



BLACK MAGICK™

GREG RUCKA • NICOLA SCOTT

No. 01



BLACK MAGICK™

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“AWAKENING”

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Mabon (Fall Equinox)

"NOW THE WORLD IS IN BALANCE,
AT THIS MOMENT, IN THIS AGE, IN
THIS PLACE. DAY AND NIGHT EQUAL
IN EACH OTHERS' SIGHT..."

"...THE LADY AND THE LORD ENTWINED AND
ENTRANCED, BELOVED AND BELONGING..."



...THEIR UNION SACRED, ETERNAL, AND YET EVER-CHANGING IN ITS CYCLE.

NOW THE LADY IN HER GLORY, RIPE FOR HIS REBIRTHING TO COME, WISE IN THE WAY OF ALL SEASONS.

NOW THE LORD WANES IN HIS POWER, FADING UNTO SAMHAIN.

THIS NIGHT, THIS TIME, SO SACRED IN ITS PERFECT BALANCE BETWEEN THAT WORLD OF SPIRIT AND THIS OF FLESH.



THIS NIGHT, OUR HAVEN, ONE OF BUT TWO EQUALS IN OUR ENDLESS AND ETERNAL CYCLE.



THIS NIGHT, WE WORK OUR WILL.

SO MOTE IT BE.



SO MOTE IT BE.

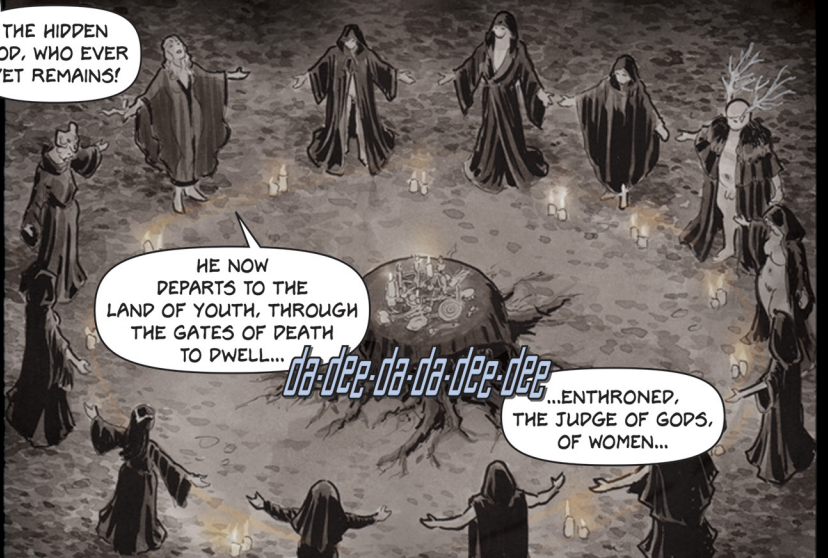
SO MOTE IT BE.

SO MOTE IT BE.



FAREWELL, O SUN, EVER-RETURNING LIGHT!

THE HIDDEN GOD, WHO EVER YET REMAINS!



HE NOW DEPARTS TO THE LAND OF YOUTH, THROUGH THE GATES OF DEATH TO DWELL...

da-dee da-da-dee-dee

...ENTHRONED, THE JUDGE OF GODS, OF WOMEN...



da-da-da-dee-dee

...OF MEN,
ALL RIGHT, WHO THE
HELL FORGOT TO TURN
OFF THEIR FUCKING
PHONE?



da-da-dah



da-dee-da-

YEAH,
THAT'S
ME...



SOMEBODY
HAD BETTER
HAVE FUCKING
DIED--



WE'RE GOING
TO HAVE TO REPRAP
THE CIRCLE, WE'LL HAVE
TO CALL QUARTERS
AGAIN--

I KNOW.

THE WHOLE
RITUAL--

I KNOW.





--PETEECTIVE BLACK,
SORRY, DIDN'T
RECOGNIZE YOU!

THEY'RE
WAITING FOR
YOU AT THE
COMMAND
POST.

MORGAN!



RO,
WHERE--

YOU
FUCKING
TOOK YOUR
TIME.

I WAS KINDA
IN THE MIDDLE
OF SOMETHING,
CAPTAIN.



THIS AREA IS CLOSED OFF, YOU'LL HAVE TO--



WHAT THE HELL IS THAT? IS THAT INCENSE?

YOU SMELL LIKE A HEADSHOP, PARTNER.

NEW SOAP. SOMEONE GOING TO TELL ME WHAT'S GOING ON?



PUT THIS ON AND LISTEN.

WHENEVER YOU'RE READY, PETE.



YOU STILL THERE, SON?

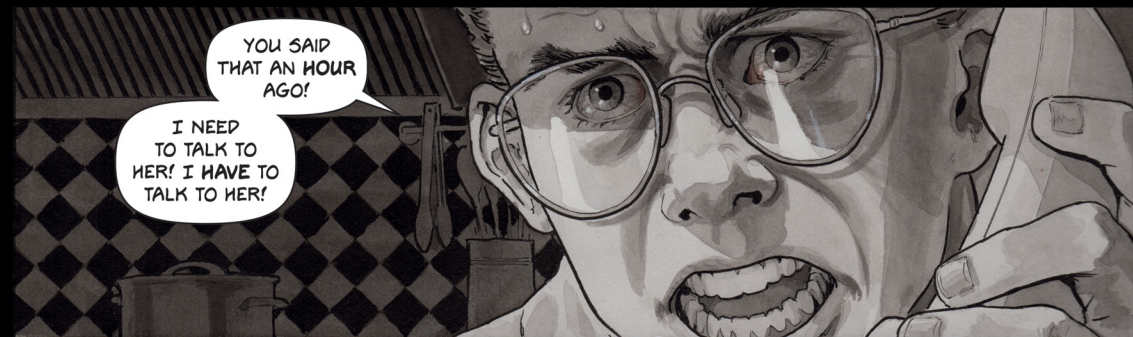
OF COURSE I'M STILL HERE, YOU FUCKING IDIOT...



...WHERE THE HELL AM I GOING TO GO?

DID YOU FIND HER? IS SHE THERE?

SHE'S ON HER WAY, LIKE I TOLD YOU.



YOU SAID THAT AN HOUR AGO!

I NEED TO TALK TO HER! I HAVE TO TALK TO HER!

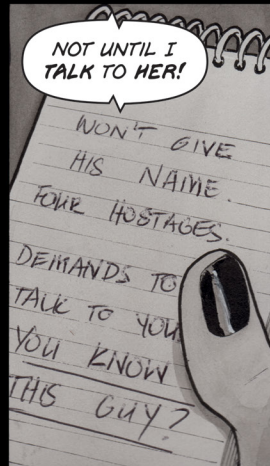


SOON AS SHE GETS HERE I'LL PUT HER ON, I SWEAR IT, SON.

BUT YOU'VE GOT TO GIVE US SOMETHING, FIRST. THAT'S ONLY FAIR, DON'T YOU THINK?



WHY DON'T YOU LET ONE OF THE HOSTAGES GO?

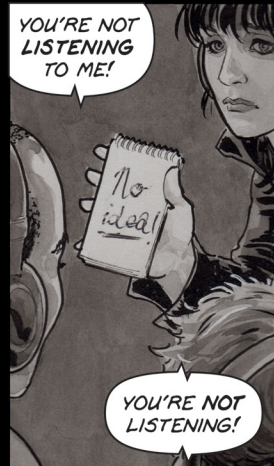


NOT UNTIL I TALK TO HER!

WON'T GIVE HIS NAME. FOUR HOSTAGES. DEMANDS TO TALK TO YOU YOU KNOW THE GUY?



JUST ONE OF THE HOSTAGES, SON.



YOU'RE NOT LISTENING TO ME!

YOU'RE NOT LISTENING!



I AM LISTENING, SON.





WE HAVE
TO TALK. I HAVE
TO TALK TO
YOU.

HEY,
YOU'VE GOT THE
HOSTAGES...



ALONE.
WE HAVE TO
TALK ALONE.

YOU HAVE
TO COME
INSIDE.

WE HAVE
TO TALK
ALONE.



THAT DOESN'T
SOUND LIKE A
LOT OF PRIVACY
TO ME.

I'LL RELEASE
THEM. ALL OF
THEM...



"...BUT WE HAVE TO TALK ALONE."

YOU PULL HIM INTO SIGHT OF THE WINDOWS, SNIPERS WILL DO REST.

IT GOES TITS UP, SAY "AVALANCHE," YOUR WIRE WILL PICK IT UP, WE'LL COME IN WITH GAS AND FLASH-BANGS.

WHY AM I DOING THIS AGAIN?



THIS WOULD BE THE 'PROTECT' PART OF 'PROTECT AND SERVE.'

AH.

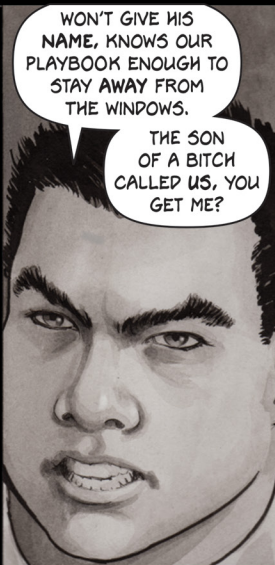
THERE'S SOMETHING OFF WITH THIS GUY.

I THINK TAKING HOSTAGES WAS THE FIRST CLUE.



THERE'S NOTHING FUNNY ABOUT THIS, DETECTIVE BLACK.

HE TAKES A BURGER JOINT HOSTAGE JUST TO GET FACE-TIME WITH YOU?



WON'T GIVE HIS NAME, KNOWS OUR PLAYBOOK ENOUGH TO STAY AWAY FROM THE WINDOWS.

THE SON OF A BITCH CALLED US, YOU GET ME?



I GOT A BAD FEELING WHAT HAPPENS YOU WALK IN THERE.

REAL BAD FEELING.

I'LL BE OKAY, PETE.



YOU GET THE HOSTAGES OUT FIRST, THEN YOU GET YOURSELF OUT.

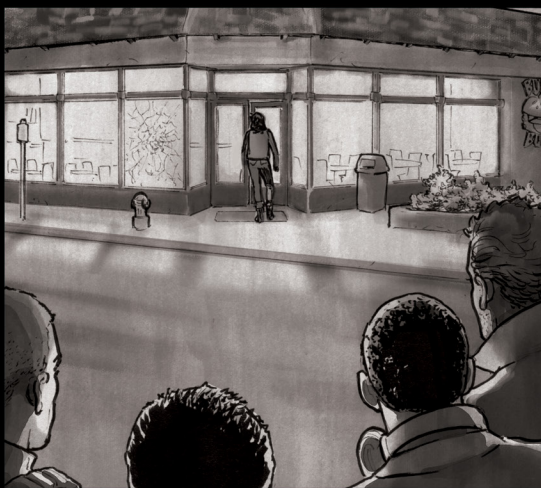
WAY AHEAD OF YOU ON THAT, CAPTAIN.

GOOD GIRL.



RIGHT.

LET'S WALK THE WALK.





COMING IN. I'M ALONE.



HANDS AT YOUR NECK. COME BACK HERE.

IS THAT... SMELLS LIKE...

...AM I SMELLING KEROSENE?



MOTHER-FUCKER.



IF HE'S SOAKED THE PLACE, WE THROW GAS OR FLASH-BANGS...



Fwoosh, YEAH.

I SAID...

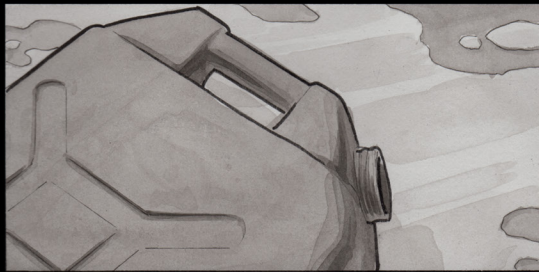


...COME INTO THE BACK.

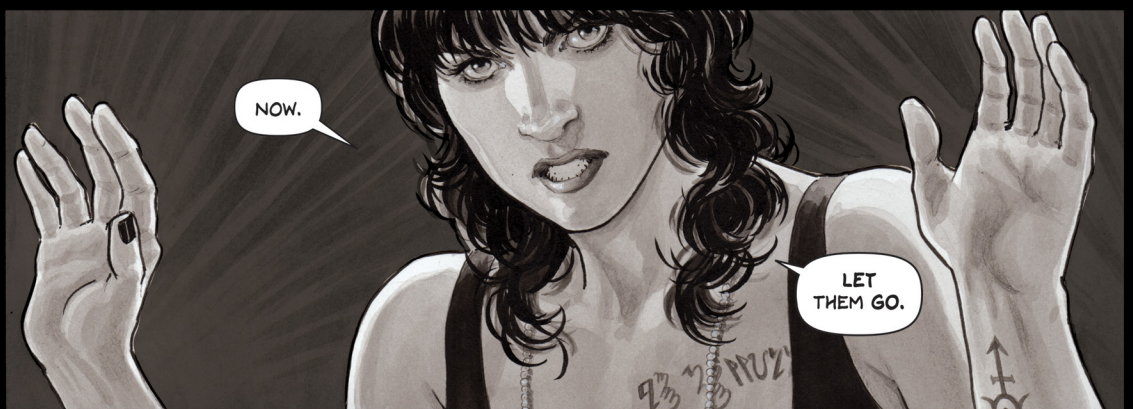
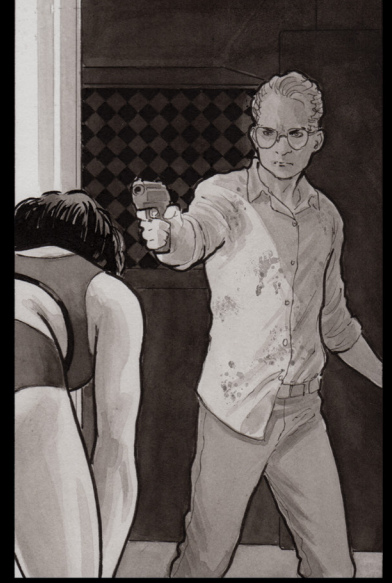
YOU SAID YOU'D LET--



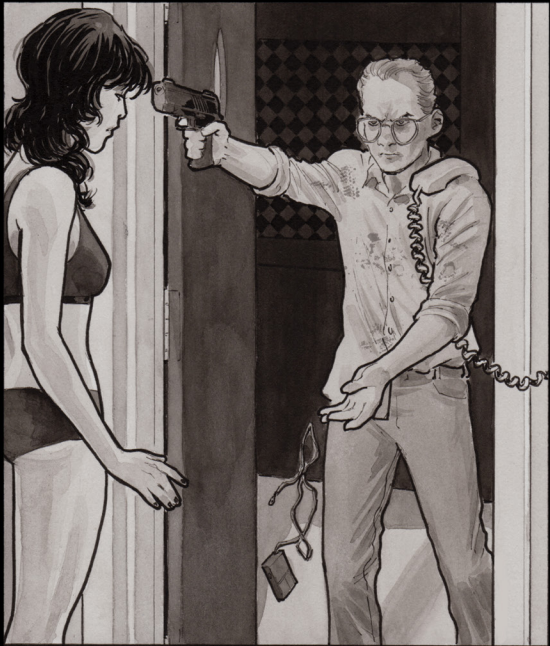
IN. THE. BACK.













WE'RE GONNA GET YOU OUT OF THESE CLOTHES--



NEED A MEDIC!



I NEED TO TALK TO--

THEY'VE ALL GOT TO BE DECONNED, CAPTAIN...



...YOU'LL HAVE TO DO IT AT THE HOSPITAL.

WHAT DOES THIS GUY WANT?

I NEED TO KNOW WHAT HE WANTS!



HER, MAN...







WHO?
WHO TOLD
YOU?

WHO ARE
YOU?



YOU KNOW
HOW TO GET RID
OF A WITCH,
DON'T YOU?



YOU DO.
YOU
KNOW.



NO...YOU
CAN'T BE ONE OF
THEM, ONE OF
THEIRS--



YOU
KNOW!



YOU
BURN HER.

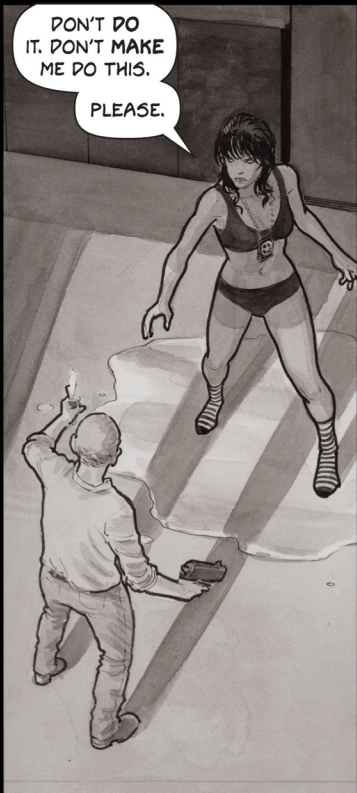
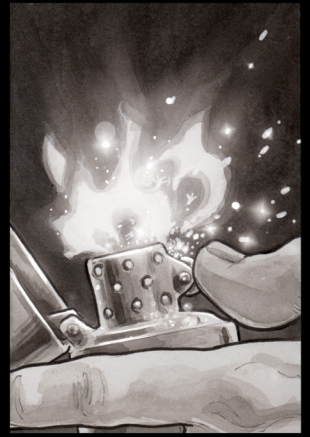
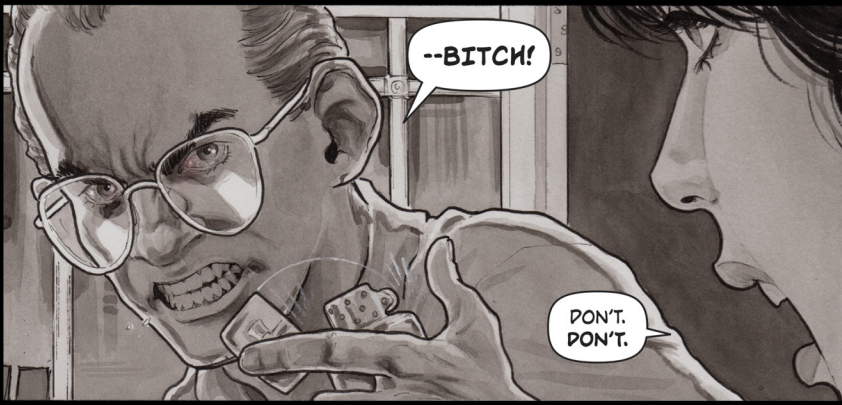


ALIVE.

DON'T...
...DON'T
DO THIS, YOU
DON'T WANT TO
DO TH--

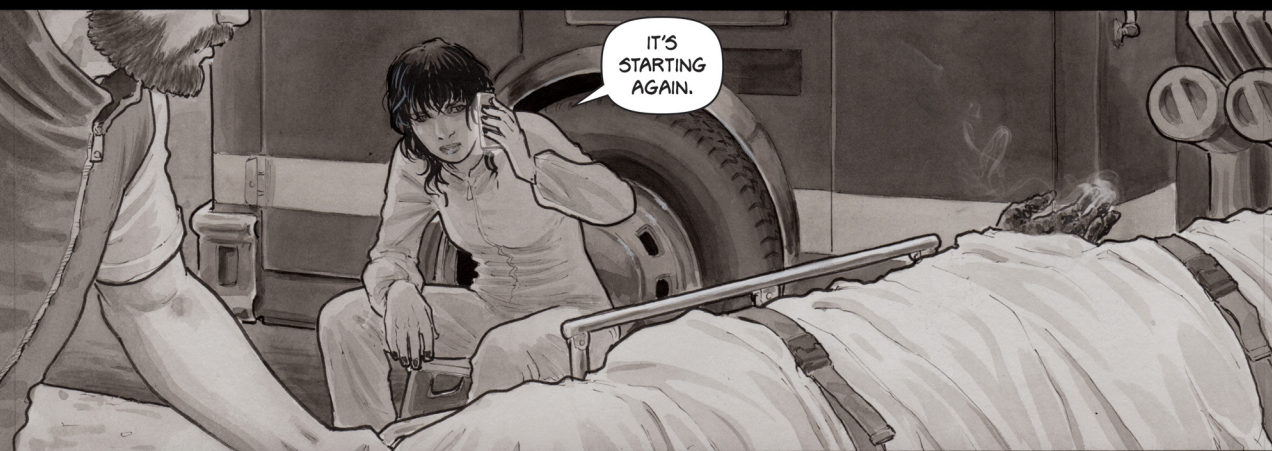
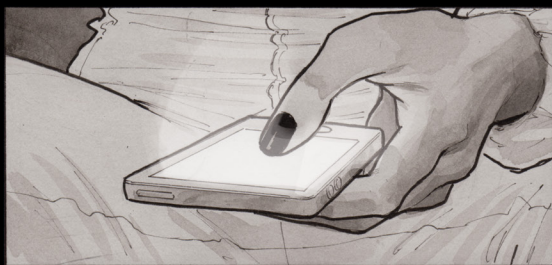


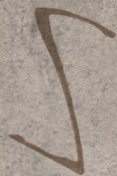
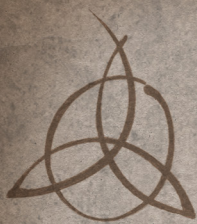












Mother! Father! I cry to thee!

My devotion eternal from day to night

Now I am made unto pray and hunt

Now I am seen and despysed

Give me a share of your cunning

Astaroth wrap me in your cloak

Ose lead me to safety

Agrimony Blackberry and Blackthorn for Protection

Briar Rose and Rowan for Power

Dragons Blood for Courage

And my own to ignite

For I am afraid and alone

hansy to my Dark Lady

three times three times three

Begining forgiveness

Do not abandon your daughter

I shall make rite and amend

three times I shall

Do not abandon your daughter

So mote it be

One of the last pages of Regan Black's grimoire, ca 1809.

1900-1999

CALISTA BLACK

b. 1929 d. 1944
KIA Battle of Anzio

1800-1899

CHARLOTTE BLACK

b. 1808 d. 1837
Consumption

ISADORA BLACK

b. 1940 d. 2013
Circumstances Unknown

IDRIS BLACK

b. 1833 d. 1926
Circumstances Unknown

MAIREAD BLACK

b. 1962 d. 1999
MVA

ROWAN BLACK

b. 1986 d. _____



B L A C K

1700-1799

COIRA BLACK
b. 1709 d.1834

ISABEAU BLACK
b. 1739 d.1813
Circumstances Unknown

MARGAUX BLACK
b. 1862 d.1965

RYANNE BLACK
b. 1886 d.1919
Tried & Executed by Aira

MORGANCE BLACK
b. 1765 d.1863

REGAN BLACK
b. 1783 d.1810
Tried & Executed by Aira

1650-1699

MATHURIN DU NOIR
b. 1659 d.1692
Salem, Mass.
Circumstances Unknown

RENEE DU NOIR
b. 1685 d.1718
Tried & Executed
by Aira

IN THE WINTER OF THE YEAR OF OUR LORD, 1532, I saw my first witch burned at the stake.

I was thirteen, and still new to the inheritance of my family, to the sacred duty that had been passed down from parent to child since, in the words of my grandfather, Jehan, “before time itself was accounted.” Thus my studies had only just begun, and while I had taken to them quickly as the winter grew close and cold, I was unprepared for the practice as opposed to the theory.

How the word had come to my father and grandfather I do not know, but as I remember that morning, I was awoken even earlier than was normal, made to saddle my horse, and together we rode south to Lisieux. Normally an easy ride, the journey this time was made in rain and cold that did not cease once, made worse by an insistent wind that refused to be impeded by our traveling clothes. We rode in silence, myself in a state of some bewilderment as to the sudden activity and change to routine, the reason for the journey, and my father and his in a somber mood that, in my innocence, I took instead to be melancholy.

There was much activity as we arrived in Lisieux, much noise, much motion, far more than would have been expected, especially considering the time of year. I thought ourselves first bound for the Cathédral Saint-Pierre de Lisieux, the seat of the Bishopric, but we instead continued through growing crowds and their evident mounting excitement until ultimately reaching the square further south. All throughout I looked to my father, hoping for some explanation of why we had made this journey and what was at hand, but his silence remained, and thus I kept my own.

It was from astride my horse, reined up between two generations prior, that I beheld my first pyre and began to comprehend what I had been brought to witness. The stake had been erected before our arrival, and now we watched as the fuel was provided, the sound of the wood knocking heavily, block upon block being thrown upon the pile. My unease at this was profound, the echo of the logs falling clear over the many voices. I recall hearing laughter in the crowd.

The procession began without ceremony, bringing with it a silence. First came the Inquisitor, then behind the jailor, and then, led by the rope in which she'd been bound, the wretched creature whose life would soon be brought to an end. She was a slight, young woman, and could not have been possessed of more than three harvests past my own, her wrists bound heavily in coils that ran to her elbows, her arms bare to her shoulders. Her clothing was less a dress than rags, stained and torn, and she walked barefoot. I thought she must be very cold in the winter air, and made myself near sick at the next thought, at how she would soon be made warm. Her hair was black, her eyes nearly as dark, and either fear or deprivation or both told of a suffering that was almost too much

to behold. There was so little to her that the two men who followed, both of the guard, seemed an absurdity, and yet they gazed upon her with such a ready fear that I could discern it even from our distance.

The Inquisitor enumerated her crimes, declaring the woman before us a witch. She had committed heresy, had made pact with the Devil, had indeed laid with him; through that dark compact had celebrated the witches' sabbath; had turned the orchards to rot, and made cows run dry. To all these charges the gathered made assent, some quietly, some with full voice.

She was made fast to the stake, and began to weep as she was made so. She hung her head, and through the crowd I thought I could make out her voice, but could not make out the words. One of the guards struck her a blow across the face to make her silent, and some cheered.

“Does she make a spell?” I asked my father.

“She is no witch,” my grandfather said.

“She prays,” my father said.

“Can we not help her?” I asked. My horse, beneath me and sensing my distress, shifted on its hooves, and required my father's hand on my reins to steady it.

“We cannot,” he told me. “We have no authority, and no power, and would be burned ourselves for interfering.”

“Then why have you brought me here?”

“To witness, Gilles. Do not turn away.”

My grandfather put his hand upon my arm, my father his to my shoulder.

The flames were made, the smoke rose, and with them, too, her screams and pleas, the sounds of desperate and absolute anguish. My stomach turned, my eyes stung, tears running from them freely. Yet I did not move, fighting every desire to close my eyes or to turn away, struggling to obey my father's command.

It is not a quick thing, to watch one of God's creatures perish in flame.

The crowd had begun departing once her struggles had ended, when it was clear there were no more screams to be heard. By the time the flames had taken her bonds and dropped her to the fire, full half were gone, and soon after those that remained, until it was only myself, my father, and my grandfather, and those few members of her persecutors who had attended. Then my father turned my mount with his, my grandfather in time, and we departed the square, heading north, back to Pont-L'Évêque.

My tears stopped, but the vision remained, the scent, the sound, the sight all together tormenting me. We were approaching home when I found myself unable to keep my silence any longer.

“Why did you wish me to witness that?” I exclaimed. “To what purpose?”

“To understand what we are not,” my grandfather answered. “And to understand what we must never become.”

SPELL CHECKED

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Please e-mail your correspondence to blackmagickcomic@gmail.com
Visit us at blackmagickcomic.tumblr.com

When I was 15, I told my mother I would no longer be attending Sunday Mass. I had decided I wanted to see what else was out there, spiritually-speaking. My Roman-Catholic mother was, while not exactly jumping for joy, very supportive and I'm grateful for it. I went to a lot of different masses and spiritual gatherings for the next few years, trying to figure out where I belonged. The closest I ever came was attending open Circles (Wiccan ritual gatherings, what Rowan got called away from at the beginning of this book) at a shop in the East Village in NYC. I went with a friend, and we didn't go for very long. But I looked forward to them: Circle and then brunch at a now-long-closed diner on First Ave.

I ended up being a much more solitary practitioner, and then, as time went on, I stopped practicing at all. Not for any reason, it was just the centrifugal force of an incredibly hectic life and I let it get spun off beyond the limits of my practical scope. It's something that I've always regretted.

Fast-forward about a decade and while I'm walking back from my daughter's 13-month check-up, I get a phone call. It's Greg Rucka, and he says, "So I have this book I think you'd be great for." That day I dug out all my texts and notebooks that had moved with me into six different apartments, so glad that I had never been able to bear getting rid of them.

He sent me everything he and Nicola had been working on for years: character bios, maps of a city sprung from Greg's head, timelines and lifespans of dozens of people. And Nic's art! Lush, painted pages that I wanted to crawl into.

Rowan Black is a fascinating character; smart, dry, and sometimes terrible at making good decisions, she's good police and a great witch. Her every day is striking a balance between two parts of her life that seem to not fit, but why shouldn't they? Your police, your doctors, your kids' teachers, they all have an interior life you don't know about...this book just wonders, *what if they can also do magick?* How does that change them, how does it change your relationship to them, and to the world around you?

There's a Wiccan rede that essentially says, "Do no harm." I'd like to think Rowan strives for that, as do we all; but unfortunately she, and sometimes we, just can't get there. Over just this first arc, aptly named "Awakenings," Rowan's history, and the history of her world, is cracked open, spilling out secrets and horror and beauty (and some of those aforementioned terrible decisions).

Thanks to the whole team—Greg, Nic, Chiara, Jodi, and Eric—for giving me a project with which I can right an old regret. So right now, I'm going to go light a candle and think about what I want to put out into the world. Because I do think that in the end, we get from the world what we put into it, what we truly want to see in it.

Here's hoping Rowan—and you—thinks so, too.

Jeanine Schaefer
Los Angeles
September 2015

Welcome, gentle readers, to our letter column, where month in and month out I'll ramble on unapologetically at unsuspecting readers. This month, we have a very special All-Valkyrie edition!

Hey *Black Magick* crew!

What a stunning first issue! I was captivated with your story by page three, ready for the journey that promised to lay out. This is an extremely impressive debut, exciting and well-paced. Nicola's art is gorgeous, and Greg's story is instantly captivating. I had a surprising amount of fun with this first issue, for as tense as it got at points. This is a fresh, refreshing comic that I cannot wait to read more of! I'm recommending it to all my customers.

Keep up the great work!

—Amy C., a Valkyrie

Hey, Amy, thanks so much!

It is fun, isn't it? That's how I felt, once I dove in—the characters are all so real and the world so fully realized, that they act like people you know act, even in incredibly tense situations (I mean, sure, I've never lit anyone on fire with my mind, but who hasn't wanted to?). It really does suck you in, and it's because there are literally hundreds of virtual index cards full of story, backstory and biographies, not to mention a walking-tour guidebook of the neighborhoods of Portsmouth. Seriously, I've lived in LA for five months now and I think I could find my way around Portsmouth better, because Greg knows every alley and bookstore and cafe and park bench. I love it there, I hope you do, too! Let's move there before the rents go up!

Dear Greg, Nicola, & team,

I feel privileged to have read the first issue of *Black Magick* and I can't wait to read it again in print & savor the wonderful art more leisurely. There were several pages that were astounding digitally and I'm sure they'll be even better in print. I can't wait to tell everyone I know (and a whole lot of people I don't know) that they *need* to read this book.

I mentioned this to Nicola already, but then realized of course it's appropriate for both Greg and Nicola: I can't help but see a little of Diana (*Wonder Woman*) in Rowan. Maybe not in personality, but a bit in her look & in adherence to beliefs many might call "the old ways" but which they know to be powerful & real & still valid today (in their respective fictionalized versions of our world).

Thank you for a first issue that's so very compelling. I hope many readers find this book as interesting as I do, so I can keep reading for a long time to come. Speaking of which, do you have a definite series length in mind for *Black Magick*? I hope it's leaning towards epic versus miniseries, but I have a feeling I'll love it either way.

—Maria (pronounced like Mariah), Oakland, CA, @solusandra

Hi, Maria! Rowan is totally in line with some of the other great women leads out there trying to figure out how to balance their more unwavering and potentially old-world beliefs with the ever-changing landscape of the modern world. You have no idea, actually, how much the "old ways" influence Rowan.

Wait until you see Nic's art printed. It's like holding fine art in your hands! The look in the hostage-taker's eye, the bead of sweat on his brow, they're almost real. They *are* real. It's another level of arting that Nic's gone to with this.

As for the length, we do know how long it'll be and it's trending much more towards the epic side of the scale.

Hello you fantastic people at *Black Magick* HQ,

Ever since reading *Black Magick*, my mind won't stop in trying to figure out what you'll call the letters section. The ideas that came to mind all led back to the use of Runes or Grimoire? Either way, it's just evidence of how this comic stuck with me. From the subtly of colour, to a fantastic choice of Rowan's transportation, to the runic tattoos on

her body. The hints at this being the tip of an iceberg. Rowan does her job, but also doesn't back down and protects herself, as hard as it was. I'm excited to learn more about her, see this world explored, how tenuous the balance must be of balancing her magic side and her cop side, to find out who is "riding", what happened before, and how Rowan will wade through it all. Fantastic writing, as per usual—Thank you Greg! Evidence again provided as to why you're one of my favourite writers. Fantastic art by Nicola—always loved your stuff—and colours by Chiara—thank you! This has been on my pull since it was announced, and this as a measure, I'm sure it will stay there for quite some time.

—Kara S., Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Kara, as of writing this I have no idea what to call the letters section! Is there a name up there yet? Eric Trautmann, our designer and the glue that keeps this book together, e-mailed earlier to ask me what it was, and I thought for way too long before I had to just tell him I'm terrible at puns—I think I'm missing a gene that enables me to get them without someone having to explain them to me. So I'll assume, if there is a title up there, that someone else has. (*Update: Eric did! Of course. He had three magick related puns for us to choose from! Show-off.*) But I like your thinking!

Please have Ro use a motorbike as her only mode of transport, I'd love to see Nicola draw that bad boy every issue! It wouldn't matter what Ro uses, an elephant, a spaceship, a skateboard—Nicola makes everything look rad. Each panel is truly a work of art I'll be poring over, not just because of skill but heart and emotion expressed. Those single beads of sweat, gosh darn. I love the washes and restrained use of colour.

This will be one book I'll be keen to buy the physical and digital copies in order to immerse myself in each panel. Is it crass to chant the *aussie aussie aussie, oi oi oi* chant? Keep that li'l fact under your hat and continue kicking arse...

...in other news, the story and suspense is exceptional too. This is not my go-to genre but I'm digging what's going on and keen to see what happens.

By the way, the Valkyrie preview cover was a huge surprise and makes us all feel pretty special!

—Marie Mour, Central QLD, Australia

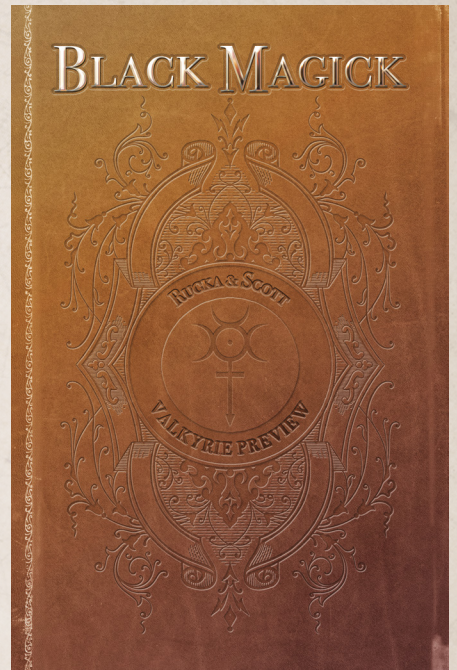
Marie, I have no idea what's considered crass in Australia, for I am American, and we have no ceiling on crass. But to your point, Nic does make everything look rad, especially that bike. Last night I fell down a motorbike tumblr rabbit hole and it was also rad (though I regretted it when I only got four hours of sleep somehow—I have a toddler, I need every minute of sleep I can get!).

As for the color, I'm glad you brought that up—we are using color very minimally, but very deliberately, and Nic and Chiara have a real vision for it that's gorgeous.

Also, glad to hear that you liked it even though it's not something you might usually pick up. I really think this crosses genres—it's a cop drama, it's a *noir*, it's an occult story, it's historical drama. And I think Greg has a few more up his sleeve as we roll into our second arc.

That's all I've got for now. Like I said, I have a toddler, I need some sleep! Make sure you send your letters in to BLACKMAGICKCOMIC@GMAIL.COM and mark them OKAY TO PRINT.

NEXT MONTH: Rowan makes not her first in a series of questionable decisions.



Trautmann's digital "cover" for the Valkyrie's preview.



NEXT ISSUE:

**Rowan considers a
spark, a hand, a body.**



**ON SALE
NOVEMBER 2015**

About the Creators

GREG RUCKA once punched a whale. Right in the face. In all fairness, that whale was being kind of a tool. Reports of Mr. Rucka haunting the streets of Portland in a nicotine and caffeine fueled rage, screaming about **Mass Effect** to anyone unfortunate enough to cross his path are greatly exaggerated. And completely true.

He can be found online. If he can be found at all.

NICOLA SCOTT is basically Imperator Furiosa, and you fuck with her at your peril.

She draws really well, too.

JODI WYNNE really doesn't deserve this abuse. Based on her e-mail handle, it also appears she digs wolves. Wolfes? Wolfi? Savage forest dogs. I am referring to **Savage Forest Dogs**.

Anyway, she letters the book, among other unsung things.

CHIARA ARENA doesn't deserve this crap, either. But this is the hand we have been dealt.

I hope she looks back fondly on the all-too-brief period where this **seemed** like a terrific opportunity.

JEANINE SCHAEFER, on the other hand, **totally** deserves this. A former DC Comics and Marvel editor, she's **got** to be wondering what the hell went wrong. If nothing else, Trautmann's constant e-mail rants probably have her reconsidering certain...choices.

Like giving Trautmann her e-mail address.

ERIC TRAUTMANN isn't sobbing while he types this. (He is totally sobbing while he types this.) He has recently decided to name his Steppenwolf cover band "Savage Forest Dogs" and at this precise moment would commit nonspecific homicides for a hot cup of coffee.

He got into comics for the **respect**, not the money.





“Right. Let’s walk the walk.”

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