

# WITCHBLADE®

#185



MICHAEL  
TURNER

BRIAN:



DOUBLE-SIZED SERIES FINALE



# DOUBLE-SIZED SERIES FINALE



COVER A

MICHAEL TURNER & BRIAN HABERLIN

COVER B

KEU CHA, D-TRON & STEVE FIRCHOW

COVERS C & D  
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ABHISHEK MALSUNI • *artist*

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NANJAN JAMBERI • *colorist* (Pgs. 7-16)

BETSY GONIA • *editor*

TROY PETERI • *letterer*

WITCHBLADE CREATED BY MARC SILVESTRI, DAVID WOHL, BRIAN HABERLIN, & MICHAEL TURNER



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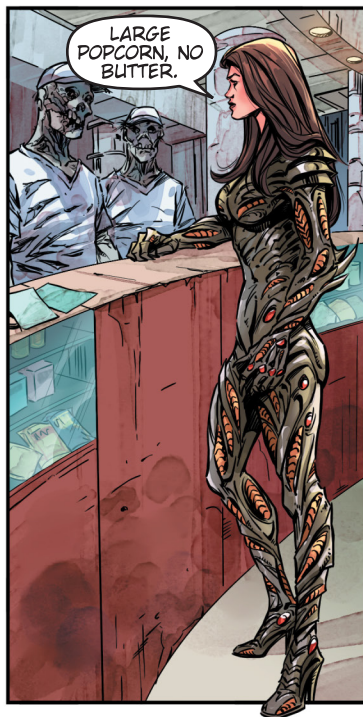
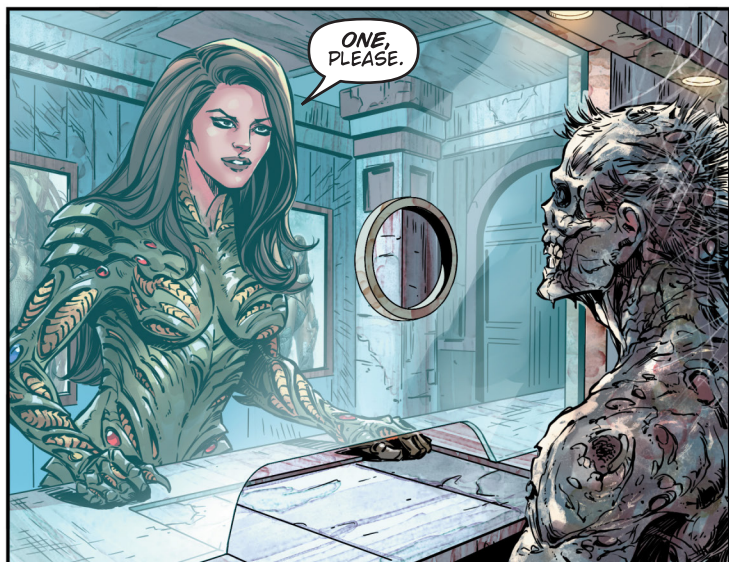
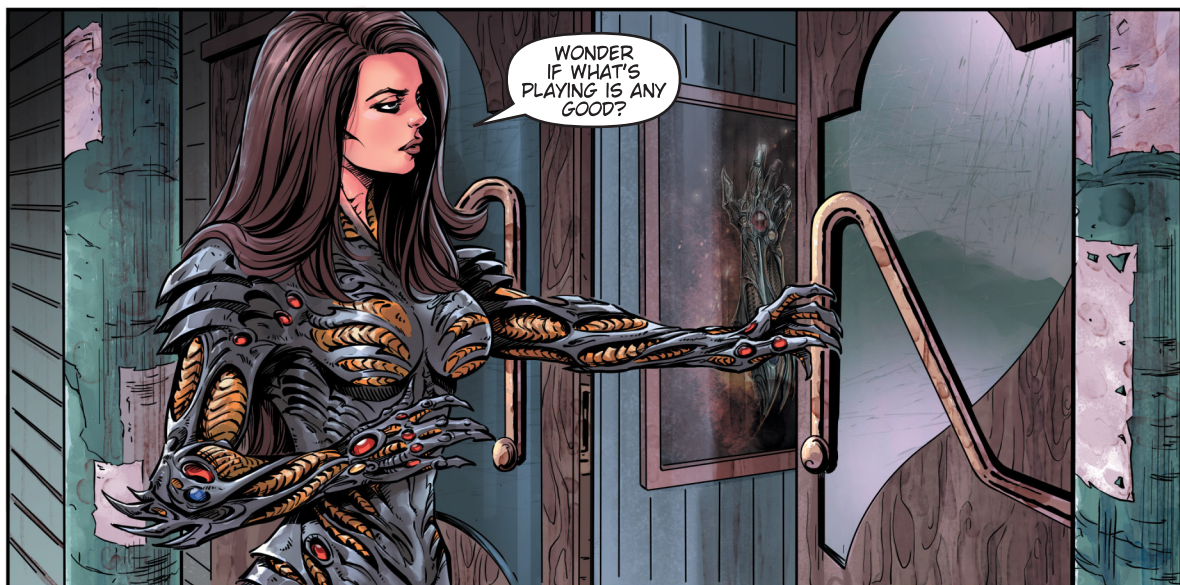




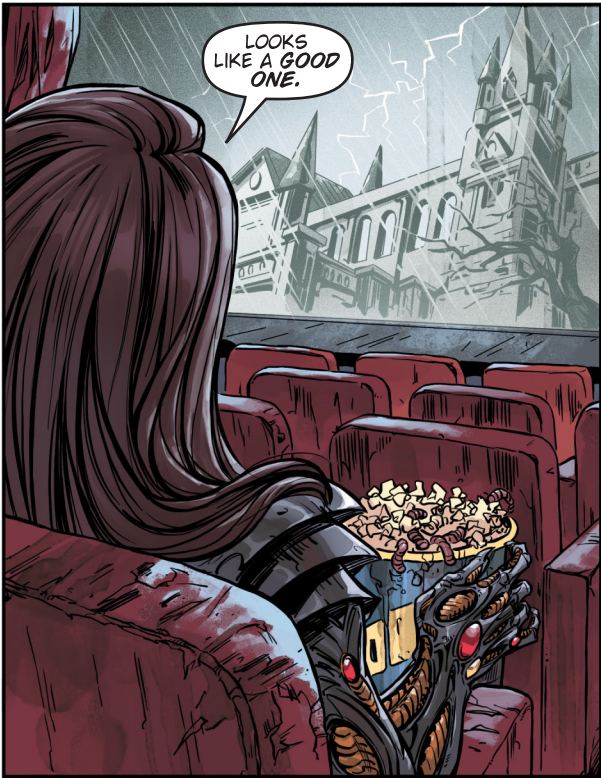
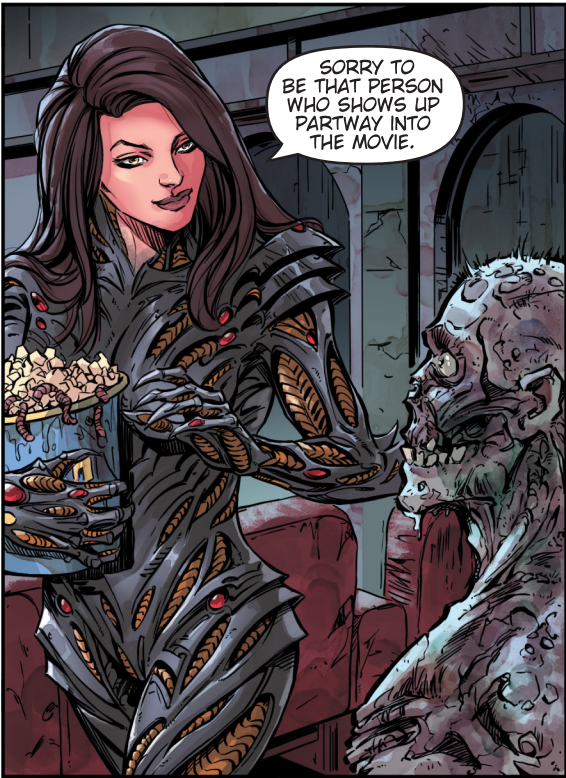
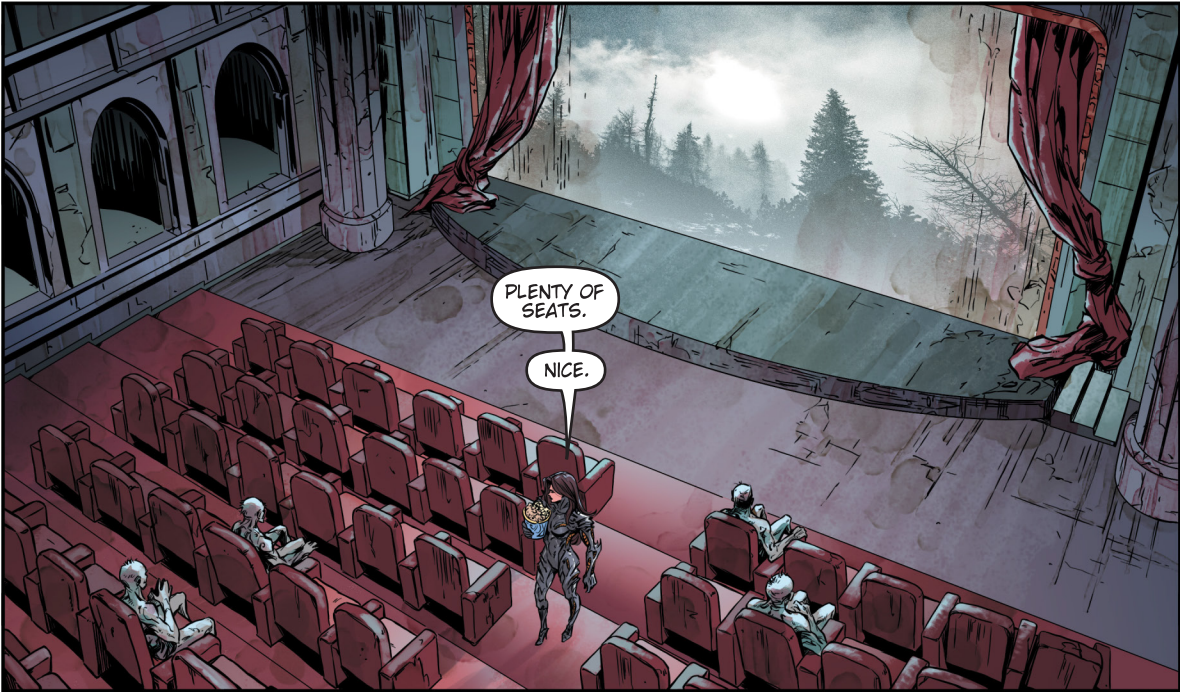
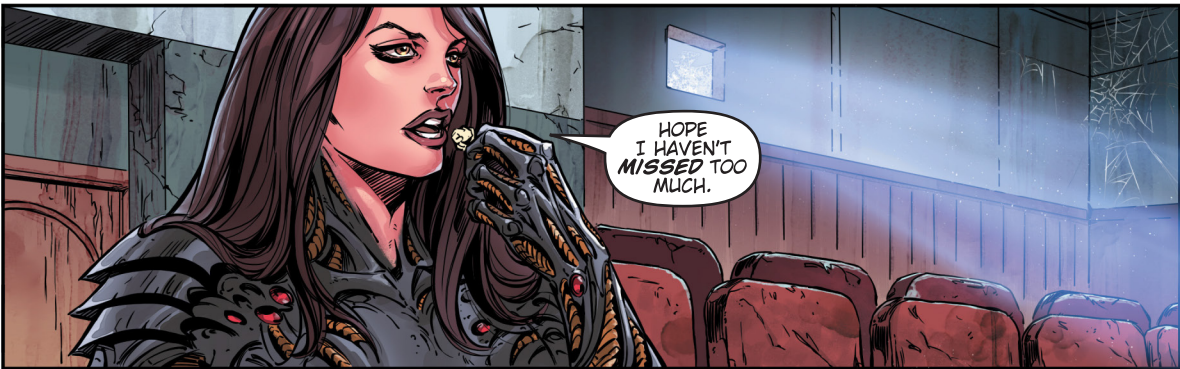
HOME  
AGAIN.

NOW PLAYING  
**WITCHBLADE**













EVERYBODY  
LOVES  
MONSTERS,  
RIGHT?



WAIT,  
WHAT'S...



...THIS ISN'T  
SUPPOSED TO BE  
HAPPENING!

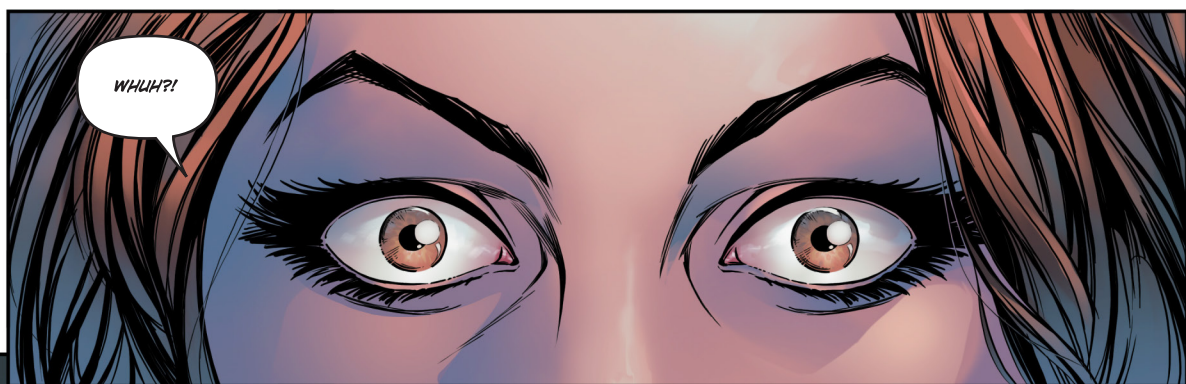








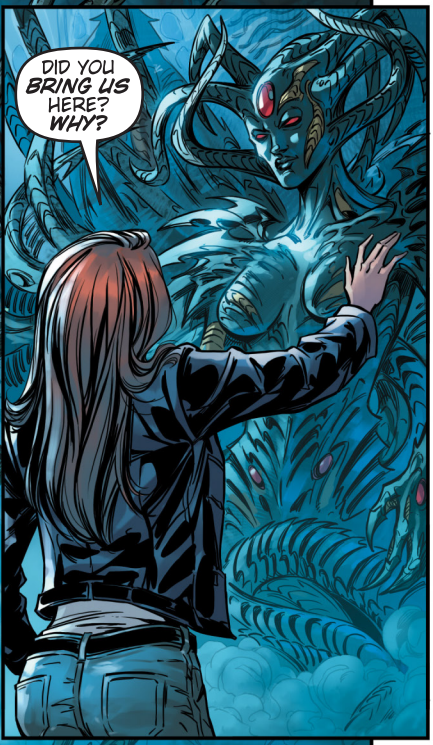








WHAT'S  
GOING  
ON?



DID YOU  
BRING US  
HERE?  
WHY?



HELLO?



THERE  
SOMEBODY IN  
HERE?



YOU HAD TO SEE THE  
**NO TRESPASSING**  
SIGNS OUTSIDE.



SHOW  
YOURSELF,  
I'M A **POLICE**  
OFFICER.





GLEASON?

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING HERE?



I THINK I'M SUPPOSED TO BE ASKING YOU THAT. I'M THE ONE WHO'S STILL A COP, REMEMBER?

TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH, I DON'T KNOW *HOW* I GOT HERE, MUCH LESS WHAT I'M *DOING* HERE.



WELL, APPARENTLY YOU **BROKE IN**, BECAUSE SOMEBODY CALLED IT IN. I WAS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD, SO I TOOK IT.

THOUGH, TO BE PERFECTLY HONEST, WHEN I HEARD **RIALTO THEATER**, I THOUGHT IT MIGHT POSSIBLY HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH YOU...

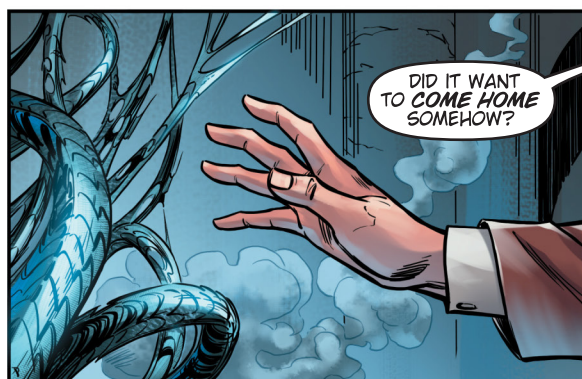


...AND THAT.

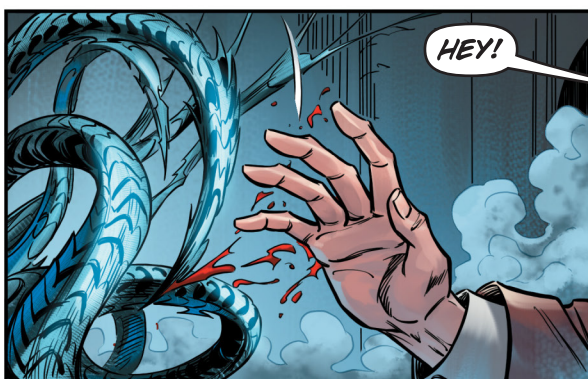


ANY IDEA WHAT THE WITCHBLADE'S UP TO, SARA?





DID IT WANT  
TO **COME HOME**  
SOMEHOW?



HEY!



I ALWAYS  
WONDERED IF THE  
WITCHBLADE REALLY  
DIDN'T **LIKE** ME.  
GUESS I'M NOT  
**WONDERING**  
ANYMORE.

I DON'T  
KNOW IF **THAT'S**  
EXACTLY TRUE. I  
MEAN, IT LET YOU  
GET CLOSE TO  
**ME**.



YEAH, I WON'T BE STICKING  
MY HAND CLOSE ENOUGH TO  
**CONFIRM** IT ONE WAY OR  
THE OTHER, THANKS.

IS THIS SORT OF  
THING...**UNUSUAL**? I MEAN,  
UNUSUAL BEYOND HAVING A  
SENTIENT, SUPERNATURAL  
WEAPON ATTACHED  
TO YOU?

THE  
WITCHBLADE'S  
NEVER DONE  
THIS BEFORE.  
AT LEAST NOT  
**LIKE THIS**.



IT'S HARDLY  
**EVER** SEPARATED FROM  
ME WILLINGLY. IT'S BEEN  
A **PART** OF ME FOR SO  
MANY YEARS, I ASSUMED  
IT WOULD **ALWAYS** BE A  
PART OF ME.

I THOUGHT I'D  
ALWAYS HAVE A PART  
OF ME THAT WAS...  
WELL, A **MONSTER**.  
AND IT WAS **MY** JOB  
TO KEEP IT FROM  
CONSUMING ME...

...OR  
ANYONE  
ELSE.



I THOUGHT  
THIS WAS GOING  
TO BE MY  
**LIFE**...

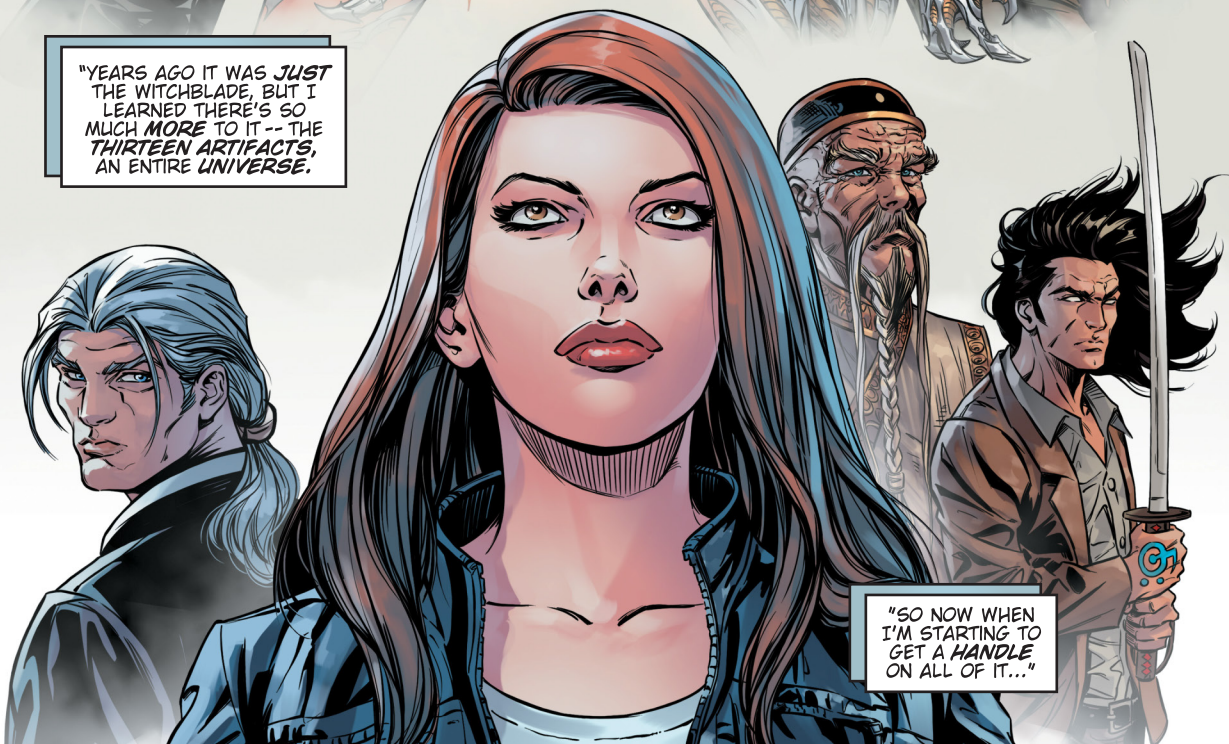


"...THE **WITCHBLADE**,  
THE TRINITY WITH THE  
**ANGELLUS** AND THE  
**DARKNESS**.

"IT'S BEEN THIS WAY  
FOR SO LONG, I CAN  
HARDLY REMEMBER  
WHAT MY LIFE WAS  
LIKE **BEFORE**."

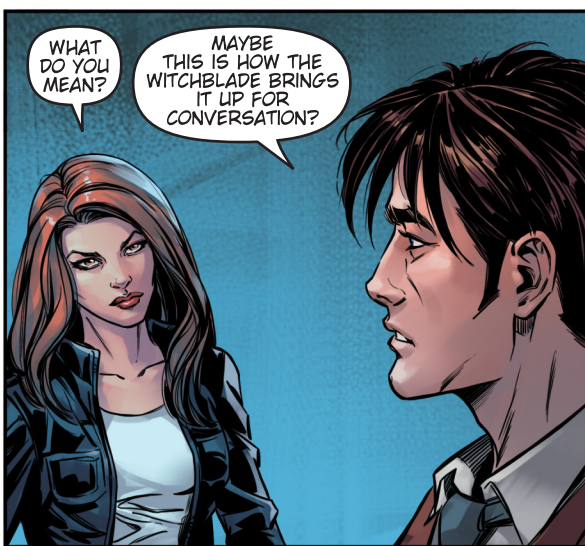
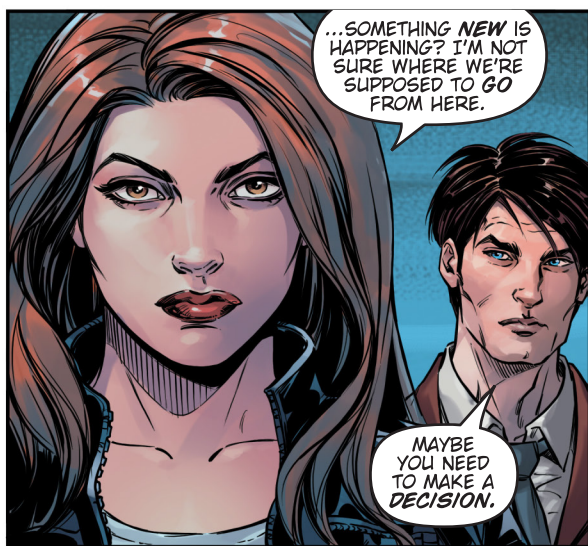


"YEARS AGO IT WAS **JUST**  
THE WITCHBLADE, BUT I  
LEARNED THERE'S SO  
MUCH **MORE** TO IT -- THE  
**THIRTEEN ARTIFACTS**,  
AN ENTIRE **UNIVERSE**."

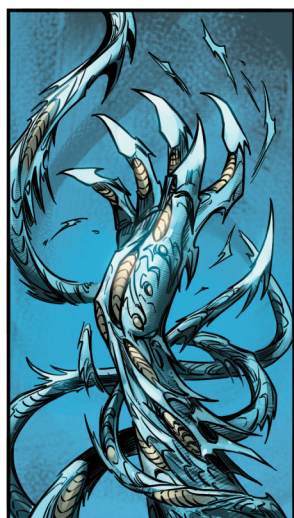
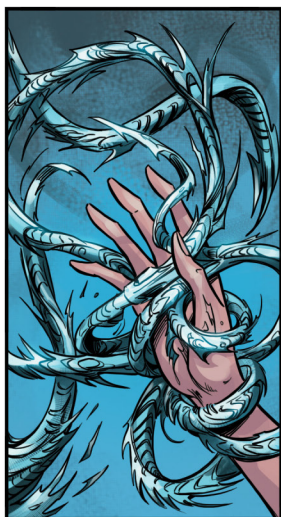
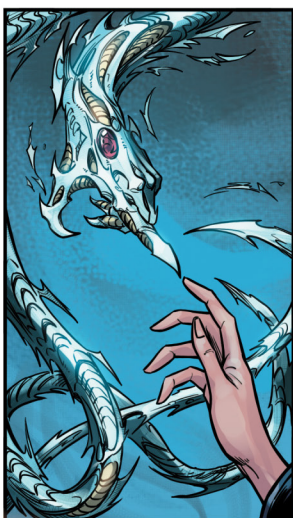


"SO NOW WHEN  
I'M STARTING TO  
GET A **HANDLE**  
ON ALL OF IT..."















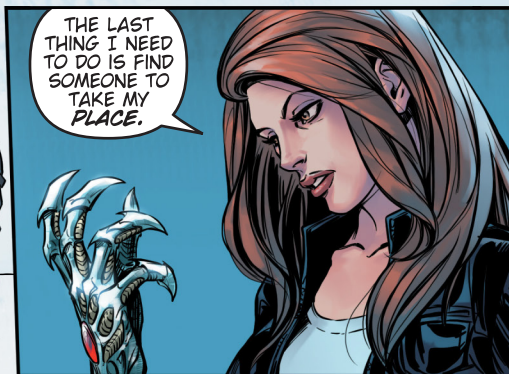


...UHHN?

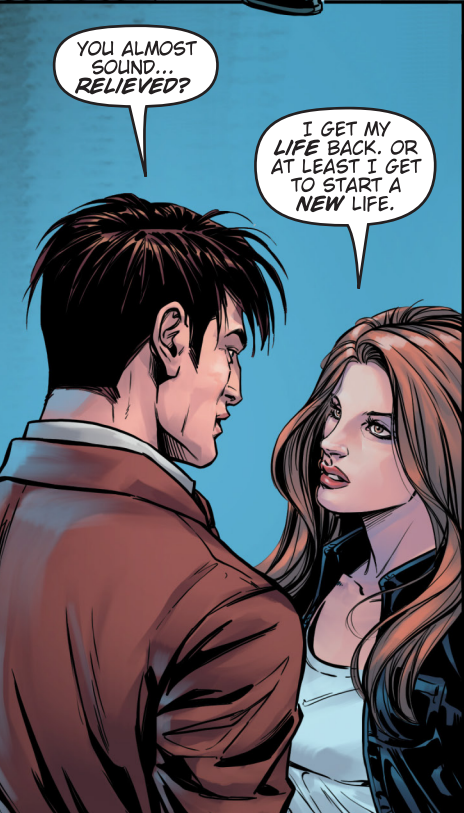
**SARA?!**  
WHAT JUST  
HAPPENED?  
ARE YOU ALL  
RIGHT?



I'M  
FINE. BUT  
THIS...  
...THIS WHOLE  
THING IS OVER.  
AFTER ALL THESE  
YEARS, WE'RE DONE  
WITH EACH OTHER.  
WE'RE MOVING  
ON.

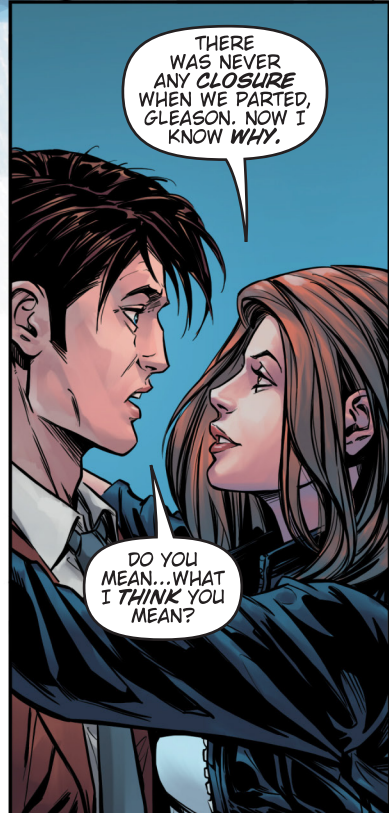


THE LAST  
THING I NEED  
TO DO IS FIND  
SOMEONE TO  
TAKE MY  
PLACE.



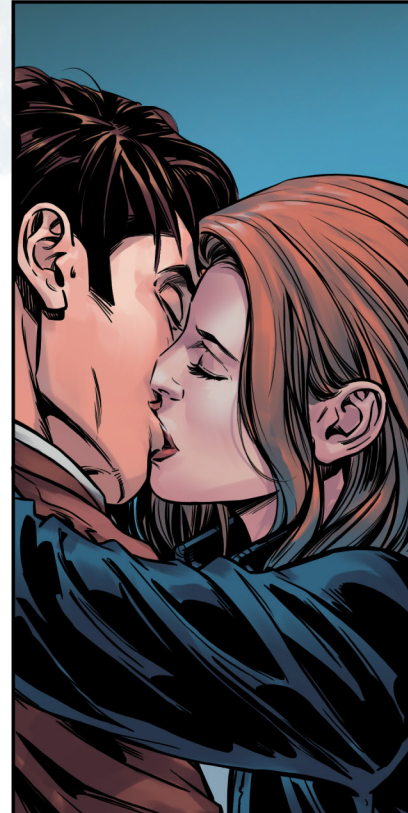
YOU ALMOST  
SOUND...  
RELIEVED?

I GET MY  
LIFE BACK. OR  
AT LEAST I GET  
TO START A  
NEW LIFE.



THERE  
WAS NEVER  
ANY CLOSURE  
WHEN WE PARTED,  
GLEASON. NOW I  
KNOW WHY.

DO YOU  
MEAN...WHAT  
I THINK YOU  
MEAN?

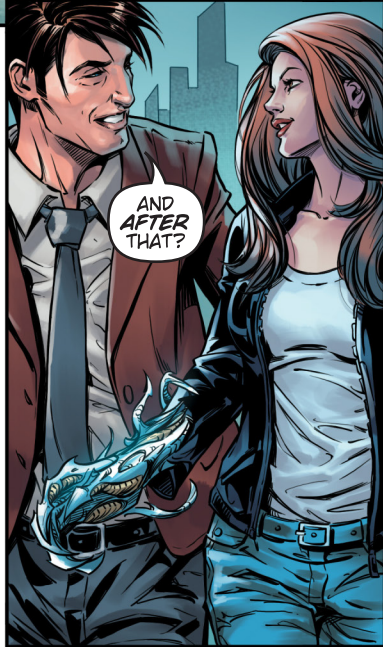




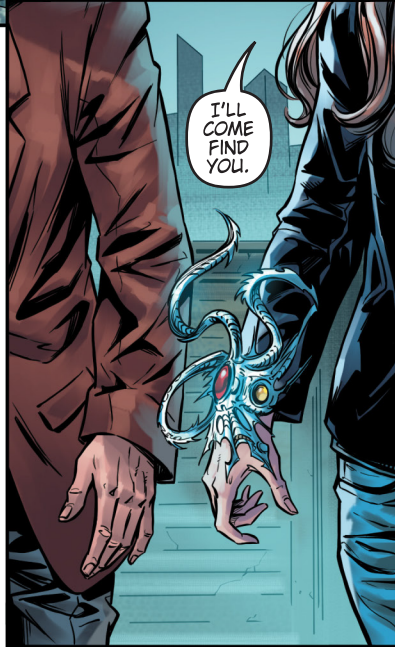


WHAT NOW?

I'VE GOT SOME *THINKING* TO DO, AND THEN PROBABLY SOME *TRAVELING* TO DO.



AND AFTER THAT?



I'LL COME FIND YOU.



I'M ANXIOUS TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS NEXT.

END CHAPTER 1



## A LETTER FROM RON MARZ

Breaking up is hard to do.

I've been writing *Witchblade*, with a slight break in the middle, since 2004. My daughter was a toddler when I wrote my first *Witchblade* script. Now she's old enough to read even the mature-themed issues. Sara Pezzini has been "the other woman" in my life for more than a decade. But it's over.

With this issue, we reach the end of *Witchblade*, for a while at least. It's bittersweet, of course, as there's sadness in bringing down the curtain a final time. But there's also satisfaction in keeping the series running for 185 issues, especially in an era when relaunches, reboots and revamps are commonplace. It's been a hell of a run.

When I was initially offered the writing duties on *Witchblade*, I had never read an issue of the series. I was familiar with it, but it wasn't on my pull list. Throughout my career, I've found that those assignments, the ones with less familiarity and no pre-conceived notions, are often the ones that turn out the best. You can approach the material with fresh eyes, and more easily sort what works from what doesn't. For me, that meant digging into Sara herself, trying to flesh out her character (no pun intended) and make readers care about her. And in the process, of course, make me care about her.

I've probably written more stories about Sara than any other character in my career. We've been through a lot together. Sara lost a partner, lost the *Witchblade*, regained the *Witchblade*, got a good boyfriend, got pregnant by a bad boyfriend, had a baby, sacrificed the baby, moved away from New York, and moved back to New York. I'm sorry we've come to the end of the road, but I'm proud of the journey we've taken. I think I grew as a writer, and I hope Sara grew as a character.

Comics are inherently a collaborative medium, a marriage of words and pictures making a greater whole. None of these 185 issues could have existed without a long list of writers, artists, letterers, editors, production people and more. I personally want to thank everyone at Top Cow past and present, all the artists I worked with, and of course all the readers. Lastly, any mention of *Witchblade* would not be complete without honoring the late Michael Turner, who helped bring Sara and the *Witchblade* into the world.

This chapter is done. I'm going to miss Sara. I hope you will too.

Ron Marz  
October, 2015





CHAPTER  
TWO

*writer*

MATT HAWKINS

*artists*

MICHAEL TURNER

STJEPAN SEJIC

LINDA SEJIC

ISAAC GOODHART

PHILLIP SEVY

NELSON BLAKE II

RANDY GREEN

D-TRON • *inker*

J.D. SMITH & BILL FARMER • *colorists*

BETSY GONIA • *editor*

TROY PETERI • *letterer*



# ONE POLICE PLAZA NEW YORK

RETIRING FROM THE WITCHBLADE ISN'T LIKE QUITTING THE POLICE FORCE. THERE'S NO GOLD WATCH, NO DRUNKEN PARTY... JUST A FEAR THAT IT WILL FALL INTO THE WRONG HANDS.

I'M FORTY-FIVE NOW AND IT'S BEEN TWENTY YEARS SINCE THE WITCHBLADE FIRST LATCHED ONTO ME.

AT TIMES, IT'S HARD FOR ME TO ACCEPT WHAT I'VE SEEN AND EXPERIENCED AS REAL. THERE'S A WORLD OF SUPERNATURAL WONDERS AND HORRORS WE AREN'T MEANT TO SEE... AND MOST SHOULD BE GRATEFUL FOR THEIR IGNORANCE.

I'VE IDENTIFIED THREE WOMEN WHO I THINK COULD BE GOOD CANDIDATES TO BEAR THE WITCHBLADE AND I PRAY THAT IT WILL ACCEPT ONE OF THEM.

YOU SURE YOU WANT TO DO THIS? YOU'RE LEAVING A LEGAL RECORD OF WHAT INCLUDES SOME ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES.

YES, GLEASON, I WANT TO MAKE A RECORD FOR THE NEXT BEARER TO HELP THEM.  
I'LL OF COURSE COUNSEL THEM DURING THE TRANSITION, BUT I DON'T WANT ANY OF THIS IN MY LIFE MUCH LONGER.

LET'S GET STARTED, I'VE ONLY GOT THE ROOM FOR FOUR HOURS.

REC

I'M SARA PEZZINI, YOU KNOW THAT ALREADY IF YOU'RE WATCHING THIS.

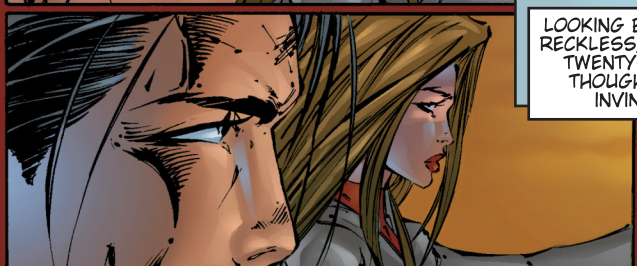
00:09:23







I WAS YOUNGER THAN MOST WHEN I MADE DETECTIVE AND I WAS PRETTY HIGH ON MYSELF.



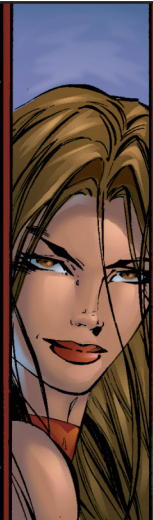
LOOKING BACK I WAS RECKLESS, BUT I WAS TWENTY-FIVE AND THOUGHT I WAS INVINCIBLE.



I'M GIVING YOU THIS BACKGROUND SO YOU CAN UNDERSTAND WHO I WAS AND HOPE THE CONTEXT EXPLAINS SOME OF MY ACTIONS AND WHY I CAN NO LONGER BE PART OF THIS WORLD.



MY PARTNER BACK THEN WAS MICHAEL YEE. HE AND I WERE FOLLOWING UP ON A TIP OF SOME ILLEGAL CONTEST GOING ON AT THE RIALTO THEATER.





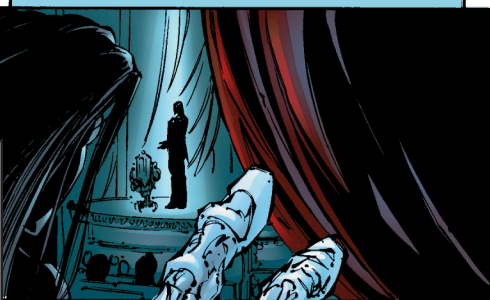
THE THEATER HAD BEEN CLOSED SINCE BEFORE I WAS BORN BUT IT WAS PACKED THAT NIGHT.

A VERITABLE WHO'S WHO OF THE CRIMINAL UNDERGROUND AND WANNABES WERE ALL THERE.



IT WAS THE FIRST TIME I SAW THE WITCHBLADE.

THE BRITISH CHARMER IAN NOTTINGHAM AND HIS BOSS KENNETH IRONS WERE LOOKING FOR SOMEONE WHO COULD WEAR IT... APPARENTLY IT HAD RIPPED OFF IRONS' AND OTHERS' ARMS WHEN THEY TRIED IT ON.



THE WITCHBLADE MUST CHOOSE ITS WIELDER.

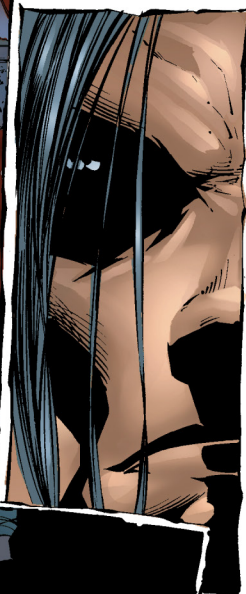
I DIDN'T REALIZE IT AT THE TIME, BUT THAT MEETING WOULD COME TO DEFINE ME FOR TWO DECADES.



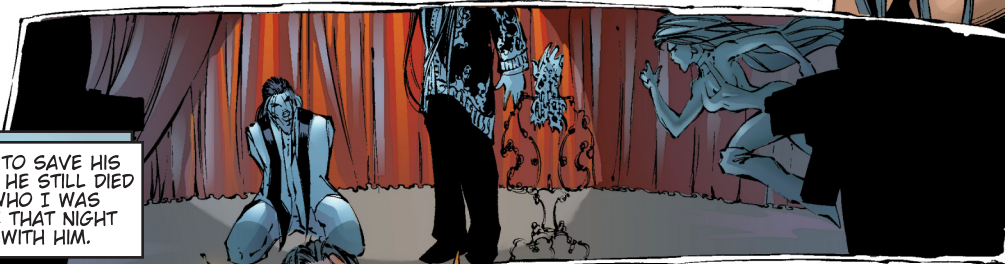


WHILE I WAS UNDERCOVER IN MY BEST TIGHT FITTING RED DRESS TO...AHEM...BLEND IN... MY PARTNER MICHAEL YEE WAS CAUGHT.

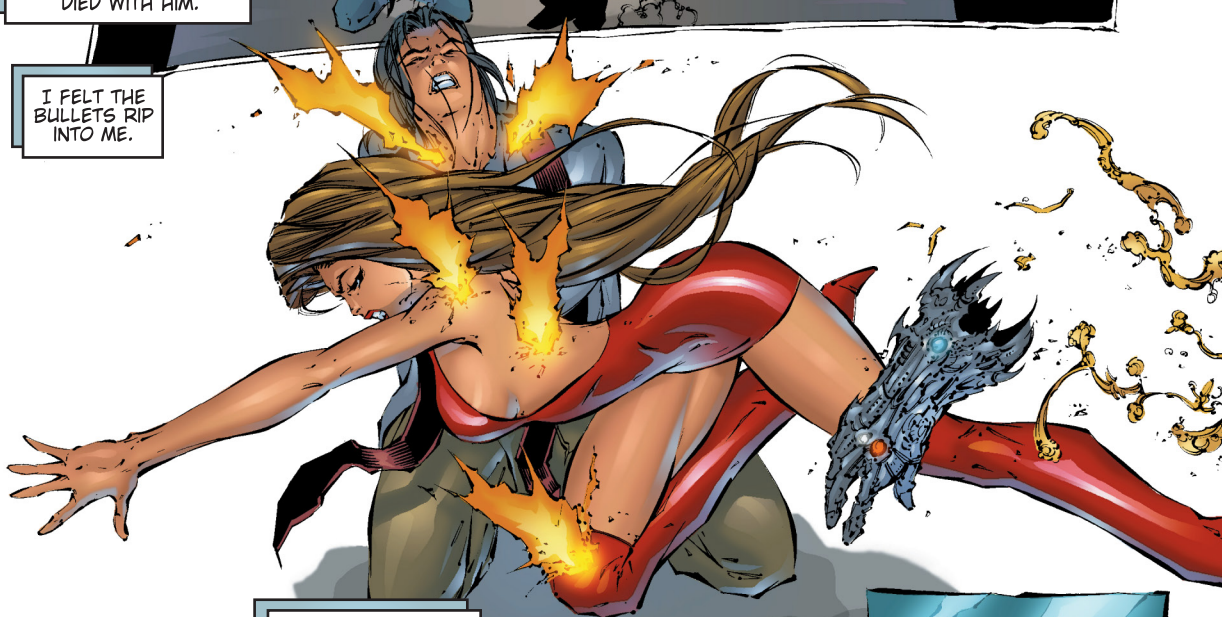
THEY WERE GOING TO EXECUTE HIM AS PART OF THE EVENING'S ENTERTAINMENT.



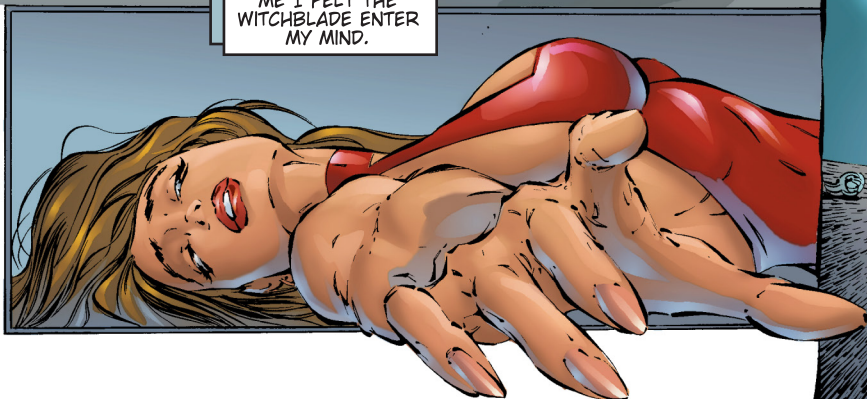
I TRIED TO SAVE HIS LIFE, BUT HE STILL DIED AND WHO I WAS BEFORE THAT NIGHT DIED WITH HIM.



I FELT THE BULLETS RIP INTO ME.

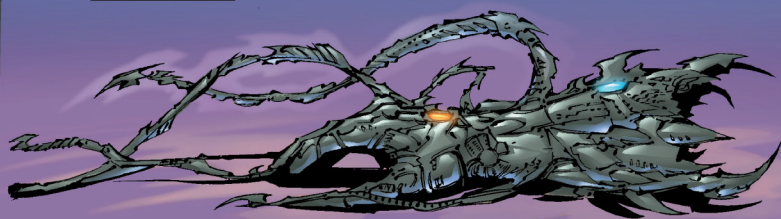


RIGHT BEFORE THE DARKNESS CLAIMED ME I FELT THE WITCHBLADE ENTER MY MIND.

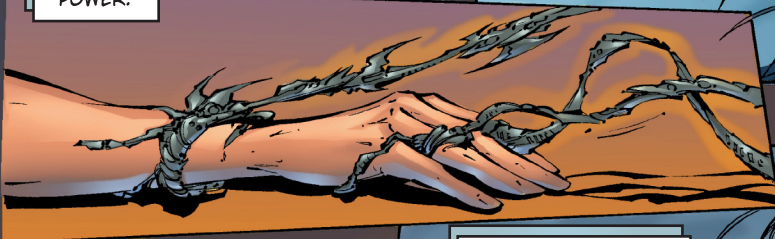




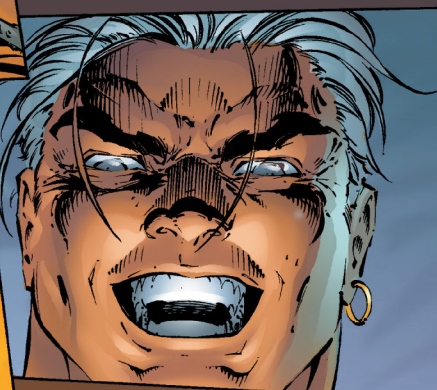
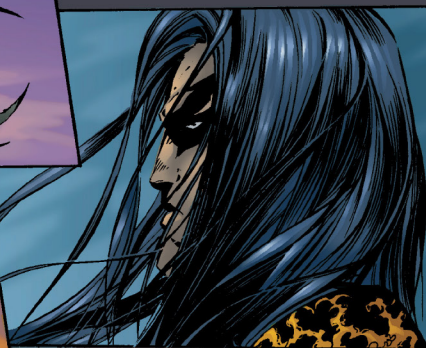
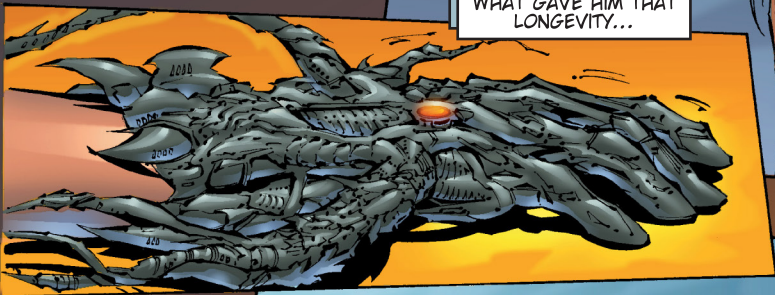
ITS VOICE  
WAS CLEAR.



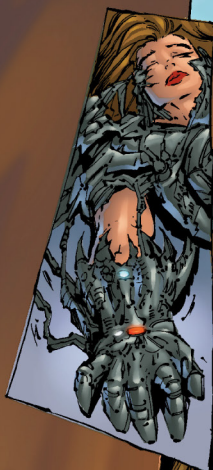
I FELT ITS  
POWER.



IRONS HAD SOUGHT A  
BEARER FOR OVER A  
CENTURY, I NEVER  
QUITE UNDERSTOOD  
WHAT GAVE HIM THAT  
LONGEVITY...

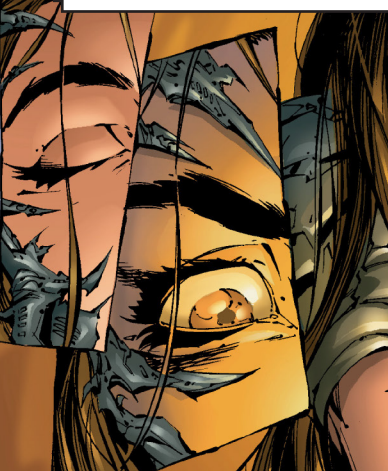


...BUT WHEN YOU'RE DEALING  
WITH SUPERNATURAL STUFF ON  
A REGULAR BASIS, YOU TEND TO  
STOP QUESTIONING AND JUST  
BELIEVE IT'S POSSIBLE.



...BUT WHEN YOU'RE DEALING  
WITH SUPERNATURAL STUFF ON  
A REGULAR BASIS, YOU TEND TO  
STOP QUESTIONING AND JUST  
BELIEVE IT'S POSSIBLE.

I'VE NEVER FOUND A  
SATISFACTORY ANSWER  
FOR THE WHY OF THINGS.







BUT MAYBE THAT'S  
THE WHOLE POINT?

SOME THINGS  
ARE MEANT TO BE  
BEYOND HUMAN  
UNDERSTANDING.

I WAS RAISED CATHOLIC.  
I STILL BELIEVE IN GOD  
ALTHOUGH MY EXPERIENCE  
WITH ANGELS AND DEMONS  
IS THAT THEY DON'T QUITE  
LINE UP WITH WHAT'S  
WRITTEN IN THE BIBLE.

CONCEPTS OF  
GOOD AND  
EVIL ARE  
MORE FLUID  
THAN I  
WANTED TO  
BELIEVE.



FOUR HOURS LATER

WE'RE OUT OF TIME. I CAN BOOK ANOTHER SESSION IF YOU NEED MORE.

NO I THINK THAT'S ENOUGH. THANK YOU, GLEASON.

I CAN GIVE THIS TO THE NEXT BEARER AND TELL THEM CONFIDENTLY THAT THIS IS ALL I KNOW.

SO WHO'S FIRST ON YOUR LIST?

YOUR FORMER PARTNER DANIELLE BAPTISTE. IF IT TAKES WITH HER YOU CAN AT LEAST HELP KEEP AN EYE ON IT UNTIL WE FIGURE OUT OUR NEXT MOVE.

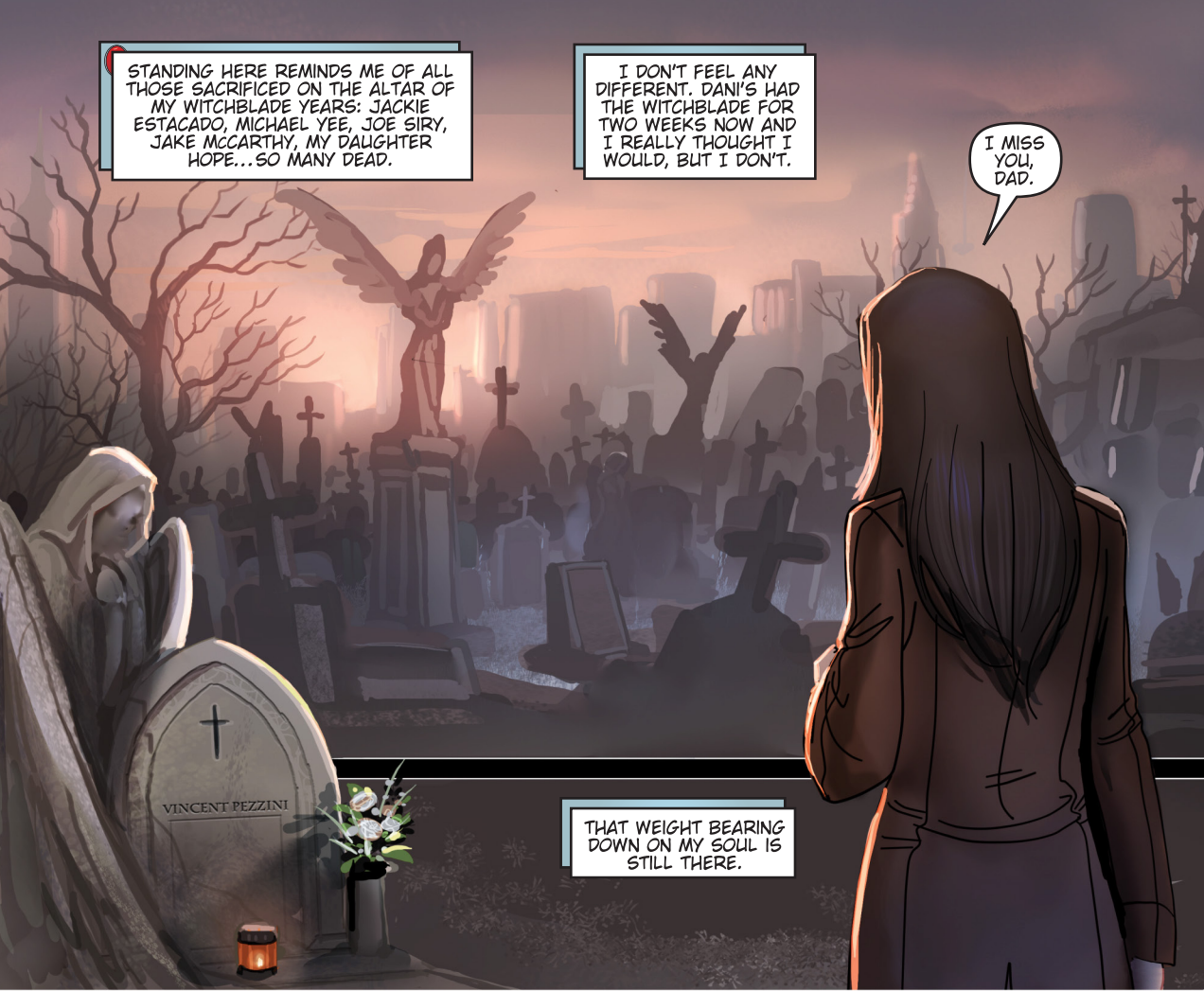
WELL THERE SHE IS NOW.

HEY DANI, YOU REMEMBER SARA?

OF COURSE, HEY, IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN.

THE WITCHBLADE TOOK TO HER; MAYBE THIS WOULD BE EASIER THAN I THOUGHT.



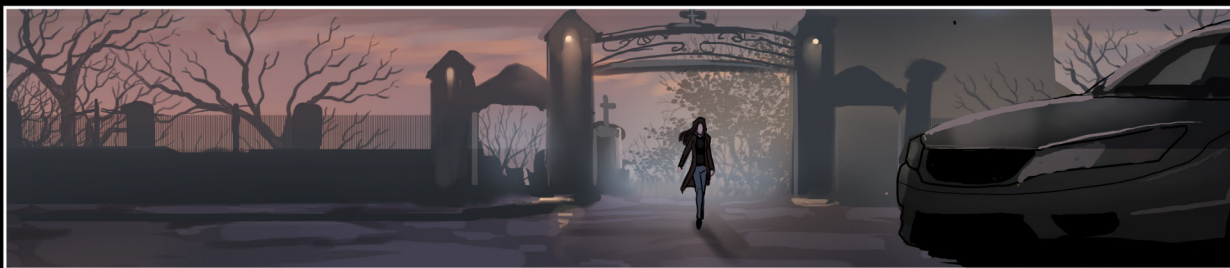


STANDING HERE REMINDS ME OF ALL THOSE SACRIFICED ON THE ALTAR OF MY WITCHBLADE YEARS: JACKIE ESTACADO, MICHAEL YEE, JOE SIRY, JAKE MCCARTHY, MY DAUGHTER HOPE...SO MANY DEAD.

I DON'T FEEL ANY DIFFERENT. DANI'S HAD THE WITCHBLADE FOR TWO WEEKS NOW AND I REALLY THOUGHT I WOULD, BUT I DON'T.

I MISS YOU, DAD.

THAT WEIGHT BEARING DOWN ON MY SOUL IS STILL THERE.



WHAT THE? HOW'D YOU SNEAK BACK WITHOUT MY EVEN NOTICING?



GLEASON



THE WITCHBLADE... IT CAME BACK.



## THREE WEEKS LATER ROME

DANI SAID SHE WOKE UP  
AND IT WAS SIMPLY GONE.  
SHE DIDN'T KNOW WHY  
BUT DIDN'T WANT IT BACK.

SO ONTO NUMBER TWO ON  
THE LIST, A WOMAN I'VE  
WORKED WITH BEFORE AND  
KNOW WELL: THE  
MAGDALENA, WHO ALREADY  
HAS A SISTER ARTIFACT,  
THE SPEAR OF DESTINY.

HER REAL NAME  
WAS PATIENCE AND  
SHE WAS ABOUT  
TEN YEARS  
YOUNGER THAN ME  
AND HER HEART  
WAS STILL IN  
THE FIGHT.



WHEN I SPOKE TO HER  
ABOUT IT, SHE WAS  
HESITANT BUT  
ULTIMATELY AGREED.  
SHE DIDN'T WANT THE  
WITCHBLADE TO FALL  
INTO THE WRONG  
HANDS EITHER.



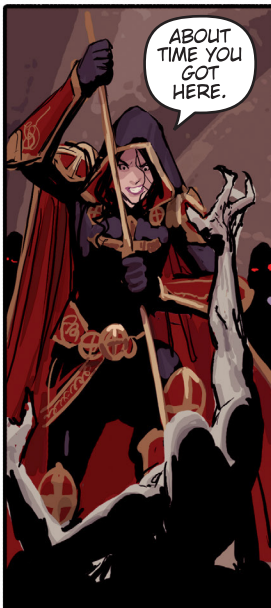
AND OF COURSE SHE  
COULDN'T MEET ME  
AT, YOU KNOW, A  
STARBUCKS OR  
SOMETHING. SHE  
ASKED ME TO MEET  
HER IN A SEWER  
NEAR THE VATICAN.

I GUESS WHEN YOU'RE A  
WARRIOR FOR THE  
CATHOLIC CHURCH YOU'RE  
USED TO WEIRD MEETINGS.

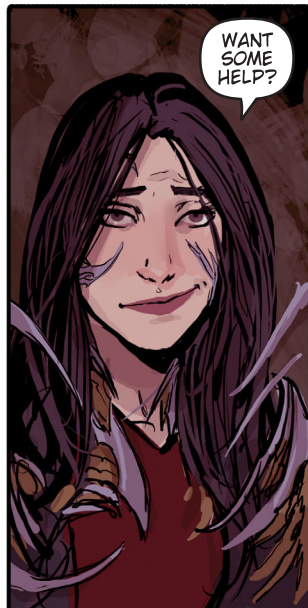


WHO AM I TO TALK?  
I'VE DONE WEIRDER.

ABOUT  
TIME YOU  
GOT  
HERE.



WANT  
SOME  
HELP?







IT FELT GOOD TO  
UNLEASH A BIT.





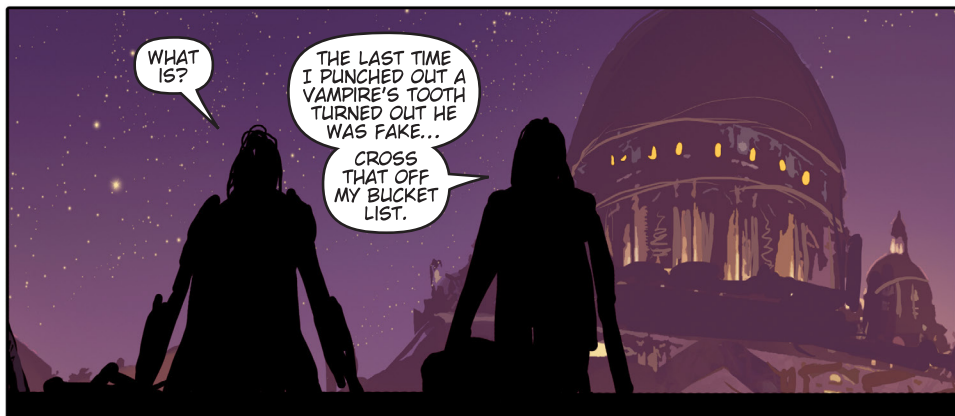
I DON'T UNDERSTAND  
THE THIRTEEN  
ARTIFACTS OR WHO  
MADE THEM, BUT I  
DO KNOW THEY'RE  
WEAPONS.

AND WEAPONS  
ARE DESIGNED  
TO KILL.





IT'S KINDA FUNNY...



WHAT IS?

THE LAST TIME I PUNCHED OUT A VAMPIRE'S TOOTH TURNED OUT HE WAS FAKE...

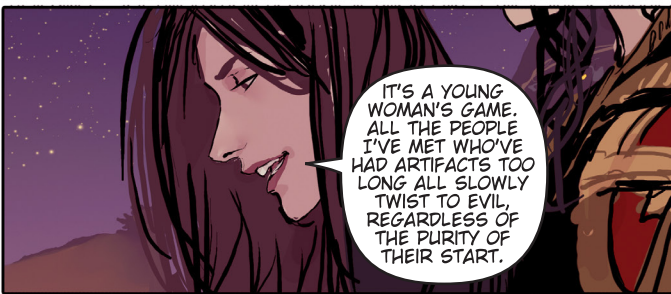
CROSS THAT OFF MY BUCKET LIST.



I CAN'T LIE I'M GOING TO MISS THIS.



THEN WHY GIVE IT UP?



IT'S A YOUNG WOMAN'S GAME. ALL THE PEOPLE I'VE MET WHO'VE HAD ARTIFACTS TOO LONG ALL SLOWLY TWIST TO EVIL, REGARDLESS OF THE PURITY OF THEIR START.



THE IDEA OF HAVING TWO ARTIFACTS IS SCARY, BUT I WILL NEVER SHIRK FROM DUTY.

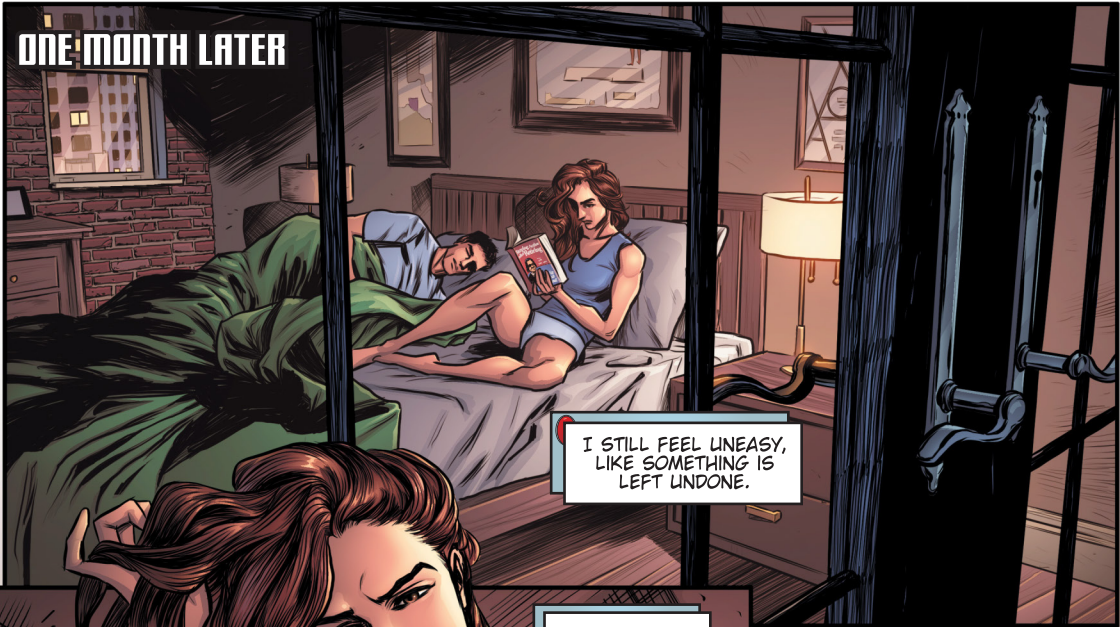


I WILL CARRY YOUR LEGACY WITH HONOR, SARA.

WE WON'T MEET AGAIN, GOD BE WITH YOU.



ONE MONTH LATER



I STILL FEEL UNEASY,  
LIKE SOMETHING IS  
LEFT UNDONE.

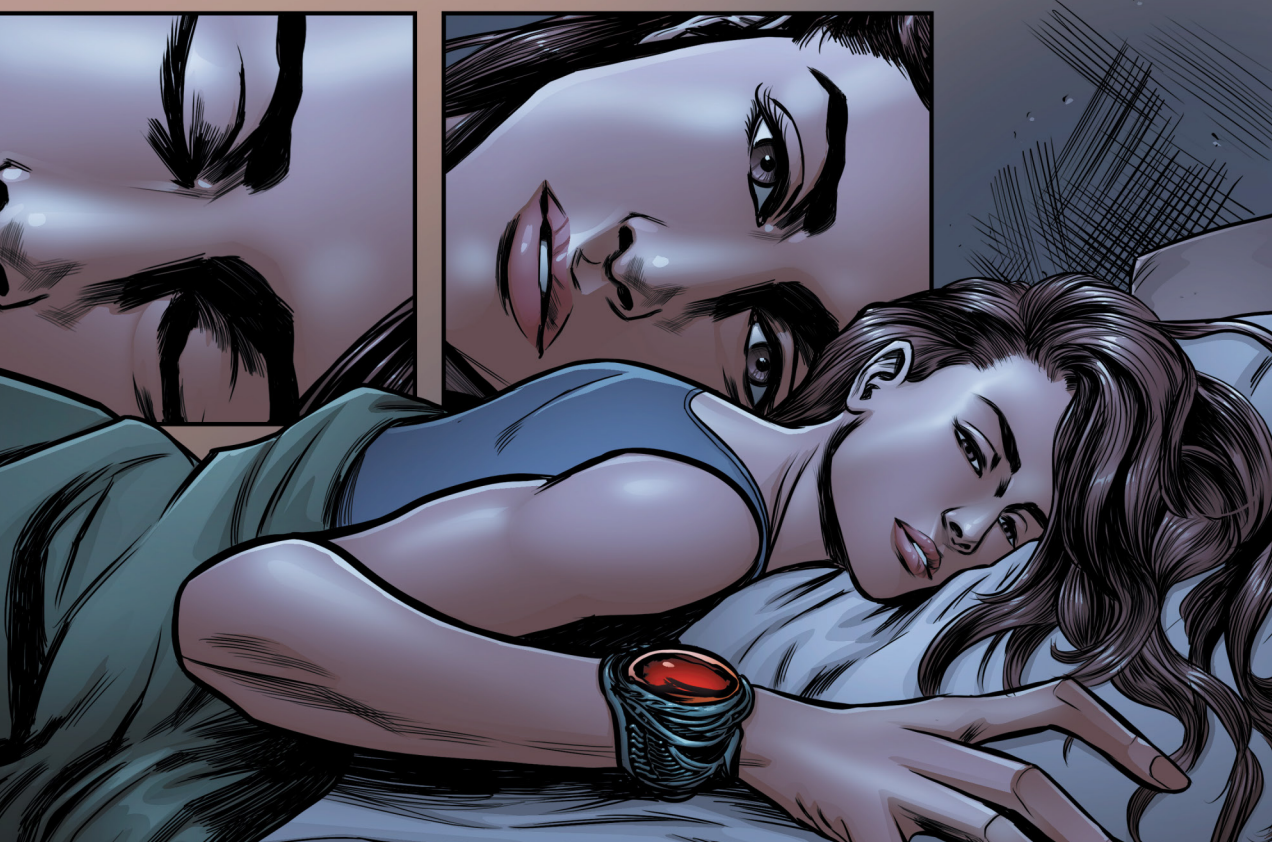


I NEED TO FIND  
A HOBBY.



START A NEW  
CAREER.

MAYBE HAVE  
A BABY.





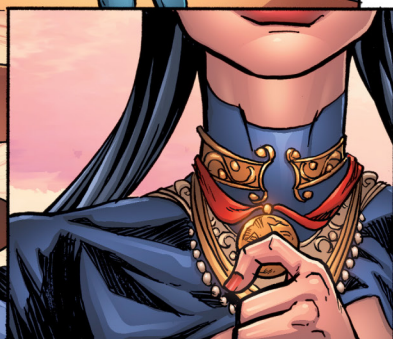
PATIENCE SENT WORD THAT THE WITCHBLADE HAD ABANDONED HER, SHE DIDN'T KNOW WHY BUT WAS NO LONGER WILLING TO TAKE IT.

WHICH LEFT ONE LAST WOMAN ON MY LIST. IF THIS ONE DIDN'T TAKE, I WASN'T SURE WHAT I WAS GOING TO DO.

I'M GLAD YOU CAME TO ME MISS PEZZINI. I'M NO STRANGER TO THESE ARTIFACTS.



I FOUND THE COIN OF SOLOMON YEARS AGO AND HAVE USED IT TO HELP BUILD CYBER DATA FROM A SMALL START UP TO WHAT YOU SEE TODAY.



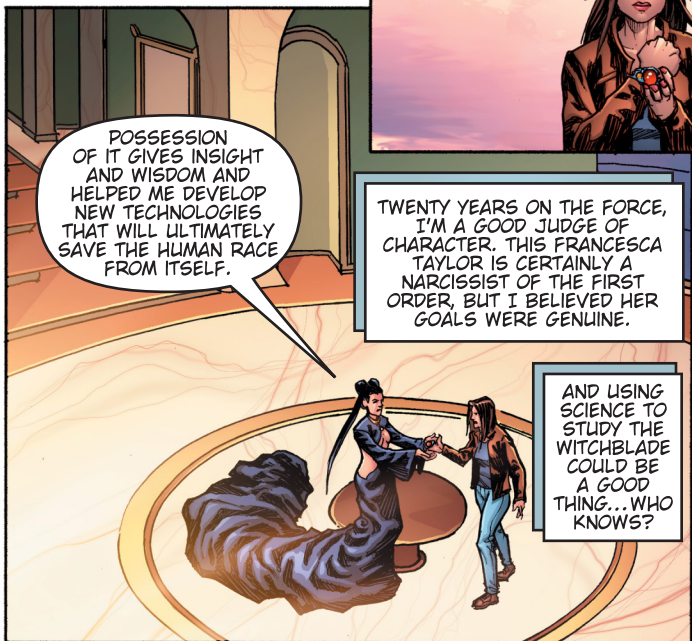
I DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT THE COIN.



POSSESSION OF IT GIVES INSIGHT AND WISDOM AND HELPED ME DEVELOP NEW TECHNOLOGIES THAT WILL ULTIMATELY SAVE THE HUMAN RACE FROM ITSELF.

TWENTY YEARS ON THE FORCE, I'M A GOOD JUDGE OF CHARACTER. THIS FRANCESCA TAYLOR IS CERTAINLY A NARCISSIST OF THE FIRST ORDER, BUT I BELIEVED HER GOALS WERE GENUINE.

AND USING SCIENCE TO STUDY THE WITCHBLADE COULD BE A GOOD THING... WHO KNOWS?



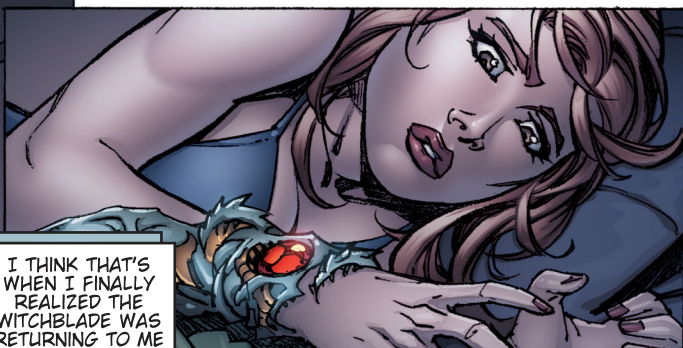


TWO DAYS LATER

I KNEW IT WAS  
BACK BEFORE I  
EVEN WOKE UP.



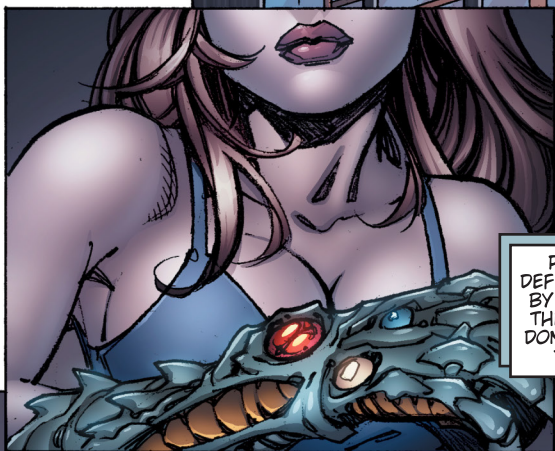
I THINK THAT'S  
WHEN I FINALLY  
REALIZED THE  
WITCHBLADE WAS  
RETURNING TO ME  
BECAUSE I DIDN'T  
ACTUALLY WANT  
TO LET IT GO.



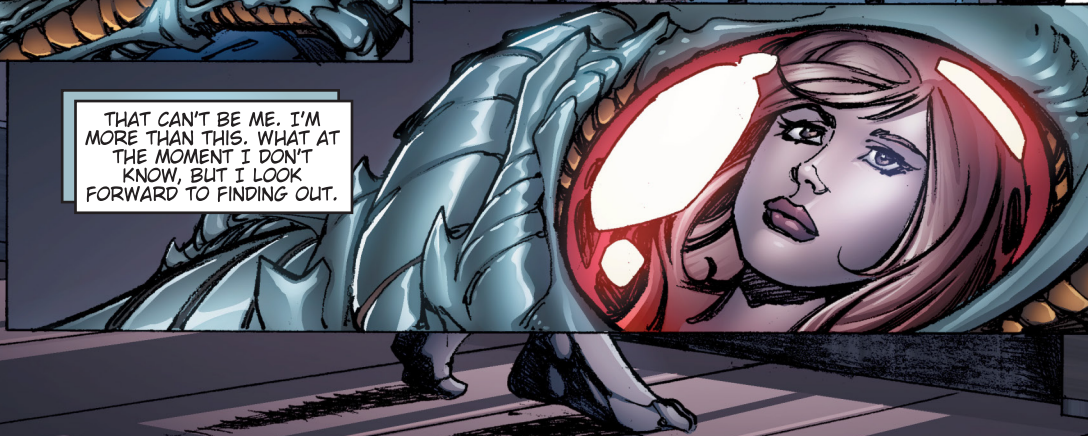
IT WAS SO MUCH  
A PART OF ME  
THAT I WAS  
AFRAID OF MY  
LIFE WITHOUT IT.  
WHO WOULD I  
BE? WOULD MY  
LIFE STILL  
MATTER?



PEOPLE OFTEN  
DEFINE THEMSELVES  
BY THE TRAUMA IN  
THEIR LIVES. THEY  
DON'T WANT TO LET  
THE PAIN GO.



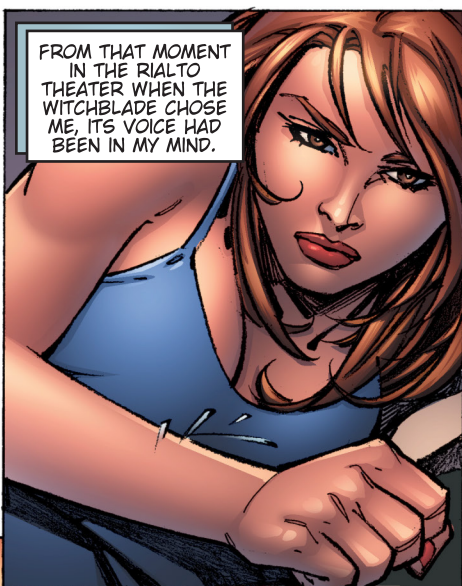
THAT CAN'T BE ME. I'M  
MORE THAN THIS. WHAT AT  
THE MOMENT I DON'T  
KNOW, BUT I LOOK  
FORWARD TO FINDING OUT.







THE NEXT MORNING IT WAS GONE. I THOUGHT I'D FEEL FEAR NOT KNOWING WHAT HAPPENED TO IT, BUT ALL I FELT WAS AN INNER PEACE.



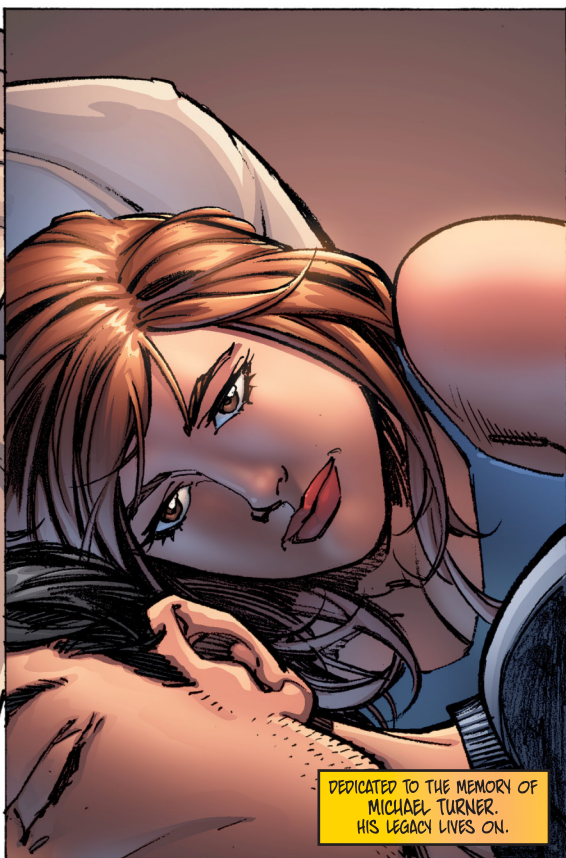
FROM THAT MOMENT IN THE RIALTO THEATER WHEN THE WITCHBLADE CHOSE ME, ITS VOICE HAD BEEN IN MY MIND.



IT'D BEEN WHISPERING TO ME FOR SO LONG I KINDA TUNED IT OUT...BUT NOW ITS ABSENCE IS STARTLING.



SO QUIET.



DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF  
MICHAEL TURNER.  
HIS LEGACY LIVES ON.



# MARC SILVESTRI & BRIAN HABERLIN — CO-CREATORS OF WITCHBLADE

It's hard to believe it's been over twenty years since Brian Haberlin pitched the idea of a female King Arthur to Brad Foxhoven and me over at Top Cow. Back in the mid 1990's, the comic market was in a vicious downward spiral and everyone was grasping for even a mid-level hit. When *Witchblade* landed in the comic shops it truly was as if Excalibur had been pulled from the stone. Because not only was *Witchblade* the hit Top Cow needed, but combined with the talents of David Wohl and the late Michael Turner stirred into the mix it became a sensation. And really, things were never the same after that.

The fan response to David Wohl, his writing partner Christina Z and the "Where the hell did this guy come from" talent that Michael Turner brought to the book was nothing short of astonishing. The early days of *Witchblade* from concept, to production, to marketing, was a literal clinic in how to produce and promote a successful comic book. Heck, it even gave birth to another Top Cow hit, *The Darkness*! Everyone involved was at the top of their game and it was exhilarating to watch and be a part of. Creative lunches with David and Mike were always short because all of us wanted to get back to actually doing the physical work on *Witchblade*. It was rarified air and I'll never forget the experience.

Michael Turner was taken from his family and from all of us fans far too soon. When I look back at those early days, hanging out with Mike and tossing ideas back and forth with him, it will always bring a smile to my face, even if it's sometimes bittersweet. All of us at Top Cow would marvel at the sheer talent this man possessed and to this day I believe he was one of the best creators our business had ever seen. I often find myself wondering how much he would have contributed to our industry had he not passed at such an early age. It is in no exaggeration to say that Top Cow would not have become what it is without Mike and the work he did on *Witchblade*.

In closing, I'd like to thank all of the talented writers, artists, editors, marketers, and especially the fans that made Sara Pezzini and *Witchblade* such a success and pleasure over the years. I'm humbled and honored to have had a small part in her beginnings.

Again, thank you all.

-Marc Silvestri

Hubris... *Witchblade* was born of it.

In 1995 *Shi* and *Lady Death* were the heavy hitters in comics. We thought we could do better. (Both Brian and Billy have since become my friends and I have huge respect for them both...but at the time, they were the competition...so think about it that way.) David Wohl and I headed down to the Santa Monica Pier with notebooks in hand to see what we could come up with. We both loved Michael Moorcock's Eternal Champion series: Elric of Melniboné, Dorian Hawkmoon, Corum, etc. So we started with the power. An obvious accessible focus, as it were. One with a dark past, and sentient nature. I always thought it'd be interesting if Green Lantern's ring rebelled one day and took control...sort of saying, "Frankly, I'm sick of being used." That was the threat, here. Would the *Witchblade* stay in line? Would it be the good little "power ring" and do what the hero wants? Well, not exactly.

Then it was on to the bearer of the *Witchblade*. She had to have a job and a real life, complete with friends, car keys, etc. Did you know she was originally Sara Lopez? Most folks don't. Anyway, that name didn't stick and we moved on to Sara Pezzini. Always thought we could do some interesting visual things with Pez dispensers and how she would be given them as gifts all the time, but always hated them. Anyway, first we played with her being a firefighter. But if we really wanted to have her job help drive stories with action and mystery, then a cop was the way to go. We gave her a unique set of problems, unique set of friends, and unique villains... Really fun villains, cuz if you don't have a good villain, the hero is kinda pointless.

Then it was time to talk to Marc. He liked it, though we had to tell him the *Witchblade* title enough times to have him think he came up with it... ;)

Now...to find an artist... We knew Marc would do the *Cyblade/Shi* crossover, so first appearance was covered. But what about the series? Well, that was easy. I'd just finished the Ballistic miniseries with this young talented kid, Mike Turner. Mike was obviously a star on the rise...and with a grin that was incredibly infectious. So Marc, David, Mike and I did more pow-wow-ing and fleshing out and...well... hubris won out.

I'm very proud of all of the *Witchblade* books and I know we'll be seeing many more in the future as she was built from the very beginning to be the eternal champion. And whoever wields The *Witchblade* in the future I'm sure will fill the shoes quite admirably. All the best to the bearers of the blade!

-Brian Haberlin



*Top Cow is Proud to Present...*

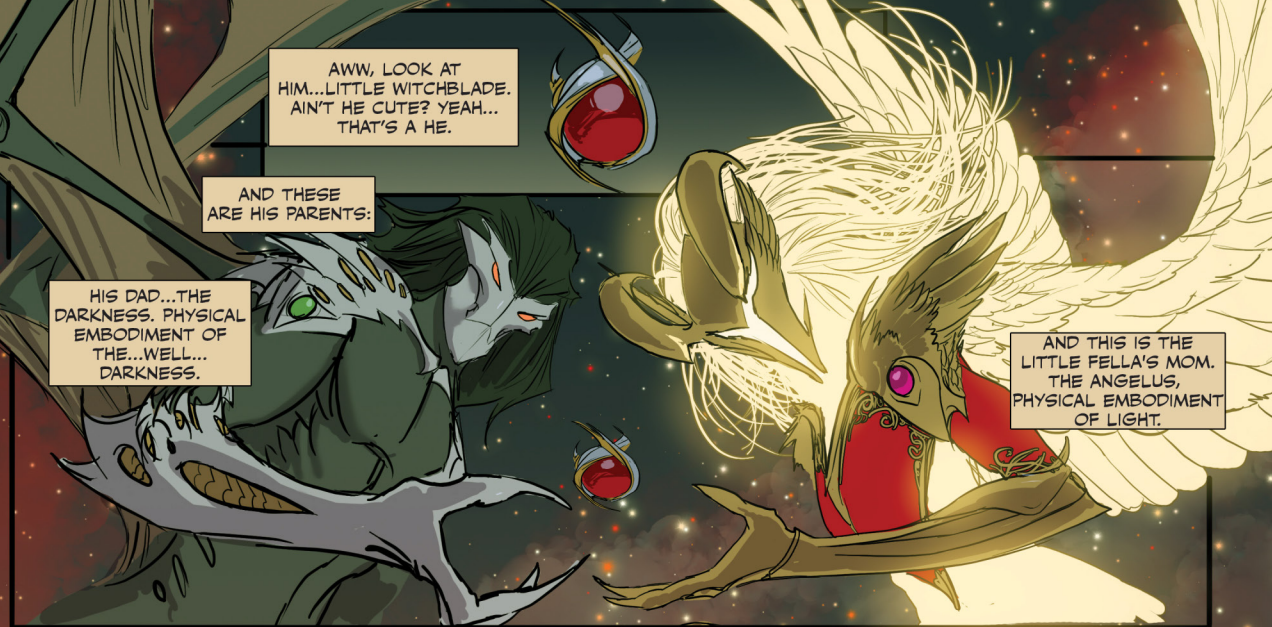


Issue #1 Preview

Written & Drawn by Stjepan Sejic

In Stores Now



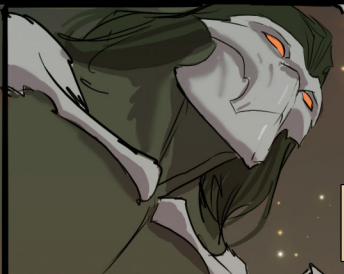


AWW, LOOK AT HIM...LITTLE WITCHBLADE. AIN'T HE CUTE? YEAH... THAT'S A HE.

AND THESE ARE HIS PARENTS:

HIS DAD...THE DARKNESS. PHYSICAL EMBODIMENT OF THE...WELL... DARKNESS.

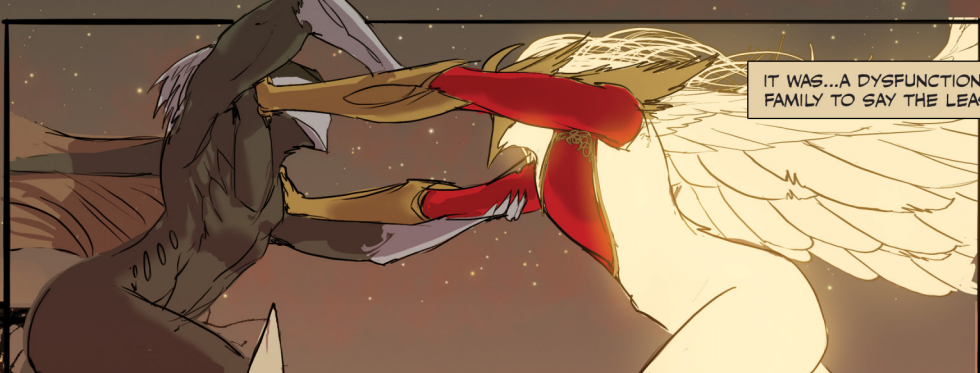
AND THIS IS THE LITTLE FELLA'S MOM. THE ANGELUS, PHYSICAL EMBODIMENT OF LIGHT.



SO...UM, YEAH...



MOM AND DAD DIDN'T REALLY GET ALONG.



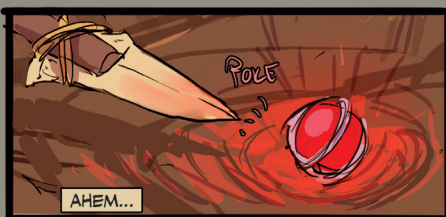
IT WAS...A DYSFUNCTIONAL FAMILY TO SAY THE LEAST.



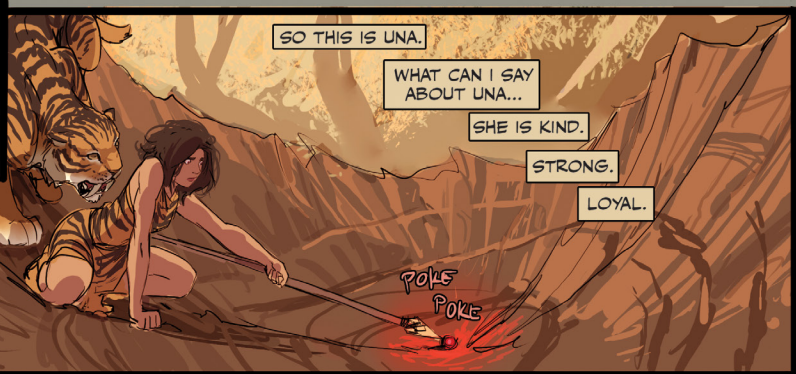
SO, ONE DAY LITTLE WITCHBLADE LEFT HIS HOME AND WENT TO SEE THE WORLD...

AND TO FIND SOME FRIENDS.





AHEM...



SO THIS IS UNA.

WHAT CAN I SAY  
ABOUT UNA...

SHE IS KIND.

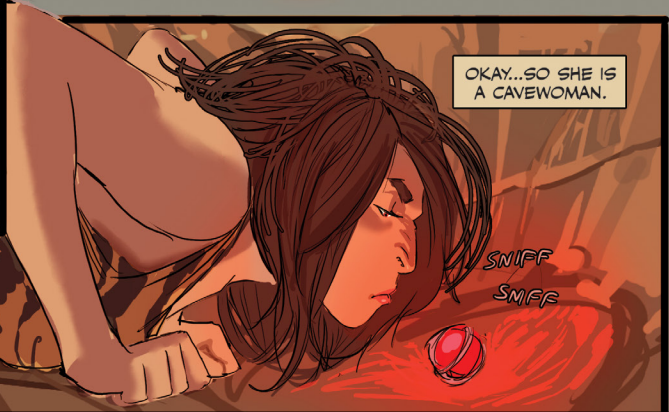
STRONG.

LOYAL.

POKE  
POKE



BRAVE...

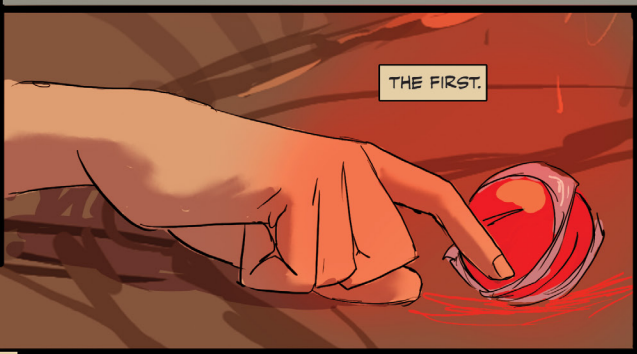


OKAY...SO SHE IS  
A CAVEWOMAN.

SNIFF  
SNIFF



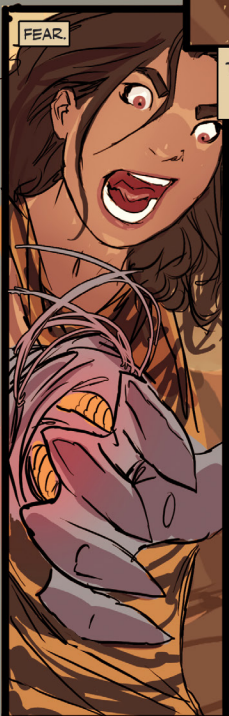
AND SHE WAS...



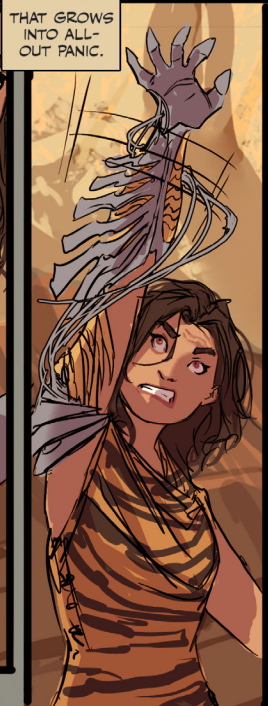
THE FIRST.



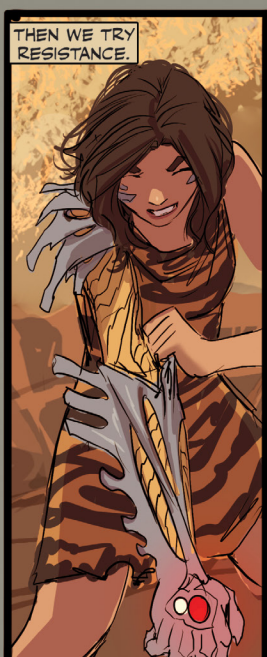
NOW, PAST THIS POINT,  
THINGS GO EERILY  
SIMILAR FOR  
MOST BEARERS.  
THERE'S SHOCK...



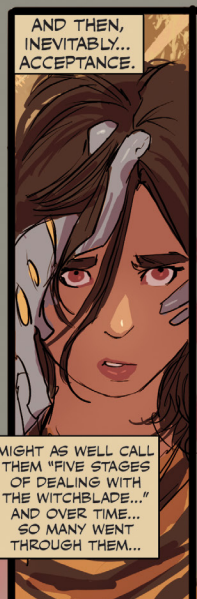
FEAR.



THAT GROWS  
INTO ALL-  
OUT PANIC.



THEN WE TRY  
RESISTANCE.



AND THEN,  
INEVITABLY...  
ACCEPTANCE.

MIGHT AS WELL CALL  
THEM "FIVE STAGES  
OF DEALING WITH  
THE WITCHBLADE..."  
AND OVER TIME...  
SO MANY WENT  
THROUGH THEM...



UNA WAS THE FIRST.

MANY FOLLOWED.

QUEENS.

WARRIORS.

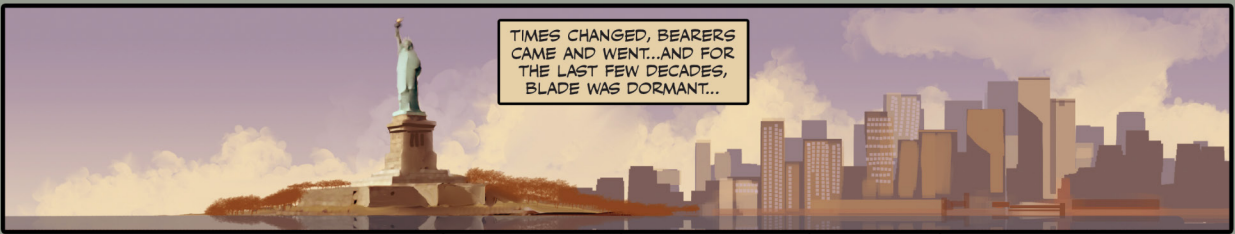
SCHOLARS.

ADVENTURERS.

ALL EXCEPTIONAL WOMEN  
IN THEIR OWN WAYS, AND  
ALL POSSESSING THE  
HEART OF COURAGE...

AND EVERY SINGLE ONE  
OF THEM, A BEARER  
OF THE WITCHBLADE.  
SO YEAH...BLADE HAD  
HIGH STANDARDS...





TIMES CHANGED, BEARERS  
CAME AND WENT..AND FOR  
THE LAST FEW DECADES,  
BLADE WAS DORMANT...



AND THEN IT  
FELT THE CALL.



A NEW BEARER WAS READY.

THE TIME WAS RIGHT!

THE WITCHBLADE  
KNEW THAT THE  
BEARER WAS TO BE  
AN EXCEPTIONAL  
WOMAN...



LIKE THOSE  
BEFORE HER...

A PARAGON  
OF *COURAGE*...

EXCEPTIONAL  
*WILLPOWER*...



AND, MOST LIKELY,  
*GREAT BEAUTY*...





SO...WHY DID IT  
CHOOSE *ME*?

I HAD MY THEORIES, BUT  
THE ONE I SETTLED WITH --  
AT LEAST FOR A WHILE -- WAS:  
YOU EAT ENOUGH *STEAK*, AND  
AFTER A WHILE YOU'LL FIND  
YOURSELF CRAVING FOR  
A *BURGER*.

AS IT HAPPENS, I WAS WRONG ON  
THAT ONE...BUT WE'LL GET THERE.



HEY, MARY!!!  
SPACIN' OUT?

YAAAAHHH!!!

MMYEAH...  
A REAL KNEE  
SLAPPER  
THERE.

AW, COME  
ON! BY THE WAY,  
SINCE WHEN DO  
YOU WEAR BEANIES?  
I BARELY  
RECOGNIZED  
YOU!

IT'S A  
NECESSITY --  
NOT A FASHION  
CHOICE.

YOU ROCKIN'  
A BALDSPOT?

ON THE  
CONTRARY...  
NOT HIDING  
A LOSS...

WHATCHA  
COVERING  
THEN?



THE HELL  
IS WRONG WITH  
YOU, RUDY?  
JEEZ!

HAHAHAHA...  
OH MAN, TOO EASY...  
ALSO, SEE WHAT I DID  
THERE? *SPACIN' OUT*?  
PRICELESS.

I...HAVE A THING  
FOR UFOLOGY...

RUDY THOUGHT  
IT WAS DUMB...

I REGRET  
NOTHING!



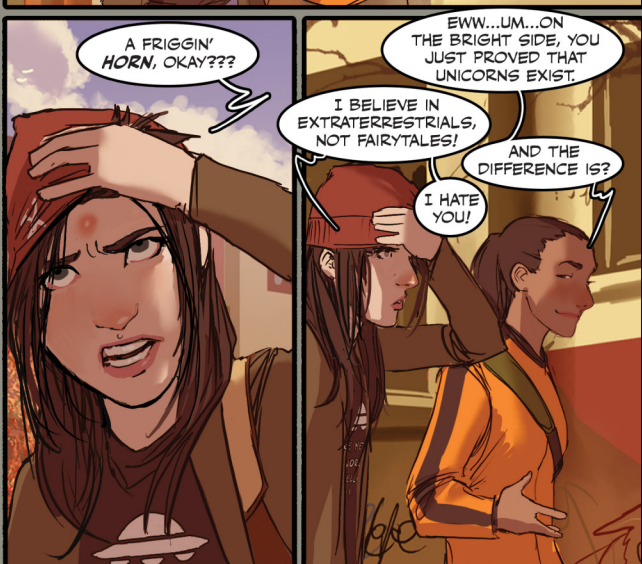
A FRIGGIN'  
HORN, OKAY???

EW...UM...ON  
THE BRIGHT SIDE, YOU  
JUST PROVED THAT  
UNICORNS EXIST.

I BELIEVE IN  
EXTRATERRESTRIALS,  
NOT FAIRYTALES!

AND THE  
DIFFERENCE IS?

I HATE  
YOU!







RUDY WAS A WISE-ASS...

RUDY WAS MY BEST FRIEND...

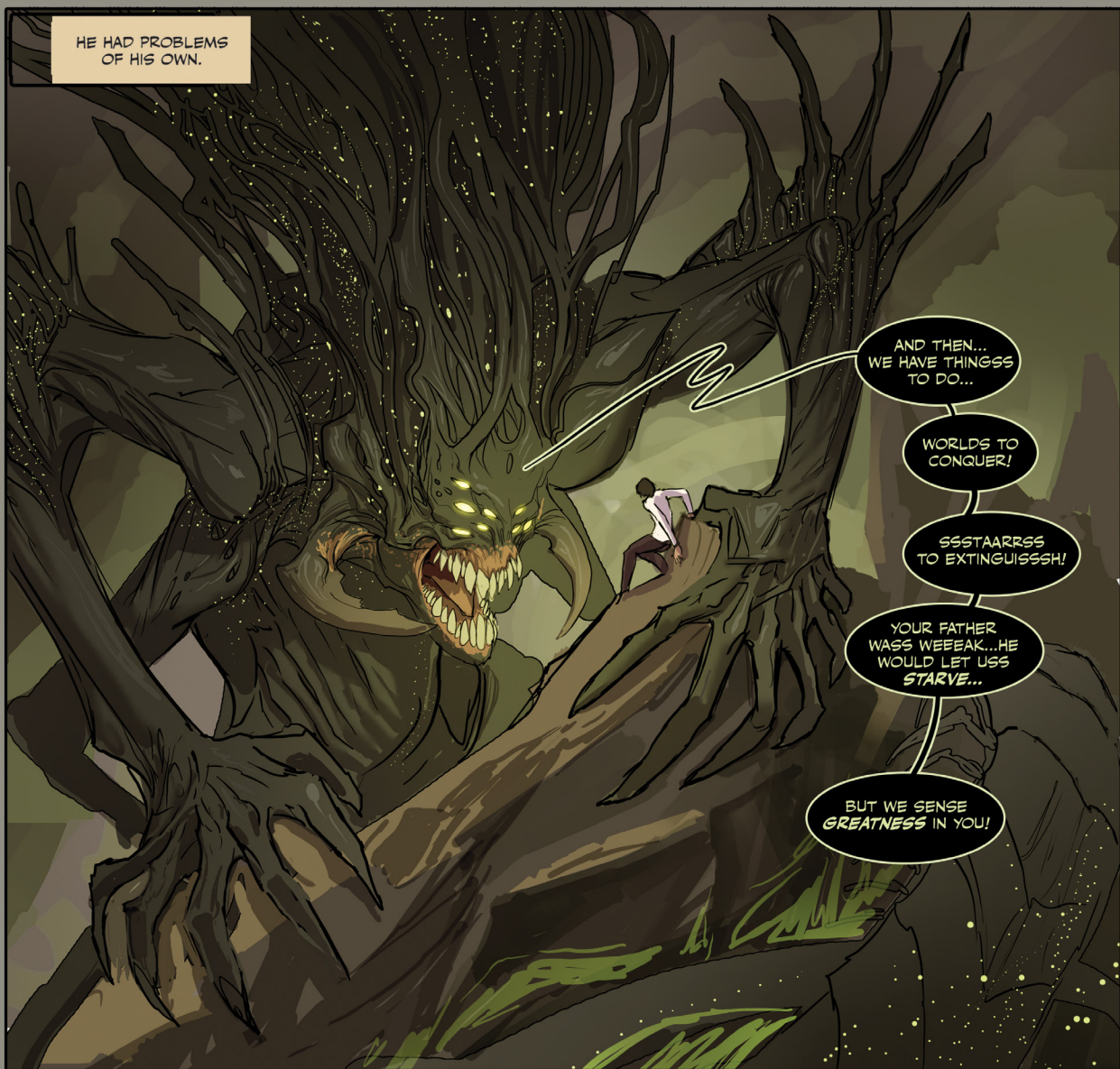
RUDY WAS ALSO A *BLACK BELT*.















WE WOULD KNOW,  
TONY! AFTER ALL WE ARE  
THE GREATNESS IN YOU!

AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA



AAAAHHHHH!!!!

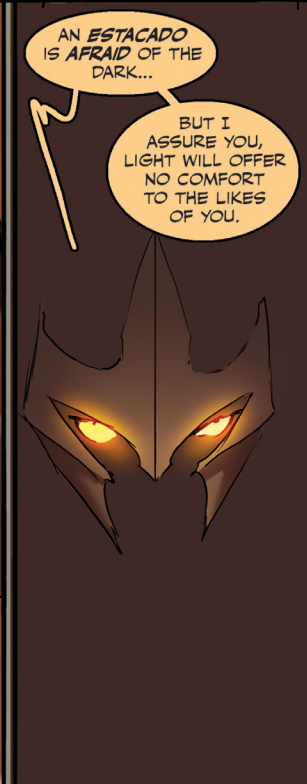


OH, FOR  
CRYING OUT LOUD...  
THIS CRAP AGAIN?



A NIGHT LIGHT?  
OH, THIS IS JUST TOO  
PRECIOUS.

HUH?

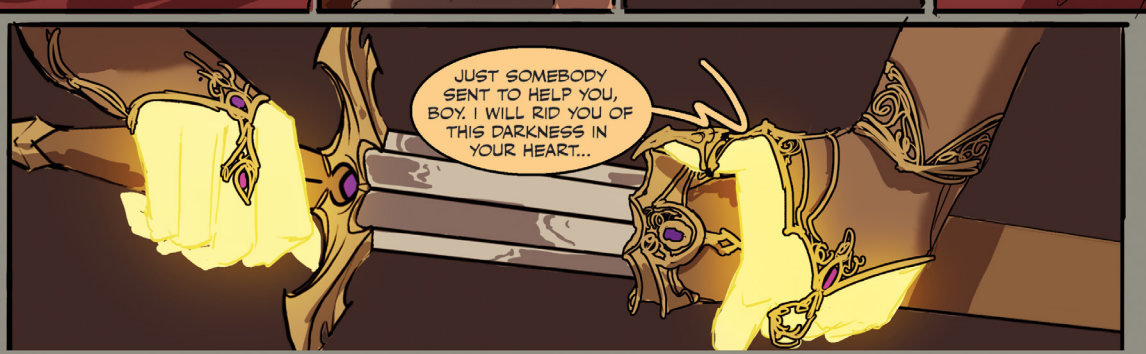


AN *ESTACADO*  
IS AFRAID OF THE  
DARK...

BUT I  
ASSURE YOU,  
LIGHT WILL OFFER  
NO COMFORT  
TO THE LIKES  
OF YOU.



W-WHO  
ARE YOU?



JUST SOMEBODY  
SENT TO HELP YOU,  
BOY. I WILL RID YOU OF  
THIS DARKNESS IN  
YOUR HEART...

To find out what happens next, pick up *Switch #1*—in stores now!



# SWITCH™

I CAN TEACH  
YOU TO FIGHT  
**SMART!**

WITH ME,  
IT'S **ONE SHOT!**  
THAT'S ALL!  
YOU WIN!

I COULD  
TRAIN YOU TO  
FIGHT THE **GODS**  
THEMSELVES!

IT'S CALLED  
THE **WITCHBLADE**  
FOR A REASON,  
TOGETHER WE  
CAN **SHOW**  
THEM WHY!

LISTEN,  
I'VE FOUGHT USING  
A **SPEAR** MY WHOLE  
LIFE. TRUST ME,  
IT GETS THINGS  
DONE!

OH YEAH...  
THIS IS ALL  
JUST SUPER  
HELPFUL.

**STJEPAN SEJIC**

**IN STORES  
NOW**

**IMAGECOMICS.COM**



we create...icons!  
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