



image

322

DIGITAL
EDITION

TODD
MCFARLANE

CARLO
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SPAWN





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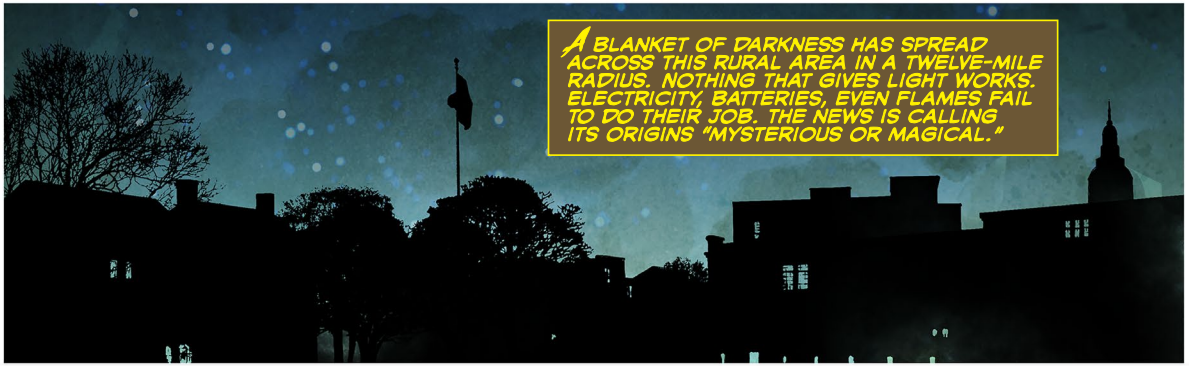
Publisher For
Image Comics/
Chief Creative Officer
ERIC STEPHENSON

SPAWN CREATED BY
TODD McFARLANE



PREVIOUSLY IN SPAWN

While on the hunt for another secret file pertaining to the "Shadow Players", Spawn makes a horrifying discovery in the basement of one of their former associates. This fight is going to be personal!



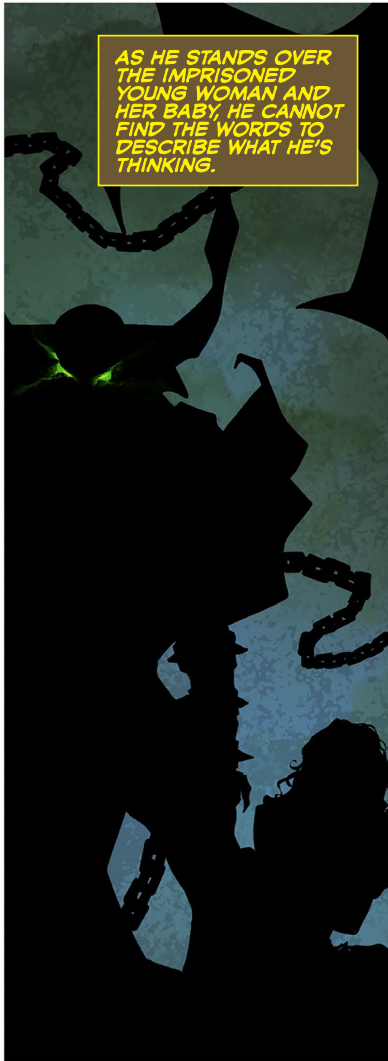
A BLANKET OF DARKNESS HAS SPREAD ACROSS THIS RURAL AREA IN A TWELVE-MILE RADIUS. NOTHING THAT GIVES LIGHT WORKS. ELECTRICITY, BATTERIES, EVEN FLAMES FAIL TO DO THEIR JOB. THE NEWS IS CALLING ITS ORIGINS "MYSTERIOUS OR MAGICAL."



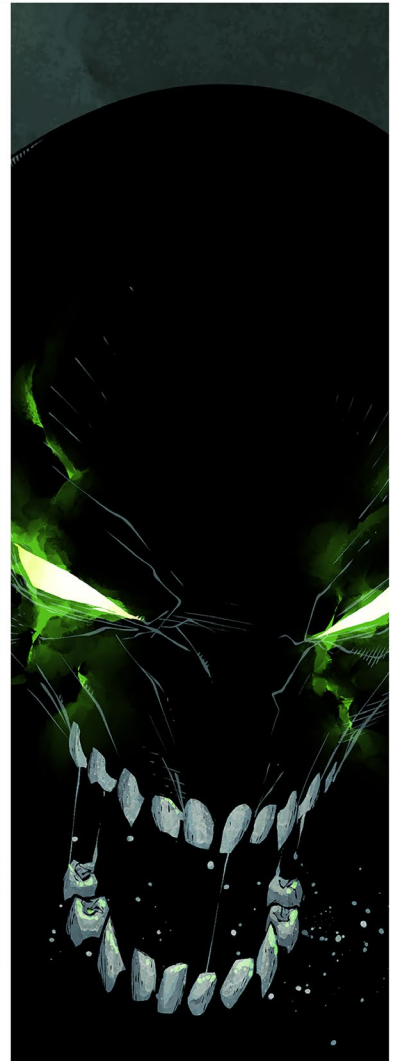
THEY'RE WRONG, IT'S FROM THE PITS OF HELL.



ONE OF ITS CHOSEN PUPPETS, IS ENRAGED, AND THAT EMOTION, UNWITTINGLY, HAS BEEN CONVERTED INTO POWER!



AS HE STANDS OVER THE IMPRISONED YOUNG WOMAN AND HER BABY, HE CANNOT FIND THE WORDS TO DESCRIBE WHAT HE'S THINKING.



WHAT'D
YOU DO
TO MY
DOGS?!

THEY AREN'T
LISTENING TO ME.
WHY? BECAUSE OF
THAT GODDAMN GIRL?
WE'RE FROM HELL,
WE TAKE WHAT WE
WANT, **DON'T** START
GOING SOFT
ON ME!

ONLY ANIMAL
SOUNDS RESONATE
FROM SPAWN.



A comic book panel showing Spawn, a character with a white mask, glowing green eyes, and a red cape, lunging at an enemy. The enemy is wearing a brown jacket and grey pants. The background is a dark night sky with a full moon and many bats flying. Spawn's hands are large, black, and spiked, and he is wearing a red utility belt. The scene is set on a rooftop with a wooden railing.

SHE'S OURS,
SPAWN, YOU GET
THAT? SHE'LL SERVE
OUR PLEASURES,
DO WHATEVER WE
TELL HER TO DO...
AND IN ANY
POSITION.

LIKE A LION ATTACKING ITS
PREY, SPAWN LUNGES AT HIS
ENEMY WITH A SPEED HE'S
RARELY SHOWN, ENSNARING
HIS ENEMY BEFORE IT HAS
A CHANCE TO BLINK.

SPAWN HITS HIM
HARD ENOUGH TO
CRUSH CARTILAGE
AND CRACK BONE
AROUND THE NOSE
AND EYE SOCKETS.
ANOTHER FIST
CRACKS THREE RIBS.

THOOK

BUT THIS IS
TOO EASY, TOO
UNSATISFYING.
SO, SPAWN LETS
HIS PREY GO.

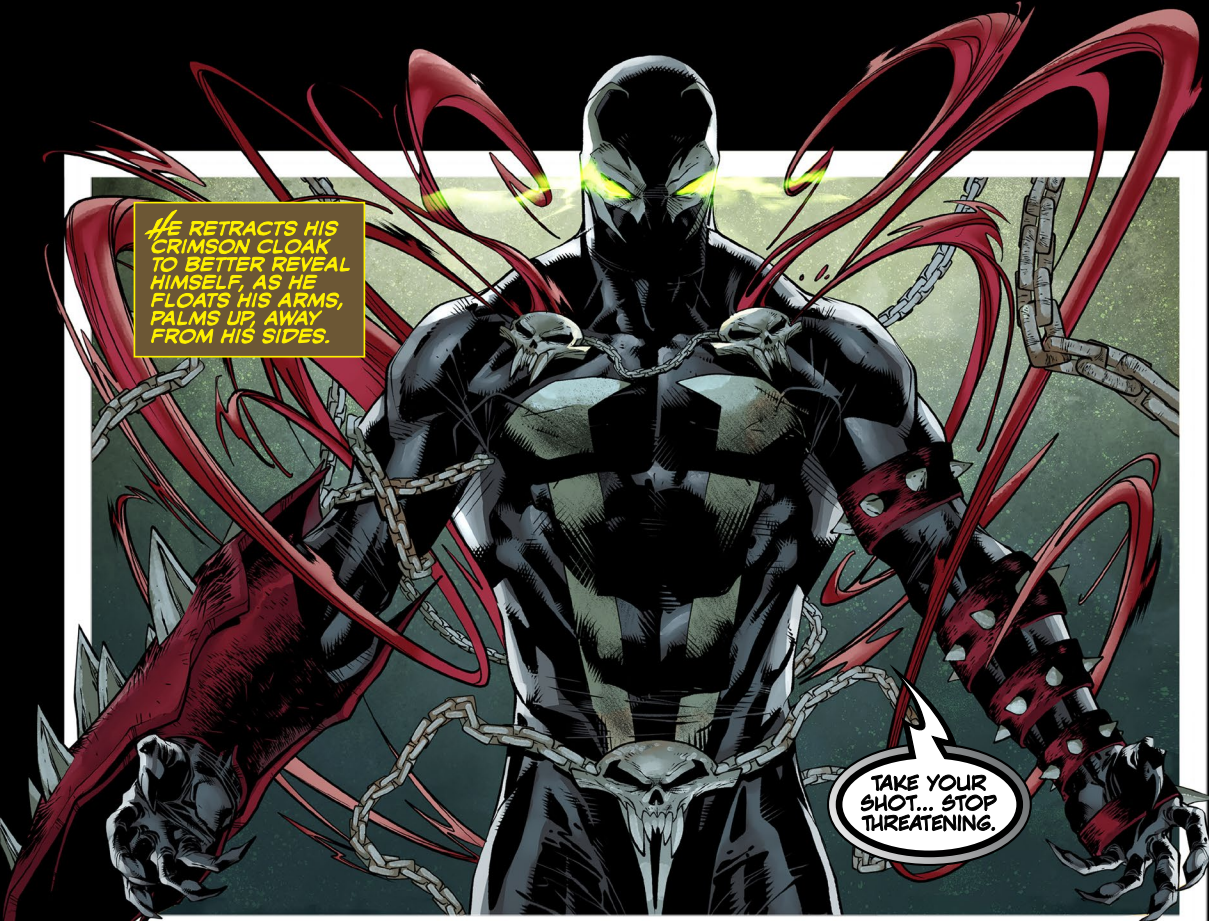
KNOWING THE WEAK
WILL ALWAYS MAKE
ONE...LAST...FEEBLE
ATTEMPT TO SURVIVE.

AS HE TAKES AIM, WHAT STRIKES
THIS VAMPIRE IN HUMAN FORM THE
MOST, IS THAT SPAWN HAS SUDDENLY
BECOME CALM. ALMOST PEACEFUL
IN HIS BREATHING.

EVEN WHEN FACED
WITH THE PROSPECT
OF SEVERE PAIN.

YOU KNOW
WHAT KIND
OF SHELLS I
HAVE IN HERE,
RIGHT?

THE KIND
THAT'LL
KILL YOU!



HE RETRACTS HIS CRIMSON CLOAK TO BETTER REVEAL HIMSELF, AS HE FLOATS HIS ARMS, PALMS UP, AWAY FROM HIS SIDES.

TAKE YOUR SHOT... STOP THREATENING.



THEN FULLY EXPOSED, HE ADVANCES SLOWLY TOWARDS HIS ENEMY. NEVER BREAKING STRIDE.



NEVER SHOWING PAIN.



WHAT THE F*CK?!
WHAT'VE YOU
BECOME?

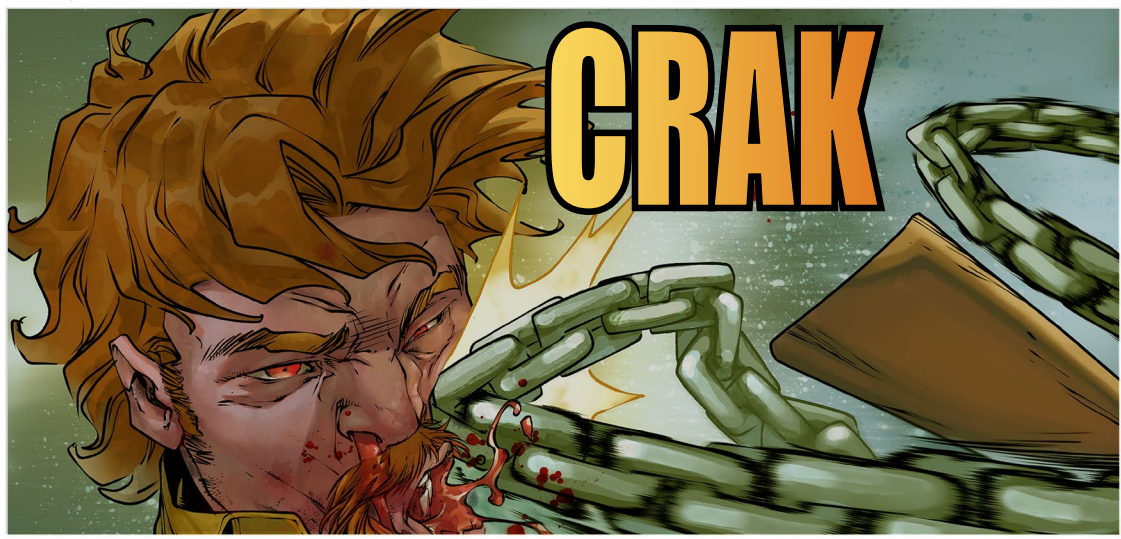
*THEN ONE MORE
LAST FEEBLE
EFFORT.*



CLIK



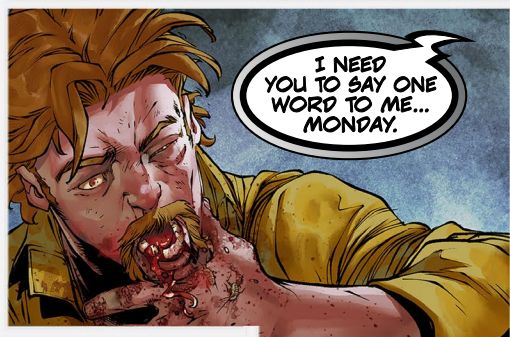
DON'T YOU
DARE SMILE,
YOU
BASTARD!



CRAK



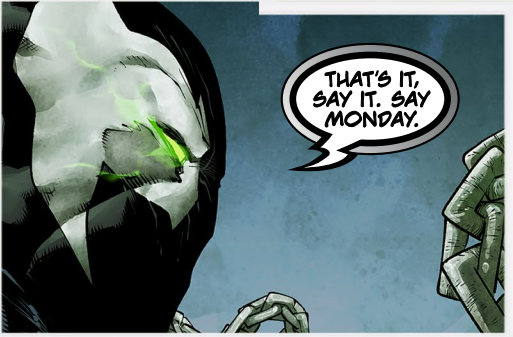
*BROKEN--THE VAMPIRE
STRUGGLES TO BREATHE
AS HE FEELS HIS BODY
BEGIN TO QUIVER AND
SWEAT. SOMETHING IS
GROWING INSIDE HIM!*



I NEED YOU TO SAY ONE WORD TO ME... MONDAY.



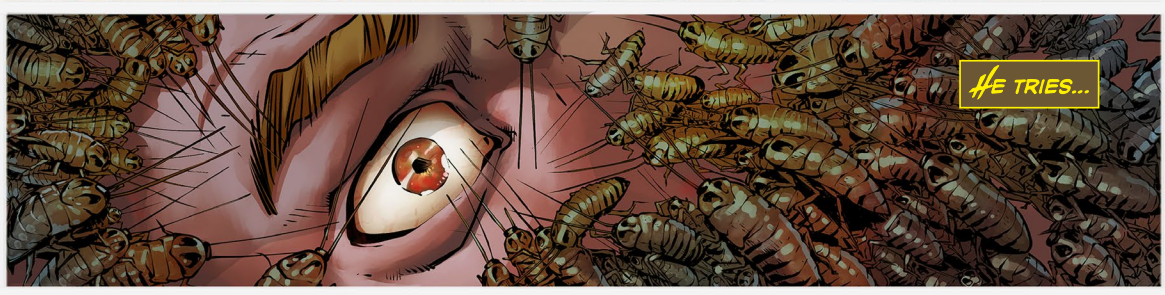
urk



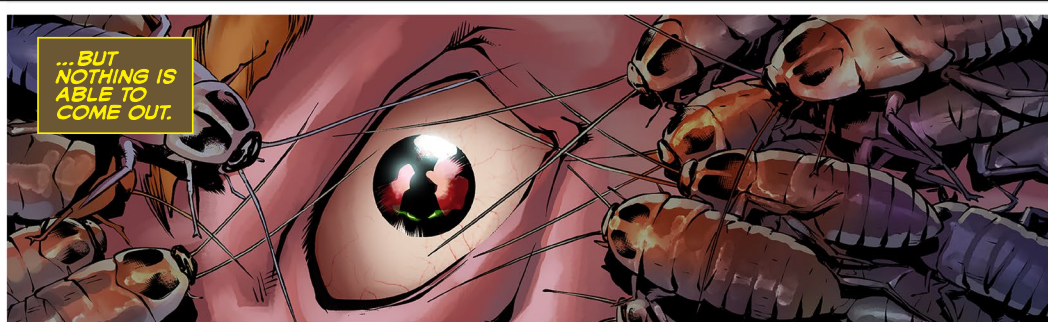
THAT'S IT, SAY IT. SAY MONDAY.

BECAUSE IF THERE'S ONE THING SPAWN KNOWS, IT'S THAT VAMPIRES RELY ON NOURISHMENT. DRAINING BLOOD FROM VICTIMS TO SUSTAIN THEIR COMPULSION TO ALWAYS BE FEEDING.

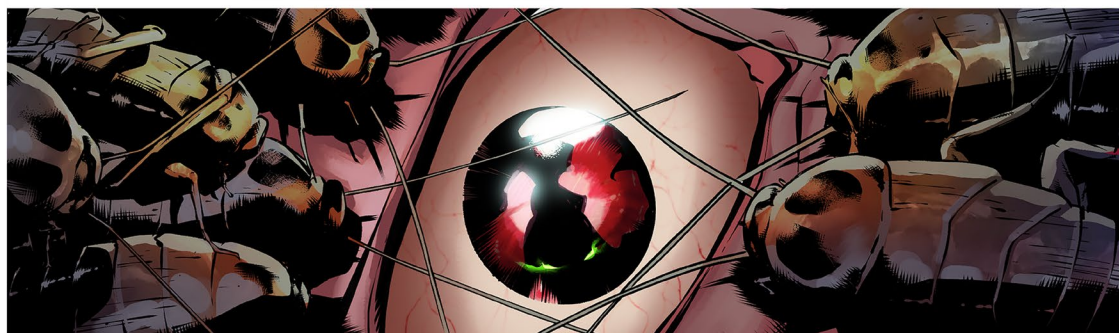
AND SO, ANY CREATURES-- OR INSECTS-- CAPABLE OF ABSORBING THAT NUTRITION, SCARES THE SHIT OUT OF THEM.



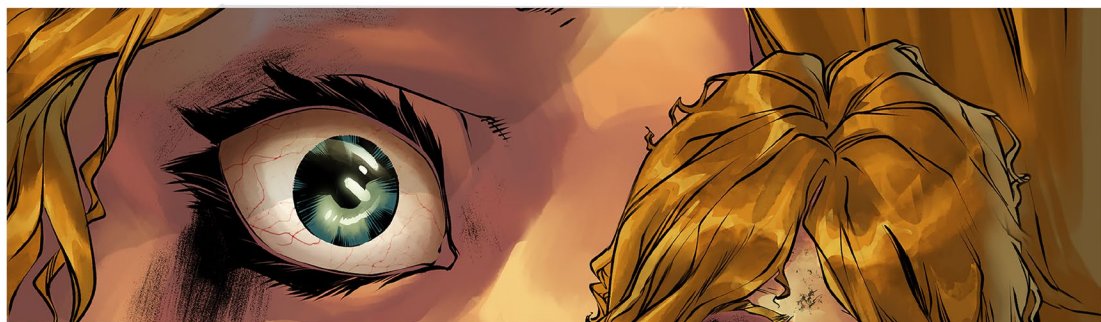
HE TRIES...



...BUT
NOTHING IS
ABLE TO
COME OUT.

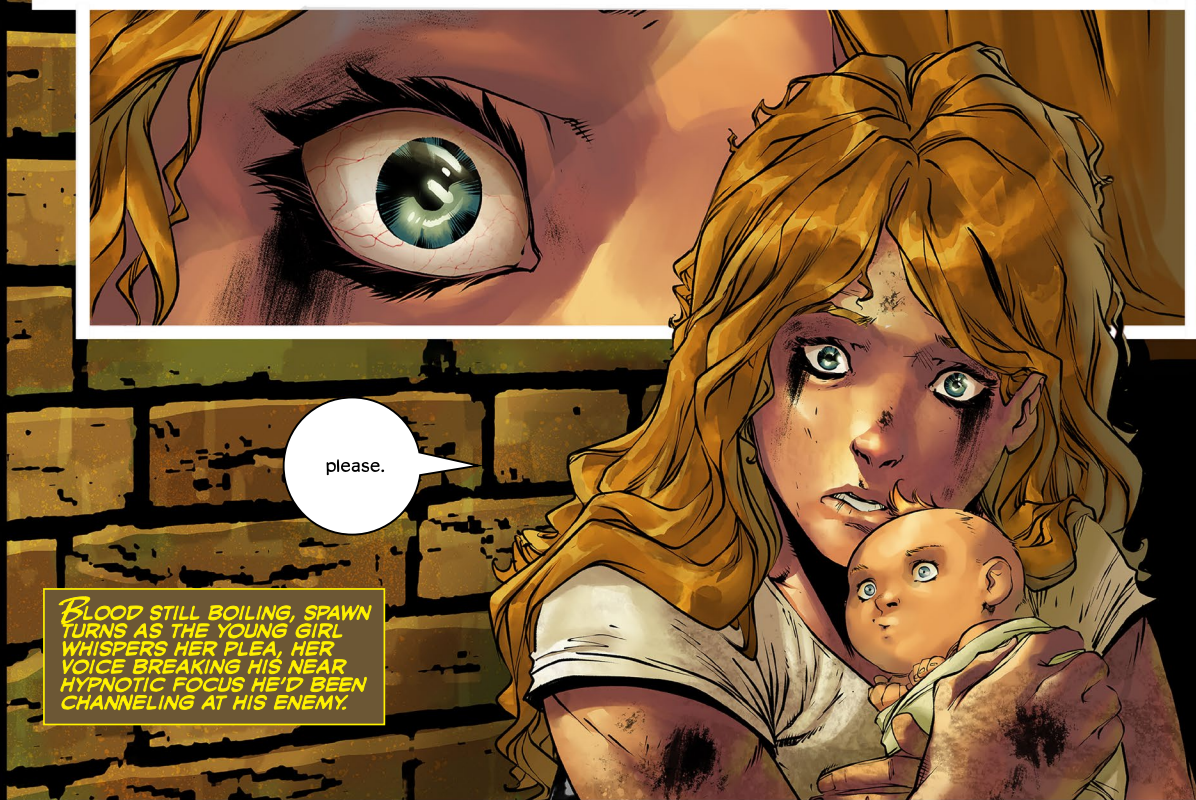


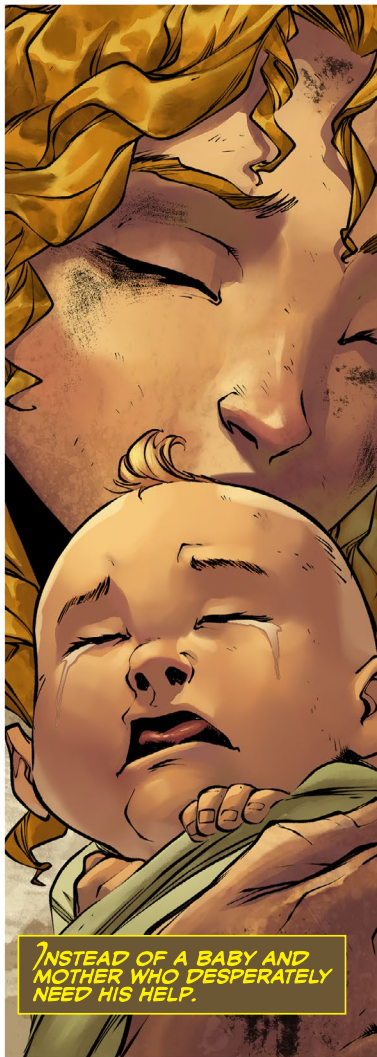
THEN, FOR HIM, THERE
IS SIMPLY 'NOTHING.'



please.

BLOOD STILL BOILING, SPAWN
TURNS AS THE YOUNG GIRL
WHISPERS HER PLEA, HER
VOICE BREAKING HIS NEAR
HYPNOTIC FOCUS HE'D BEEN
CHANNELING AT HIS ENEMY.





INSTEAD OF A BABY AND MOTHER WHO DESPERATELY NEED HIS HELP.



THOUGH FOR THE LAST FEW MINUTES, MELISSA HAS TRAUMATICALLY WITNESSED AN UNGODLY FIGHT. NATURALLY, SHE COWERS AS HE NEARS.



I PROMISE...

HE NEEDS TO BUILD SOME TRUST WITH HER, QUICKLY. TRANSFORMING TO HIS AL SIMMONS FORM IS THE BEST PLAY HE HAS LEFT.



YOU'RE GETTING OUT OF HERE, TONIGHT. YOU AND YOUR BABY. BUT I NEED TO TOUCH YOU FIRST, CAN I DO THAT? CAN I PICK YOU UP?

please.

TEPIDLY, SHE NODS APPROVAL, THOUGH AL FEELS HER BODY TENSE... THEN GRADUALLY BEGIN TO TREMBLE WHEN HE LIFTS HER IN HIS ARMS.

YEARS OF ABUSE GRANTS HER THE RIGHT TO BE SCARED NOW.

SHE'LL NEED TO TRANSPORT WITH HIM INTO 'THE DARK.' IT'S THE ONLY SAFE WAY TO GET HER OUT OF HERE, NOW THAT THE ENTIRE TOWN IS SHROUDED IN BLACK.

READY? HOLD YOUR BABY TIGHT, OKAY?

I UNDERSTAND THEIR STANCE. I'M SAYING IT'S UNACCEPTABLE. I'LL PHONE THEM IN THE MORNING TO CLEAR THIS UP.

DR. KEPLER... I NEED YOUR HELP.

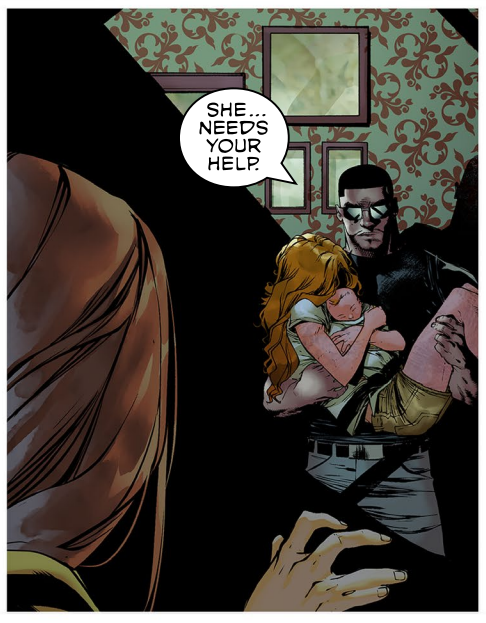
WHO'RE YOU? GET OUT OF HERE! I'M CALLING SECURITY!

SHE... NEEDS YOUR HELP.

I'LL BEG IF I HAVE TO, BUT I'M TELLING YOU, SHE NEEDS SOMEONE. SOMEONE TO... TO... ACTUALLY, I DON'T REALLY KNOW WHAT SHE NEEDS RIGHT NOW...

WHO ARE YOU?

...BUT IT'S NOT ME. I'M BETTER AT OTHER THINGS.





ON A DIFFERENT NOTE, A COMMUNITY IS BREATHING A SIGH OF RELIEF TONIGHT. TWENTY-TWO YEAR OLD MELISSA HAGGENS HAS BEEN FOUND ALIVE. SHE HAD GONE MISSING FOUR YEARS AGO, AND WAS LAST SEEN WALKING HOME FROM HER HIGH SCHOOL IN ROCK ISLAND, ILLINOIS, NEAR THE IOWA-ILLINOIS BORDER. A SEARCH WENT STATEWIDE, WITH THE FBI SOON INVOLVED AS IT BECAME AN INTERSTATE SEARCH AS WELL. AFTER SIX MONTHS, THOUGH, THOSE AUTHORITIES WOUND DOWN THEIR INVESTIGATION, FEARING THE WORST. MELISSA'S PARENTS NEVER LOST HOPE, THOUGH, AS A BODY WAS NEVER RECOVERED.

THE YOUNG WOMAN IS CURRENTLY UNDER OBSERVATION. SHE IS REPORTED IN SATISFACTORY CONDITION, BUT FURTHER DETAILS ARE PENDING. UNDER CARE AS WELL IS THE BABY SON SHE BORE DURING HER FOUR-YEAR ORDEAL. ACCORDING TO MELISSA'S MOTHER, THE GIRL HAD NO IDEA WHERE SHE WAS BEING HELD. NEITHER MELISSA NOR HER BABY WERE ALLOWED TO GO OUTSIDE. PHYSICIANS TELL US THAT LACK OF NATURAL SUNLIGHT CAN CAUSE IMMUNE FUNCTION ISSUES. THE STAFF AND CREW HERE AT THE NETWORK JOIN ME IN WISHING ALL THE BEST FOR THESE TWO SURVIVORS.



WE HAVE MORE ON MELISSA HAGGENS' **MIRACULOUS** ESCAPE. SOURCES CLOSE TO THE FAMILY HAVE LEAKED TO US THAT MELISSA'S BODY WAS COVERED WITH **SCARS** ALONG HER ARMS AND DOWN HER BACK FOLLOWING HER **TERRIFYING** FOUR-YEAR ORDEAL. SOME HAVE SAID THAT THEY RESEMBLE **TOOTH MARKS**, THOUGH NO SPECIFIC DETAILS HAVE BEEN OFFICIALLY SHARED. SADLY, IT HAS BEEN RUMORED THAT HER BABY SON, KYLE, ALSO HAD SOME OF THOSE **SAME** SCARS FOLLOWING WHAT WE CAN ONLY IMAGINE WAS AN **UNSPEAKABLE** IMPRISONMENT.

AS FOR HER **KIDNAPPER**, AUTHORITIES HAVE SAID THAT THEY HAVE NO CONCRETE LEADS OTHER THAN THAT IT WAS A **WHITE MALE**, AROUND THE AGE OF **FORTY**. A COMPOSITE SKETCH IS BEING DRAWN UP AND WILL BE CIRCULATED TO THE MEDIA ONCE MELISSA IS **HEALTHY** ENOUGH TO HELP THE F.B.I. FURTHER. FOR NOW, HER MOTHER AND FATHER, AS WELL AS HER ENTIRE FAMILY, ARE **ECSTATIC** TO HAVE THEIR DAUGHTER BACK AFTER LOSING HOPE THAT THEY'D EVER SEE HER **ALIVE** AGAIN.



LOOK...! USUALLY I'M ALL BOMBASTIC AND HOPPED UP TELLING YOU ABOUT GOVERNMENT **OVERREACH** AND POLITICAL AND CORPORATE **MADNESS**, BUT THIS STORY ABOUT YOUNG MELISSA HAGGENS AND HER BABY HAS GIVEN ME PAUSE. IT'S HARD TO GET WORKED UP OVER ANOTHER TOPIC WHEN YOU SEE SOME OF THE IMAGES OF THAT GIRL ENTERING THE HOSPITAL ON A **STRETCHER**. LET'S PRAY SHE MAKES A FULL RECOVERY AND THAT THE **BASTARD** THAT DID THIS TO HER IS HUNTED DOWN LIKE THE **DOG** HE IS, AND BROUGHT TO JUSTICE.

NOW, IN RELATED NEWS THAT WE'VE JUST OBTAINED, MELISSA SAID THAT THE PERSON WHO WAS INFLUENTIAL IN HER ESCAPE WORE A LARGE **RED CAPE** AND WAS DRESSED IN **BLACK**. TO ME, THAT SOUNDS LIKE THE **SPAWN CHARACTER** WE'VE BEEN SEEING BECOME MORE AND MORE PUBLIC WITH HIS ACTIONS. IF IT WAS INDEED HIM, WHERE **IS** HE IN ALL THIS, AND HOW DID HE FIND MELISSA AFTER **ALL THESE YEARS**? WE'RE ALL TRYING TO COME TO GRIPS OF WHETHER HE'S A HERO, OR HAD SOME **OTHER** CONNECTION TO THESE STRANGE EVENTS. **STAY TUNED!**



AS THE NATION IS GRIPPED WITH THE STORY OF MELISSA'S RETURN, THERE IS BARELY ENOUGH TIME FOR OUTLETS TO MENTION THE STRANGE BLACKOUT THAT HAPPENED IN THE SURROUNDING AREA OF MONTROSE, MISSISSIPPI.



IT HAS REMAINED WITHOUT POWER FOR DAYS NOW, ALONG WITH ATTRACTING A STRANGE INFLUX OF BATS HOVERING OVER THE TOWN DAY AND NIGHT.

SPAWN WILL NEED TO DEAL WITH THAT PROBLEM SOON. FOR NOW, THOUGH, THERE'S ONLY ONE THING ON HIS MIND.



unn...



THAT'S IT, WAKE UP, PAUL. WE'VE ALL BEEN WAITING.

WHATCHA YOU DOIN'?... YOU'VE GONE CRAZY, I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING. **NOTHING** YOU WOULDN'T HAVE DONE.

I NEED YOU TO BE QUIET.



YOU
GONNA
KILL ME?

PERHAPS.



BUT LIKE
I SAID, I NEED
YOU TO BE
QUIET. BEFORE
YOU DO, I NEED
YOU TO SAY
"FRIDAY."

GO TO
HELL!

SAY IT,
PAUL.

I'M NOT
GOING...

**SAY
IT!**

FRIDAY.

EXACTLY,
TODAY'S
FRIDAY.



AND YOU
HAVEN'T EATEN
IN NEARLY FIVE
DAYS.



FOR A
VAMPIRE, THAT
CAN BE PRETTY
SEVERE. NO BLOOD.
NO FOOD. IT HURTS,
DOESN'T IT?



NOT EATING
FOR SO LONG...
LIKE YOU MADE
THAT POOR GIRL
SUFFER.

squeek



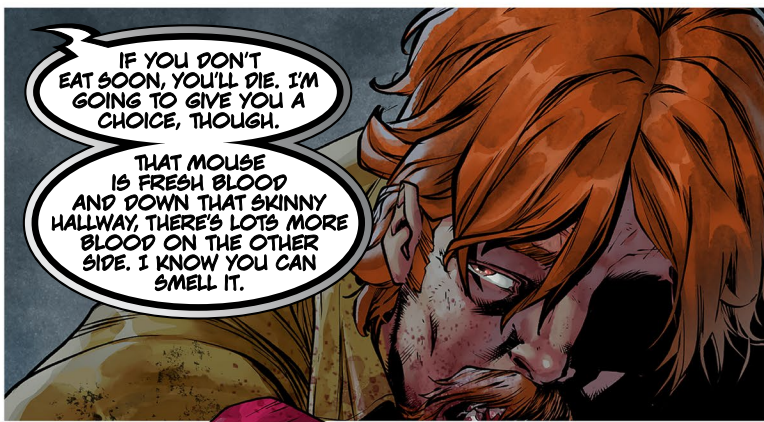
bap



THAT'S RIGHT,
WATCH THAT MOUSE...
BECAUSE WHATEVER YOUR
BODY IS TRYING TO DO TO
COMPENSATE FOR YOUR
LACK OF ENERGY, I MADE
SURE THOSE ROACHES ATE
IT AWAY FROM YOUR
INSIDES.



THUD



IF YOU DON'T
EAT SOON, YOU'LL DIE. I'M
GOING TO GIVE YOU A
CHOICE, THOUGH.

THAT MOUSE
IS FRESH BLOOD
AND DOWN THAT SKINNY
HALLWAY, THERE'S LOTS MORE
BLOOD ON THE OTHER
SIDE. I KNOW YOU CAN
SMELL IT.



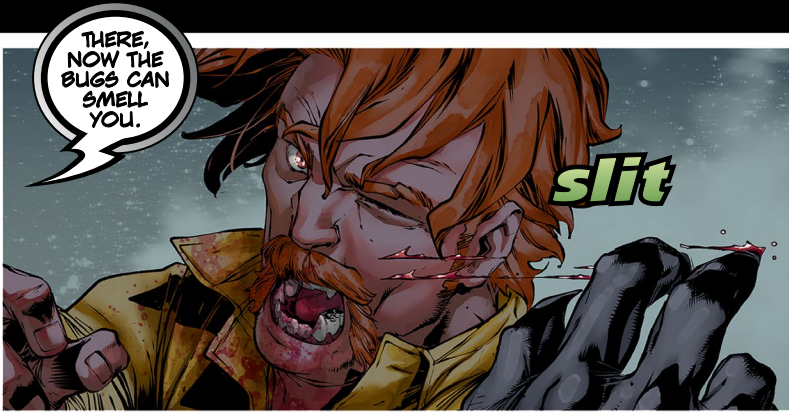
I'M ALSO
SURE YOU
NOTICED THERE'S
NO SPIKES ON MY
COSTUME. I DECIDED
TO PUT THEM TO
ANOTHER USE.



YOUR DECISION
RIGHT NOW IS
WHETHER YOU'RE GOING
TO LET THOSE BUGS EAT
YOU ALIVE OR SEEK OUT
THE NOURISHMENT YOU
NEED ON THE OTHER
SIDE OF THAT
HALL?

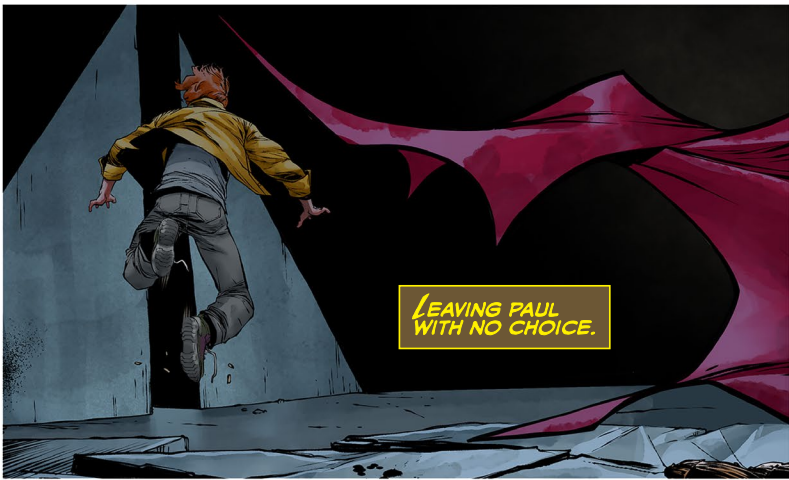


IF IT'LL
MAKE YOUR
CHOICE EASIER,
WE CAN SPEED
THIS UP.



THERE,
NOW THE
BUGS CAN
SMELL
YOU.

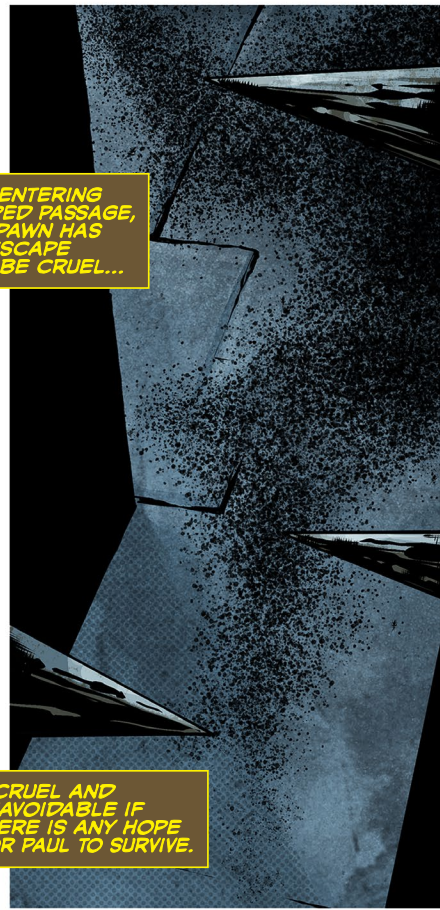
slit



LEAVING PAUL
WITH NO CHOICE.



BUT UPON ENTERING
THE CRAMPED PASSAGE,
HE SEES SPAWN HAS
BUILT AN ESCAPE
MEANT TO BE CRUEL...



...CRUEL AND
UNAVOIDABLE IF
THERE IS ANY HOPE
FOR PAUL TO SURVIVE.

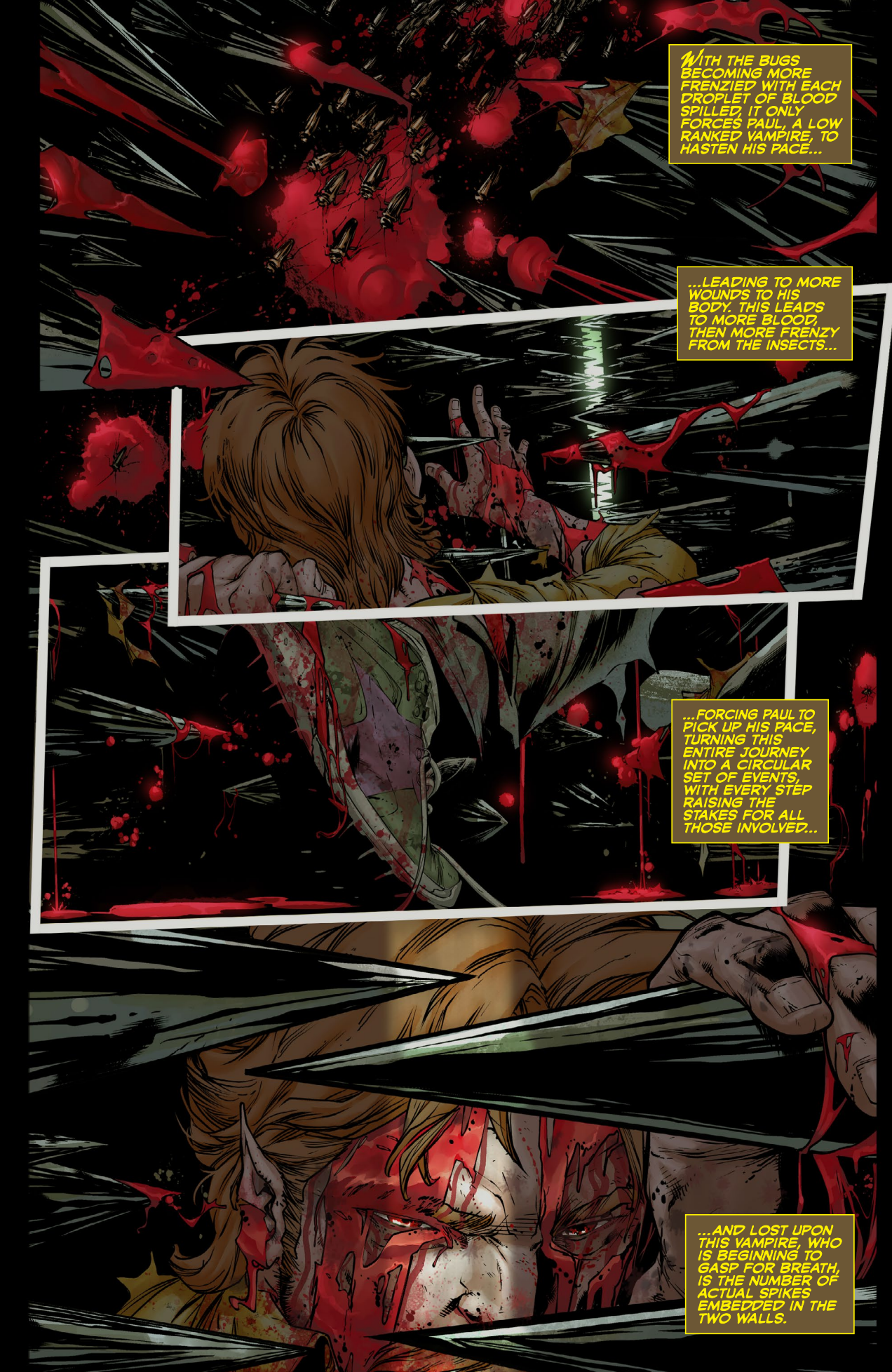


AS HE TURNS SIDeways, HIS BODY, NO MATTER HOW SLOW OR DELIBERATE HE MOVES, IS CUT OVER AND OVER AGAIN. HIS STOMACH, LEGS, ARMS AND BACK ARE ALL RAVAGED BY THE PROTRUDING SPIKES FROM SPAWN'S SYMBIOTE COSTUME.

THIS HALL WASN'T BUILT TO BE A PASSAGEWAY... IT WAS BUILT TO BE A TORTURE CHAMBER, IN HOPES OF REMINDING PAUL ABOUT ALL THE DAYS HE INFLICTED PAIN UPON A TEENAGE GIRL WITHOUT A MOMENT'S PAUSE FOR CONCERN OR COMPASSION.

SPAWN WANTS TO DELIVER THE SAME COURTESY BACK, SO AS HE WATCHES PAUL STRUGGLE AND SCREAM...

...SPAWN LIKEWISE DOESN'T GIVE A SHIT HOW MUCH HIS VICTIM IS HURTING.



WITH THE BUGS
BECOMING MORE
FRENZIED WITH EACH
DROPLET OF BLOOD
SPILLED, IT ONLY
FORCES PAUL, A LOW
RANKED VAMPIRE, TO
HASTEN HIS PACE...

...LEADING TO MORE
WOUNDS TO HIS
BODY. THIS LEADS
TO MORE BLOOD,
THEN MORE FRENZY
FROM THE INSECTS...

...FORCING PAUL TO
PICK UP HIS PACE,
TURNING THIS
ENTIRE JOURNEY
INTO A CIRCULAR
SET OF EVENTS,
WITH EVERY STEP
RAISING THE
STAKES FOR ALL
THOSE INVOLVED...

...AND LOST UPON
THIS VAMPIRE, WHO
IS BEGINNING TO
GASP FOR BREATH,
IS THE NUMBER OF
ACTUAL SPIKES
EMBEDDED IN THE
TWO WALLS.

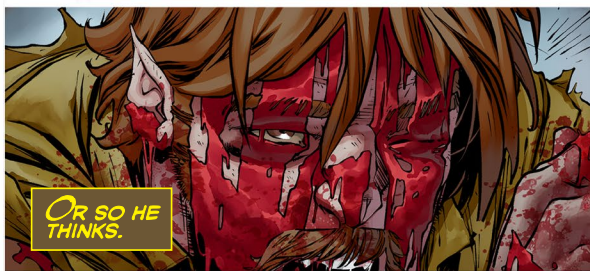


THERE ARE ONE
THOUSAND
THREE HUNDRED
AND SEVEN.
SPAWN CHOSE
THAT NUMBER
SPECIFICALLY.

IT'S THE NUMBER OF
DAYS MELISSA HAGGENS
WAS HELD CAPTIVE. THE
NUMBER OF DAYS SHE WAS
BEING HURT EMOTIONALLY
OR PHYSICALLY.

SPAWN
HOPES ITS
ENOUGH
SHARP
EDGES TO
SEND HIS
'MESSAGE.'

THROUGH BLINDING
PAIN, PAUL PUSHES
HIS RAVAGED BODY
TOWARD THE LIGHT
ON THE OTHER SIDE,
FINALLY ESCAPING
THE SADISTIC
PUNISHMENT.



OR SO HE THINKS.



YOU LOOK HORRIBLE, PAUL. GUESS I'VE BEEN A BIT ABUSIVE TO YOU, LIKE YOU WERE TO YOUR DOGS. I CAN COMMUNE WITH ANIMALS AND I CAN TELL YOU'VE BEATEN AND ABUSED THEM TOO.

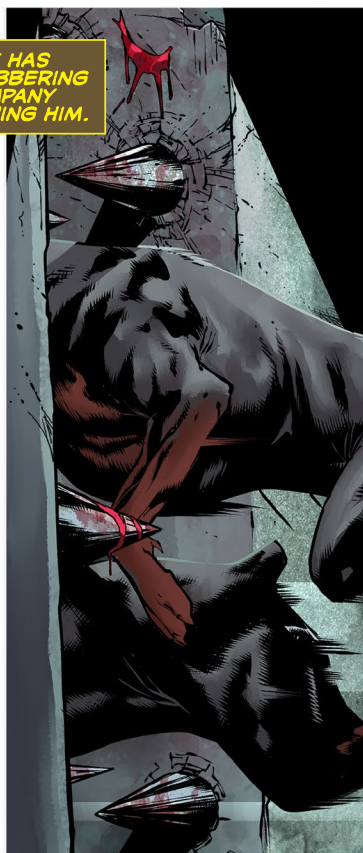
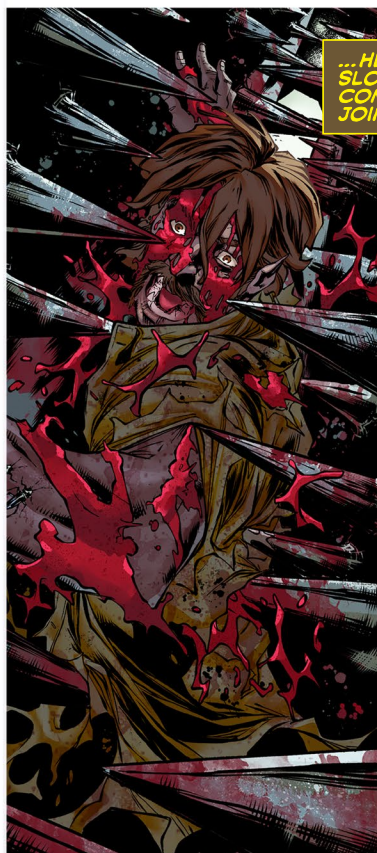
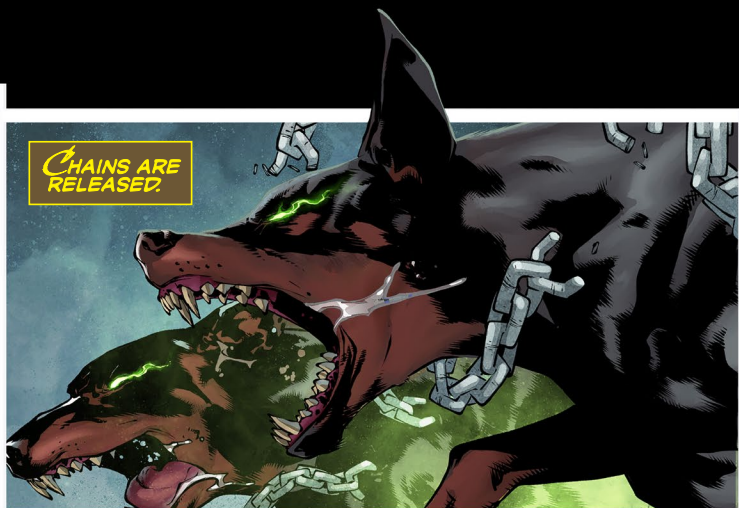
THEY HAVEN'T EATEN IN FIVE DAYS EITHER--AND THEY'RE STARVING, ISN'T THAT RIGHT, BOYS?



HERE. THIS KEY UNLOCKS A DOOR ON THE OTHER SIDE. TO LEAVE HERE YOU'LL NEED TO GO BACK THROUGH THE PASSAGE AGAIN.



BUT THE...THE BUGS.





SPAWNING GROUND

PRESENTS:

THE BREAKDOWN

THE EVOLUTION OF SHE-SPAWN

Nyx was the original She-Spawn. She was a young witch who helped Al Simmons and acquired a sliver of Spawn's powers. She made a bargain with the Demon Lord N'Zezheaal so she would be able to enter Hell and save the soul of a childhood friend. Upon leaving Hell empty-handed, Mammon revealed himself as the mastermind behind the plot to steal all of Spawn's powers.



After the death of Nyx at the hands of Cogliostro, Nyx's friend, Jessica Priest, a reformed "Operative" working for Jason Wynn, discovers her body along with an ancient Grimoire and a medallion of resurrection. While attempting to use the medallion on Nyx, Jessica unknowingly awakens a dormant remnant of Spawn's powers still residing in Nyx. These powers bond to Jessica, creating the new She-Spawn.





Jessica has taken it upon herself to assist Al Simmons in his war to protect humanity. Putting aside their past differences, these two "Spawns" have started to build something to push back against the rising darkness. Working with both allies and former foes, She-Spawn helps to lead the charge against evil.



Do you have a question or comment about Spawn? If so, e-mail it to us at: spawningground@mcfarlane.com

VELVET DEADLY CLASS *ROYAL CITY*
LAZARUS **EAST OF WEST** I KILL GIANTS
THE WALKING DEAD I HATE FAIRYLAND
KING CITY *SEX CRIMINALS*
KILL OR BE KILLED
CURSE WORDS *RATQUEENS*
SOUTHERN BASTARDS **SPAWN** THE WICKED + THE DIVINE **BLUE MONDAY**
MONSTRESS **CHEW** *KINGSMAN*
HOWTOONS THEY'RE NOT LIKE US **SUNSTONE** SEVEN TO ETERNITY
DESCENDER *PAPER GIRLS*
OCTOPUS PIE WYTCHEs *SHUTTER*
TOKYO GHOST THE BLACK MONDAY MURDERS **BITCH PLANET**
SAGA *MOTOR CRUSH* **WAYWARD** *TREES*
THE AUTUMNLANDS
PLUTONA *CRIMINAL* *LOW*
REVIVAL **NAILBITER**
CAMP MIDNIGHT
SNOTGIRL **ODDLY NORMAL**
MAGE *HINGES*
BLACK SCIENCE
PRETTY DEADLY
THE FADE OUT



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GUNSLINGER

S P A W N



OCTOBER 2021

SPAWN® 323

WRITTEN BY SPAWN CREATOR:

**TODD
McFARLANE**



OCTOBER 2021



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