

J O H N B Y R N E

# ANGEL™



BLOOD & TRENCHES

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## BLOOD & TRENCHES

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# OVER THERE

THE TIMING COULD NOT BE WORSE.

THE MEN I CARRY ARE NEAR DEATH, AND DAWN IS ONLY AN HOUR AWAY.






WE'RE GOING OVER!

HANG ON!




THE NEXT FEW SECONDS ARE A BLUR.

THE LORRY SLIDES SIDEWAYS AND OVER.




BENEATH ITS SPINDLY WHEELS, THE EDGE OF THE ROAD GIVES WAY.

MY MUSCLES SEEM TO MOVE WITHOUT MY CONSCIOUS CONTROL.




WITHOUT KNOWING HOW, I AM OUT OF THE CAB.




THE ECHOES FADE. THE WORLD GROWS STILL AND DARK.

I TUMBLE THROUGH ICY SNOW AND JAGGED ROCK.




AND THEN I HEAR IT.



THE MOON IS BRIGHT AT THE PILOT'S BACK, BUT I CAN STILL MAKE OUT HIS FACE.

IN THAT GLIMPSE, MY WORST FEARS ARE CONFIRMED.

I HEAR HIM PRIME HIS GUNS.



NOT KNOWING IF MY CHARGES HAVE SURVIVED THE CRASH, HOPING TO LURE HIM AWAY FROM THEM...

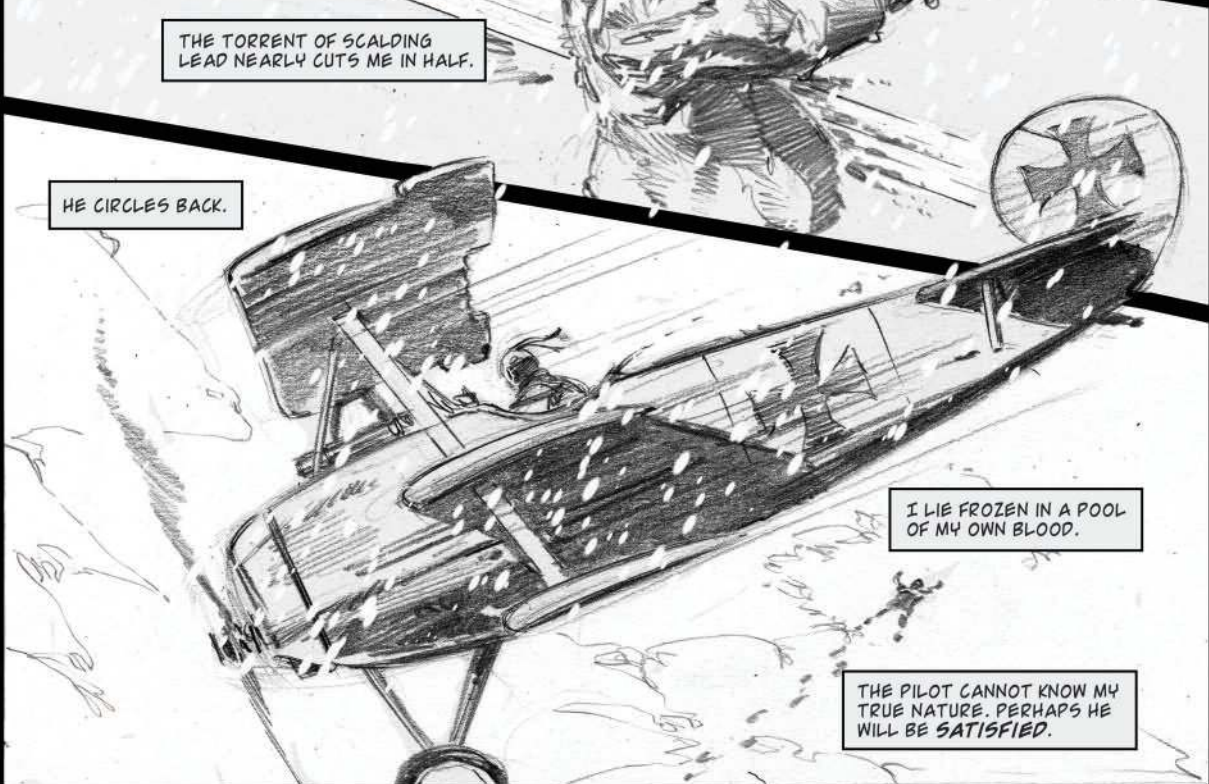
I RUN.



I HEAR THE BARK OF THE SPANDAU AN INSTANT BEFORE I FEEL THEIR FIRE.

THE TORRENT OF SCALDING LEAD NEARLY CUTS ME IN HALF.

HE CIRCLES BACK.



I LIE FROZEN IN A POOL OF MY OWN BLOOD.

THE PILOT CANNOT KNOW MY TRUE NATURE. PERHAPS HE WILL BE SATISFIED.



HE ISN'T.


FOR A LONG MOMENT IT SEEMS AS IF HE IS LEAVING. THE FOKKER MOVES AWAY. THE CLATTER OF ITS ENGINE FADES.

THEN, IN A LONG, SLOW ARC, IT TURNS BACK. ITS NOSE DIPS.

AND THE TWIN MACHINE GUNS BARK AGAIN.




MY OWN HOWL OF ANGUISH AND OUTRAGE IS LOST IN THAT TERRIBLE CACOPHONY.




THE AIR STINKS OF SCALDED METAL AND GASOLINE.

THE TRIPLANE MOVES AWAY AGAIN, THIS TIME NOT TO RETURN.

THERE SEEMS NOTHING TO BE GAINED IN APPROACHING THE AMBULANCE, BUT APPROACH I DO.



WHAT I FIND IS WHAT I EXPECTED TO FIND.




...I LAY MY BURDENS IN THE SNOW.

ONLY THEN DO I NOTICE MY HANDS.

I CARRY THE SOLDIERS AS FAR FROM THE FIRE AS I CAN IN MY WEAKENED STATE.

THEN...



THE SOLDIERS ARE BOTH DEAD, BUT THEIR BLOOD IS STILL WARM. IT STEAMS ON THE FRIGID AIR.

THE SMELL OF IT FILLS MY NOSTRILS. THE MEMORY OF RECENT FEEDING FILLS MY BRAIN.

I PUSH MYSELF AWAY FROM THE BODIES, SCRABBLING BACKWARDS LIKE AN ANIMAL.

I TRY TO THINK OF ANYTHING ELSE...

Six Weeks Ago.



New York City. Gliming gateway to a nation as yet untouched by the war that rages on the other side of the Atlantic.



Untouched, but not oblivious...

EXTRA!  
EXTRA! LATEST  
ATROCITIES BY  
ARMY OF THE  
KAISER!

SEVENTEEN  
NEW BODIES  
FOUND DRAINED  
OF BLOOD!



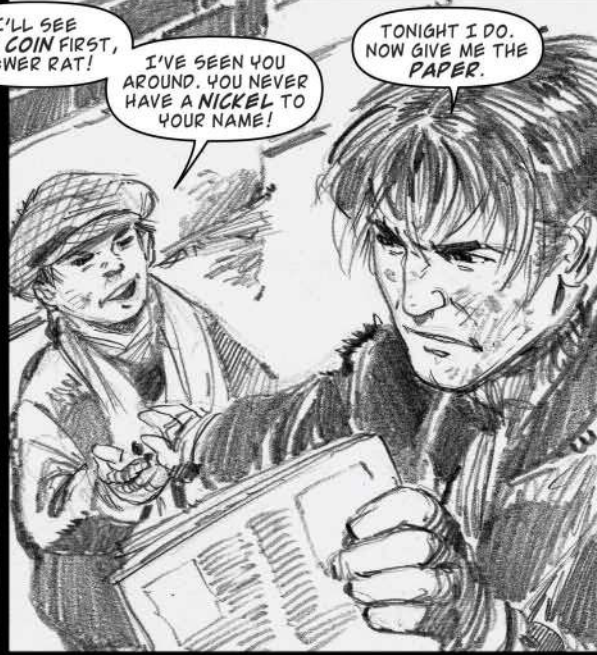
I'LL TAKE  
ONE OF THOSE  
PAPERS, BOY.



I'LL SEE  
YOUR COIN FIRST,  
SEWER RAT!

I'VE SEEN YOU  
AROUND. YOU NEVER  
HAVE A NICKEL TO  
YOUR NAME!

TONIGHT I DO.  
NOW GIVE ME THE  
PAPER.



"Authorities refuse to give greater detail, but it is believed this is at least the tenth time bodies of British and French troops have been found in this appalling condition.



"Sources inform the Enquirer that there is no kind of medicinal machine which could so completely drain a human body without collapsing and damaging veins and arteries. Sources say no such damage has been found in the fifty or more bodies discovered thus far.

"One thing has been reported to be consistent in all these mysterious killings.

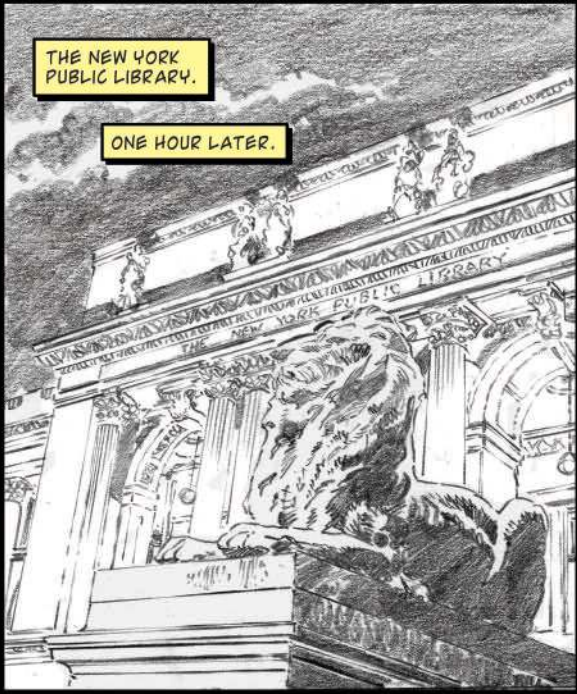
"An unidentified mark or sign has been found scribed in the blood of the victims.

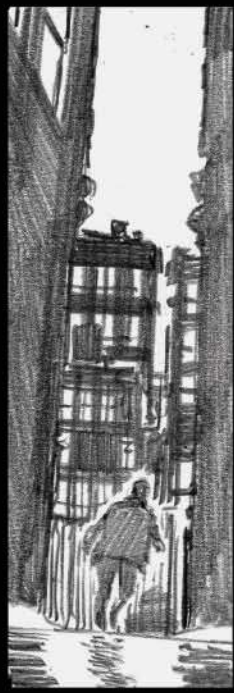


"Authorities are unable or unwilling to identify this sign."

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY.

ONE HOUR LATER.

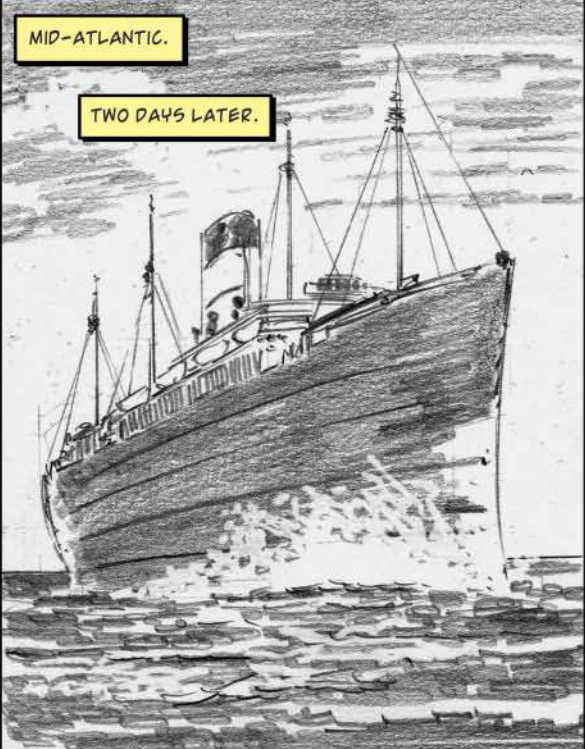
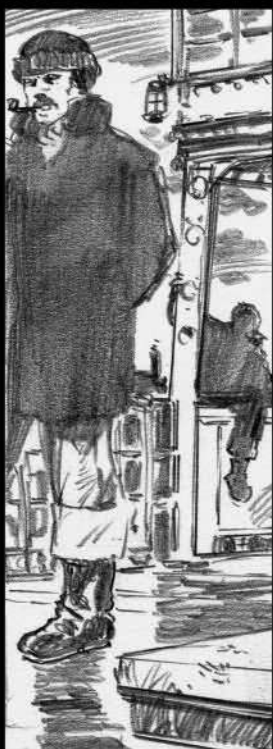




HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA.

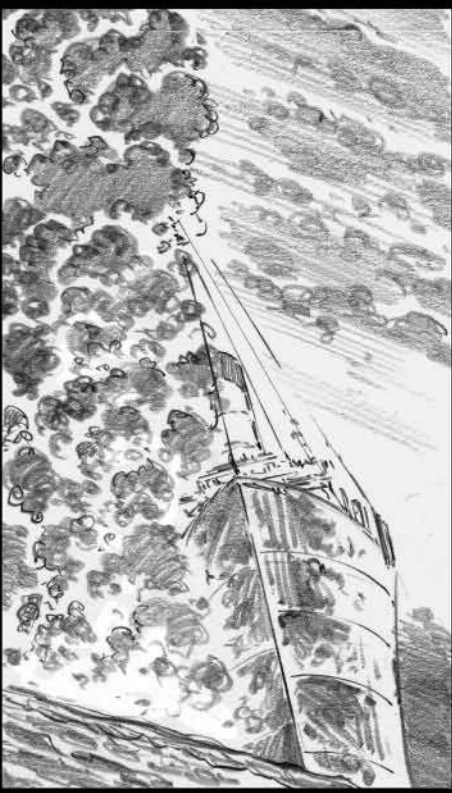
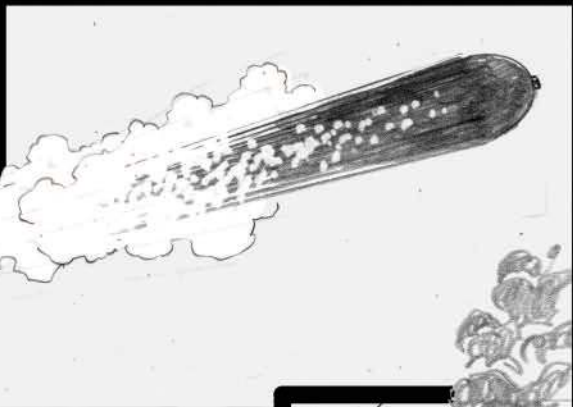
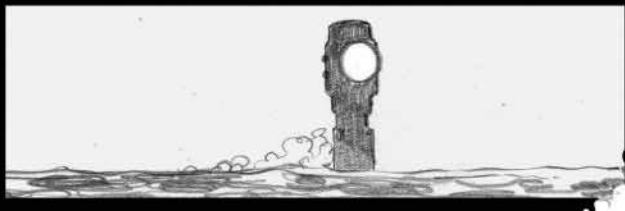


FIVE DAYS LATER.



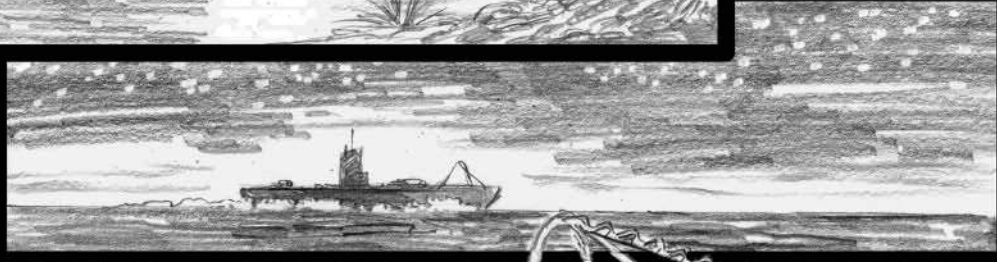
MID-ATLANTIC.

TWO DAYS LATER.



THE FRENCH COAST.

TWO DAYS LATER.





CRKEY! WHERE THE BLOODY 'ELL DID 'E COME FROM?



'ERE! I'VE FOUND THE FIRST AID KIT!

THERE'S ONT THAT CAN DO, DUSTY! THERE'S NO 'EARTBEAT. 'E'S DEAD!



BUT WE CAN'T JUST LEAVE 'IM 'ERE!

AND THERE MAY BE SUMMAT THEY CAN DO AT 'OSPITAL!



THERE! NO WORRIES ABOUT 'IM BEIN' COMFORTABLE, I SUPPOSE!



IT'S SIX MILES TO 'OSPITAL. WE CAN BE THERE IN TEN MINUTES.





'EY OOP, SISTER! WE GOT A DEAD UN FOR YOU!

A "DEAD UN," CORPORAL BAINES?

NOT MUCH WE CAN DO FOR HIM, I FEAR!



IS IT... ONE OF OUR LADS?

I DON'T THINK SO, SISTER. WE... ER... FOUND 'IM.

I THINK 'E MIGHTA BIN 'IT BY A LORRY.



I WAS... BUT I'M NOT DEAD!

STONE TH' CROWS!

OH!

WHO... WHO ARE YOU, SIR?



I'M CALLED... ANGEL... WHERE AM I?

THIS IS EMERGENCY HOSPITAL STATION NUMBER TWELVE...

...AND WE NEED TO EXAMINE YOU!



EXAMINE? YOU MEAN—?

OH, ER, NO. THAT'S ALL RIGHT. I'M FINE, REALLY...

I THINK IT WOULD BE FOR THE BEST IF I WAS THE JUDGE OF THAT!

NOW, COME ALONG. AT THE VERY LEAST YOU COULD USE SOME CLEAN CLOTHES!

TYPICAL!

WOT?



SIX MONTHS I'VE SPENT TRYIN' TO GET 'ROUND THAT, SO NATURALLY SHE TUMBLES FOR THE FIRST 'AND SOME STRANGE WOT COMES ALONG!

'ERE... WHERE'S THAT BULLETIN WE GOT FROM H.Q.?

WHICH ONE? THEY SEND OUT FIVE 'UNDRED EVERY WEEK, SEEMS LIKE!



THE ONE ABOUT REPORTIN' ANY "STRANGE AND UNUSUAL EVENTS" TO THE HIGH COMMAND.

IF THAT BLOKE DON'T QUALIFY, I DON'T KNOW WHAT DOES!

MY NAME IS MARGARET, BY THE WAY.

LADY MARGARET D'ASCOYNE—BUT I PREFER NOT TO STAND ON CEREMONY.

NOW... LET'S HAVE A LOOK AT YOU!



WELL, IT'S GOOD NEWS TO START WITH, MR. ANGEL. NO BONES BROKEN!

THOSE SCARS ON YOUR CHEST ARE A BIT ODD, THOUGH. THEY LOOK ALMOST LIKE... BULLET HOLES?

THEY'RE... NOTHING. CHILDHOOD INJURIES.

I WON'T TRY TO IMAGINE WHAT YOUR CHILDHOOD WAS LIKE, THEN!

NOW... JUST A QUICK LISTEN TO YOUR CHEST, AND WE'LL BE DONE.

LISTEN—?

AH... NO. THAT'S ALL RIGHT. I... HAVE A BIT OF AN ERRATIC HEARTBEAT. ALWAYS HAVE.

DON'T WANT YOU MAKING A FUSS ABOUT IT.



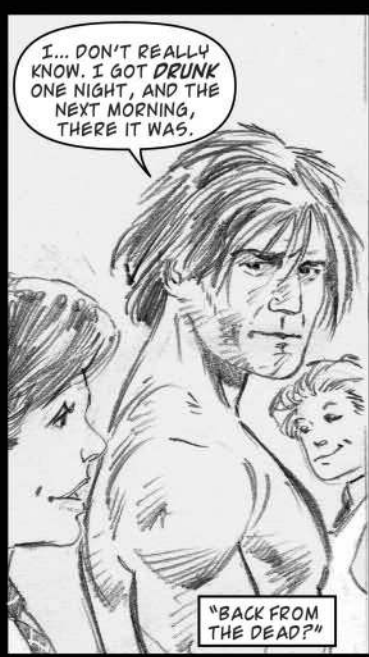
INDEED? VERY WELL, THEN. AT LEAST WE CAN FINISH CLEANING YOU UP!

THAT'S IT LAD! DOWN TO YOUR ALTOGETHER!



OH, WHAT AN INTERESTING TATTOO.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?



I... DON'T REALLY KNOW. I GOT DRUNK ONE NIGHT, AND THE NEXT MORNING, THERE IT WAS.

"BACK FROM THE DEAD?"



YOU'RE BALMY! OR DRUNK!



I SWEAR, SARGE, WE'VE NEITHER OF US 'AD A DROP IN A WEEK.

AND WE'VE BOTH SEEN ENOUGH DEATH IN THIS WAR TO KNOW A DEAD MAN WHEN WE 'ANDLE ONE.

AND 'E WAS STONE COLD DEAD, SERGEANT!

HMPH.



ALL RIGHT—I'LL MAKE THE CALL.

BUT 'EAVEN 'ELP THE BOTH OF YOU IF THIS IS SOME KIND OF JOKE!



SISTER MARGARET? ARE YOU BUSY?

NOT AT ALL, MR. ANGEL! DO COME IN! LET'S HAVE A LOOK AT...



...YOU!

MY GOODNESS! I KNEW YOU'D TIDY UP WELL, BUT THIS IS A REMARKABLE TRANSFORMATION, MR. ANGEL!

THANKS. AND... IT'S JUST ANGEL, OKAY?



"OKAY"? ARE YOU AMERICAN THEN... ANGEL?

I RATHER FANCIED I'D CAUGHT A HINT OF A BROGUE...

I'VE... LIVED IN AMERICA FOR THE PAST... SEVERAL YEARS.



I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO...

LOOK OUT!

EEEEEEEE!



THERE'S ANOTHER ONE!  
WHAT ARE THEY?  
WHAT DO THEY WANT?

THEY'RE VAMPIRES!

VERY GOOD, DEAD MAN!



AND WHAT WE WANT IS THE BLOOD STORED HERE!

THOUGH WE ARE CONTENT TO START WITH YOUR OWN FRESHER KIND!



AH-GH!

TOO LATE!



HOW DID YOU DO THAT? NO BLOOD SACK HAS THE STRENGTH TO...

SNUF! SNUF!  
IT CAN'T BE! YOU'RE...



ANGEL UUUHHHGGGG!



ANGEL!

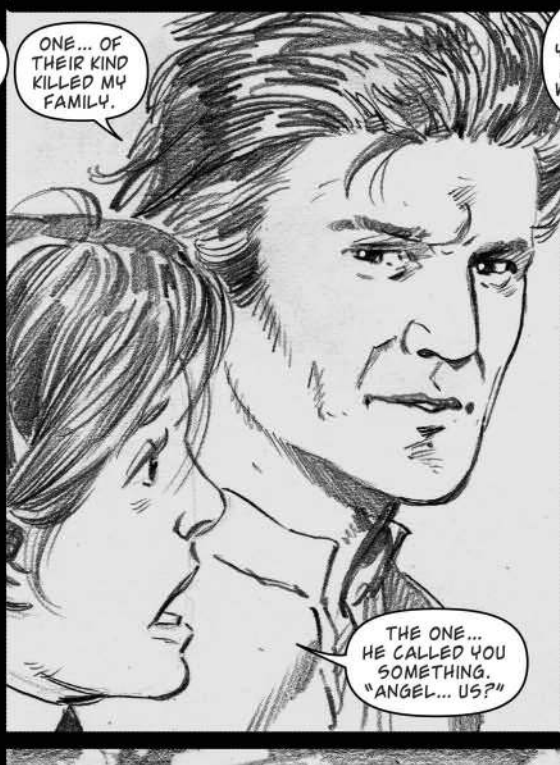
I SEE HIM!



WHO... WERE THEY? THEY WERE WEARING GERMAN UNIFORMS.

I'VE BEEN... FIGHTING CREATURES LIKE THEM... A LONG TIME.

BUT... THEY SEEMED TO... KNOW YOU?



ONE... OF THEIR KIND KILLED MY FAMILY.

THE ONE... HE CALLED YOU SOMETHING. "ANGEL... US?"



IT'S NOTHING. BUT... NOW THAT YOU KNOW WHY I'M HERE... IF THERE WAS SOMETHING I COULD DO.

SOME WAY TO... BLEND IN?



OH... WELL... YES. I SUPPOSE THERE IS.




"WE ALWAYS NEED MORE AMBULANCE DRIVERS."

HURRY! SEVERAL ENEMY AIRCRAFT HAVE BEEN SEEN HEADING MORE OR LESS THIS WAY!








THE SCENT OF BLOOD IS TOO STRONG. IT OVERWHELMS ALL OTHER THOUGHTS.

FOR YEARS I HAVE SUBSISTED ON THE BLOOD OF RATS, COWS, ANYTHING BUT HUMAN BEINGS.


ABOARD THE GERMAN SUBMARINE, A KIND OF MADNESS CAME OVER ME. I TOLD MYSELF THEY WERE THE ENEMY. THAT KILLING THEM WAS JUSTIFIED.



NOW ALL I CAN THINK OF IS THE TASTE OF THEIR BLOOD.

FRESH.

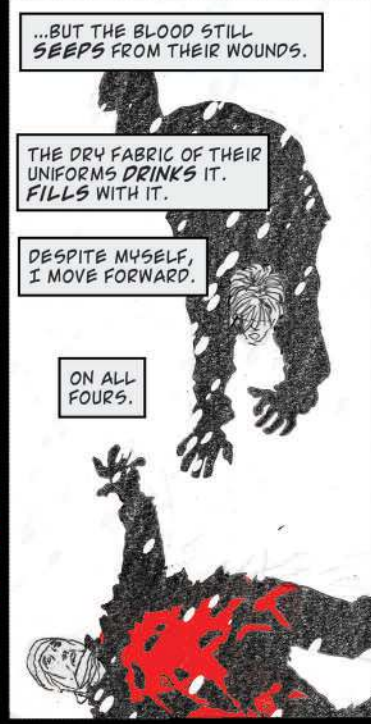
WARM.



THE MEMORY OF IT MINGLES WITH THE SMELL RISING FROM THE TWO DEAD MEN BEFORE ME.

THE MEN WHOSE LIVES I HAD BEEN TRYING TO SAVE.

THEIR HEARTS NO LONGER BEAT...



...BUT THE BLOOD STILL SEEPS FROM THEIR WOUNDS.

THE DRY FABRIC OF THEIR UNIFORMS DRINKS IT. FILLS WITH IT.

DESPITE MYSELF, I MOVE FORWARD.

ON ALL FOURS.



LIKE SOME UNTHINKING BEAST.

**SNAP**





RIGHT! NO TROUBLE NOW, ME BEAUTY!

AND WE'LL GET THIS WRAPPED UP...



...NEAT AS A PRETTY PRESENT FROM FATHER CHRISTMAS!



AND JUST TO BE SURE...

WHAK  
WHAK  
WHAK  
WHAK  
WHAK  
WHAK



OUT COLD! PITY THESE BUGGERS DON'T BRUISE!

WHY DON'T WE JUST STAKE 'IM AND BE DONE WITH IT, SARGE?



BECAUSE THE COLONEL SAYS WE DON'T, IS WHY!

GOT 'IM. COLONEL!

JOLLY GOOD! PUT HIM IN MY TRUNK...



"...AND WE'LL SE ABOUT FINISHING UP THIS LITTLE LOT!"

'ERE THEY COME!

'OPE THEY'VE 'AD GOOD 'UNTING!



ALL RIGHT, LADS! ROUSE THE HOUSE AND WE'LL FIND OUT HOW FAR THIS PESTILENCE HAS GOT!

YESSIR!



GLOMP GLOMP THUD CRASH

WHAT IN THE WORLD—?



I SAY! WHAT THE DEVIL ARE YOU MEN DOING HERE?

LADY MARGARET D'ASCOYNE?



WYNDAM-PRYCE IS MY NAME. COLONEL GEOFFREY WYNDAM-PRICE.



AND MY QUESTION, COLONEL?

WE'RE HERE ON HER MAJESTY'S BUSINESS, YOUR LADYSHIP.

RIGHT, CHAPS! PUT THAT IN THE DRAWING ROOM OVER THERE!



COLONEL! THAT'S OUR OPERATING THEATRE!

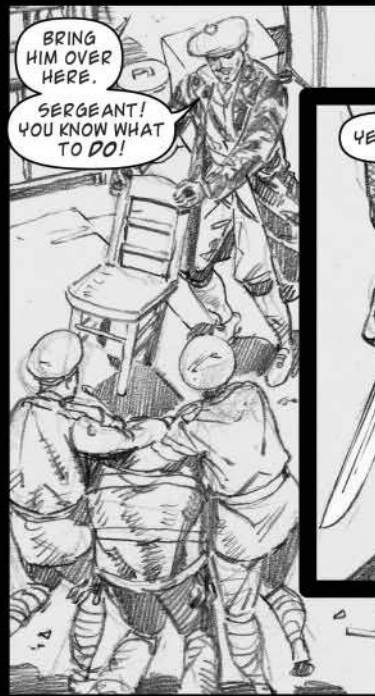
WHAT HAVE YOU GOT IN THAT TRUNK?

PERHAPS SOME ANSWERS...



OH, MY LORD! IT'S A MAN!

IT AIN'T THAT, Y'LADYSHIP!



BRING HIM OVER HERE.

SERGEANT! YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO!



YESSIR!

OUT YOU COME, CHOMPERS!

RIIIIIIPT



ANGEL!

WHAT HAVE THEY DONE TO YOU?

YOU ACKNOWLEDGE KNOWING THIS VAMPIRE, YOUR LADYSHIP?



VAMPIRE? ARE YOU DAFT?

HE'S NOT A VAMPIRE! HE KILLS VAMPIRES!

CHOOSE YOUR NEXT WORDS VERY CAREFULLY, LADY MARGARET.



YOU DON'T WANT TO INCRIMINATE YOURSELF!

SAH! WE 'AVE THE 'OLE 'OUSE ROUNDED UP, SAH!

BRING THEM IN.



ALL RIGHT, YOU LOT! DAH! MAKE A FUSS!

MARGARET! THEY'VE GOT YOU TOO!


WHAT THE DEVIL IS HAPPENING?

I... DON'T KNOW, MR. STEVENS.



THEN ALLOW ME TO MAKE EVERYTHING CLEAR, YOU LADYSHIP.


THIS THING YOU CALL "ANGEL" IS, INDEED, ONE OF THE NOSFERATU—THE UNDEAD.



AN UNKNOWN NUMBER OF THESE VERMIN ARE PRESENTLY IN THE EMPLOY OF THE KAISER—ALTHOUGH WE SUSPECT THEIR MOTIVES ARE ENTIRELY THEIR OWN.


MY UNIT HAS BEEN SET THE TASK OF ROOTING OUT AND DESTROYING THIS INFESTATION.

AND SINCE YOU AND YOUR STAFF HAVE BEEN EXPOSED TO THIS ONE FOR AN UNCERTAIN AMOUNT OF TIME...



...IT IS NECESSARY THAT WE DETERMINE HOW MANY OF YOU IT MANY HAVE INFECTED.

FORTUNATELY...



...THERE IS A QUICK AND EASY MEANS BY WHICH WE CAN DO JUST THAT.

AND DESTROY THIS ONE AT THE SAME TIME!

# FRONT LINES




FROM THE MOMENT THE **SUNLIGHT** TOUCHES ME, I KNOW I HAVE ONLY SECONDS TO TAKE ACTION.

AND THAT THAT **ACTION** MUST BE THE **LAST** THING MY CAPTORS WOULD EXPECT.



I'M BURNING BEFORE I  
EVEN HIT THE GROUND.

THIS IS WHY MY ESCAPE  
WAS SO UNEXPECTED.



I HURL MYSELF  
HEADLONG INTO  
THE DEEPEST  
DRIFTED SNOW...




...BUT THE RESPIRE  
LASTS BARELY MORE  
THAN A SECOND.

I DEPEND NOW ON  
MY MEMORY OF  
THIS ROUTE, DRIVEN  
MORE THAN A DOZEN  
TIMES AT NIGHT.




THE RICKETY, OLD  
HENHOUSE IS  
WHERE I REMEMBER.



ONE HARD HIT IS  
ENOUGH TO SEND  
ITS CANOPY OF  
SNOW TUMBLING  
ONTO MY BACK.

THIS WILL LAST  
LONGER, AND  
BRING ME  
CLOSER TO  
MY GOAL.



BUT BEHIND ME I HEAR  
THE UNMISTAKABLE  
INDICATION THAT MY  
CAPTORS HAVE  
GOTTEN OVER THEIR  
INITIAL SHOCK.




KLIK  
KLIK  
KLIK

THE SHOT CAN DO ME NO  
PERMANENT DAMAGE...



BANG

...BUT IT IS ENOUGH TO  
THROW ME OFF MY STRIDE.



MY GOAL SEEMS AT ONCE  
SO CLOSE, AND YET SO  
VERY FAR AWAY.




**BANG** **BANG**

IT SEEMS ALMOST A  
MIRACLE WHEN I MAKE  
IT TO THE BRIDGE...



...BUT I KNOW BETTER THAN  
TO COUNT ON MIRACLES!



THE DROP IS JUST  
ENOUGH FOR ME TO  
BREAK THROUGH.

THE WATER BELOW SEEMS  
EVEN COLDER THAN THE  
ICE THAT COVERS IT.



'E'S GONE  
UNDER!




'E'S NOT  
GETTIN' AWAY  
THAT EASILY!  
FIRE! FIRE!



WAIT! LOOK!  
THE WATER'S  
FLOWING THAT  
WAY!



IF 'E'S RIDING  
CURRENT, 'E'LL  
BE ON THE OTHER  
SIDE OF THE  
BRIDGE!




SWEEP  
THE AREA, LADS!  
MAYBE WE'LL 'IT  
'IM BY LUCK!

**STOP!**



DAMMIT ALL,  
STOP WASTING  
AMMUNITION!

YOU SHOULD  
KNOW BETTER  
THAN THAT!




IF HE WASN'T  
CONSUMED BY THE  
FLAMES, AND HAS  
BEEN SWEEP ALONG  
BY THE WATERS...

...THERE'LL BE  
NOTHING TO STOP HIM  
STAYING HIDDEN UNDER  
THE ICE FOR HOURS IF  
HE SO CHOOSES!

WHAT CAN  
WE DO THEN,  
SIR?

I'LL SEND  
OUT AN ALERT  
TO ALL STATIONS  
DOWNSTREAM.

IF HE POPS  
UP ANYWHERE  
BETWEEN HERE AND  
THE GERMAN LINES,  
SOMEONE IS SURE  
TO SPOT HIM.

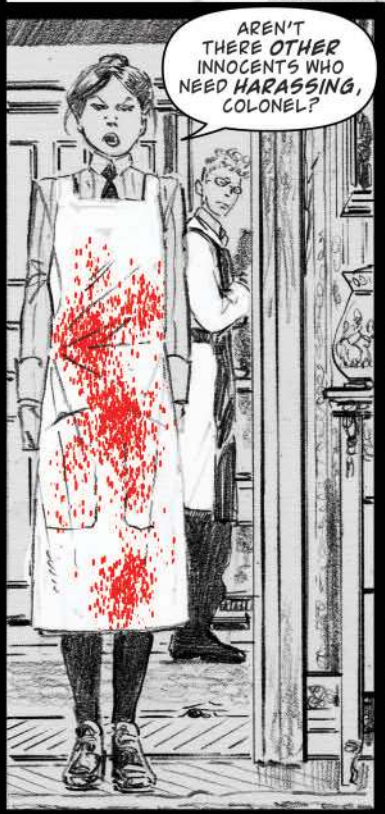


AND  
NOW... I NEED  
TO CONTINUE THE  
INTERROGATION  
OF THE HOSPITAL  
PERSONNEL.

LADY  
D'ASCOYNE  
IN MOST  
PARTICULAR!



YOU WAITED ALL DAY?



AREN'T THERE OTHER INNOCENTS WHO NEED HARASSING, COLONEL?



I ASSURE YOU, YOUR LADYSHIP, HARASSMENT IS THE LAST THING MY MEN AND I HAVE ON OUR MINDS.

NOW, IF YOU ARE DONE FOR THE DAY, WON'T YOU JOIN ME FOR SOME TEA?



TEA...? I HAVEN'T HAD A CUP OF REAL TEA IN ALMOST A YEAR!

THE PRIVATIONS OF WAR. BUT ONE MUST CLING TO CIVILIZATION IN THE FACE OF SAVAGERY.



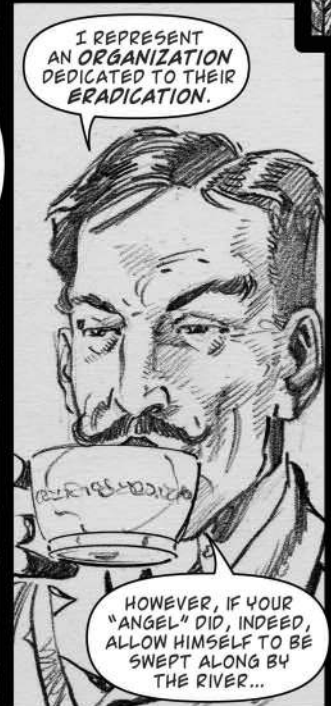
NOT YET. BUT WE WILL.

I HOPE YOU APPRECIATE, LADY MARGARET, THAT YOU ARE NOW PARTY TO CERTAIN INFORMATION THAT IS NOT KNOWN BY EVEN ONE IN ONE MILLION PEOPLE.

AND WHAT ABOUT ANGEL, COLONEL? DID YOU... KILL HIM?

INFORMATION?

THAT VAMPIRES ARE NOT MERELY THE STUFF OF LEGEND. THAT THEY EXIST.




I REPRESENT AN ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO THEIR ERADICATION.

HOWEVER, IF YOUR "ANGEL" DID, INDEED, ALLOW HIMSELF TO BE SWEEP ALONG BY THE RIVER...

"...WITHIN A FEW MINUTES HE WOULD HAVE CROSSED THE GERMAN LINES.

"AND THAT MAKES HIM THE KAISER'S PROBLEM!"




I DON'T KNOW HOW FAR I HAVE TRAVELED, PUSHING AGAINST THE CURRENT.

ABOVE THE ICE, DAY HAS FADED INTO EVENING...



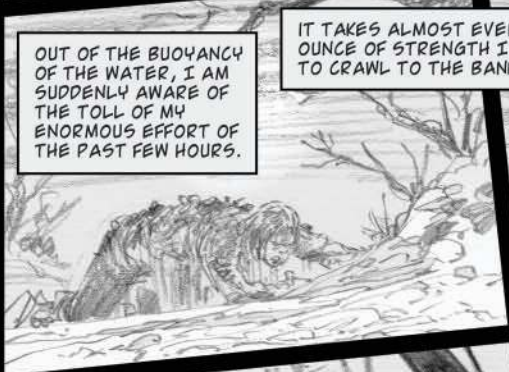
...AND I FEEL IT IS SAFE TO VENTURE OUT INTO THE OPEN AIR AGAIN.



BREAKING THROUGH THE ICE IS A STRANGE EXPERIENCE.


SOME ANCIENT MEMORY MAKES MY LUNGS WANT TO GASP AND GULP, FILL THEMSELVES WITH LIFE-GIVING AIR.

BUT THE TIME FOR THAT IS LONG PAST.




OUT OF THE BUOYANCY OF THE WATER, I AM SUDDENLY AWARE OF THE TOLL OF MY ENORMOUS EFFORT OF THE PAST FEW HOURS.


IT TAKES ALMOST EVERY OUNCE OF STRENGTH I HAVE TO CRAWL TO THE BANK.



AND THERE IS STILL A CLIMB AHEAD OF ME.




AT THE TOP I AM FROZEN FOR A MOMENT BY WHAT I SEE.



THIS PART OF THE FOREST HAS BEEN BLASTED AND BURNED BY SHELL FIRE.

I REALIZE I HAVE CROSSED THE FRONT LINES...



...AND AS I MAKE MY WAY ACROSS A FIELD OF OLD CRATES TURNED INTO A PEACEFUL LUNAR LANDSCAPE BY YESTERDAY'S SNOW...

...I REALIZE ALSO THAT I AM NOT ALONE.



HALT!

96



WHO ARE YOU?  
WHAT ARE YOU  
DOING HERE?

I'M... NOBODY.  
A CIVILIAN. I...  
CROSSED THE  
LINES WITHOUT  
MEANING TO.



WHAT'S  
WRONG WITH  
YOUR SHIRT?  
WERE YOU ON  
FIRE?

WHAT IN...?  
YOU'RE SOAKING  
WET!

SOME...  
BRITISH SOLDIERS  
THREW ME OFF A  
BRIDGE.



AH! BECAUSE  
YOU ARE IRISH?  
THAT IS A TRACE  
OF ACCENT I  
DETECT, YES?

CORPORAL! GIVE  
HIM MUELLER'S  
COAT! HE DOESN'T  
NEED IT!

NO! HE  
COULD BE ONE  
OF THEM!



"THEM"?

TELL HIM,  
SERGEANT!

SOONER OR  
LATER, WE HAVE TO  
TELL SOMEBODY!



YES...

BUT FOR THREE  
DAYS I HAVE BEEN  
TRYING NOT TO  
THINK ABOUT IT...

WHAT  
HAPPENED?



"WE HAD BEEN UNDER  
CONSTANT BARRAGE.

"THEN, AFTER ALMOST  
A FULL DAY... SUDDENLY  
THEY STOPPED.

"THERE WAS A LONG SILENCE  
THAT WAS SOMEHOW WORSE  
THAN THE CANNON FIRE...

"...THEN SUDDENLY A  
TERRIBLE ROAR.

"LIKE ALL THE HOUNDS  
OF HELL HAD BEEN LET  
LOOSE AT ONCE.

"IN THE NEXT INSTANT  
THEY WERE UPON US.

"SOME OF US BROKE  
AWAY IN THE CONFUSION.

"WE SCRAMBLED  
FROM THE TRENCH  
AND RAN OUT INTO  
NO MAN'S LAND.

"THEY CAME FROM  
NOWHERE, AS IF THEY  
FELL FROM THE SKY.

"BEFORE THEY COULD EVEN  
MOVE, MY COMRADES WERE  
BEING TORN TO SHREDS.

WE RAN.

WE RAN...  
UNTIL WE COULD  
NO LONGER HEAR  
THE SCREAMS.

"ONLY FIVE OF US GOT AWAY."

"WE WANDERED ACROSS NO MAN'S LAND, WAITING FOR THE ENEMY TO SEE US AND FIRE..."

"BUT NOTHING HAPPENED."

"FIVE, OUT OF THIRTY."



"UNTIL..."

MUELLER!

"I HAD SEEN DEATH IN ENOUGH MEN'S EYES TO KNOW HE HAD ONLY MOMENTS TO LIVE."

"HE BEGGED ME NOT TO LEAVE HIM OUT THERE TO ROT."

"BEGGED ME TO FIND A WAY TO GET HIM HOME..."

"AND FOR THREE DAYS WE HAVE BEEN HIDING IN THESE WOODS, TRYING TO FIND A WAY TO DO JUST THAT."

WAIT... YOUR COMRADE DIED BECAUSE HE WAS ATTACKED BY VAMPIRES?

LET ME SEE THAT BODY!



WHAT'S HE DOING! GET HIM AWAY FROM MUELLER!!

STOP! WHATEVER YOU'RE DOING...

I THOUGHT HE'D BEEN SHOT...

BUT THE MARKS ARE HERE. HE WAS BITTEN.

BUT SOMETHING ISN'T RIGHT.



THE AMOUNT OF TIME HE TOOK TO DIE.

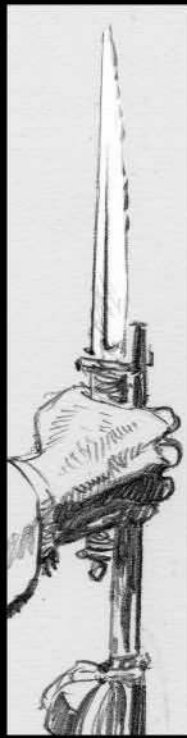
THEY WANTED HIM TO BE ABLE TO TRAVEL. TO MOVE AWAY FROM THE ATTACK POINT.

THEY AREN'T JUST FEEDING...



...THEY'RE RECRUITING.

AND THAT MEANS WE HAVE TO ACT QUICKLY...



WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING TO DO WITH THAT BAYONET?

THE BLADE ISN'T IN THE BEST SHAPE...



...BUT I DON'T HAVE TO DO THIS NEATLY.

IT ONLY MATTERS THAT IT GETS DONE.



WHAT GETS DONE?

SERGEANT! DON'T LET HIM NEAR MUELLER! HE'S INSANE!

KILL HIM! KILL HIM NOW!

LISTEN TO ME. YOU'VE SEEN THOSE CREATURES. YOU KNOW THEY'RE REAL.

MUELLER WAS... INFECTED BY THEM. HE'S NOT MUELLER ANY MORE. HE'S ONE OF THEM.

OR SOON WILL BE!

ARE YOU MAD? MUELLER IS DEAD!

NO, HE'S NOT. HE'S SOMETHING MUCH, MUCH WORSE THAN DEAD!



WE'VE HEARD ENOUGH! SERGEANT! SHOOT!

YOU SEEM TO HAVE LEFT ME NO CHOICE, STRANGER.



SCHULTZ!



HOW GOOD OF YOU TO DEFEND ME, SCHULTZIE!



FOR THAT,  
I REWARD YOU  
WITH THE REAL  
DEATH!



MUELLER! NO! NO!  
NO!



WASTING  
THE KAISER'S  
AMMUNITION,  
SERGEANT!  
NOW, I AM  
INDESTRUCTIBLE!



NOT  
QUITE!



IDIOTS!



YOU HAVE NOT  
EVEN *BEGUN*  
TO UNDERSTAND WHAT  
HAS *HAPPENED*  
TO ME!

AND WHAT WILL  
NOW HAPPEN TO  
EACH OF YOU!





YOU SEE...  
NOT ENTIRELY  
INDESTRUCTIBLE!



WHAT... WHAT  
HAPPENED  
TO HIM?

WORRY  
ABOUT THAT  
LATER.

SOLDIER,  
DID HE BITE  
YOU?

NO. I  
DON'T THINK  
SO.



BE SURE.  
BUT... WE'RE NOT  
DONE YET. THERE'S  
STILL THE MATTER OF  
YOUR COMRADES WHO  
WERE ATTACKED IN  
THE TRENCHES...



GONE! NO  
TRACE OF  
THEM!

THEIR  
ATTACKERS  
MUST HAVE  
TAKEN THE  
BODIES FOR  
BURIAL.



WHICH MEANS MY  
GUESS WAS RIGHT.  
THEY'RE NOT JUST  
FEEDING...



THERE  
WAS SO MUCH  
VIOLENCE...

WHY IS THERE  
SO LITTLE  
BLOOD?

THEY... TEND  
TO BE CAREFUL  
ABOUT THAT.

WE HAVE TO  
FIND THOSE  
BODIES!



ST-STRANGER...





NO, THEY'RE NOT. NOT ANY MORE!

BUT THEY REMEMBER WHEN THEY WERE.  
AND THEY CAN USE THAT AGAINST YOU!

YOU HEARD THE MAN!  
DO IT! DO IT!

THEY FIGHT BRAVELY,  
FOR THE MOST PART.

BUT WE ARE  
OUTNUMBERED.

AND NOT ALL SEEM  
SO WILLING TO FIGHT.

IT SEEMS AS THOUGH  
IT WILL ALL BE OVER  
IN SECONDS, THEN...

**STOP!**

LOOK!

YES.  
I KNOW  
YOU.

BEFORE HE DIES, I  
WANT A BETTER LOOK  
AT THIS WOLF AMONG  
THE SHEEP!

YOU... KNOW  
ME, BLOOD  
SACK?

**CRIXUS!**

AND YOU  
KNOW ME!



GOD IN HEAVEN!

HE'S ONE OF THEM!  
HE'S ONE OF THEM!

BUT... HE... HELPED... US...?!

ANGELUS? CAN THAT REALLY BE YOU?  
I HAD HEARD... STORIES. RUMORS. YOU HAD A PROBLEM WITH SOME GYPSIES...

THE ONLY PROBLEM I HAD WAS WHICH ONE TO EAT FIRST. NOW BACK AWAY, CRIXUS. THESE HUMANS ARE MINE.



I THINK NOT!  
GRAB HIM!



CALL OFF YOUR MEN, CRIXUS!

I'VE KILLED ENOUGH FOR ONE DAY!

AND YOU'LL KILL NO MORE!

I DON'T CARE HOW FAMOUS YOU ARE! WHEN A VAMPIRE KILLS HIS OWN KIND...



STOP!



THIS IS NOT A MATTER OF US TO DECIDE!



SOMETHING STINKS HERE, ANGELUS...

BUT IT IS FOR OUR LEADER TO JUDGE WHAT TO DO WITH YOU.

YOUR... LEADER? ISN'T THAT YOU, CRIXUS?



THINGS HAVE CHANGED SINCE LAST WE MET, ANGELUS.

THERE ARE NEW FORCES AT PLAY IN THE WORLD.

BIND THE HUMANS! BRING THEM!



TRULY AMAZING, IS IT NOT, ANGELUS?

IN OUR CENTURIES WE HAVE SEEN THE HUMANS STRIVE CONSTANTLY TO FIND NEW AND BETTER WAYS TO KILL THEMSELVES.



BUT THIS WAR IS WORSE THAN ANYTHING WE HAVE KNOWN.

EXACTLY.

A WHOLE CONTINENT HAS BEEN LAID BEFORE US AS A KILLING FIELD.



AT FIRST, WE WERE DISORGANIZED. WE DID NOT FULLY APPRECIATE WHAT HAD BEEN MADE FOR US.

BUT THERE WAS ONE WHO UNDERSTOOD. ONE WHO IS OLDER, ONE WHO IS WISER THAN ANY OF US.

HE BROUGHT US TOGETHER—AND HE OFFERED OUR SERVICES TO THE KAISER. FOR A PRICE.



PRICE?

IF THE ONE YOU SPEAK OF IS WHO I THINK IT IS, THE PRICE MAY BE MORE THAN ANYONE SHOULD BE WILLING TO PAY!

YOU'LL KNOW SOON ENOUGH!



THIS IS WHAT WE NOW CALL HOME.



OF... COURSE.

OF COURSE, WE HAD TO KILL ALL THE NUNS WHO FORMERLY RESIDED HERE.

BUT... EVEN IN TIME OF WAR WE ARE ALLOWED A LITTLE FUN, NO?

BUT WHAT ABOUT THAT, CRIXUS?



THAT DIDN'T BELONG TO NUNS, SURELY?

A GIFT FROM THE KAISER.

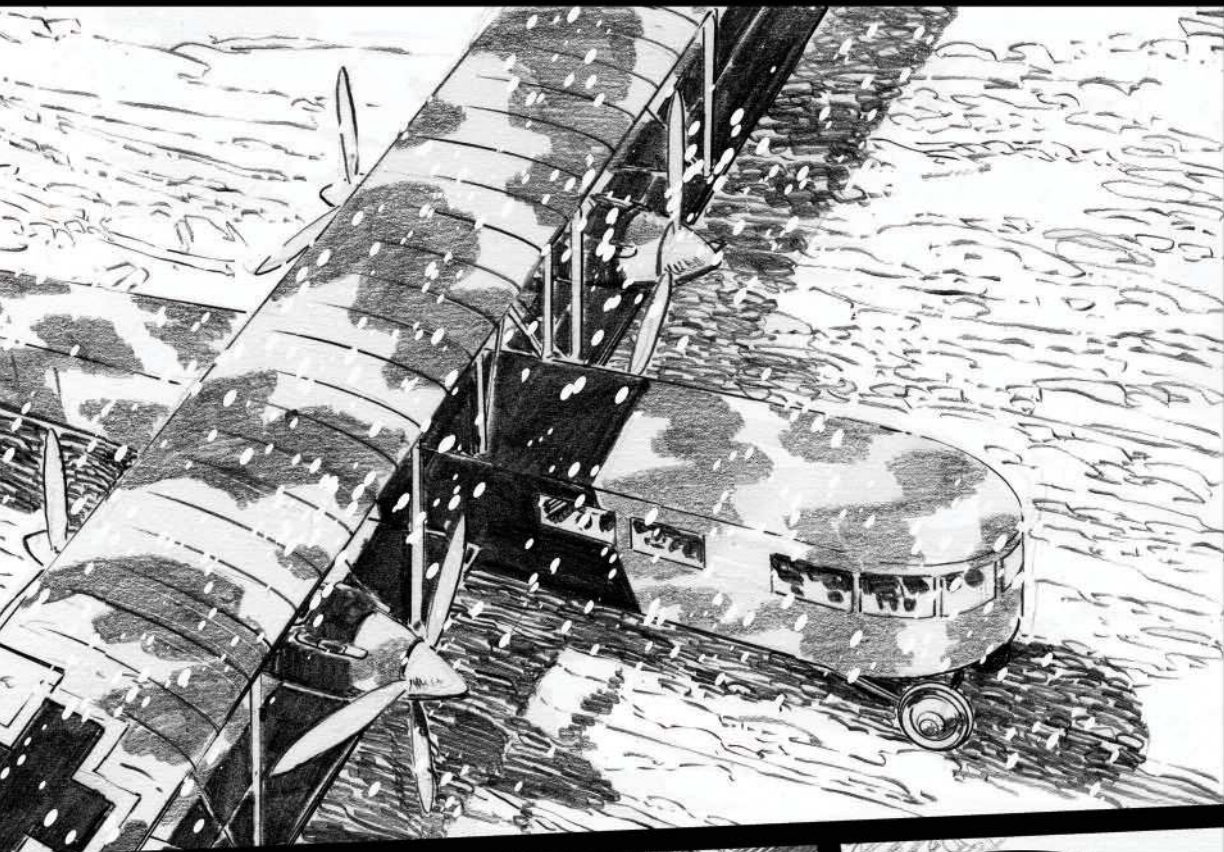
I HOPE YOU HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPERIENCE IT, ANGELUS. WE SWOOP DOWN UPON UNSUSPECTING PREY—LIKE RIDING THE THUNDER!

WE SEEM TO BE GOING DOWN A LONG WAY, CRIXUS.

HERE, IN THE CATACOMBS, WE ARE MOSTLY FREE FROM EXTERNAL LIGHT.

YES. THE LITTLE SISTERS OF ETERNAL SORROW DID NOT KEEP THIS PLACE IN THE BEST REPAIR.

WE HAVE TO GO DEEP TO AVOID THE PROBING FINGERS OF SUNLIGHT.



AND TO BE SURE, WE HAVE THESE STONE COFFINS WITH NICE COZY LIDS.

THEY LOOK—LESS THAN COMFORTABLE, CRIXUS!

COMFORT WILL BE OF LITTLE CONCERN TO YOU, ANGELUS...



...UNLESS YOU CAN EXPLAIN WHY THERE IS SO MUCH OF THE STENCH OF A SOUL ABOUT YOU!



# INTERLUDE

LONDON



YOU  
SENT FOR  
ME, SIR?



... BY  
REPUTATION IF NOT  
PERSONALLY.

I TAKE IT  
SOMETHING RATHER  
IMPORTANT IS  
TRANSPIRING?



TO SAY  
THE LEAST,  
COLONEL.

WE HAVE BEEN  
RECEIVING REPORTS  
OF A MOST DIRE NATURE  
FROM THE WESTERN  
FRONT.



AS IF THIS BLOODY  
WAR WASN'T BAD  
ENOUGH, IT SEEMS A  
NEW WRINKLE HAS  
BEEN ADDED.

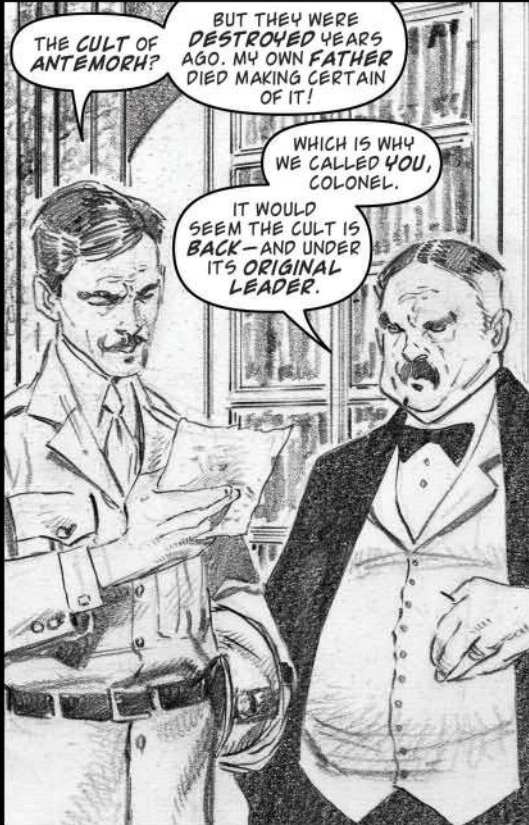




YES, COLONEL. I BELIEVE YOU ARE ACQUAINTED WITH THESE GENTLEMEN?



WE WAITED TO ACT UNTIL WE WERE CERTAIN.



THE CULT OF ANTEMORH?

BUT THEY WERE DESTROYED YEARS AGO. MY OWN FATHER DIED MAKING CERTAIN OF IT!

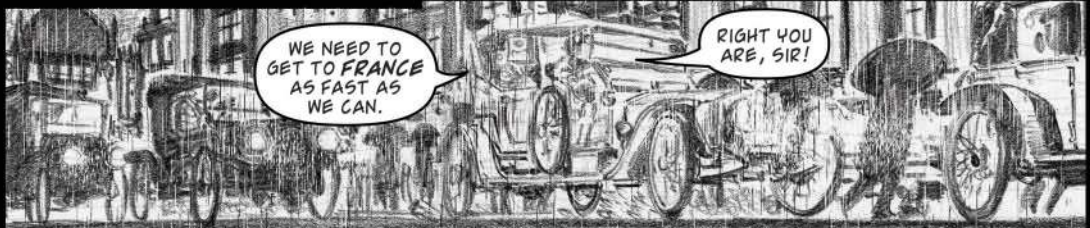
WHICH IS WHY WE CALLED YOU, COLONEL.

IT WOULD SEEM THE CULT IS BACK - AND UNDER ITS ORIGINAL LEADER.



THEN IF YOU WILL EXCUSE ME, GENTLEMEN...

...I MUST MAKE IMMEDIATE ARRANGEMENTS FOR TRANSPORT TO FRANCE.





LOOK SHARP, CORPORAL!

GET AS MANY PEOPLE TO COVER AS YOU CAN!



HURRY! HURRY! THE UNDERGROUND WILL BE THE SAFEST PLACE UNTIL THIS RAID ENDS!



BUT THAT'S A KIND OF SCREAM I'VE HEARD TOO MANY TIMES BEFORE!



WOMAN SCREAMING-?!



DAMN! I WAS RIGHT!



"VAMPIRE!"



GET AWAY FROM HER!

AH! A HERO! YOU'RE TOO LATE TO SAVE THIS ONE!



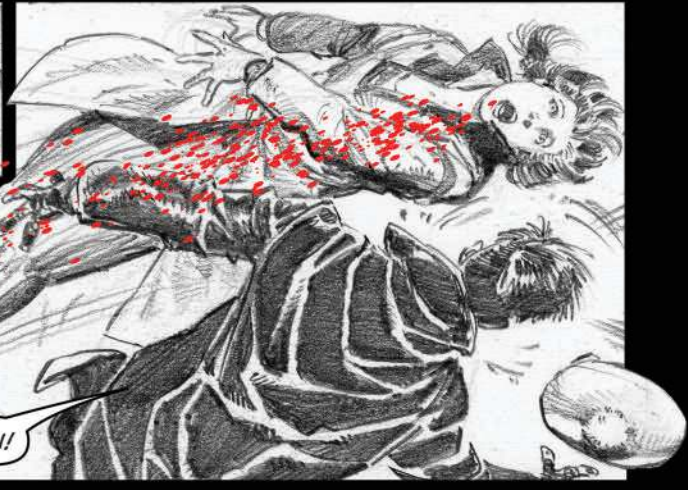
BUT NOT TOO LATE TO SORT YOU OUT!

UNGH!



VERY GOOD, HERO!

YOU HAVE STRENGTH TO MATCH YOUR MISPLACED COURAGE!



UHN!



AND YOU HAVE THE TYPICAL ARROGANCE OF YOUR KIND, VAMPIRE.

IT SEEMS NONE OF YOU WILL EVER LEARN THERE ARE THOSE WHO DO NOT FEAR YOU.



AND WHO HAVE BEEN TRAINED TO DEAL WITH YOU!



BUT HOW THE DEVIL DID HE GET HERE?



"DEVIL" IS RIGHT, ENGLANDER!

GAH!!



WE SERVE A VERY OLD DEVIL INDEED!

WHAT IN BLAZES? VAMPIRES... FALLING OUT OF THE SKY?!



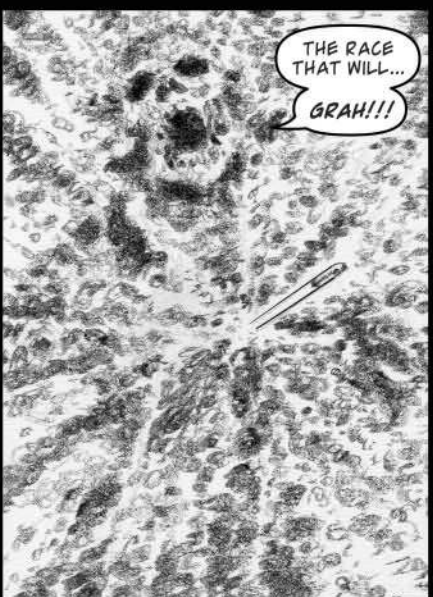
YES, ENGLANDER! NOT AT ALL THE KIND OF RAIN YOUR SOGGY COUNTRY IS USED TO!



GERMANS! YOU'RE ALL... GERMAN!



WE WERE. BUT WE BELONG NOW TO A MUCH LARGER RACE!



THE RACE THAT WILL... GRAH!!!



LOOK SHARP, SIR!

IT'S GOING TO TAKE ME A FEW TICKS TO RELOAD!



NOT TO WORRY, CORPORAL!  
I'VE GOT MY SECOND WIND NOW!



AND WE CAN DUST UP THIS LOT IN A TRICE!



YOU HUFF AND PUFF, LITTLE MAN!

COME ON, BESSY! THIS IS NO TIME TO STIFFEN UP ON ME!



NOT TO WORRY, OLD LAD!  
I THINK THIS BRINGS US TO ABOUT EVEN, DOESN'T IT?



THESE ARE MORE THAN MERE HUMANS.  
THEY ARE TRAINED!  
THEY KNOW WHAT THEY ARE DOING.



BUT THEIR TRAINING CANNOT HAVE PREPARED THEM FOR EVERYTHING!

THE BUGGER GOT AWAY. AND PARDON MY FRENCH, SIR!

WE'LL FILE A REPORT BEFORE WE SET SAIL.

AS LONG AS THE HOME GUARD ARE ON THE ALERT, HE SHAN'T GET FAR.



RIGHT NOW, WE HAVE SOMETHING MORE... URGENT TO ATTEND TO.

HE'S TOO FAST! I CAN'T GET A GOOD SHOT!



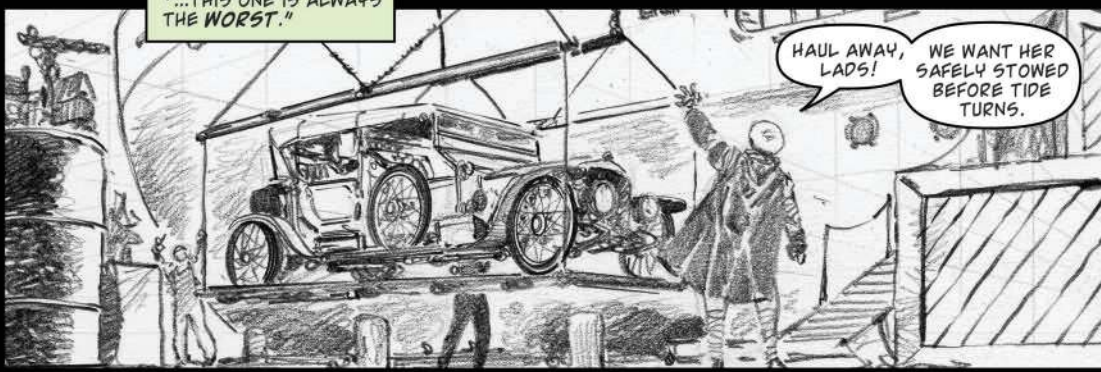
YESSIR.

YOU KNOW, OF ALL THE MESSY JOBS WE HAVE TO DO...

KEEP AN EYE ON THE BODY, CORPORAL.

I'LL GET MY SWORD FROM THE ROLLS.

"...THIS ONE IS ALWAYS THE WORST."



HAUL AWAY, LADS!

WE WANT HER SAFELY STOWED BEFORE TIDE TURNS.

HOW ARE YOU GETTING ALONG, DOWLING?

EEE, I'M RIGHT RUM IN THE TUM, SIR!

NOW TO BE DONE TO STOP THIS SHIP ROLLING?

THEY SAY IT CAN HELP TO KEEP ONE'S EYES FIXED ON THE HORIZON.

HAVE YOU TRIED THAT?

AYE, SIR. ONE OF THE TARS TOLD ME. BUT ALL THAT DOES IS MAKE ME SEE THINGS.

UNLESS THAT'S REAL?

GOOD LORD!

"SOMEBODY BRING ME A PAIR OF FIELD GLASS! CHOP CHOP!"

IT IS! IT'S A BLOODY U-BOAT!

MUST'VE BEEN GOING A HELL OF A CLIP TO GROUND ITSELF LIKE THAT!

BUCK UP, CORPORAL! WE'LL BE ON SOLID GROUND SOON.

OR SOMETHING VERY MUCH LIKE IT.

RIGHT YOU ARE, SIR!

NO NEED TO SWING BACK FOR MY BREAKFAST...





NO ARGUMENT FROM ME THERE, SIR!

STILL... SOMETHING... FUNNY ABOUT THIS ONE, IF THIS OLD SNIFFER OF MINE IS TO BE TRUSTED.

THAT NOBLE NOSE OF YOURS HAS NOT LET ME DOWN IN THE EIGHT YEARS YOU'VE BEEN MY BATMAN, CORPORAL.

AND NONE OF THESE GERMANS HAVE BEEN LEFT IN A CONDITION IN WHICH THEY WILL RESURRECT.



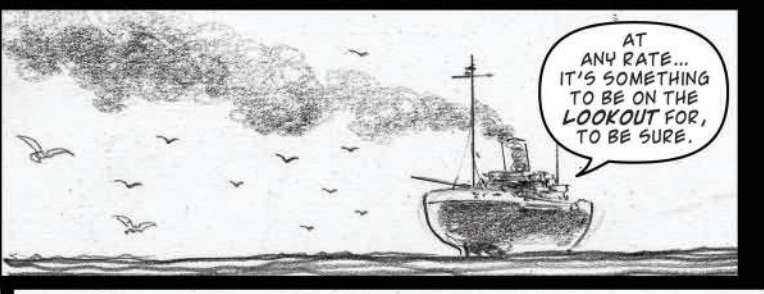
A VAMPIRE THAT FEEDS BUT DOES NOT SIRE. UNCOMMON, EH, OLD LAD?

ANYTHING THAT DOESN'T INCREASE THE OPPOSITION IS A PLUS AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED, SIR!



STILL... HAVE TO WONDER WHAT HIS GAME IS.

"GAME" MAY BE EXACTLY THE WORD. IT'S ALL SPORT TO THOSE DEVILS.



AT ANY RATE... IT'S SOMETHING TO BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR, TO BE SURE.



LOOK AT THIS COUNTRYSIDE, SIR! IT'S BLOODY CRIMINAL!

ME AN' TH' MISSUS COME HERE ON OUR HONEYMOON, BACK IN OH-NINE...

...AND IT WAS LIKE A VISIT TO PARADISE.



LOOKS LIKE WE'VE ARRIVED, SIR!

COBBS, MILLET, JONES AND MCDUGALL! IT'S LIKE OLD HOME WEEK!



GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN, LADS!

WE'VE GOT A NASTY ONE, THIS TIME! NOT ONLY A CLUTCH OF VAMPIRES WHO ARE APPARENTLY WORKING FOR THE KAISER...

...BUT THERE MAY BE SOME KIND OF ROGUE ON THE LOOSE!

NOT TO WORRY, SIR! WE'LL FIX 'IM THE WAY WE'VE FIXED ALL THE OTHERS!



JUST THAT I LIKE TO HEAR!

NOW, HERE'S THE PLAN... WE'LL DIVIDE INTO TWO GROUPS.

"COBBS AND MILLETT, YOU GO WITH DOWLING AND DO A THOROUGH RUNDOWN ON THAT U-BOAT WE FOUND.

"JONES AND MCDUGAL, YOU'LL COME WITH ME.



"WE'LL FOLLOW UP ANY LEADS WE CAN FIND THAT MIGHT LEAD TO THIS ROGUE."

WAS THAT THE YANK THEY CALL "ANGEL"?



"IF WE CAN GET ON HIS TRAIL, WE'LL RUN HIM TO GROUND!"

BLAST!

THAT BLOODY JERRY IS GOING TO BEAT US TO THE FOX!





LOOKS LIKE "ANGEL" HAS BEEN THROWN CLEAR. HE'S RUNNING. DAMNED IF IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE HE'S TRYING TO DRAW THE PILOT AWAY FROM...

THE LORRY'S GONE OFF THE ROAD. ROLLED.



GOT HIM! BOUNDER CUT HIM DOWN ON THE RUN!

BUT I DON'T THINK HE'S...

BY GOD! HE'S GONE BACK TO THE LORRY!



HE'S PULLING THE WOUNDED MEN OUT!

LAI D THEM OUT IN THE SNOW. NOW HE'S CROUCHING UNDER A TREE.



PERHAPS WE WERE...

NO! THERE HE GOES! THE BLIGHTER'S FEEDING!

ALL RIGHT, CAPTAIN!



"YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO!"

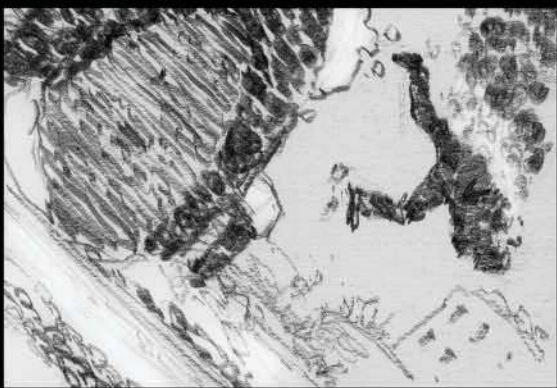
OH, MY LORD! IT'S A MAN!


IT AIN'T THAT, Y'LADYSHIP!




ANGEL!

WHAT HAVE THEY DONE TO YOU?






WAIT! LOOK!  
THE WATER'S  
FLOWING THAT  
WAY!



IF 'E'S RIDING  
CURRENT, 'E'LL  
BE ON THE OTHER  
SIDE OF THE  
BRIDGE!




SWEEP  
THE AREA, LADS!  
MAYBE WE'LL 'IT  
'IM BY LUCK!

STOP!



DAMMIT ALL,  
STOP WASTING  
AMMUNITION!

YOU SHOULD  
KNOW BETTER  
THAN THAT!



IF HE WASN'T  
CONSUMED BY THE  
FLAMES, AND HAS  
BEEN SWEEP ALONG  
BY THE WATERS...

...THERE'LL BE  
NOTHING TO STOP HIM  
STAYING HIDDEN UNDER  
THE ICE FOR HOURS IF  
HE SO CHOOSES!

WHAT CAN  
WE DO THEN,  
SIR?

I'LL SEND  
OUT AN ALERT  
TO ALL STATIONS  
DOWNSTREAM.

IF HE POPS  
UP ANYWHERE  
BETWEEN HERE AND  
THE GERMAN LINES,  
SOMEONE IS SURE  
TO SPOT HIM.

AND  
NOW... I NEED  
TO CONTINUE THE  
INTERROGATION  
OF THE HOSPITAL  
PERSONNEL.

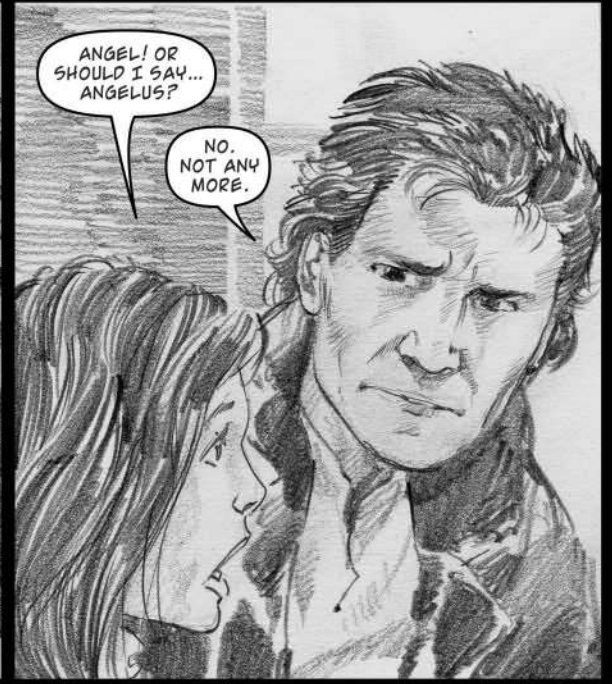


LADY  
D'ASCOYNE  
IN MOST  
PARTICULAR!





DON'T CRY OUT, LADY MARGARET!



ANGEL! OR SHOULD I SAY... ANGELUS?

NO. NOT ANY MORE.



I DON'T KNOW WHAT THAT BRITISH COLONEL TOLD YOU, LADY MARGARET... BUT THERE ARE THINGS HE DOESN'T KNOW. THINGS HE CAN'T KNOW.

I WAS ANGELUS. AND I WAS THE WORST OF THE WORST.

BUT SOME YEARS BACK, A TRIBE OF GYPSIES TOOK VENGEANCE ON ANGELUS FOR MURDERING ONE OF THEIR WOMENFOLK. THEY PUT A CURSE ON HIM... ON ME.

THEY GAVE ME BACK MY HUMAN SOUL... AND NOW I CARRY THE FULL WEIGHT OF GUILT FOR EVERY LIFE ANGELUS TOOK.



IS... THAT WHY YOU WERE... HELPING HERE?

YOU'RE SOMEHOW TRYING TO ATONE FOR WHAT ANGELUS DID?

THAT'S... PART OF IT, LADY MARGARET.



AND YOU EXPECT ME TO BELIEVE THAT??

DING-A-LING-A-LING



NICELY DONE, YOUR LADYSHIP!

NOW HOLD STILL, BLOODSUCKER...

... AND WE'LL FINISH THIS UP SHORT, SWEET...

...AND TO THE POINT!



HE'S CHANGED!

THE STORIES ARE TRUE!

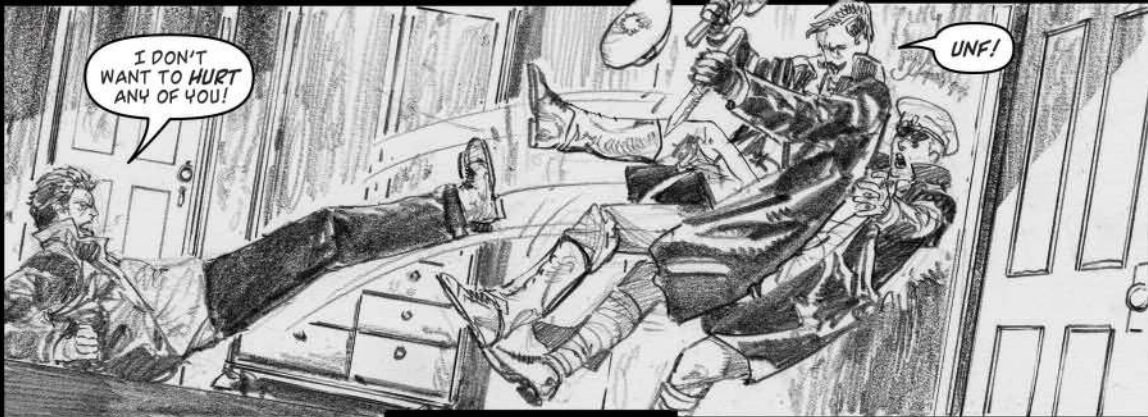
**BLONG**

NO!

YOU'RE HAD A LONG RUN, ANGELUS!

I'M PROUD TO BE THE ONE TO END IT!

NO! LISTEN TO ME!



I DON'T WANT TO HURT ANY OF YOU!

UNF!



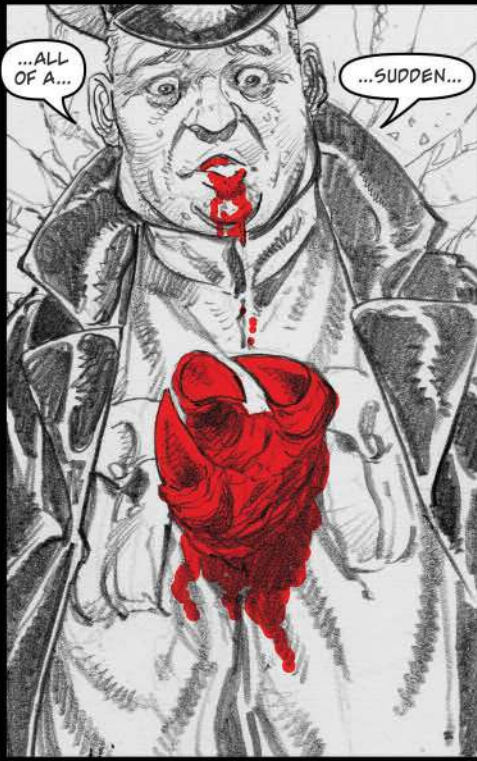
NICELY CUSHIONED, GILBERT! ALL THOSE BANGERS AND MASH IN THE MESS DIDN'T GO TO WASTE!

H-HALF A TICK, SIR...



...I FEEL...

...PROPER POORLY...



...ALL OF A...

...SUDDEN...





DEAD! THESE HUMANS ARE SO FRAGILE!

IT DISGUSTS ME TO THINK I ONCE WAS ONE!

KAKISTOS!



YOU KNOW MY NAME, HUMAN! THERE ARE FEW OF YOUR KIND OF HAVE THAT PRIVILEGE.

AT LEAST... ALIVE.



MY FAMILY HAS BEEN FIGHTING YOU AND YOUR KIND FOR GENERATIONS.

MY FATHER DIED AT YOUR HANDS.



AND NOW I AVENGE HIM!

CHUK



FOOL!

I KNOW STAKES  
CAN'T HURT YOU,  
KAKISTOS...

...BUT HOW  
DID YOU GET IN  
HERE?

HOW?

I WAS  
INVITED!


# MONSTERS

THREE DAYS.





IT SEEMS SO MUCH LONGER.




THE HUNGER THAT BURNS INSIDE ME INSISTS IT HAS BEEN WEEKS, MONTHS SINCE LAST I FED.

BUT THE MARCH OF THE COLD WINTER SUN ACROSS THE FLOOR OF MY PRISON CELL TELLS THE TRUE STORY.



THREE DAYS SINCE I WAS CAPTURED BY THE VAMPIRE LORD KAKISTOS.

CAPTURED AND CHAINED TO THIS WALL, IN THIS TOWER, HIGH IN THESE FROZEN MOUNTAINS.



I CONSIDER THE GERMANS.


THEY TWITCH AND MOAN IN THEIR UNEASY SLEEP, AND IT IS NOT HARD TO IMAGINE THE COLOR OF THEIR DREAMS.

WHEN I LINKED UP WITH THEM, BEHIND THEIR LINES THREE DAYS AGO, THAT HAD ALREADY BEEN SEVERAL DAYS WITHOUT FOOD.


I CAN IMAGINE ALL TOO WELL THE DAGGERS THEY FEEL NOW IN THEIR EMPTY BELLIES. AND I DO NOT NEED IMAGINATION TO SMELL THEIR FEAR.

THEY ARE SOLDIERS. THE NIGHTMARE INTO WHICH THEY HAVE BEEN THRUST IS LIKE NOTHING LIFE HAS PREPARED THEM FOR.

AND THERE WERE THREE OF THEM WHEN WE WERE TAKEN.



THEIR LEADER, THE QUIET, EARNEST SERGEANT, WAS TAKEN AWAY ALMOST AS SOON AS WE WERE BROUGHT HERE.



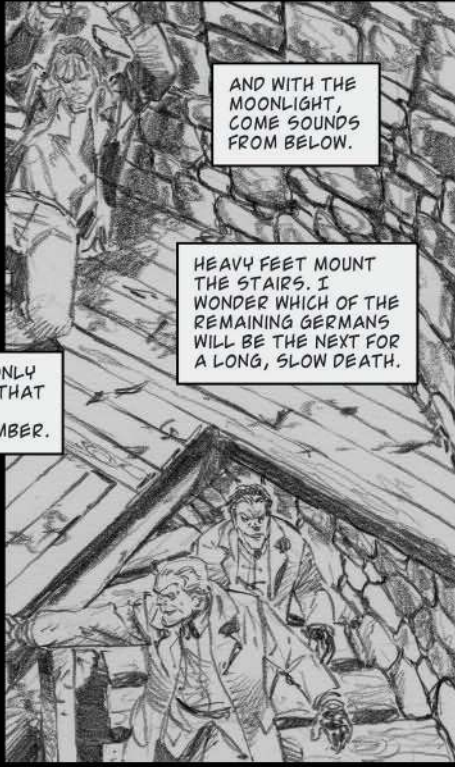
IT TOOK HIM NEARLY TWO DAYS TO DIE.

EVEN UP HERE, WE HEARD EVERY HOUR OF IT.



THE PATCH OF SUNLIGHT CREEPS UP THE ICY STONES.

SOON IT IS ONLY MOONLIGHT THAT LIGHTS OUR PRISON CHAMBER.



AND WITH THE MOONLIGHT, COME SOUNDS FROM BELOW.

HEAVY FEET MOUNT THE STAIRS. I WONDER WHICH OF THE REMAINING GERMANS WILL BE THE NEXT FOR A LONG, SLOW DEATH.



TO MY SURPRISE, IT IS ME OUR CAPTORS HAVE COME FOR THIS TIME.

THREE DAYS WITHOUT SUSTENANCE OF ANY KIND, I AM ALMOST TOO WEAK TO MAKE THE CHANGE...



...BUT I KNOW THERE WILL BE NO HOPE IF I WAIT ANY LONGER.

THIS IS AN OPPORTUNITY I MUST SEIZE WHILE I CAN.



THE MOMENT IS SHORT.

THEY ARE AT THE PEAK OF THEIR STRENGTH, I AT THE BOTTOM OF MINE.



I OFFER NO MORE RESISTANCE THAN A SACK OF FLOUR AS THEY DRAG ME INTO THE DARK BELLY OF THE KEEP.

THEY ARE SPEAKING, BUT THEIR WORDS ARE TO ME A DISTANT DRONE, INDECIPHERABLE.



THINGS ARE MORE CLEAR BY THE TIME WE REACH OUR DESTINATION.

CRIXUS!  
WHERE IS  
KAKISTOS?

ELSEWHERE.

HE HAS  
LEFT YOU TO  
OUR TENDER  
MERCIES,  
ANGELUS.

FUH! IT  
SEEMS WRONG  
EVEN TO CALL  
YOU BY THAT  
NAME.

KAKISTOS' AGENTS HAVE REPORTED BACK TO US. THEY HAVE FOUND OUT MUCH ABOUT YOU—ABOUT YOUR DOWNFALL.

WHAT HAPPENED, ANGELUS? WHAT MADE YOU LOSE YOUR TASTE FOR BLOOD, FOR HUMAN BLOOD, AT LEAST.

NO MATTER.

WE HAVE SAVED YOU SOME, ANYWAY. A FEW DROPS LEFT IN THIS CARCASS.

CAN YOU SMELL IT, ANGELUS?

I CAN.

THE MAN HAS BEEN DEAD ALMOST A DAY. HIS BLOOD IS STALE.

THE STENCH OF IT BURNS MY NOSTRILS.



IT TASTES EVEN WORSE THAN IT SMELLS.

CRIXUS AND THE OTHERS LAUGH AS THEY FORCE IT DOWN MY THROAT.

THAT'S IT, ANGELUS! DRINK IT ALL DOWN!

BUT IN THEIR TAUNTING THEY HAVE MISCALCULATED.

THE GOBLET HOLDS ONLY A FRACTION OF THE BLOOD I WOULD ONCE HAVE CONSUMED IN A SINGLE FEEDING.



BUT IT IS ENOUGH.

I KNOW MY SUDDEN SURGE OF STRENGTH WILL BE SHORT-LIVED...



...BUT IT BUYS ME AN UNEXPECTED BONUS.

A WEAPON.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT...



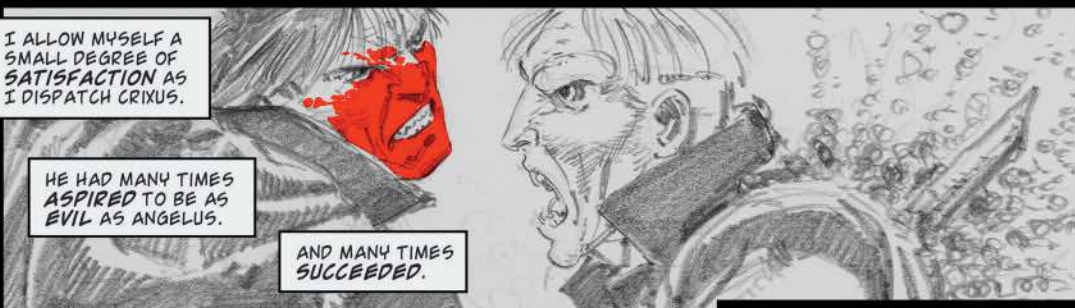
...HAPPENS QUICKLY.



I ALLOW MYSELF A SMALL DEGREE OF SATISFACTION AS I DISPATCH CRIXUS.

HE HAD MANY TIMES ASPIRED TO BE AS EVIL AS ANGELUS.

AND MANY TIMES SUCCEEDED.



THE **CRYPT** IS SILENT NOW.

SILENT AND STILL ENOUGH FOR ME TO BE ABLE TO HEAR THE MOVEMENTS OF THE OTHERS WHO DWELL HERE.

MY STRENGTH IS EBBING FAST. I KNOW I CANNOT FACE THE **DOZENS** OF VAMPIRES WHO WILL TRY TO STOP ME.

I THINK OF THE REMAINING HUMAN PRISONERS. I DO NOT WANT TO LEAVE...



...BUT COLD, HARD REASON TELLS ME I MUST.

THEIR ONLY **HOPE** IS IF I CAN ESCAPE AND RETURN WITH **HELP**.

I DON'T MAKE IT AS FAR AS I HOPED BEFORE I AM SPOTTED.

MY PURSUERS HAVE ALL THE STRENGTH AND SPEED OF THEIR KIND.

THEY CLOSE ON ME LIKE WOLVES CHASING A WOUNDED STAG.

MY ONE HOPE IS THE FOREST.

THE TANGLE OF TREES WILL SLOW THEM DOWN. A LITTLE.

AND, AGAIN, I AM PROVIDED WITH WEAPONS.



TWO WHO ALMOST OVERTAKE ME PAY THE PRICE.

AND FORTUNE SMILES ON ME AGAIN.

I HAVE CORRECTLY GUESSED THE DIRECTION OF MY ESCAPE.



I STAND ONCE MORE ON THE BANK OF THE FROZEN RIVER THAT BROUGHT ME THIS FAR BEHIND ENEMY LINES.


NOW, IF MY GOOD LUCK WILL HOLD A LITTLE LONGER...

...THIS SAME RIVER WILL SERVE TO CARRY ME BACK TO WHERE I WANT TO BE.

ALL I NEED IS TO FIND, BEFORE MY FORMER CAPTORS CAN RETAKE ME...


...THIN ICE!






THE WATER IS EVEN COLDER THAN I REMEMBER.

THE CURRENT GRABS ME ALMOST AT ONCE.




MY PURSUERS DO NOT FOLLOW.

IT IS UNEXPECTED, BUT I DO NOT PAUSE TO QUESTION MY CONTINUED GOOD LUCK.



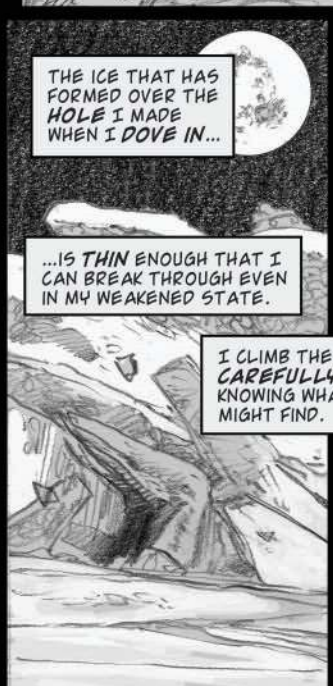
THIS TIME, I DO NOT FIGHT AGAINST THE CURRENT.

I LET IT CARRY ME BACK THE WAY I CAME, THREE DAYS AGO.



THE JOURNEY IS MUCH FASTER THIS WAY.


IT IS STILL AN HOUR OR SO BEFORE DAWN AS I SEE THE LANDMARK I SEEK LOOM OUT OF THE LIQUID DARKNESS.



THE ICE THAT HAS FORMED OVER THE HOLE I MADE WHEN I DOVE IN...

...IS THIN ENOUGH THAT I CAN BREAK THROUGH EVEN IN MY WEAKENED STATE.

I CLIMB THE BANK CAREFULLY, NOT KNOWING WHAT I MIGHT FIND.



ONCE AGAIN, I FIND LUCK IS ON MY SIDE.



THE BRITISH GUARD SHOWS ME THE SOLDIERS ARE STILL HERE...

...AS IS THE DISTINCTIVE AUTOMOBILE OF THE MAN I SEEK.

BUT BEFORE I LOOK FOR HIM...

...THERE IS A MATTER TO WHICH I MUST ATTEND.

HERE, IN THIS ROOM WHICH UNTIL NOW I HAVE MOST JUDICIOUSLY AVOIDED.

THE COLD IN THIS UNHEATED ROOM HAS HELPED PRESERVE THE BLOOD...

...BUT IT, TOO, IS STILL OLD AND STALE TO MY TASTE.

NOW, WITH MY STRENGTH FULLY RESTORED...

LIKE THE TASTE OF RUSTED IRON.

...I SEEK OUT THE WOMAN I HOPE WILL HELP ME...

...BUT WHO INSTEAD BETRAYS ME.

TO THE VERY MAN I NEED ON MY SIDE.

IN A CASCADE OF EVENTS, I SOON LEARN HER BETRAYAL RUNS EVEN DEEPER THAN THAT!

DEEPER THAN EVER I WOULD HAVE GUESSED.

CLEARLY MUCH HAS CHANGED IN THE THREE DAYS OF MY ABSENCE.

YOU ESCAPED, ANGELUS!

I HOPE YOU KILLED THE ONES WHO ALLOWED YOU TO DO SO!

IT WILL SAVE ME THE TROUBLE!

HE TOSSES ME AS EASILY AS A RAG DOLL...

THERE, MY SOLDIERS!  
HE IS YOURS!

BUT THROUGH THE TORRENT OF PAIN THAT FOLLOWS...

...ONE THOUGHT BEGINS TO BECOME CLEAR IN MY MIND.

IT HAS NOT BEEN SIMPLY LUCK THAT HAS ALLOWED ME TO GET THIS FAR.

KAKISTOS AND HIS FOLLOWERS HAVE MADE A FATAL MISTAKE.

THEY ASSUME MY SOUL HAS ROBBED ME OF A VAMPIRE'S SPEED, A VAMPIRE'S STRENGTH.

THIS IS WHY KRIXUS TAUNTED ME WITH BLOOD—THE VERY LAST THING HE SHOULD HAVE DONE.



AND WHY I WAS NOT FOLLOWED UNDER THE ICE. THEY THOUGHT I WOULD DROWN.

IN A MOMENT ONLY KAKISTOS IS LEFT.

BUT I KNOW MY PUNY WEAPON IS NOT ENOUGH TO FINISH HIM WITH.



THEN...



**COCK-A-DOODLE-DOOOOO**

COCK'S CROW CATCHES US BOTH OFF-GUARD...

THE NEXT SECOND, AS THE STILL MORNING IS SHATTERED BY A SCREAM LIKE TEN THOUSAND BANSHEES...

...BUT I AM EVEN MORE SURPRISED BY KAKISTOS' RESPONSE TO IT.



AS IF RACING TO EMBRACE HIS DOOM...

...HE CLIMBS!



...I KNOW WHY!

IN AN INSTANT HE IS  
SNATCHED AWAY INTO  
THE REDDENING SKY...



THE PLANE IS STAYING  
LOW, SO AS NOT TO  
HASTEN THE SUNRISE.

IN THE TIME IT TAKES FOR  
KAKISTOS TO REACH THE  
SAFETY OF THE CABIN...

...HIS LAUGHTER LOST  
IN THE ROAR OF THE  
AEROPLANE'S ENGINES.



...THERE IS A  
CHANCE I  
CAN STILL DO  
SOMETHING.

AT THE VERY  
LEAST...

...PERHAPS I CAN BRING  
THEM DOWN IN FLAMES.



BUT KAKISTOS HAS  
ANTICIPATED MY  
ACTIONS.



LIKE THE TAIL OF A  
BROKEN KITE THE  
LADDER DROPS.

AND ME  
WITH IT!





THE HAYSTACK THAT BREAKS MY FALL ALSO PROVIDES SHELTER FROM THE RISING SUN.

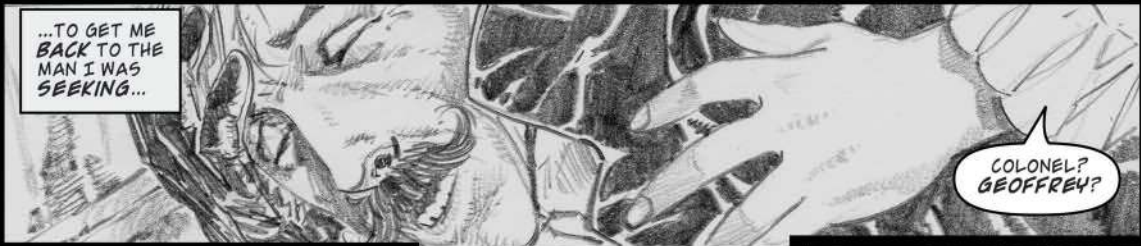
I HEAR THE AEROPLANE'S ENGINES DRONE OFF INTO SILENCE, AS IT PASSES BEYOND THE HORIZON, KAKISTOS SAFE WITHIN THE SHADOWS OF ITS CABIN.



SAFE... FOR NOW.

THE SHEET THAT COVERS THE HAYSTACK IS SOAKED THROUGH AND STINKS OF MOLD.

BUT IT PROVIDES THE COVER I NEED...



...TO GET ME BACK TO THE MAN I WAS SEEKING...

COLONEL? GEOFFREY?



LADY... MARGARET. WHAT HAPPENED? ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

THEY'RE GONE.

THE VAMPIRES...



THEY ALL LEFT TOGETHER. BEFORE THE SUN CAME UP.

BUT WHAT ABOUT YOU? KAKISTOS HIT YOU SO HARD.

HE MIGHT HAVE FRACTURED YOUR SKULL!



AND WHEN YOU TOOK SO LONG TO WAKE UP...

...I WAS SO WORRIED...



MY WORST FEARS ARE REALIZED.



GET AWAY FROM HIM!

ANGELUS!



STAND AWAY, VAMPIRE! YOU MAY HAVE ESCAPED ME TWICE BEFORE...

...BUT THE THIRD TIME IS MY TURN!

DON'T BE A FOOL, COLONEL!



THIS ISN'T LADY MARGARET ANY MORE. I PROMISED MYSELF I'D PROTECT HER...

...BUT BECAUSE OF YOU I FAILED!

...NO...!



NO!



THE TRANSFORMATION IS PAINFUL TO SEE...

...BUT IT MAKES THIS EASIER.



**SKREEEEEE**

*FWEET  
FWEEEEEEET*



IF THAT WHISTLE IS INTENDED TO SUMMON YOUR TROOPS, YOU CAN SAVE YOUR BREATH.

THEY'RE ALL DEAD. I SAW THEM ON MY WAY IN.



BUT... WHAT HAPPENED TO LADY MARGARET? WHEN WAS SHE TURNED?

IT MUST HAVE BEEN...

...AFTER YOU ESCAPED THE FIRST TIME. SHE LOCKED HERSELF IN HER ROOM FOR NEARLY THREE DAYS.

TODAY WAS THE FIRST TIME SHE HAD EMERGED...



KAKISTOS MUST HAVE GOTTEN TO HER THEN. SURED A VAMPIRE IN HER FORM.

AND NOW HE INTENDS TO UNLEASH AN ARMY OF THE UNDEAD ON LONDON.



HE WON'T BE ABLE TO DO MUCH UNTIL NIGHTFALL.

THAT GIVES US SOME TIME, AT LEAST.



"US"?

YOU SURELY DON'T EXPECT ME TO JOIN FORCES WITH YOU?



"COLONEL... DO YOU REALLY THINK YOU HAVE ANY CHOICE?"



I STILL DON'T SEE WHY I COULD NOT HAVE DRIVEN...

BECAUSE I KNOW THE WAY, COLONEL.

AND IT'S EASIER FOR ME TO DRIVE THAN TO GIVE DIRECTIONS.



PERHAPS...

...BUT IF THIS IS SOME KIND OF TRAP...





IT'S NOT...

...BUT ONLY MY ACTIONS NOW CAN CONVINCE HIM OF THAT.

WE REACH THE KEEP JUST AS THE SUN DIPS BELOW THE WESTERN RIM OF THE WORLD.



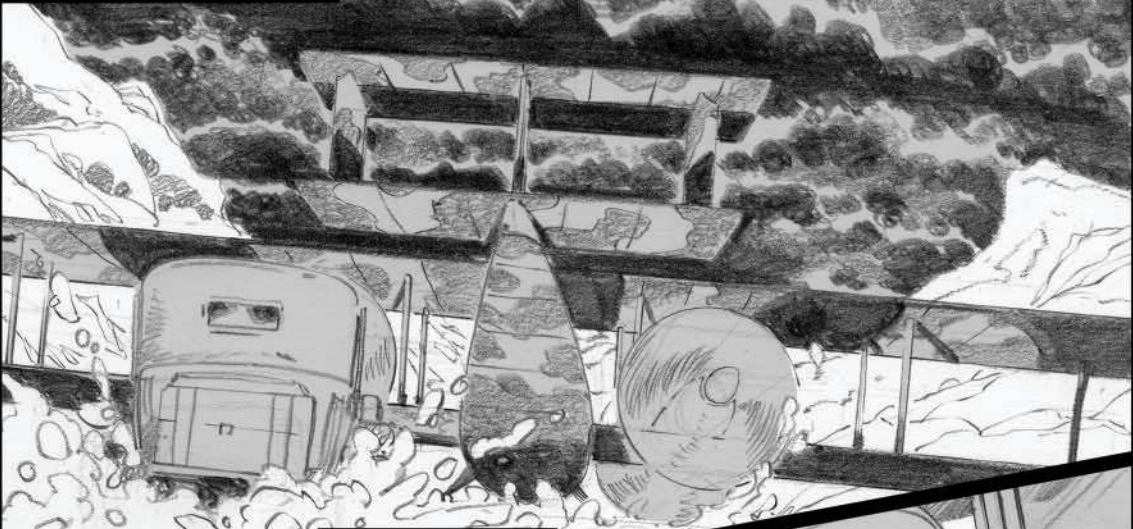
WHAT THE DEVIL?



IT IS A SOUND I NOW KNOW WELL.

AND IT TELLS ME WE HAVE ARRIVED JUST IN TIME.

KAKISTOS AND HIS FOLLOWERS ARE ABOUT TO TAKE TO THE AIR.



AND THERE IS ONLY ONE THING I CAN DO!



TAKE THE WHEEL, COLONEL!

WHAT-?!

I HAVE ONLY A FEW SECONDS IN WHICH TO ACT.

THE AEROPLANE'S WHEELS ARE ALREADY OFF THE GROUND.

MY FINGERS DIG INTO THE TRAILING EDGE OF THE WING.

THE FABRIC TEARS ALMOST TOO EASILY.



AND WE ARE ALOFT.



SINCE MAN FIRST CONQUERED THE AIR, I HAVE WONDERED WHAT IT WOULD BE LIKE TO FLY.

I DON'T THINK I KNOW YET!



ANGELUS!

HAVE YOU LOST YOUR SENSES... OR FOUND THEM?

A LITTLE OF BOTH, KAKISTOS.



AND NEITHER WILL DO YOU ANY GOOD!





I HAVE NOT TIME FOR WORD GAMES, ANGELUS.

WE END THIS NOW.

THIS TIME, I AM THE ONE WHO UNDERESTIMATES HIS FOE.

FOR A MOMENT, I FORGET THAT KAKISTOS'S GREAT SIZE DOES NOT HAMPER HIS SPEED.

I RECOVER AS FAST AS I CAN.

KAKISTOS SLAMS BACK INTO THE ENGINE NACELLE...

...AND THERE IS AN ANGRY SHRIEK OF TEARING METAL.



EVEN OVER THE ROAR OF THE ENGINES, I HEARD THE PANIC IN THE VOICES OF THOSE IN THE CABIN.

THE STARBOARD ENGINES ARE TEARING LOOSE!

I CAN'T STEER!

LAND! LAND ANYWHERE!

BUT LANDING IS NOT AN OPTION.



THIS CRAFT IS HEADING FOR THE GROUND...

...BUT NO HAND CONTROLS ITS DESCENT.



THE SUDDEN STEEP PITCH OF THE AEROPLANE PLAYS BRIEFLY TO KAKISTOS'S ADVANTAGE.

HE TUMBLES INTO ME. HE HITS HARD.

AND DOES EVEN MORE DAMAGE TO THE AIRCRAFT.

MY OPTIONS ARE LIMITED.



BUT IF SOMETHING WORKED ONCE...

I CANNOT HONESTLY SAY I WAS AIMING HIM TOWARD THE FORWARD PROPELLER.

THE WOODEN BLADE SLICES INTO HIM WITH A SOUND LIKE NOTHING I HAVE EVER HEARD.

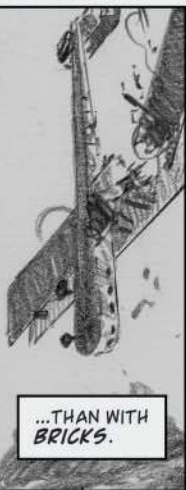




THE SOUNDS THAT FOLLOW ARE EVEN WORSE.

NO BANSHEE WAIL EVER MATCHED THE NOISE OF THE ENGINE POD TEARING ITSELF FROM THE WING.

IN AN INSTANT THE HUGE MACHINE HAS LESS IN COMMON WITH BIRDS...



...THAN WITH BRICKS.

BUT SOMETHING IN THE SNAP OF THE TORN FABRIC REMINDS ME OF A DAY LONG AGO.



REMINDS ME OF CHINA.

OF KITES.



MY DESCENT IS SLOWED...

...BUT NOT BY MUCH.



AND MY LANDING IS NO LESS IGNOMINIOUS THAN WAS THAT OF MY FORMER CAPTORS.



THERE IS SILENCE FOR A FEW BRIEF SECONDS...

...AND THEN...

...PERHAPS, SOMEWHERE IN THE BROKEN CARCASS OF THE AEROPLANE, METAL HAS SCRAPPED ON METAL, AND A SPARK HAS BEEN BORN.



NO ONE EMERGES FROM THE FLAMES.

AND A SEARCH REVEALS NO TRACE OF KAKISTOS.

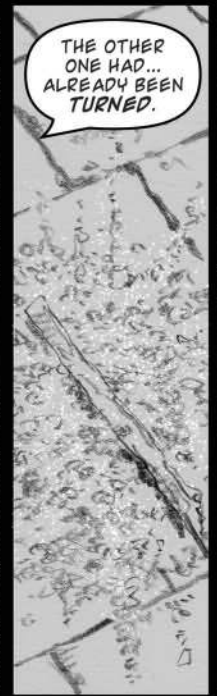
I WILL HAVE ONLY A SMALL PORTION OF GOOD NEWS FOR THE WAITING COLONEL.



WHAT...?!

I FOUND YOUR FELLOW PRISONERS. I'M CHECKING THIS ONE FOR ANY MARKS OF YOUR KIND.

THERE ARE NONE.



THE OTHER ONE HAD... ALREADY BEEN TURNED.



I'M... SORRY TO HEAR THAT. HE SEEMED A GOOD MAN.

BUT... AT LEAST IT'S OVER, FOR NOW. WE'VE BEATEN KAKISTOS AND HIS FOLLOWERS.

AND AGAIN YOU SAY "WE."

MAKE NO MISTAKE, ANGELUS.



YOU SAVED MY LIFE, BACK THERE AT THE HOSPITAL STATION. THAT BUYS FOR YOU A SINGLE MOMENT OF LENIENCY.

BUT YOU AND YOUR KIND ARE MY ENEMIES, AND THAT WILL NEVER CHANGE.

BUT...

WALK AWAY, ANGELUS.

WALK AWAY BEFORE I CHANGE MY MIND.



AND KNOW THAT IF EVER WE MEET AGAIN...

... I WILL DESTROY YOU!

I'LL... REMEMBER THAT, COLONEL.



AND WHAT ABOUT ME, ENGLISH?

I AM NOT A VAMPIRE, BUT I AM A GERMAN SOLDIER. I AM ALSO YOUR ENEMY.

WILL YOU KILL ME?

NO.

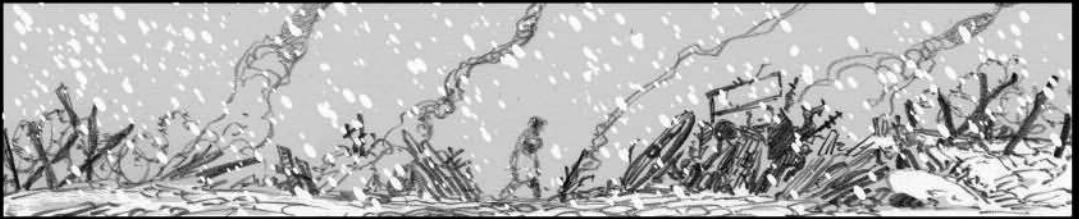
TODAY I LOST A DOZEN GOOD MEN, AND MY BEST FRIEND.

THERE HAS BEEN TOO MUCH KILLING FOR ONE DAY.



"TAKE YOUR LIFE AS A GIFT..."

"...AND USE IT WISELY AND WELL."



HEY!



YOU'RE ONE OF OURS, AREN'T YOU? WHAT THE DEVIL ARE YOU DOING OUT HERE, ON THIS ROAD?

I'M TRYING TO GET BACK TO CAMP.

I HAVE TO REPORT!



I HAVE TO REPORT WHAT I'VE SEEN!

THE MONSTERS--!



I SEE FROM HIS RECORDS THAT HE WAS RATHER BADLY GASSED.

DO YOU THINK HE'S TRYING FOR A MEDICAL DISCHARGE?



ORDINARILY, I'D SAY YES, SIR.

THIS TIME THOUGH... HE SEEMS VERY SINCERE IN HIS CLAIMS.

SINCERE OR NOT, WE CANNOT HAVE HIM SPREADING THIS KIND OF NONSENSE AMONG THE MEN.

MORALE IS LOW ENOUGH!



"GET HIM BACK TO THE TRENCHES... AND TELL HIM TO KEEP HIS MOUTH SHUT!"

READY TO GET BACK TO THE WAR, CORPORAL?

BACK?



BUT... BUT HOW CAN I GO BACK? I HAVE TO TELL EVERYONE WHAT I SAW!

NOT THIS TIME, CORPORAL!

IN FACT, THE COLONEL WANTS YOU TO STOP TELLING ANYONE ABOUT IT!



NO ONE IS GETTING SENT HOME ANY MORE! THE FIGHTING IS GOING TOO BADLY.

WE NEED EVERY MAN!

BUT... THE MONSTERS.



ALL IN YOUR IMAGINATION. AND YOU SHOULD KEEP THEM THERE!

THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS MONSTERS, CORPORAL HITLER!

END.

art gallery



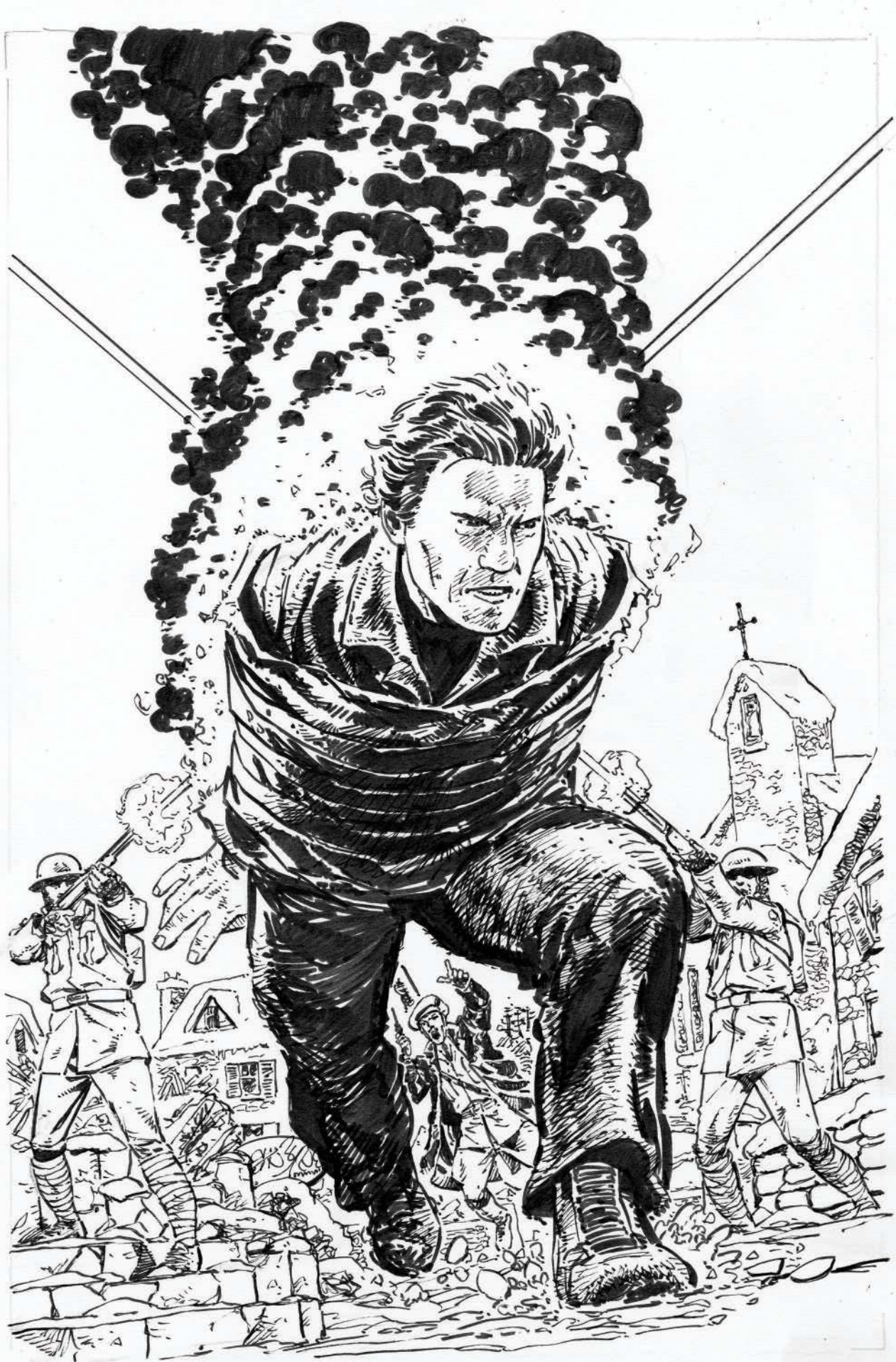






















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