

WILLINGHAM • CASAGRANDE

# ANGEL



THE CROWN PRINCE SYNDROME



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# Angel: The Crown Prince Syndrome

Plotted and Written by  
Bill Willingham, David Tischman,  
and Mariah Huehner

Art by  
Elena Casagrande

Inked by  
Walter Trono

Colored by  
Ilaria Traversi

Lettered by  
Robbie Robbins and Neil Uyetake

## Eddie Hope

Written by  
Bill Williams

Art by  
Elena Casagrande

Colored by  
Arianna Florean

Lettered by  
Neil Uyetake

Original series edited by  
Mariah Huehner

Collection edited by  
Justin Eisinger

Collection designed by  
Neil Uyetake

Angel created by Joss Whedon and David Greenwalt.

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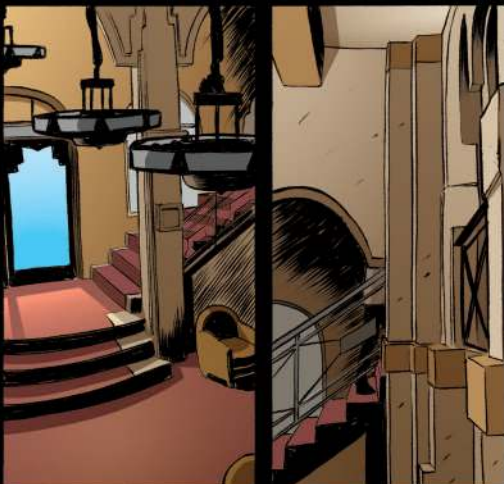
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LET'S GET RIGHT TO IT, SHALL WE? WHY WASTE YOUR TIME AND MINE?

I THINK WHAT I'D REALLY LIKE TO KNOW MOST OF ALL, JAMES, IS WHO AND WHAT ARE YOU?



AND WHY ARE YOU HERE AMONGST US, MASQUERADING AS AN ANGEL?

HMMM? WHY ARE YOU DOING THAT, JAMES? JUST WHAT SORT OF MISCHIEF ARE YOU UP TO?



I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY, MISS WEATHERMILL. I AM AN ANGEL. AN ACTUAL FOURTH STATION MESSENGER OF THE HOST OF —

OH, DO PLEASE STOP, JAMES. YOU'RE NO MORE A REAL ANGEL THAN I AM. WHY CONTINUE THE DECEPTION IN THE FACE OF UNMASKING? WHO DOES THAT BENEFIT?



PERHAPS WE CAN HURRY THIS ALONG, IF I TELL YOU A LITTLE ABOUT MYSELF. PARDON THE EGREGIOUS BREACH OF ETIQUETTE, BUT I AM ABOUT TO START LISTING CREDENTIALS.

I'VE BEEN A RESEARCH SORCERER WITH THE WATCHERS FOR 47 YEARS. YES, I'M A TAD OLDER THAN I LOOK. TOP OF MY DEPARTMENT FOR EIGHT OF THOSE YEARS, BY THE WAY.



I LITERALLY WROTE THE BOOK ON CELESTIAL PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS OF THE SUPERNATURAL, THE RECOGNIZED AUTHORITATIVE WORK ON "ANGELS" AND THEIR KIND.

IN ADDITION, I'VE UNRESTRICTED ACCESS TO MR. POLYPHEMUS HERE. HE'S ONE OF THE FEW SURVIVING EXAMPLES OF MONASTERSENGER MAGNASERM. THE ULTIMATE LIBRARY.



SO PLEASE BELIEVE ME THAT I KNOW WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT WHEN I SAY YOU, SIR, ARE FULL OF IT.

I MAY NOT YET KNOW WHAT YOU ARE. BUT I CERTAINLY KNOW WHAT YOU AREN'T.



OH, WHAT THE HELL. WHY NOT?

MY SUBTERFUGE COULDN'T LAST FOREVER, COULD IT?




YOU FOUND ME OUT FAIR AND SQUARE. AND THAT'S FINE.

I WAS JUST ABOUT DONE WITH THIS GUISE ANYWAY. I FOUND OUT MOST OF WHAT I CAME TO THIS WORLD FOR.



BUT I'M CURIOUS: WHAT GAVE ME AWAY? THOSE OTHER IDIOTS BOUGHT MY CLAIM HOOK, LINE, AND SINKER.

MY EXPERIENCE AMONG YOUR KIND IS THAT THE BIGGER, BOLDER LIE IS ALWAYS MORE LIKELY TO BE BELIEVED THAN THE SMALL, TIMID ONE. AUDACITY, IS ALL.



From Myresto Mor, 367th Son of Kerithan;  
Lord of the Axial Wastes; Accuser General of the  
Shifting Realms; 42nd Ancestral Grand  
Harlequin (second crèche) of the Eternal Howl;  
Thaneholder of the Hungerlands, including sole  
suzerainty over Misery, Strife, and Discord.

To Rowant Mor, Corpse Sledge Mother;  
Lady of the Ever Descending Steps;  
Deepest Fallen; Soul Caster; Most  
dishonored Baroness of the Black Flow.

CRASSSSSS  
HHHH

Greetings, dearest sister.



Well, sis, true to my word I've had a good long look at this little world of yours—this earth. and I have to say I'm not overly impressed.

JAMES?



First of all, it's too small, too unruly and uncomfortably hot. did you know water actually exists in nature as a liquid here?

ARE WE UNDER ATTACK?



I could hardly be expected to live here, accustomed as I am to the outer darkness. The grand plutonic depths.



I GUESS YOU COULD SAY THAT.



So this world would basically be yet another investment property, which begs the question, is there anything here of value?



TREAD CAREFULLY, VAMPIRE. YOUR STRENGTHS ARE INSIGNIFICANT COMPARED TO MINE.

Is there aught that might generate a return on my investment?



Demon breeding farms perhaps? That might work.


BUT I'D RATHER NOT HAVE TO DEMONSTRATE IT.





THIS BODY I'VE SO CAREFULLY CRAFTED, AT GREAT EXPENSE, I MIGHT ADD, ISN'T CAPABLE OF CONTAINING THE FULL FLUSH OF MY TRUE ASPECT.

These humans are so wonderfully susceptible to seemingly endless varieties of infernal possession, infestation, and transformation.



DON'T FORCE ME TO DISCARD IT, IN ORDER TO TEACH YOU A LESSON ABOUT WHAT HAPPENS WHEN ANTS DARE TO INTRUDE IN THE MATTERS OF GODS.

They're practically living petrie dishes, perfect growth mediums for any number of interesting new thanatoforms.



WE DON'T OFTEN FORGIVE SUCH HUBRIS.

So, breeding farms it is. The people of this wretched place truly aren't good for much, but oh what a wonderful dung in which so many dread crops can flourish.



Of course, this will require a huge extra investment in infrastructure and expert manpower.

TRUTH BE TOLD, ANGEL, I'VE GROWN CURIOUSLY FOND OF YOU IN OUR SHORT ACQUAINTANCE.

OKAY, NOT YOU EXACTLY, BUT ANGELUS. HIM I LIKE.



So, even though I'm modestly interested in your offer, the original price you quoted simply won't do.

AAAAHHHGGGGH!

A hundred cities of The Howl, plus all of my properties along Under Road? Preposterous. You must be dreaming.



SUCH POTENTIAL ANGELUS HAS, EVEN FOR A LOWLY BLOODSUCK.



Or worse, you've been sampling your own product again.

HUUUGGGH!

I WONDER IF YOU REALIZE HOW MUCH OF HIM SHINES THROUGH. EVEN WHEN YOU'RE AT YOUR BEST HE INFORMS YOUR EVERY THOUGHT AND MOOD.

Take my advice, sister. Stay away from the Bone Mists. You never could handle them.



DID YOU KNOW THAT? DO YOU FEEL HIM, SCRATCHING TO GET OUT?

DO YOU HEAR HIS CONSTANT WHISPERS IN THE DARK, OR IS IT MORE OF A SUBLIMINAL THING?

Blame it on the addictive personality you inherited from the Krel side of our family. Thank Dog I managed to avoid that dubious gift.



RRRRRRRRRRRIPPPP

But to get back to it, I'm interested, but not at your price. You'll have to come down considerably, or I'll reluctantly have to move on to other opportunities.

NO PROFIT IN IT.

Let the haggling begin.

IN ANY CASE, TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF, BUDDY. REST. GET BETTER. QUIT RISKING YOUR VALUABLE UNLIFE FOR THESE SHORT-LIVED, WEAK, DISPOSABLE MEAT UNITS.



I remain, as ever, your most loving brother, *Shyr*.

WHO KNOWS? I MIGHT HAVE USE FOR YOU IN TIMES TO COME.

BYE FOR NOW.



*My dear brother, Myr. I received your many letters. I hope you don't mind that I killed and filleted each of your couriers as they arrived.*

*My dear brother, Myr. I received your many letters.*



*I know I should better respect your property but it's such fun to see the moment of fright on their faces as they realize what I'm about to do.*



*They say such terror doesn't actually transfer, spicing up the taste and fragrance of their bones, as is commonly believed, but I disagree.*



*I swear I can taste a difference. I truly can.*

*Of course, feel free to treat my couriers in the same way, turnabout being the pinnacle of fair play.*





*Forgive me for not writing back sooner, but I've been ever so busy. I'm pleased that you're interested in purchasing one of my lovely little holdings—this Earth place. But I don't for a minute believe your interest is as casual as you let on.*

*You want this place, dearest of my heart. I can tell by your attempts to downplay it. That and the amount of time you spent there. No one lingers so long in a place of such scant value as you attempt to counterfeit.*

BACK AT THE HYPERION. THAT EVENING.

*Yes, you want this world and I'm obliged by the hellish nature we both share to make you pay dearly for it.*

WE GOT LAURA TO THE HOSPITAL IN TIME. IT LOOKS LIKE SHE'LL LIVE.

*I'll not only have the cities of The Howl, and the Under Road properties from you, exactly as stated earlier.*

WHAT HAPPENED, DAD? YOU'VE BEEN OUT FOR — WELL, HOW ARE YOU FEELING?

NOT AS BAD AS I PROBABLY SHOULD, CONSIDERING.

*But now I'll want Mammón's Abyss from you as well. Consider it a penalty for trying to fox me.*

YOU'LL NEED TO REMOVE THESE BANDAGES, THOUGH. I CAN ALREADY FEEL THINGS STARTING TO REGROW. WHICH IS ODD. AND NEW.



Take it or leave it. Myr, my pet. I won't bargain with you further.

MY FORMER HANDS AND FEET?

DUSTED.



I know this hurts, but would you love me so much if I didn't torture you so completely?

WHY IS THAT? WHY DO LOST VAMPIRE APPENDAGES TURN TO DUST NOW? THEY DIDN'T BEFORE, RIGHT?

IN THE DEEP PAST THEY DID.



Now, as to the matter of letting Angelus live, I fear that may have been a mistake. He's no mere vampire.

IN THE FIRST AGE OF THE VAMPIRE RACE. BUT NOT FOR MANY CENTURIES.

SO WHAT'S CHANGED? OR WHY?



First, a truly delicious amount of prophecy and fate surrounds him, clinging to him like one of my frequent suitors.

MISS WEATHERMILL AND I WERE INTERESTED IN THE SAME QUESTION. WE HAD A FEW THEORIES.

*In some way yet to be revealed, he's a player on our larger stage.*

ONE OF COURSE BEING THAT SUCH THINGS ARE MERELY CYCLICAL, LIKE CLIMATE.

THE MORE FRIGHTENING POSSIBILITY IS THAT SOMETHING OLD AND POWERFUL IS BACK IN THIS WORLD. SOMETHING FROM THE FIRST DAYS OF YOUR KIND.

*Second, he and his band are one of three groups responsible for saving my little world time and again, though they've never been aware of its true provenance.*

AND WE'RE REVERTING BACK TO THE OLD WAYS WITH IT?

YES. EVERYTHING AFFECTS EVERYTHING ELSE, IN NATURE AS WELL AS THE SUPERNATURE.

*They've overthrown some powerful (and intrusive) principalities in recent years.*

TO WHAT PURPOSE?

WHO CAN SAY? MAYBE IT'S JUST AN INCIDENTAL BYPRODUCT OF SOME OTHER CHEMICAL OR MAGICAL PROCESS, A DISCHARGE IT ISN'T EVEN AWARE OF.

*As much as I'm grateful to them for protecting my property rights from those upstart claim jumpers, I'm disturbed by their impressive success rate.*

AND HOW DOES THAT EXPLAIN JAMES SUDDENLY TURNING INTO THE KING OF ALL PILLOCKS?

WHO CAN SAY? THEY MAY BE UNRELATED.



*You should have destroyed Angelus and his entire crew, even at the cost of having to shed your human gown.*

JAMES IS THE PROBLEM WE NEED TO DEAL WITH FIRST. WHAT CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT HIM? WHY DID HE GO OFF LIKE THIS?

AND DON'T SAY "WHO CAN SAY" AGAIN, OR I'LL SHAKE YOU LIKE A BABY.



*Yes, I know you claim to be fond of the creature, but I don't buy that. I think it's just because you're so cheap.*

HE'S NO ANGEL, FALLEN OR OTHERWISE. THAT MUCH IS CERTAIN.

MY HANDS AND FEET SEEM LIKE THEY'LL BE RESTORED IN AN HOUR OR SO. BE READY TO MOVE OUT THEN.



*Admit it. You didn't want to risk getting your pretty human body torn up, and then have to bear the cost of growing a new one.*

I TAKE IT WE'RE GOING AFTER JAMES?

DAMN STRAIGHT.



*I swear, Mr., that quaint human idiom is so apt where you're concerned. You could pinch a penny until it bleeds.*

EVEN THOUGH SHE'S NEW HERE, LAURA WAS ONE OF US.

AND OUR MOST BASIC RULE APPLIES: YOU DON'T HURT ONE OF US WITHOUT BRINGING DOWN A WORLD OF HURT FROM THE REST.

2:27 PM, THE NEXT DAY...

Oh sister, my sister, how you do grieve me at times. How can you accuse me of being cheap, when I'm about to be so generous to you?

5:13 PM.

I accept your latest offer. Please have the title transferred to me post haste. As you can see, I've included the deeds to your new properties in this letter.

8:20 PM.

Do me one favor though, my little cuddlebug. If you plan to redecorate anywhere, give me a chance to move my stuff out first.

3:16 AM.

Now, as far as Angel and his merry band are concerned, you've convinced me. I've decided to do them in.

6:46 AM.

But I don't have to risk my handsome earthly meat suit doing it. Not when I can employ agents to do my dirty deeds for me.

6:53 AM.

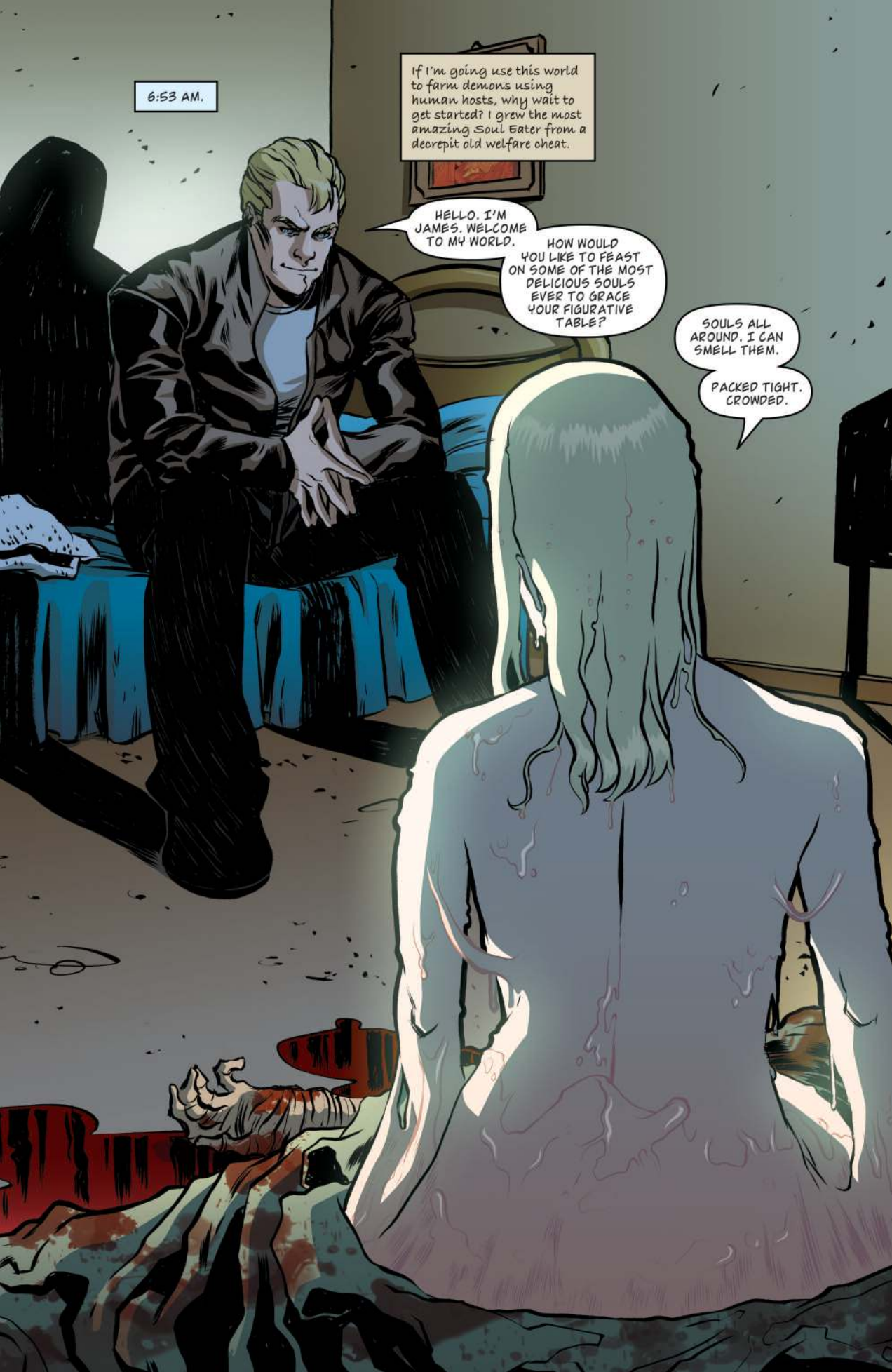
If I'm going use this world to farm demons using human hosts, why wait to get started? I grew the most amazing Soul Eater from a decrepit old welfare cheat.

HELLO. I'M JAMES. WELCOME TO MY WORLD.

HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO FEAST ON SOME OF THE MOST DELICIOUS SOULS EVER TO GRACE YOUR FIGURATIVE TABLE?

SOULS ALL AROUND. I CAN SMELL THEM.

PACKED TIGHT. CROWDED.



I can't wait until this place is one giant factory farm, growing bumper crops of Bone Snappers and Gower Howlers and Discordant Weirds and—

ABUNDANT.

SO TRUE. AND FEEL FREE TO GRAZE AMONGST THEM AS YOU LIKE, BUT I WANT TO DIRECT YOU TO SOME PARTICULAR TREATS, BEGINNING WITH THIS VAMPIRE NAMED —

VAMPIRES DON'T INTEREST ME.

SOULESS.

EMPTY BAGS.

—Well, every sort of foul and valuable thing I can produce from a vast supply of host carcasses.

I'll write again to keep you abreast of my progress. Until then, take care.

I'd say I owe it all to you, Rowe, but I don't. I paid you too much and owe nothing more.

YES, THAT'S NORMALLY TRUE. BUT I HAPPEN TO KNOW WHERE YOU CAN FIND TWO VAMPIRES THAT DO HAVE SOULS. HAVE YOU EVER TASTED THE SOUL OF AN UNDEAD?

NO.

WELL, NOW YOU CAN. TALK ABOUT EXOTIC VITTLES, HUH?

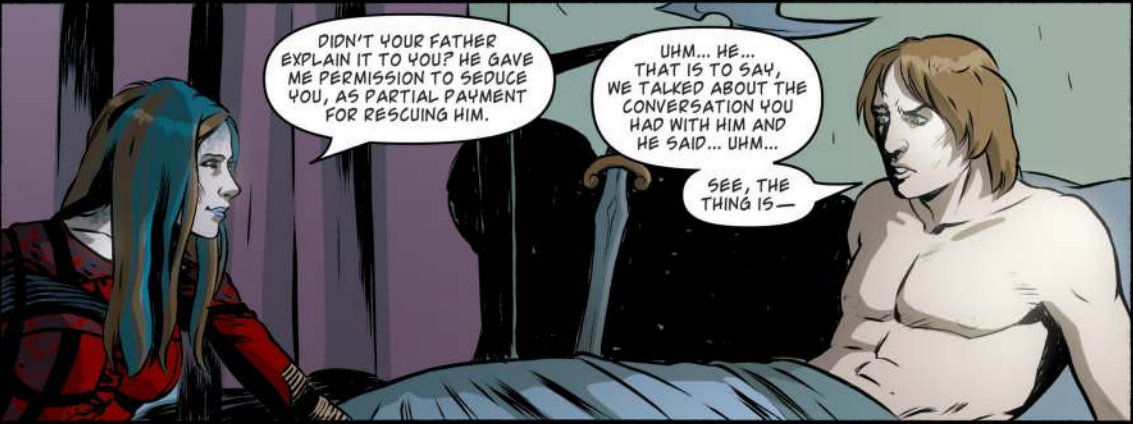
INTRIGUED.

I'LL BET YOU ARE.

NOW LET'S GET YOU BATHED AND DRESSED, SO WE CAN PUSH THIS RAVENING WOLF OUT AMONG THE LAMBS, SHALL WE?

Come visit, if you get a chance. Maybe during one of the Low Unholy days? As always and ever, your loving brother, *Alpr*.







NO, CONNOR. I DIDN'T GIVE YOU AWAY IN SOME BIZARRE SORT OF AN ARRANGED MARRIAGE TO ILLYRIA.

I ONLY AGREED NOT TO INTERFERE IF SHE DECIDED TO... UH... TAKE A RUN AT YOU. YOU'RE YOUR OWN MAN AND CAN MAKE YOUR OWN DECISIONS ABOUT WHO YOU CHOOSE TO —



YOU'RE AN ANCIENT GODDESS, OR DEMONESS — DEPENDING ON WHOSE ACCOUNT YOU READ — WHILE I'M A LOWLY MORTAL HUMAN, WHO'S ONLY BEEN AROUND FOR A FEW YEARS.

DON'T BE LUDICROUS. IS THAT THE CORRECT TERM? LUDICROUS? SYNONYMS ARE LAUGHABLE AND RIDICULOUS.



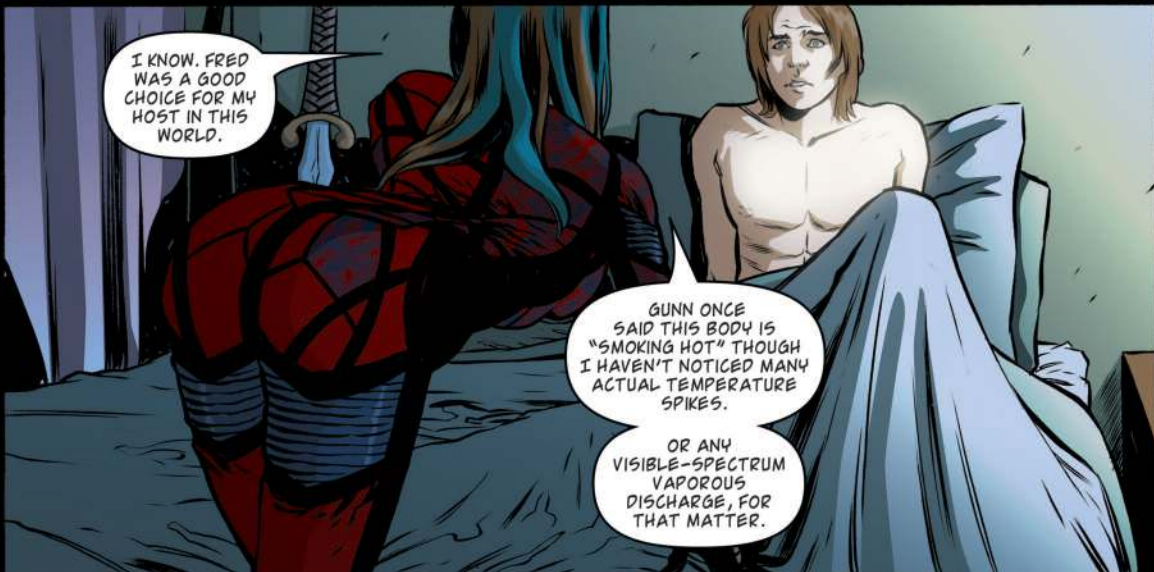
YOU'RE AN EXTRAORDINARY HUMAN. AND NOT AT ALL MORTAL, BY THE STANDARD DEFINITION. NOT ENTIRELY HUMAN EITHER, IN FACT. STRONG. POWERFUL.

A LODESTONE FOR SEVERAL AXIS-LINES OF TERRIBLE DESTINY. WHAT MORE COULD A WOMAN WANT?

YOU'LL MAKE AN EXCELLENT FATHER FOR OUR BROOD.

BROOD? AS IN PLURAL? UHM... HOW MANY ARE YOU THINKING OF —

NO. WAIT. THAT'S BESIDE THE POINT. YOU SEE, ILLYRIA, YOU'RE A LOVELY WOMAN.



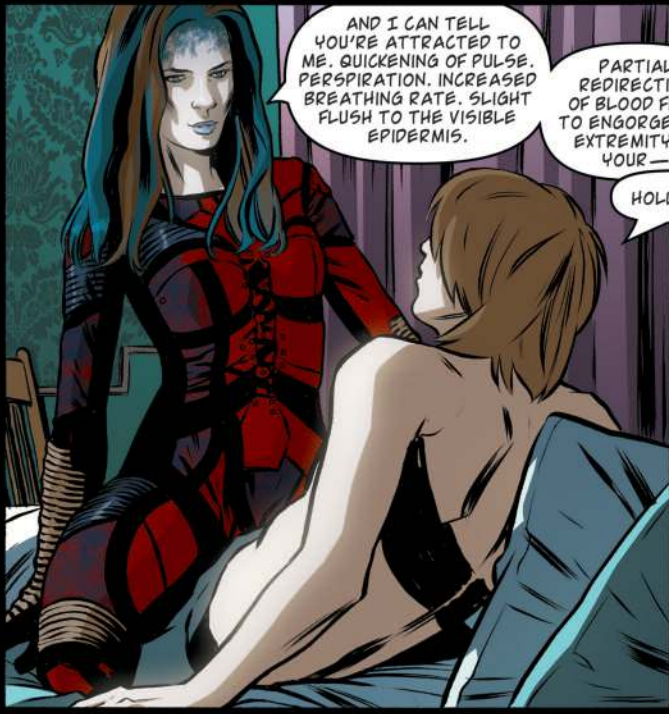
I KNOW. FRED WAS A GOOD CHOICE FOR MY HOST IN THIS WORLD.

GUNN ONCE SAID THIS BODY IS "SMOKING HOT" THOUGH I HAVEN'T NOTICED MANY ACTUAL TEMPERATURE SPIKES.

OR ANY VISIBLE-SPECTRUM VAPOROUS DISCHARGE, FOR THAT MATTER.



A EUPHEMISM, PERHAPS?  
 BUT THE POINT IS, NEARLY EVERY MALE I'VE ENCOUNTERED IN THIS WORLD LOOKS UPON ME WITH UNDISGUISED LUST. ELEVEN FEMALES SO FAR, TOO.



AND I CAN TELL YOU'RE ATTRACTED TO ME. QUICKENING OF PULSE. PERSPIRATION. INCREASED BREATHING RATE. SLIGHT FLUSH TO THE VISIBLE EPIDERMIS.

PARTIAL REDIRECTION OF BLOOD FLOW TO ENGORGE THE EXTREMITY OF YOUR —  
 HOLD ON!



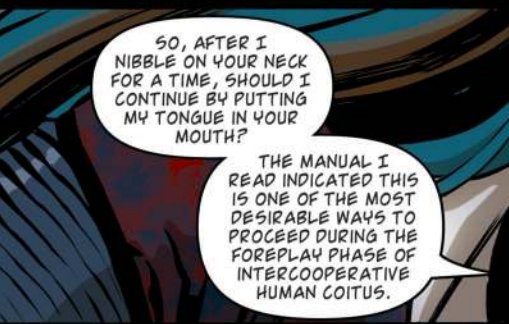
WAIT!  
 STOP, FOR JUST A SECOND, PLEASE, WHILE I THINK.  
 I DON'T WANT TO—



WE CAN'T DELAY MUCH LONGER, CONNOR. I AM AT MY OPTIMUM BREEDING CYCLE NOW.



NO, THAT'S NOT TRUE. I DO WANT TO. I REALLY WANT TO MORE THAN ANYTHING, BUT—



SO, AFTER I NIBBLE ON YOUR NECK FOR A TIME, SHOULD I CONTINUE BY PUTTING MY TONGUE IN YOUR MOUTH?

THE MANUAL I READ INDICATED THIS IS ONE OF THE MOST DESIRABLE WAYS TO PROCEED DURING THE FOREPLAY PHASE OF INTERCOOPERATIVE HUMAN COITUS.









AND HOW WOULD THEY KNOW WHO RECRUITED THEM? WE'VE HAD SOME PRETTY DARK CUSTOMERS PRETENDING TO BE THE GOOD GUYS BEFORE.

IT'S NOT LIKE THEY COME WITH CERTIFICATES OF AUTHENTICITY NOW, DO THEY?

GET OUT. GET OUT. GET OUT. GET OUT.



NO, THEY DO NOT COME WITH CERTIFICATES.

SO WHO'S TO KNOW WHO'S REALLY THE ONE WHISPERING CRYPTIC NONSENSE INTO YOUR EAR?

LEAVE NOW AND I WON'T TELL ANGEL ON YOU.



AND WHY DOES PROPHECY HAVE TO BE SO CRYPTIC ANYWAY?

WHO MADE THAT BLOODY STUPID RULE?

PLEASE, LEAVE NOW AND I'LL BE YOUR FRIEND. I'LL ASSIGN YOU ALL THE BEST JOBS FOR THE NEXT WEEK.



IF IT'S REALLY DESTINED TO COME TRUE, WHY CAN'T IT SAY, "ON THIS SPECIFIC DAY, IN THIS SPECIFIC YEAR, THIS SPECIFIC ARSEWIPE IS GOING TO DO THIS SPECIFIC THING?"

WHY CAN'T IT SAY THAT, HUH?



ARE THERE RULES? AND IF SO, WHO MAKES THEM?



SOMEWHERE ELSE IN L.A. (WHICH IS NOT, STRICTLY SPEAKING, A GREAT BIG FREEWAY)...

WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN MY ROOM?



I WANTED TO ASK YOU A QUESTION IN PRIVATE, HONORED WAR LEADER.

CUT THE FORMALITIES, RAGDA. IF YOU'RE GOING TO INTRUDE INTO MY BATH TIME, YOU MIGHT AS WELL DO IT BLUNTLY. WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND?



TO THE POINT THEN. I WANT TO KNOW HOW I'M DOING IN THE GREAT CHALLENGE.

INAPPROPRIATE TO ASK, BUT I GUESS I ADMIRE YOUR AGGRESSION. A TRUE WARRIOR'S QUALITY.




YOU DID WELL IN THE FEATS OF STRENGTH, BUT BLUNDERED THE TALENT COMPETITION.

SERIOUSLY, RAG, WHAT WERE YOU THINKING? DRAMATIC RECITATION OF THE POETRY OF BOLOG DOL? SHE WAS TRENDY FOR ABOUT FIVE MINUTES A CENTURY AGO.


THAT PUTS YOU WELL BEHIND THE LEADERS. YOU MIGHT SQUEAK BY INTO THE NEXT CUT, BUT IT'S GOING TO BE CLOSE, IF AT ALL.

ANY ADVICE ON HOW TO IMPROVE MY CHANCES?



SURE. YOU'VE GOT EIGHT DAYS UNTIL THE NEXT CUT. DISTINGUISH YOURSELF IN ACTION. YOU DID WELL THE OTHER NIGHT IN THE MASS VAMPIRE HUNT. BUILD ON THAT.

VOLUNTEER FOR EVERY MISSION THAT COMES UP. MAYBE YOU'LL GET LUCKY AND SAVE CONNOR'S LIFE AGAIN. THAT'LL GET THE JUDGES' ATTENTION.



THAT MIGHT BE ENOUGH TO NUDGE YOU OVER THE LINE, ASSUMING YOU'RE ALREADY CLOSE ENOUGH ON OFFICIAL POINT SCORES.

IF I DO MAKE THIS CUT, I CAN GO ALL THE WAY. THE GLADIATORIAL COMBAT AND THREAT RECOGNITION EVENTS ARE MY SPECIALTIES.



I COULD END UP ONE OF THE FINAL FIVE IN THE GREAT BLOODLETTING.

HOW NICE FOR YOU. NOW, IF YOU'D KINDLY GET OUT OF MY QUARTERS...





WELL, AS LONG AS WE HAVE TO SPEND THIS TIME TOGETHER, WHY NOT DO IT IN BED?

WE'VE HAD THIS UNRESOLVED SEXUAL TENSION BETWEEN US FOR SO LONG, PERCOLATING LIKE A—NO, I THINK SIMMERING'S A BETTER WORD FOR IT. SIMMERING LIKE A—



MY POINT IS, WHY NOT JUST GET IT OUT OF THE WAY AND NOT HAVE THIS HANGING OVER OUR HEAD LIKE A SWORD OF DAMOCLES, HMMM?

BECAUSE IT ISN'T PROFESSIONAL. I DON'T WANT TO RISK RUINING OUR WORKING RELATIONSHIP BY YIELDING TO A MOMENTARY—HEY, THAT'S A GREAT BRA.



ISN'T IT? I GOT IT ON SALE FROM THE SWEET BOUTIQUE ON ROBERTSON. PRETTY HOT, HUH?

WANT ME TO LEAVE IT ON OR TAKE IT OFF?



UHM—



AH, WHAT THE HELL. LEAVE IT ON. I CAN REMOVE IT LATER WITH MY TEETH.

GET IN HERE, HONEY BISCUIT.

GERONIMO!



NOW WHAT ARE YOU DOING?



WELL I'VE CLEARLY CHANGED MY MIND, HAVEN'T I? YOU'RE NOT REALLY AS UNATTRACTIVE AS YOU ATTEMPT TO BE.

WILLIAM! PUT YOUR PANTS BACK ON, THIS INSTANT! PUT EVERYTHING BACK ON!

OR—OH, HELL. WHAT AM I THINKING—



OR AT LEAST TAKE THOSE RIDICULOUS SHORTS OFF. TRY TO BE MORE MATURE.

THIS IS GOING TO PRESENT SOME INTERESTING PROBLEMS IN BOTH PROCESS AND ARCHITECTURE.



NONSENSE. YOU'RE A VAMPIRE WITH SUPERNATURALLY ENHANCED STRENGTH, DEXTERITY, AND SENSES.

IF YOU CAN'T FIND A WAY TO WORK AROUND A FEW OBSTACLES, AND STILL GET THE JOB DONE, THEN WHAT GOOD ARE YOU?



TRUE. I AM JUST THAT GREAT.

LET'S JUST SEE IF WE CAN DO THIS WITHOUT FURTHER INJURIES, PLEASE. AND SERIOUSLY, WHAT'S WITH THE UGLY SHORTS? ARE YOU TWELVE?



HONESTLY, WILLIAM, PAY ATTENTION. IF YOU'D JUST LIFT A BIT HERE, YOU COULD GET MY BOTTOMS OFF WITHOUT RIPPING THEM.

CAN'T WE JUST TALK ABOUT THIS A LITTLE MORE?

OKAY, I THINK WE BOTH AGREE WE SHOULD'VE DONE THIS AGES AGO.



JUST PROMISE ME THIS ISN'T MAKING YOU PERFECTLY HAPPY. I DON'T WANT YOU LOSING YOUR SOUL AGAIN BECAUSE OF ME.

DON'T WORRY, SWEETIE. THIS IS GREAT, BUT IT'S HARDLY PERFECT.



DEZ?

WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN MY ROOM?

WELL-UHM-I FOUND MYSELF SUDDENLY IN THE MOOD FOR-UH-


DO YOU TWO WANT COMPANY?



I'M NOT SURE. WHAT DO YOU THINK, HONEY DOVE?

WOULD IT MAKE YOU HAPPY, PUPPYCAKES?






IT'S NOT YOU, ILLYRIA, IT'S JUST THAT I'M NOT READY TO BE A FATHER.




A FATHER AGAIN, YOU MEAN.

OKAY, SURE. AND LOOK HOW WELL THAT TURNED OUT.



IRONY, RIGHT? OR IS THAT SARCASM? I STILL GET CONFUSED ON THOSE TWO. OR, WERE YOU BEING SINCERE?

ARE YOU STILL DESIROUS OF SIRING A WORLD-DESTROYING MONSTER GODDESS?



IF SO, THAT SEEMS TO CONFLICT WITH YOUR FATHER'S MORAL WORLDVIEW AND STATED MISSION. HE SEEMS DETERMINED TO PROTECT THIS WORLD AND ITS LOWLY MINIONS.

ARE YOU TURNING EVIL AGAIN, CONNOR?



NO!

OF COURSE NOT!

AND I WOULDN'T SAY I WAS EVIL THEN, SO MUCH AS TERRIBLY MISGUIDED.



BUT THAT'S BESIDE THE POINT. I REALLY DON'T THINK WE SHOULD BE DOING THIS.



DON'T GET ME WRONG. PART OF ME REALLY WANTS THIS.

BUT AT THE VERY LEAST I NEED MORE TIME TO CONSIDER—

YES, I CAN SEE EXACTLY WHICH PART.

MORE TIME IS THE ONE THING WE DON'T HAVE. I AM AT MY PEAK. COPULATION NEEDS TO COMMENCE SOON OR—



OH NO.

WHY'D YOU STOP? I GIVE UP. I DID THE BEST I CAN, BUT I CAN'T RESIST ANY LONGER. YOU'RE SO INCREDIBLY HOT, I—



PLEASE QUIT PAWING AT ME THAT WAY, CONNOR. IT'S GONE. IT'S PASSED.

HUH?

WE DELAYED TOO LONG. MISSED THE WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY. I'M NO LONGER IN OPTIMAL BREEDING MODE. WE'LL JUST HAVE TO WAIT FOR THE NEXT OCCURRENCE IN MY CYCLE.





LUCKILY FOR BOTH OF US, THERE'S A REASONABLE CHANCE YOU'LL STILL BE ALIVE AND FULLY FUNCTIONAL IN A THOUSAND YEARS.

BARRING THE UNFORESEEN APOCALYPSE OF COURSE.

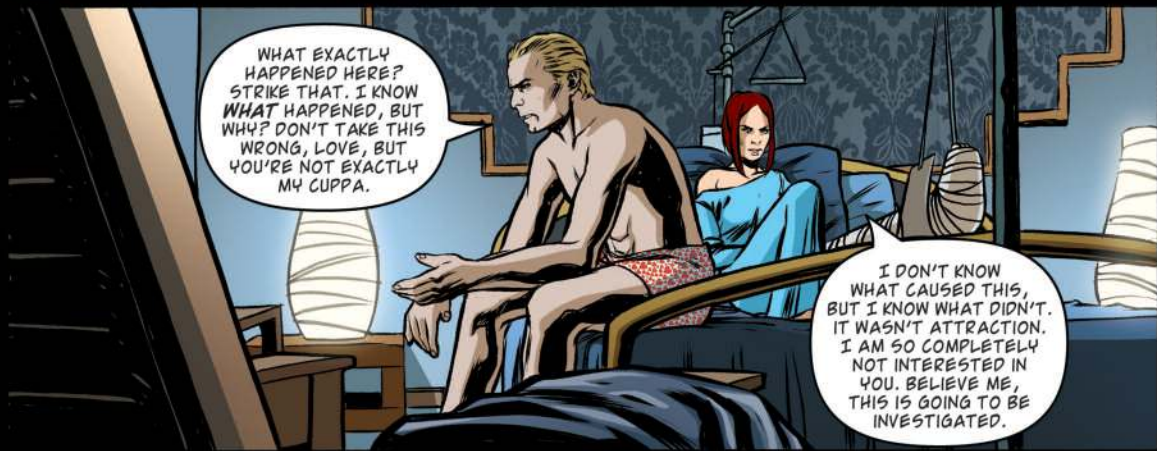
BUT—?



SO WE'RE ALL IN AGREEMENT? WE NEVER TALK ABOUT THIS, RIGHT?

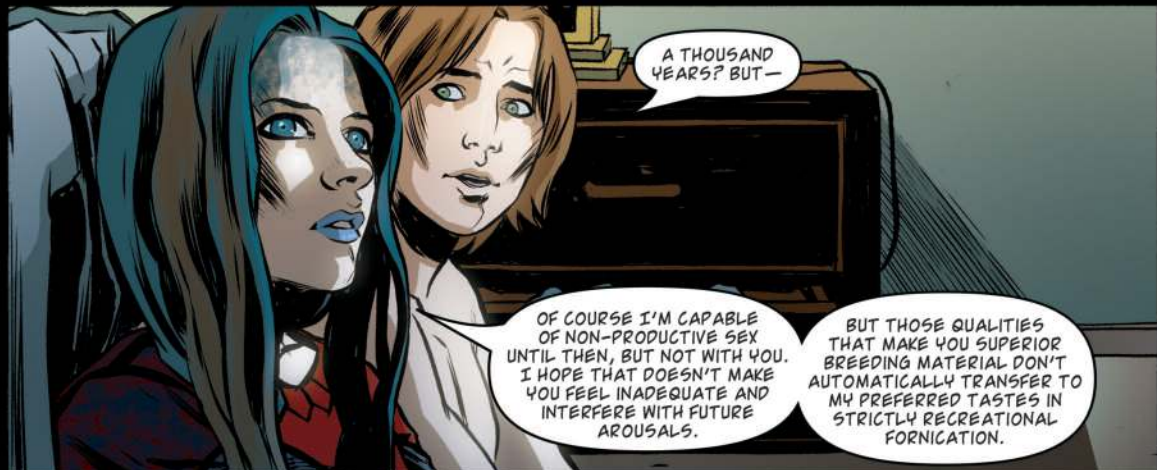
AGREED.

NOT IN A MILLION YEARS.



WHAT EXACTLY HAPPENED HERE? STRIKE THAT. I KNOW WHAT HAPPENED, BUT WHY? DON'T TAKE THIS WRONG, LOVE, BUT YOU'RE NOT EXACTLY MY CUPPA.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT CAUSED THIS, BUT I KNOW WHAT DIDN'T. IT WASN'T ATTRACTION. I AM SO COMPLETELY NOT INTERESTED IN YOU. BELIEVE ME, THIS IS GOING TO BE INVESTIGATED.



A THOUSAND YEARS? BUT—

OF COURSE I'M CAPABLE OF NON-PRODUCTIVE SEX UNTIL THEN, BUT NOT WITH YOU. I HOPE THAT DOESN'T MAKE YOU FEEL INADEQUATE AND INTERFERE WITH FUTURE AROUSALS.

BUT THOSE QUALITIES THAT MAKE YOU SUPERIOR BREEDING MATERIAL DON'T AUTOMATICALLY TRANSFER TO MY PREFERRED TASTES IN STRICTLY RECREATIONAL FORNICATION.



WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN MY ROOM?



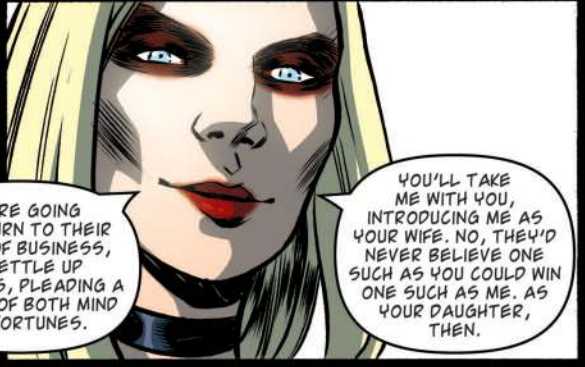
BRADLEY HUBBLE.  
YOU RECENTLY ENLISTED THE AID OF ANGEL INVESTIGATIONS TO LOCATE AND DISPATCH A LAMIA THAT WAS STALKING YOU—WHICH THEY DID.



BUT YOU STIFFED THEM ON PAYMENT. IS THAT CORRECT?

WHO ARE YOU?  
WHAT DO YOU WANT WITH ME?

YOU'RE GOING TO RETURN TO THEIR PLACE OF BUSINESS, TO SETTLE UP ACCOUNTS, PLEADING A CHANGE OF BOTH MIND AND FORTUNES.



YOU'LL TAKE ME WITH YOU, INTRODUCING ME AS YOUR WIFE. NO, THEY'D NEVER BELIEVE ONE SUCH AS YOU COULD WIN ONE SUCH AS ME. AS YOUR DAUGHTER, THEN.



I WON'T DO ANY SUCH THING!

YOU WILL.  
FOR THE NEXT 24 HOURS OR SO, AFTER I EAT YOUR IMMORTAL SOUL, YOU'LL BE IN MY THRALL. SHORTLY THEREAFTER YOUR BODY WILL WITHER, BECOMING EMPTY CARCASS.



MMMMMMMM.  
SLIGHT.  
INADEQUATE.  
BUT TASTY  
ALL THE SAME.

BURBANK, CALIFORNIA.

NO, YOU GET PAID STRICT WRITING GUILD MINIMUM. BUT THERE WILL BE FAT BONUSES FOR THE BEST WORK—BEST BEING ENTIRELY DEFINED BY MY EXCELLENT TASTES AND WHIMS.

NO, I REALLY DON'T CARE IF YOU AREN'T HAPPY GETTING MINIMUM PAY. NO MATTER HOW MUCH YOU WERE PAID FOR YOUR LAST JOB, YOUR LAST JOB WAS AWHILE AGO.

OTHERWISE, YOU WOULDN'T HAVE SHOWN UP HERE, WOULD YOU? I SPECIFICALLY PUT THE CALL OUT FOR OUT-OF-WORK SCREENWRITERS, DIDN'T I?

Open Writers Call  
For All Out of Work  
Hollywood Writers.  
  
Pay Plus Benefits.  
  
Tonight Only.

IT'S WRITTEN RIGHT THERE ON THE BLOODY SIGN, RIGHT IN FRONT OF THE BLOODY DOOR YOU ALL JUST WALKED THROUGH.

IF YOU LOT DON'T LIKE THE DEAL, THEN FEEL FREE TO WALK OUT THE SAME DOOR YOU CAME IN. WE'LL TAKE A MINUTE AND WAIT FOR YOU TO MOVE ALONG.







AT THAT MOMENT...

GOOD EVENING, MR.... HUBLE WAS IT? HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?

WE DON'T WANT TO SEE YOU. WE WANT TO SEE ANGEL.

WELL, ANGEL MOSTLY RUNS SPECIAL ASPECTS OF THE BUSINESS, NOW. I'M HIS SON AND I RUN THE OPERATIONS SIDE OF THINGS.

THAT WON'T DO. I'M HERE TO SETTLE MY OVERDUE ACCOUNT, BUT I INSIST ON TALKING DIRECTLY TO ANGEL.

AND DON'T FORGET SPIKE. WE NEED BOTH OF THEM.



OH YES, WE NEED TO TALK TO BOTH ANGEL AND SPIKE TOGETHER. I INSIST. THIS IS MY DAUGHTER LISS, BY THE WAY.

EITHER HIS DAUGHTER, OR TROPHY WIFE, OR MISTRESS. WHICHEVER SEEMS MOST LIKELY.



UHM... OKAY...



THAT SEEMS... SO, AS I WAS SAYING, NEITHER OF THEM ARE HERE RIGHT NOW, BUT YOU CAN DEAL WITH ME, AS LONG AS YOU'RE JUST HERE TO SETTLE YOUR BILL.

NO, WE ABSOLUTELY NEED TO SEE ANGEL AND SPIKE TOGETHER. WE'LL WAIT AS LONG AS IT TAKES.

ELSEWHERE...

THERE SHE IS. PULL OVER.

EXCUSE ME, LADY. YOU CAN'T BE HERE.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO EXPLAIN WHAT YOU'RE DOING, WAVING A SWORD AROUND IN PUBLIC?

AH, GENDARMES OF THE MUNDANE CONSTABULARY. OF COURSE I'LL EXPLAIN. WE'RE UNDER ORDERS TO RENDER FULL COOPERATION TO THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES.



I AM BAEDEN, SECOND BLADE OF THE THIRTY-THIRD STRIKE OF THE SISTERHOOD OF THE JARO HULL.

BY ORDER OF CONNOR, CHOSEN PRINCE OF THE COMING RESTORATION, I'M STATIONED HERE ON GUARD. "PATROLLING MY BEAT," TO USE HIS PARTICULAR VERNACULAR.





I WILL KEEP THIS SECTION OF YOUR CITY CLEAR OF ALL DEMONIC THREATS, KILLING OR CAPTURING THEM, AS THE SITUATION WARRANTS.

IN THE COURSE OF YOUR SPAN-OF-SERVICE — YOUR "SHIFT" I BELIEVE YOU CALL IT — YOU WILL IMMEDIATELY REPORT ALL DEMONIC ACTIVITIES TO ME.



IN RETURN I WILL OF COURSE REPORT ALL MUNDANE THEFTS, MURDERS, MUGGINGS, RAPES AND PURSE SNATCHINGS TO YOU.

UNLESS YOU'D RATHER I SIMPLY DISPATCH THEM DIRECTLY AND SAVE YOU UNNEEDED BOTHER.



I UNDERSTAND UNINTERRUPTED DOUGHNUT CONSUMPTION IS AN IMPORTANT SACRED RITUAL AMONG YOUR KIND.

UH... LISTEN, MA'AM, YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO LAY DOWN YOUR WEAPON AND COME WITH US.



I'LL DO NO SUCH THING. ABANDONING MY ASSIGNED POST WOULD BE AN UNPARDONABLE DERELICTION OF DUTY.

THAT MAY BE SO, LADY, BUT I'M AFRAID YOU HAVE TO. IT'S THE LAW. THERE'S NO NEED FOR TROUBLE HERE.



NO, IT'S CLEARLY YOU TWO WHO LACK UNDERSTANDING. THIS IS CONNOR'S TOWN NOW. HE'S THE SOLE AUTHORITY AND PROTECTOR OF THE LAND, THE CITY, AND ITS PEOPLE.

YOU IN THE JUNIOR AGENCIES WILL BE PERMITTED AND EVEN ENCOURAGED TO HELP, IN THE SMALL WAYS THAT YOU CAN, BUT NONE WILL BE ALLOWED TO INTERFERE. THAT IS THE NEW LAW.



I'M AFRAID YOU HAVE TO COME WITH US, WHETHER YOU WANT TO OR NOT. WE DON'T WANT TO HAVE TO FORCE YOU, BUT—



IF YOU ATTEMPT TO LAY HANDS ON ME, YOU'LL LOSE BOTH OF THEM IN A SINGLE DEFT SWORD STROKE. WOULDN'T THAT BE A SAD OUTCOME?



THEN YOU'LL NO LONGER HAVE THE ABILITY TO OPERATE YOUR MOTOR VEHICLE, OR EMPLOY YOUR WEAPONS...



...OR HOLD YOUR DAUGHTER, OR CARESS YOUR PRETTY, PLUMP WIFE, OR YOUR SLIM YOUNG MISTRESS.



HER NAME IS LIZABETH, I BELIEVE? THE MISTRESS, NOT THE WIFE.

HOW DO YOU KNOW—?



OUR RESEARCH DETACHMENT THOROUGHLY INVESTIGATED EACH CIVIL OFFICER WITH WHOM WE MIGHT POSSIBLY COME INTO CONTACT, AND BRIEFED US ON ALL OF YOU. IN DETAIL.

DID YOU IMAGINE WE WOULD EVER GO INTO HARM'S WAY WITHOUT THE BENEFITS OF FULL INTELLIGENCE ON OUR POTENTIAL ALLIES AS WELL AS ENEMIES?



WHAT SORT OF PRIMITIVE WARRIORS WOULD WE BE, IF WE FOLLOWED YOUR SLIPSHOD HUMAN STANDARDS AND METHODS?

PASS THE WORD, OFFICERS. WE'RE SMARTER THAN YOU. STRONGER. BETTER TRAINED. I CAN HOLD A THOUSAND TIMES A THOUSAND THOUGHTS IN MY HEAD FOR EACH ONE OF YOURS.



NOW THAT THE SISTERHOOD IS ON THE SCENE, SPREAD THROUGHOUT THE CITY IN A PROTECTIVE CORDON, THE CITY OF ANGELS IS TRULY SAFE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN AN AGE.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO HERE, STEVE. THIS IS WAY BEYOND ANYTHING I WAS TRAINED FOR.



NOW BE ABOUT YOUR BUSINESS, GENTLEMEN. I SUDDENLY DETECT A FAINT WHIFF OF A STURJAL LEECH DEMON NEST IN THE INITIAL SHUDDERING OF THEIR ANNUAL NESTING FUGUE.



COLLEGIAL SHOFTALK MUST INEVITABLY YIELD TO BOLD ACTION WHEN THE MONSTERS ARE NIGH.

AND BACK IN BURBANK...

YOU SEE, I'VE DONE A BIT OF POKING AROUND—DETECTIVE WORK, IF YOU WILL. AND GUESS WHAT? THERE ARE NO RULES FOR WHO GETS TO WRITE PROPHECY. NOT A ONE!

SO WHY NOT ME? OR, TO BE MORE PRECISE, WHY NOT MY SMALL ARMY OF WORK-FOR-HIRE WRITERS?

WHAT SPECIFICALLY ARE WE GOING TO WRITE ABOUT?

AT LONG LAST THE VITAL QUESTION. PERHAPS THE LOT OF YOU AREN'T ENTIRELY DIM AFTER ALL. MARK YOURSELF DOWN FOR A MODEST BONUS. REMIND ME OF IT LATER.

YOU'RE GOING TO WRITE ABOUT ME. YOU'RE GOING TO PROPHECY THAT ANYTIME, FROM NOW ON, WHEN THE APOCALYPSE LOOMS AND THE CRAP RAIN STARTS TO FALL, I'M THE BIG HERO WHO SAVES US ALL.

HEY, THAT RHYMES, SORT OF. GOOD. LOTS OF OLD PROPHECIES ARE CONSTRUCTED POETICALLY, SO SOMEONE REMEMBER THAT.

I'M THE BIG HERO WHO GETS THE GIRL AND SAVES OUR COLLECTIVE BACON. AND WE'LL TALK IN A BIT ABOUT THE SPECIFIC GIRL I HAVE IN MIND.

ANGEL IS VERY SPECIFICALLY NOT THE HERO. GET IT? EITHER YOU WILL NOT MENTION ANGEL AT ALL OR, BETTER YET, YOU WILL CAST HIM AS SOME SORT OF VILLAIN.

YES, THAT'S IT. MAKE HIM THE VILLAIN. AND GIVE HIM SOME PONCEY, DRAMA QUEEN, PRISSY NAME LIKE *DUSK*, OR *SUNSET*, OR *THE FALL OF DARKNESS*.

NOW, LET'S GET TO WORK, SHALL WE?

AT THAT MOMENT...





WHO CHANGED THE RULES?



OKAY, THIS IS ODD ENOUGH TO MERIT FURTHER STUDY, BY SISTERS MORE ADEPT IN THE INFERNAL FORENSIC ARTS THAN ME.

CONGRATULATIONS, CREATURE. YOU GET TO BE TAKEN ALIVE.



AT LEAST UNTIL THE AUTOPSY, WHERE—

WHAT IN THE MANY DISCREET HELLS?! WHAT'S YOUR BLOOD DOING TO MY BLADE?

IT TOOK ME THIRTY-SEVEN YEARS TO GROW IT AND EDUCATE IT FROM A BABY. HOW'LL I REPLACE IT HERE IN THIS PRIMITIVE WORLD?



DAD, MISS WEATHERMILL, I'M GLAD YOU'RE BACK. WE HAVE AN ODD SITUATION SHAPING UP IN THE OFFICE.

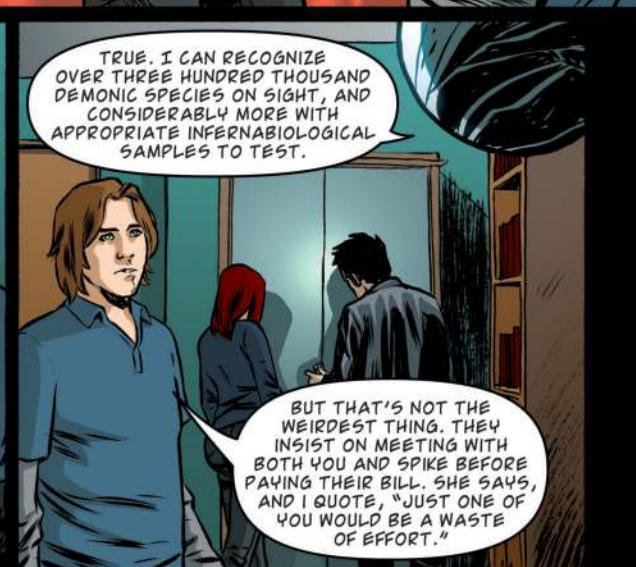
ONE OF OUR OLD CLIENTS, HUBBLE, IS HERE TO PAY HIS PAST DUE BILL, BUT HE ACTS MORE LIKE A HALF DEAD PRE-ZOMBIE THAN A LIVING HUMAN BEING.

AND HIS FEMALE COMPANION IS EVEN WORSE. I'M PRETTY SURE SHE'S A DEMON, BUT I CAN'T BEGIN TO GUESS WHAT KIND.



THAT'S NOT AUTOMATICALLY A DANGER SIGN, CONNOR. HALF OUR CLIENTS ARE INHUMAN IN SOME CAPACITY.

IF SHE'S A DEMON, I'M CONFIDENT I CAN IDENTIFY HER. AND IF I CAN'T, MISTER POLYPHEMUS CERTAINLY CAN.



TRUE. I CAN RECOGNIZE OVER THREE HUNDRED THOUSAND DEMONIC SPECIES ON SIGHT, AND CONSIDERABLY MORE WITH APPROPRIATE INFERNABIOLOGICAL SAMPLES TO TEST.

BUT THAT'S NOT THE WEIRDEST THING. THEY INSIST ON MEETING WITH BOTH YOU AND SPIKE BEFORE PAYING THEIR BILL. SHE SAYS, AND I QUOTE, "JUST ONE OF YOU WOULD BE A WASTE OF EFFORT."



HOW MUCH DOES HUBBLE OWE US?

NINETEEN GRAND AND CHANGE.

WELL, THAT'S ENOUGH TO INDULGE A FEW ECCENTRICITIES. ANYONE KNOW WHERE SPIKE IS?

THE HOURS TICK AWAY...

I CAN'T GET YOU ANYTHING? COFFEE? WATER? AND YOU'RE NOT HUNGRY AT ALL?

I'M HUNGRY ENOUGH, BUT ON A SPECIAL DIET. I'LL EAT ONCE SPIKE AND ANGEL ARE HERE.

UH—OKAY. WELL, LET ME KNOW IF YOU CHANGE YOUR MIND, AND I'LL GO SEE IF WE'VE MANAGED TO LOCATE SPIKE YET.

DO THAT. DON'T WASTE MY TIME WITH JUST ONE OR THE OTHER. I WAS PROMISED BOTH AT ONCE.


THAT IS TO SAY, ONCE WE'VE CONCLUDED OUR PERFECTLY INNOCENT BUSINESS WITH THEM AND RETURNED TO OUR OWN DOMICILE IN WHICH TO FEAST IN PRIVACY.

WELL, SHE'S ALMOST CERTAINLY A DEMON, BUT I DON'T KNOW WHAT KIND. TOO BAD SHE WOULDN'T TAKE A CUP OF ANYTHING I COULD SNEAK A SAMPLE FROM.

I COULD GO IN AND SEE FOR MYSELF.

NOT YET, MISTER POLYPHEMUS. I DON'T WANT THEM TO GET A LOOK AT YOU JUST YET, AS I'M CONVINCED SHE'S THOROUGHLY BENT IN SOME WAY, TOO.

WHATEVER SHE'S WAITING FOR, IT ISN'T GOING TO BE PLEASANT. I SUGGEST WE TREAT THIS AS A THREAT, AND GET ALL FIGHTING ASSETS PRESENT BEFORE ANYONE GOES IN THERE AGAIN.



IN THE MEANTIME, WILL YOU KEEP AN EYE ON THINGS, ANGEL, WHILE CONNOR AND I HAVE THAT CHAT WE SPOKE OF EARLIER?



SURE. MIGHT AS WELL DO THAT, WHILE WE'RE ALL TWIDDLING OUR THUMBS, WAITING FOR SPIKE.

WHAT'S UP?

I WANTED SOME TIME TO GIVE YOU A BRIEFING ON WHAT I'VE BEEN ABLE TO FIND OUT ABOUT THE SISTERHOOD OF JARO HULL, BUT THINGS KEPT COMING UP.

SURE. WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN ABLE TO DIG UP?

FIRST OF ALL, I'VE NO EVIDENCE THAT THEY AREN'T EVERY BIT AS LOYAL TO YOU AS THEY CLAIM TO BE.


BUT I CAUTION YOU THAT EVERYTHING COMES WITH A PRICE—MOST ESPECIALLY SOMETHING THAT'S OFFERED FOR FREE.

SOONER OR LATER THEY'RE GOING TO PRESENT YOU WITH A BILL FOR SERVICES RENDERED. WHAT IF IT'S FOR MORE THAN YOU'RE WILLING, OR ABLE, TO PAY?

IN ORIGIN, THEY USED TO BE A MINOR DEMONIC SPECIES BRED SPECIFICALLY AS SLAVES AND PLEASURE HOSTESSES FOR A GROUP OF FAIRLY MAJOR DEMONS CALLED THE JUSK.



"YOU WON'T FIND ANY JUSK DEMONS TODAY, BECAUSE THEY'RE ALL EXTINCT. AGES AGO AND WORLDS DISTANT, THE JARO HULL ROSE UP AGAINST THEIR MASTERS AND WIPED THEM OUT."



"SINCE THEN THEY'VE BEEN A STRICT MARTIAL SOCIETY, VALUING ONLY BATTLE AND THE OTHER WARRIOR VIRTUES."



MY ADVICE,  
CONNOR: WATCH  
YOUR BACK.

THINGS ARE  
FINALLY COMING  
UP MY WAY.

AND THIS  
IS ONLY THE  
BEGINNING. I'M  
GOING TO KEEP  
THOSE GRUMPY  
PISSHATS WORKING  
UNTIL WE'VE BURIED  
EVERY OTHER  
PROPHECY UNDER  
ALL THIS NEW  
MATERIAL.



WHAT  
NOW?

HAVE TO CALL  
YOU BACK, PARTNER.  
SOMETHING'S UP AT  
THE HOME BASE.

WE'VE GOT A  
SITUATION IN THE  
OFFICE. GEARING UP  
IN CASE IT TURNS  
UGLY. YOU'LL WANT  
TO JOIN IN.

THERE YOU  
ARE. WE WERE  
JUST ABOUT TO  
GIVE UP ON  
YOU.

SPIKE AND  
ANGEL WILL GO IN  
FIRST, JUST IN CASE  
THEY AREN'T ACTUALLY  
HERE FOR NEFARIOUS  
REASONS. BUT TRUST  
ME—THIS IS GOING TO  
BE A FIGHT. I CAN  
PRACTICALLY  
SMELL IT.



MISTER HUBBLE?

YOU WANTED TO SEE US TO SETTLE YOUR BILL?

AT LAST!



I WAS NEARLY FAMISHED!

SMASH

WHAT THE HELL?!



SOME HELP HERE WOULD BE NICE!

COMING UP!

ANGEL! SPIKE! WATCH HOW YOU LAND!

YOU'RE BOTH PIERCED WITH MULTIPLE WOOD SHARDS! ONE WRONG MOVE AND YOU COULD BE DUSTED!



40W!

I BELIEVE I RECOGNIZE OUR ADVERSARY. I'M REASONABLY CERTAIN SHE MAY BE A SOUL EATER.

OF COURSE SHE IS. ISN'T IT OBVIOUS?



THESE THINGS ARE STRONG, BUT NOT IMPOSSIBLE TO KILL.

THOUGH YOU'LL WANT TO AVOID PROXIMITY IF YOU'VE A SOUL YOU WANT TO KEEP.

WISE WORDS.

CRASH



AND I'LL BE DINING ON NOT ONE BUT TWO VAMPIRE SOULS TONIGHT!

THAT HAS TO BE THE RAREST OF DELICACIES IN A THOUSAND REALMS!



BUT NOW I  
SEE I'VE BEEN  
CHEATED!

ANGEL  
CLEARLY HAS  
A SOUL! I CAN  
TASTE IT FROM  
HERE!

BUT NOT  
THIS ONE!

THIS THING  
IS AS EMPTY AS  
ALL THE OTHERS  
OF HIS KIND!

WHAT?!

YOU TAKE  
THAT BACK, YOU  
SLANDEROUS  
BINT!

A TYPICAL EVENING  
IN THE HYPERION.

NO SOUL?  
WHO SAYS I  
DON'T HAVE  
A SOUL?

IT'S  
OBVIOUS!

YOU'RE AN  
EMPTY JAR, JUST  
LIKE EVERY OTHER  
VAMPIRE!

I'VE  
BEEN LIED  
TO!  
CHEATED!

ANGEL, YOU  
HAVE TO STAY BACK!  
NO CREATURE WITH A  
SOUL SHOULD RISK  
CONTACT WITH THIS  
THING!



THEN GET ME AWAY FROM HER!

I'VE GOT A SOUL!

I BLOODY WELL EARNED IT!



I DIDN'T RECEIVE MINE ALL GIFT-WRAPPED FOR ME BY A BAND OF BLOODY GYPSIES!

I'M SORRY TO HAVE TO SAY THIS, WILLIAM, BUT I'M INCLINED TO BELIEVE THE DEMON.

SHE'S BEEN IN PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH YOU FOR LONG ENOUGH FOR THE SOUL-CONSUMING PROCESS TO'VE BEGUN.



AND YET SHE CLEARLY ISN'T FEEDING FROM YOU. THE PROCESS IS IMPOSSIBLE TO CONCEAL.

THEN WHAT HAPPENED?

BECAUSE I KNOW MY SOUL IS STILL HERE. SOMETHING IS JUST... MESSING WITH IT.

I NEED TO GET IN THIS!



NOT A CHANCE, ANGEL.

WE CAN'T BEAT THIS THING BY GIVING HER SOMETHING TO FEED ON. IF YOU THINK SHE'S STRONG NOW—



SHE'S CLEARLY IN A PRE-STARVATION CONDITION AND COULDN'T HELP BUT START FEEDING IMMEDIATELY. AUTOMATICALLY.

HOLD HER STILL, ILLYRIA!  
LET ME—!



I'M ATTEMPTING TO. SHE'S NOT COOPERATING.

THERE!  
TAKE THAT YOU—!



YOU WANT TO HELP? GO DRAW A BATH. MAKE IT DEEP AND COLD. AND THEN USE THE BOTTLE OF ARANTHIA ACID, YOU'LL SEE IT IN MY OFFICE.

BUT—  
DON'T ARGUE WITH ME. I KNOW HOW TO KILL THIS THING!





EASY NOW. YOU'RE DOING FINE. LET'S NOT LOSE HER.

YOU'VE GOTTEN AWFULLY BOSSY, YOU DAMNED FLOATING RUGBY BALL.

AND YOU STAY AT A DISCRETE DISTANCE, MISS WEATHERMILL. WE DON'T WANT YOU TO PROVIDE HER WITH AN UNWANTED ENERGY BOOST AT THIS STAGE.

I WOULDN'T THINK OF IT, MR. POLYPHEMUS.

BUT YOU NEED TO FLOAT AHEAD AND CLEAR ANGEL OUT OF THE BATHROOM BEFORE WE GET HER THERE.



SHE'S LOSING STRENGTH.

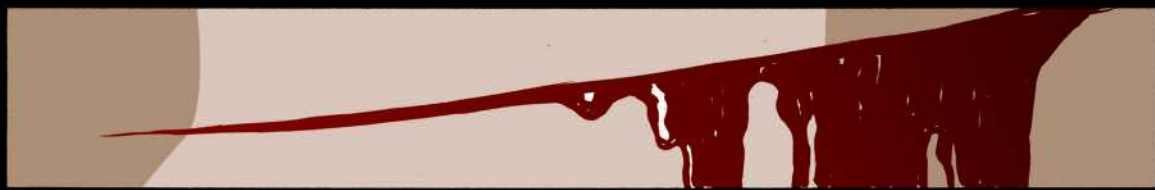
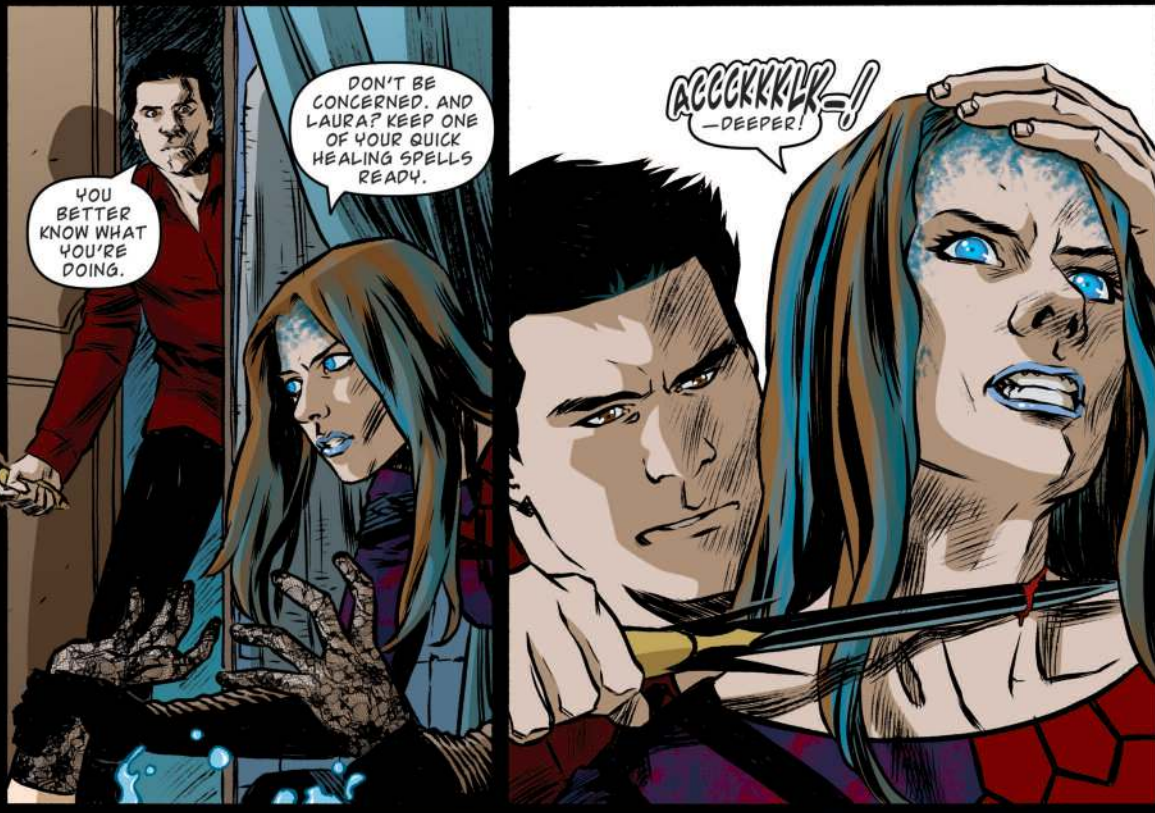
UNDERSTANDABLE. I COULD SENSE SHE WAS FIGHTING ON THE DREGS OF ONLY A SINGLE HUMAN SOUL.



SITTING SO LONG IN OUR OFFICE, WAITING ALL EVENING FOR SPIKE TO ARRIVE, MUST HAVE DEPLETED HER JUST ENOUGH THAT WE HAD THIS SLIVER OF A CHANCE.

YEAH, HURRAY FOR ME. I SAVE THE DAY AGAIN.







ILLYRIA HAS VERY POWERFUL BLOOD, EVEN FOR A DEMON.

THANKS.



HELLO—? WHAT? HOLD ON...

IT REACTS WITH THE WATER AND ARANTHIA ACID TO FORM A DEADLY MAGICAL COMBINATION—



—FOR LACK OF A MORE ACCURATE TERM.

AND THAT'LL KILL THE DEMON?

NO, BUT IT'LL BURN AWAY THE LAST OF THE HUMAN SOUL SHE'S PREVIOUSLY CONSUMED. DEPRIVED OF THAT SUSTENANCE, SHE'LL GO INTO A FORCED RESTING STATE...



GRRRRR!

"...NOW WE JUST HAVE TO KEEP HER UNDER THE WATER FOR FOUR OR FIVE HOURS WHILE SHE STARVES TO DEATH."

AS SOON AS THIS THING IS DEAD, WE NEED TO FIGURE OUT WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON WITH MY SOUL. I AM NOT TAKING ITS WORD FOR IT, BUT I HAVE FELT ODD LATELY...

THE HYPERION.

EERRHHHRR

THIS IS A BOLD MOVE, MISTRESS. I TRUST IT WILL NOT AFFECT THE TRIALS?

YOUR AMBITION IS ENDEARING, RAGDA. BUT TIRE SOME.

THE OLD WAYS ARE MAKING THIS WORLD TOO DANGEROUS. WE CAN NO LONGER ENSURE THE HONORED ONE'S SAFETY.

I TRUST THE TROOPS ARE READY, SHOULD WE ENCOUNTER ANY OPPOSITION?

YES, MY LEADER.

GOOD—

—FOR IF THE SISTERHOOD IS TO CONTINUE, WE DO WHAT WE MUST. SHOULD WE FAIL, WE ALL DIE.

FIVE HOURS LATER...

THAT SHOULD DO IT.

BLOODY HELL. IT'S ABOUT TIME. MY ARMS ARE GOING TO FALL OFF.

I HOPE NOT. IT TOOK TOO LONG FOR YOUR LEG TO GROW BACK.

JUST AN EXPRESSION, BLUE.

ALL RIGHT, THEN. BADDIE DISPATCHED. NOW IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO HELP ME...

...I WANT THIS "MISSING" SOUL BUSINESS FIGURED OUT. NOW.

LET'S SAY WE BELIEVE YOU, AND YOU DID NOT LOSE YOUR SOUL

I DID NOT LOSE IT. WE'VE ALL SEEN WHAT HAPPENS TO YOU AND I'M FINE. MAYBE A LITTLE... OFF MY GAME LATELY. BUT FINE.

ACCORDING TO CONNOR, NOT THAT FINE. HE SAID YOU'VE BEEN ACTING STRANGELY AND MADE SOME COMMENTS ABOUT THAT VAMPIRE YOU KILLED BEFORE COMING TO GET ME.

COMMENTS THAT SUGGESTED YOU KNEW HER... INTIMATELY. THAT DOESN'T SOUND LIKE "GOOD" SPIKE TO ME.

I... WELL... I MEAN... MAYBE? I DID SORT OF... I DON'T KNOW WHAT CAME OVER ME. IT'S ALL KIND OF A BLUR.

I WENT THERE SO WE COULD QUESTION HER AND THEN... I REMEMBER BLOOD, AND NOT MUCH ELSE. NOT IN ANY DETAIL.

BLOOD? THAT'S NOT GOOD. THE LAST THING WE NEED IS THE CRAZY-IN-THE-BASEMENT SPIKE RETURNING.



UNLIKELY. FOR ONE THING, THIS CONVERSATION WOULD BE A LOT MORE INTERESTING AND CRYPTIC.

FOR ANOTHER, LAURA AND I HAD A THING WHEN ILLYRIA'S HORMONES WENT WEIRD AND IT FELT KIND OF THE SAME WAY. OFF. ANYWAY, SOMEONE WOULD HAVE NOTICED SOMETHING IF I WAS REALLY ALL HEAD MESSED AGAIN. RIGHT?

YOU AND... LAURA?

DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT USING THAT TONE. NOT WITH WHAT WE ALL KNOW WENT ON IN YOUR ROOM.

OKAY, FINE. BUT I HAVEN'T BEEN AROUND, AND YOU'RE ALWAYS ANNOYING TO ME, SPIKE.

THANKS EVER SO. LOOK, THERE'S POETICALLY CRAZY, RANTY SPIKE ANNOYING, AND THEN THERE'S JUST ME. THEY ARE NOT EVEN REMOTELY SIMILAR SO YOU COULDN'T MISTAKE ONE FOR THE —



HEY, GUYS...!

...WE HAVE A PROBLEM.



BLUP



THIS IS NOT GOOD, GUYS. WE NEED TO—



KKKKACCGH!



DEZ—!

AAAAAAAAWWWWKKKSSSS...



HSSSSSSKKKKKKK!



GRAB HER, I'M STILL RECOVERING—!



WHUMP

DAMN!  
OW!



MISS WEATHERMILL,  
GET DOWN!



SWAAACK

POLYPHEMUS!



GKKKKCH...

YOU'LL FEED  
ME WELL, WATCHER.  
AND THEN I'LL  
HAVE MY VAMPIRE  
DESSERT.



...?!



**KRAACCH**

THAT'S IT.

SEE HOW EASY IT IS TO EAT SOULS NOW.

WHY CAN'T WE EVER GET NICE THINGS? LIKE, I DON'T KNOW, FLUFFY BUNNY DEMONS THAT WANT TO SHOWER US WITH LOVE.



**SKLLOOCH**





OKAY, GUYS,  
TIME TO EAT.  
ALAN, MAKE SURE  
YOU ACTUALLY HAVE  
VEGETABLES THIS  
TIME.

THEY TASTE  
FUNNY.

I KNOW GREEN  
FOOD IS FOREIGN TO  
YOU, BUT YOU NEED IT.  
JUST TRUST ME. IT  
WON'T KILL YOU.



YOU'RE AN  
ANGEL FOR  
HELPING OUT  
THE WAY YOU  
HAVE.

WELL, NOT  
EXACTLY.



KAF  
KOF





IT'S ABOUT TO GET SO MUCH MORE COLORFUL IN HERE. ENTRAILS LIVEN A PLACE UP.



THERE ARE SO MANY MORE WORLDS THAN THIS ONE, SO MANY POSSIBILITIES. ALL OPENED UP. ALL CONVERGING. THE TIME IS SO RIPE IT'S NEARLY ROTTEN.

OH, NO. NOT A DEMON PORTAL. GOT TO GET THE KIDS OUT OF HERE...

WHEN I FIRST CAME HERE, I SAW THE POTENTIAL. I SAW A RAW WORLD SWARMING WITH MILLIONS OF HOSTS JUST WAITING TO BE FILLED. TO BE... EVOLVED.



YOU'LL SEE. IT WILL ALL BECOME CLEAR.

AND IT WILL BE LIKE NOTHING YOU HAVE EVER SEEN BEFORE. THE DEATH AND REBIRTH OF THIS WORLD WILL BE HAILED FOR AGES TO COME.

ENLIGHTENMENT IS ALWAYS PAINFUL. THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING.

LOS ANGELES.

THE HYPERION HOTEL.

...THE LOCAL PAPER—THEY GAVE US THIS NUMBER IF THERE WAS A PROBLEM. DEMONS? NO, MA'AM. WE'RE FROM IOWA.

MY WIFE, SHE WON THIS SUDOKU CONTEST—



—YES, MA'AM. SUDOKU. I THINK IT'S JAPANESE.

THE REASON I'M CALLING, WE'RE SUPPOSED TO GO SEE ONE OF MY WIFE'S FAVORITE SHOWS TONIGHT...



...ME, I PREFER A GOOD NOIR MYSTERY, BUT THE TICKETS COME WITH THE TRIP, AND THAT GIRL FROM "FRIENDS" IS SUPPOSED TO BE ON—

...HELLO?  
HELLO?



DID YOU GET THE ADDRESS?

CELL PHONE SIGNAL'S COMING FROM 1300 PASS AVENUE, IN BURBANK—



—ALTHOUGH I'M AMAZED YOU KEPT ANYONE ON THE LINE AS LONG AS YOU DID, WITH THAT STORY.





KRAK

YOUR SOUL, SPIKE. YES OR NO? WHAT ARE YOU HIDING?

SOMETHING IS UP WITH SPIKE'S SOUL. HE SAYS IT'S A MISTAKE, BUT THIS IS SPIKE, AND I DON'T HAVE TIME TO WADE THROUGH THE SNARK.

THE TRUTH IS, I'M WORRIED ABOUT CONNOR —



KAFF... GREAT, THAT'S GOING TO STAIN.

I SHOULD HAVE SEEN THAT COMING...



...AND I CAN'T BLAME HIM, EXACTLY. BUT I WILL.

I KNOW I HAVEN'T BEEN ACTING ALL HIGH AND MIGHTY LIKE SOME PEOPLE WE KNOW, BUT I DIDN'T KILL ANYONE'S GIRLFRIEND, OR STALK ANY LITTLE BLONDE GIRLS, AND I'M NOT INTERESTED IN TRYING TO END THE WORLD.

SO GET OFF MY BACK, ANGEL —



I'M NOT THE BOY SCOUT TYPE, EVEN WHEN I'M AT A HUNDRED PERCENT, BUT MY SOUL IS HERE.

-I'M NOT YOU.



AND YOU CAN'T JUST HIT ME, WILLY NILLY, AND GET AWAY WITH—

SMACK



WHACK

I KNOW THAT SOUL EATER WAS LYING. I KNOW IT. I CAN STILL FEEL THE DAMN THING BURNING IN HERE, HOT AS EVER.



SO WHY AM I FIGHTING HIM SO HARD?

SPIKE, WE HAVE TO—

DON'T TELL ME WHAT I HAVE TO DO!



I KNOW YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT CONNOR, BUT YOU CAN'T JUST TAKE IT OUT ON ME.

I'M NOT YOUR PUNCHING BAG. NOT ANY MORE.

CRAP.



I HATE IT WHEN HE'S RIGHT.

STOP, SPIKE...



...PLEASE.

HE NEVER LISTENS.



SPIKE, I LISTEN. AND I'M SORRY I HIT YOU. I DO CARE—

NO ONE'S ASKING FOR A HALL-MARK MOMENT, ANGEL, I'M RIGHT AND YOU'RE WRONG. I'M GOOD WITH THAT.



MISS WEATHERMILL AND I MAY BE CLOSE TO FINDING A SOLUTION, WILLIAM.

BUT I'M NO HELP LIKE THIS. NOT WITH ALL OF YOU DOUBTING ME.

YOU REALLY HATE ASKING FOR HELP, DON'T YOU?

ONLY FROM YOU.



THERE'S NO WAY YOU COULD SIMPLY LOSE YOUR SOUL WITHOUT MORE SIGNIFICANT PROBLEMS ARISING. SO YOUR CONCERN IS WARRANTED, AND APPRECIATED.

WE'RE HOPING THESE TEXTS CAN HELP US BETTER DIAGNOSE YOUR CONDITION.

THANK YOU, LAURA.

IF YOUR SOUL IS ACTUALLY MISSING, WILLIAM, IT SUGGESTS SOMETHING ELSE IS AMISS.



IN REGARD TO JAMES, WE REQUIRE VENGEANCE FOR DEZ'S DEATH. SHE WAS A GOOD SOLDIER...



...AND AN HONORABLE COMPANION.



I KNOW. AND WE'RE GOING TO DEAL WITH JAMES. BUT RIGHT NOW, CONNOR IS THE PRIORITY.

GOOD LUCK, THEN—



—I'M STAYING HERE WITH THE KNOW-IT-ALL-BALL AND MS. BOOKISH. WE'LL FIGURE THIS OUT AND GET YOUR BACK.

HOPEFULLY BEFORE SOMEONE TOSSES CONNOR INTO ANOTHER DIMENSIONAL RIFT.



SOMETIMES SPIKE KNOWS EXACTLY WHAT TO SAY TO MAKE ME WANT TO STRANGLE HIM AND THANK HIM AT THE SAME TIME.

FIGURE IT OUT. FAST.



I NEED ALL THE HELP I CAN GET. EVEN FROM YOU.

ALWAYS THE FEARLESS LEADER.

FOUND CONNOR'S CELL PHONE IN THE STREET. LAST CALL WAS TO RAGDA. NOT GOOD. GOT TO FIND HIM.

LET'S GO,  
ILLYRIA.

OUTNUMBERED BY AN ARMY OF ARMORED  
WARRIOR DEMONS. BEEN  
THERE, DONE THAT.

BUT THIS IS ABOUT  
CONNOR—

—IF THEY'VE HURT HIM, I'LL  
PERSONALLY DRAG EACH  
ONE OF THEM TO HELL.

SLAM

ANGEL IS  
WORRIED ABOUT  
HIS SON.

CAPTAIN  
OBVIOUS,  
AREN'T YOU,  
BLUE?

BUT I AM RELUCTANT  
TO LEAVE YOU WITH SPIKE.  
IF HE IS TRULY EVIL, YOU  
MIGHT NEED MY HELP. WE  
HAVE... HISTORY.

I WAS A WATCHER,  
ILLYRIA—AND THERE  
ARE TWELVE WAYS TO  
KILL SPIKE WHERE HE  
STANDS. YOUR CONCERN  
IS UNNECESSARY.

YOU KNOW  
I'M RIGHT  
HERE?

TELL  
YOU WHAT,  
LADIES AND  
BALLS—

—NOW THAT  
WE'RE ALL ON THE  
SAME PAGE, MAYBE  
WE CAN UNRIDDLE MY  
LITTLE ENIGMA. THE  
SOONER WE DO THAT,  
THE SOONER WE GET  
TO HELP ANGEL AND  
CONNOR CRACK SOME  
DEMON SKULLS...

...AND THEY'RE GOING TO NEED  
ALL THE HELP THEY CAN GET.

I HAVE BEEN  
REVIEWING THE  
ENLIGHTENMENT TEXTS  
OF THE ANCIENT SUMERIAN  
BLOOD DAEMONS, WHO  
WERE ABLE TO REMOVE  
THEIR SOULS BEFORE  
ENTERING BATTLE.

BUT THAT  
REQUIRED THE  
DAEMON'S MOTHER  
TO INGEST THE  
SOUL OF HER  
OFFSPRING.

MY MOTHER  
WOULD'VE  
LOVED THAT.  
BUT NO—

"—THE ANSWER TO MY PROBLEM IS SOMEWHERE ELSE."

MY SISTERS, WE GATHER TODAY TO PERFORM THE HOLY RITE AS WRITTEN IN THE PROPHECY OF THE CHOSEN ONE—

COULD SOMEBODY SHUT THAT WINDOW...?

1300



...MAYBE IT'S ME, BUT I FEEL A DRAFT.

—AS CONNOR, THE SPAWN OF TWO VAMPIRES, SACRIFICES HIS HUMAN BLOOD SO THAT WE ACHIEVE OUR DESTINY.

AFTER A MILLENNIA OF WAITING, THE SISTERHOOD OF THE JARO HULL WILL BE REBORN!



SHHHINNGGGHHH

DID YOU SAY "SACRIFICE"?



YOU HAVE PROVEN YOURSELF, RAGDA. WE GRANT YOU THE HONOR OF THE FIRST.

HIS POWERS ARE NOT YET AT OPTIMAL LEVELS.



WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?! POWERS? I'M JUST REALLY STRONG.

OKAY, AND REALLY FAST. BUT THAT'S IT.

I'M REALLY NOT THE DROID YOU'RE LOOKING FOR.



BE STILL, CONNOR. YOU DO NOT SEE IT, BUT YOUR FULL POTENTIAL LIVES IN YOUR VEINS.

THEN I ACCEPT. AND ON MY WORD, CONNOR, WE PROMISE YOUR CITY WILL NOT FALL TO THE UPRISING TO COME.

WHAT UPRISING?



SISTERS! THE HOUR IS NIGH—  
—LET IT BEGIN!



GRRRRK!

SHXX

IT'S... SUCH BEAUTY—!



DESTINY!

DESTINY!

-I CAN TASTE IT. THE POWER, FLOODING MY BODY LIKE A WHITE HEAT...!  
...PURE... CREATION.

DESTINY!

DESTINY!



"WHAT FEELINGS DO YOU ASSOCIATE WITH THE FOLLOWING WORDS:"

"ICE CREAM, BLOOD, SUNSETS, BUNNIES—"

THIS IS RIDICULOUS.

YES, NO, OW BURN-Y, AND WHO BLOODY CARES. I'M MORE OF A CAT PERSON. HOW IS THIS GOING TO HELP?

THESE QUESTIONS HELP US ESTABLISH THE ROOT OF THE PROBLEM, WHETHER IT'S OF A MYSTICAL, MAGICAL, OR INTER-DIMENSIONAL ORIGIN.

OR QUANTUM.

LOOK, ISN'T THERE, LIKE, I DON'T KNOW, SOME KIND OF STICK I CAN PEE ON? IT TURNS BLUE, VOILA—SOUL.

NOT REALLY. SOULS ARE TRICKY; THEY DON'T ACTUALLY EXIST IN A PHYSICAL SENSE.

EXCEPT... OH, NEVER MIND.



THAT'S INTERESTING...

WHAT? WHAT IS IT? DID YOU FIND SOMETHING?

YOU Sired YOUR OWN MOTHER?

IT'S COMPLICATED.

ALSO? THANKS SO MUCH FOR ANNOUNCING MY PRIVATE BUSINESS TO THE ROOM.

IT'S ALMOST LIKE WATCHING MYSTICAL FOREPLAY. I GUESS ARCAINE KNOWLEDGE GETS THEM HOT.

HIS ANSWERS ARE INCONCLUSIVE.

HAVING A SOUL DOESN'T ALWAYS EQUAL GOODNESS. WE'VE SEEN CASES—

—A KRIASTEUM DARKNESS SPELL? OR A SHROUD OF INFINITE DRABORS? EITHER ONE COULD AFFECT HIS JUDGMENT.

TOO VOLATILE. AND THE SHROUD HAS A TENDENCY TO SET HAIR ON FIRE.

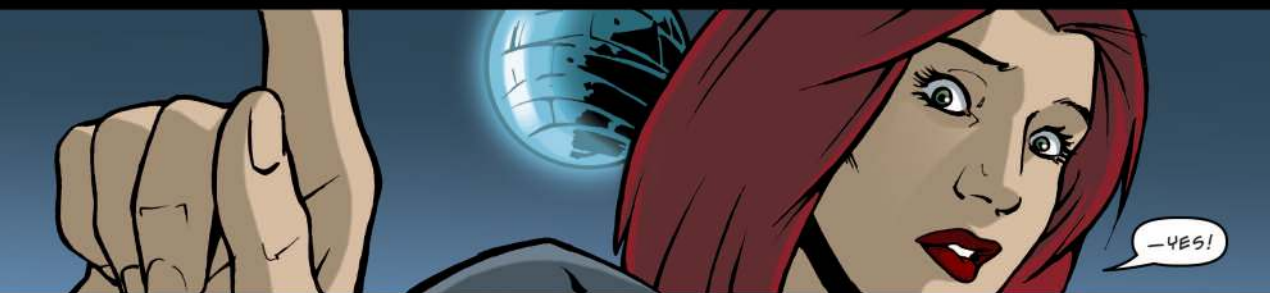
A RELINQUIA VOSTERIUM CASTING?

SKIN TURNS GREEN. WE'D NOTICE THAT. LET'S TRY CROSS-REFERENCING—

—I HATE TO INTERRUPT, SEEING AS HOW IT'S MY SOUL WE'RE TALKING ABOUT HERE, BUT REALLY PEOPLE...



...PUT ME OUT OF MY MISERY, AND GET A BLOODY ROOM, ALREADY!





WHAT IS IT, LAURA?

SPIKE... WHEN WOLFRAM E HART BROUGHT YOU BACK, YOU WERE A GHOST, YES?

I PREFER "CORPOREALLY-CHALLENGED." A TEMPORARY SIDE EFFECT.

AND I DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT THAT, EITHER.

POLYPHEMUS, ISN'T THERE A PARASITE THAT AFFECTS THOSE WHO ARE, TECHNICALLY, SHIFTING BETWEEN REALMS? THAT LITERALLY LATCHES ONTO SOULS?



THE ARCADIA SUM. IT'S VERY RARE AND VERY OLD. THEY CAN LIE DORMANT FOR YEARS, WAITING FOR A MAGICAL CATALYST TO BECOME ACTIVE.

BUT THAT WAS AGES AGO.

THE CONDITIONS AND USE OF MAGIC IN YOUR RESURRECTION, COMBINED WITH THE RECENT TIME SHIFTS AND THE REAPPEARANCE OF SOME ANCIENT MAGICKS...

SO IT WAS THAT LITTLE ARCADIA BEASTIE THAT MADE ME HAVE SEX WITH VAMPIRES AND TRY TO CREATE MY OWN PROPHECIES?

THAT COULD EXPLAIN WILLIAM'S RECENT LACK OF JUDGMENT!



AFFECTING A VICTIM'S MORAL CENTER IS ONE OF THE SYMPTOMS.



THE SOUL EATER WAS PROBABLY READING YOUR SOUL AS "CORRUPT," AND THEREFORE INVISIBLE.

BUT IT'S THERE? MY SOUL IS THERE?

THERE ARE SEVERAL INCANTATIONS CAPABLE OF KILLING AN ARCADIA SUM. ONCE COMPLETED, YOUR SOUL SHOULD BE GOOD AS NEW.

WELL, WHAT ARE WE WAITING FOR?



FIRST, I'M GOING TO NEED YOU TO FILL OUT THESE FORMS.

BUGGER.





IT'S A PRIVATE CALLER.

DON'T ANSWER IT.

IT COULD BE IMPORTANT.

LET IT GO TO VOICE—



HELLO...? WHO IS THIS?

CONNOR GAVE YOU THIS NUMBER...? SPEAK.

...YES, WE MADE OURSELVES FAMILIAR WITH ALL AREAS OF YOUR CITY.



A DEMON NEST IN WESTWOOD.

THAT IS 40 MINUTES AWAY.

THEN WE MUST MOVE QUICKLY.

BIP



IT IS A CRUEL IRONY THAT AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, WE WERE FORCED TO MOVE IN HASTE, BEFORE CONNOR'S BODY COULD FULLY INTEGRATE HIS POWER—



—A FEW MORE WEEKS, AND HE WOULD HAVE SURVIVED THE REBIRTH.

WE HAD NO CHOICE. LIKE IT OR NOT, LOS ANGELES, AND ALL THE HUMANS WHO DWELL HERE, ARE NOW UNDER OUR PROTECTION.



FOR CONNOR!

FOR CONNOR!

FOR CONNOR!

"THAT SHOULD GET RID OF THEM FOR AT LEAST AN HOUR."



FOOL ME ONCE, SHAME ON YOU; FOOL ME TWICE, SHAME ON ME.

YOU'RE WATCHING TOO MUCH "STAR TREK."

I WAS QUOTING AN ANCIENT DEMON PROVERB.

RIGHT. OF COURSE IT IS—

"—LET'S GO FIND CONNOR."



NOW.

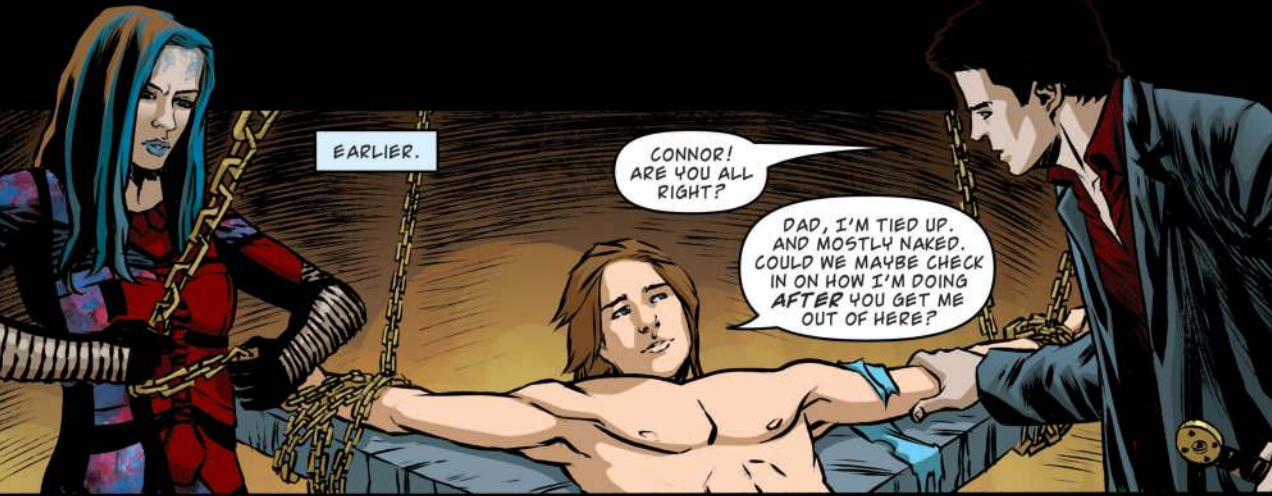
6  
CHAPTER

I THINK I'M TIRED.

NO MATTER  
WHAT I DO,  
IT'S NOT  
ENOUGH.

I LOVE CONNOR,  
BUT IT'S NEVER...

...HOW DID THINGS  
END UP LIKE THIS?



EARLIER.

CONNOR!  
ARE YOU ALL  
RIGHT?

DAD, I'M TIED UP.  
AND MOSTLY NAKED.  
COULD WE MAYBE CHECK  
IN ON HOW I'M DOING  
AFTER YOU GET ME  
OUT OF HERE?



AND  
THANKS, BY  
THE WAY.

FOR  
WHAT?

FOR BEING  
YOU, I GUESS.  
AND COMING TO  
GET ME.



I... OF  
COURSE I  
CAME.

YOU COULD  
NOT BREAK THESE  
ON YOUR OWN?  
ARE THE CHAINS  
ENCHANTED?



NO  
MATTER.

I THINK THEY'RE  
MADE OUT OF THE  
SAME METAL AS  
THEIR ARMOR.



LEAVE  
HIM!

HE IS OUR  
CHOSEN ONE! WE  
NEED HIM.

YOU  
CAN'T HAVE  
MY SON.



WE DO WHAT WE MUST.

YOU KNOW WHAT? I. DON'T. CARE.

YOU WILL SUFFER FOR THIS.



LADY, I WAS AT THE APOCALYPSE. THERE IS LITERALLY NOTHING YOU CAN SAY OR DO THAT WILL SCARE ME.

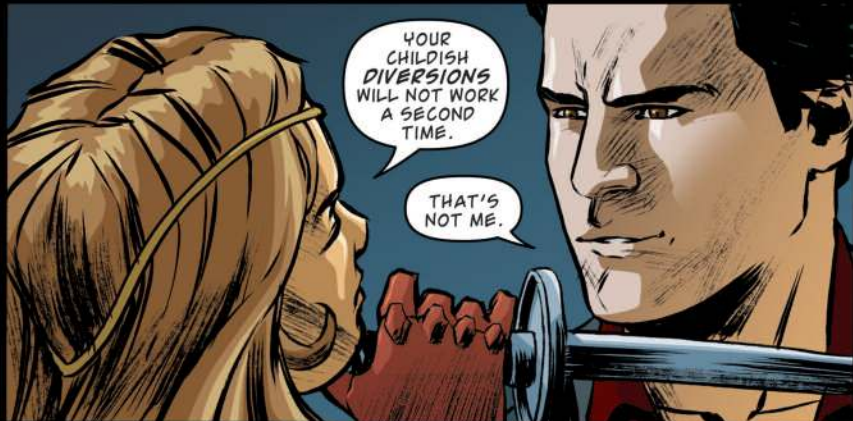


WE ARE THE SISTERHOOD! A LEGION OF THE MOST HIGHLY TRAINED AND FEARED ARMY IN ALL THE NETHER—

BLAH, BLAH, BLAH. WE'RE REALLY EVIL. STILL UNDERWHELMED.



WTF



YOUR CHILDISH DIVERSIONS WILL NOT WORK A SECOND TIME.

THAT'S NOT ME.



SOMEONE CALL FOR BACK-UP?



YOU'RE LATE.



YEAH, WELL, SOUL THING TOOK LONGER THAN I THOUGHT.

ALL BETTER? WHAT HAPPENED?

SOUL FLU. FINE NOW.



LET'S GET TO WORK.

THAT'S MY LINE.

WHATEVER.



SHOOT AT THEIR KNEES—



"—WE CAN'T KILL THEM, BUT WE CAN SURE SLOW THEM DOWN!"

ILLYRIA! WE NEED TO GET CONNOR DOWN NOW!



DONE.

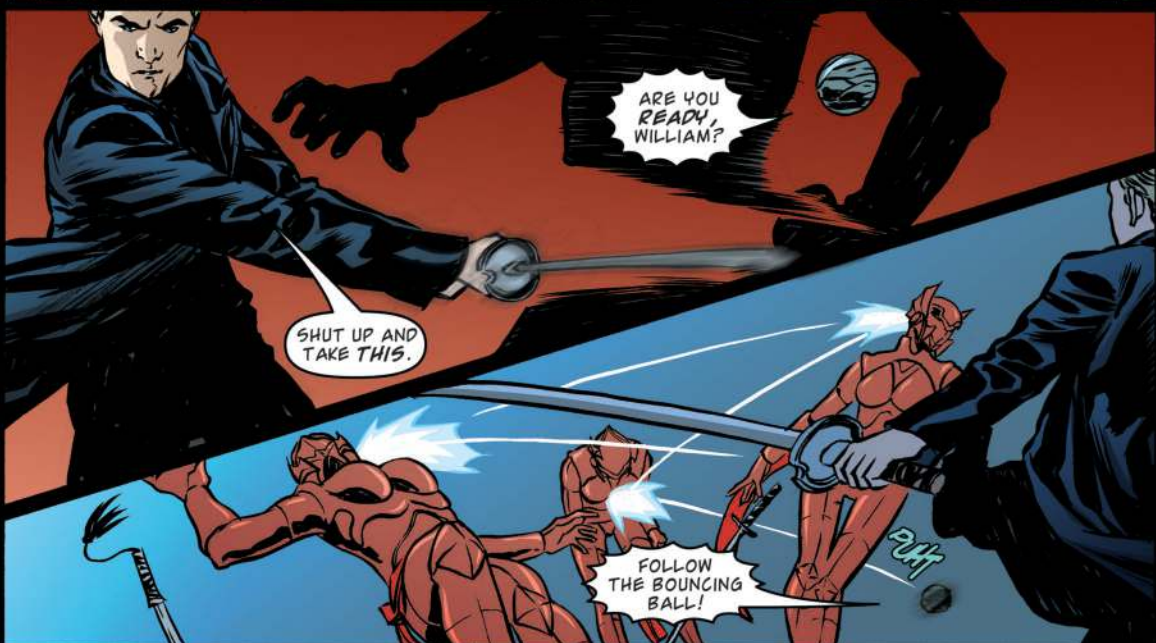
THANKS—!



I KNOW.

WE'LL TALK LATER.

—I OWE YOU.



ARE YOU READY, WILLIAM?

SHUT UP AND TAKE THIS.

FOLLOW THE BOUNCING BALL!

BOOM

IT FELT GOOD TO  
BE TOGETHER.



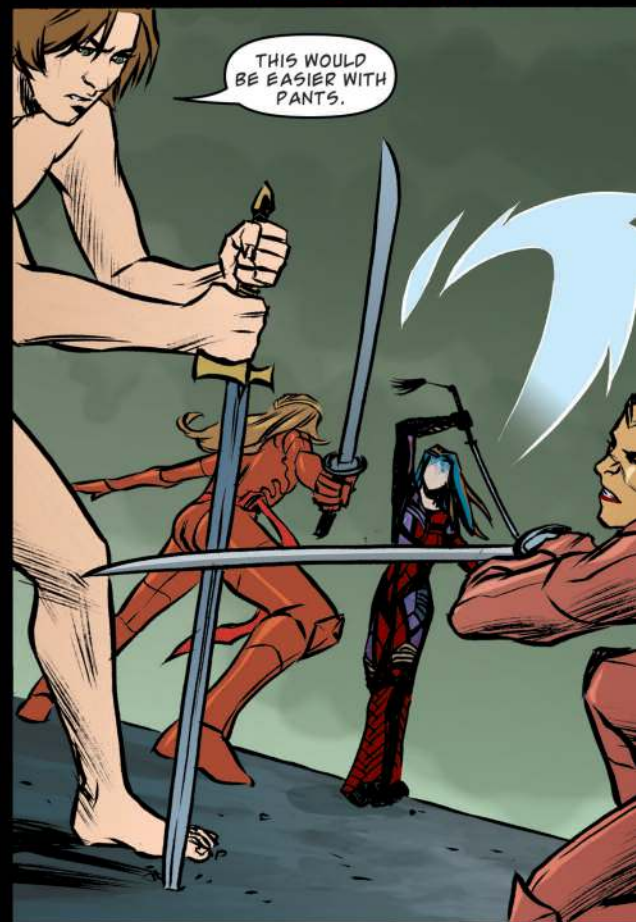
Flaw  
2010



FIGHTING THE  
GOOD FIGHT.

FIGHTING FOR EACH  
OTHER, INSTEAD OF  
WITH EACH OTHER.

WHO KNEW IT WOULD  
BE THE LAST TIME?







SFFFSSSSSSSS

UHM...

YOU'VE GOT TO BE KIDDING.

HEY!

HUH.

WHAT THE FU—

JUST WHEN I THINK THINGS CAN'T GET ANY WEIRDER.

SFFFSSSSSSSS

SFFFSSSSSSSS

SFFFSSSSSSSS



OKAY. MY SON CAN TURN CERTAIN DEMONS TO DUST. THAT'S... HANDY.



THAT WAS CRAZY, EVEN FOR THIS CROWD.

SINCE WHEN CAN CONNOR DO THAT? I HAVEN'T BEEN GONE THAT LONG. RIGHT?



THAT'S NEVER HAPPENED BEFORE.

IT COULD BE A SPONTANEOUS BRILLEANTITHUS...

-OR MAYBE YOU'RE EVOLVING.



WELL, THEN, ANOTHER BADDIE DONE IN.


UNTIL THE NEXT TIME SOME CRAZY DEMON TRIES TO DESTROY THE PLANET, THAT IS... OR WE FINALLY DEAL WITH JAMES.



I THINK I NEED A BREAK.

ANGEL, MAYBE I'M NOT REALLY FINE.





AND THAT'S HOW WE GOT HERE.



ILLYRIA'S GONE OFF TO FIND SPIKE.



AH. THOUGHT THAT MIGHT HAPPEN.




WHAT DID YOU SAY TO HER?

NOT A LOT. SHE HAS TO FIGURE SOME THINGS OUT ON HER OWN. LIKE MOST OF US.



ARE YOU UPSET SHE DIDN'T SAY GOODBYE?



NO. I'M NOT REALLY GOOD WITH THAT KIND OF STUFF, ANYWAY. AND SHE'LL BE BACK. PROBABLY.



DAD... WE NEED TO TALK.



ARE YOU OKAY?

YEAH; I'M FINE... YOU CAN PUT THE SWORD DOWN.

RIGHT.



I NEED... I DON'T KNOW WHAT I NEED.

I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT I AM RIGHT NOW.

SON OF TWO VAMPIRES? SOME KIND OF CHOSEN ONE? HOW CAN I SUDDENLY DO WHATEVER IT IS I CAN DO?



THEY'RE ALL JUST IDEAS.

WHAT MATTERS IS THE FIGHT. AND I'M READY FOR THAT.



I'M HOLDING YOU BACK.

IT'S NOT... WELL... KIND OF.



WHEN YOU WERE BORN... A LOT OF THINGS BECAME CLEARER FOR ME.

I'D HAD A PURPOSE, BUT YOU GAVE IT MEANING.

BUT YOU NEED TO FIND THAT FOR YOURSELF.



I KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO FIND YOURSELF WITH RESPONSIBILITIES YOU NEVER EXPECTED. AND WE'RE ONLY STARTING TO SEE WHAT YOU'RE CAPABLE OF.



I MISSED YOUR CHILDHOOD. AND THEN I TRIED TO DO WHAT I THOUGHT WAS BEST.

YOU GAVE ME A LOVING FAMILY. CONSIDERING WHAT HAPPENED BEFORE...

NEVERMIND. NONE OF THAT MATTERS. WHAT MATTERS IS YOU AND ME AND THE PEOPLE IN THIS CITY.



THE CITY NEEDS YOU.

AND MAYBE YOU'LL FIND YOU NEED IT, TOO.

SO... MAYBE IT'S TIME I STEPPED BACK FOR AWHILE AND LET YOU FIND EACH OTHER.



SPIKE'S RIGHT. YOU REALLY DON'T GET IT.

WHAT...?



I'VE DONE A LOT  
OF THINGS I'M NOT  
PROUD OF. BOTH  
BEFORE AND AFTER  
I WAS A VAMPIRE.

BUT SOMEHOW, THIS...  
YOUNG MAN CAME OUT  
OF SOMETHING THAT  
NEVER SHOULD HAVE  
BEEN POSSIBLE.



AND I'M MORE GRATEFUL  
FOR THAT THAN I CAN  
EVER TELL HIM.



THE NEXT DAY.

I'M  
LOOKING FOR  
ANGEL.

I'M SORRY, BUT  
ANGEL'S NOT HERE.  
HE'S ON LEAVE.  
TRAVELING. I'M HIS  
SON, CONNOR —

— I'M IN  
CHARGE OF ANGEL  
INVESTIGATIONS  
NOW. OFFICIALLY.

CAN  
I HELP  
YOU?

OUR  
BUSINESS IS  
WITH ANGEL. BUT  
THANK YOU. WHEN  
HE RETURNS,  
PLEASE GIVE  
HIM MY  
CARD.

AND  
CONGRATULATIONS  
ON TAKING OVER THE  
FAMILY BUSINESS.  
BEST OF LUCK TO  
YOU.

THANKS...

**WOLFRAM & HART**  
New York, Los Angeles, Paris, London and

OH...  
SHOT...

**NEXT: THE WOLF,  
THE RAM,  
AND  
THE HEART...**

**EDDIE HOPE:**  
Eddie and the Crew



Di Vito

art by ANDREA DI VICO



HI. YOU SHOULD HAVE A PRETTY BIG TO-GO ORDER FOR GUNN...

IS THAT YOUR REAL NAME? OR A NICKNAME?

IT'S CHARLES GUNN. WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

MARY-ALICE. GUNN'S A COOL NAME. DO YOU INTRODUCE YOURSELF LIKE BOND, JAMES BOND?

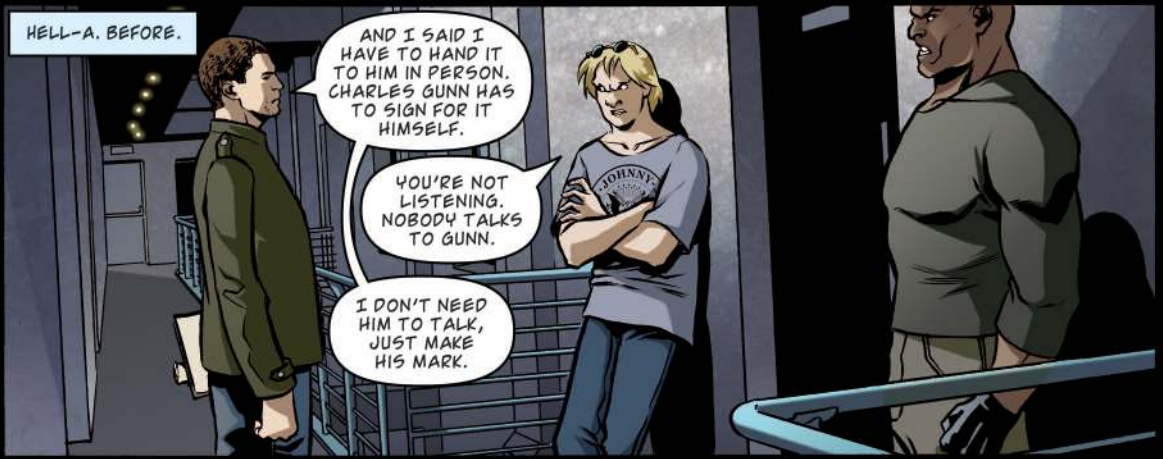


NAW. ARE YOU NEW HERE? I USED TO COME HERE A LOT BACK IN THE DAY.

GUNN. THAT NAME SOUNDS FAMILIAR.



NO WAY. IS IT "THAT" GUNN? SHOULDN'T HE BE DEAD ALREADY?



HELL-A. BEFORE.

AND I SAID I HAVE TO HAND IT TO HIM IN PERSON. CHARLES GUNN HAS TO SIGN FOR IT HIMSELF.

YOU'RE NOT LISTENING. NOBODY TALKS TO GUNN.

I DON'T NEED HIM TO TALK, JUST MAKE HIS MARK.



OR, I COULD EAT YOU AND FINISH YOUR JOB FOR YOU.

JEROLD. WE DON'T EAT PEOPLE. WE RECRUIT PEOPLE. WE PROTECT THEM FOR THEIR OWN GOOD.

ARE YOU BRINGING ME SOMETHING FROM GUARD CAPTAIN HARROS?

I AM.

LET'S SEE IT.



CAN YOU SIGN THIS, PLEASE?

DON'T MIND SIGNING FOR GOOD NEWS. WERE YOU AFRAID THESE GUYS WOULD KILL YOU?

NOT REALLY.

HARROS PROTECTS HIS PEOPLE AND YOU NEED ALL OF THE ALLIES YOU CAN GET FOR WHAT'S TO COME.

HA! WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

THE NAME'S EDDIE HOPE.



AND HERE I THOUGHT HELL WAS HOPELESS...



EX-VAMPIRE GANG LEADER CHARLES GUNN IS JUST STANDING THERE AS LARGE AS LIFE. WHY HASN'T SOMEBODY STAKED HIM YET?

HE'S NOT A VAMP ANYMORE, BUT HE'S STILL GUILTY.



AS FAR AS I KNOW, HE'S NEVER BEEN PUNISHED FOR THE THINGS HE DID IN HELL.

HE SHOULD BE.



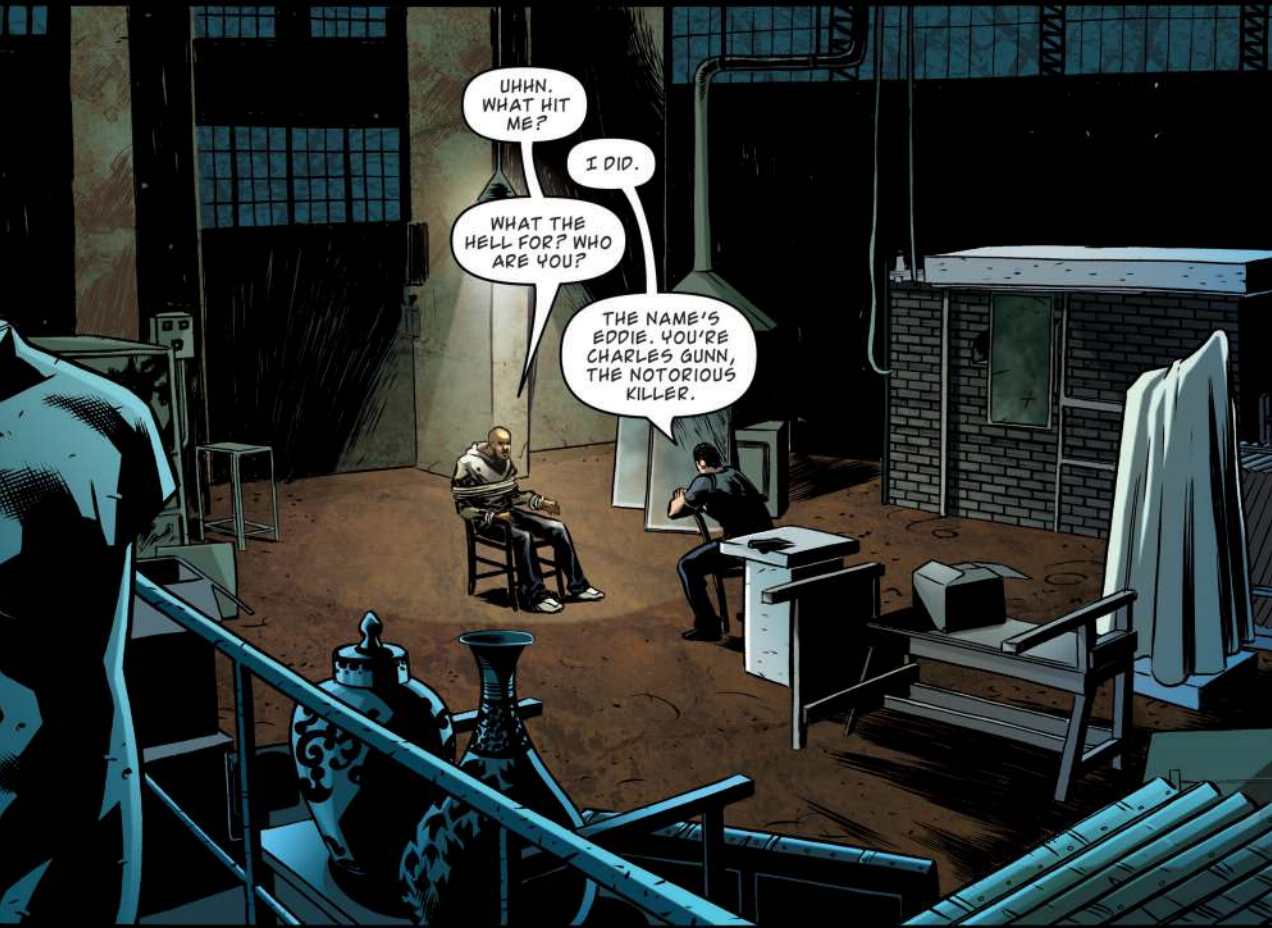
BUT IS HE MY BUSINESS?

CHARLES GUNN ISN'T ON MY LIST, BUT IF I CAN'T MAKE AN EXCEPTION FOR HIM...



...WHO WOULD I STRETCH THE RULES FOR?





UHHN.  
WHAT HIT  
ME?

I DID.

WHAT THE  
HELL FOR? WHO  
ARE YOU?

THE NAME'S  
EDDIE. YOU'RE  
CHARLES GUNN,  
THE NOTORIOUS  
KILLER.



WHAT DID  
I EVER DO  
TO YOU?

CHARLES GUNN.  
FALLEN HERO.  
CHAMPION TURNED  
KILLER TURNED  
CHAMPION AGAIN.



NOTHING  
AS FAR AS  
I KNOW.

EDDIE HOPE.  
HUNTS AND KILLS  
OTHER KILLERS.  
SOMEWHAT IRONY  
RESISTANT.



BUT WHEN LOS ANGELES WENT TO HELL, YOU AND YOUR MEN SLAUGHTERED PEOPLE BY THE SCORE. YOU DID THIS AFTER YOU TOLD THEM YOU WOULD SAVE THEM.

YOU TURNED THEM INTO MONSTERS.



THAT NEVER HAPPENED.

AND EVEN IF IT DID...



IT DID HAPPEN. PEOPLE DO REMEMBER. TELL ME GUNN...

...HAVE YOU RUN INTO SOMEONE YOU KILLED? DO THEY RECOGNIZE YOU AND RUN AWAY SCREAMING?

IT WASN'T ME.



WHEN YOU GET TURNED INTO A VAMPIRE, YOU DIE AND A SOULLESS DEMON RETURNS IN YOUR PLACE.

EDDIE, I DIED IN HELL AND THE DEMON DID ALL OF THAT. NOT ME. I'VE DONE BAD THINGS BEFORE AND I'VE TRIED TO MAKE UP FOR THEM, BUT I NEVER DID THAT.



DO YOU REALLY THINK I BROUGHT YOU HERE SO THAT YOU COULD PLAY BLAME-THE-DEAD-GUY?

GET THIS THROUGH YOUR HEAD. IT NEVER HAPPENED.



IF LOS ANGELES NEVER WENT TO HELL...

HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN THIS? HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN ME?



YOU'RE A DEMON.

I'M A DEVIL. THERE'S A DIFFERENCE.

I'M INNOCENT.

REALLY?



TELL ME, GUNN. IF YOU REALLY BELIEVE THAT YOUR HANDS ARE SO CLEAN, WHY DO YOU ACT SO GUILTY?

IT'S COMPLICATED.



NO, ITS NOT.  
I'LL GIVE YOU  
THE CHOICE. A  
BULLET IS  
QUICK.

A STAKE TAKES  
LONGER AND IF YOU  
DON'T GO INTO SHOCK  
IT TAKES A FEW  
MINUTES.



YOU'RE LOOKING  
FOR WHAT, REVENGE?  
ABSOLUTION? YOU  
WON'T FIND IT BY  
KILLING ME.

THAT'S  
MY PROBLEM.  
BULLET OR  
STAKE?



YOU'RE  
MAKING A  
MISTAKE.

I CAN LIVE  
WITH THAT.



I'M SORRY.

GOODBYE,  
CHARLES  
GUNN.



EDDIE, IF THAT'S YOUR CELL PHONE, YOU CAN GO AHEAD AND TAKE THAT.

OKAY. THANKS, GUNN.



UNKNOWN. HURM.

I CAN WAIT.

I GOT THIS CELL PHONE YESTERDAY. NOBODY SHOULD HAVE THIS NUMBER.



HELLO.

STOP WHAT YOU'RE DOING RIGHT NOW.

WHAT AM I DOING?

YOU'RE ABOUT TO MAKE A VERY BIG MISTAKE. YOU MUST NOT KILL CHARLES GUNN.



THE DEVIL SMURF CUT RIGHT TO THE BONE DIDN'T HE? NOW WHAT? WAIT FOR A BULLET?

I DON'T THINK SO.



SHOW YOURSELF.

OKAY LADY...

I'M MILES AWAY FROM YOU, EDDIE, BUT I CAN SEE YOU AS CLEAR AS DAY.

CHARLES GUNN IS A GOOD MAN.



WRONG.

FINE. CHARLES GUNN IS A USEFUL MAN. HIS DEATH SERVES NO PURPOSE.



SOUNDS LIKE IT'S THE GOVERNOR.



SHUT IT OR YOU GET ONE IN THE KNEE.



NOW YOU, MYSTERY CALLER...

WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?



WELL, EDDIE. I'M THE PERSON YOU'VE BEEN DEPENDING ON TO HELP YOU PICK YOUR TARGETS.

I FOUND 'EM USING THE INTERNET. PROVE IT.



LUIS FERNANDEZ.  
MONTE MATHIS.  
JAMES MCGEE.  
JACOB CRANE.

OH CRAP.





HE SHOULD HAVE USED A METAL CHAIR. DUMBASS.



DON'T YOU SEE, I'VE BEEN SETTING THEM UP AND YOU'VE BEEN KNOCKING THEM DOWN.

YOU THINK SO...

I CAN BRING YOU IN, EDDIE, YOU CAN WORK WITH US. IT'S TIME.

I'M A SOLO ACT. LOSE MY NUMBER.



YOU KNOW I CAN'T DO THAT, EDDIE. I DIDN'T SPOON FEED YOU LEADS FOR THESE PAST FEW MONTHS JUST TO QUIT NOW.

I DON'T KNOW YOU. BUT IF YOU LET ME KNOW WHO YOU ARE, I'LL COME FIND YOU.




THEN WE'LL TALK. YOU CAN SHOW ME HOW CLEVER YOU ARE IN PERSON.





I'M LUCKY THE FIRST SHOT HIT ME IN THE HORN. IT'S ABOUT TIME THESE THINGS WERE USED FOR SOMETHING ASIDE FROM MY DEVILISH GOOD LOOKS.



IT COULD HAVE CRACKED MY THICK SKULL INSTEAD OF JUST RINGING MY BELL.

FIVE MINUTES AGO, I HAD A PISTOL TO CHARLES GUNN'S HEAD. THEN I FIND OUT I'VE BEEN USED. NOW GUNN IS TRYING TO BEAT ME TO DEATH WITH A LEAD PIPE IN THE ABANDONED WAREHOUSE.

IT'S LIKE THE WORST GAME OF CLUE EVER.



INTERESTING PHONE CALL.



SOUNDS LIKE I'M NOT THE ONLY KILLER IN THE ROOM.

I'M GETTING TIRED OF GETTING BLAMED FOR STUFF I DIDN'T DO.

AND I NEED TO GET BACK ON OFFENSE.



GET USED TO IT.



FAP

UH OH...

C'MERE.



WHAM



YOU ALMOST  
TOOK MY HEAD OFF  
WITH THIS LITTLE  
TOY, GUNN.

YOU  
SHOULD  
HAVE RUN.



NOW...

WHAM



...GET  
UP.



DON'T NEED  
A NIGHTMARE  
LECTURIN' ME  
ON MORALITY.

GET OVER  
HERE. I WANNA  
LOOK YOU IN THE  
EYE WHEN I  
KILL YOU.



BE RIGHT  
THERE.



HERE I AM, GUNN. WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT IT?

I HAD YOU BACK THERE. I HAD YOU.



WE'LL NEVER KNOW. NOW HOLD STILL. I'LL BE QUICK.



STOP RIGHT THERE.



GUNN MAY BE A TOOL, BUT HE'S OUR TOOL.

AND YOU ARE?


THAT, MY FRIENDS, IS THE ONE AND ONLY EDDIE HOPE.



I AM SO SCREWED.

I RECOGNIZE SPIKE. AND ANGEL FROM HIS DESCRIPTION. THAT MUST BE ANGEL'S GIRLFRIEND. THEY EVEN BROUGHT SOME CREEPY FETISH MODEL. MAYBE THE CITY SLIPPED BACK TO HELL AGAIN, AND I MISSED IT.


MY ONLY CHANCE IS THE WINDOW. SUNLIGHT EVENS MY ODDS. IT TAKES THE GUYS OUT OF THE FIGHT.



I NEED TO TAKE THEM ONE AT A TIME, WHICH MEANS THEY NEED TO SLOW DOWN. SPLIT UP.



WELCOME TO EDDIE'S WINTER WONDERLAND.



THEY SAY ANGEL'S A HERO.



I CAN'T TAKE THE CHANCE.



EDDIE.

SPIKE. IT'S BEEN A WHILE.

YUP.

ARE WE GOING TO HAVE A PROBLEM?

I OWE YOU A SOLID FROM THAT WHOLE THING WITH TANGY FRY AND THE HELLMOUTH. SO, I'M GOING TO BREAK GUNN LOOSE BEFORE HIS GIBLETS FREEZE.



CHARLES GUNN IS A MONSTER.



YOU THINK SO? THAT'S RICH COMING FROM A MAN WITH HORNS AND A TAIL.

AND HAVE YOU MET KATE?



BACK AWAY FROM GUNN! I'M L.A.P.D.

SPIKE KEPT ME TALKING. HE'S SMARTER THAN HE LOOKS.



NOT SURE ABOUT HOW I FEEL ABOUT KILLING A COP.

CAN'T... FEEL ANYTHING.

YOU'RE BETTER OFF.



I HEARD THERE WAS A BIG BLUE DEMON HUNTING IN MY CITY.

I NEEDED A NEW SPARRING PARTNER.



SPIKE! YOU MIGHT WANT TO WATCH THIS!

YOU'RE QUICK.



LEFT HAND'S BROKEN. DOESN'T FEEL RIGHT, BUT IT WAS WORTH IT TO LAND THAT PUNCH.





THE SO-CALLED HERO OF LOS ANGELES HAS A PRETTY GOOD RIGHT CROSS.

TOO BAD HE'S COVERING FOR A MURDERER. I KNEW ANGEL'S STORY WAS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE. NOBODY'S THAT GOODY-GOODY.



NICE PUNCH. FOR A VAMPIRE. CHARLES GUNN IS A KILLER, BUT YOU HAVE THAT IN COMMON, DON'T YOU?



AND YOU'VE BEEN RUNNING AROUND LOS ANGELES KILLING PEOPLE. YOU MADE MY LIST.

THAT'S FUNNY.



HURK



IF YOU ASK ME, THE TERM "VAMPIRE HERO" IS AN OXYMORON.

YOU MEAN LIKE "DEMONIC VIGILANTE"?

ACTUALLY, THAT KIND OF WORKS.



LITTLE HELP...

OW.  
AND I'M A DEVIL. NOT A DEMON. NOBODY EVER GETS THAT RIGHT.

TURN US LOOSE AND WE CAN DISCUSS THAT LITTLE PIECE OF TRIVIA.



I GOT THE GUNN-CICLE HERE. ILLYRIA, GO HELP THE LAD BEFORE EDDIE KILLS HIM.

SAVE ME SOME...

YOU'RE AN OPTIMIST.







WELL, THAT WAS FAST.

HOW DO YOU KNOW THIS GUY AGAIN?

HOW CAN WOMEN ADORE YOU WHEN YOU'RE SUCH A TERRIBLE LISTENER?



HE DISTRACTED A FEW VAMPIRES WHILE I CLOSED TANSY FRY'S LITTLE HELLMOUTH A FEW WEEKS BACK. EDDIE'S DRIVEN. VIOLENT. KIND OF FUN.

THAT STORY WAS REAL?

YEAH. DRAG HIM BACK TO THE HYPERION. LAURA CALLED. SHE WANTS HIM FOR SOMETHING.



ILLYRIA CAN DO IT.

WHAT GOOD IS A BASEMENT JAIL CELL IF YOU NEVER USE IT?

HOW LONG DO YOU PLAN ON KEEPING HIM?

SHE'D BETTER KNOW WHAT SHE'S DOING. I DON'T WANT TO HAVE TO KNOCK HIM OUT AGAIN.

THAT DEPENDS ON LAURA.



GOOD. LET'S GET GUNN SOME MEDICAL HELP BEFORE HE FINISHES FREEZING HIS BOLLOCKS OFF.

THAT'S NOT FUNNY.

IT'S A LITTLE FUNNY.



KATE, DO YOU HAVE TO HIT EVERY CHUGHOLE?

THAT DEMON TOOK YOU TO A PRETTY BAD PART OF TOWN.

THAT RESCUE WENT PRETTY WELL. ALL THINGS CONSIDERED.

DOES LAURA KNOW THIS GUY?

SOMEBODY ELSE SHOULD HAVE TO BE ME FOR A WHILE.



I'VE GOT A MANGLED LEFT HAND AND A BULLET HOLE IN MY TAIL.

WHO ELSE CAN SAY THAT?

BUMP



SPIKE AND HIS CREW ARE SO CONCERNED WITH GUNN, THEY DID A LOUSY JOB WITH ME.



LUCKY BREAK.



SPIKE. I THOUGHT YOU SAID YOU CHECKED HIM.

MAKE UP YOUR MIND. DO YOU WANT ME WATCHING AFTER EDDIE OR GUNN?

ANGEL. YOU LOST MY NEW PET.



OKAY. I'LL MAKE IT EASY. I'LL WATCH GUNN.

IF WE GO BACK AFTER HIM...

I KNOW. GUNN SUFFERS. JUST KEEP DRIVING. ILLYRIA, GET A PUPPY.



"JUST TAP THE BRAKES TO SHUT THESE DOORS. IT'S GETTING SEARING BACK HERE."




SOMETHING ABOUT THAT THOUGHT BOTHERS ME.

"SOMEBODY ELSE SHOULD HAVE TO BE ME FOR A WHILE."



WHO CAN LIVE LIKE THIS?



MAYBE I LOST MY WAY  
WHEN I WENT OFF OF  
MY ORIGINAL LIST.

CHARLES GUNN IS  
SOMEONE ELSE'S  
PROBLEM FROM  
HERE ON OUT.

SOMETHING ABOUT THE  
TRANSFORMATION TO DEVIL  
FORM HELPS ME HEAL. THIS  
WOULD BE A GOOD TIME FOR  
THAT TO WORK BACKWARDS.




HURNNN.

HAND'S STILL BROKEN. THAT BULLET  
RATTLED DOWN THE BACK OF MY PANTS.  
BEATS EXPLAINING THAT WOUND TO A DOC.




AND THAT LINE IS  
STILL THERE LIKE A  
STONE IN MY MIND.

"SOMEBODY ELSE  
SHOULD HAVE TO BE  
ME FOR A WHILE."



WORKING THE CLUTCH WILL  
FEEL LIKE SOMEONE IS  
BACKING OVER MY HAND.

BUT IT'LL BEAT SITTING  
STILL. I'D RATHER BE  
MOVING NOW.



WHAT I'M DOING ISN'T WORKING. SIXTEEN KILLS IS A PRETTY GOOD RUN, ISN'T IT?

I THINK THAT EDDIE HOPE, THE AVENGING DEVIL, NEEDS SOME TIME OFF. I'M NOT QUITTING BUT...



...I GUESS I KNOW WHAT I HAVE TO DO. MAYBE IT'S TIME.




HOPE RESIDENCE.

RACHAEL. IT'S EDDIE.

OH MY GOD. OH MY GOD. WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?

THE LAST TIME I SAW YOU, THOSE DEMONS WERE HAULING YOU AWAY.



THEY WERE DEVILS, BUT NO ONE EVER GETS THAT RIGHT.

WHY DIDN'T YOU COME BACK TO US, EDDIE?

I HAD SOME THINGS I HAD TO WORK OUT AFTER... YOU KNOW... BUT I'M ALL BETTER NOW.

REALLY?

I'M COMING HOME.

IT TURNED OUT MY OTHER BODY COULD TAKE JUST ABOUT ANY PUNISHMENT. BUT MY HEART—IT WAS A MORE DELICATE VESSEL.

THE END.

# ART GALLERY



art by JENNY FRISON

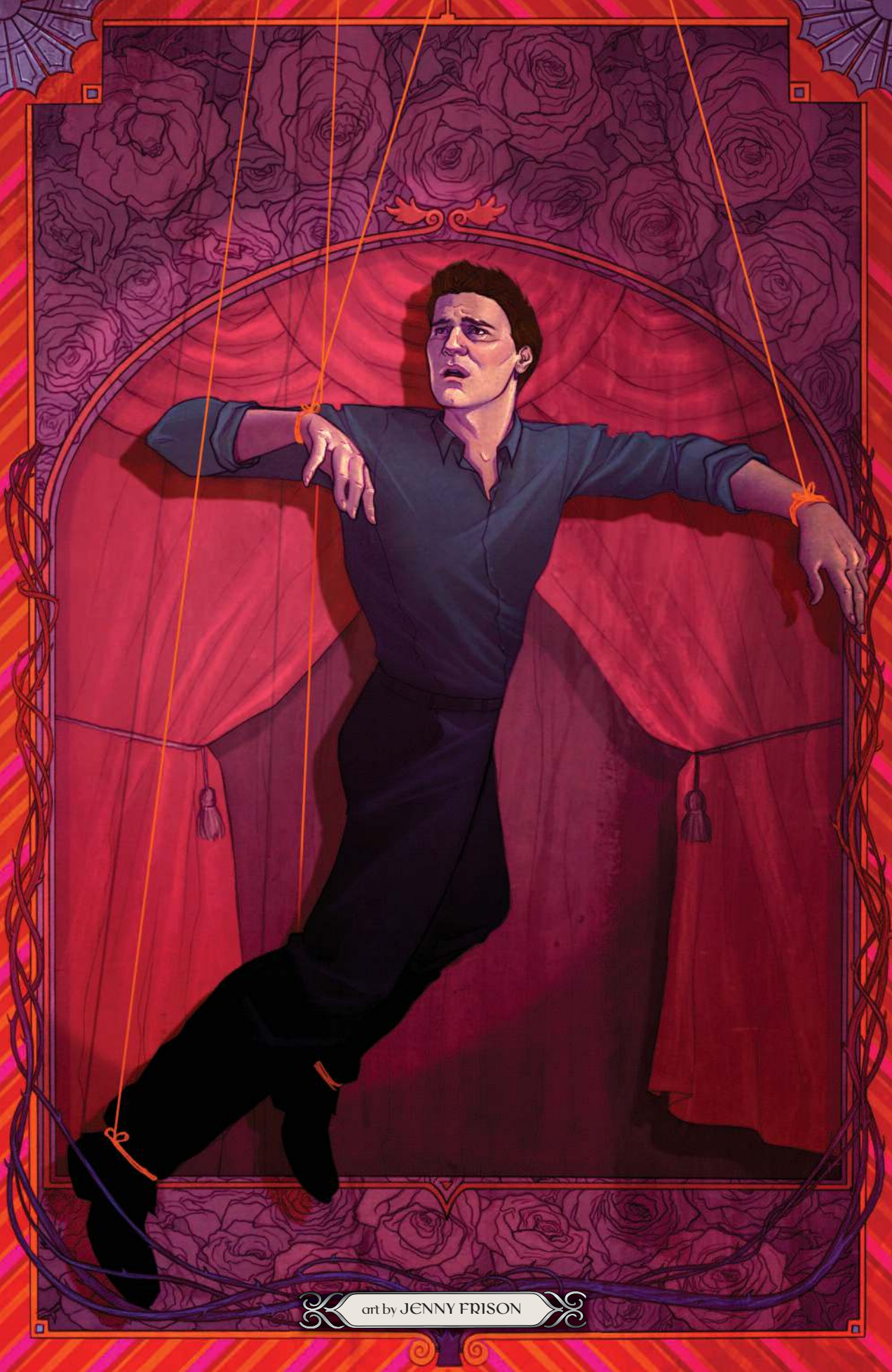
KEEPING  
L.A.  
SAFE



art by ANDREA DI VICO







art by JENNY FRISON



GET A SOUL

BE SMART!  
GAIN THE...DS  
...A SOUL!

art by DAVID MESSINA

5-09 Niro



MESSINA-MIRO  
**OLD ONE**  
DIGITAL PRINTING ON CHAVIS

art by DAVID MESSINA

FEEL GUILTY FEEL GUILTY

GUILTY FEEL GUILTY FEEL GUILTY

FEEL GUILTY FEEL



MESS  
Niro

art by DAVID MESSINA



# ANGEL™

THE CROWN PRINCE SYNDROME





# ANGEL™

## THE CROWN PRINCE SYNDROME

Now that Angel's back in charge, he struggles to keep his relationship with Connor from getting messy and discovers weird new things about Illyria as she tries to woo the prodigal son. Meanwhile, Spike gets into the prophecy business, Laura Kay Weathermill has some strange ideas, and a demon army of warrior women tries to "fix" L.A. You know, just another day for Angel and crew.

**IDW™**