

KIERON GILLEN DAN MORA
TAMRA BONVILLAIN

ONCE & FUTURE™

VOLUME TWO
OLD ENGLISH



DAN MORA



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BOOM!
STUDIOS

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The background is a solid orange color with a white line-art sketch of a skull and wings. The skull is positioned in the lower-left quadrant, and the wings are spread out across the upper and middle sections. The sketch is done in a rough, expressive style with many fine lines.

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KIERON GILLEN

ILLUSTRATED BY
DAN MORA

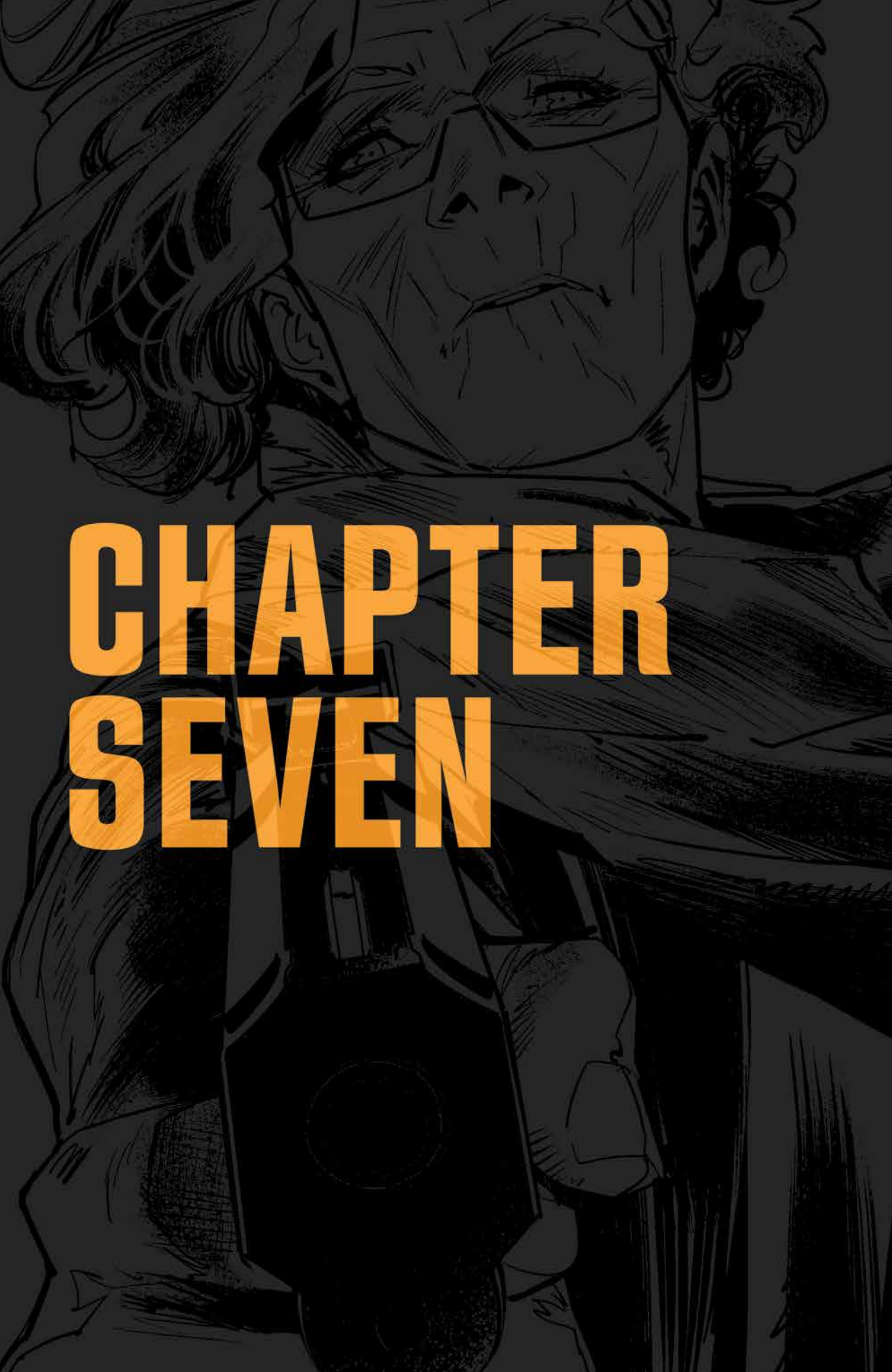
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ONCE & FUTURE™

CREATED BY **KIERON GILLEN** AND **DAN MORA**



CHAPTER SEVEN

CAMELOT, OTHERWORLD



THE WARPING TIME IS OVER. WE HAVE REPELLED THE CHANGE. MY FORM IS TRUE.

BUT I HAVE RECEIVED A DARK MESSAGE...



MY OLD RIVAL WILL SOON STALK THE LAND. THE HOUND OF THE SAXONS MUST BE BURIED DEEPER BEFORE HE CAN RISE.

I HAVE A QUEST FOR A KNIGHTLY MAN.

CHOOSE ME, MY KING! CHOOSE GALAHAD!



I STOOD BESIDE YOU WHILE THE WORLD WENT MAD! I AM THE BLADE THAT HAS BEEN HONED MY WHOLE LIFE TO BE WIELDED BY YOU! I EVEN FOUND THE BELT THE HAG THREW FROM YONDER WINDOW!

LET ME PROVE MYSELF!

HMM. MY EMISSARY TO THE HAUNTED WORLD, YOU MUST BE MY GREATEST KNIGHT...

...WOULD YOU RISK THE SIEGE PERILOUS?



OH. THE SIEGE PERILOUS. YES!

ONLY THE GREATEST KNIGHT CAN SIT UPON IT AND LIVE...





...AND GALAHAD IS THE GREATEST KNIGHT.



THERE, MY MERIT SHINES CLEAR AND BRIGHT. I HAD NO FEAR THAT--



AGGHGHHHH!



NO, NO,
PLEASE,
NO.



NOW YOU
ARE MY
GREATEST
KNIGHT.



IF YOU
LIVE.

CORNWALL



I
KILLED
THE
PIXIE.

AVON



GOOD WORK,
DUNCAN. TRICKY
LITTLE BASTARDS,
PIXIES.

ANY
PROBLEMS?



I WILL NEVER
LOOK AT A
TOADSTOOL IN
THE SAME WAY
AGAIN.



BRISTOL



DUNCAN?
IT'S NEARLY
DAWN. ARE
YOU FINISHED
WITH THE
PIXIE?



YEAH.
GRAN'S
ADVICE PAID
OFF.

OH.
YOU TWO
ARE TALKING
NOW? HAVE
YOU MADE
UP?



NO,
JUST TALKING.
SHE KNOWS
EVERYTHING. I'D
RATHER NOT BE
DEAD.

I WISH I COULD
TRUST A WORD SHE
SAYS, BUT YOU CAN'T
HAVE EVERYTHING,
RIGHT?

PLEASE TELL
ME I CAN GET
SOME SLEEP
NOW.

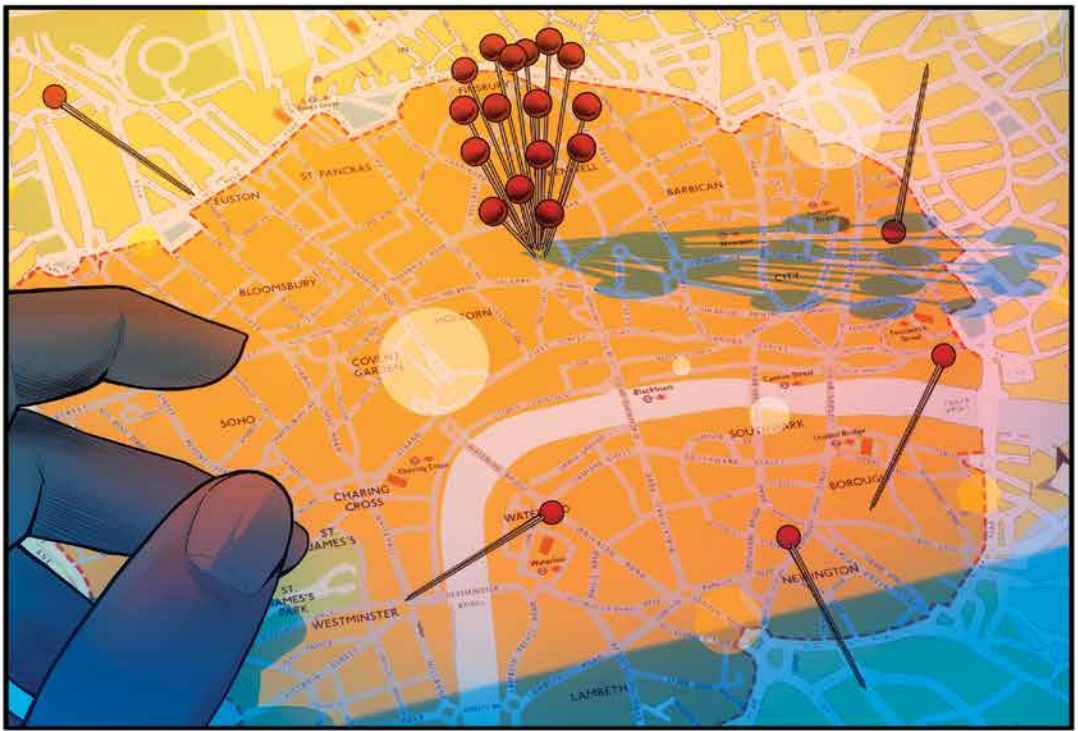


WELL...I
GUESS YOU
CAN SLEEP
ON THE
TRAIN.

YOU
NEED TO
GET UP TO
LONDON.



I WOKE UP
EARLY TO DO THE USUAL
'SIR CHARLES' DIVINATION
SPECIAL' TO SEE IF
SOMETHING WAS GOING TO
CROSS OVER TONIGHT...



AN INCURSION FROM OTHERWORLD. BIGGER THAN ANYTHING I'VE SEEN SINCE DOING THIS.

GIVEN THE LOCATION, I SUSPECT IT'LL BE A THEFT. I'LL GET YOU ACCESS AND PRIVACY.

GOOD LUCK.

KLKK

WHO NOW?

SO, ROSE. I COULD MAKE SMALL CHAT, BUT WE'RE BOTH WOMEN OF THE WORLD AND I WOULDN'T WANT TO INSULT YOU.

WHAT DANGER HAVE YOU JUST THROWN MY UNPREPARED IDIOT GRANDSON INTO?

THE BRITISH MUSEUM, LONDON THAT EVENING

RIGHT...

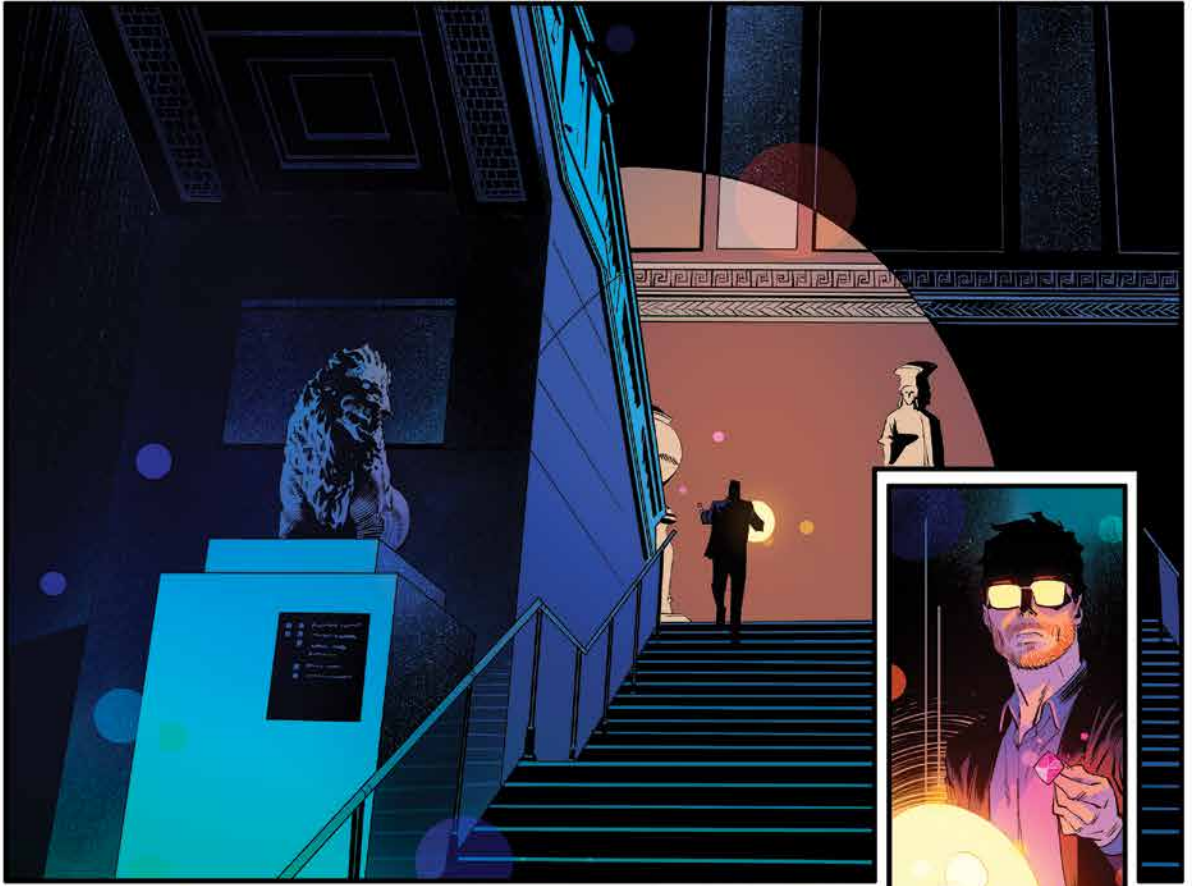
A FEW WEEKS AGO, I'D HAVE SAID I'D KILL TO BE ABLE TO WALK AROUND THIS PLACE BY MYSELF.

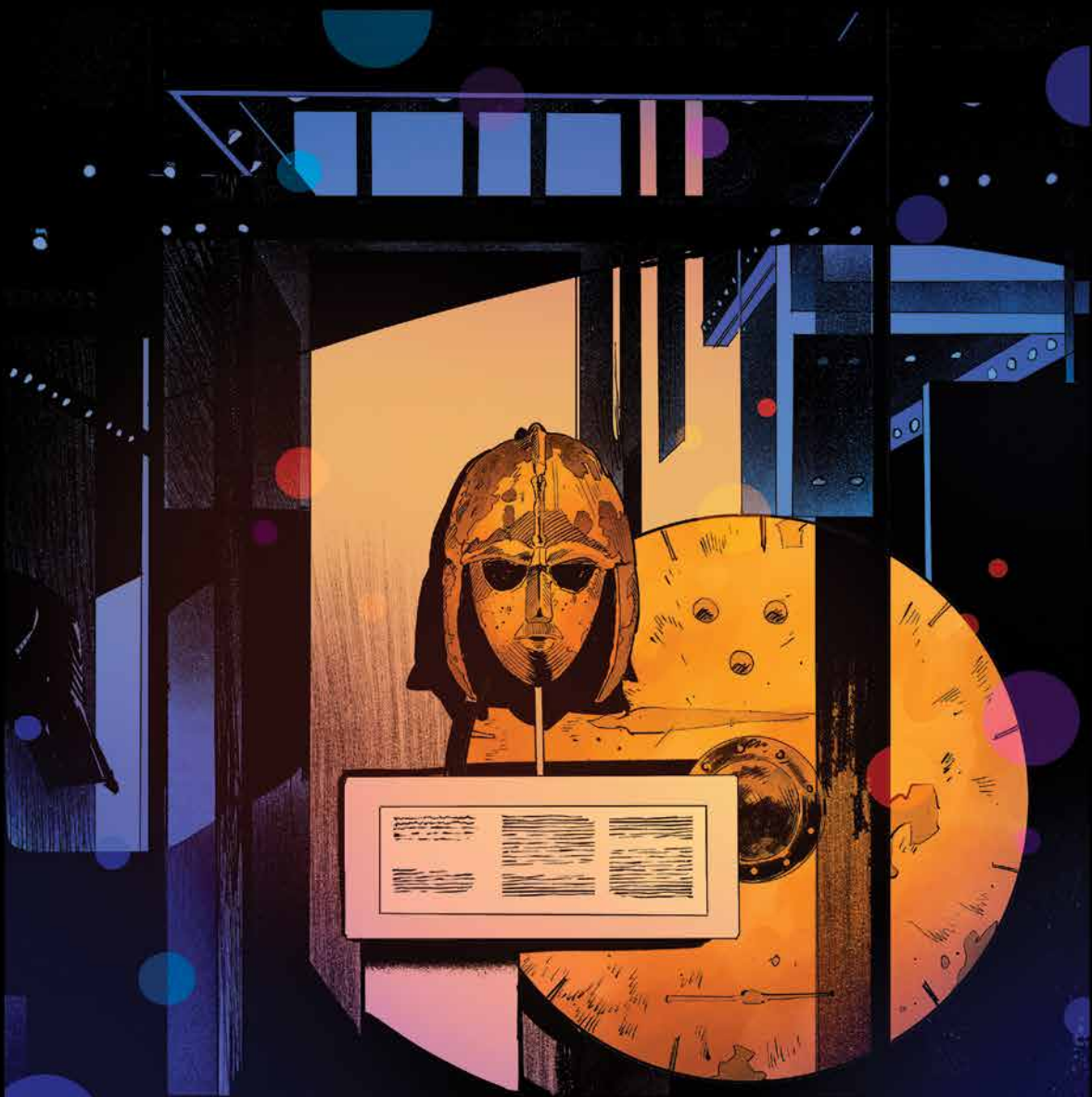
KNOWING I'LL LIKELY HAVE TO KILL WHEN I'M HERE REALLY DOES TAKE THE SHINE OFF IT ALL.

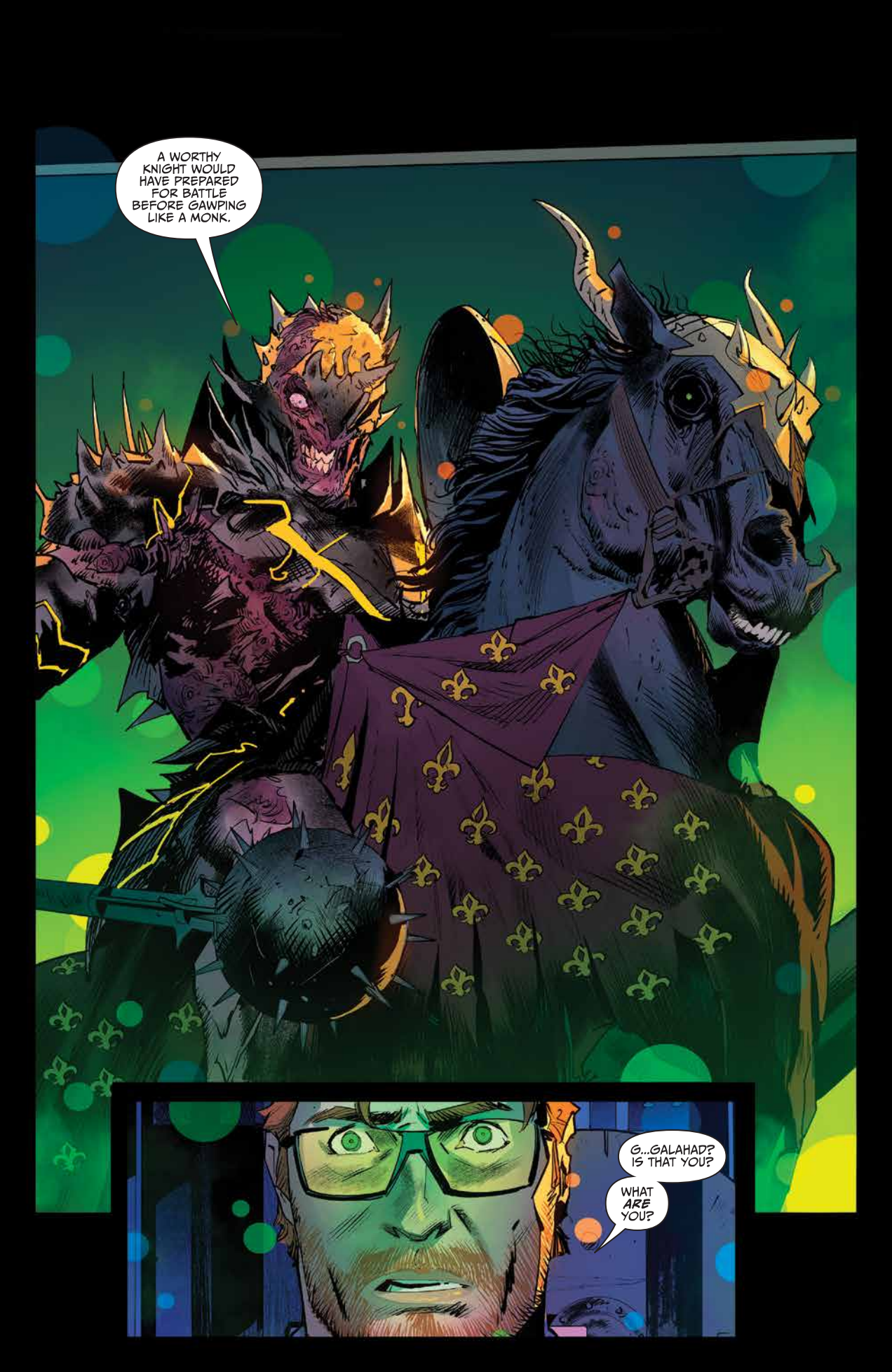
OH, WELL.

ER...
ARE YOU WORKING?

HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO FIND THE PROBLEM IF--







A WORTHY
KNIGHT WOULD
HAVE PREPARED
FOR BATTLE
BEFORE GAWPING
LIKE A MONK.



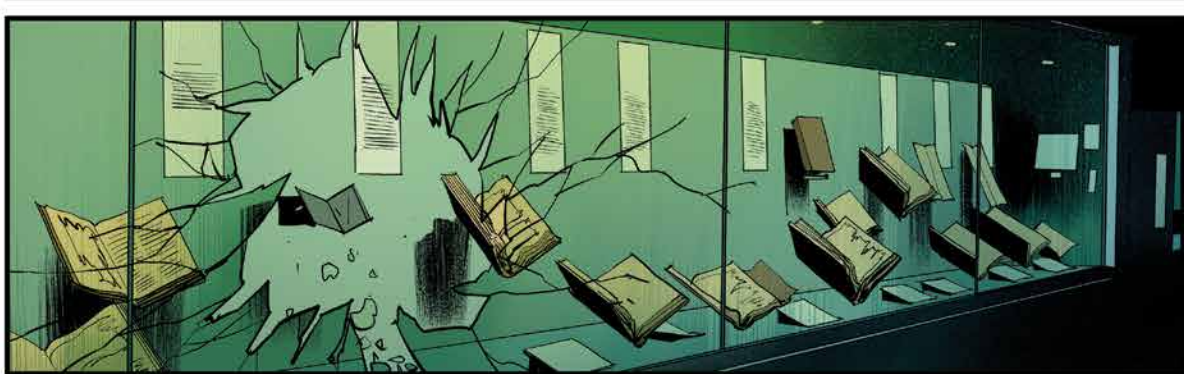
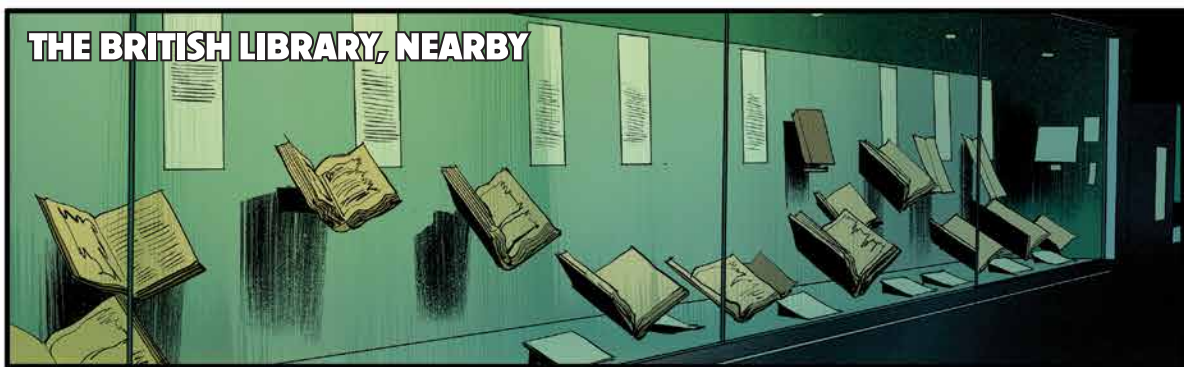
G...GALAHAD?
IS THAT YOU?

WHAT
ARE
YOU?

PERFECT!



THE BRITISH LIBRARY, NEARBY



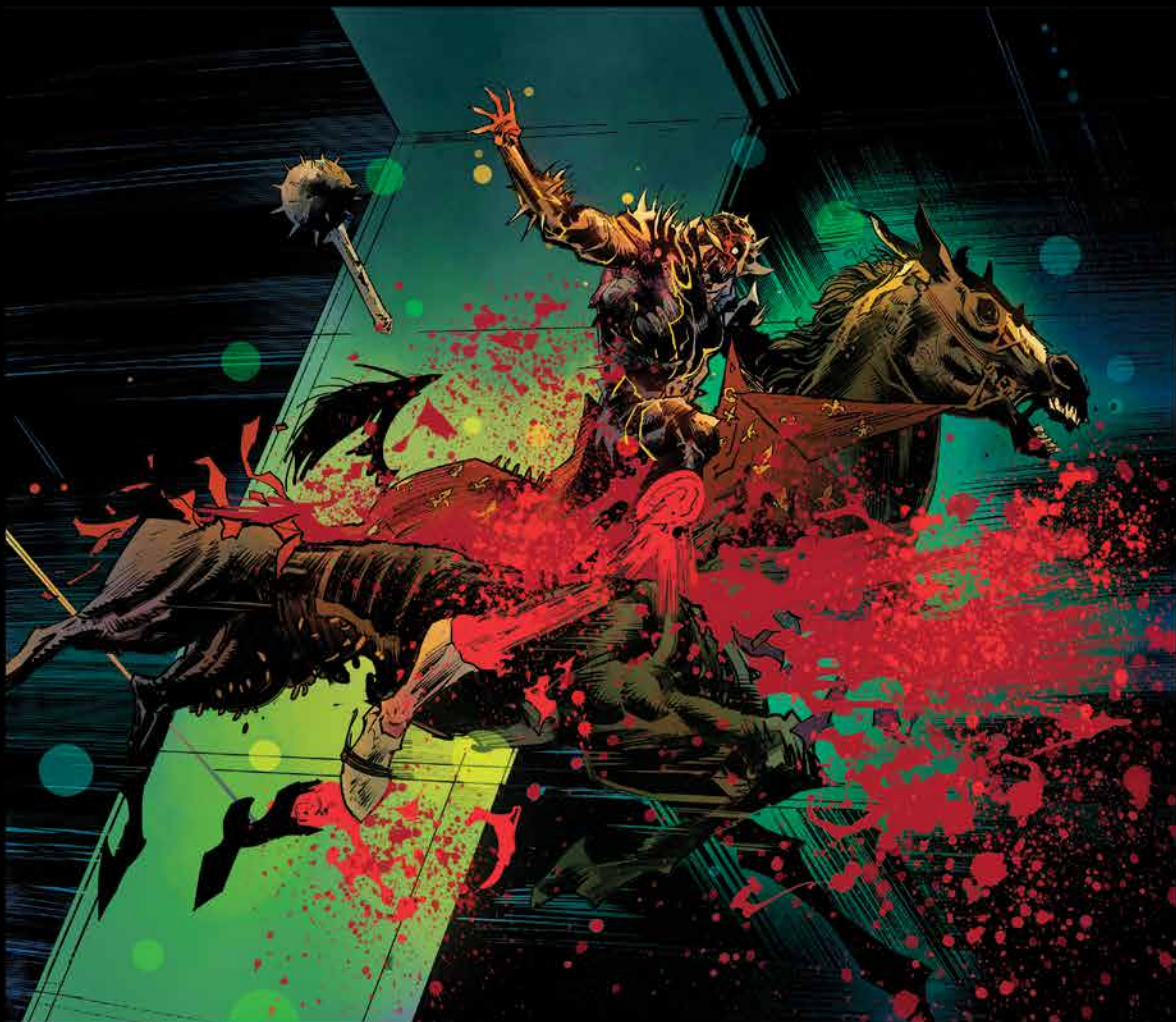


DON'T LET YOURSELF GET DISTRACTED, YOU NINNY.



SEE, I DID WARN YOU NOT TO GET DISTRACTED.







MONSTER!

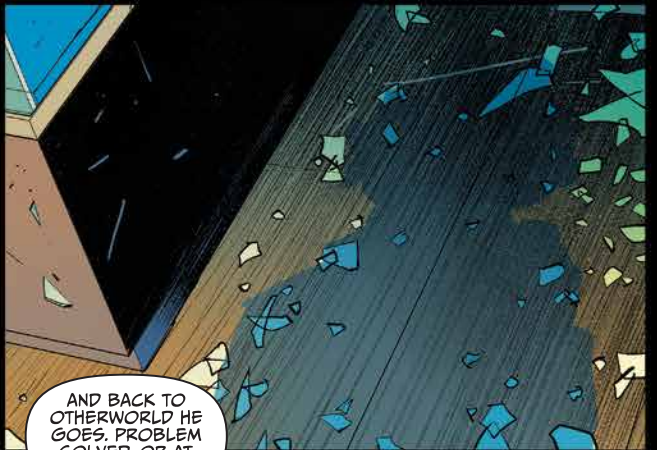


YEAH, WE DIDN'T REALLY GET TO DO INTRODUCTIONS, DID WE?

YOU CAN CALL ME GRANDMA.



TODDLES.



AND BACK TO OTHERWORLD HE GOES. PROBLEM SOLVED. OR AT LEAST DELAYED.



I'M SURE ARTHUR WILL DO SOMETHING TO HIM TO GET HIM BACK ON HIS FEET. THE STORY'S ALREADY DROWNED GALAHAD...

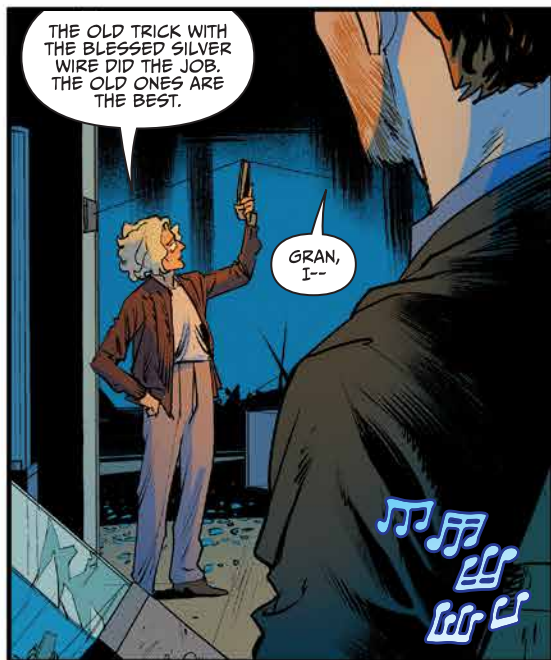
THAT WAS HORRIBLE. THAT...

GRAN! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?



SAVING YOU. SORRY I CUT IT A BIT FINE.

MEGABUS TOOK A WHILE TO GET UP HERE.



THE OLD TRICK WITH THE BLESSED SILVER WIRE DID THE JOB. THE OLD ONES ARE THE BEST.

GRAN, I--



HEY ROSE. IT WAS MESSY, BUT I THINK WE'RE GOOD. THEY WERE TRYING TO STEAL AN ANGLO-SAXON HELMET AND--



I'M NOT SURE WE ARE. THERE'S A COMPLICATION.

WHEN YOU'VE BEEN THERE, THE BRITISH LIBRARY HAD A MYSTERIOUS BREAK-IN. THEY STOLE A MANUSCRIPT. I JUST SCRIED NOW, AND I'M GETTING A TRACE...



HMM. CLEVER. THIS WAS SUCH A SHOWY INTRUSION, IT COVERED UP THE SMALLER ONE. NO PINS GOING TO GO TO SOMETHING QUIET WHEN YOU'VE GOT SOMETHING NOISY LIKE YOUR STEPBROTHER MAKING AN AWFUL FUSS WITH HIS SILLY MACE.

CLEVER. MOSTLY ANNOYING, BUT CLEVER.

SO...WHAT EXACTLY DID THEY TAKE?

SUTTON HOO, LATER



HWÆT,
WE GARDENA IN
GEARDAGUM.

FEODCYNINGA,
PRYM GEFRUNON,

HU ÆA
ÆPELINGAS
ELLEN
FREMEDON.

OFT SCYLD
SCEFING
SCEAFENA
PREATUM,



MONEGUM
MÆGUM,
MEODOSETLA
OFTEAH,

EGSODE
EORLAS.
SYDDAN AÆREST
WEARD



FEASCRAFT
FUNDEN, HE
PÆS FROFRE
GEBAD,

WEOX UNDER
WOLCNUM,
WEORÆMYNDUM
PAH,



I
RETURN!



ALL
THE FOES OF
BEOWULF WILL BE
BLADE-KISSED
BEFORE DAWN.





CHAPTER EIGHT

SUTTON HOO



SEE--THIS IS WHERE YOU SAY, "YES, GRAN, YOU WERE RIGHT."



YES, THIS IS CLEARLY SOMETHING, BUT I DON'T GET WHY WE AREN'T PURSUING THE BEOWULF MANUSCRIPT. WE DIDN'T EVEN GO AND LOOK AT THE BREAK IN!

YES, ROSE GOT A NEW READING HERE, BUT THE MANUSCRIPT WAS WHAT WAS ACTUALLY STOLEN.

OH, JUST LET ME REVEL IN THE "I TOLD YOU SO" A LITTLE LONGER.

WE HAVE A LOAD OF STINKY CANDLES ON A SUTTON HOO MOUND, WHERE THE HELMET GALAHAD NEARLY NICKED WAS FOUND...

STRANGE THOUGH.



WE'RE STANDING ON A MOUND IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT IN WHAT LOOKS LIKE SOME KIND OF SATANIC MASS AND IT'S "STRANGE."

NAH. NOT A SATANIC MASS.

BETTER CANDLES.



LOOK, SMELL THIS! LOVELY.

IS THAT SANDALWOOD?



GRAN...THIS IS NOT THE TIME TO DISCUSS A WELLNESS REGIMEN!

IF WE CATCH UP TO WHOEVER DID THIS, WE'LL HAVE TO ASK WHERE THEY GOT THEM.



GOOD CHRISTMAS PRESENTS, CANDLES.

ALL THE GIRLS AT THE HOME LIKE CANDLES.

GRAN! WHY IS THIS STRANGE THING IN OUR LIFE OF STRANGE THINGS SPECIFICALLY STRANGE?



I DON'T KNOW WHAT WE HAVE TO DO NEXT.



YOU DON'T KNOW ANYTHING?

OH, NOT *NOTHING* NOTHING. NOT A TRACE OF THIS TURNED UP IN ROSE'S EARLIER DIVINATION.

TELLS US TWO THINGS...

ONE, THAT THE RITUAL CAME FROM *THIS* SIDE. WHOEVER DID THIS DROVE HERE AFTER GETTING OUT OF THE BRITISH LIBRARY. THAT MEANS THEY'RE HUMAN, NOT A STORY...



THEY LIKELY CAN'T BE FAR AWAY.

SO WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

THAT HELMET. SUTTON HOO. A MANUSCRIPT. SHOULD BE ENOUGH CLUES FOR US TO WORK OUT WHICH BEASTIE IS IN DESPERATE NEED OF A SHOT IN THE FACE, RIGHT?

CAN'T WORK OUT WHO IT'D BE...



ER... THEY STOLE THE BEOWULF MANUSCRIPT.

WHAT ABOUT BEOWULF?

DON'T BE DAFT, DUNCAN.

BEOWULF'S JUST A POEM.

CAMELOT, OTHERWORLD



AGGRHHHHH!

EVEN
YOUR HOWLS
ARE MIGHTY.
ARTHUR IS
IMPRESSED.

GREATEST
KNIGHT...
GREATEST
LUNGS.





THE PAIN!
I DON'T WANT
TO DIE!

YOU
SURVIVED
THE SIEGE
PERILOUS.

YOU WON'T
DIE.



WHO
COMES TO
CAMELOT?

ANSWER!




I
WON'T
LET
YOU.



WHO IS
KING?



**BEOWULF
COMES TO
YOUR HALL.**



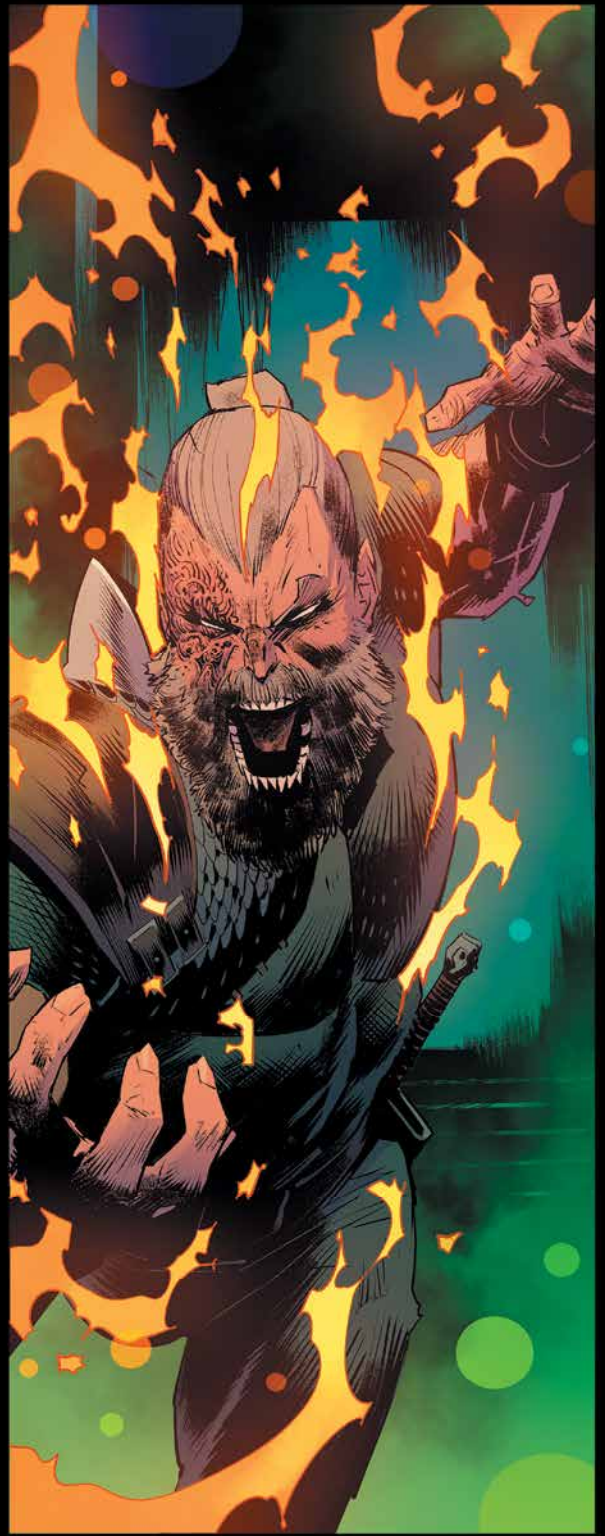
**I AM
ARTHUR...**

**I AM THE
ONE WHO
WHIPS THE
SAXON
DOGS.**



**NO SAXON
AM I, AND MY
BACK IS NOT
FOR SCOURGE-
BEARING.**

**COME IF YOU
THINK YOU CAN
CONVINCE ME
OTHERWISE.**







BRAVE
BEOWULF,
HONEY
HERO.

BEAST-
WOUNDER!
LISTEN!



TRAGEDY
STALKS THE
HALL OF
CAMELOT!



SEE HOW
OUR HEROES
HAVE BEEN
BROUGHT
LOW.



WHO ARE YOU? HOW DO YOU COME HERE?

I AM YOUR SALVATION, LORD.

I AM SKILLED IN THE GUIDING OF THOSE WHOSE WITS HAVE DESERTED THEM...



WHAT... MONSTER DID THIS?



A MONSTER AND A MOTHER HUNT THIS HALL. OUR HEROES ARE FALLEN.

ALL ARE LOST. WILL BEOWULF SAVE US?



BEOWULF IS HERO-BORN, FOE-HAMMER.

THE MONSTER AND ITS FOUL MOTHER WILL FEEL MY FISTS.

I WILL BRING THEIR LIMBS TO MOUNT ABOVE THE FIRE!



MY LORD... PLEASE...

WE... THANK YOU, BEOWULF.



I FOUGHT HIM, I THINK. IN ANOTHER TIME. HE IS NOT A SAXON, THOUGH HE FIGHTS WITH THEM? I...

ALL IS CONFUSION.

IT WILL BECOME CLEAR.



WHO ARE YOU?

I AM THE ONE WHO WARNED YOU OF HIS RETURN.

THE ONE WHOSE ADVICE YOU FOLLOWED WHEN YOU SENT FORTH YOUR PERFECT KNIGHT TO TRY AND PREVENT HIS COMING...

HE FAILED, YES, BUT WE MAKE THE BEST OF THE SITUATION. WE CAN USE THIS, MY LORD...

I AM MERLIN.



HMMM.
MERLIN...



I KNOW YOU NOT.



I KNOW, LORD.
I KNOW.



I THINK WE'VE GOT ALL WE CAN. LET'S MOVE.

IF THEY'RE AROUND HERE, SHOULDN'T WE...



GO WANDERING AROUND IN THE DARK?

NOW, MAYBE IF I WAS YOUR AGE, BUT I'M GOING TO END UP WITH A BROKEN ANKLE IF I DO THAT.

AND IF I WAS YOUR AGE, I'D HAVE FOUND SOD ALL ANYWAY AND COME HOME WITH A COLD. LAST THING YOU WANT WHEN FIGHTING THE ETERNAL FORCES OF THE NIGHT IS SNIFFLES, DUNCAN.



PLUS...THEY'RE A HUMAN, NOT A STORY. HUMANS ARE TRICKIER THAN MONSTERS.

YOU JUST GET A BULLET.

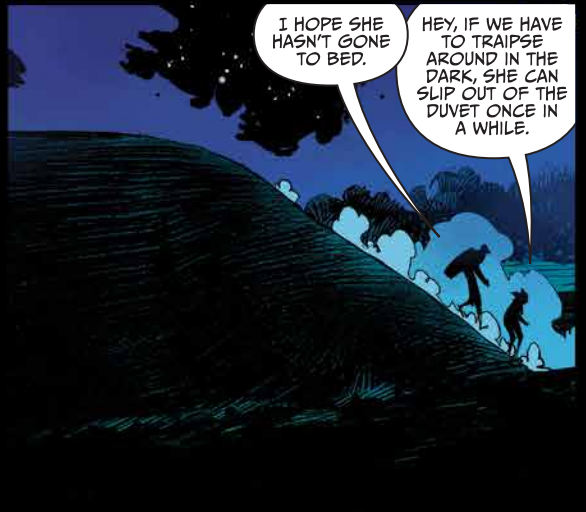
YOU DON'T GET ALL THE COLORS GOING STRANGE IF A HUMAN CREEPS UP ON YOU WITH A GUN.



I GUESS YOU'RE THE EXPERT IN BULLETS.

OOH, THE CHEEK. MIND YOUR LIP, DUNCAN. YOU'RE GETTING THAT REAL UNLIKABLE BROODY HERO SARCASM, AND THAT GETS OLD QUICK.

LET'S GET OUT OF HERE. ROSE WILL NEED AN UPDATE.



I HOPE SHE HASN'T GONE TO BED.

HEY, IF WE HAVE TO TRAIPESE AROUND IN THE DARK, SHE CAN SLIP OUT OF THE DUVET ONCE IN A WHILE.







COO-EE,
DEAR. IT'S
ME.

THE
BOY AND
I ARE JUST
LEAVING...



MU-HMM.
HMM.

HAVE
YOU TWO
MADE UP?



I'M VERY
ANNOYED YOU
TOLD HER WHERE
I WAS GOING,
ROSE. I'M SO
ANGRY--

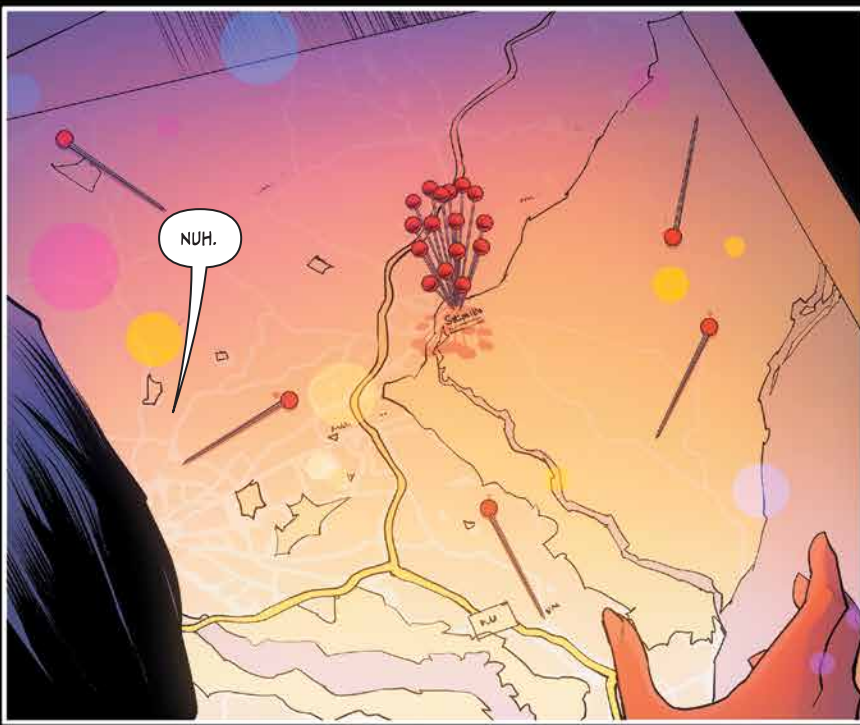
THAT HE
COULD EVEN
RAISE HIS
VOICE!

WE'LL BE
COMING BACK
TO NOSE AT THE
FILES TOMORROW.
WHATEVER CAME
THROUGH IS GONE
NOW. BEST HAVE A
QUICK CHECK WITH
THE OL' PINS
THOUGH...



GUH.
WILL DO.











GRAN!

KEEP DRIVING. I'LL...



HAH!



I SEE YOU.



**BEOWULF
HAS YOU
NOW!**



SEE--*THIS* IS
WHERE YOU SAY,
"YES, DUNCAN,
YOU WERE
RIGHT."





CHAPTER NINE



ARGGGHHH!!!



YOUR KEENING
HOWL WILL SOON
BE BUT ECHOES,
HAG-SPAWN.



GRAN,
HEAD DOWN,
NOW!







BUGGER.



ARE YOU OKAY? I'M SORRY, I--

DID SOME QUICK THINKING.

HE WAS GOING TO PICK OUR HEADS CLEAN OFF.



I DON'T SUPPOSE WE CAN HOPE THAT HE'S DEAD?



OF COURSE NOT.



DISTRACT HIM, I'LL SET UP A TRAP.

DISTRACT HIM? WITH WHAT?



SHOW HIM THE SHARP END, DUNCAN.

OH.



COME TO ME! COME TO THE HERO!

MY FISTS ARE LIKE HAMMERS, MY HEART LIKE AN ANVIL.



GOOD LUCK, DUNCAN. BE CAREFUL.

I HEAR HIS FISTS ARE LIKE HAMMERS.



OH, GREAT.



ARGG
GHHH!



THERE'S
GOT TO BE
SOMETHING
HERE...



PERFECT.

FRONT
TOWARD ENEMY



ARGGGHHHHH!



HAH.



YOU LITTLE SWAMP-CRAWLER WILL THREATEN FOLK NO MORE.

I REALLY DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT YO--



ARGGH!

TWO STRONG ARMS.



I'LL TAKE ONE.







BACK
M 18 AL APERS M





WHAT WAS IN THAT THING?

THE USUAL PENNY-MIX OF MYSTIC SELECTION.

PLUS BLESSED BY A FEW PRIESTS.



YOU TALKED VICARS INTO BLESSING A LANDMINE?

YOU CAN BE AWFULLY PROVINCIAL IN YOUR THINKING AT TIMES, DUNCAN.

I DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING ABOUT "CHRISTIAN."



SO...WHAT NOW?

WELL...



...YOU DO HAVE THAT INSURED, YEAH?

**NEAR MIDSOMER NORTON,
SOMERSET**



BRIDGETTE!
BACK FROM
ANOTHER ONE
OF YOUR
ADVENTURES?

EVERYONE
WAS RUNNING
AROUND
TRYING TO
FIND YOU
AGAIN.



I'M FINE! AND
"ADVENTURES?"
DON'T BE SO
DRAMATIC, TONY.
JUST A LITTLE
DAY OUT.

AND I'M
ALWAYS
FINE!
EVERYONE
KNOWS
THAT.



I'M
ALWAYS FINE,
BUT I'VE HAD
PRACTICE.

WHAT
ABOUT
YOU?



I AM. I'VE GOT TO GO.
THEY'LL BE DROPPING OFF
THE REMAINS OF THE CAR AT
MINE AND I NEED TO PAY
THEM. PLUS, LAST BUS BACK
IN FIVE MINUTES AND...

I...AM JUST
UNCOMFORTABLE.
NOT EVEN BECAUSE
EXPLAINING WHY A
NATIONAL TREASURE
IS STILL MISSING,
BUT...

I'VE A
LOT TO
THINK
ABOUT.

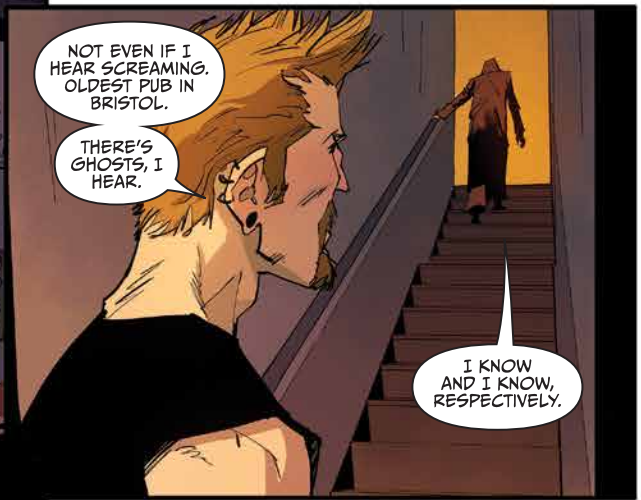
WHAT ARE
YOU GOING
TO DO?




TO
START
WITH?

SPEND AS
MANY HOURS AS
I CAN MANAGE
FACE DOWN ON
A PILLOW.

BRISTOL





IT IS, FIRST, TRICK ARTHUR TO SEND MEN TO THE MUSEUM AS A DISTRACTION SO YOU CAN STEAL THE MANUSCRIPT, THEN USE IT TO RAISE BEOWULF... THEN SEND *HIM* AGAINST OUR ENEMIES. IT IS ALL AS I PLANNED. ARTHUR TRUSTS ME NOW...

ARTHUR WAS ONCE MY KING.

HE WILL BE AGAIN.



BUT ONCE MORE... HE DOESN'T REMEMBER ME.



HE DID WHEN I TALKED TO HIM. HE SEEMED TO MISS YOU.

YES, BUT HE CHANGED IN THE SAME MOMENT WHEN I WAS RELEASED.

THIS IS A CAUSE FOR BOTH HOPE AND FEAR. THAT HE CAN CHANGE MEANS HE CAN BE FOUND.

HE *MUST* BE MY KING AGAIN. I HAVE TRIED SO LONG. HE WILL NOT BE LOST.



HAVE YOU BEEN DRINKING?

I HAVE SPENT MORE TIME WITH A CUP IN MY HAND THAN YOU HAVE BEEN ALIVE, GIRL.



DID YOU PASS MY MESSAGE TO GALAHAD?

I WOULD HAVE, BUT HE WAS SOMEWHAT... DISTRACTED. YOU KNOW THE YOUNG.

WHEN I AM SORCERESS OF A NEW ENGLAND, I'LL TEACH HIM TO SHOW MORE MANNERS. I JUST HOPE HE'S HAPPY...

...BUT THAT IS THEN AND THIS IS NOW.

HOW DID THE PLAN WORK? ARTHUR TRUSTS YOU, BUT BRINGING BEOWULF BACK JUST FOR MU...BRIDGETTE TO KILL HIM? IS THAT WHAT YOU HOPED?

YES.

THE WOMAN IS WISE IN WHAT HAS HAPPENED...BUT THE TALE THAT IS BEOWULF HAS NOT WALKED THE LAND FOR A THOUSAND YEARS.

IF BEOWULF IS HERE, OTHERS ARE TOO. THE STORY IS IN MOTION...

...AND THEY HAVE KILLED THE HERO.



LOOK WHO'S DECIDED TO REJOIN US?



WE WERE WATCHING BAKE OFF.

WE CAN TURN OVER.

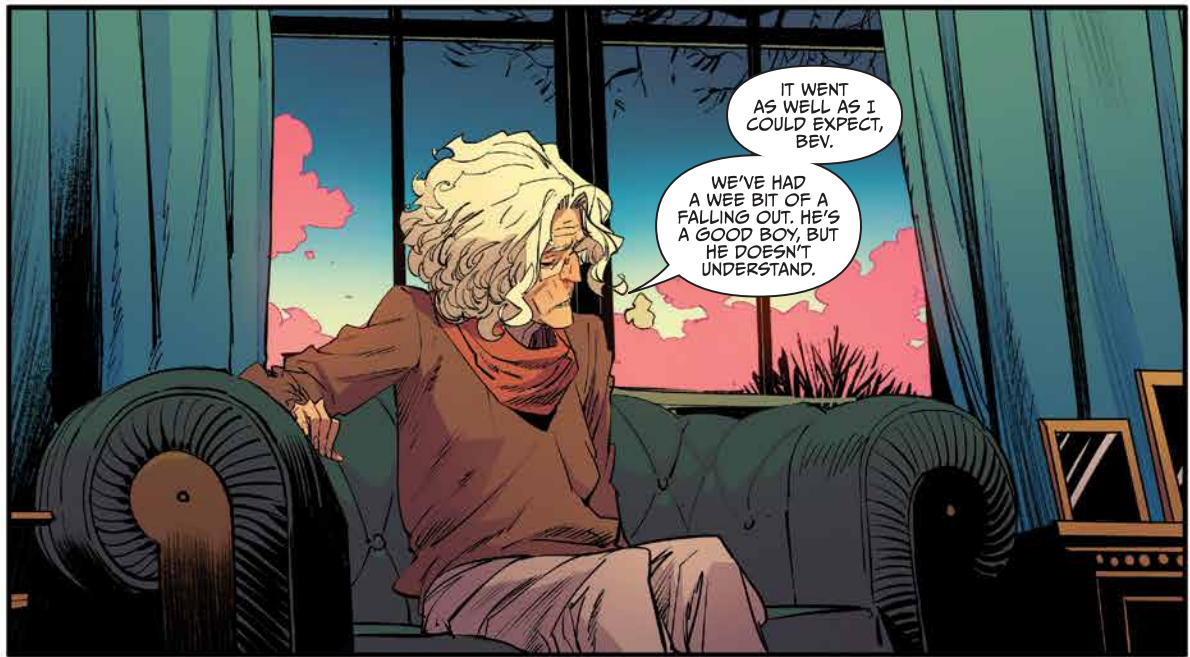
I'LL TURN OVER.



OH, IT'S FINE. I'M IN THE MOOD FOR A BIT OF NICENESS. NOTHING WRONG WITH NICENESS, ESPECIALLY COVERED IN DOLLOPS OF ICING.

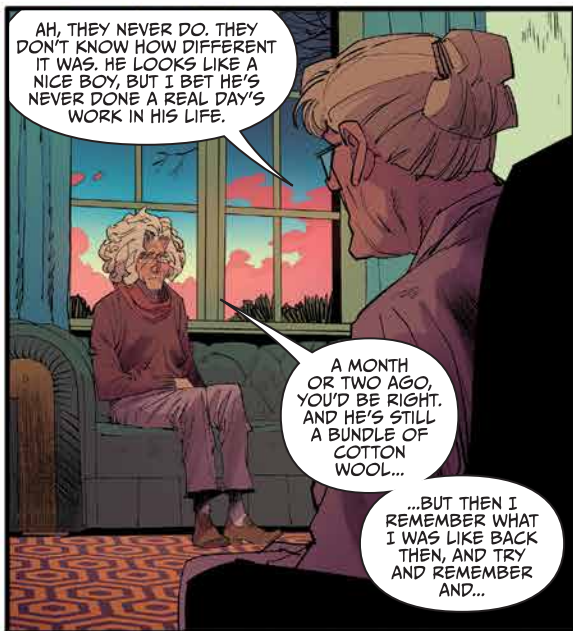
IF YOU SAY SO, BRIDGE. WE KNOW HOW YOU GET WHEN YOU'RE AGITATED.

THE TRIP WITH THE BOY WENT WELL?



IT WENT AS WELL AS I COULD EXPECT, BEV.

WE'VE HAD A WEE BIT OF A FALLING OUT. HE'S A GOOD BOY, BUT HE DOESN'T UNDERSTAND.



AH, THEY NEVER DO. THEY DON'T KNOW HOW DIFFERENT IT WAS. HE LOOKS LIKE A NICE BOY, BUT I BET HE'S NEVER DONE A REAL DAY'S WORK IN HIS LIFE.

A MONTH OR TWO AGO, YOU'D BE RIGHT. AND HE'S STILL A BUNDLE OF COTTON WOOL...

...BUT THEN I REMEMBER WHAT I WAS LIKE BACK THEN, AND TRY AND REMEMBER AND...



I THINK IF I'D FOUND OUT WHAT HE HAS, I'D NEVER SPEAK TO ME AGAIN.

AT BEST.



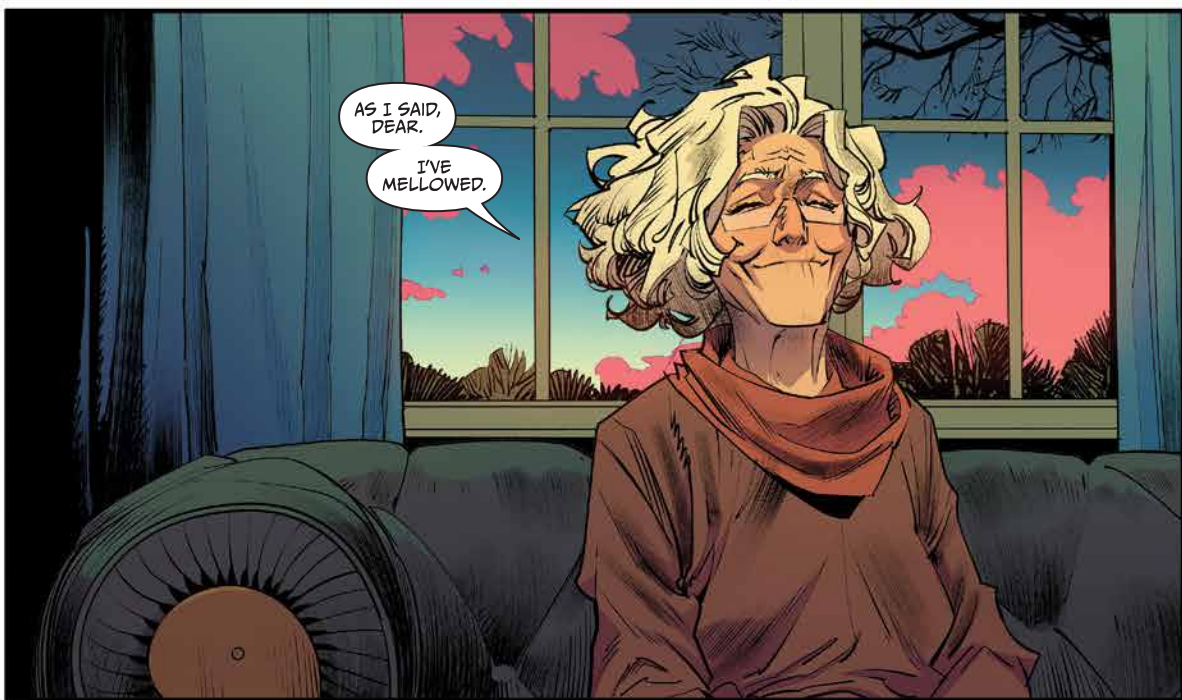
YOU WERE THAT BAD?

OH, I WAS FIREWORKS, TREVOR. THE WHOLE NOVEMBER 5TH.

I WAS EXPLOSIVE. I'VE MELLOWED NOW.



YOU THREATEN TO BREAK OUR FINGERS AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK.



AS I SAID, DEAR.

I'VE MELLOWED.

CLIFTON, BRISTOL



BETTER
GET TO
IT...



LET'S HOPE
DUNCAN CAN
HAVE A NIGHT
OFF.



BEDMINSTER, BRISTOL









GRENDDEL
HUNGERS.



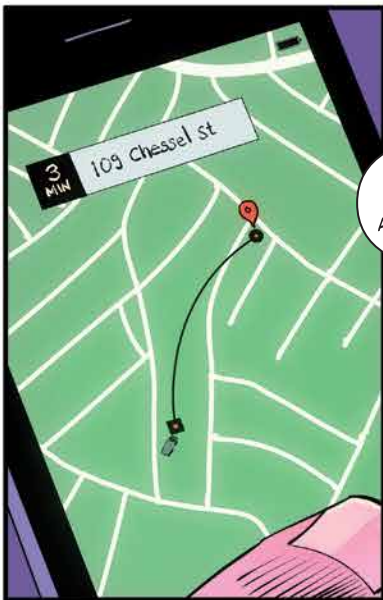


CHAPTER TEN



C'MON,
C'MON,
C'MON...

OKAY, I AM
NOW QUITE USED
TO THE IDEA OF
MIRACLES AND ALL
THE EXISTENTIAL
HORROR OF THE
IMPOSSIBILITIES
HEREIN...



...BUT HOW CAN
SOMETHING BE
THREE MINUTES
AWAY FOR THREE
MINUTES?



All Lost

Recent

✓ Gran (3)

OKAY...
GRAN. PICK
UP THIS
TIME.

PLEASE,
PLEASE,
PICK UP.

Rose

✓ Work





OH, THANK YOU.



STOP!



ARE YOU NUTS?

I'M JUST DESPERATE.

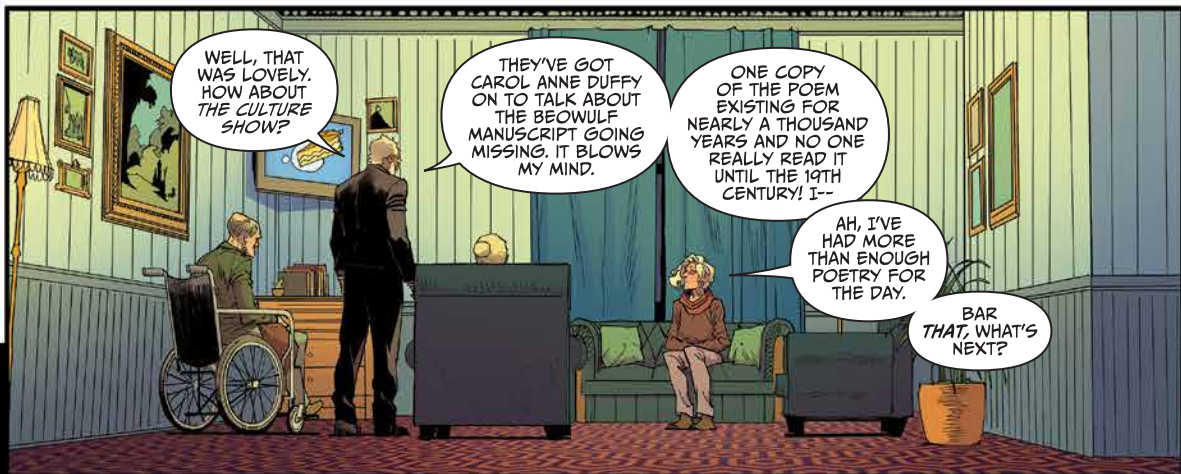


I NEED TO GET OUT PAST MIDSOMER NORTON, TO THE HOME NEAR MELL'S.

I'M SORRY, MATE. THAT'S WAY OUT OF THE WAY.

I'M NOT GOING THAT FAR OUT.





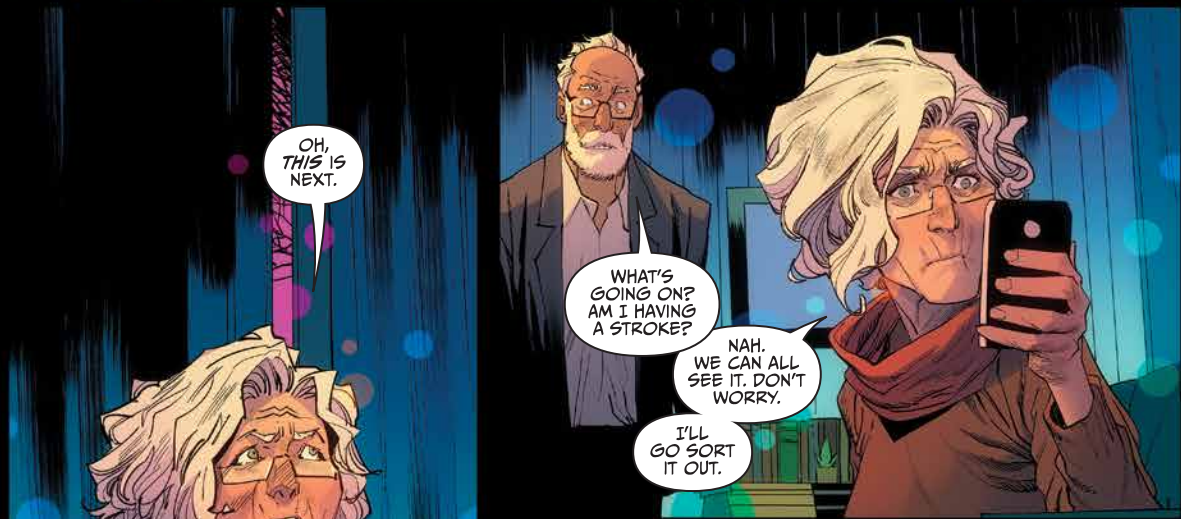
WELL, THAT WAS LOVELY. HOW ABOUT THE CULTURE SHOW?

THEY'VE GOT CAROL ANNE DUFFY ON TO TALK ABOUT THE BEOWULF MANUSCRIPT GOING MISSING. IT BLOWS MY MIND.

ONE COPY OF THE POEM EXISTING FOR NEARLY A THOUSAND YEARS AND NO ONE REALLY READ IT UNTIL THE 19TH CENTURY! I--

AH, I'VE HAD MORE THAN ENOUGH POETRY FOR THE DAY.

BAR THAT, WHAT'S NEXT?



OH, THIS IS NEXT.

WHAT'S GOING ON? AM I HAVING A STROKE?

NAH. WE CAN ALL SEE IT. DON'T WORRY.

I'LL GO SORT IT OUT.



MISSED MESSAGES FROM THE BOY. THAT'S KIND. NICE TO BE THOUGHT OF.

OH, EVERYONE--IF YOU HEAR ANY RUCKUS?




SEE IF YOU CAN DRAG SOMETHING HEAVY BEHIND THE DOOR, HMM?



GOING
SOMEWHERE,
BRIDGETTE? DON'T
LET THE LIGHT SPOOK
YOU. IT'S JUST A
WEIRD SUNSET.
POLLUTION,
I BET.

AND I THOUGHT
YOU'D HAVE GOT
YOUR WANDERING
OUT OF YOU WITH
THE EXCURSION
EARLIER?



DON'T
SUPPOSE YOU
KEEP A GUN
AROUND HERE
ANYWHERE,
JACK?



BRIDGETTE!

AH...JUST
MY LITTLE
JOKE.

CAN WE POP
ALONG TO THE
KITCHEN?



WHAT FOR,
EXACTLY?



A
SNACK.



OH, YOU SWEET, WORRYING THING. THE EXCURSION JUST LEFT ME PECKISH, I MISSED DINNER.



DID YOU THINK I'M LOOKING AROUND FOR A NICE BIG KNIFE OR SOMETHING?

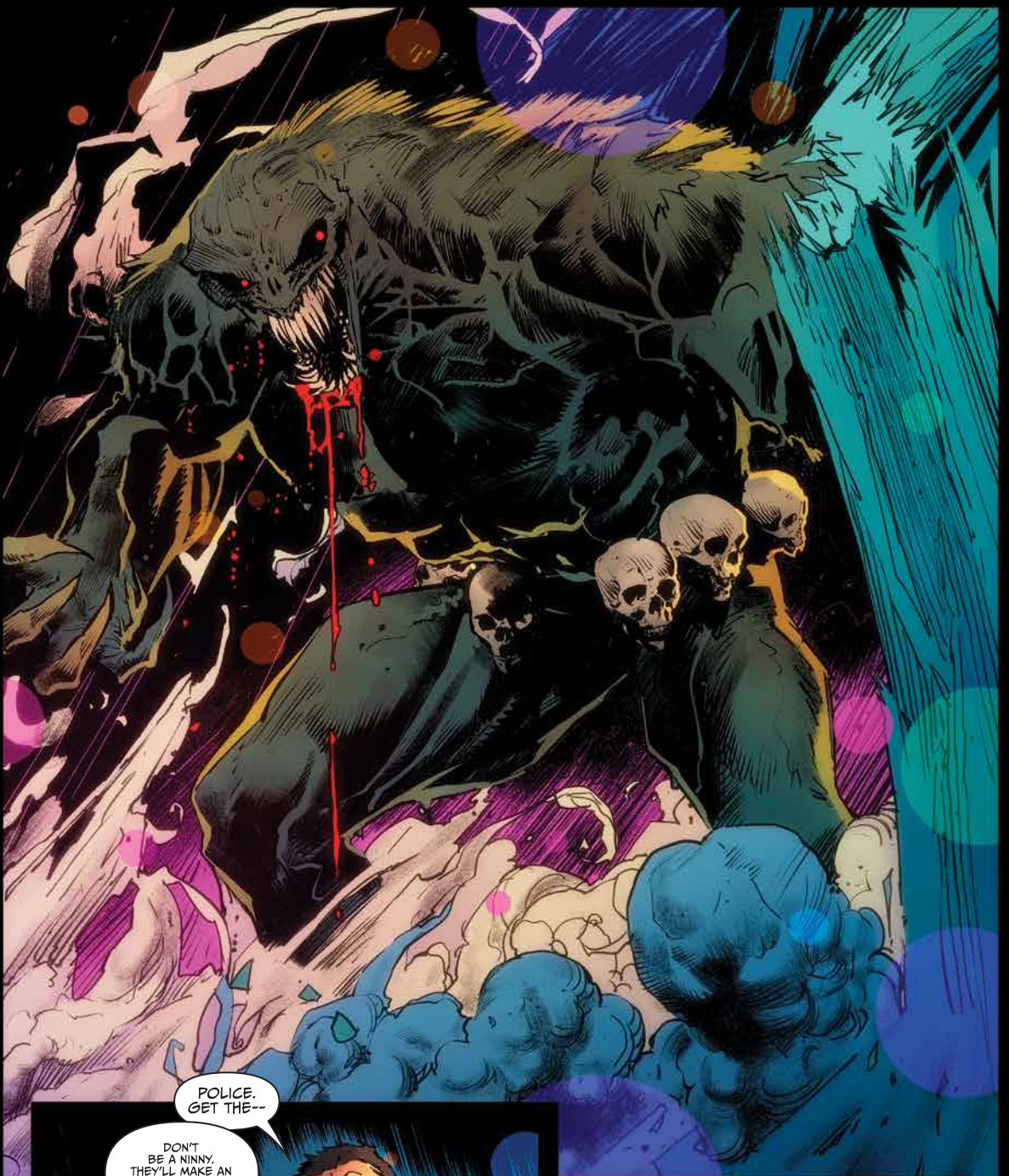
PERISH THE THOUGHT. LET'S GO...



I'LL FIX YOU A SANDWICH. JUST LET ME ANSWER THIS AND--

RING RING RING





POLICE.
GET THE--

DON'T
BE A NINNY.
THEY'LL MAKE AN
AWFUL MESS OF
EVERYTHING.

JUST
GET TO THE
KITCHEN.
NOW...

ARE YOU ABSOLUTELY
SURE ABOUT THAT "NOT
HAVING A GUN" THING,
HMM?





THEY'RE STILL NOT PICKING UP, ROSE!



MAYBE THEY'VE HAD AN EARLY NIGHT AND DON'T WANT VISITORS. HOW ABOUT NOT GOING ALL THE WAY OUT HERE?

PLEASE, RELAX.

I'M NOT GOING TO SHOOT YOU.



DUNCAN, YOU DO KNOW THAT KINDA UNDERMINES YOUR BARGAINING POSITION, RIGHT?



YOU HAVEN'T SEEN THE SIZE OF THE GUN.

I'M SCARED OF IT, AND IT'S NOT EVEN POINTING AT ME.

THIS IS... HELL. I'M STILL TEN MINUTES AWAY. ANYTHING COULD BE HAPPENING.



I'VE TOLD THE LOCAL COPS TO STAY BACK, CITING THE USUAL REGULATIONS, BUT THEY ARE NEARBY IN ALL THEIR BIG COP IN A SMALL TOWN GLORY.

I KNOW YOUR GRAN SAID TO ONLY USE THE POLICE AS A CORDON, BUT THEY COULD GO IN.



DO IT.



I THINK WE MADE IT.



HEH. COME OUT...



T--



SHUSH, DEAR.





POOR SWEET TONY WON'T BE TRIMMING THE HEDGES NO MORE, BUT NO NEED TO GO JOINING HIM IN EARLY RETIREMENT.

THE BIG FELLA IS JUST TRYING TO SCARE FOLKS OUT OF HIDING.

WHAT IS IT?
DON'T KNOW EXACTLY, BUT I'LL BET IT DOESN'T WANT TO STOP AT TONY.

ANOTHER MONSTER RUNNING ABOUT SO SOON ISN'T NORMAL. ESPECIALLY ONE COMING STRAIGHT TO ME.

HMM. SOMEONE'S PLAYING ME. DOESN'T SEEM LIKE ARTHUR'S STYLE, BUT...



FORGET IT. WHAT ARE YOU?

PROBABLY BEST YOU DON'T KNOW.

PRETEND THIS IS ALL A BAD DREAM.



SO...IF IT GETS UPSTAIRS TO THE REAL OLD ONES, THERE'S GOING TO BE A RIGHT MESS. YOU'LL BE CLEANING IT UP WITH A MOP.

WE DON'T WANT THAT.



AH, THERE YOU ARE. YOU'LL DO.

SO, WHAT NOW?



YOU'RE GOING TO GO AND HIDE IN THE CLOSET UNTIL EVERYTHING'S CALMED DOWN.









I HEAR THAT ELECTRICITY IS BETTER FOR BAKING, BUT THERE ARE SOME TIMES ONLY GAS WILL DO.



ANSWER!
ANSWER!
ANSWER!

AT
LAST!



GRAN, I'M
NEARLY THERE!
POLICE OFFICERS
WILL BE THERE
SHORTLY. JUST
STAY SAFE.

ARE YOU
OKAY?!



OH, BRIDGE
HAS JUST STEPPED
OUT, BUT THERE'S
BEEN SOME SCARY
NOISES, LIKE A BIG
DOG. AND...

OH! I'M BEV.
PLEASED TO
MEET YOU. WE'VE
BARRICADED
OURSELVES
IN...





WHAT'S THIS?

WAIT--WAS THIS MEANT TO STOP SOMEONE GETTING IN?!



IT'S A HEAVY POTPLANT.

YOUR GRANDSON IS ON THE PHONE!

NEVER MIND THAT.

GET HERE, NOW. QUICKLY.

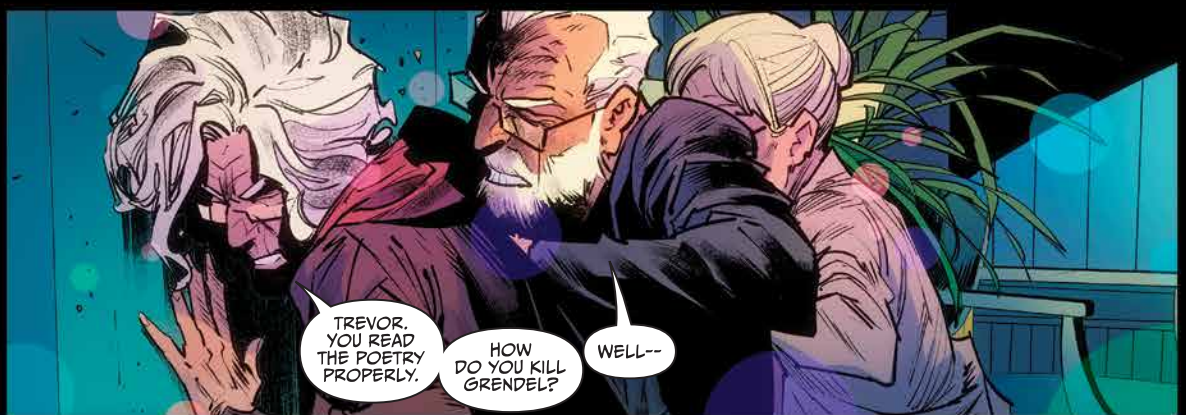


GRAN? IS THAT YOU?

WHAT'S HAPPENING?!



HEH. COME OUT, COME OUT...



TREVOR, YOU READ THE POETRY PROPERLY.

HOW DO YOU KILL GRENDEL?

WELL--



ARGHHHH!



GRAN?

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

NO! DON'T YOU DARE!



WHAT'S HAPPE--



KLK



HEY!





GR...GR...
GREDEL IS
KILLED...

WHEN
BEOWULF
TEARS OFF
H-HIS ARM.



OH,
BEOWULF
DOES IT. DEAD
BEOWULF.

WE MAY
HAVE AN ITSY
PROBLEM.









CHAPTER ELEVEN

OTHERWORLD

AGGG
GHHH!!



AAAAAAAAHHH!!

THE BOY KNIGHT'S SCREAMS ARE BEGINNING TO TRY MY PATIENCE...

THEY WILL END SOON, MY LORD.

I'LL SOON HAVE HIM READY FOR THE FRAY.



WE ARE READY FOR THE FRAY. TO SIT AND HAVE THE HATED HERO OF THE ANGLO-SAXONS FIGHT IS UNSEEMLY.

AH, HE IS ALREADY DEAD. ONLY HIS MONSTERS REMAIN, SENT TO FIGHT OUR MONSTERS...



...AND WHEN MONSTERS FIGHT ONE ANOTHER, HEROES ALWAYS WIN.



OH, JUST BLOODY WONDERFUL.

HOW'S AN OLD LADY LIKE ME GOING TO TEAR OFF THAT THING'S ARM?



KNIFE?

WELL, IT'S A START.

NOW, I'M GOING TO TRY SOMETHING STUPID.



WHEN YOU SEE ME MAKE MY MOVE, HEAD BACK TO THE KITCHEN.

JACK'S HIDING IN THE CUPBOARD. TRY NOT TO SLIP IN THE HOT OIL.



GRENDEL!
YOU MUCKY
PUP!

LOOK AT
THE MESS
YOU'VE
MADE!



THE DEATH THAT
STALKS HEOROT
HALL DOES AS HE
WISHES!

YES,
BUT DID YOU
HAVE TO DO IT
IN HERE?

WERE
YOU BORN IN
A PIGSTY?



NO. A
POOL.

WELL YOU'VE LEFT
POOLS OF BLOOD
EVERYWHERE. GROWING
UP IN A PLACE THAT
BASICALLY MOPS ITSELF
HAS SPOILED YOU
SOMETHING ROTTEN.

I MEAN,
DOES YOUR
MOTHER KNOW
YOU'RE OUT
LIKE THIS?



YES.

YES, SHE
DOES.




OH...

WAIT!
WHAT'S THAT
IN YOUR
MOUTH?



PEOPLE.

SOON,
YOU.



OH, NO.
I SEE WHAT
IT IS NOW!



A DIRTY
GREAT
KNIFE.



THAT
WAS MY
MOVE!



RUN!







HAH.



IF YOU'VE HURT HIM...



I HURT YOU TOO.



NO.



YOU LEAVE HER ALONE.



GRRR HAH!



OH, YOU'RE FINE, DUNCAN!
DID YOU BRING GUNS?



IN... THE... TAXI.



WELL, THAT'S ANOTHER PROBLEM.

IF WE'RE NOT CAREFUL WE'RE GOING TO END UP LIKE TONY, ALL CHEWED UP AND USED AS BAIT FOR...



POOR TONY. THESE WERE HIS PRIDE AND JOY.

ALWAYS KEPT THEM NEAT...



OH!







LET'S
FINISH
IT.

BRGGG BRGGG

BRGGG BRGGG



AHHHHHH!



HARDER
THAN IT LOOKS,
CHAINSAWING A
MONSTER.

ALL THE
SINEWY
AND BONY
BITS.



THERE'S
A KNACK
TO IT.



HE RUNS OFF AND DIES IN THE POEM, RIGHT?

YES.

THAT'S NICE.



OH, THERE HE GOES NOW. AND YOU KNOW WHAT?

BLEEDING TO DEATH IN PAIN COULDN'T HAPPEN TO A NICER MONSTER.

ER, YOU TWO...



...WHATEVER TIP YOU HAD IN MIND, IT'S NOT ENOUGH.







IT IS!
IT REALLY IS...THOUGH
BEST IF YOU
DON'T LOOK
AT ANY OF
THIS.

WHATEVER
IT IS.



WHAT'S THE
RUCKUS?



JACK--MAKE SURE NO ONE COMES
DOWN FROM UPSTAIRS AND SEES
ANYTHING, PLEASE. WE NEED TO KEEP
A LID ON IT. THIS IS A WORST-
CASE SCENARIO...

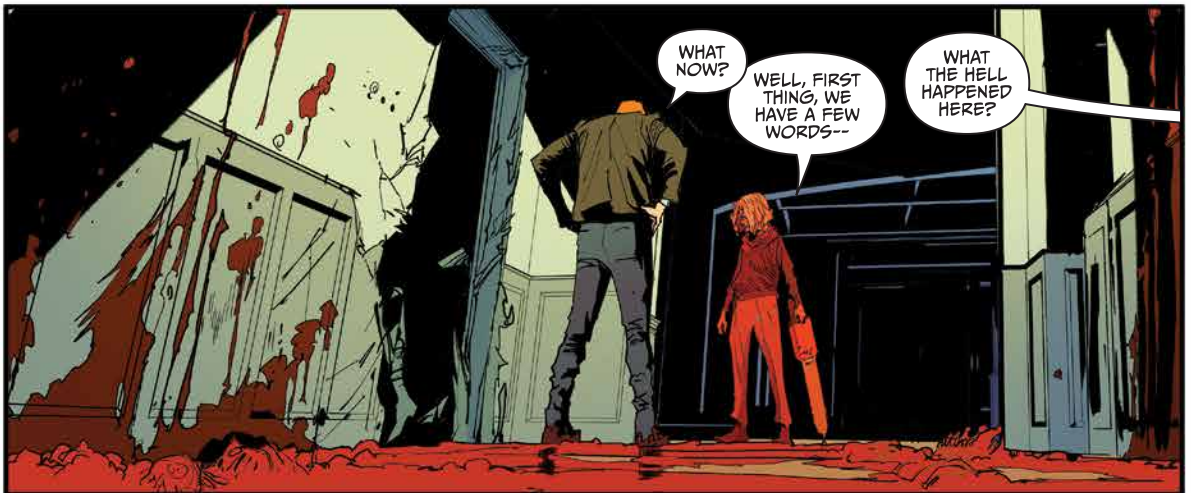
WHAT
HAPPENED,
BRIDGETTE?
THAT WAS
A--



I'LL TELL YOU WHAT
I CAN WHEN WE'VE
SORTED THIS OUT.
JUST KEEP AS MANY
PEOPLE AWAY
FROM THIS AS
POSSIBLE.

BEV.
CHARLIE, TREV. GO
BACK INTO
THE LIVING
ROOM.
PLEASE.

I DON'T THINK
I'VE EVER
HEARD HER SAY
"PLEASE" IN
HER LIFE.



WHAT
NOW?

WELL, FIRST
THING, WE
HAVE A FEW
WORDS--

WHAT
THE HELL
HAPPENED
HERE?



...AND IS THAT, LUKE?



I DON'T KNOW. I DIDN'T CATCH HIS NAME.

WHERE'S THE REST OF HIM?



YOU REALLY DON'T WANT TO KNOW. YOU DON'T NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ANY OF THIS.

REMEMBER THE STRANGE CALLSIGN THAT TOLD YOU TO STAY CLEAR AND OBEY? IT'S IN EFFECT.

SKEDADDLE RIGHT OUT OF HERE, HMM?

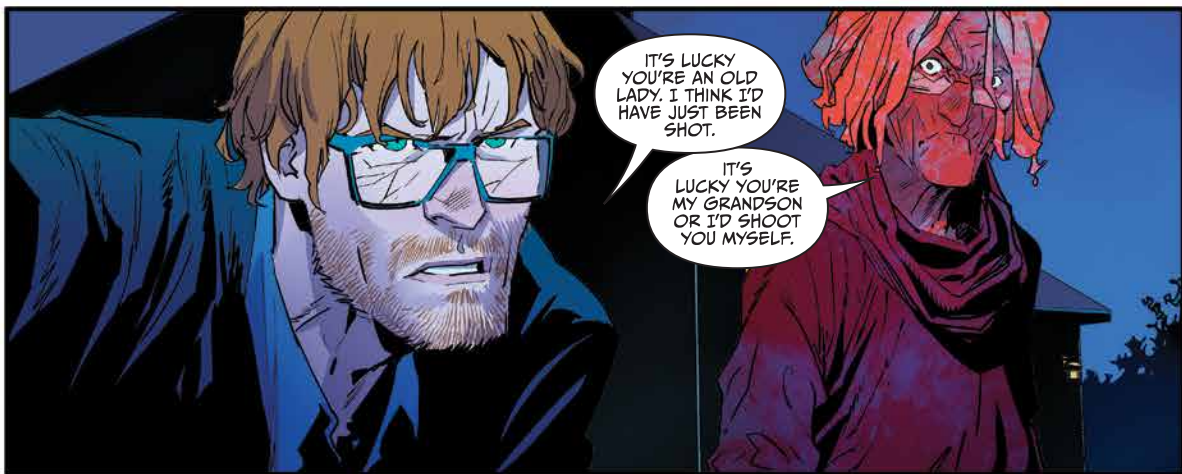


WHY DO YOU HAVE A BLOODY CHAINSAW?



ER.





IT'S LUCKY YOU'RE AN OLD LADY. I THINK I'D HAVE JUST BEEN SHOT.

IT'S LUCKY YOU'RE MY GRANDSON OR I'D SHOOT YOU MYSELF.



WHAT IN GOD'S OWN NAME WERE YOU THINKING?

CALLING IN THE POLICE?



I WAS THINKING MY GRAN WAS IN TROUBLE AND EVERYONE IN THERE WAS ALSO IN TROUBLE AND I DIDN'T WANT YOU ALL TO DIE!



THAT'S ALL WELL AND GOOD, BUT ALL YOU'VE DONE IS DRAGGED A BUNCH OF SHEEP INTO THE WOODS AND NOW THEY KNOW ABOUT WOLVES.

WE CAN'T LET PEOPLE KNOW.



YOU HAVE TO KNOW THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE. IT'S THE 21ST CENTURY. "INFORMATION WANTS TO BE FREE" AND ALL THAT.

OH, I'M SURE IT DOES.



SERIAL KILLERS WANT TO BE FREE TOO.

WE KNOW HOW THAT ENDS UP.



EVERYONE'S SETTLED UPSTAIRS, BUT WHAT ARE WE DOING ABOUT--

DON'T ASK QUESTIONS.

COME, AND I'LL TELL YOU EVERYTHING WITH THE OTHERS.



WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO TELL THEM?

WELL, I'LL TELL YOU WHAT I'M NOT GOING TO TELL THEM: THAT THE WORLD IS FULL OF FERAL STORIES WITH BIG NASTY TEETH.

AND IF YOU KNOW ABOUT THEM, IT MAKES YOU THE FIRST TARGETS.



YOU TOLD ME ABOUT THE FERAL STORIES.



I KNOW. I WISH I HAD ANOTHER CHOICE.

BUT WHAT WE ARE IS SHEEPDOGS.



ALL SHEEPDOGS ARE IS WOLVES GONE ROGUE.



WE TRY AND USE OUR TEETH TO KEEP THE STUPID SHEEP SAFE. AND STUPID.

FOLLOW ME.



NOW, DEARS.

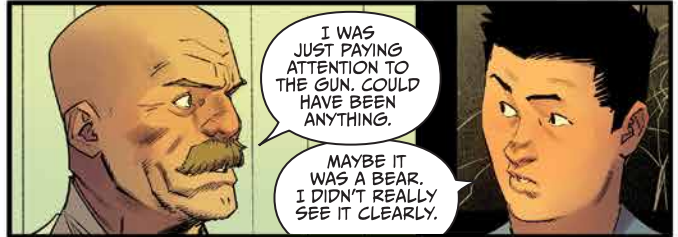
THIS IS HARD TO EXPLAIN. LISTEN CAREFULLY...



NOTHING HAPPENED. YOU DIDN'T SEE ANYTHING. MAYBE IT WAS A LOOSE BEAR?

EVERYONE GET DRUNK, PRETEND THE OLD ALZHEIMER'S COME A CALLING, WHATEVER.

TRY AND FORGET THIS. NOTHING HAPPENED.



I WAS JUST PAYING ATTENTION TO THE GUN. COULD HAVE BEEN ANYTHING.

MAYBE IT WAS A BEAR. I DIDN'T REALLY SEE IT CLEARLY.



A BEAR WOULD MAKE SENSE. IT HAD THOSE BIG CLAWS.



WHAT IS *WRONG* WITH YOU ALL? THAT WAS *GRENDEL*. IT SAID IT WAS *GRENDEL*!

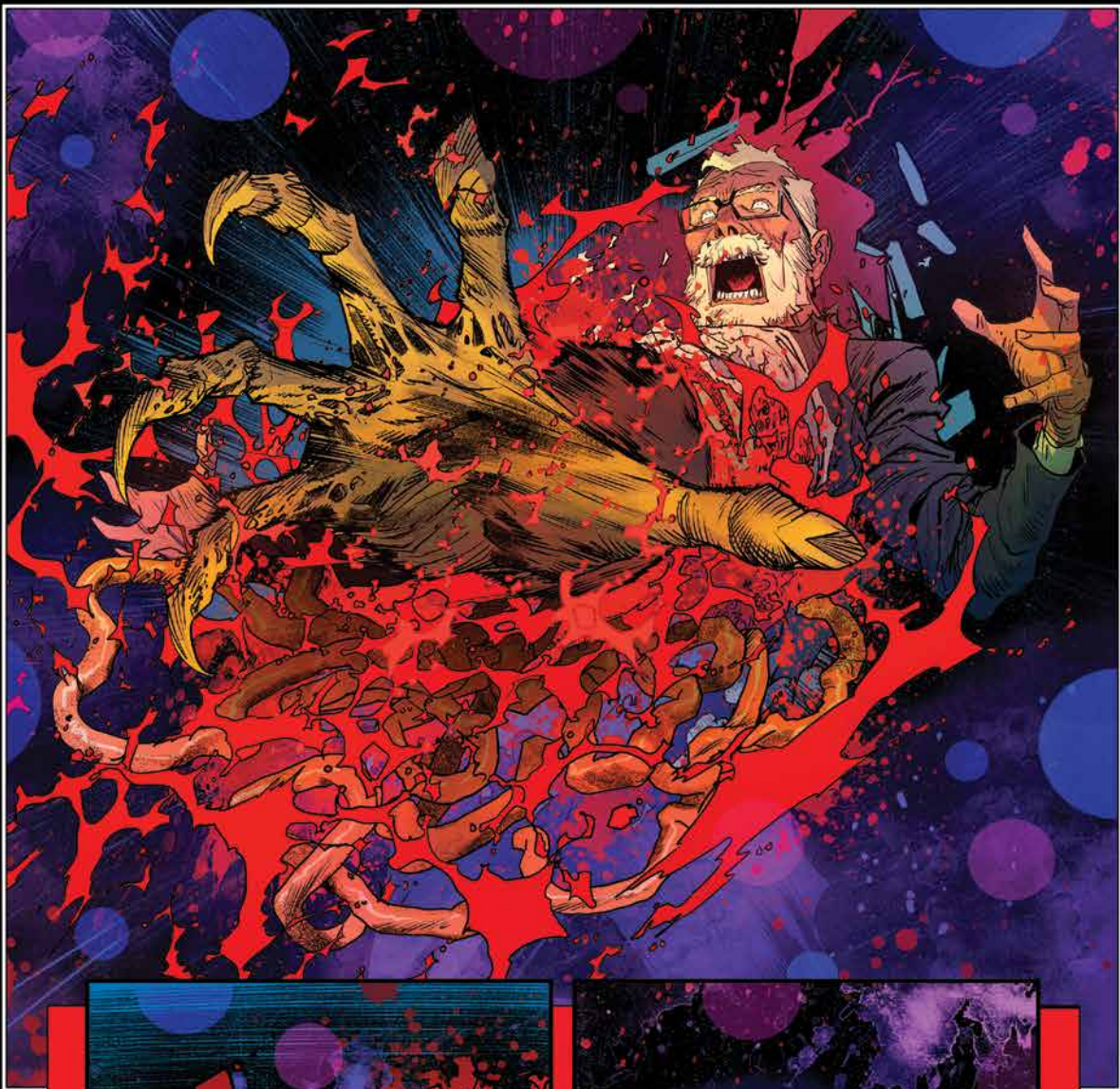
YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?



DON'T.



THEY'RE ALL CELEBRATING WHAT A GOOD JOB THEY'VE DONE, AND THEN ITS MOTHER TURNS UP!





YOU
KILLED MY
BOY.

JOIN
HIM.

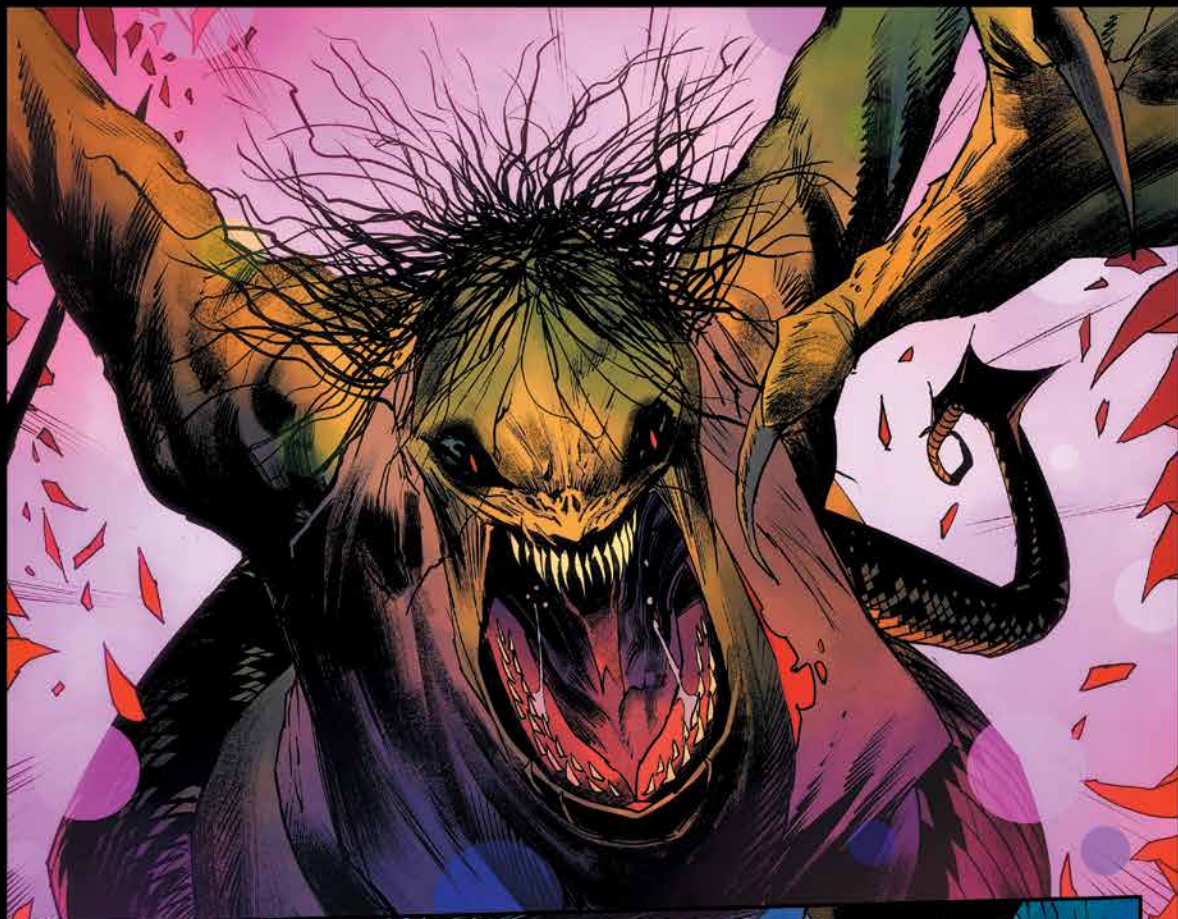




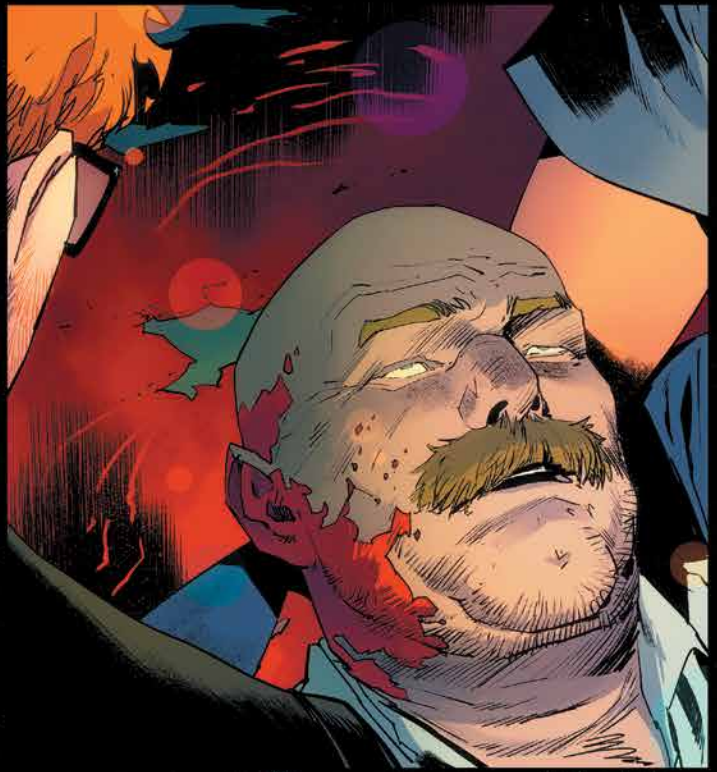


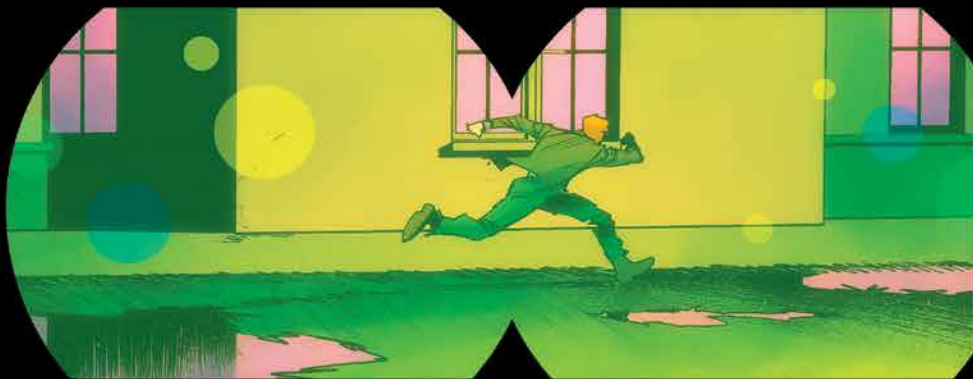
CHAPTER TWELVE













A CHAINSAW HAS MANY VIRTUES, BUT STEALTH REALLY ISN'T ONE OF THEM.



DUNCAN...



...LOOKING FOR WEAPONS?



IF YOU'RE GOING TO SHOOT ME, DO IT.

I HAVEN'T TIME FOR FAMILY DRAMA.



I'M NOT HERE FOR THAT...



I'M GIVING A WEAPON.

IF YOU'RE WILLING TO TAKE IT.



YOU
LEAVE HER
ALONE, YOU
BLOODY--



HEH.



LEAVE
ALONE.

YES.



BUT
I COME
BACK.



I ALWAYS
COME
BACK.





DIVE IN. I'LL READ. YOU LISTEN.

I'M NOT SURE I'LL HEAR UNDER WATER.



YOU WILL. MAGIC FINDS A WAY.

BEOWULF ISN'T HERE, BUT YOU CAN UNDERSTUDY HIM. TAKE ON THE ROLE.

SO I'LL BE PLAYING TWO ROLES? PERCIVAL AND BEOWULF.



I'M SURE THAT WILL TURN OUT JUST FINE.



ÆFTER ðÆM WORDUM WEDERGEATA LEOD EFSTE MID ELNE, NALAS ONDSWARE BIDAN WOLDE; BRIMNYLM ONFENG HILDERINCE. ÐA WÆS HWIL DÆGES...





YOU PULL THE TRIGGER, I STOP READING THIS.

I DON'T KEEP READING THIS, HE DIES.



WHAT HAPPENED, MARY? EXPLAIN QUICKLY. I'M LOST, AND I HATE THAT. I HAVEN'T BEEN LOST SINCE I WAS IN THE BLOOD MAZE BENEATH STONEHENGE BACK IN THE SEVENTIES.

THAT WAS A TERRIBLE SOLSTICE.



MARY DOESN'T KNOW.

ONLY NIMUE HAS BEEN TAKEN INTO MERLIN'S COUNCIL.



OKAY, MADAM. HAVE IT YOUR WAY.

WHAT HAPPENED, NIMUE?



ONCE THERE WAS A WAR OF STORIES AND THE KINGS WHO LIVED THERE.

TALES FOR THE SAXONS. TALES FOR THE BRITISH. TALES FOR BOTH...

"...ONE OF THE MERLINS CAUGHT THE FERAL STORY OF BEOWULF IN A MANUSCRIPT FOR A THOUSAND YEARS. ARTHUR'S STORY LIVED AS FOLK MYTH. BEOWULF WAS TRAPPED IN PAPER..."

"HE WAS DUG OUT IN THE 19TH CENTURY AND STUCK IN THE BRITISH LIBRARY, AND ONLY REALLY STUDIED BY ACADEMICS."

WE SET HIM FREE...

...AND WE KILLED BEOWULF.

HMM. THE LINE ONLY GOES BACK TO NORMAN TIMES. IF HE WASN'T A THREAT SINCE THEN, NO WONDER I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THE TROUBLESOME LITTLE BEOWULF. *FRUSTRATING.*

WITH BEOWULF DEAD, WE NEED A STAND IN.

THAT'S DUNCAN.

IF I READ THIS...

ARGGGHHH!

DO IT!



"GRAP DA TOGEANES,
GUDRINC GEFENG
ATOLAN CLOMMUM. NO
PY FER IN GESCOD..."



"...ALDRE SCEPÐAN, AC
SEO ECG GESWAC..."

"...GESEAH ÐA ON SEARWUM
SIGEADIG BIL,
EALD SWEORD EOTENISC,
ECGUM PYHTIG..."



"...FÆGNE FLÆSCHOMAN;
HEO ON FLET GECRONG."

"SWEORD WAS
SWATIG, SECG
WEORCE GEFEH..."



...AND
DONE.

SO...WHAT
DID THAT
ACTUALLY
MEAN?



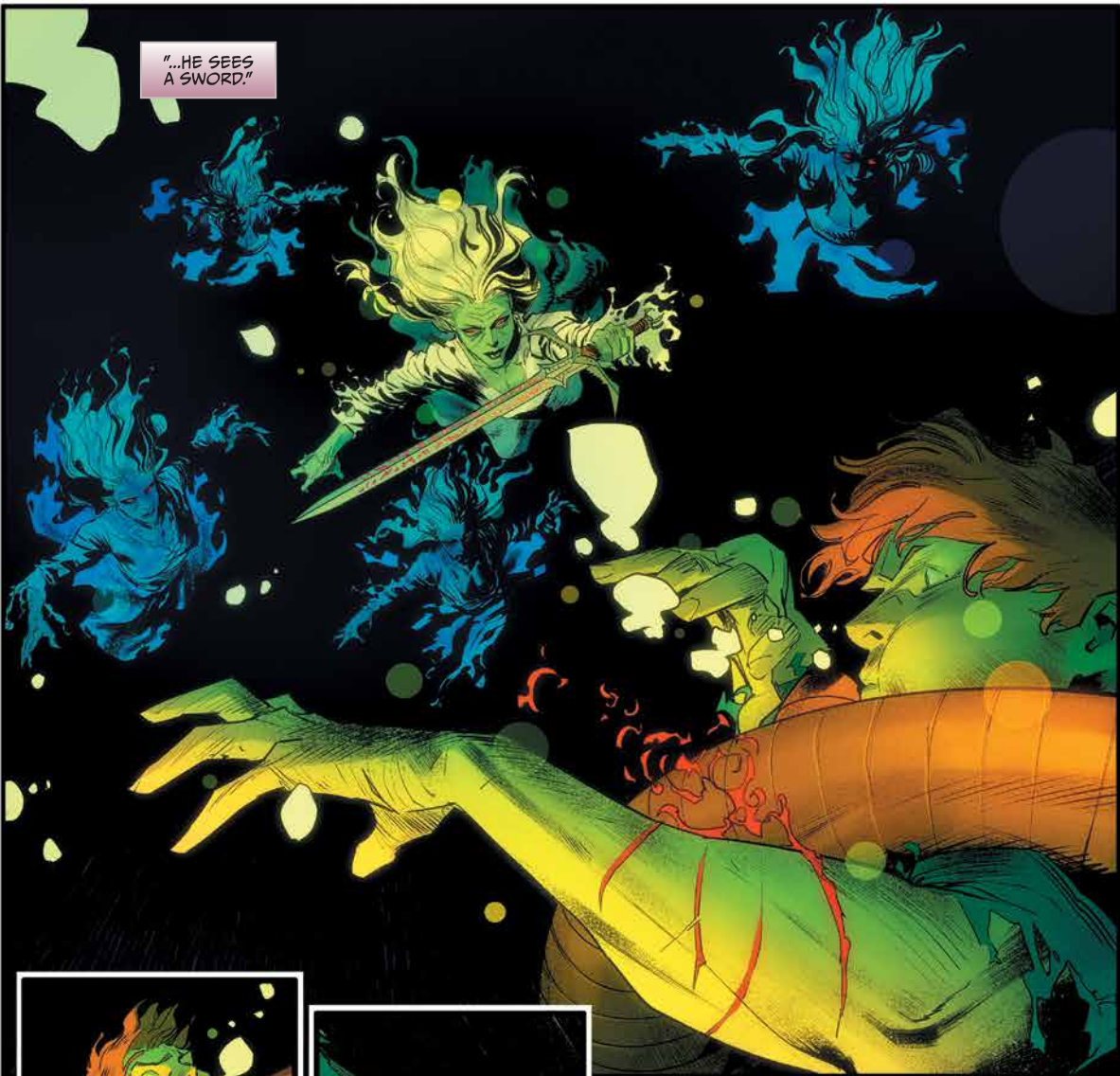
"IN SHORT?
BEOWULF GOES
INTO THE MERE
WHERE THE MOTHER
OF MONSTERS
LURKS."

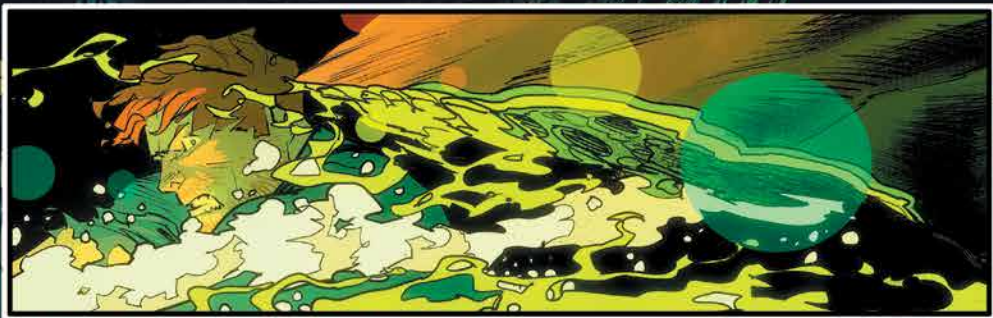
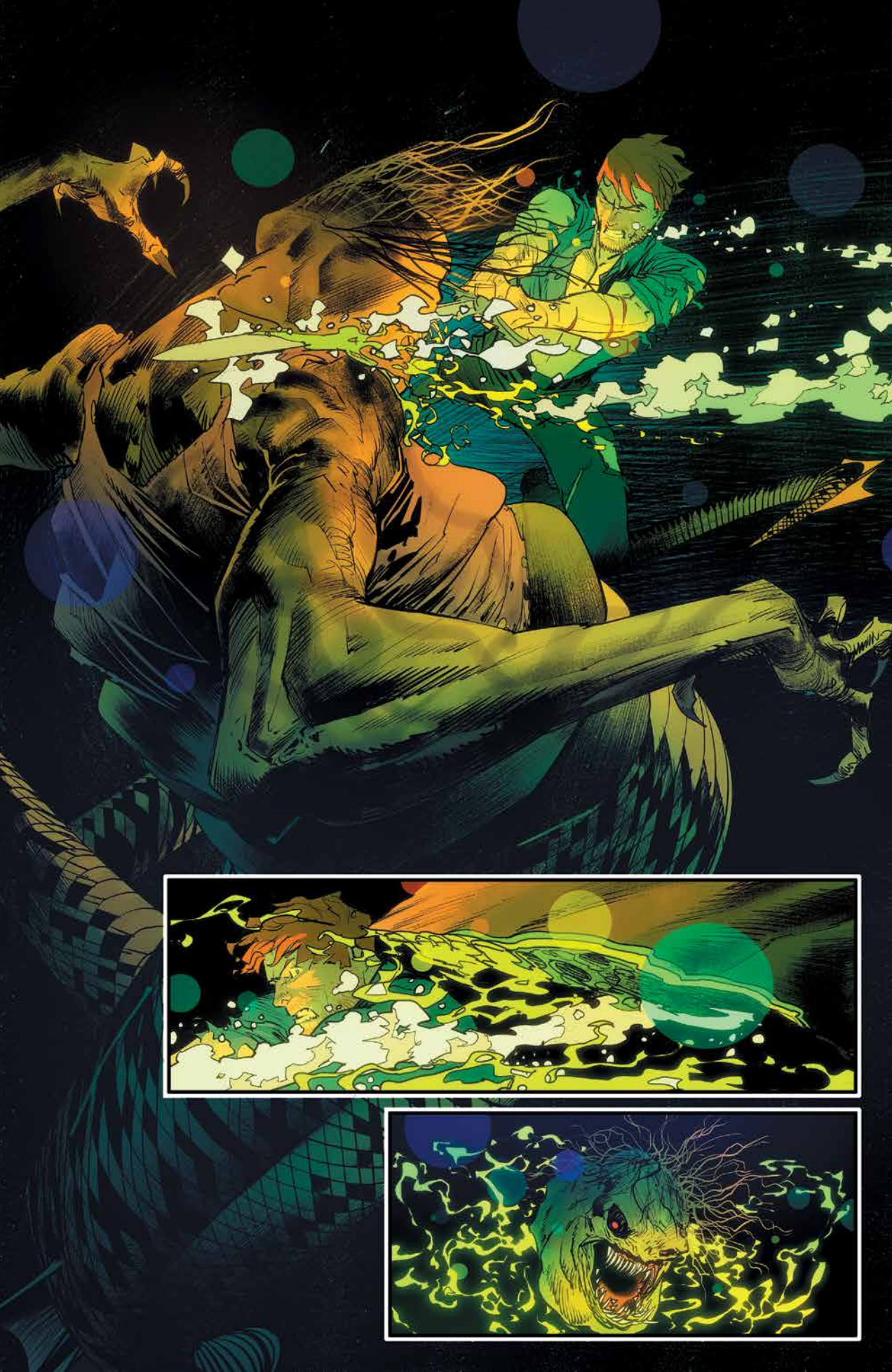
"ALL HIS
WEAPONS
FAIL."



"JUST AS HE'S
DYING..."

"...HE SEES
A SWORD."





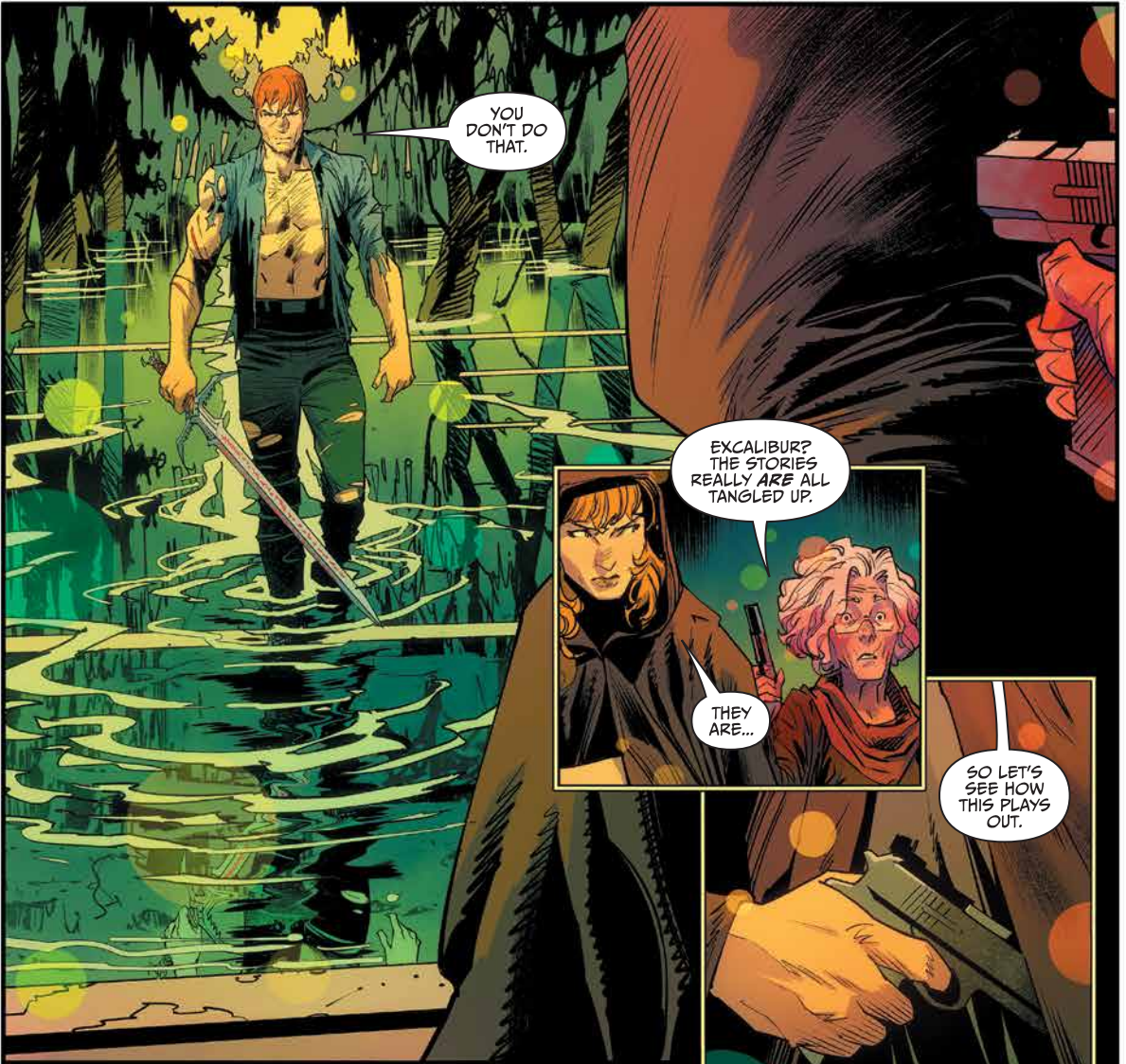


THAT'S A GOOD OMEN.



FOR SOME OF US ANYWAY, DEAR.

NO!



YOU DON'T DO THAT.



EXCALIBUR? THE STORIES REALLY ARE ALL TANGLED UP.

THEY ARE...



SO LET'S SEE HOW THIS PLAYS OUT.



OH, DEAR. YOU KNOW NIMUE BETRAYS MERLIN, YES? YOU'RE JUST TRAPPED IN THIS ROLE NOW.

YES, THAT'S WHAT SHE IS.

AND YOU KNOW THAT BEOWULF KILLS THE MOTHER OF MONSTERS.



ONE MOTHER OF MONSTERS IS DEAD IN THE LAKE. ANOTHER IS STILL UP HERE.

LET'S SEE HOW THAT ENDS UP...



SO...YOU'VE GOT BEOWULF WRAPPED UP WITH YOU, BUT HOW DOES IT ACTUALLY END?

I REMEMBER THE MONSTERS, BUT NOT HOW IT ENDS. FUNNY THAT. FUNNY SOMETHING YOU KNOW MORE THAN ME.



HE KILLS A DRAGON AS IT KILLS HIM.

OH. I GUESS THAT EXPLAINS WHY BEOWULF WAS ON FIRE. THAT WAS BOTHERING ME.

IN THE SAME NIGHT?



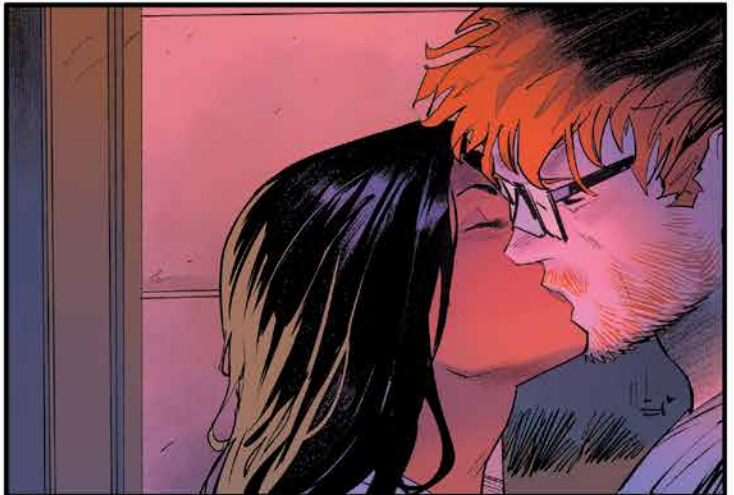
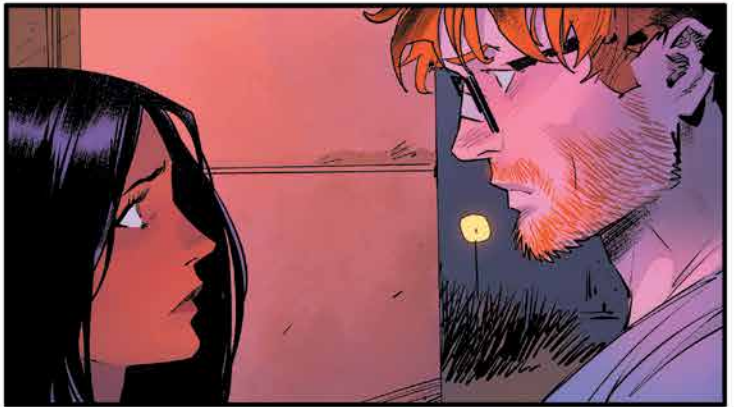
NO. MUCH LATER.

OH, THAT'S SOME GOOD NEWS.

GOT TO ADMIT, I DON'T THINK I'VE GOT ENOUGH PETROL IN THE OL' TANK TO FIGHT A DRAGON TONIGHT, LUV.

BRISTOL

RING





THE ART OF LIGHT CAPTURED ON PARCHMENT IS FASCINATING...AS IS THE INFORMATION IT REVEALS.

THIS IS THE KNIGHT'S LOVER?



FOR NOW, AT LEAST, I'LL WORK OUT WHO SHE IS AND HOW SHE CONNECTS TO THEM.

AT LEAST WE HAVE SOMETHING FROM THIS MESS...



I'M SORRY. DUNCAN JUMPING ME AND TAKING THE MANUSCRIPT WAS NOT PART OF THE PLAN.

YOU TRIED. WHO WOULD DOUBT THE LOYALTY OF NIMUE?

WORRY LESS ABOUT PLANS. THE STORY WILL LEAD US ON. ALL BARDS MAKE THE STANDARDS THEIR OWN. WE KNOW HOW IT GOES, YET STILL IT DELIGHTS.

THE TALE OF BEOWULF IS IN MOTION. AS IS THE TALE OF ARTHUR, THE GRAIL. THE KNIGHTS ARE ASSEMBLED...



HOW IS GALAHAD? IS HE WELL?

TO TRUTH, HE HAD HIS LEGS CUT FROM UNDER HIM A LITTLE.



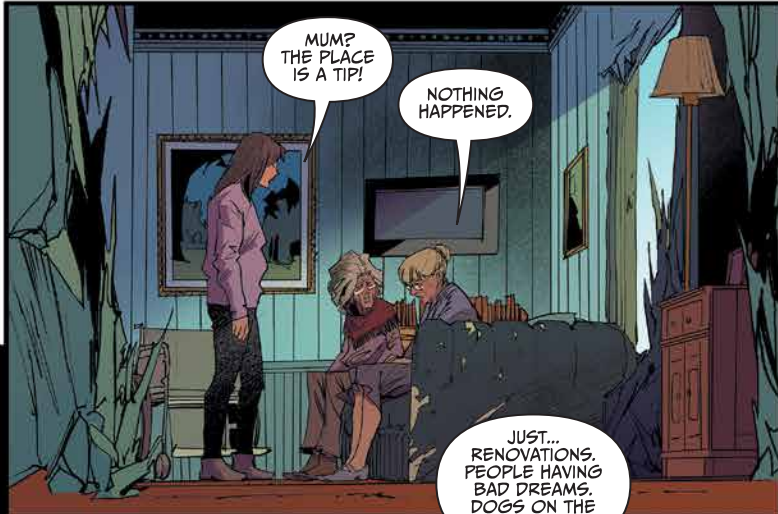
BUT DO NOT WORRY, FAITHFUL NIMUE.

WE'LL SOON HAVE HIM BACK ON HIS FEET.





WHAT HAPPENED HERE?



MUM? THE PLACE IS A TIP!

NOTHING HAPPENED.

JUST... RENOVATIONS. PEOPLE HAVING BAD DREAMS. DOGS ON THE LOOSE TOO.



AND... AND...

WHAT'S WRONG, MUM?

WE'VE ALL JUST HAD A BAD FEW DAYS, LUV.

YES. BAD DAYS. AND...

WHEN YOU GO HOME, DO KEEP THE LIGHTS UP BRIGHT.



THAT'S A GOOD IDEA.

IT'S ONLY GOING TO GET DARKER.

ONCE & FUTURE™

OLD ENGLISH

GILLEN

MORA

BONVILLAIN

DUKESHIRE



OTHERWORLD

I DREAM OF ENGLAND'S GREEN FIELDS...

ICHOR COVERING THE BEACHES, FILLING THE THROATS OF ANGLO-SAXON MEN.

I DO NOT SEE HOW WE ARE CLOSER TO THE GRAIL...

THE PLAN IS IN MOTION.

TO FIND THE GRAIL WE NEED PERCIVAL, GALAHAD AND BORS.


BETWEEN THEM, THEY WILL BRING A NEW ENGLAND.

PERCIVAL AND GALAHAD ARE KNOWN. BUT BORS?

HAVE YOU FOUND THIS KNIGHT?

NOT EXACTLY, MY LORD...


LONDON



SIR, I AM SYMPATHETIC TO YOUR POSITION. THE CASUALTIES ARE CONSIDERABLE, INCLUDING TO MEMBERS OF THE POLICE. I UNDERSTAND THE CONSTABULARY'S FURY.


HOWEVER, THESE STATUTES ARE AS OLD AS GOVERNMENT.

IN FACT, SIGNIFICANTLY OLDER.



WHEN INVOKED, THE SECRECY IS ABSOLUTE. THE INFORMATION IT COVERS IS DANGEROUS. THERE ARE SYSTEMS IN PLACE TO ENSURE IT IS NOT ABUSED, WHILE AVOIDING FURTHER CONTAMINATION. I CAN PUT THEM IN ACTION.

THIS IS AN UNWRITTEN PART OF OUR CONSTITUTION AND SHOULD NOT BE BYPASSED.



WE LITERALLY CANNOT PREDICT HOW SEVERE THE CONSEQUENCES COULD BE.



HMMM...
YES, I KNOW,
I KNOW. I
UNDERSTAND. BUT
I'M THE PRIME
MINISTER.

LET'S OPEN
UP THIS BOX AND
HAVE A GOOD
POKE AROUND,
EH?



NOT BORS,
BUT CLOSE
ENOUGH.

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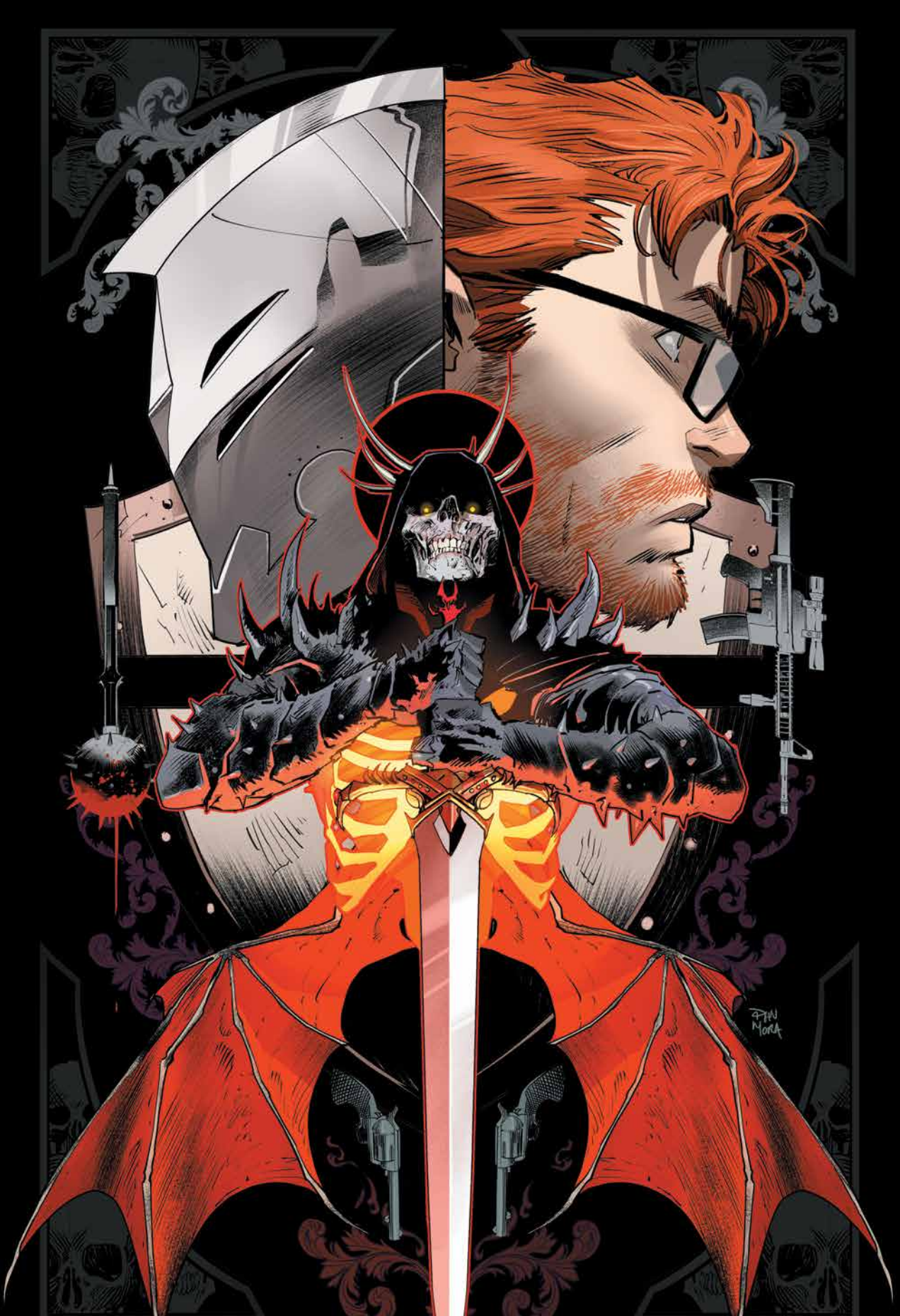




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