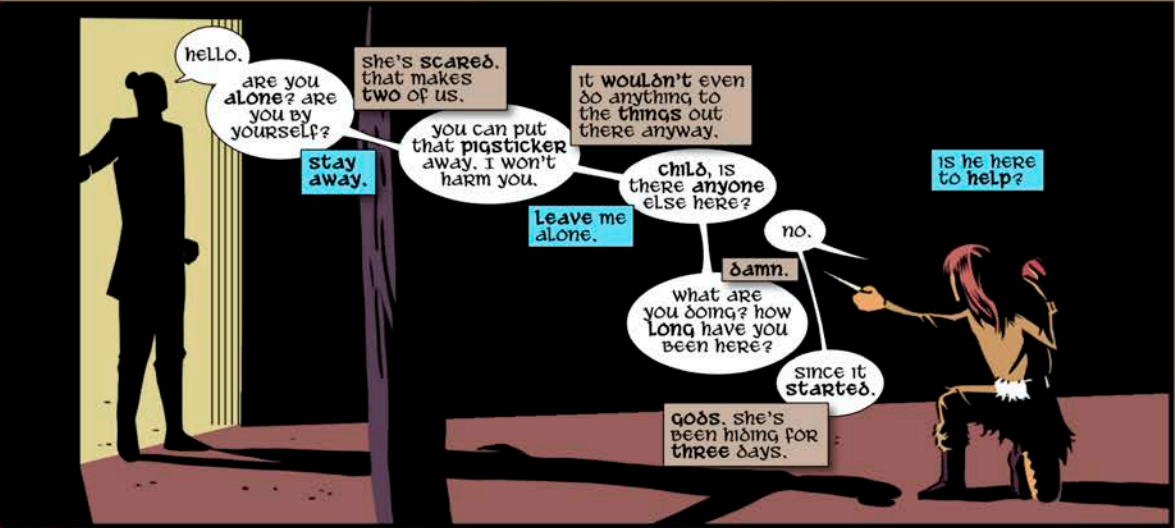
who is there?!



a girl?!

I am damned.

what does he want?



hello.

are you alone? are you by yourself?

stay away.

she's scared. that makes two of us.

you can put that pigsticker away. I won't harm you.

leave me alone.

it wouldn't even do anything to the things out there anyway.

child, is there anyone else here?

no.

damn.

what are you doing? how long have you been here?

since it started.

gods. she's been hiding for three days.

is he here to help?



you need to run.

staying here, the creatures will find you. eventually.

where did you come from?

I came with some scouts to-

die.

-try and assist the village. I'm the last one.

Like me.

he is here to help!

hmm.

the great warpack I came from awaits in the east forest. when the sun sets, they will rain fire and destroy your entire village.

and hopefully every foul monstrosity within it.

you need to run before the fire comes.





take me with you!

no child, you're better on your own.

i'm weaponless, i can't-

i can take you to weapons!

i can! the armorer is on the way to the east forest!

please!

i will die a fool today.

what's your name, child?

kaia.

well kaia,

i am gunnar.

take me to the weapons.

she is brave.

surviving as long as she has with no weapon.

he's as frightened as i am.

the way his hands were shaking when he entered the home.

i will not hold it against him. everybody was scared.

she must wonder why i am running around, cowering, instead of dying to revenge our people.

why did i bring her with me?

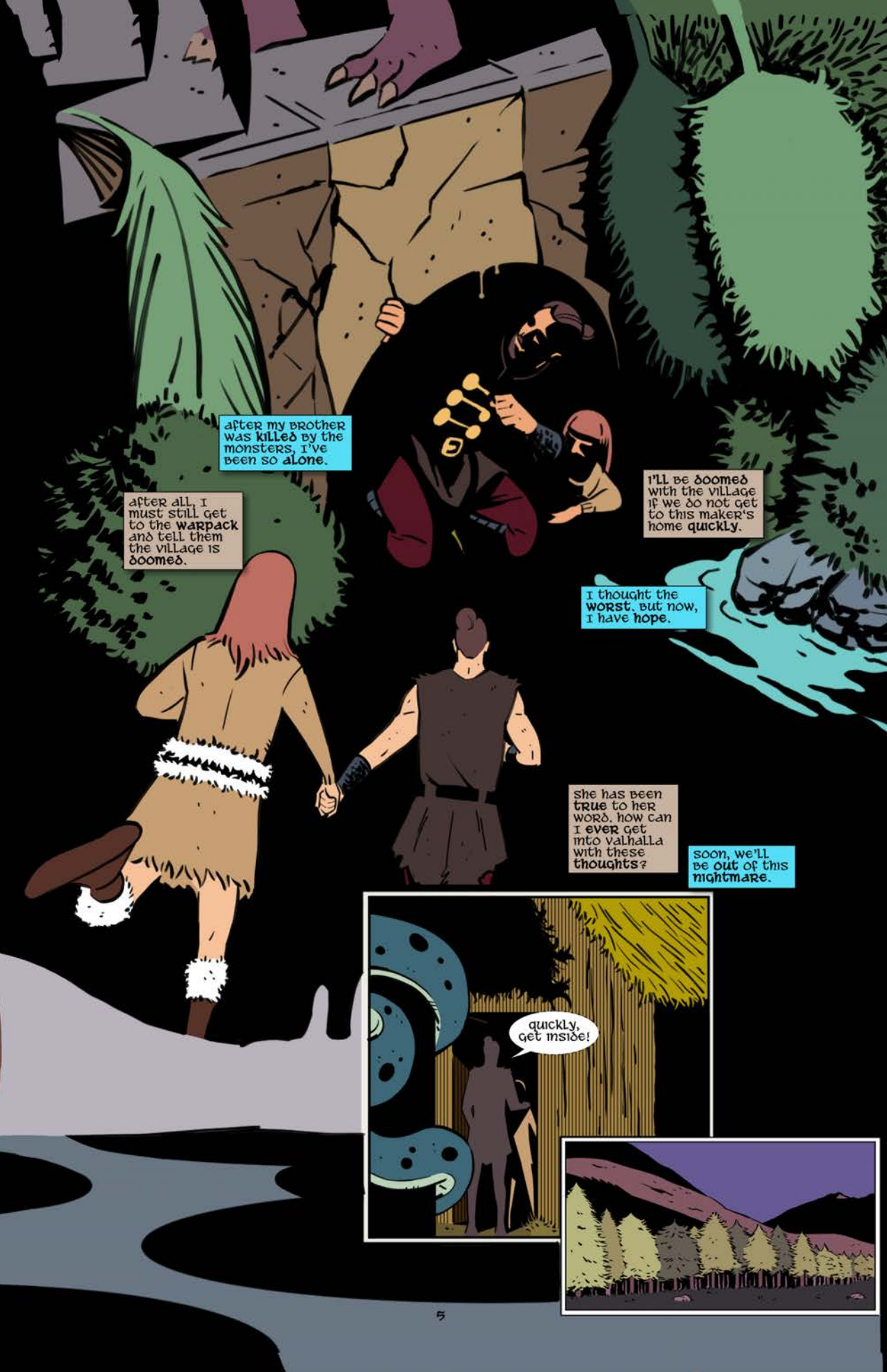
if we stay together, we can get through this.

did i bring her so i would have something to sacrifice and distract the creatures for when they find me?

he'll protect me. i know it. i can get us the weapons and then he can clear the path out of here.

so i just get to the weapons and then give her up?

thank the gods for bringing him to me.



after my brother
was killed by the
monsters, i've
been so alone.

after all, i
must still get
to the warrack
and tell them
the village is
doomed.

i'll be doomed
with the village
if we do not get
to this maker's
home quickly.

i thought the
worst, but now,
i have hope.

she has been
true to her
word. how can
i ever get
into valhalla
with these
thoughts?

soon, we'll
be out of this
nightmare.



quickly,
get inside!





too late. I should have been ready.

oof!!

CRASH



dammit! it's got me!
this is how i die. again,
the gods laugh.

Kaia, Run!
Save
yourself!



I cannot let the
child watch me die.
to be embarrassed
out of this life.

gods, what can
i do? i can't
let him die.



valhalla denied.



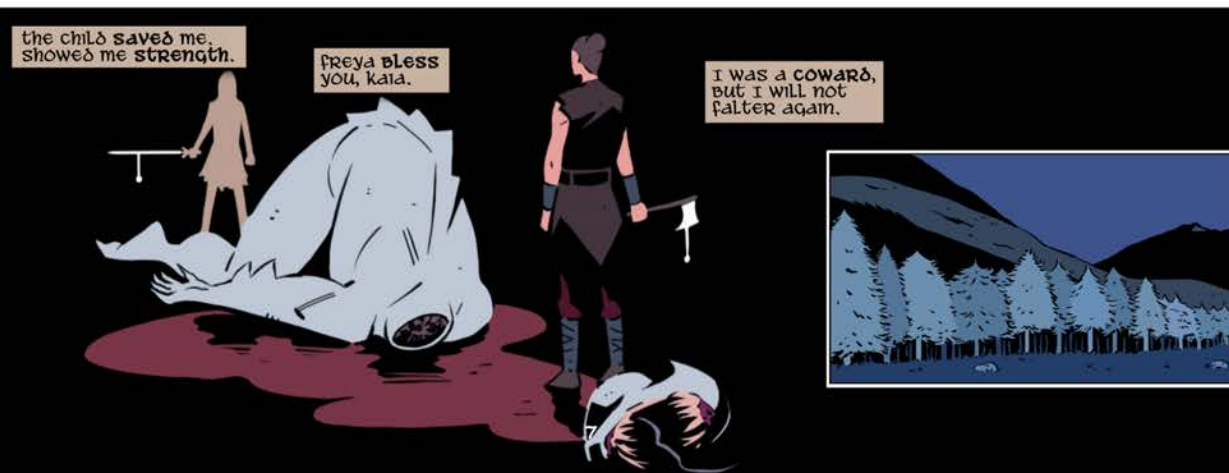
again, the girl
gives me hope.



and a chance
to strike!

back to hel
monster,
die!

CHUNK



the child saved me,
showed me strength.

freya bless
you, kaia.

I was a coward,
but i will not
falter again.



we need
to leave,
gunnar.

no
child,
we are
surrounded.

she understands me.
and i'll not leave her.



now, we fight together.



Look! oðin
smiles on
us.

she has reminded me
what it is to be of the
northern tribes.



"the fury of the
mightiest warpack in
midgard is coming to
destroy them all."

"are you certain?"

"yes, child."

"gunnar, i don't
want to die."

"imagine, drinking from
golden goblets. eating
the finest meats and
apples. laughing with
your family again. does
feasting in valhalla next
to the gods sound nice?"

"it does."

"then let us
live forever!"



and let us
make glorious
sacrifices of
these hellish
bastards so they
hold the gates
open for us!

fm?

TEDDIES

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TALES
BEYOND

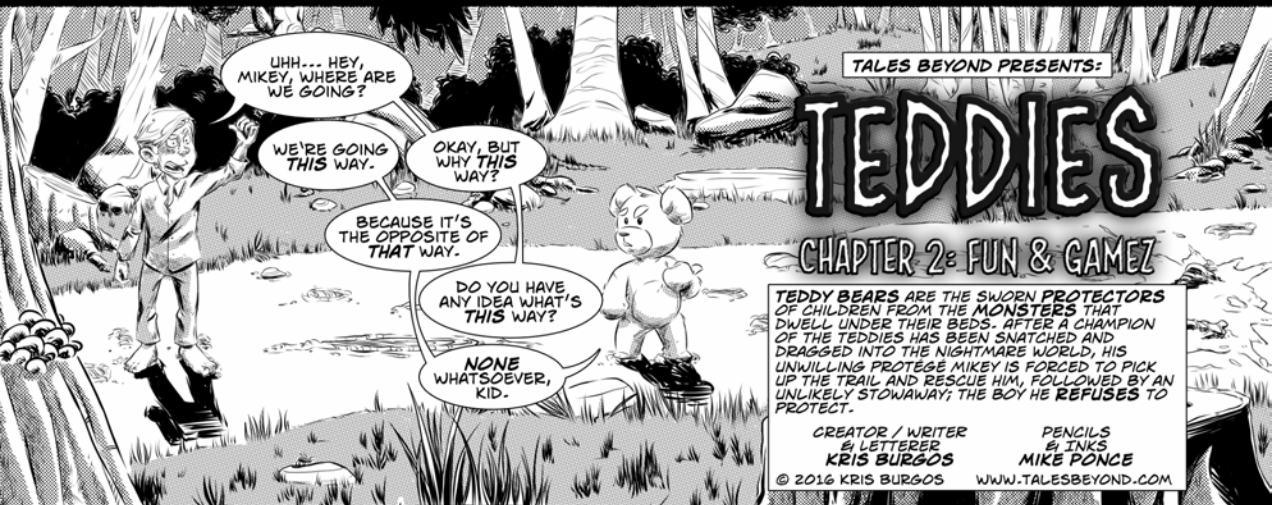
ADVENTURE
SHORTS

TEDDIES



KRIS
BURGOS

MIKE
PONCE





WHAT DO WE HAVE HERE?

IF IT LOOKS LIKE A BERRY...



...BON APPETIT.



NOT BAD.

HOW DO YOU KNOW THESE AREN'T POISONOUS?

CUZ I'D BE GURGLING IN MY DEATH THROES BY NOW.

IT'S FOOD. EAT IT.

WHY DO YOU SEEM SO ANGRY?



WHY AM I ANGRY?

WHY AM I ANGRY?!

I'VE BEEN SENT ON A QUEST TO SAVE A TEDDY BEAR FROM A WORLD SO OMINOUSLY TITLED 'NIGHTMARE' BY MY COMMUNITY OF PEERS. AND AS I STEP INTO THE VOID-

WHICH MANY HAVE DEEMED A SPECIAL TYPE OF HELL...

I TELL A BOY, 'GO TO SLEEP, THIS DOESN'T CONCERN YOU!'

TO WHICH, THE CHILD REFUSES TO LISTEN-

AS IF HE WASN'T JUST ATTACKED BY CTULHU'S DOONCHILD THE NIGHT BEFORE-

AND JUMPS INTO THE PORTAL, FOLLOWING ME INTO THIS WORLD OF MATERIALIZED FEARS AND PERSONIFIED CALAMITY.



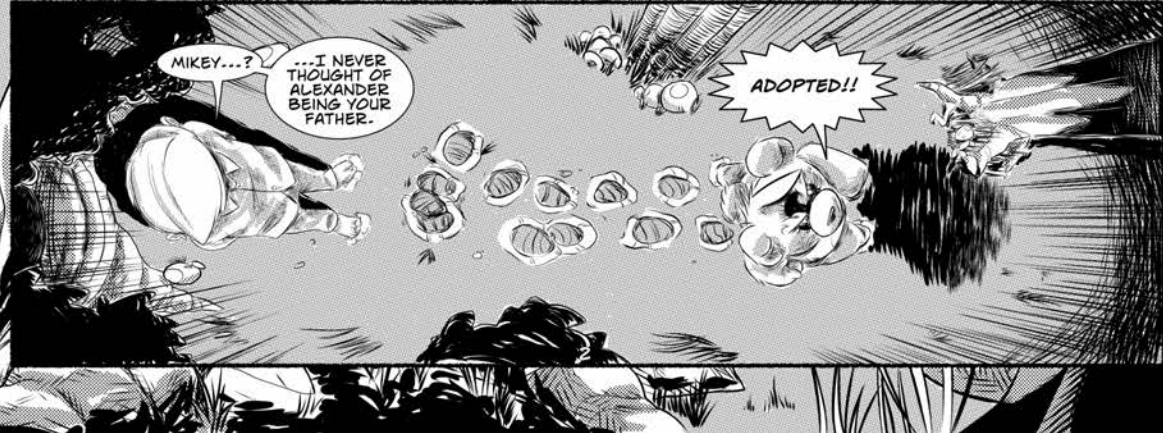
MIND YOU, I'M NOT LIKE OTHER TEDDIES. I'M NOT A PROTECTOR. I DON'T WANT ANY PART OF BATTLING THE FORCES OF DARKNESS OR DEFENDING CHILDREN FROM THE #@<*> CREATURES THAT COME FROM THIS #@<*> WORLD UNDER YOUR BEDS.

YOU WANT ME TO SUMMON MY SPIRIT SABRE?! THE WEAPON OF LIGHT THAT SLICES THROUGH THE DARKEST BLACK TO DEFEND THE INNOCENT? HUHT? THAT MAKES TWO OF US, PAL, CUZ I CAN'T! I NEVER LEARNED!

YET, HERE I AM, IN THE MIDDLE OF THIS DANGEROUS WORLD, ON THIS DANGEROUS QUEST TO RESCUE MY FATHER, WHO, WHILE BEING ONE OF THE MOST BOSS TEDDY PROTECTORS EVER, COULDN'T DEFEND HIMSELF FROM BEING BEAR-SNATCHED, AND I HAVE NO CLUE HOW TO FIND HIM, SAVE US, OR DEFEND MYSELF ALONG THE WAY!

AND NOW, I'M RESPONSIBLE FOR A KID WHO'S A LITTLE TOO CURIOUS FOR HIMSELF AND WHO DECIDED TO FOLLOW ME INTO THIS DANGEROUS HELLHOLE, PROBABLY LOOKING FOR SOME #@<*>E PLAYTIME WITH HIS STUFFED BEAR THAT HE JUST DISCOVERED CAN TALK!

I DON'T KNOW, I THINK I'M DOWNRIGHT CHIPPER. YOU TELL ME WHY I'M ANGRY!!!



MIKEY...?

...I NEVER THOUGHT OF ALEXANDER BEING YOUR FATHER.

ADOPTED!!



STUPID KID. HE'S GONNA GET HIMSELF HURT, OR EVEN KILLED!

AND I'LL BE TO BLAME.

HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO HELP HIM?! I DON'T KNOW WHERE YOU ARE. I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHERE I AM. I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT I'M DOING. AND THIS PLACE... UGH. TALK ABOUT A DEL TORO WET DREAM.

I KNOW I WAS HARD ON HIM. I'M JUST FRUSTRATED. I'M NO PROTECTOR AND YOU, YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE OUR "CHAMPION".

HOW DO I COMPARE TO THAT? IF ANYTHING HAPPENS TO ERIC, OR ANY OTHER...

...I JUST CAN'T LOSE ANOTHER KID.

AND WAIT TILL THE MONSTERS START TO COME AFTER US. THEN YOU'LL REALLY SEE HOW MUCH OF A FAILURE I AM. IF EVERYONE BACK HOME COULD WATCH THEY'D SEE...

...THEY WERE RIGHT. I REALLY AM A WASTE OF COTTON.

AND HERE I AM, JUST TALKING TO MYSELF. IT'S NOT EVEN LIKE ALEXANDER'S HERE WHEN I NEED-

HELP!

ERIC?!

I LEAVE THE KID FOR 5 MINUTES!

ERIC?!

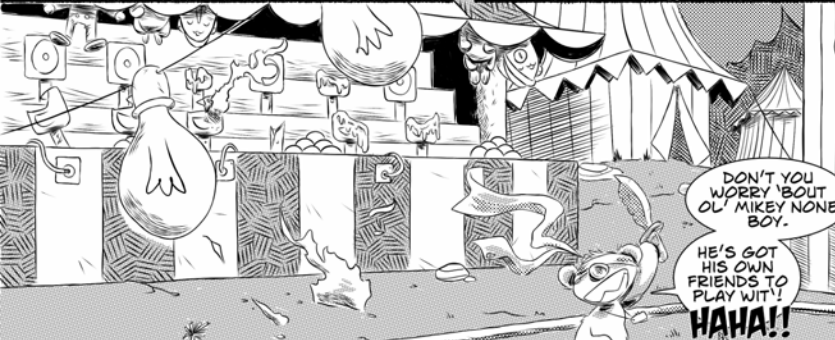
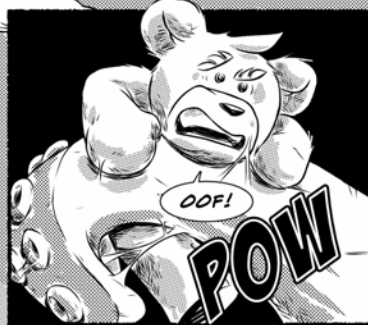
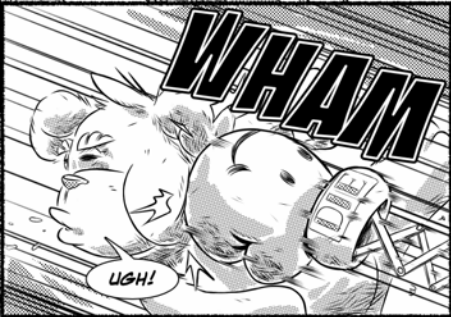
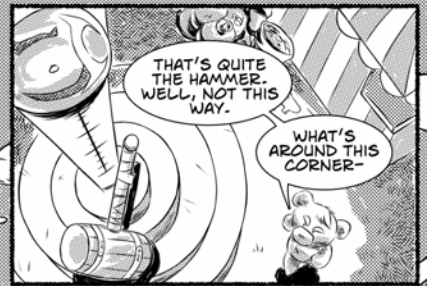
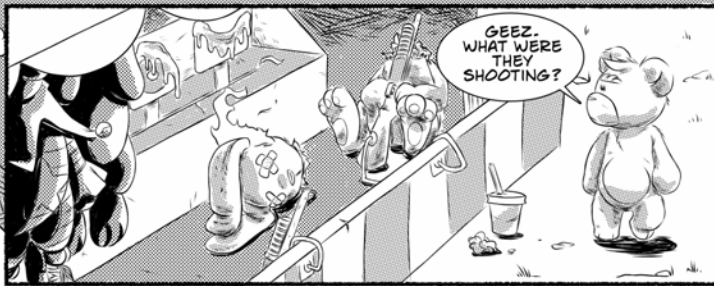
MIKEY!!
HELP!!

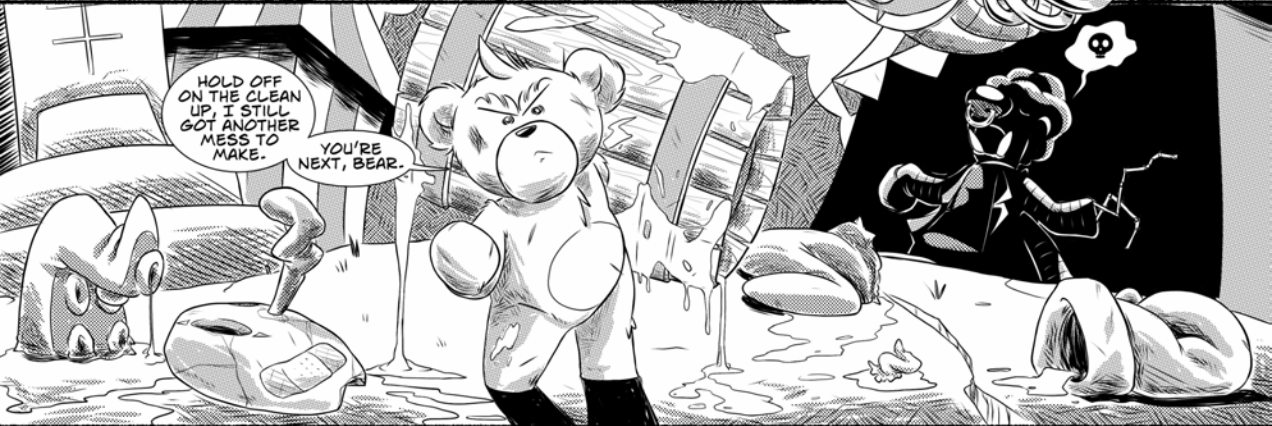
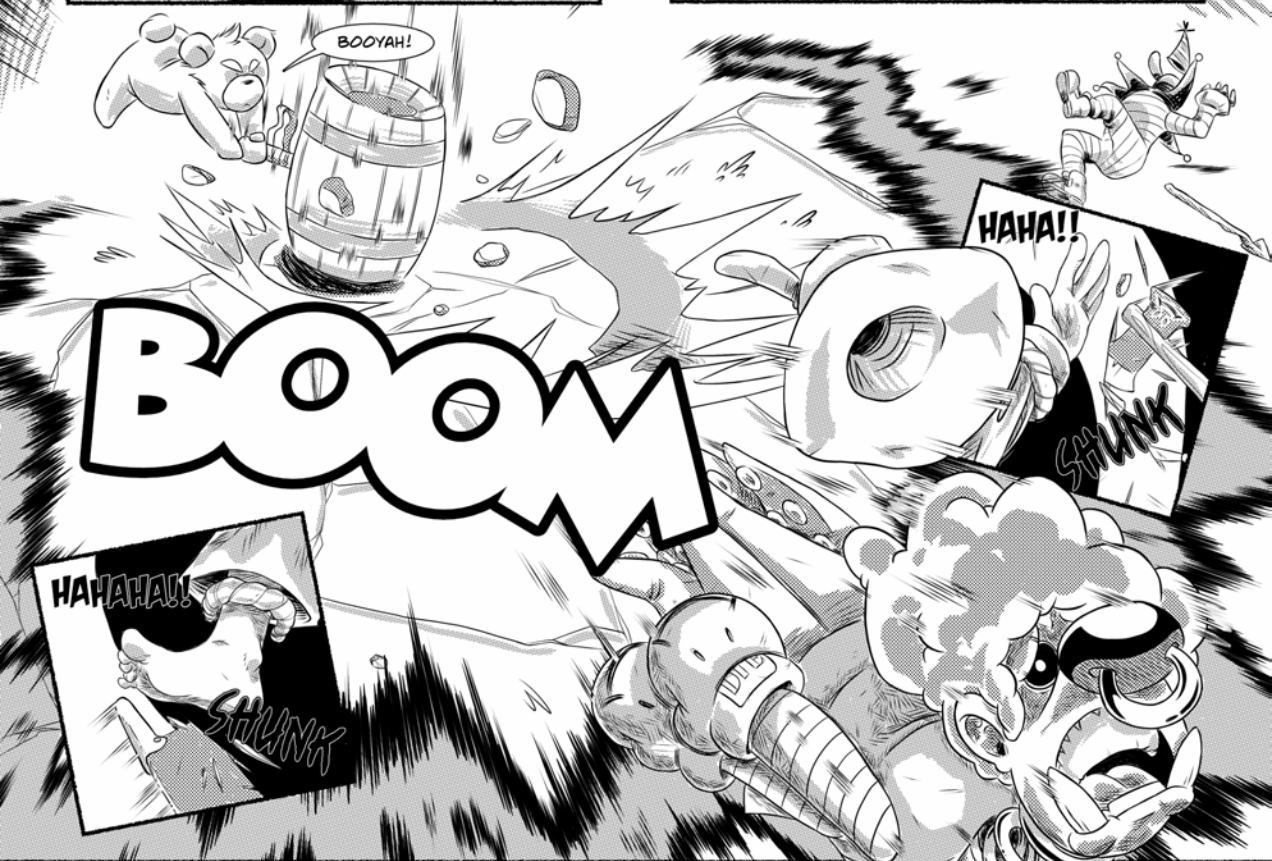
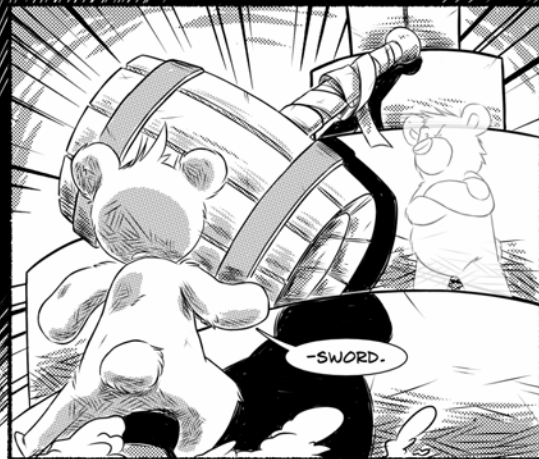
ERIC?!
WHERE ARE-

%#&!\$!

MIKEY!!









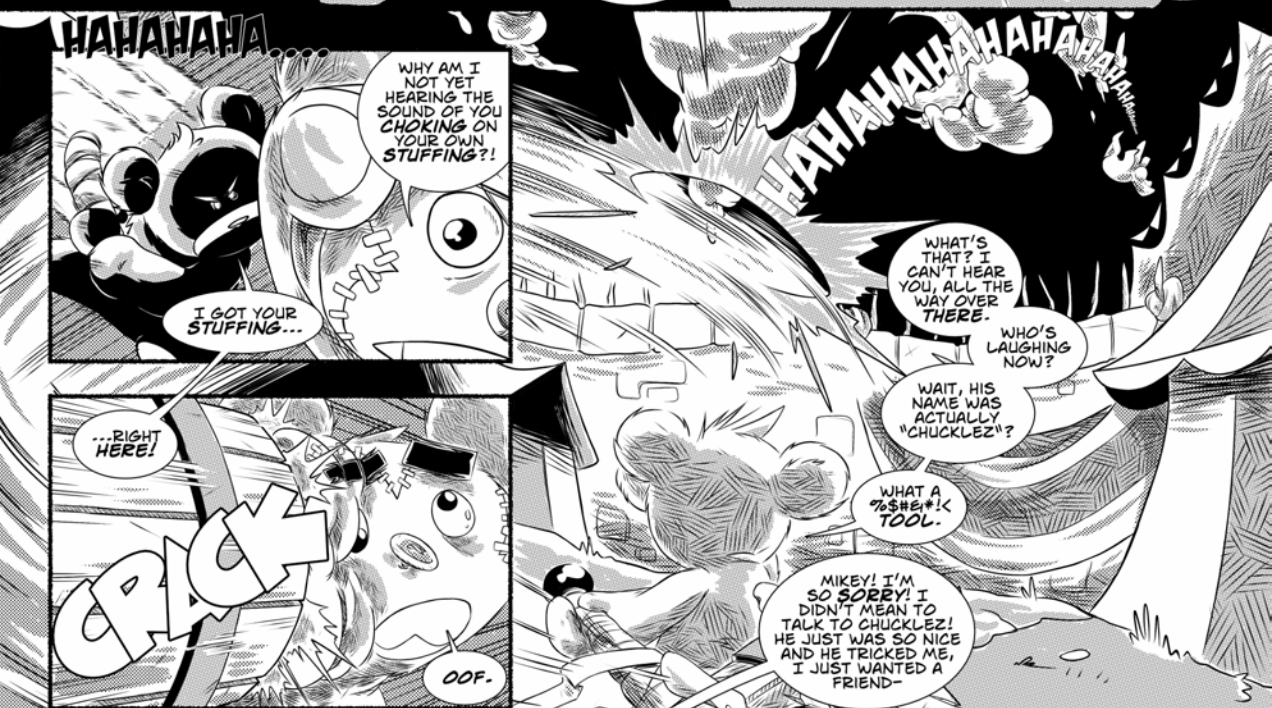
HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!

LAUGH IT UP CHUCKLES.

IT'S ALL FUN AND GAMES TIL SOMEONE GETS THEIR AORTA PIERCED.

THAT'S THE POINT!

HAHAHAHA!! AND IT'S CHUCKLEZ WIT' A 'Z!



HAHAHAHA

WHY AM I NOT YET HEARING THE SOUND OF YOU CHOKING ON YOUR OWN STUFFING?!

I GOT YOUR STUFFING...

...RIGHT HERE!

OOF.



WHAT'S THAT? I CAN'T HEAR YOU, ALL THE WAY OVER THERE.

WHO'S LAUGHING NOW?

WAIT, HIS NAME WAS ACTUALLY "CHUCKLEZ"?

WHAT A %\$#@!< TOOL.

MIKEY! I'M SO SORRY! I DIDN'T MEAN TO TALK TO CHUCKLEZ! HE JUST WAS SO NICE AND HE TRICKED ME, I JUST WANTED A FRIEND-



HEY, HEY, HEY. ERIC, KID, IT'S OKAY. IT'S MY FAULT. I WAS ANGRY. I SHOULDN'T HAVE STORMED OFF. I JUST HAVE A LOT OF PRESSURE RIDING ON ME, IS ALL.

I TOOK IT OUT ON YOU, AND I'M SORRY.

I WANNA GO HOME. HOW DO WE GET BACK HOME?

LISTEN, I KNOW THIS WAS BAD FOR YOU, BUT I GOTTA FINISH WHAT I STARTED.

I GOTTA FIND ALEXANDER.

UM... OKAY.

I DON'T KNOW HOW TO GET YOU HOME, MAYBE WE'LL FIND SOMEWHERE SAFE YOU CAN HIDE FOR A WHILE. I DON'T KNOW. CAN YOU HANDLE THAT FOR A BIT?

HEY, I'M STILL NO CERTIFIED PROTECTOR OR NOTHIN'! AND I AIN'T GONNA BE YOUR KNIGHT IN SHINING ARMOR IF THE APOCALYPSE RAINS DOWN ON US, BUT WHILE YOU'RE HERE, I'LL WATCH YOUR BACK.

AND WE CAN BE FRIENDS.

IT'S NOT LIKE YOU HAVEN'T BEEN PLAYING WITH ME FOR YEARS ALREADY ANYWAY, RIGHT?

AND NOW WE CAN FINALLY TALK COOL?

COOL.

HEY MIKEY, WHAT'S A SPIRIT SABRE?

NOW THAT, IS INSANELY COOL.

UNTIL NEXT TIME...

ANACHRONAUTS: TRAPPED IN TIME

Writer/Penciller/Inker/Colorist:

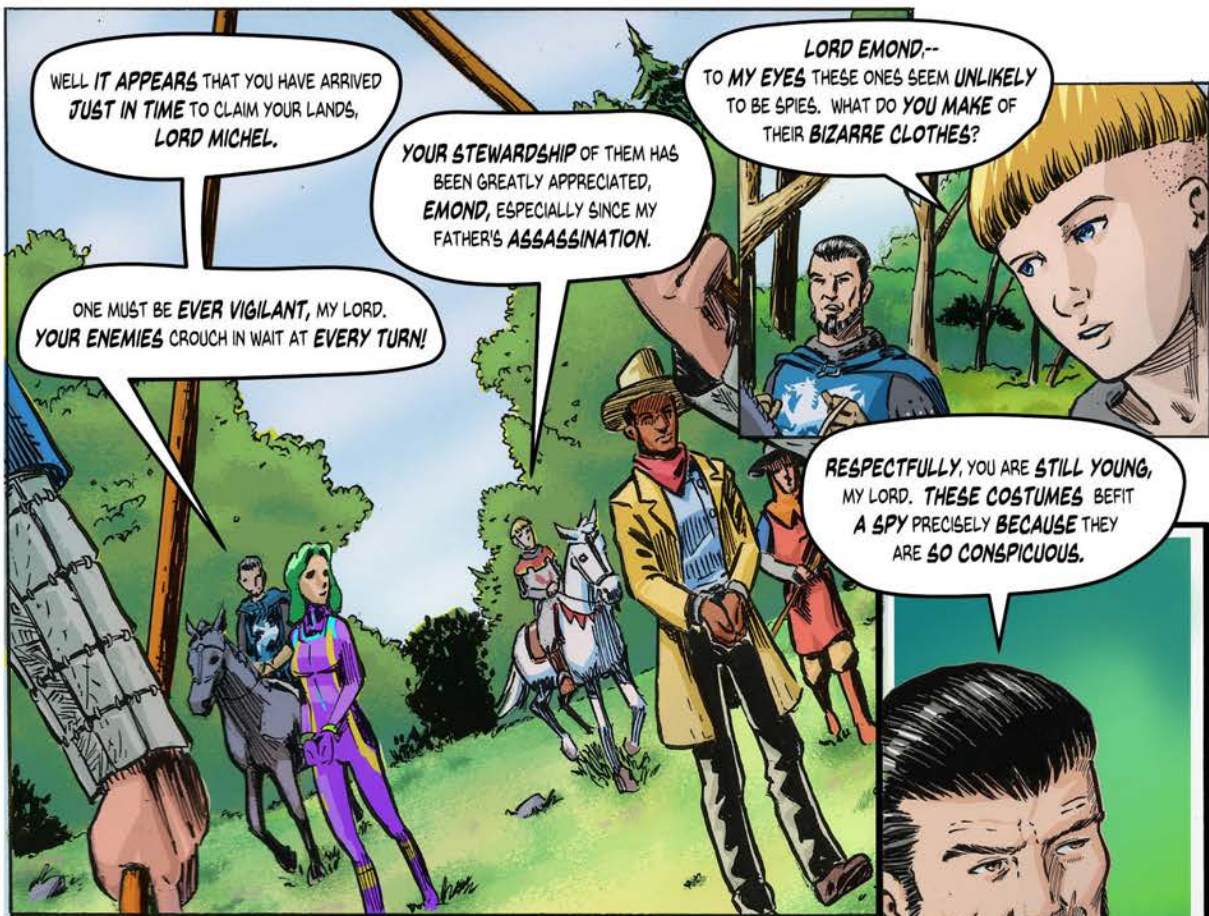
Philip Burnette

For more info: <http://philipspace.deviantart.com>



Story and Art by Philip Burnette
LETTERING COURTESY OF BLAMBOT
PHILIPBURNETTE@HOTMAIL.COM





WELL *IT APPEARS* THAT YOU HAVE ARRIVED
JUST IN TIME TO CLAIM YOUR LANDS,
LORD MICHEL.

YOUR STEWARDSHIP OF THEM HAS
BEEN GREATLY APPRECIATED,
EMOND, ESPECIALLY SINCE MY
FATHER'S *ASSASSINATION*.

LORD EMOND--
TO MY EYES THESE ONES SEEM *UNLIKELY*
TO BE SPIES. WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF
THEIR *BIZARRE CLOTHES*?

ONE MUST BE *EVER VIGILANT*, MY LORD.
YOUR ENEMIES CROUCH IN WAIT AT *EVERY TURN*!

RESPECTFULLY, YOU ARE *STILL YOUNG*,
MY LORD. THESE *COSTUMES* BEFIT
A *SPY* PRECISELY BECAUSE THEY
ARE *SO CONSPICUOUS*.



SO WE KNOW THAT
THEY'RE SPIES BECAUSE THEY DO
WHAT NO SPY WOULD EVER DO?

EXACTLY!



AMAZING THAT THEY WERE
ABLE TO FIND US IN THE FOREST
SO FAST.

YEAH.

ALMOST LIKE THEY
KNEW WE WERE COMING.

LATER...

PER OUR ARRANGEMENT, THE PRISONERS ARE IN OUR **DUNGEON**. UNMOLESTED.

THE BOY, AS YET, SUSPECTS NOTHING.

TELL ME, HOW DID YOU KNOW WE WOULD FIND THEM IN THE FOREST?

ALL THINGS IN TIME, LORD EMOND. SUFFICE IT TO SAY, THERE IS NO PLACE THAT GIRL CAN GO THAT I WON'T BE ABLE TO FIND HER.

AS PROMISED, I BRING YOU THE TOOL THAT WILL ALLOW YOU TO RULE THIS LAND UNCONTESTED.

THIS IS LIKE THE DEVICE THE GIRL'S COMPANION CARRIED--

A WEAPON THAT CAN DEFEAT ANY FOE. ONCE I HAVE THE GIRL, I'LL SHOW YOU HOW TO OPERATE IT.

YOU SHALL HAVE THE GIRL, AND WITH YOUR HELP I WILL AT LONG LAST PUT AN END TO THAT WHELP MICHEL. SOON HE SHALL JOIN HIS FATHER, AND I WILL CLAIM THESE LANDS AS MY OWN!

HA
HA
HA
HA







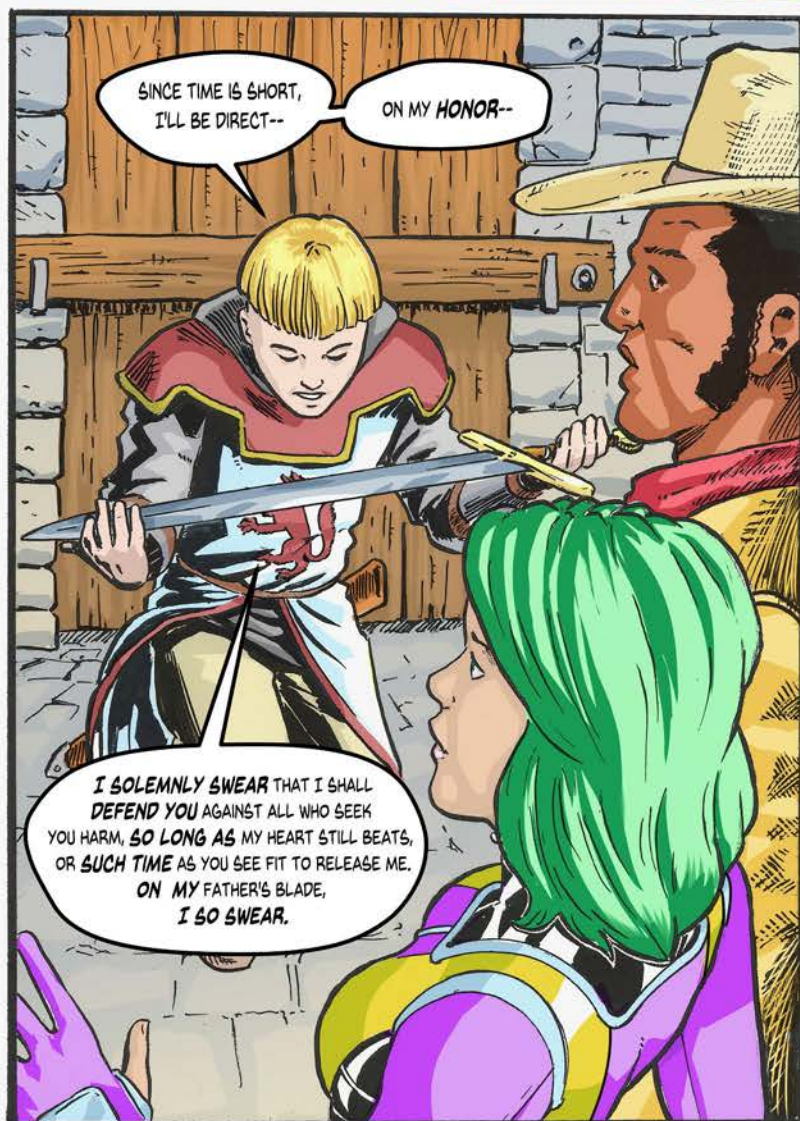
THAT SHOULD KEEP THEM OUT,
AT LEAST **MOMENTARILY**.

WAIT!
HOW DO WE **EVEN KNOW** WE CAN
TRUST THIS BOY?

HE MAKES A FAIR POINT.
YOU'RE RESPONSIBLE FOR
OUR IMPRISONMENT!



BREAK IT DOWN!!
NOW!!!



SINCE TIME IS SHORT,
I'LL BE DIRECT--

ON MY **HONOR--**

I **SOLEMNLY SWEAR** THAT I SHALL
DEFEND YOU AGAINST ALL WHO SEEK
YOUR HARM, **SO LONG AS** MY HEART STILL BEATS,
OR **SUCH TIME** AS YOU SEE FIT TO RELEASE ME.
ON MY FATHER'S BLADE,
I SO SWEAR.



TWILIGHT OF THE GODS PROPHECY

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For more info: <https://www.deviantart.com/greendragongryphon>

Colorist: Maja Opacic

For more info: <http://majaopacic.com>

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FRAGMENTS FROM A
PROPHECY OF THE
APOCALYPSE KNOWN AS
TWILIGHT OF THE GODS,
CONTAINED IN THE DWARF
SCROLLS, DATING FROM
3,000 YEARS AGO:

"...an age of famine,
pestilence and desolation
shall set upon the world
by your own hand, as you
ravage, slaughter and
usurp."

IN THE
BATTLEFIELD OF
THE LOWLANDS
OF RAN'E-LAGH,
IT WAS THE ORCS
WHO LIT THE
RITUAL BONFIRE
OF TRUCE IN THE
SACRED PLACE.

"and you shall inch
towards the end of
the world, but the
noise of deception
and that of brothers
killing brothers will
not let you hear
the doom that is
coming."

"should all that devastation not
suffice, i shall send two final signs..."

TWILIGHT OF THE GODS PROPHECY

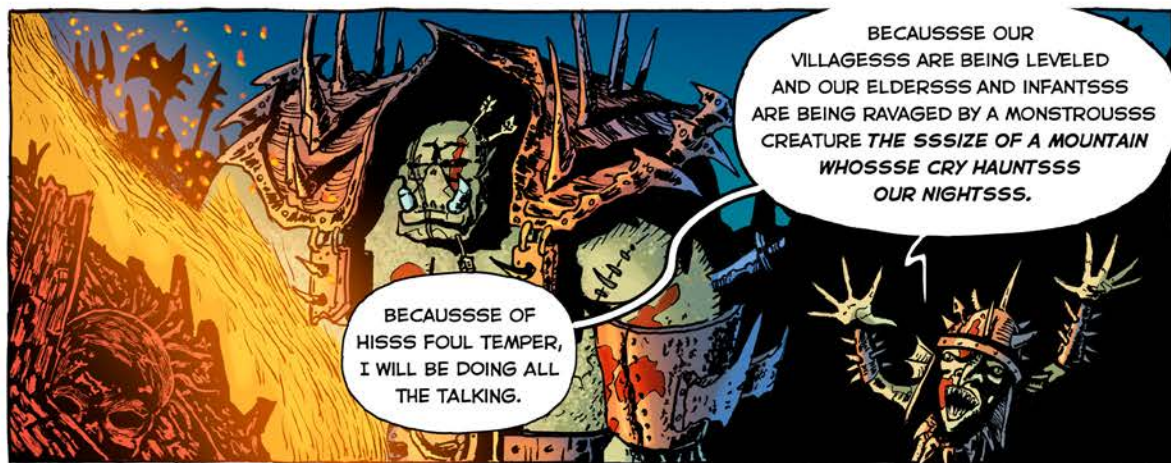
BRIANO

GENSER

SPACIC



TELL ME ORC,
WHY SHOULD WE HELP
THE ENEMY THAT WE
DESPISE?!



BECAUSSSE OUR
VILLAGESSSS ARE BEING LEVELLED
AND OUR ELDERSSSS AND INFANTSSSS
ARE BEING RAVAGED BY A MONSTROUSSS
CREATURE THE SSSIZE OF A MOUNTAIN
WHOSSSE CRY HAUNTSSSS
OUR NIGHTSSSS.

BECAUSSSE OF
HISSS FOUL TEMPER,
I WILL BE DOING ALL
THE TALKING.



GUNUNGWANGI?

BUT HOW
COULD
THAT BE?

THE
PROPHECY?



SILENCE!

the first sign:
gunungwangi the
immortal seven-headed
dragon, born in hell from
serpent and flying beast,
big like an ocean, has a shriek
like chunder, and its appectice,
like a volcano, is never satisfied.



A BEAST ERADICATING
YOUR ILK FROM THIS WORLD?
SOUNDS LIKE AN ANSWER
TO OUR PRAYERS!

THE QUESTION
REMAINS, WHY SHOULD
WE HELP YOU?



ONCE NO MORE
ORCS OR GOBLINS,
WHO THE BEAST GOING
TO FEED ON?

HOLD YOUR
TONGUE, GENERAL!
WE HAVE AGREED!

WE'D RATHER
TAKE OUR
CHANCES







AS SIGN OF
APPRECIATION FOR YOUR
HELP, WE HAVE DECIDED
TO THROW BANQUET TO
REUNITE YOU WITH YOUR
LOVED ONES.

TO GAIN
YOUR TRUST, WE
WILL EAT FIRST.

ENJOY!



THE FOOD IS
VERY GOOD, ORC.

THANK
YOU.



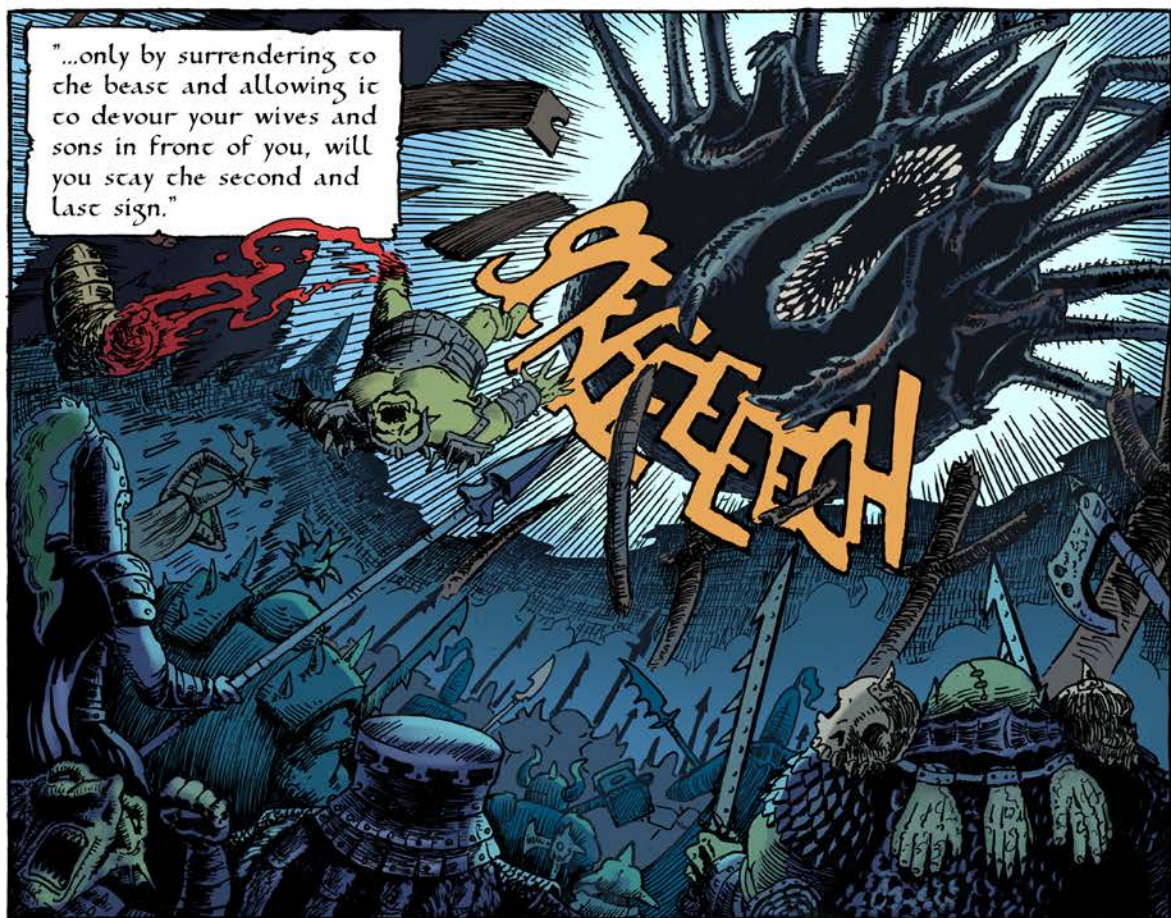
INDEED.

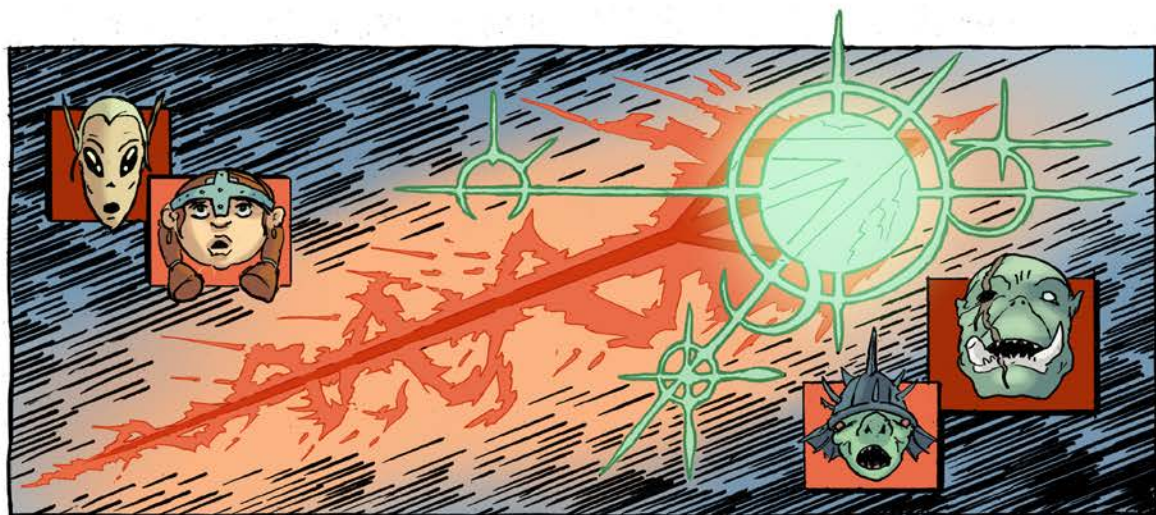
BUT I'M
GROWING IMPATIENT.
WHERE'S MY SON?



ON THIS
TABLE...

DON'T RECOGNIZE
TASTE OF YOUR OWN
FLESH AND BLOOD?





"the second sign: but if
the sun becomes black
in the middle of the
day, you will know that
you have failed, for this
is the last sign."



"and i will sweep the
earth with the broom
of destruction, and
the whole land shall
become a desolate
wasteland forever."



"...for peace shall
only be obtained
when no creature
remains alive."



"and the responsibility
shall be yours and not
mine, for i am divine."



I HATE
COCKROACHES.



THE UNFIXED MAN

Writer/Penciller/Inker/Letterer/Editor:
KDS

On Instagram: [@kds.art_and_stuff](#)

On Twitter: [@kds_creator](#)

ALL OF LIFE IS SUFFERING.

WE ARE BORN, WE SUFFER ...

YOUR SACRIFICE
WAS ACCEPTED.

GO IN
PEACE.

WE GROW OLD, IN THE BEST
CASE, AND THEN WE DIE.

THE UNFIXED MAN

ART & STORY: KDS

THE HUB IS BROKEN, AND THE WHEEL SPINS OUT OF CONTROL. USUALLY, ALL THINGS CRUMBLE AND ARE REBORN ONLY AFTER MANY AEONS. BUT UNNATURAL CREATURES HAVE CORRUPTED THIS PROCESS, AND NOW THE UNIVERSE DIES AND IS REBORN EVER FASTER. SOME CAN SURVIVE A RESET, BUT ONLY BY USING THE ESSENCE OF LIVING SENTIENTS. THE END IS NEAR... AGAIN.

I BELIEVE IT IS INCUMBENT ON ALL OF US TO ALLEVIATE SUFFERING. ELAINE DISAGREES.

CALL ANOTHER
SACRIFICE.

NEXT!

SHE TAKES THEIR ESSENCE AND TURNS IT INTO
THE SAP THAT POWERS HER EVIL CIVILIZATION.

I AM GOING TO STOP HER.

MA'AM, THE
TANKS REMAIN
EXPOSED.

PERHAPS THIS
IS NOT A WISE
COURSE

DO YOU DOUBT
MY WISDOM?

BUT FIRST I NEED TO SURVIVE.

OF COURSE
NOT, MA'AM.

AND FOR THAT, I NEED THE SAP
SHE'S BEEN STEALING.

OR I'M STUCK HERE...

PRESSURE
23.04543

SHE WINS...

AND THIS NEVER ENDS.

I WISH THERE WAS ANOTHER WAY.

I FEEL DIRTY USING
THIS STOLEN SAP.

DAMN! IT'S
CLOGGED!

MA'AM,
IT'S TIME.
HE HAS
TAKEN THE
BAIT.





COUGH
COUGH

GOTTA MOVE.

I HAVE JUST ENOUGH SAP TO MAKE
IT THROUGH THE NEXT RESET.



IF I HAD JUST A LITTLE
MORE I COULD JUMP
OUT OF HERE.



THEY DON'T LOOK SO TOUGH.
MAYBE I CAN TAKE THEM?



GOD DAMN!
THAT HURTS!



FIGHTING ISN'T AN OPTION.

I NEED TO LOSE THEM
DOWN THIS ...



DEAD END!

ONLY ONE OPTION NOW.



I DON'T WANT TO HAVE TO DO THIS.



THEY ARE FORCING MY HAND.



GET HIM BEFORE HE DISSAPEARS...

AGAIN.

NEWT DRAINED ITS SAP AND JUMPED AWAY.



PUT THAT OUT OF ITS MISERY.

IF HE HAD TO DO THIS, HE MUST BE VERY LOW ON SAP.



I'M NOT LIKE HER.



I DIDN'T HAVE A CHOICE.
I HAD TO DRAIN IT.

AND I HAVE JUST ENOUGH TO
SURVIVE THE NEXT RESET.



IT'S NOT LIKE I
DRAINED A HUMAN.
THOSE ARE JUST ...
THINGS.

IF I CAN MAKE IT THROUGH
THE NEXT RESET, I FINALLY
HAVE ENOUGH TO STOP
THEM ONCE AND FOR ALL.

IT WAS A SACRIFICE
FOR THE GREATER
GOOD.



UNGH!

I'M SO SORRY! I
DIDN'T SEE YOU
THERE.



WHY... OH...
I SEE.

ELAINE WOULDN'T
TAKE US.

SHE WOULD ONLY
GIVE FOOD FOR
OUR SON'S
SACRIFICE.

WE WERE SO
HUNGRY.

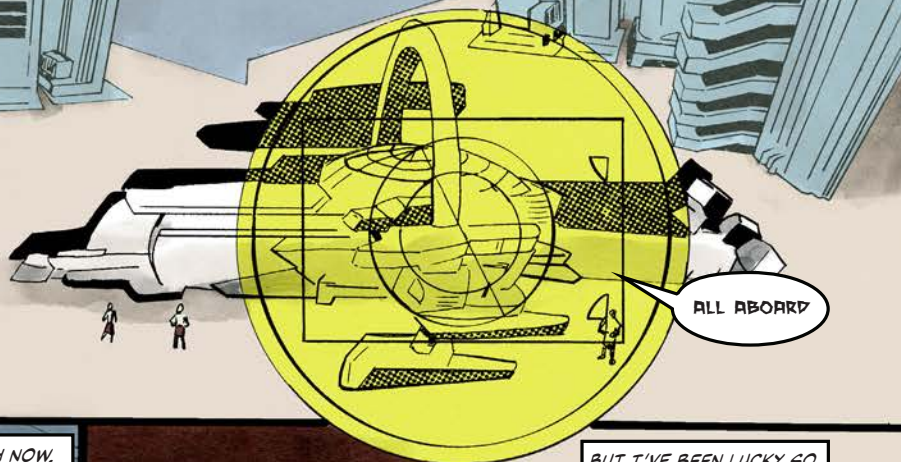


I'M NOT LIKE HER.

HOLD STILL.

FW-ZAAAAAP

LATER THAT DAY...



ALL ABOARD

UGH. NOT ENOUGH NOW.

I HOPE THAT FAMILY MAKES IT.

BUT I'VE BEEN LUCKY SO FAR. WHO KNOWS.

I MIGHT NOT.

MAYBE I CAN SNEAK ONTO THEIR SHIP?



THE TRAP WAS NOT SPRUNG IN TIME.

HE WOULD HAVE BEEN CAUGHT IF... WE... HAD ACTED SOONER.

HE FAILED! IF I MADE A MISTAKE IT HARDLY MATTERS.



HE HAS HARRASSED US FOR A LONG TIME.

AND MYSTERIOUSLY ALWAYS MANAGES ESCAPE.



HE FAILED!

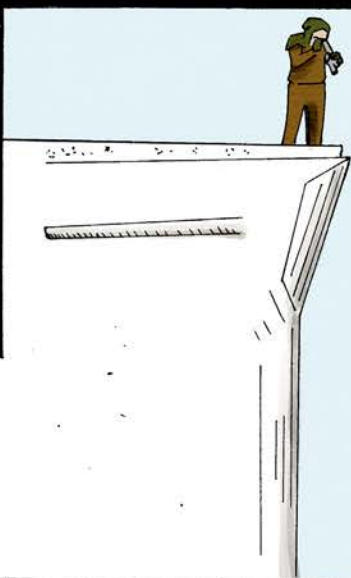


ALL HANDS, PREPARE FOR LAUNCH.

GOOD BYE ANUTON. I EXPECT I'LL SEE YOU AGAIN.



GUESS I'M NOT GETTING ON
THEIR SHIP.



NOT MUCH LONGER NOW.



I HOPE YOU MAKE IT.



MAYBE I'M WRONG...



AND ELAINE HAS IT RIGHT.



MAYBE THE ONLY ONE I CAN
SAVE IS MYSELF.

I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT.



I'M NOT LIKE HER.

FLASH FICTION

Why Are There Flash Fiction Pieces in a Comic Book Anthology?

Words and pictures have been intimately connected since human beings began telling stories. As many comics pros have been quick to point out, some of the earliest recorded stories—painted on the caves of France and Indonesia approximately 44,000 years ago, were, essentially, sequential storytelling art. To use a more modern word, comics.

But the history of words and pictures complementing each other is not exclusive to comics or sequential art. From the illuminated manuscripts of the middle ages, to the literati paintings of the Ming and Qing dynasties, to Gustave Dore's unforgettable woodcuts for Dante's *Inferno* and Coleridge's *Rime of The Ancient Mariner*, images and text enhanced and illuminated each other even in the most serious literature. Some of the world's greatest artists, such as Edouard Manet (Poe's *The Raven*) and Eugene Delacroix (Goethe's *Faust*) illustrated editions of some of the great literature of the 19th Century. Charles Dickens, arguably the greatest novelist ever, worked closely with illustrators on all but two of his novels.

It is only during the 20th Century that illustrated writing—at least for adults—was banished to the funny books and science fiction pulps. Why did this happen? The most common answer is that readers' tastes, led by literary critics who felt that illustrations placed a barrier between the reader and their experience of the text, changed. A more cynical analysis suggests that as books became widely available, they were produced cheaply for the mass market. Art costs money, and pocket-sized, inexpensively-printed, paperbacks are not the best format for presenting illustrations anyway. Either way, by the second half of the 20th Century illustrated prose, with a few notable exceptions like Hunter S. Thompson's creative non-fiction, was exceptionally rare.

These days, however, things are changing. We live in a world where illustrated literature is respectable once again. *Watchmen* appeared on many "Best Novels of the Last 100 Years" lists, and many younger readers are more likely to remember reading a graphic novel for class than one of their teachers confiscating a comic book which they read, surreptitiously, inside the book that they were supposed to be reading. Hollywood has mined the pages of graphic literature to create some of the most popular movies and television programs of our time, bringing the genre out of the counterculture and into the mainstream. At the same time, ebooks

(like this one) are now the least expensive form of publication, and have eliminated the cost-related concerns associated with printing illustrations. Still, with the exception of young adult literature, pictures in prose books are still not as popular as they used to be.

They are, however, making a comeback. Many literary journals print art to accompany their selections. Interest in books as art objects, which often contain fancy, illustrated book plates, have become more popular, as well.

It is into this changing landscape that Comic Book School presents the creators who completed the Flash Fiction Challenge. Inspired equally by the classics mentioned above, the old pulp magazines, and early Ray Bradbury short story collections that drew on both traditions, writers and artists from our online community were challenged to create stories that married one page of prose with a single, full-page illustration.

The results speak for themselves. From D. Alley, who like William Blake, wrote and illustrated her piece, *The Rescue*; to George Dawkins II and Philip Burnette, whose powerful prose and black and white illustrations for *The Black Knight* are reminiscent of the great 19th Century engraved bookplates; to Mike Ponce, the master of backgrounds, who, like Paul Kibdy did with Terry Pratchett's Discworld, somehow pulled together the surreal genre mash-up with which I presented him in *The Duel*.

In each of these stories, the marriage of art and writing enhances the reader's experience beyond what either could do on its own. We invite you to join us on the vanguard of this revival.

A. A. Rubin
Prose Editor, Comic Book School
December, 2020

THE BLACK KNIGHT

Writer: George Dawkins II

For more info: <https://desertfoxcomic.weebly.com>

[On Instagram: @thedesertfoxcomic](#)

[On Facebook: @desertfoxcomic](#)

Penciller/Inker/Colorist: Philip Burnette

For more info: <http://philipspace.deviantart.com>



THE BLACK KNIGHT

Written By George Dawkins II

Illustrated by Philip Burnette

My name is Absolon. I am the Black Knight. I was born on a ship which held others like me. I do not know where we came from, but I do know that we were in bondage. When I was a boy, the ship was seized by the man who would become my master, Sir Henryk the Noble. He was one of the greatest knights in all the lands, but, to me, he was my teacher, father, and closest friend. He was in exile when he found me, and it was during that exile that he taught me the ways of the knight.

My steed, Noir, is a creature like no other. Sir Henryk was teaching me how to ride horseback when I first met Noir. He was just a colt back then. Henryk told me that a knight's horse should be a mirror into his soul, and when I saw this black beast running free, I saw my reflection and knew that this was to be my steed.

My sword was forged from the ore of a falling star, and as a result, it is dark in color as well. It, too, is unique, a weapon like no other. Henryk told me that a knight's sword should be a weapon that defines his character, and when I came upon a ball of fire that had fallen from the heavens, I knew that this was to be the material used to construct my righteous tool of justice.

It was Sir Henryk's last wish for me to see the land of his origin in the flesh. From what I see, this land has lost its way. The knights here have no honor, and I believe that there are darker forces at play that I do not see yet. If Henryk could see all this now, he would no-doubt be ashamed and beside himself. I have come to save this land. I will honor Sir Henryk's teachings and be a noble knight that he would be proud of. No matter what challenges or prejudice may come during my quest, I will do whatever it takes to save this land.

THE DUEL

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Penciller/Inks/Colorist: Mike Ponce

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Mike

THE DUEL

Written by A. A. Rubin

Illustrated by Mike Ponce

Two wizards stare at each other across the dusty road. “This town ain’t big enough for the two of us,” says one, his dusky robe billowing in the wind.

His white-clad opponent says nothing. He just spits in the dirt.

The air crackles with kinetic magic as a lone tumbleweed rolls by. In the distance, a coyote howls.

Everything is still save for the sun, which inches towards its apex across the azure sky, and the hands of the tower clock, which mimic that arc with the steady tick, tick of doom.

Presently, the first chime sounds reverberating across the plain, followed by another, and another.

At the ringing of the twelfth bell—high noon—each wizard throws back his cloak and swings his staff toward his opponent. Magic explodes from the orbs atop the yew-wood which strains beneath the power of preternatural energy.

Each wizard’s aim is true. The bolts crash midway across the road. The jolt crackles and sparks where the beams meet, and—bang—the point explodes with the force of creation. The feedback reverberates outward, and each mage’s boots slide backward through the dirt as he fights to hold his footing.

Horses rear up desperately trying to break free from their reigns, dogs scurry away with their tails between their legs, and even the vultures stop circling, and search for safe perches.

Through it all, the wizards remain resolute, their eyes fixed forward, toward each other, through the glowing orb of pure energy which grows between them.

The wizards stumble forward, their staffs dim, their powers spent. All they can do is watch as reality warps, bending toward the abyss, collapsing inward toward the rend they tore in the very fabric of spacetime.

The locus convulses, belching forth reality. The world bends once again, this time in the opposite direction. The town fragments and shimmers, refracting around the spot midway between the two wizards, twisting and shifting, in surreal, kaleidoscopic glory. Buildings fold outward, refracting around themselves in every conceivable prismatic formation, shifting and spinning with the force of the universe, folding ever outward from nothingness into reality.

It is over as quickly as it had begun. The still sound of silence fills the town again. The wizards rise and people open their shutters—but, when the single chime marking the hour strikes, it strikes in stereo, two bells clang, identically, from two clock towers, across the street from two general stores, two brothels, two sheriff’s offices, and, yes, two wizards standing in front of two identical saloons, on opposite sides of a crossroads, between two identical main streets.

“Now,” the dark wizard says. “This town is big enough for the two of us.”

The white wizard inclines his head and touches the brim of his hat.

Each wizard turns away and walks down the dusty road to an identical magical workshop. Beneath the high sun, two tumbleweeds roll in their wake.

THE NEW WORLD ORDER: THE RESCUE

Writer/Artist: D. Alley

On Twitter: [@Redheadeded](#)

On Instagram: [@r3dh3ad3d3d](#)

For more info: <http://www.redheadeded.com>



THE NEW WORLD ORDER: THE RESCUE

Written and Illustrated by D. Alley

Marco laughed when Eddie reappeared on the upper decks with an annoyed expression. Still grinning, he confirmed for his returning first mate that all the crew were aboard, and all the salvage was secure. They set sail south. There was no wind for the first hour, so the intense heat remained an issue, like a hot poker branding every inch of the tanned leather skin on Eddie's face, neck, and back. But coming into the Trinity Current, the wind picked up toward the old gulf pushing the ship toward its new destination.

Eddie was still amazed at the transformation of this old-timey sailing yacht into something out of an 18th century pirate novel. The original stern and cabin had been set into a larger ship base and served as the rudder and third sail, but the entire rest of the ship was built up from salvage of other ships, cars, even old highway lamp posts. Once they were finally moving at a good pace, Marco leaned toward Eddie for a laugh.

"How badly did the Captain yell at you for waking her up?" Marco grinned, but avoided eye contact.

"I think Peter got the most of it," Eddie said, shaking off the irritation.

"But she still got you," Marco said laughing, "I saw your face, oh man, I would not want to be you at sundown." He made several pretty vulgar gestures which Eddie wasn't sure how to interpret, so he tried to ignore him. "Come on man, it's been three years! How do you not get it by now?"

"Watch the bow, we'll come up on the contaminated waters before you know it."

"Man, you are still soo stiff." Marco smiled, "You need to loosen up you wanna go to Pleasure Isl—"

"I get it, Marco, I'm just worried about this call," Eddie said, trying to change the subject. He knew if his quartermaster got the chance, he'd start in on Eddie's dating life, or lack thereof... Again. He was just so tired of hearing about it. But thankfully, Marco heard the concern in his voice.

"Why you worried about an underwater rescue?" he asked earnestly.

"We know the call came from the Cowbells in the Keys," Eddie said, working out his thoughts as the ship sped south. "But they don't normally do rescues, I doubt they even thought to second-guess if it was genuine. Headed into a contaminated zone for a frikkin' bomb shelter? After all this time?" Eddie stopped for a moment. It just didn't sound plausible.

"But who would wanna mess with the Cowbells?" Marco asked looking up at the sails. "They are just farmers."

"Exactly, but who do they sell to?" Eddie asked, putting the pieces together in his own mind as the younger man followed this new train of thought.

"Traders, shippers, and...Us?" Marco said, not getting to Eddie's final point. Eddie looked at Marco and smiled, knowing they might be headed right into a trap.

"Right, us...Pirates."

AFTERWORD

A Final Word from the Publisher

This anthology turned out better than I'd expected. Yes, really. Better. This entire project—to host a comic-creation challenge—was not supposed to turn out this good. And yet, here it is.

What you have on your screen is something special. It's proof that we can (quoting Neil Gaiman here...) "make great art" when times are bad, when the conditions are wrong, and when nobody is really asking for what we're making.

It's proof that no matter how bad things are (and 2020 was very, very bad) you can still make great art.

I've been working professionally in comics for 25 years. I've seen important trends that have shaped the business: Boom years, bust years, controversies, feuds, and shady business deals.

And yet, we persist. This is the thing that fascinates me most: The persistence.

Making comics as a career choice doesn't really seem practical, if you think about it. The industry itself is rather small, but the talent pool is global. The odds of succeeding as a comic book creator are, statistically, rather low. This is particularly true if you want to be a writer or editor. There just aren't that many jobs out there, so you must be persistent.

The medium of comic books is enjoying something of a golden moment. Big screen movies and innovative TV shows have made people aware that there are some great comic books being published. The world thinks comics are kind of cool.

Unfortunately, that enthusiasm hasn't exactly turned those moviegoers into comic book buyers. Sure, sales are up for some fortunate publishers, but overall, comics are not exactly a promising career path. There may be movies based on comic book characters that have \$200 million budgets, but there are no comics with even \$2 million budgets.

So that's why this anthology is so remarkable. Despite the odds against success and the lack of financial incentive, we produced a really good comic book anthology.

In some ways, however, 2020 was the best possible year for making comics. The lockdown from the pandemic forced many of us to stay in the house. It gave us back a precious resource: time.

It also gave us time to reconsider our priorities. We had to set priorities that we've never had to consider before. In 2020, we had to consider the very real possibility of food shortages, household supply shortages, medication shortages, and even death.

We started this anthology project before we had even heard of COVID-19. We continued it through global unrest, a crashing economy, and massive unemployment. We continued it through a contentious Presidential election.

We finished it because it was important to us.

We had every reason to stop working. Nobody in our lives would have even questioned us if we decided that we could no longer carry on making our comics. Everyone would have understood that 2020 was, well, 2020.

But against all odds, we finished it. The people who worked on this did it for their own reasons, but ultimately because they were committed to telling their stories. They blocked out the noise and met their deadlines. That's what professionals do.

We also rallied together as a creative community. People didn't just focus on their own stories. They offered help to other people making comics. They came together for the production of this anthology, which was much larger than we'd expected. There was a lot of work, but somehow, we had enough hands to get everything done.

To the people who worked on anthology, thank you. I am truly grateful for the many ways you came together to make this happen. It's one of those magical moments that I will never forget. This means more to me than you can know.

For those of you who download this as a PDF and read it, thank you. We're grateful to have you as our audience. We need you because, without you, this would feel a bit less special. We make comics for passion and love, but we also make them for you.

For those of you who are out there dreaming of making comics professionally, you are not alone. This comic is proof that you can make comics with people who share your dream. We are your people and we will read your comics.

Dream big, do the work, and never give up.

Buddy Scalera
Founder, Comic Book School
December, 2020

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