

WITCHBLADE®

#179



Loupe
Blade
2014

RON MARZ • LAURA BRAGA • BETSY GONIA

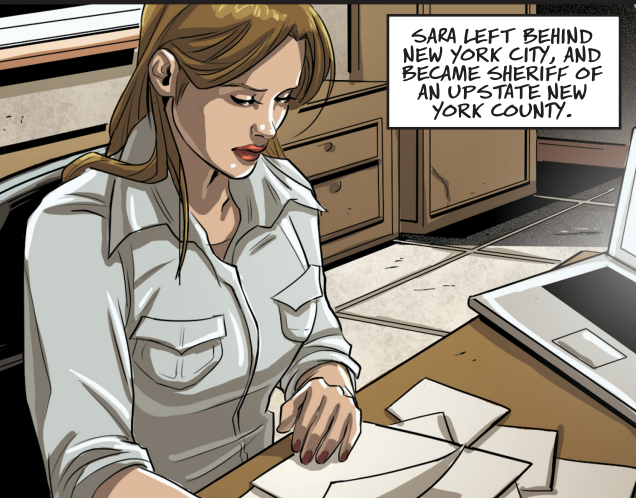
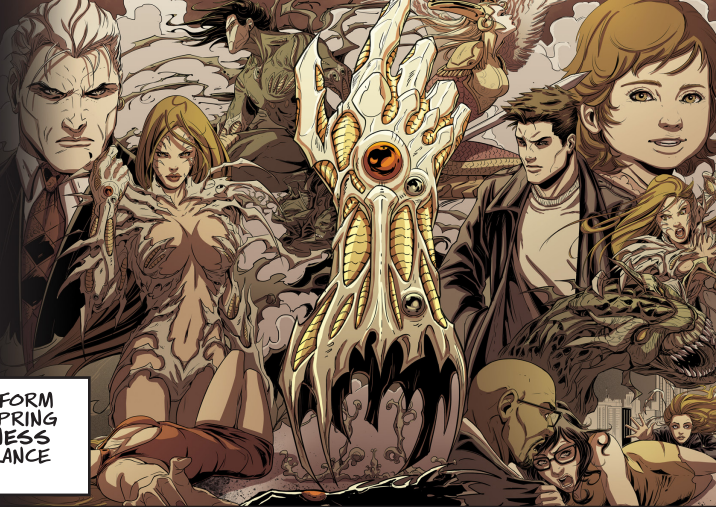
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PREVIOUSLY IN WITCHBLADE

SARA PEZZINI WAS A NEW YORK CITY POLICE DETECTIVE, BUT HER LIFE CHANGED FOREVER WHEN SHE CAME INTO POSSESSION OF A POWERFUL ARTIFACT CALLED THE WITCHBLADE.

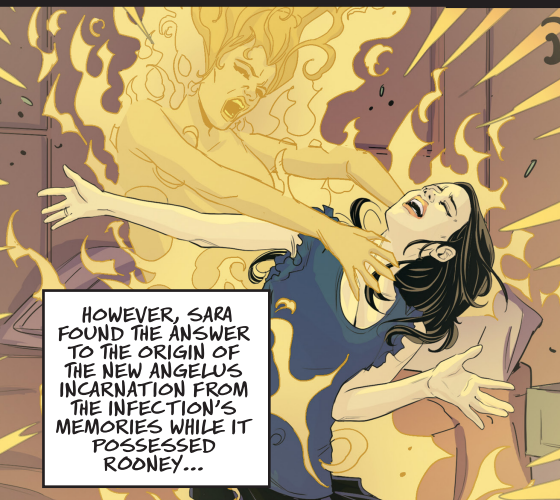
THOUGH THE WITCHBLADE MOST OFTEN TAKES THE FORM OF A MYSTIC GAUNTLET, IN TRUTH IT IS THE OFFSPRING OF THE UNIVERSE'S PRIMAL FORCES, THE DARKNESS AND THE ANGELUS, AND MEANT TO ACT AS A BALANCE BETWEEN THE DARK AND THE LIGHT.



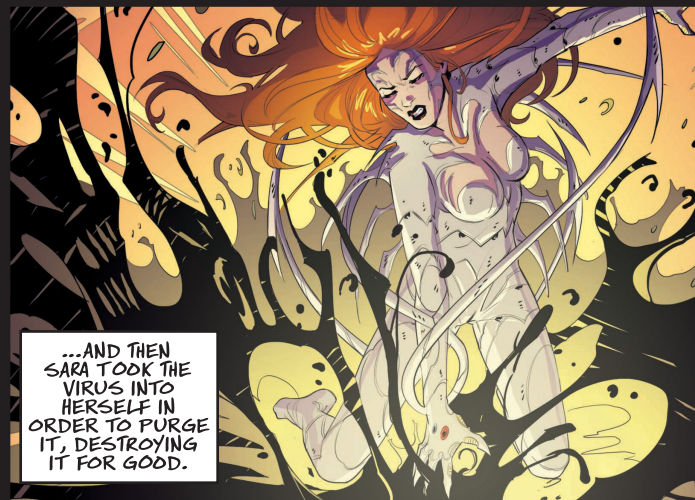
SARA LEFT BEHIND NEW YORK CITY, AND BECAME SHERIFF OF AN UPSTATE NEW YORK COUNTY.



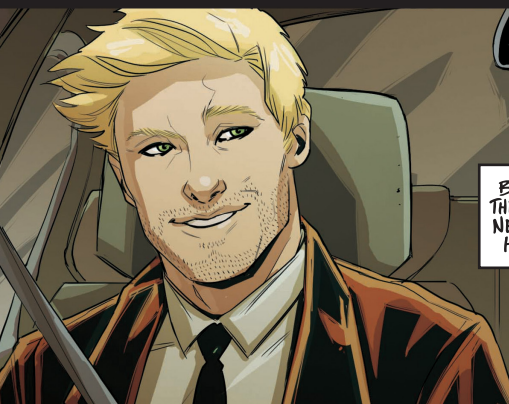
WHILE EXPLORING THE BASEMENT OF DECEASED DARKNESS HOST JACKIE ESTACADO'S MANSION, DEPUTY KATE ROONEY BECAME INFECTED BY THE ROGUE DARKNESS VIRUS.



HOWEVER, SARA FOUND THE ANSWER TO THE ORIGIN OF THE NEW ANGELUS INCARNATION FROM THE INFECTION'S MEMORIES WHILE IT POSSESSED ROONEY...



...AND THEN SARA TOOK THE VIRUS INTO HERSELF IN ORDER TO PURGE IT, DESTROYING IT FOR GOOD.



BUT AS SARA CLEANED UP THE MESS IN NEW JERSEY, A NEW TROUBLE ARRIVED FOR HER BACK IN NEW YORK...





YEAH, THIS IS WHY I GOT INTO POLICE WORK...



...SO I COULD BE CALLED OUT TO A FARM AT THREE IN THE MORNING AND STEP IN COW SHIT.



AT LEAST WE'RE GETTING SOME FRESH AIR. RIGHT, SHERIFF?



SO, UH... WHAT WAS THAT ABOUT FRESH AIR, RODNEY?

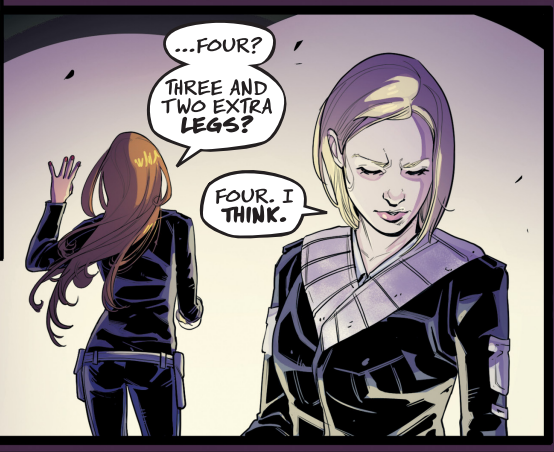
MY GOD...

...I THINK I JUST ATE MY LAST HAMBURGER EVER.



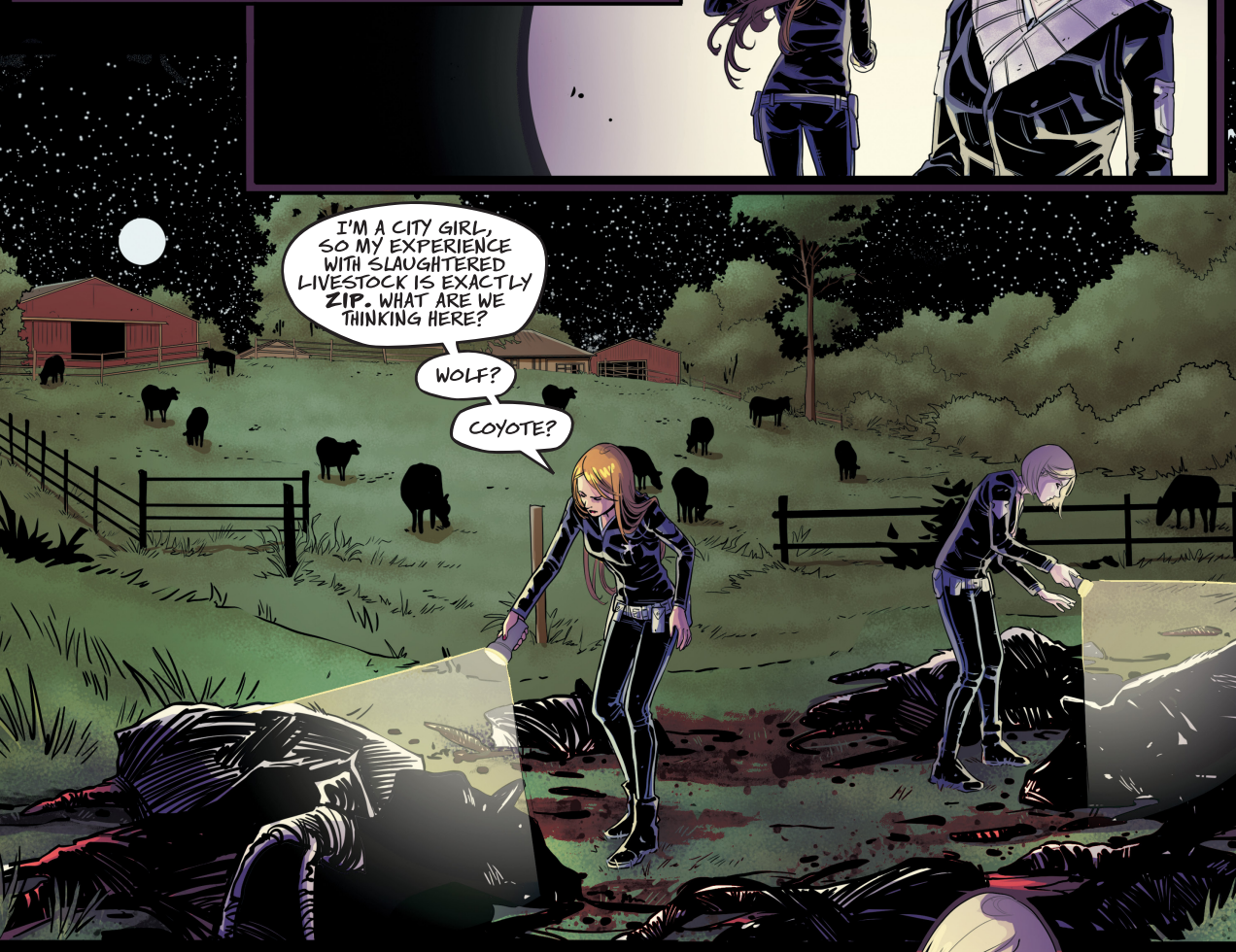


I'M NOT EVEN SURE HOW MANY OF THEM THERE ARE. THREE...



...FOUR?
THREE AND TWO EXTRA LEGS?

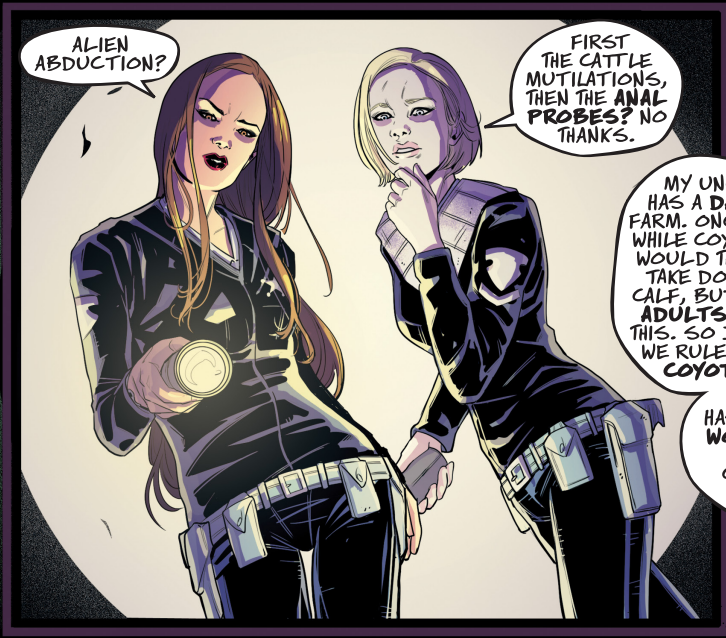
FOUR. I THINK.



I'M A CITY GIRL, SO MY EXPERIENCE WITH SLAUGHTERED LIVESTOCK IS EXACTLY ZIP. WHAT ARE WE THINKING HERE?

WOLF?

COYOTE?

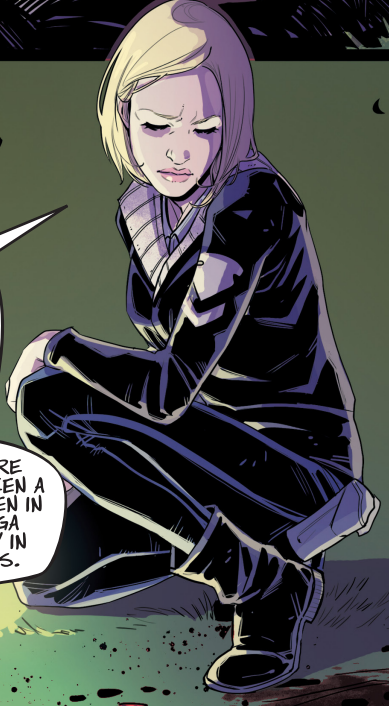


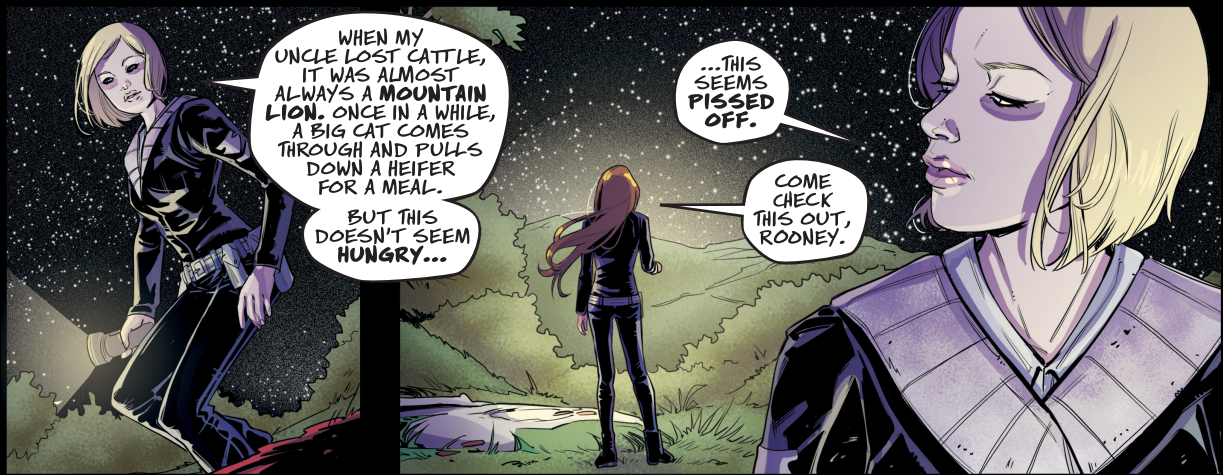
ALIEN ABDUCTION?

FIRST THE CATTLE MUTILATIONS, THEN THE ANAL PROBES? NO THANKS.

MY UNCLE HAS A DAIRY FARM. ONCE IN A WHILE COYOTES WOULD TRY TO TAKE DOWN A CALF, BUT NOT ADULTS LIKE THIS. SO I THINK WE RULE OUT COYOTE.

AND THERE HASN'T BEEN A WOLF SEEN IN SARATOGA COUNTRY IN DECADES.



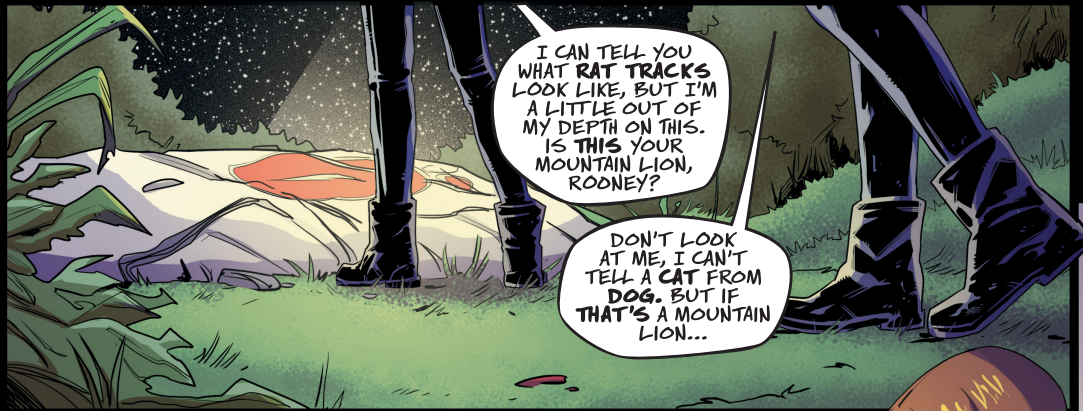


WHEN MY UNCLE LOST CATTLE, IT WAS ALMOST ALWAYS A MOUNTAIN LION. ONCE IN A WHILE, A BIG CAT COMES THROUGH AND PULLS DOWN A HEIFER FOR A MEAL.

BUT THIS DOESN'T SEEM HUNGRY...

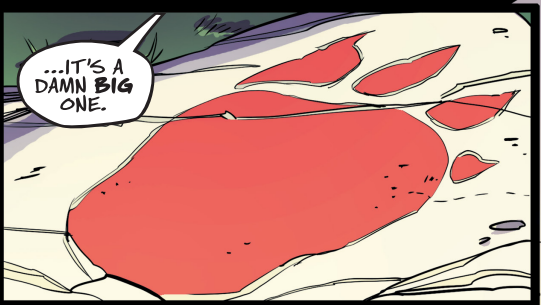
...THIS SEEMS PISSED OFF.

COME CHECK THIS OUT, ROONEY.

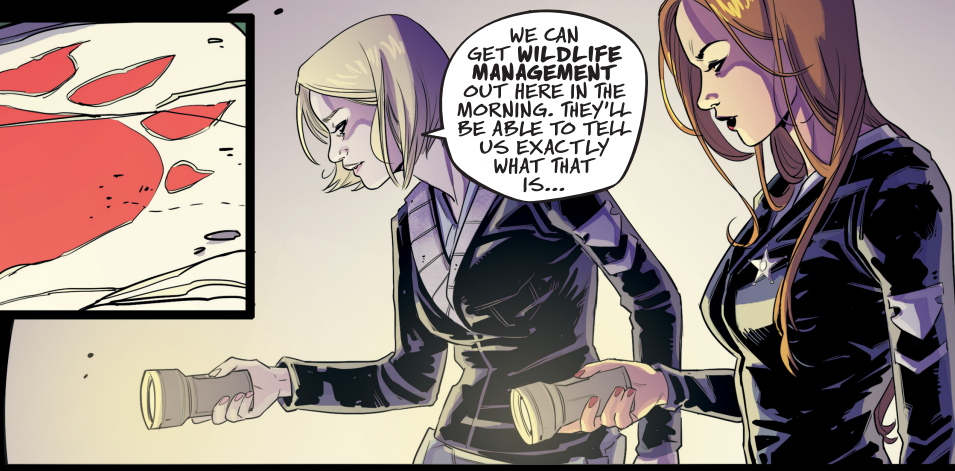


I CAN TELL YOU WHAT RAT TRACKS LOOK LIKE, BUT I'M A LITTLE OUT OF MY DEPTH ON THIS. IS THIS YOUR MOUNTAIN LION, ROONEY?

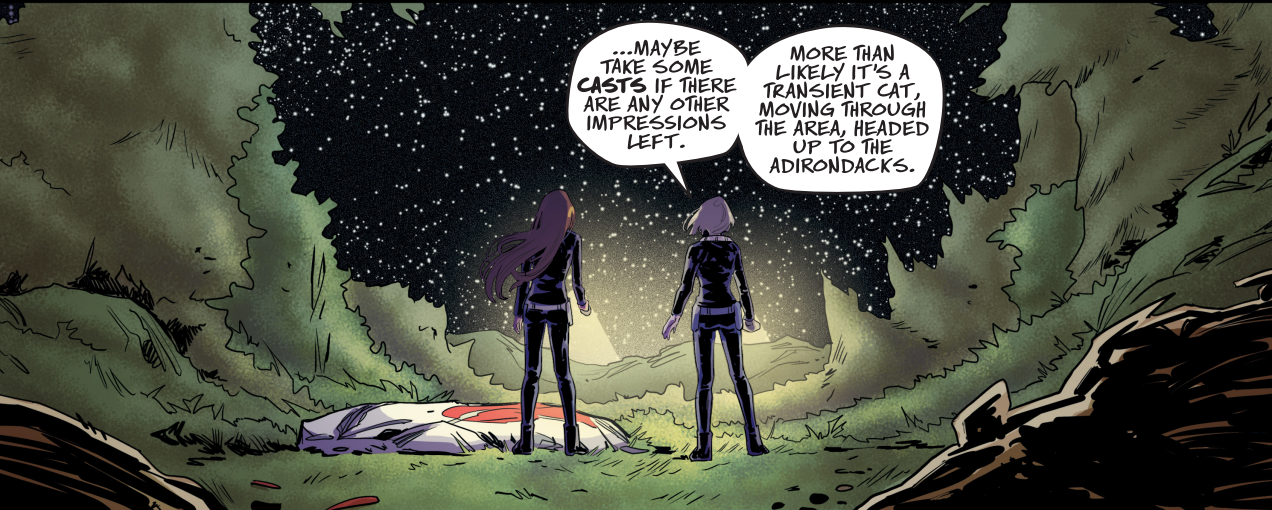
DON'T LOOK AT ME, I CAN'T TELL A CAT FROM DOG. BUT IF THAT'S A MOUNTAIN LION...



...IT'S A DAMN BIG ONE.

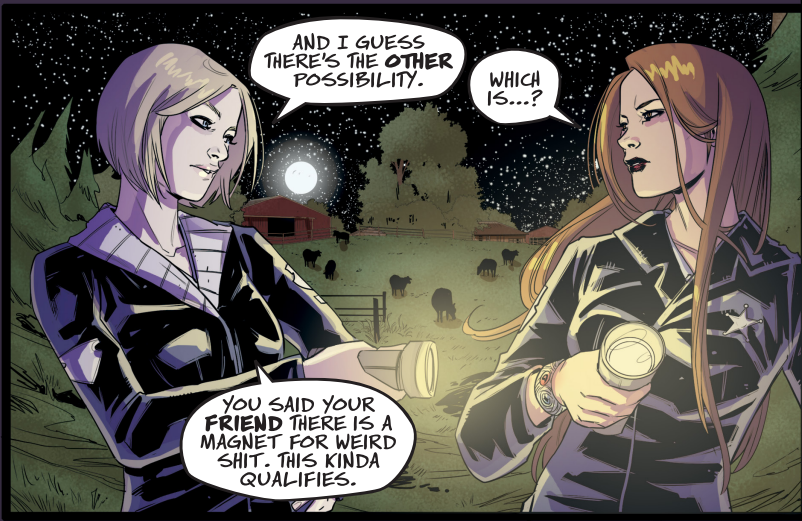


WE CAN GET WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT OUT HERE IN THE MORNING. THEY'LL BE ABLE TO TELL US EXACTLY WHAT THAT IS...



...MAYBE TAKE SOME CASTS IF THERE ARE ANY OTHER IMPRESSIONS LEFT.

MORE THAN LIKELY IT'S A TRANSIENT CAT, MOVING THROUGH THE AREA, HEADED UP TO THE ADIRONDACKS.



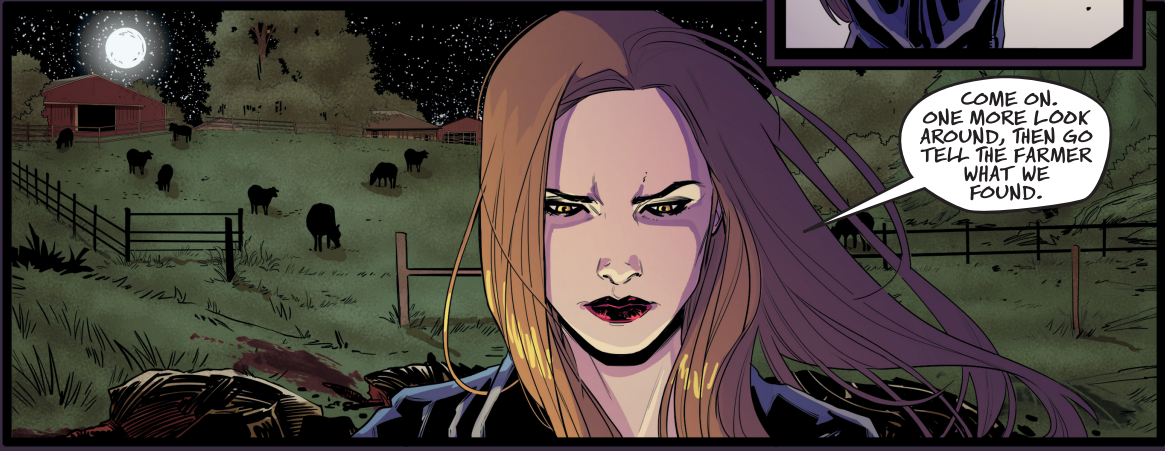
AND I GUESS THERE'S THE OTHER POSSIBILITY.

WHICH IS...?

YOU SAID YOUR FRIEND THERE IS A MAGNET FOR WEIRD SHIT. THIS KINDA QUALIFIES.



SOME DEAD COWS? I DON'T THINK I'M READY TO MAKE THAT LEAP YET.



COME ON. ONE MORE LOOK AROUND, THEN GO TELL THE FARMER WHAT WE FOUND.

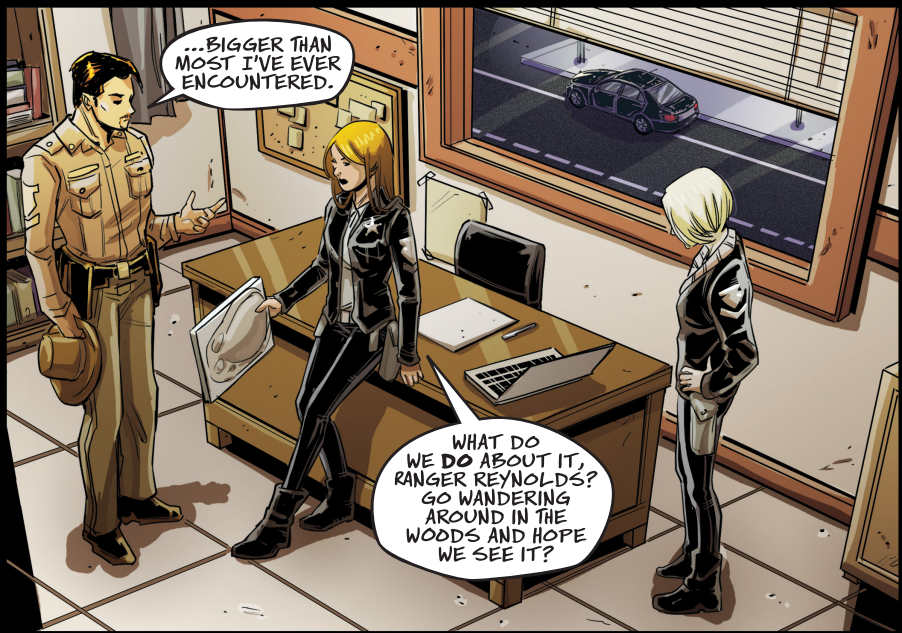


AT LEAST HE'LL BE ABLE TO GET SOME SLEEP.



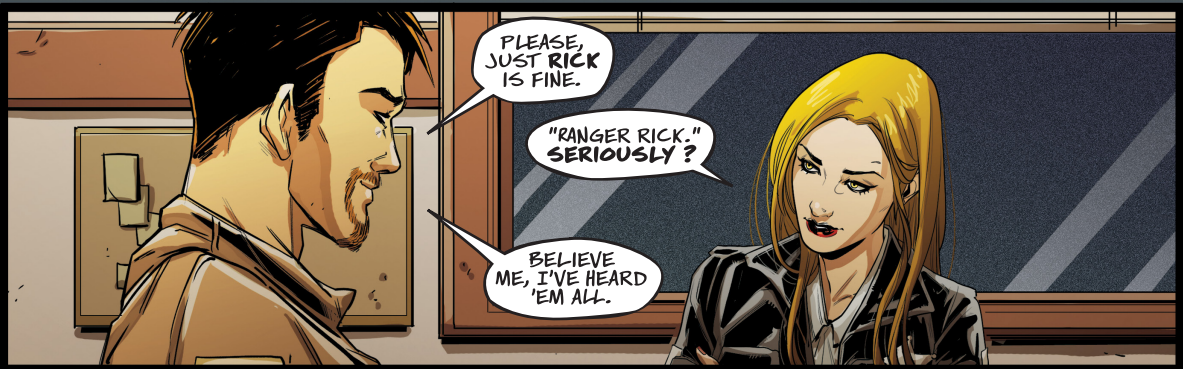


IT'S A WOLF, ALL RIGHT...



...BIGGER THAN MOST I'VE EVER ENCOUNTERED.

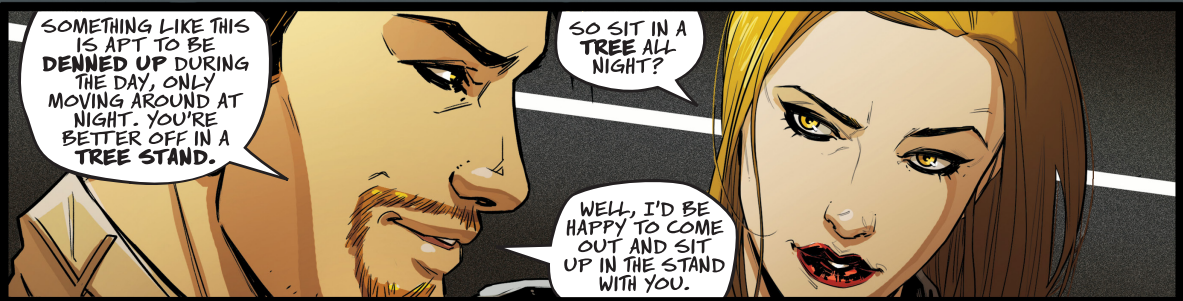
WHAT DO WE DO ABOUT IT, RANGER REYNOLDS? GO WANDERING AROUND IN THE WOODS AND HOPE WE SEE IT?



PLEASE, JUST RICK IS FINE.

"RANGER RICK." SERIOUSLY?

BELIEVE ME, I'VE HEARD 'EM ALL.



SOMETHING LIKE THIS IS APT TO BE DENNED UP DURING THE DAY, ONLY MOVING AROUND AT NIGHT. YOU'RE BETTER OFF IN A TREE STAND.

SO SIT IN A TREE ALL NIGHT?

WELL, I'D BE HAPPY TO COME OUT AND SIT UP IN THE STAND WITH YOU.



I'LL LET YOU KNOW, RICK.

DO THAT, SHERIFF.

THAT WAS A NICE OFFER...



PEZZINI!



WELL HELLO, MR. MAYOR. SO NICE TO SEE YOU AGAIN.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING ABOUT THIS?

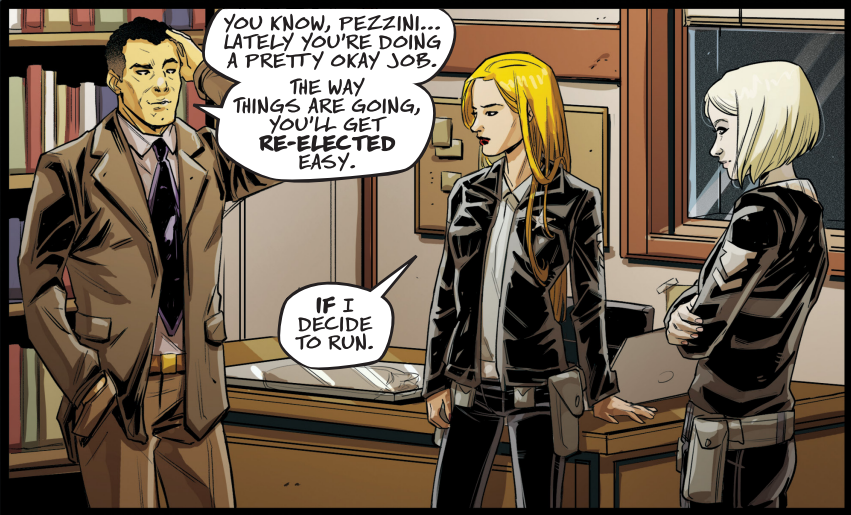


PEOPLE ARE GOING TO PANIC.



I'LL HANDLE IT. YOU CAN PUT THE PELT ON YOUR WALL IF YOU WANT TO.

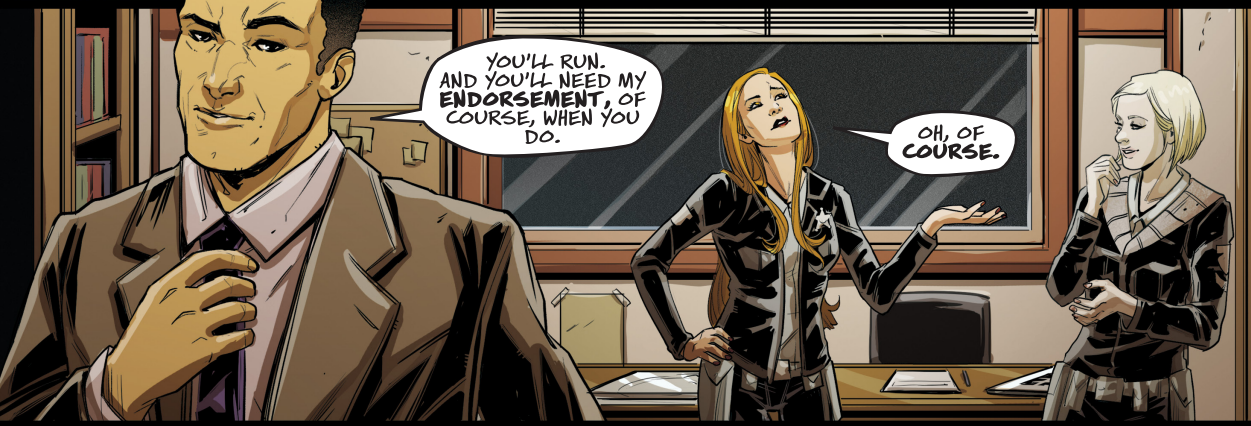
I DON'T NEED THE PELT, I JUST NEED THIS WOLF OR WHATEVER IT IS GONE.



YOU KNOW, PEZZINI... LATELY YOU'RE DOING A PRETTY OKAY JOB.

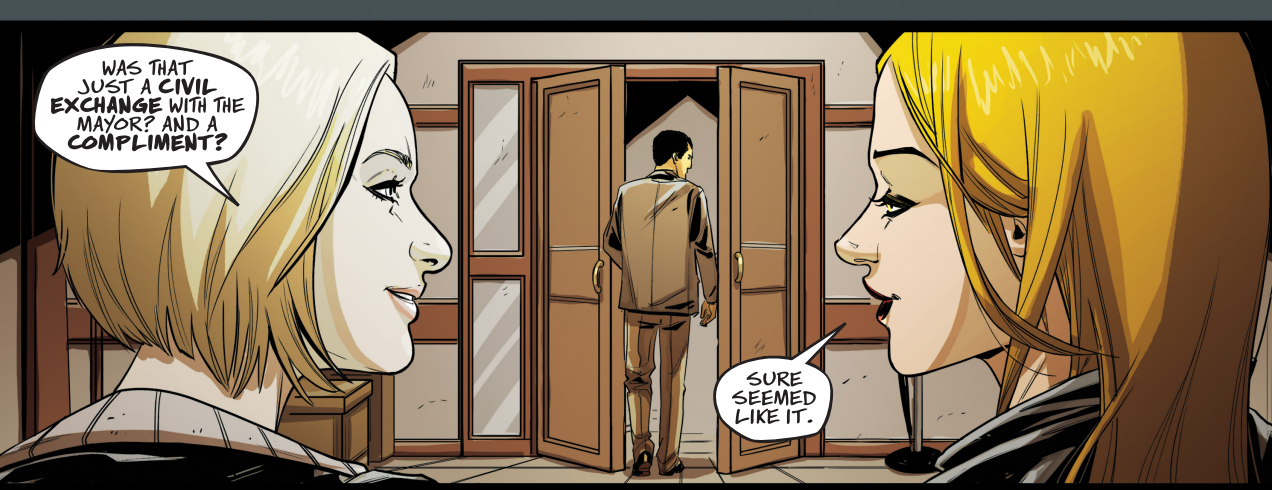
THE WAY THINGS ARE GOING, YOU'LL GET RE-ELECTED EASY.

IF I DECIDE TO RUN.



YOU'LL RUN. AND YOU'LL NEED MY ENDORSEMENT, OF COURSE, WHEN YOU DO.

OH, OF COURSE.



WAS THAT JUST A CIVIL EXCHANGE WITH THE MAYOR? AND A COMPLIMENT?

SURE SEEMED LIKE IT.



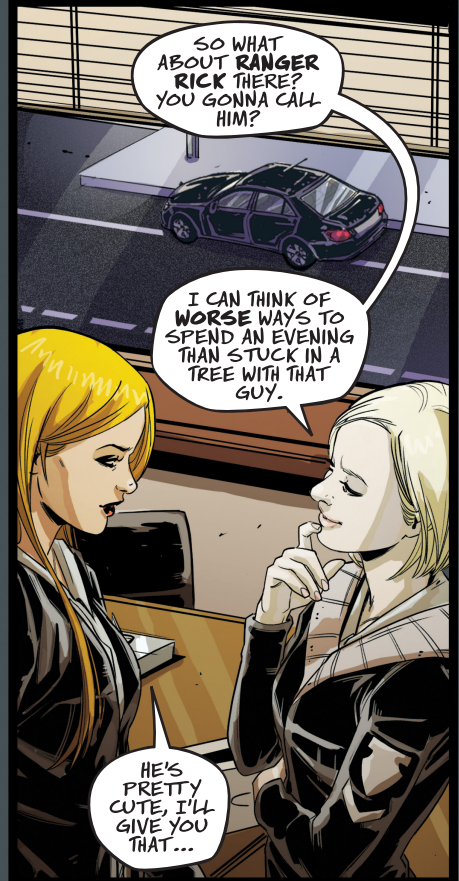
SO YOU BUYING WOLF? OR HAVE YOU CHANGED YOUR MIND ABOUT THE WITCHBLADE POSSIBLY BEING INVOLVED?

MAYBE.

AFTER THAT FREAK IN THE JUNKYARD, I'M NOT RULING OUT ANYTHING...



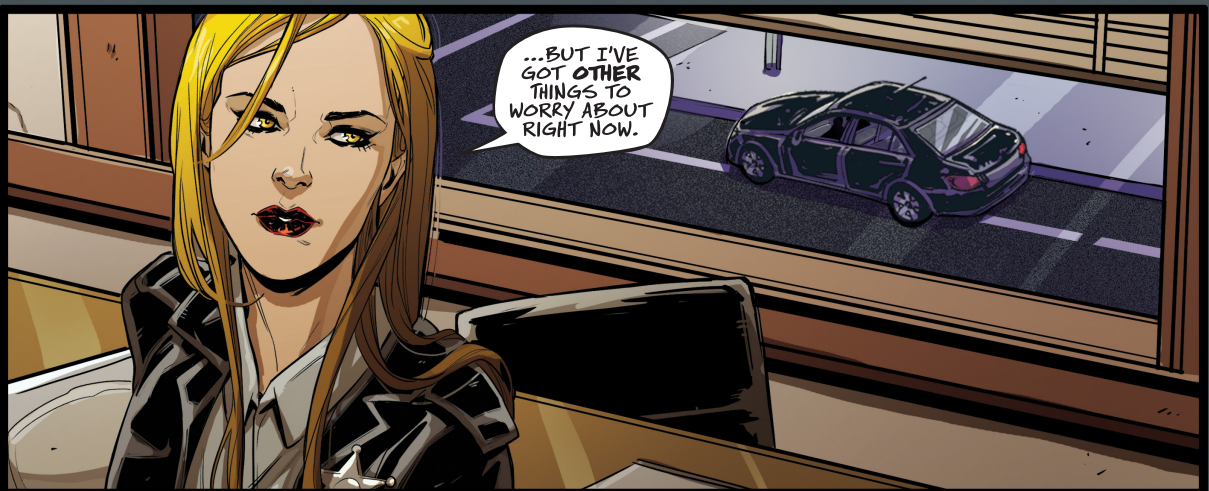
...BUT I'D RATHER NOT ASSUME THE WORST.



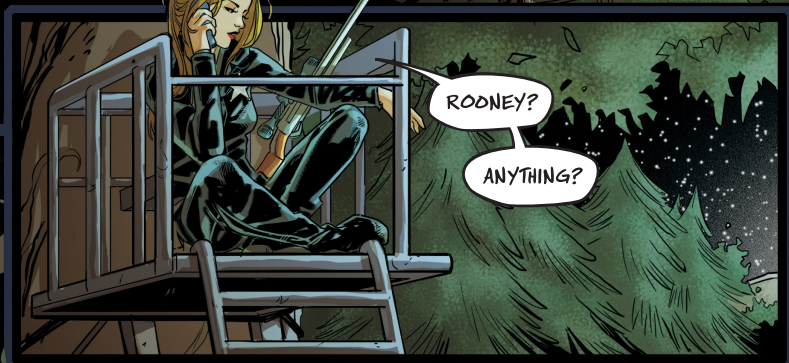
SO WHAT ABOUT RANGER RICK THERE? YOU GONNA CALL HIM?

I CAN THINK OF WORSE WAYS TO SPEND AN EVENING THAN STUCK IN A TREE WITH THAT GUY.

HE'S PRETTY CUTE, I'LL GIVE YOU THAT...

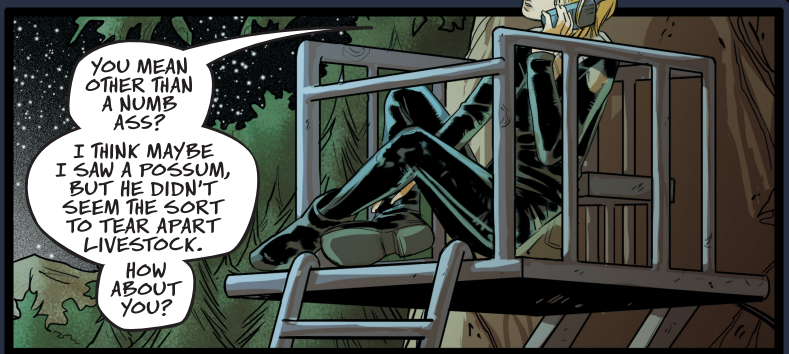


...BUT I'VE GOT OTHER THINGS TO WORRY ABOUT RIGHT NOW.



RODNEY?

ANYTHING?



YOU MEAN
OTHER THAN
A NUMB
ASS?

I THINK MAYBE
I SAW A POSSUM,
BUT HE DIDN'T
SEEM THE SORT
TO TEAR APART
LIVESTOCK.

HOW
ABOUT
YOU?

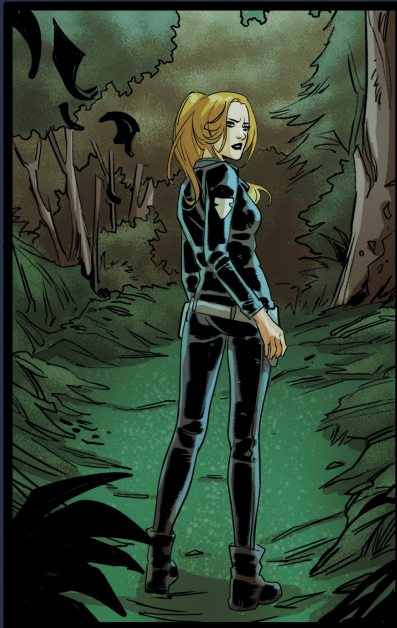
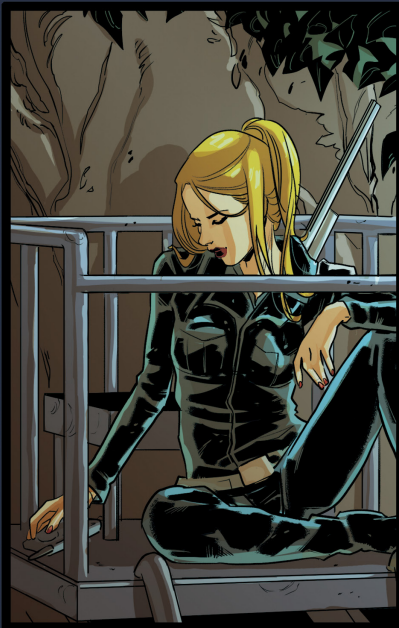


NOTHING
EXCEPT THE
COLD. MAYBE
I SHOULD'VE
CALLED RANGER
RICK, AT LEAST
IT'D BE
WARMER.



THINK I'LL
HAVE A WALK
AROUND, JUST TO
GET SOME BLOOD
FLOWING.

STAY IN
TOUCH.



HRAAARR



UWHFF!



DOWN,
BOY!



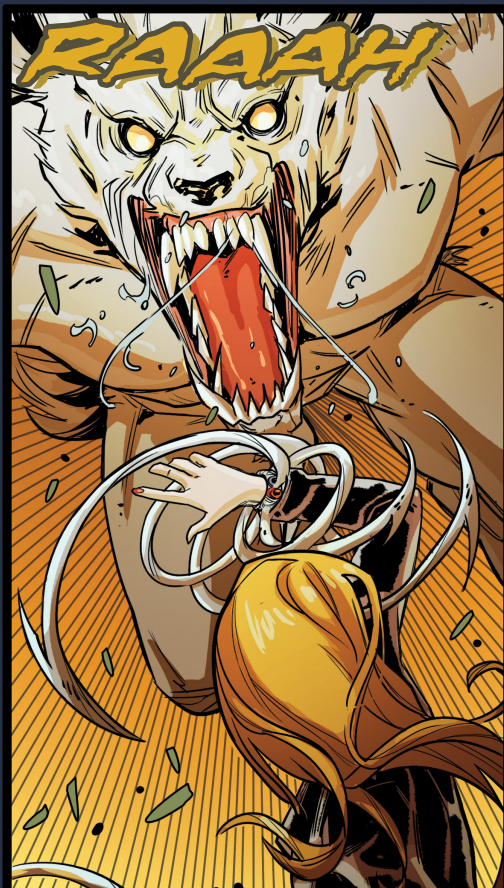
YOU
JUST A
WEIRD-ASS
BIG
WOLF...



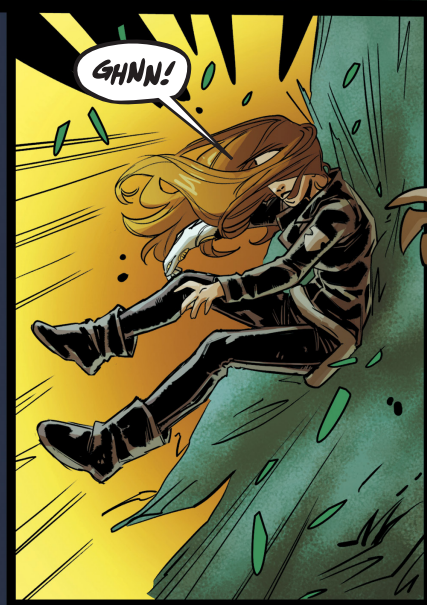
...OR
SOMETHING
ELSE?

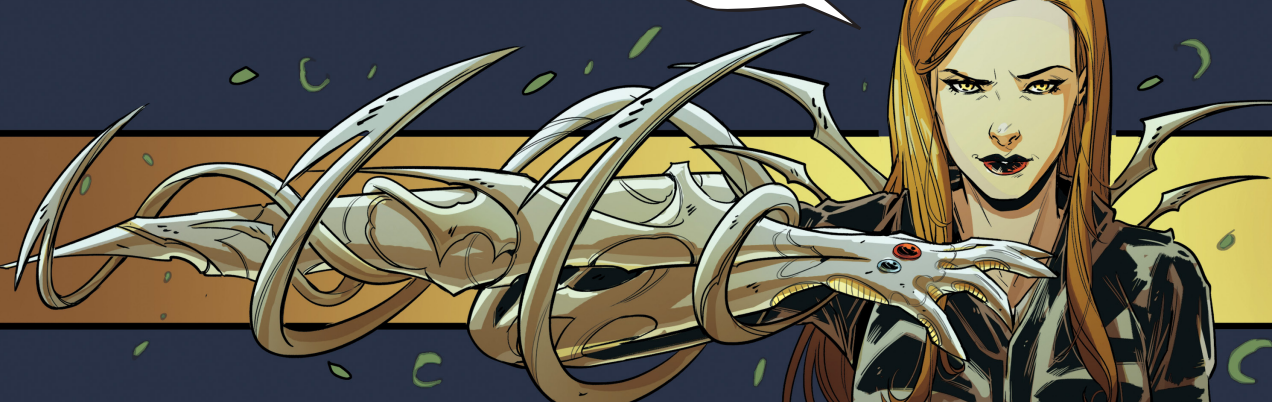
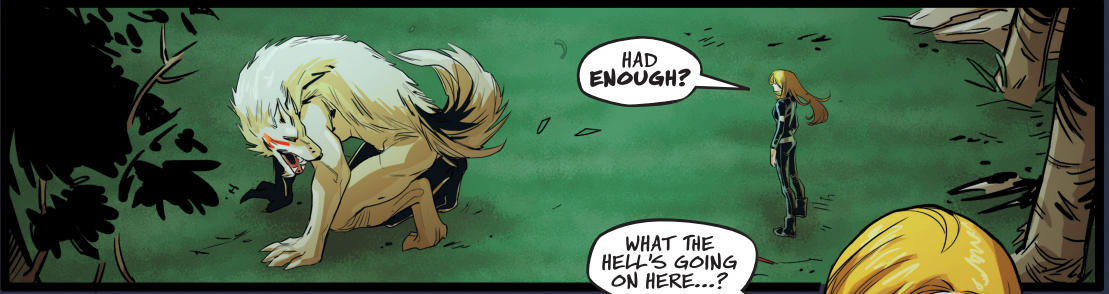


RRRRRRRR



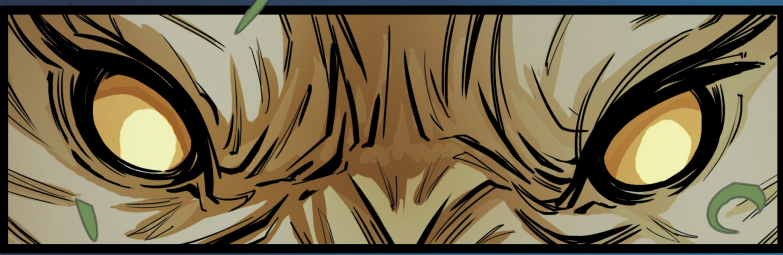
RAAAAH



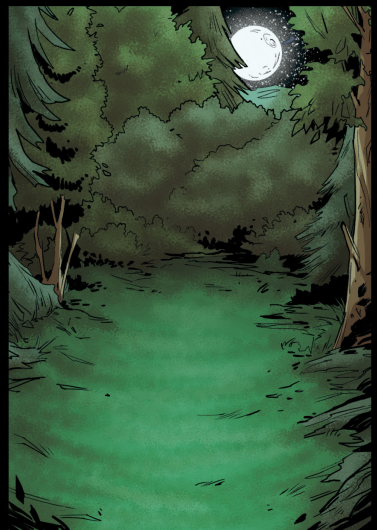


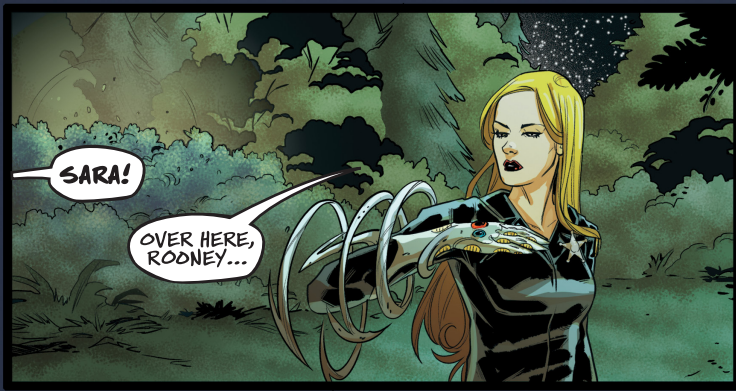


WHAT DO YOU WANT?!



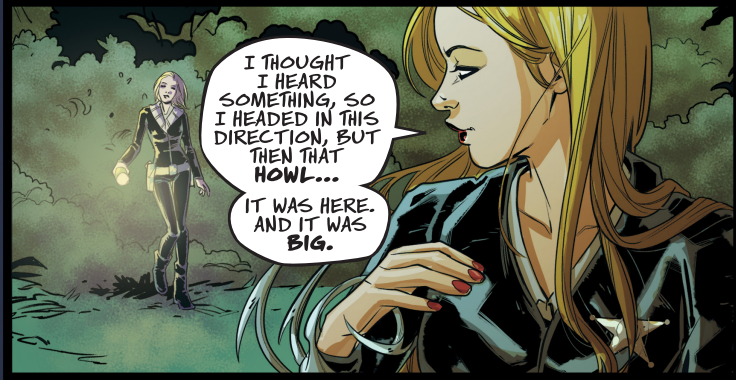
HRROOWL





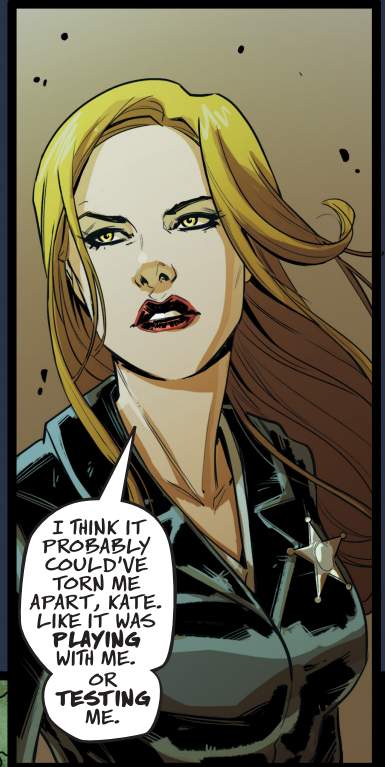
SARA!

OVER HERE,
RODNEY...

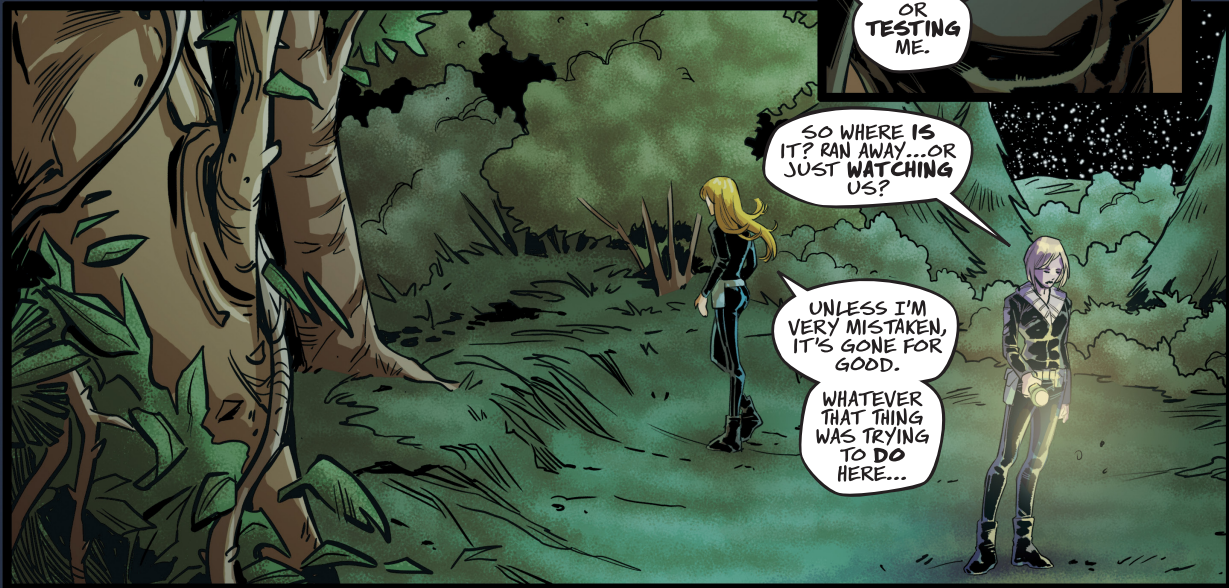


I THOUGHT I HEARD
SOMETHING, SO
I HEADED IN THIS
DIRECTION, BUT
THEN THAT
HOWL...

IT WAS HERE.
AND IT WAS
BIG.



I THINK IT
PROBABLY
COULD'VE
TORN ME
APART, KATE.
LIKE IT WAS
PLAYING
WITH ME.
OR
TESTING
ME.

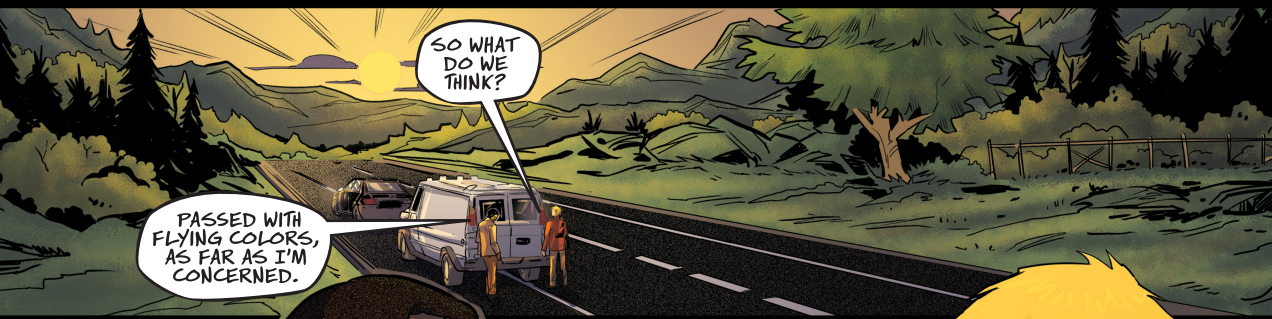


SO WHERE IS
IT? RAN AWAY...OR
JUST WATCHING
US?

UNLESS I'M
VERY MISTAKEN,
IT'S GONE FOR
GOOD.

WHATEVER
THAT THING
WAS TRYING
TO DO
HERE...

"...I'M PRETTY
SURE IT WAS
ACCOMPLISHED."

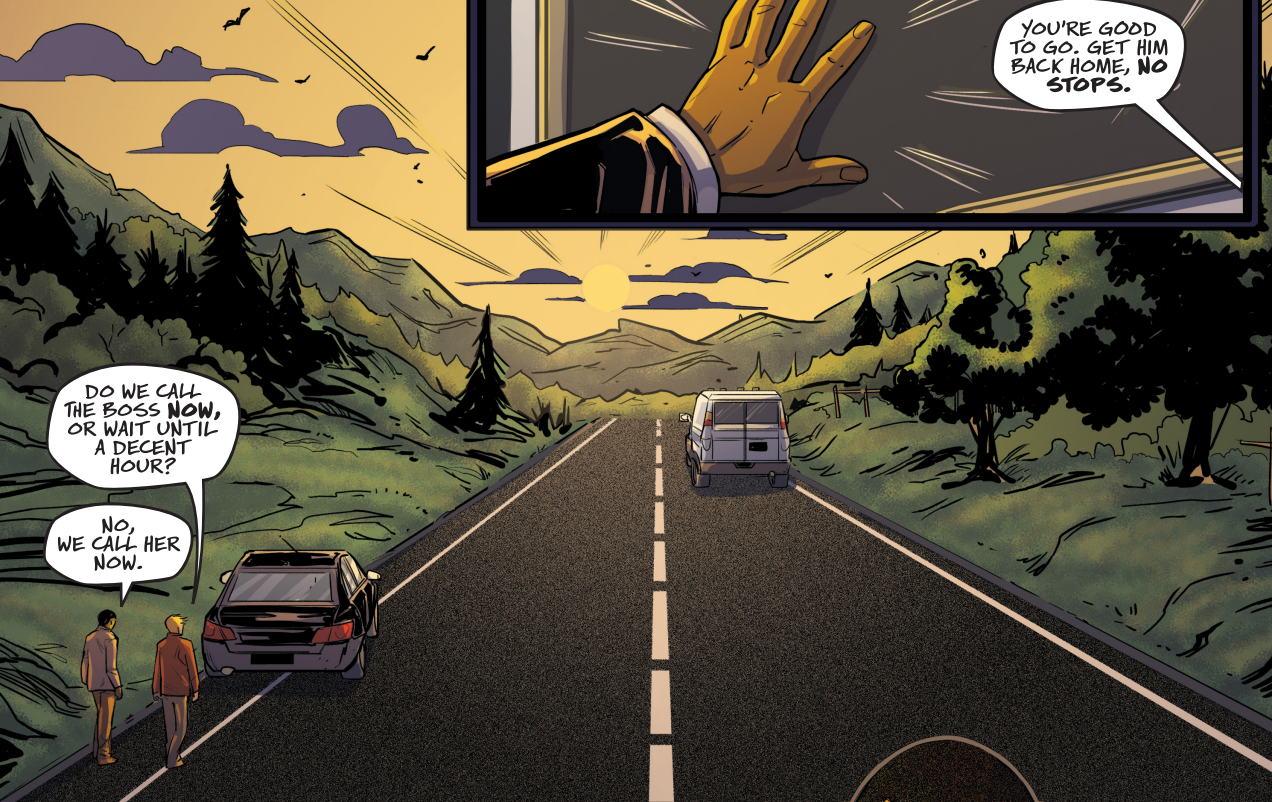




...PEZZINI IS EVERYTHING WE HOPED.




YOU'RE GOOD TO GO. GET HIM BACK HOME, NO STOPS.



DO WE CALL THE BOSS NOW, OR WAIT UNTIL A DECENT HOUR?



NO, WE CALL HER NOW.



SHE'LL WANT TO KNOW THAT SARA PEZZINI IS EXACTLY WHO SHE'S LOOKING FOR...

TO BE CONTINUED!

NEXT ISSUE

WITCHBLADE®

#180



DARKNESS FALLS: THE DEATH OF
JACKIE ESTACADO PART 1

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THE HEAVIEST TRIP IS THE ONE BACK HOME.

MATT FRACTION

CHRISTIAN WARD

ODY-C



A GENDER-BENT
EYE-POPPING
PSYCHEDELIC
SCIENCE FICTION
ODYSSEY
BEGINS HERE!



NOVEMBER
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So, a warrior scarecrow god
walks into a bar...

RUMBLE

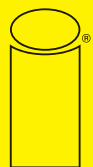
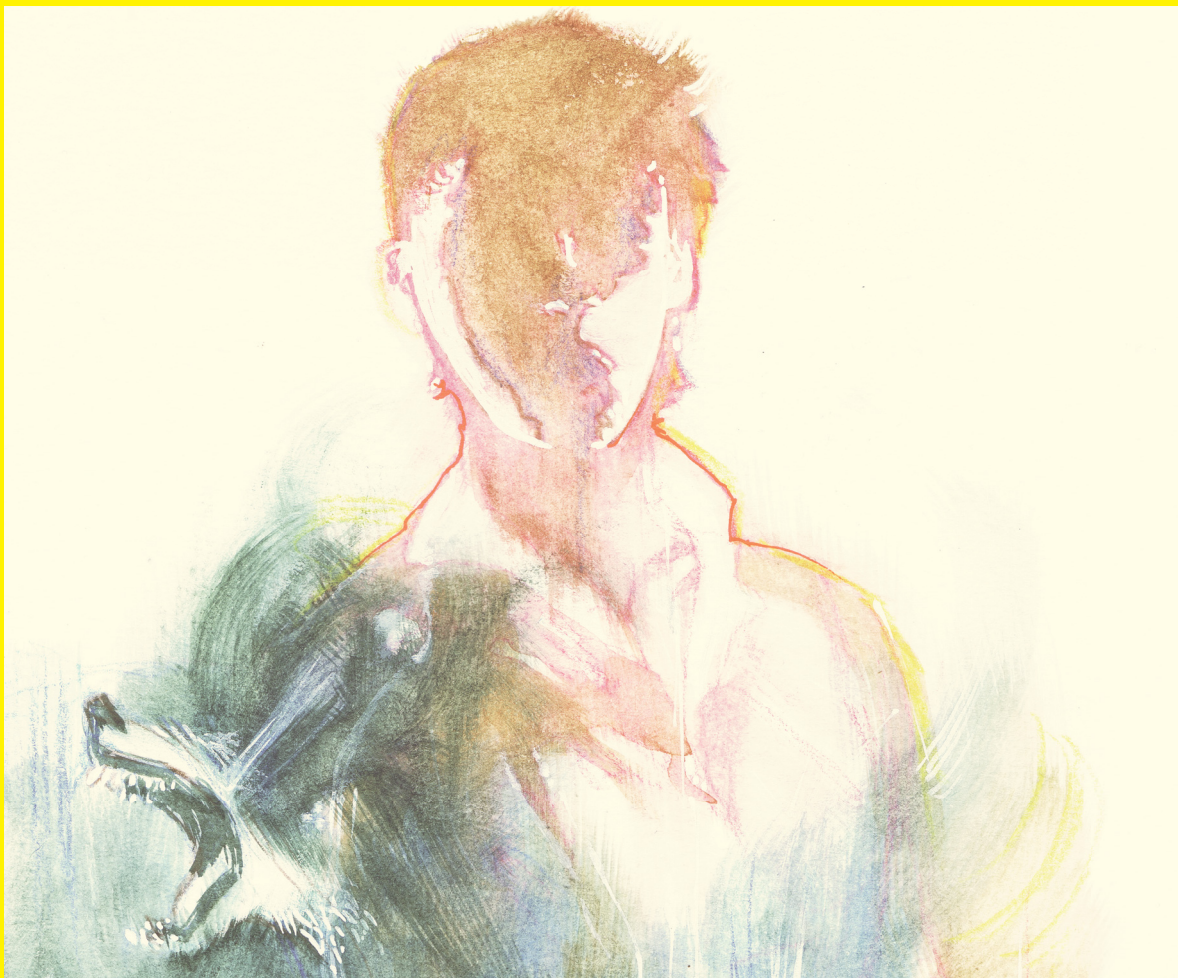
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