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JOSS WHEDON

A DARK PLACE



SPIKE



Illustration by Steve Morris

SPIKE

SEASON 9 · A DARK PLACE

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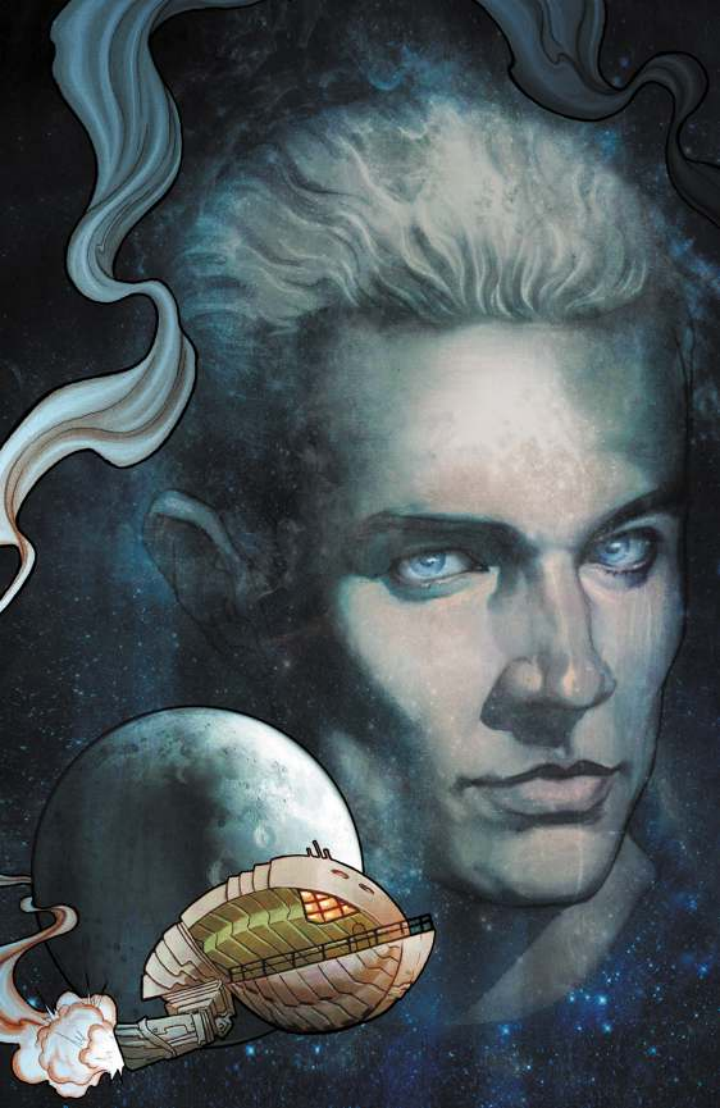
SPIKE™: A DARK PLACE

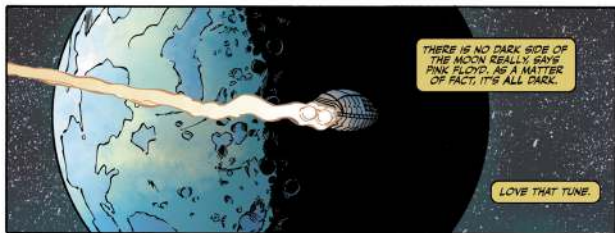
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SPiKe





THERE IS NO DARK SIDE OF THE MOON REALLY, SAYS PINK FLOYD. AS A MATTER OF FACT, IT'S ALL DARK.

LOVE THAT TUNE.



OF COURSE, IT'S NOT WHAT YOU'D CALL A SCIENTIFICALLY ACCURATE STATEMENT, IS IT?

I GUESS THAT'S ROGER WATERS MAKING WITH THE METAPHOR.

A DARK PLACE

PART 1 OF 5



CLEVER WANKERS, THOSE ROCK STARS.



WE'VE LANDED ON THE DARK SIDE AS ORDERED, SIRE.

NEVER WOULD I QUESTION ONE OF YOUR MAJESTY'S BRILLIANT PLANS, BUT WHAT PURPOSE IS SERVED BY OUR BEING HERE?

GET BENT.

THANK YOU, SIRE.



SHOULD YOU REQUIRE ANYTHING, YOU HAVE ONLY TO ASK AND I WILL IMMEDIATELY--

SOD OFF, SEBASTIAN.

SODDING OFF, MASTER.



I HAVE NEVER SEEN HIS MAJESTY LIKE THIS BEFORE.

HE HAS TOLD US TO SOD OFF MANY TIMES, ELIZABETH. YOU KNOW THIS. JUST LAST WEEK, HE TOLD SPOTTY AND ME TO ENGAGE IN AN ACTIVITY SO ANATOMICALLY IMPOSSIBLE THAT--

THIS IS DIFFERENT. HE IS... DISTURBED.



VERY WELL. WE SHALL OBSERVE.

AND TAKE STEPS AS NEEDED.





THE SOLARIUM WAS GOING TO BE HER PLACE. A PLACE OF LIGHT.



I DON'T WANT TO BE THE DARK PLACE YOU RUN TO WHEN THINGS AREN'T WORKING.

IT'LL ALWAYS BE DARKNESS FOR ME, LUV. MY SORT CAN'T TAKE THE LIGHT, CAN THEY?



SEBASTIAN, WE MUST CONFER. THIS SITUATION IS NO LONGER ACCEPTABLE.



WHAT TROUBLES YOU, ELIZABETH?



HIS MAJESTY SPIKE IS IN A STATE THAT MAKES HIM UNFIT TO BE OUR SUPREME LEADER. WE MUST TAKE ACTION.



HOW DARE YOU!

IT IS NOT FOR YOU TO QUESTION HIS SUPREME HIGHNESS.



IT IS NOT JUST ME WHO QUESTIONS.

WHO ARE THESE OTHER MALCONTENTS? LET THEM COME FORWARD AND--



OH.



VERY WELL.

STEPS WILL BE TAKEN!

50



WE MUST TALK, MASTER.

THOUGHT I MADE IT CLEAR I WASN'T IN THE MOOD.

WE HAVE NOTICED YOUR OBSESSION WITH DARKNESS, GIRE, AND YOUR BROODING IS ENTERING AN UNHEALTHY PHASE.



THE FEELING AMONG THE CREW IS THAT IN YOUR CURRENT CONDITION YOU ARE UNFIT FOR LEADERSHIP.

IN FACT... STEPS MUST BE TAKEN.



WHAT THE... STEPS MUST BE...

YOU'VE GONE BUGGY, BUG.

YOU HAVE BEEN TOO LONG IN DARKNESS.



"OI, THE SHIP'S MOVING. WHERE WE GOING?"



BACK TO THE LIGHT.

I DIDN'T GIVE ANY BLOODY ORDERS TO BLOODY LIFT OFF!



I DID.



YOU ORDERED--?!



I THINK YOU'VE FORGOTTEN WHO THE MASTER IS AROUND HERE.



HELLO.





UH, FELLAS, YOU KNOW ME AND THE BIG BRIGHT DON'T GET ALONG.

FELLAS?! COME ON, NOW, DIDN'T WE HAVE A GOOD THING GOING?




HOLD ON... WAIT JUST A--



"NOOOOOO!"





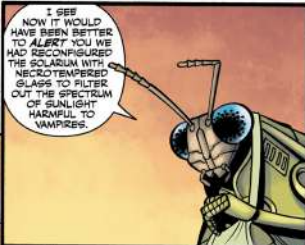
I SUBMIT MYSELF
FOR DISCIPLINE.
PLEASE PUNISH
ME, SIR.

SQUISH
ME WITH YOUR
BOOT OF
JUSTICE!



RELAX,
SEBASTIAN.
IT'S FINE.

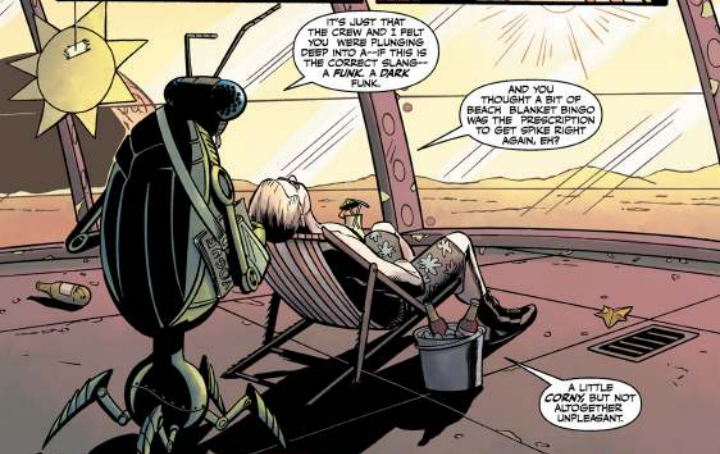
BUT YOU
CRAWLIES DID HAVE
ME WORRIED THERE
FOR A MOMENT.
THOUGHT YOU'D GONE
ALL MUTINY ON
THE BOUNTY.



I SEE NOW IT WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER TO ALERT YOU WE HAD RECONFIGURED THE SOLARUM WITH NECROTEMPERED GLASS TO FILTER OUT THE SPECTRUM OF SUNLIGHT HARMFUL TO VAMPIRES.



MMMM-HMMM.



IT'S JUST THAT THE CREW AND I FELT YOU WERE PLUNGING DEEP INTO A--IF THIS IS THE CORRECT SLANG-- A FUNK. A DARK FUNK.

AND YOU THOUGHT A BIT OF BEACH BLANKET BINGO WAS THE PRESCRIPTION TO GET SPIKE RIGHT AGAIN, EH?

A LITTLE CORNY, BUT NOT ALTOGETHER UNPLEASANT.



WE USED THIS AS A GUIDE, FROM A PERIODICAL MISS BUFFY LEFT BEHIND. IT APPEARS SUNNY AND RESTFUL.



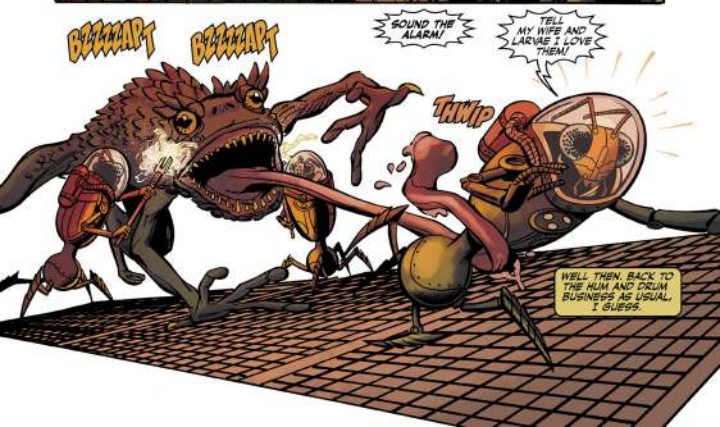
MADISON AVENUE TRIPS, SEE, DESIGNED TO DUPE THE SLACK-JAWED MASSES INTO THINKING A SIX-PACK OF COLD SUDS CAN NUMB THEM FROM THEIR DREARY LIVES.

EVERYBODY KNOWS THAT.











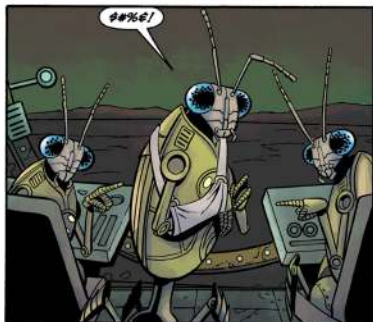


















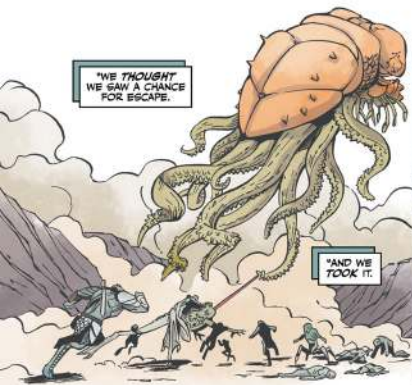
A DARK PLACE

PART 2 OF 5









"WE THOUGHT
WE SAW A CHANCE
FOR ESCAPE."

"AND WE
TOOK IT."



"OUR MISTAKE."

"THE BEAST WAS HEADED
FOR DEEP SPACE WITH NO
SIGN OF SLOWING DOWN."



"WE WEREN'T
INTERESTED
IN THAT."




"SURE, WE KEPT THE
THING FROM HAULING US TO
THE END OF NOWHERE."




"BUT WE STILL
HAD A LONG
WAY BACK."





NEVER THOUGHT I'D BE BACK HERE SO SOON. ALL ROADS IN SUNNYDALE LEAD TO TROUBLE AND HEARTACHE.



BUT I GUESS CERTAIN PLACES GET UNDER YOUR SKIN AND STAY THERE.



FUNNY THING IS...



I DON'T MIND A BIT.

AND I GET THAT FEELING AGAIN. THE TICKLE OF UNFINISHED BUSINESS DOWN THE BACK OF MY NECK.

SOMETHING IS COMING INTO FOCUS. I GUESS IF YOU BROOD LONG ENOUGH, EVENTUALLY YOU'LL STUMBLE OVER AN EPIPHANY OR TWO.

DAYDREAMING, PRETTY BOY?



DO I REALLY NEED A LEASH?

A SALIVA-COVERED LEASH?

YOU WANT OFF, THEN EARN IT.







THEY HAVE LEFT
ONLY ONE
GUARD.

WE CAN
OVERCOME
HIM WITH
CUNNING.



SEBASTIAN, SOMETIMES
I THINK YOU WON'T BE
HAPPY UNTIL WE'RE
ALL KILLED.



IF YOU HAVE NOTHING
TO LIVE FOR, THEN YOU
ARE NOT ALIVE ANYWAY,
FRISKY.

SPIKE IS
OUR MASTER,
AND WE MUST
HELP HIM.



WHAT ABOUT US?
WE MUST LOOK
AFTER OUR
OWN--

DO YOU STILL NOT UNDERSTAND
AFTER ALL THIS TIME? OUR WORTH
IS NOT MEASURED BY WHAT WE NEED,
BUT BY HOW MUCH WE ARE
NEEDED.

AND MASTER
SPIKE NEEDS
US.



I AM AWARE OF MY
DOUBT, OF COURSE.
I WILL HELP YOU,
SEBASTIAN.

GOOD, NOW GET
READY. WE'LL ONLY
HAVE ONE CHANCE.
I WILL ATTEMPT
SUBTERFUGE.

OH, NO! DON'T
DO THAT! THE
EXPLOSIVE CHAIN
REACTION WILL
KILL US ALL!





WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU BUGS--?!



STRIKE QUICKLY! HE MUST PAY FOR UNDERESTIMATING US!



AAAAAEEEEEE




YOU SEE, FRISKY, WHEN WE HELP MASTER SPIKE, WE ARE HELPING OUR OWN.



I UNDERSTAND, SEBASTIAN, BUT SOMETIMES I WONDER IF MASTER SPIKE FEELS THE SAME ABOUT US.

FAMILY.


HOME.



THOSE WORDS MEAN
SOMETHING DIFFERENT
WHEN YOU'RE WALKING
AROUND WITH A SOUL
BUZZING IN YOUR CHEST.

SAME WORLD.
SAME PEOPLE.

BUT NOTHING'S
THE SAME.



HOME. WHEN'S THE
LAST TIME I HAD ONE?
HIDEOUTS. SURE. LAIRS.



SO HERE'S OUR BOY TRYING
TO FIGURE IT ALL OUT IN
THE STEAMING HOLE THAT
USED TO BE SUNNYDALE.

ALL THIS DEBRIS
USED TO BE A TOWN.
PEOPLE, LIVES.

DARK
PLACES.

HOME?



I THOUGHT A SOUL
WOULD FREE A
FELLOW. IT DOESN'T.

IT TIES YOU TO A PLACE,
TO PEOPLE, IN A WAY
CHAINS NEVER COULD.







TA-DA. NOW CAN YOU PLEASE TELL THIS OVERGROWN SQUEEZE TOY TO UNTONGUE ME.

NOT SO FAST.



I DON'T SEE ANY SHARDS.

I DON'T SEE ANYTHING!



YOU SAID THEY'D BE HERE!

UH, NO. I SAID I COULD TAKE YOU TO THE PLACE. AND HERE WE ARE.



DID YOU REALLY THINK YOU'D BE THE ONLY ONE TO COME LOOKING FOR THE SHARDS? SOMEBODY'S BEAT YOU TO IT.

YOU'RE A LIAR!

NO. HE'S NOT.



WHO SAID THAT?

SHOW YOURSELF!



THE SHARDS
WERE GONE WHEN
I ARRIVED.

SO IT
LOOKS LIKE
WE'VE ALL MADE
THE TRIP FOR
NOTHING.



HELLO.













MAYBE NOW'S A GOOD TIME FOR YOU TO TELL ME WHO YOU ARE.

MORGAN, AND YOU ARE...?

THE FELLOW ASKING THE QUESTIONS.

WHOEVER YOU ARE, THANKS FOR SAVING ME.

SAVE YOU? WELL, I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THAT.

THE DEADLIEST CATCH HITS, YOU HIT BACK. THAT'S JUST THE MATH.



WELL, THANKS ANYWAY.



NAME'S SPIKE.



WHAT YOU SAID EARLIER WAS TRUE, SPIKE. SOMEBODY BEAT US HERE. LOTS OF SOMEBODIES.





I'VE BEEN HERE A WHILE AND I'VE SEEN A LOT OF POTENTIAL SCAVENGERS COME AND GO.

THIS WORLD WILL NEVER SEE ANOTHER DROP OF NEW MAGIC, AND PEOPLE WILL BE FIGHTING FOR EVERY LEFTOVER CRUMB.

THE SHARD'S COULD BE ANYWHERE.



AS IT HAPPENS, I MIGHT JUST KNOW A LITTLE SOMETHING ABOUT--



PLACE IS GRAND CENTRAL STATION.



WE DO APOLOGIZE FOR THE DRAMATIC ENTRANCE.

DO WE?

NO, NOT REALLY.



WELL... IF IT ISN'T FLOWERS IN THE ATTIC.





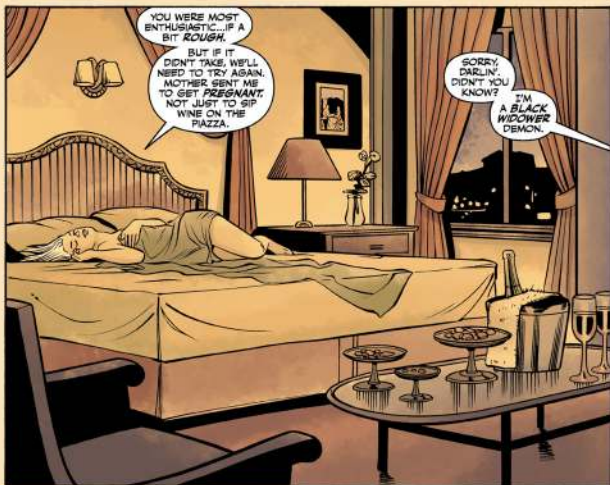


ROME, 1953.

THAT WAS
WONDERFUL.

A DARK PLACE

PART 3 OF 5



YOU WERE MOST
ENTHUSIASTIC...IF A
BIT *ROUGH*.

BUT IF IT
DIDN'T TAKE, WE'LL
NEED TO TRY AGAIN.
MOTHER SENT ME
TO GET *PREGNANT*.
NOT JUST TO SIP
WINE ON THE
PIAZZA.

SORRY,
DARLIN'.
DIDN'T YOU
KNOW?

I'M
A *BLACK
WIDOWER
DEMON*.



























MASTER, WE HAVE ONLY JUST MET THIS WOMAN. IS IT WISE TO ALLOW HER TO DICTATE THE COURSE OF THE SHIP AND--

SEE, REFRESHER COURSE. I AM THE HIGH AND MIGHTY POO-BAH. YOU ARE THE SCURRYING YES MAN...YES BUS, ACTUALLY.



WITH RESPECT, MASTER, CONSIDER THAT THE STURGEON DEMON CALLED HER A *SUCCUBUS*.

DO NOT SUCCUBI HAVE SPECIAL POWERS TO--

GIVE ME A LITTLE CREDIT, WON'T YOU, SEB?



IT'S NOT MY FIRST ROBBO, OKAY? I'M NOT ABOUT TO FALL PREY TO ANY DEMONIC MANIPULATION.

THEN WHY, MASTER, ARE WE SO AGREEABLE TO TAKE MISS MORGAN TO A HELLMOUTH WHEN WE KNOW IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR HER TO OPEN IT WITHOUT MAGIC?



IT IS POSSIBLE THAT A SHARD OF THE SEED REMAINED, MASTER?

A SHARD THAT WOULD ALLOW HER TO OPEN THE HELLMOUTH?

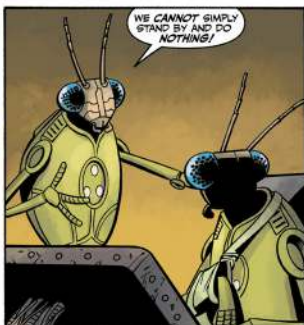
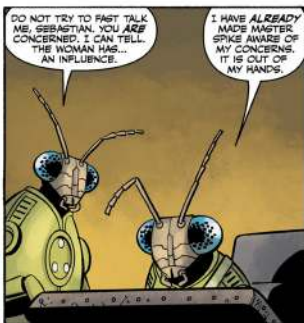
HAVE YOU NOT CONSIDERED THIS?



RIGHT. GOOD TALK, SEB. EXCUSE ME WHILE I LOOK INTO SOMETHING.









I KNOW THE STURGEON DEMON CALLED ME A *SUCCUBUS*, BUT REALLY THAT'S A CATCHALL TERM. I GUESS I FALL GENERALLY INTO THAT CATEGORY, BUT I'M MORE...HIGH END.

THERE'S A WORD FOR US IN THE ANCIENT TONGUE, BUT IT DOESN'T TRANSLATE WELL. MOST REFER TO US AS *COURTESAN DEMONS*.

COURTESAN. ISN'T THAT JUST A FANCY WAY OF SAYING...?

WELL, YOU TELL ME.

MY SORT OF DEMON WAS OFTEN SUMMONED AND *BOUND* TO ANCIENT RULERS.

GREAT MEN OFTEN FIND IT SO DIFFICULT TO TRUST WOMEN.

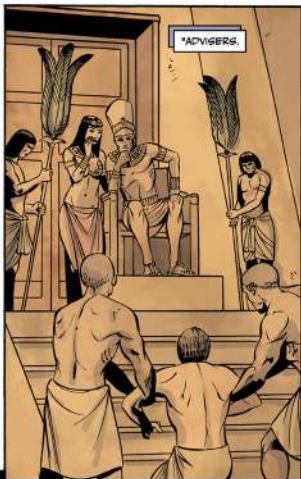
WE WERE USEFUL. VALUED.



"WE WERE COMFORTERS."



"FRIENDS."



"ADVISERS."



"AND, YES, THOSE OTHER THINGS YOU IMAGINE WE DO..."

I HOPE THAT PUTS ME IN A BETTER LIGHT.



SORRY IF I ASSUMED ANYTHING... CHEAP.



SHE'S A CHARMER, SO IT ALMOST ESCAPES MY NOTICE SHE'S GLOSSED OVER THE FACT SHE CAN GO ALL POINTY TAILED AND DEMON-ISH IN AN EYEBLINK.



MY TURN TO HEAR YOUR STORY.

SAME OLD BORING TALE.

BOY BECOMES VAMPIRE, RIDES AROUND IN SPACE WITH GIANT BUGS.



LET ME ASK YOU A QUESTION.

SHOOT.





ALL I CAN SAY IS I'M GLAD I MET *THIS* SPIKE, AND NOT THE ONE PEARL KNEW WAY BACK WHEN.



AND JUST LIKE THAT IT'S OBVIOUS WHY ANCIENT KINGS MIGHT WANT THIS LADY AROUND.



SOMETHING ELSE YOU STARTED TO SAY WHEN WE WERE BACK IN SUNNYDALE, BEFORE PEARL AND NASH ARRIVED.



SOMETHING ABOUT THE GHARDS.

SORRY, BUFFY KNEW--

UH, THAT IS TO SAY, *THE SLAYER* KNEW DANGEROUS PEOPLE-- LIKE PEARL, AND NASH-- WOULD COME LOOKING.

ANYWAY, WE COULDN'T JUST LEAVE THE LITTLE BITS OF SEED LYING AROUND FOR ANY--



OF COURSE. BUT IF YOU COULD JUST TAKE ME TO WHERE THE PIECES ARE HIDDEN, IF I COULD JUST *BORROW* EVEN A--



THE SLAYER KNEW I SHOT 'EM INTO THE SUN. WE HAD TO GET RID OF THE GHARDS FOR GOOD.









A DARK PLACE

PART 4 OF 5





LET US HOPE OUR PRECAUTIONS WILL NOT BE NECESSARY. IF MASTER SPIKE WERE TO FIND OUT--

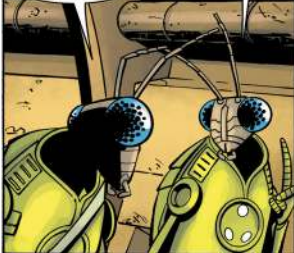
DO NOT GET COLD FINGERS ON ME NOW. YOU MUST SHOW LEADERSHIP, SEBASTIAN.

SPIKE HAS BECOME FOND OF THE DEMON WOMAN. IF HE DISCOVERS WE PLOT AGAINST HER, HE WILL SURELY SEE IT AS MUTINY.

WE DO NOT PLOT, BUT WE DO PREPARE.

AND IF WE ARE FORCED TO ACT, THEN HE WILL THANK US, AS THE EARTHINGS SAY, NO HARM, NO FOUL.

I AM NOT SURE HE WOULD SEE IT THAT WAY.



THERE IS ANOTHER OLD EARTH SAYING--IT IS EASIER TO ASK FORGIVENESS THAN PERMISSION.

I THINK YOU ARE BECOMING ENTIRELY TOO FOND OF EARTH SAYINGS.

PERHAPS MASTER SPIKE IS MERELY MAKING A NEW... FRIEND.

IF SHE IS EXERTING AN INFLUENCE OVER HIM...








"WE ARE EN ROUTE
TO THE...OTHER
HELLMOUTH."



ARE WE JAMMING
ALL SENSORY
APPARATUS AS WE
APPROACH?

BUT SEBASTIAN, WHY
ARE WE AVOIDING THE
SUBJECT WE MUST
DISCUSS?
OF
COURSE.



IT'S *BEEN* DISCUSSED.
WE HAVE TAKEN
PRECAUTIONS, BUT
BEYOND THAT WE
CAN ONLY WAIT.

AND WE ARE
SIMPLY TO AID
THIS WOMAN IN
GAINING ACCESS TO
A HELLMOUTH?
CAN THAT BE
GOOD?

WE CANNOT DEFLY
OUR MASTER
FOR SOMETHING
THAT *MIGHT*
HAPPEN. UNLESS
MASTER SPIKE
ORDERS--




O! WHAT'S
THE NOISE,
BUGS?

UH...



WE'RE ON FINAL
APPROACH TO THE
ISLAND NOW,
MASTER.



I'VE SEEN MY SHARE OF
HELLMOUTHS AND KNEW
THERE WERE OTHERS
HIDDEN 'ROUND
THE WORLD...



...BUT THOSE BIG, BLOCK-HEADED BUGGERS SHOULD HAVE BEEN A DEAD GIVEAWAY.



THOSE STATUES RING THE ISLAND, FACING OUT TO SEA.

THE ANCIENT NATIVES WHO ERECTED THEM WERE WARNING PEOPLE AWAY, ALTHOUGH THEY WERE LIKELY TOO PRIMITIVE TO UNDERSTAND AWAY FROM WHAT.

I'VE GOT THREE BARS. A BIT SURPRISING OUT HERE IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE.



"THE ISLAND WAS UNINHABITED FOR CENTURIES, BUT THERE ARE HOTELS AND OUTFITTERS NOW TO SERVICE THE TOURISTS AND ANTHROPOLOGISTS."



"BUT DON'T WORRY ABOUT UNWANTED ATTENTION. THIS IS A REMOTE AREA."



A STRANGE LITTLE PARADISE, ISN'T IT? I COULD SEE COMING HERE UNDER OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES, MAYBE WITH SOMEONE SPECIAL.



YOU THE ROMANTIC TYPE?



I MAY BE MY OWN WOMAN, INDEPENDENT. BUT DO YOU WANT TO HEAR SOMETHING FUNNY?

I MISS EXISTING FOR SOMEBODY ELSE.



IT'S NOT SO STRANGE.

WE'RE ALL ON THE LOOKOUT FOR THAT MISSING JIGSAW PIECE.



"WHY DO YOU DISTURB MY REVERIE, FRISKY?"







I CAN SOOTHE YOU. PUT YOUR RESTLESS SOUL AT EASE. YOU WOULDN'T NEED TO OBSESS ABOUT HER ANYMORE.

WHAT DO YOU GET OUT OF IT?



ISN'T IT OBVIOUS? WHAT A WOMAN LIKE ME...GETS FROM A MAN LIKE YOU?



FOR CENTURIES I HAVE BROUGHT OUT THE **GREATNESS** IN MEN.

YOU COULD BE MY GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT!



LOOK INSIDE YOURSELF SPIKE. YOU KNOW WE COULD BE GOOD TOGETHER.



PLEASE. L...



LOOK, I'M NOT SOME EMPTY VESSEL THAT YOU CAN JUST POUR ALL EXPECTATIONS INTO. I DON'T EXIST JUST TO GIVE YOU PURPOSE. TO BE YOUR ACHIEVEMENT.

I'VE GOT MY OWN PROBLEMS, MY OWN LIFE. I DON'T NEED--





DON'T
MAKE THE
SAME MISTAKE
WITH ME.



I'VE MADE MEN INTO KINGS
AND HEROES OF LEGEND.
BUT THEY WERE ALL MORTAL.
THEY WERE SO MUCH
LESS THAN YOU.

THERE'S NO
SUCH LIMIT
FOR US.



WE COULD DO
ANYTHING.

BE ANYTHING
WE WANT.



DON'T YOU WANT TO
FIND OUT? DON'T
YOU WANT TO...
TRY?



I THINK
WE COULD BE
AMAZING.







OW.



KINGS, PHAROHS,
EMPERORS,
PRESIDENTS.

ONE
POPE.

IN THREE
MILLENNIA NO
MAN HAS EVER
TAKEN A
PASS.



YOU'RE A
SHORTSIGHTED
BASTARD.



HEY, I DIDN'T MEAN TO
OFFEND. FRANKLY IT WAS
YOUR MOJO THAT MADE
ME GO ALL SELF-
ANALYSIS.

SO GLAD
I COULD
HELP.

IF MY SERVICES ARE NO
LONGER NEEDED, I THINK
I'LL BE LEAVING. I'M GOING
BACK TO MY OWN DIMENSION,
WHICH IS WHAT I SHOULD
HAVE DONE IN THE
FIRST PLACE.



THAT BRINGS US BACK
TO SQUARE ONE. YOU
CAN'T OPEN THIS
HELLMOUTH WITHOUT
MAGIC.

OF WHICH
WE HAVE
NONE.

AND IT'S A
BAD IDEA ANYWAY IN A
WORLD WITH ALL MAGICAL
DEPENDS ON THE FRITZ,
I CAN THINK OF NO FASTER
WAY TO MAKE ALL OF
REALITY GO BOOM.

I'LL
MANAGE.





IT'S BECAUSE YOU DO HAVE A SHARD.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING--

YOU HAD IT ALL ALONG. IT WAS OBVIOUS, BUT I WAS BLIND TO IT. I LET MYSELF BE TAKEN IN BY CHEAP SUCCUBUS TRICKS.

I SAID, LET ME--



GO!

WHAP



NO MORE SMOKE IN THESE EYBS, LUV.

AND IF YOU THINK I'M LETTING YOU OPEN A HELLMOUTH AND PLUNGE THE ENTIRE WORLD INTO HORROR--



YOU'RE OUT OF YOUR BLOODY MIND!

















"NO TIME FOR
A TEXTBOOK
LANDING, BUGS!

"GET THIS BUCKET
LOW AND *RIGHT NOW!*"

A DARK PLACE

PART 5 OF 5



MASTER, WHAT
ARE YOU
DOING?

TRYING TO KEEP
A MAD DEMON
FROM PULLING THE
CORK OUT OF A
BOTTLE.

WHICH
SHOULDN'T EVEN
BE POSSIBLE.









BUT I DON'T FEEL OPTIMISTIC.

I FEEL
BRUISED.



STILL...

A BLOKE'S GOTTA
GIVE IT A SHOT,
DOESN'T HE?

MORGAN!
YOU DON'T KNOW
WHAT YOU'RE DOING!

YOU OPEN UP
A HELLMOUTH AND IT
DOES NOT CLOSE UP AGAIN
GRACEFULLY WHEN YOU'RE
DONE DIMENSION HOPPING.



YOU'LL RIP
THIS WORLD
APART!

I DON'T
CARE ABOUT THIS
WORLD. I DON'T
CARE ABOUT
YOU!



YOU DON'T KNOW
WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE
CUT OFF FROM YOUR
HOME--TO FEEL A THIRST
YOU CAN NEVER
QUENCH!

ALREADY
I CAN FEEL
MYSELF DIMINISH.
I WON'T LET
IT HAPPEN.




TOO BAD, I'M
NOT LETTING
YOU--

AND I'M NOT
ASKING YOUR
PERMISSION
SO--







"NOW HOLD HER STEADY,
WE MIGHT NOT HAVE
ANOTHER CHANCE AT THIS."

"PICK YOUR
TARGETS AND..."

**SHRED THE
BASTARDS!**







"WHAT THE #0%# IS THAT?"



SIR, I BELIEVE IT IS AN AMALGAM OF ALL THE SMALLER EASTER ISLAND HEAD STATUES.



I KNOW! IT WAS A RHETORICAL EXCLAMATION INTENDED TO EXPRESS MY PANICKED DISPLEASURE!



WE NEED TO PULL UP! WE NEED TO PULL UP!

KEEP FIRING!

BZZAP BZZAP



KRONK



OKAY, WHAT'S WORSE? LOTS OF LITTLE ONES OR ONE BIG ONE?

SPLIT UP!



OH, COME ON!



SHE'S THE ONE TRIED TO OPEN YOUR BLOODY DIMENSIONAL BUS STOP.



FOOM



SUGGEST.



"IT'S NO USE,
SEBASTIAN. WE'VE
TRIED EVERYTHING."





"...AND THIS IS MY FINAL ENTRY."

HWOMM

YOU NICK-OF-TIMED THAT ONE.

I OWED YOU THAT.



UH, HIGHER, PLEASE!

I DON'T USUALLY CARRY PASSENGERS.

WHAT THE BLOODY HELL'S THAT BUG SHIP—



NO.

"IT HAS BEEN AN HONOR TO LEAD MY CREW AND TO SERVE MASTER SPIKE."



FWWABOOM

"WE SEARCHED EVERYWHERE FOR SEBASTIAN, MASTER SPIKE."



THERE WAS NO SIGN OF HIM IN THE WRECKAGE OR THE NEARBY AREA.

THERE WAS NEVER MUCH HOPE, REALLY.



WELL, THAT'S IT THEN.
SEB... DID A GOOD JOB.
YOU ALL HAVE.



LOOK, IF AT TIMES I SEEMED... I DUNNO ...BRUQUE WITH YOU CRAWLES, IT WASN'T THAT I DIDN'T APPRECIATE...

WHAT I MEAN TO SAY IS--



MASTER, SEBASTIAN WAS LOYAL TO YOU ALWAYS, EVEN WHEN OTHERS DOUBTED.
WE WILL HONOR HIS MEMORY.



THERE ARE FEW OF US NOW, AND WE HAVE NO SHIP, WE'VE ALREADY DISCOVERED A CAVE AWAY FROM THE TOURIST AREAS AND WE WILL MAKE A HOME.

I WILL BE LEADER, ALTHOUGH I HAVE NO EXPERIENCE WITH THIS. I FEAR I WILL SOON MISS SEBASTIAN EVEN MORE THAN I WOULD HAVE THOUGHT.





YEAH,
SORRY ABOUT
THAT...



FRANKLY IF YOU'D BEEN MORE
OPEN TO OUR PARTNERSHIP,
NONE OF THIS WOULD
HAVE BEEN NECESSARY,
YOU KNOW.

GET REAL IN THE
HEAD. THERE WAS
NEVER GOING TO
BE AN US.



NO. I GUESS
NOT.
BUT I DID
MEAN IT, SPIKE.
WE COULD
HAVE BEEN THIS
CENTURY'S
POWER
COUPLE.



WHEN I FOUND MYSELF
DISCONNECTED FROM
MY HOME, I WANTED
TO RECONNECT TO
SOMETHING
ELSE.
TO YOU.



BUT THERE'S NO
WAY TO GET TO YOU
WITHOUT GETTING
PAST HER.
I CAN'T
COMPETE WITH
A MEMORY.



LET'S NOT GLOSS OVER THE FACT YOU JERKED ME AROUND.

BUT I KNOW WHAT SHE MEANS, ABOUT WANTING TO CONNECT.



I USED TO HAVE A SPACESHIP. I COULD LITERALLY GO ANYWHERE IN THE GALAXY.

ANYWHERE BUT WHERE I WANTED TO BE MOST OF ALL.



AND THAT'S HOW YOU END UP DRUNK ON THE DARK SIDE OF THE MOON.



SO LOOK, I MESSED UP.

I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN MANIPULATING YOU WOULD TURN OUT BAD. I MEAN, YOU'RE NOT THE USUAL GUY, RIGHT?



SO HOW ABOUT IT? A FRESH START?

WE'VE BEEN THROUGH A LOT. SHE DESERVES A PROPER ANSWER.



SOD OFF.



WELL, NO MIXED MESSAGE THERE.

SO LONG, SPIKE. MAYBE YOU'LL HAVE COOLED OFF BY THE NEXT TIME WE CROSS PATHS.



SO I'M SMOKING MY LAST CIGARETTE. I'VE GOT NO BUGS, NO SHIP, AND NO PLAN.

AND MOST CONSPICUOUSLY, NO GIRL.

FACT IS, I MIGHT SORT OF EVEN MISS THOSE BUGS, BUT I WON'T MISS TOOLING AROUND IN SPACE LIKE SOME HALF-ASSED ASTRONAUT.

I WOULDN'T SAY NO TO A FAMILIAR FACE.

SAN FRANCISCO?

SURE. WHY NOT? BUT NOT JUST YET. WARM UP TO IT. YOU'LL GET THERE.

AND YOU'LL GET AROUND TO HER.



SO THE WORLD IS YOUR PROVERBIAL OYSTER, RIGHT? ALL YOU NEED IS A BRIGHT IDEA, A NUDGE IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION. MAYBE--



BREEP
BREEP
BREEP

WHAT THE--?





HELLO,
WANKER.

BEEN TRYING
TO GET AHEAD OF
YOU, SPIKE. YOU BEEN ON
ANOTHER PLANET OR
SOMETHING?



SOMETHING
LIKE THAT. BUT I'M
BACK
NOW.

The End



SPIKE: A DARK PLACE
COVER GALLERY
and SKETCHBOOK

CHARACTER DESIGNS BY
PAUL LEE

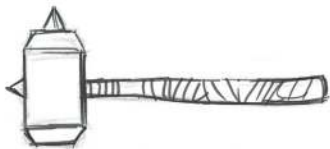
VARIANT COVER ART BY
STEVE MORRIS



*Initial sketches from interior
artist Paul Lee for the de-
mons Spike encounters on
the moon.*



Final character sketches for the demon gang by Paul Lee.





The initial likeness tryout for actor James Marsters as Spike, by Steve Morris.

FACING PAGE: *Variant cover art for Spike #1.*





Initial character design for the succubus demon, femme fatale Morgan, by Paul Lee. Her costume design was finalized on Steve Morris's issue #3 variant cover (facing).





Initial cover sketch for the Spike #4 variant cover by Steve Morris.



Final cover pencils for the Spike #4 variant cover.

FACING PAGE: *Variant cover art for Spike #4.*

FOLLOWING PAGE: *Variant cover art for Spike #5.*





"*Spike: A Dark Place #1* is definitely a fun read for both new and old *Buffy* fans. The amusing mix of comedy, sci-fi, and horror will keep readers entertained . . ."

—*Fangoria*

"Victor Gischler nails the voice of Spike, whose TV-verse swagger just drips off him with every piece of dialogue."

—*Bloody-Disgusting.com*



SEASON 9: A DARK PLACE

Spike hightails it for the dark side of the moon after parting ways with his on-again, off-again love interest, Buffy the Vampire Slayer. Once a terrifying vampire, Spike has grown soft. It's nothing that a vacation on a bug-filled spaceship headed for the moon can't fix. *That* and some heavy drinking. But his plans for self-loathing are interrupted when he's confronted by dangerous demons looking for a first-class ticket to . . . Sunnydale! Villains from Spike's shady past appear, and a sultry succubus tempts Spike to move on from his aching heart. Victor Gischler (*Deadpool*, *Punisher*) and Paul Lee (*Buffy the Vampire Slayer*) bring Spike to vivid life, presenting this vampire who *chose* to have a soul with the hard truth about himself and his enduring pursuit of the Slayer.

