



LEES
CORMACK
LEE

SINK



MONSTERS

DIGITAL DELUXE EDITION

Lee Cormack 2023

SINK

MONSTERS

SINK #12 - "The Monkey's Baw"
&
SINK #13 - "The Gorbals Vampire"



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Previously on **SINK**

*Sinkhill is a notorious, crime-ridden district of Glasgow, Scotland, where chaos and violence reign. But if there is order to be found in that chaos, it comes in the form of **Si McKirdie**. Based in Sinkhill, Si runs the most dangerous criminal organisation in the city, and has long held a formidable reputation as a figure of all-encompassing, possibly even supernatural power and influence.*

*But lately, that invincible aura has taken a few hits. The arrival in Sinkhill of masked vigilante **Mr. Dig** and vengeful hell-raiser **Florence Kilcolnm** have each come to represent major challenges to his authority. The disappearance of one of his subordinates – a Dickhead called **Jordan** – has caused a rift with **Emma Callaghan**, one of Si's few friends. And he's fallen out of favour with his boss, an enigmatic figure known as **The Duke**, who oversees numerous underworld networks like Si's throughout the UK, each in search of an entity known only as the **Black Door**.*

*And a young boy called **Robbie Carmichael** has been found dead, his body discarded in a pile of trash, a massive bite taken out of his neck.*

***Chrissie Woods**, an elderly resident of Sinkhill, believes she knows who is responsible. There is an old local legend in Glasgow about **Iron-Tooth Jack**, the Gorbals Vampire. Chrissie believes that Jack is real, and that he has returned. For Chrissie, the horrors of the present are connected to horrific evils she experienced as a child, seventy years ago...*



Si McKirdie



Mr. Dig



Florence Kilcolnm



The Duke



Emma Callaghan



Robbie Carmichael



Chrissie Woods

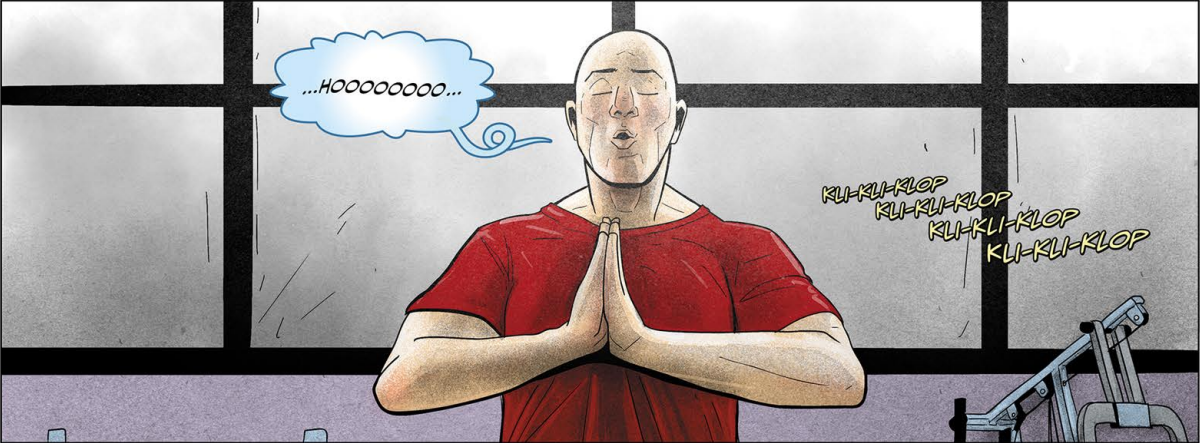


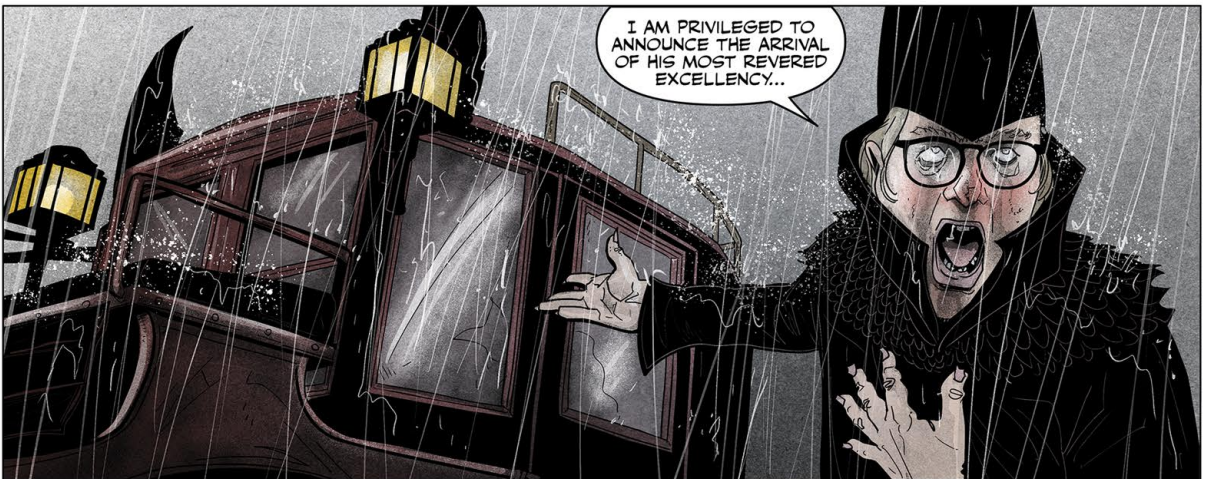
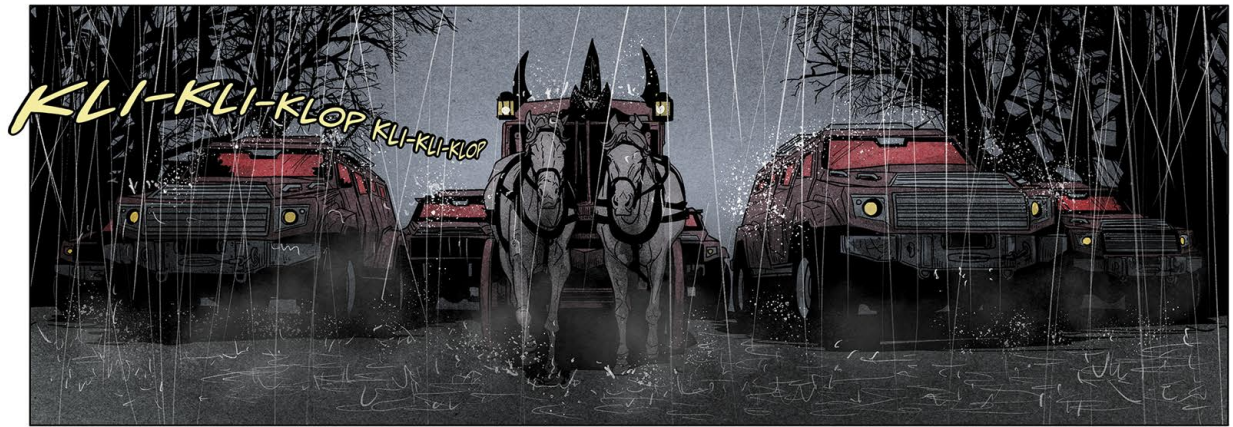
Iron-Tooth Jack



“THE MONKEY’S BAW”

TWELVE







**LORD
AUGUSTUS
GLORY
WETHERFORD VI,
DUKE OF THE
RIGHTEOUS
BLACK!**

GOOD MORNING, DUKE! AS PLEASED AS I AM WITH YOUR VISITATION, IF I HAD KNOWN YOUR ARRIVAL WOULD BE EARLIER THAN ANTICIPATED, I WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER PREPARED.

OH, SI MCKIRDIE, OLD BEAN, WITH THE DISARRAY OF YOUR DOMAIN, I CONCLUDED THERE WAS NO TIME TO WASTE!

BUT LET US HASTEN INSIDE. THE FOUL SCOTTISH AIR DISAGREES WITH MY TUM-TUM.





SHALL I CUT RIGHT TO THE CHASE? DADDY SWORE BY YOU. HE USED TO SAY YOU WERE A FORCE OF NATURE, THAT YOU CLIMBED TO THE TOP ON A MOUNTAIN OF BROKEN BODIES.

THAT'S WHY HE APPOINTED YOU AT THE HEAD OF OUR SCOTTISH CHAPTER. BUT THAT WAS A LONG TIME AGO, AND DADDY'S DEAD AND GONE NOW. THINGS CHANGE.

INDEED THEY DO.

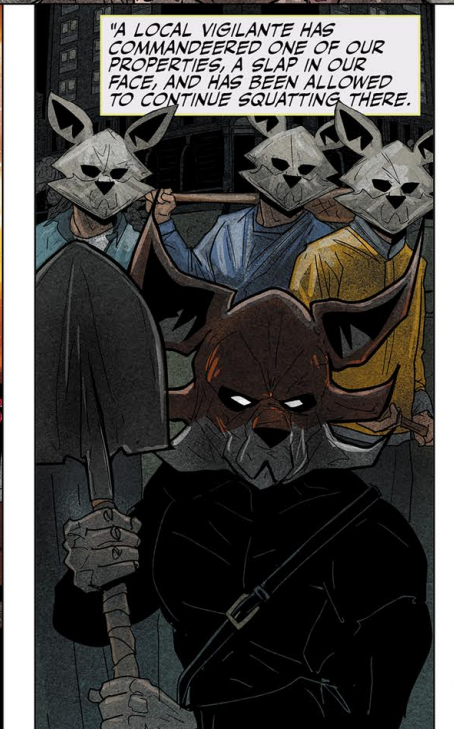


IF YOU ASK ME, UPWARD MOBILITY IS A NICE IDEA AND ALL, BUT SOME QUALITIES ARE JUST INNATE. TRUE GREATNESS IS THE KIND YOU ARE BORN INTO, NOT GIVEN.

PERHAPS THAT IS WHY THIS BURDEN SEEMS TO BE PROVING TOO MUCH FOR YOU THESE DAYS.



"WHERE DO I BEGIN? YOU ALLOWED AN ASSOCIATED BUSINESS TO BURN TO THE GROUND WITH NO REPRISAL.



"A LOCAL VIGILANTE HAS COMMANDEERED ONE OF OUR PROPERTIES, A SLAP IN OUR FACE, AND HAS BEEN ALLOWED TO CONTINUE SQUATTING THERE.



"AND THEN THE GHOSTER, SUPPOSEDLY YOUR GREAT SECRET WEAPON, YOUR ULTIMATE ACE IN THE HOLE, GOT SWATTED LIKE A FLY."



BUT YOU DON'T. YOU'RE NOT JUST SOME SHITTY GLASGOW CRIME BOSS ANYMORE. YOU ARE PART OF SOMETHING BIGGER, A GRAND CAUSE.

AND ANY PAIN, MISERY, DEATH, ALL THAT IS NOT JUST AN ACCEPTABLE COST OF BUSINESS... IT IS PART OF THE DESIGN. IT IS ALL FERTILE SOIL FOR WHAT WE SEEK TO GROW.

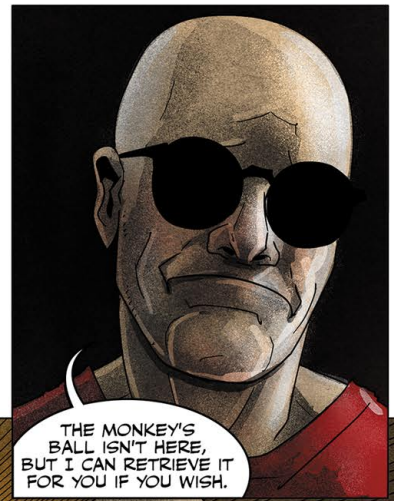
NONE OF THIS IS STRAIGHT-FORWARD.

ANY DECISION I MAKE HAS AN IMPACT. I HAVE TO THINK OF THE PEOPLE IN THIS CITY--



ON THE SUBJECT OF OUR CAUSE,
THERE IS A CERTAIN ARTEFACT
UNDER YOUR PROTECTION.
THE MONKEY'S BALL.

YOU WERE GIVEN
IT TO SAFEGUARD
SOME TIME AGO, BUT
I MAY HAVE NEED FOR IT,
AND WOULD RATHER
IT WAS IN MORE
DEPENDABLE
HANDS.



THE MONKEY'S
BALL ISN'T HERE,
BUT I CAN RETRIEVE IT
FOR YOU IF YOU WISH.



NOT HERE?!
THIS WHOLE HOUSE
IS FILLED WITH THIS
WORTHLESS JUNK, AND
YOU MANAGED TO LOSE
THE ONE ITEM OF TRUE
VALUE IN YOUR
POSSESSION?

IT'S NOT
LOST. IT IS
ELSEWHERE,
UNDER SAFE
KEEPING.

IT IS UNSAFE FOR
THOSE WHO KNOW THE
POWER OF THE MONKEY'S
BALL TO HAVE IT NEAR THEM
FOR TOO LONG. THAT'S WHY
YOUR FATHER GAVE IT TO ME.



AND THIS IS FAR FROM JUNK.
THIS WAS GIFTED TO ME BY A
TRIBE IN THE AMAZON RAINFOREST
WHO HAVE HAD NO CONTACT WITH
THE OUTSIDE WORLD FOR
GENERATIONS. I LIVED WITH
THEM FOR A YEAR.

THESE
POTS HAVE
IMMENSE VALUE
TO THEM.

THEY BELIEVE
THEY ARE VESSELS IN
WHICH THEIR OWNERS CAN
HOUSE THEIR DREAMS, TO
ONE DAY RENDER THEM
TANGIBLE. TO BE GIVEN
ONE IS A GREAT HONOUR.



EACH ITEM
HERE TELLS A
STORY. I BELIEVE
EXPANDING ONE'S
WORLDVIEW IS IMPORTANT.
I'D BE HAPPY TO TELL
YOU ALL ABOUT MORE
OF THESE ITEMS
DURING YOUR
STAY.

THOUGH
YOU'RE EARLY, I
ALREADY HAVE
YOUR ROOMS
PREPARED.

THAT'S VERY
KIND OF YOU,
BUT I WON'T BE
TAKING A ROOM.



I'LL BE
TAKING THE
HOUSE.



FRANK, GET THE DOOR.
I'LL BE SETTING UP
SHOP AT THE CLUB
FOR A WHILE.

I'VE PREPARED
YOUR OFFICE FOR
YOUR ARRIVAL,
BOSS.

THE BLACK HOLE

MR. MCKIRDIE, I'VE BEEN WAITING
TO SEE YOU. RUDDY DAWSON IS STILL
WAITING FOR AN ANSWER FROM YOU
ABOUT THE DEVELOPMENT CONTRACT.
HE'S BEEN VERY PATIENT, BUT
HE NEEDS TO--

FRANK, HAVE
YOU BEEN
CRYING?

IT'S NOTHING. HUMPH, MY CAT'S GONE
MISSING. BUT YOU HAVE FAR MORE
IMPORTANT MATTERS TO--

DON'T IGNORE ME, MR.
MCKIRDIE. I'M HERE ON BEHALF
OF RUDDY, AND ANY DISRESPECT
OF ME WILL BE TAKEN AS
DISRESPECT OF HIM!

AAH!!

AAAH!! THUK

THE GINGER
ONE? HE'S A
CUTIE.

DON'T YOU
WORRY, WE'LL
TRACK IT DOWN.
I'LL MAKE IT A
PRIORITY!

UUUUUUH...



NO! GET
FUCKED, I TOLD
YOU I DON'T
WANT TO TALK
TO YOU.



MOST PEOPLE
WOULDN'T DREAM
OF TELLING ME TO
GET FUCKED, YOU
KNOW.

GREAT. WHY
DON'T YOU GO
HASSLE ONE OF
THEM?

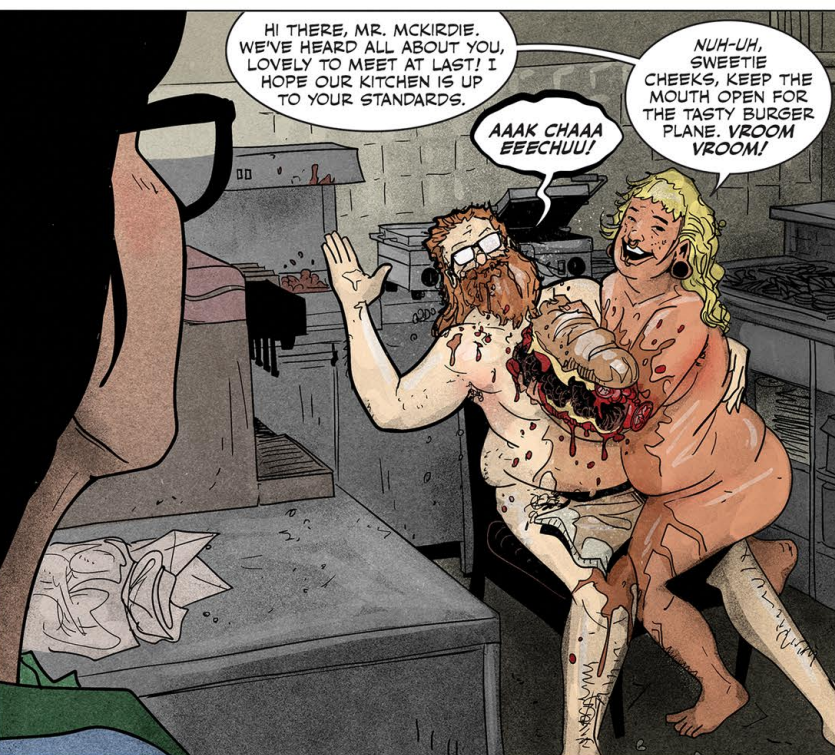
COME ON,
EMMA, I MISS
OUR CHATS. HOW'S
BASTARD DOING?
HOW LONG HAVE YOU
BEEN WORKING
HERE?



SURELY YOU KNOW ALREADY,
IF YOU ALREADY KNEW ENOUGH
TO FIND ME HERE, RIGHT?
BOUNDARIES, SI.

AND YOU SHOULDN'T BE IN
HERE. HARRY AND BLOSSOM
WHO RUN THE PLACE DON'T
LIKE ANYONE BACK IN
THE KITCHEN.

WOULD
THAT BE
THEM?



HI THERE, MR. MCKIRDIE.
WE'VE HEARD ALL ABOUT YOU,
LOVELY TO MEET AT LAST! I
HOPE OUR KITCHEN IS UP
TO YOUR STANDARDS.

AAAK CHAAA
EEECHUU!

NUH-UH, SWEETIE
CHEEKS, KEEP THE
MOUTH OPEN FOR
THE TASTY BURGER
PLANE. VROOM
VROOM!



WELL, TO MY
KNOWLEDGE,
NOBODY HAS DIED
IN THIS KITCHEN,
SO THAT MUST PUT
IT ABOVE MOST
OTHER SINKHILL
ETERIES!







WHAT IS THIS?!

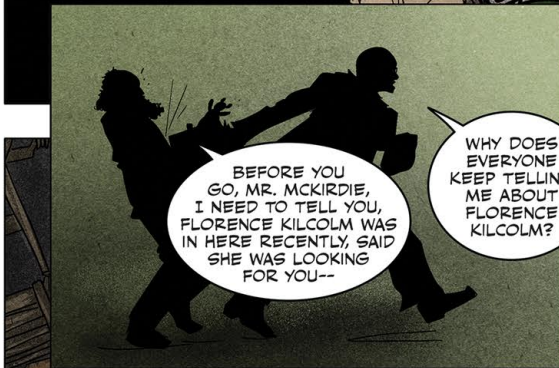


THIS WASN'T ME, MR. MCKIRDIE, I SWEAR! I DON'T KNOW HOW... JIMMY!

THAT DEADBEAT JIMMY COLE WAS SNOOPING AROUND THE CHEST A WHILE BACK, I TOLD HIM IT WASN'T FOR SALE.

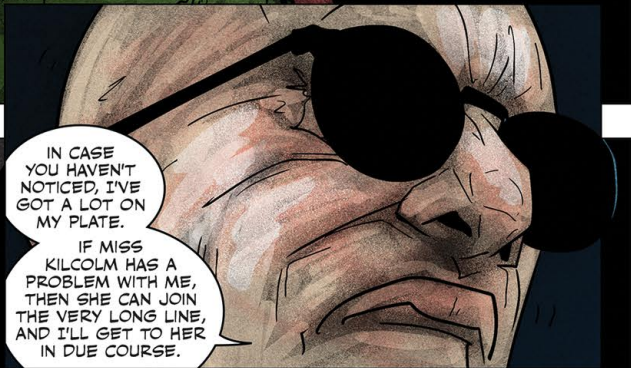
HE MUST HAVE TAKEN IT THEN. I CAN TELL YOU WHERE HE LIVES IF--

I KNOW WHERE JIMMY LIVES. I KNOW WHERE EVERYONE LIVES.



BEFORE YOU GO, MR. MCKIRDIE, I NEED TO TELL YOU, FLORENCE KILCOLM WAS IN HERE RECENTLY, SAID SHE WAS LOOKING FOR YOU--

WHY DOES EVERYONE KEEP TELLING ME ABOUT FLORENCE KILCOLM?



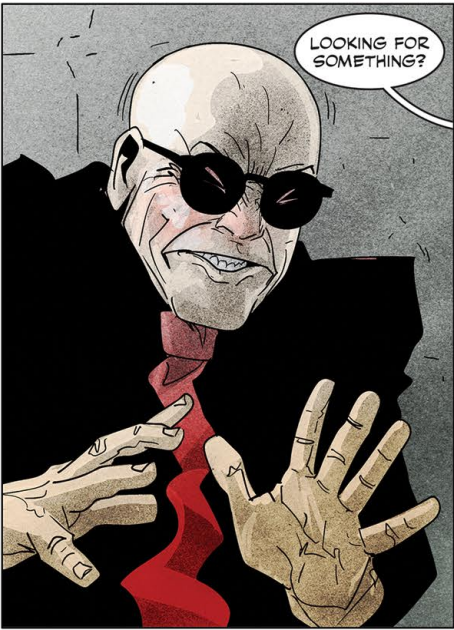
IN CASE YOU HAVEN'T NOTICED, I'VE GOT A LOT ON MY PLATE.

IF MISS KILCOLM HAS A PROBLEM WITH ME, THEN SHE CAN JOIN THE VERY LONG LINE, AND I'LL GET TO HER IN DUE COURSE.



ONE MORE THING, SORRY... JIMMY IS AN IDIOT, BUT HE'S NOT A BAD PERSON. PLEASE SHOW HIM SOME LENIENCY?

I'D BE MORE CONCERNED WITH ASKING FOR LENIENCY FOR YOU, PAUL, YOU REALLY FUCKED ME HERE. HIDING IN PLAIN SHITE, MORE LIKE!





WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? LET'S GO SEE THIS TRUSTED ASSOCIATE.

HE'S ON THE TOP FLOOR, BUT YOU NEED TO GIVE ME TEN SECONDS ONCE I'M UP THERE BEFORE YOU COME UP.

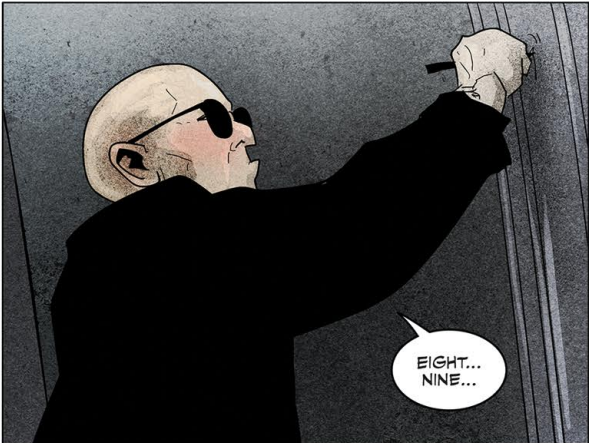
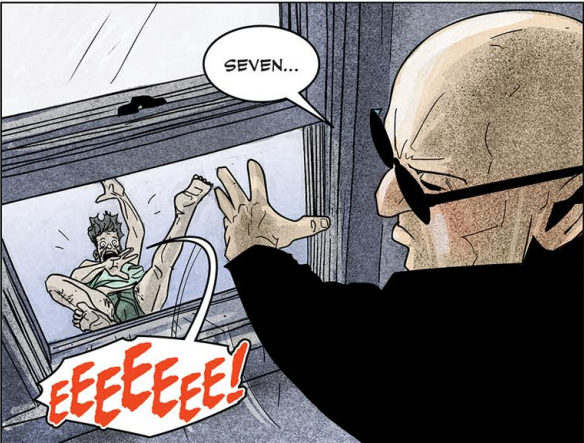
COME ON...

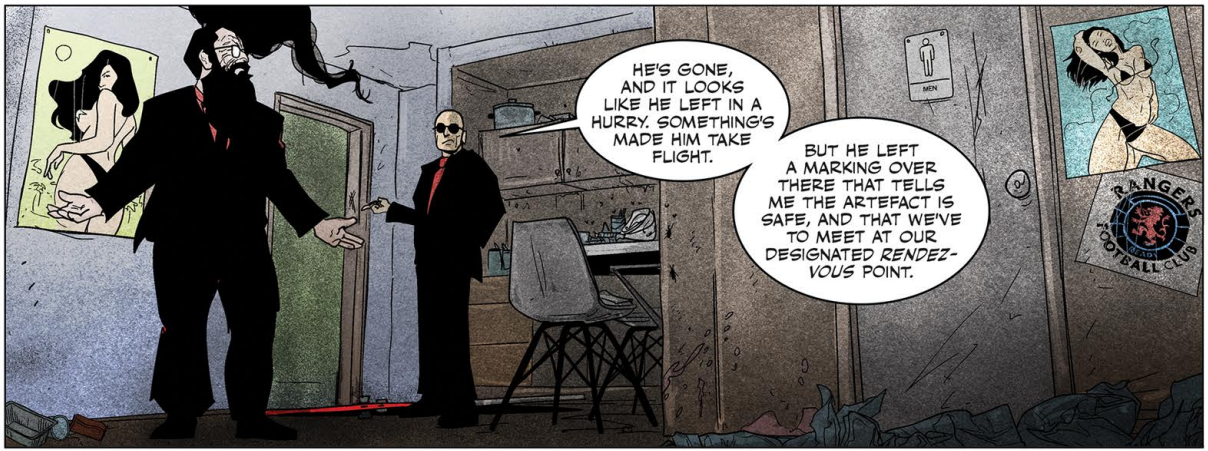
I'M SERIOUS. WHAT AM I GOING TO PULL IN TEN SECONDS?

HE'LL ONLY OPEN THE DOOR FOR ME, ALONE.

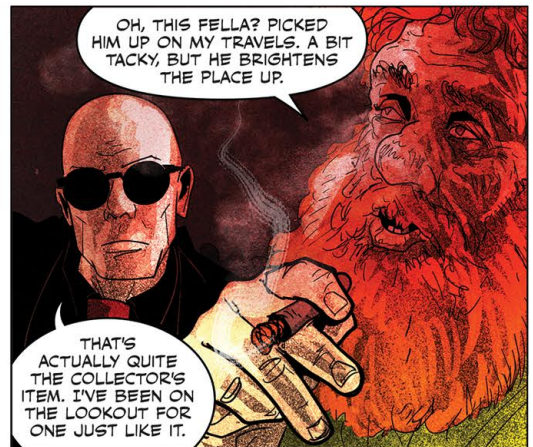
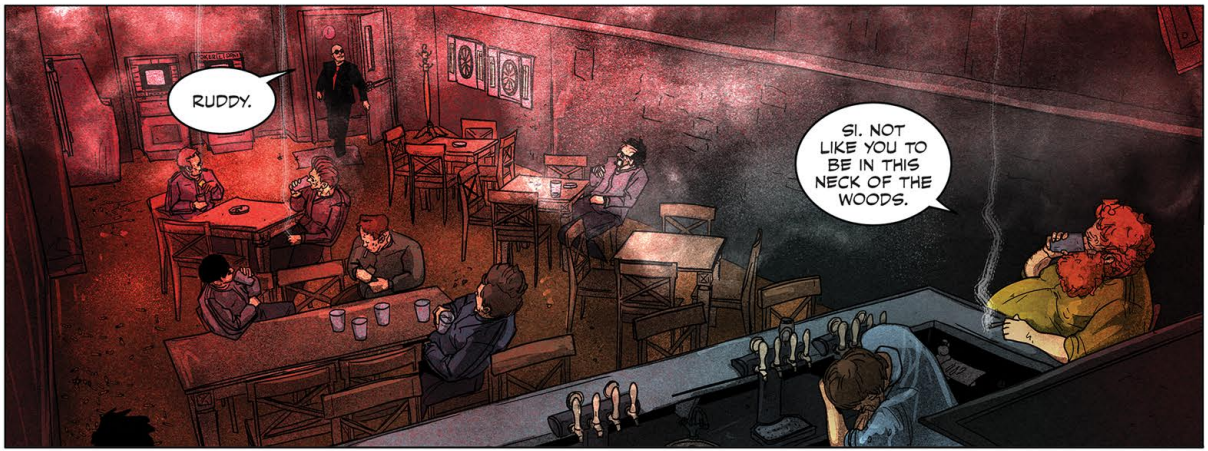
IF HE SUSPECTS EVEN THE SLIGHTEST THING IS AMISS, HE CUTS AND RUNS, HEADS TO OUR MEETING POINT WITH THE MONKEY'S BAW.

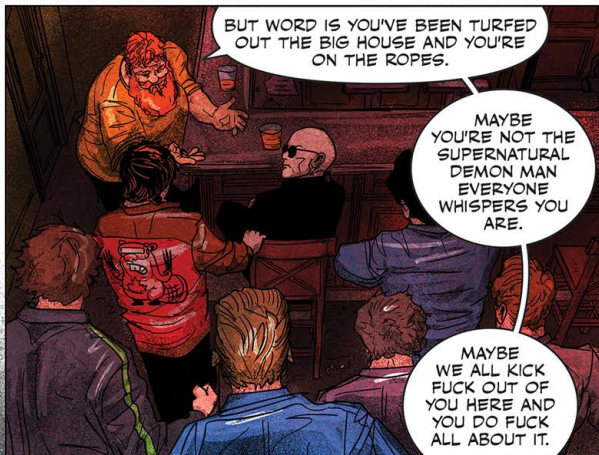
JUST TEN SECONDS, OKAY? IT WILL MAKE THINGS A LOT EASIER.



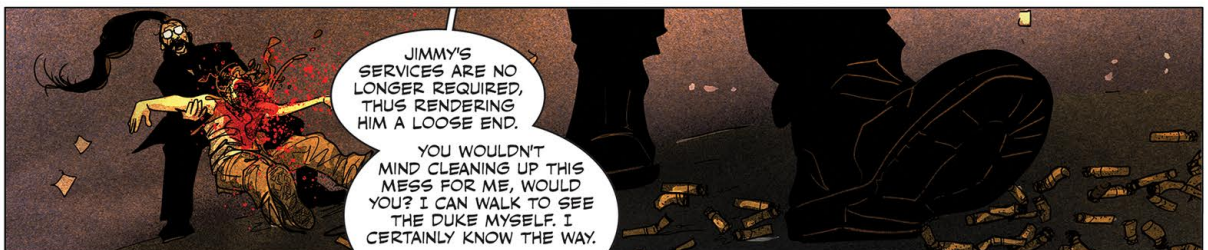
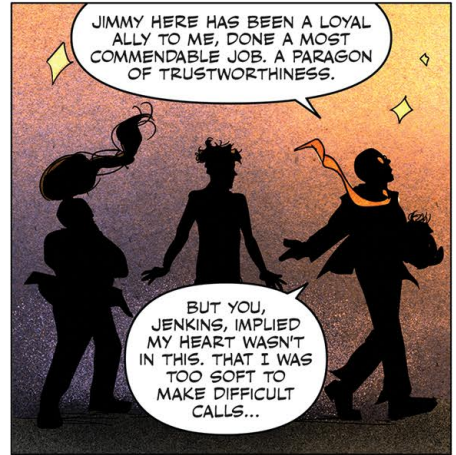


















WELL, MISS KILCOLM... THIS IS CERTAINLY ONE WAY TO GET UP A MEETING.

WHAT ELSE WIS I SUPPOSED TO DO? I'VE BIN LETTIN' EVERYONE KNOW I WANTED A WORD, YE SURE KNOW WHERE TO FIND ME.

BUT YE NEVER CAME! SO I CAME TO YOU.



YES, YES, YOU MADE QUITE THE SPLASH ON YOUR RETURN.

BUT IT MAY SHOCK YOU TO LEARN THAT I'M IN NO RUSH TO ATTEND TO UNSOLICITED FEEDBACK FROM THE PEANUT GALLERY ON HOW I CHOOSE TO RUN MY ORGANISATION.



THIS ISNAE ABOUT THAT. THIS IS ABOUT A WEE BOY CALLED **ROBBIE CARMICHAEL**.

HE WAS MURDERED. SOME SICK FUCK BIT THROUGH HIS NECK AND DROPPED HIM IN A PILE OF BIN BAGS LIKE HE WAS RUBBISH.

HIS MAW AND DA HAVE ASKED ME TO LOOK FOR ANSWERS.



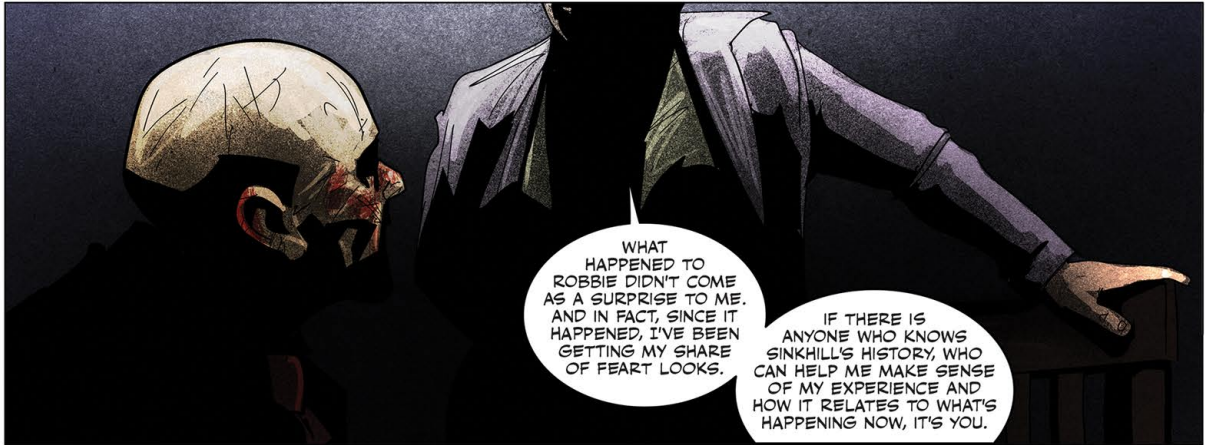
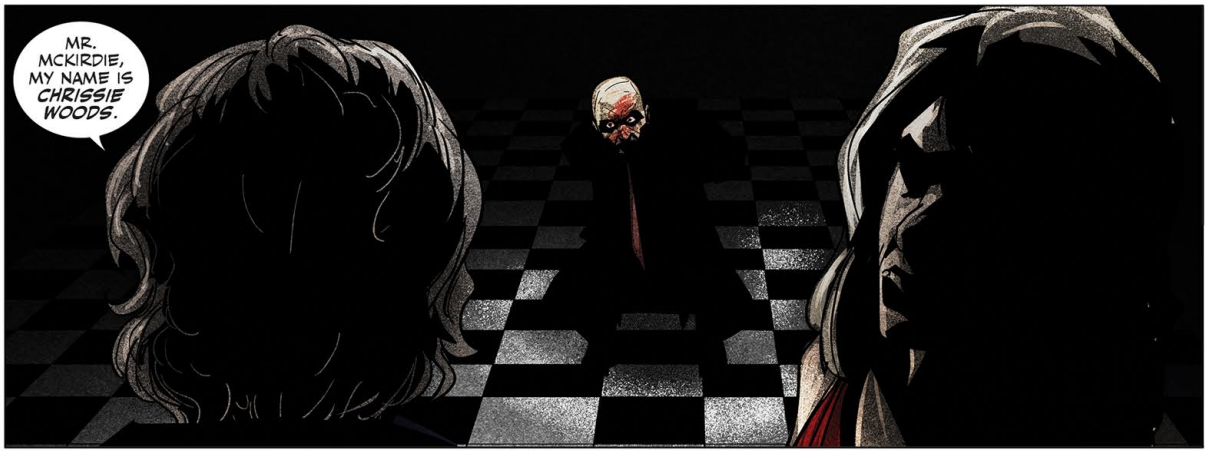
DO YOU SERIOUSLY THINK I HAVE THE TIME OR ENERGY TO BE OUT BEASTING ON LOCAL CHILDREN?

A RITUALISTIC KILLIN' LIKE THAT? FAR AS I'M CONCERNED YER FIRST ON MY--

**NOK-
NOK-
NOK**



BUT IT'S NO' MY CALL. THERE'S SOMEONE I WANT YE TO MEET, SOMEONE WHO NEEDS YE TO LISTEN TO THEM.





Mr. Gormick '24



“THE GORBAL’S VAMPIRE”

THIRTEEN



SINKHILL.

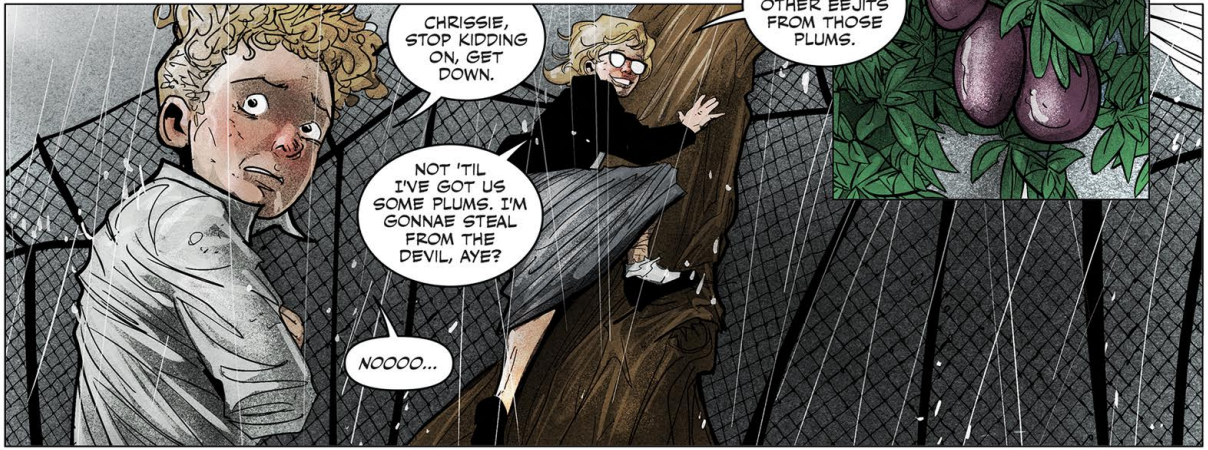
70 YEARS AGO.

WE
SHOULDN'T BE
HERE. GREGOR
SMITH SAYS THE
DEVIL LIVES IN
THERE.

GREGOR
SMITH EATS HIS
OWN BOGIES. THE
DEVIL COULD GO
ANYWHERE HE WANTS,
HE'S NO' CHOOSING
GLASGOW.

PEOPLE HAVE
BEEN SAYING THAT
AULD SPOOK STORY
FOR YEARS...

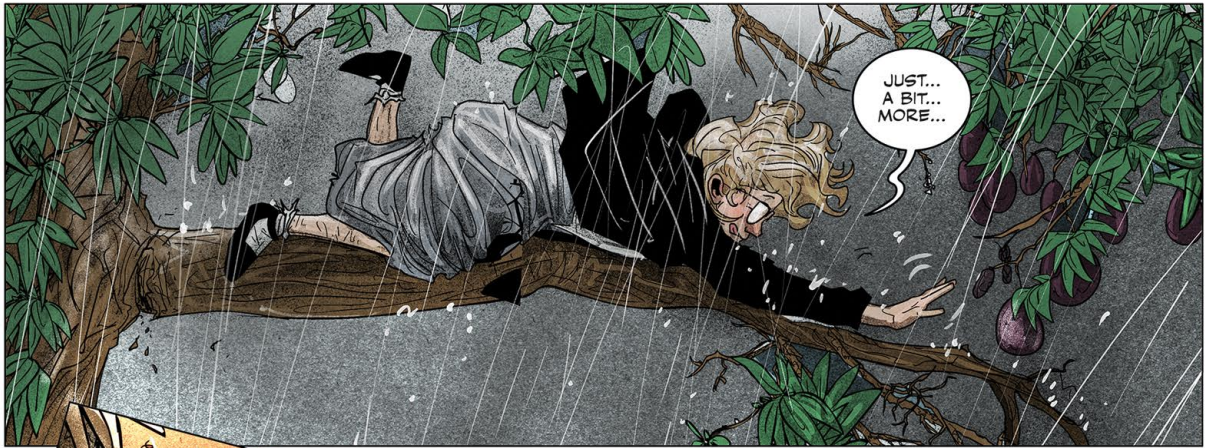
LIKELY
TO KEEP
OTHER EBJITS
FROM THOSE
PLUMS.



CHRISSIE,
STOP KIDDING
ON, GET
DOWN.

NOT 'TIL
I'VE GOT US
SOME PLUMS. I'M
GONNAE STEAL
FROM THE
DEVIL, AYE?

NOOOO...



JUST...
A BIT...
MORE...

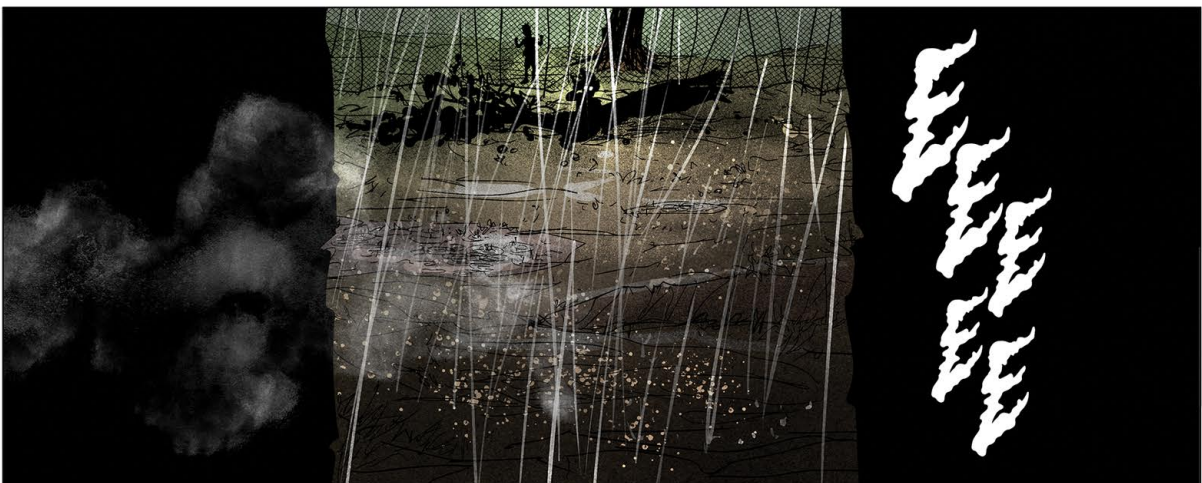
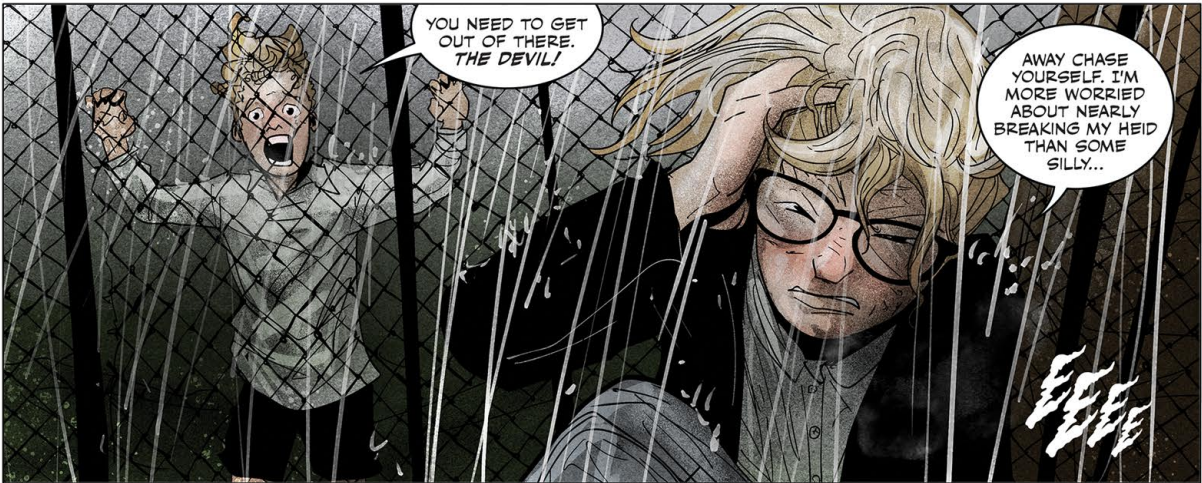


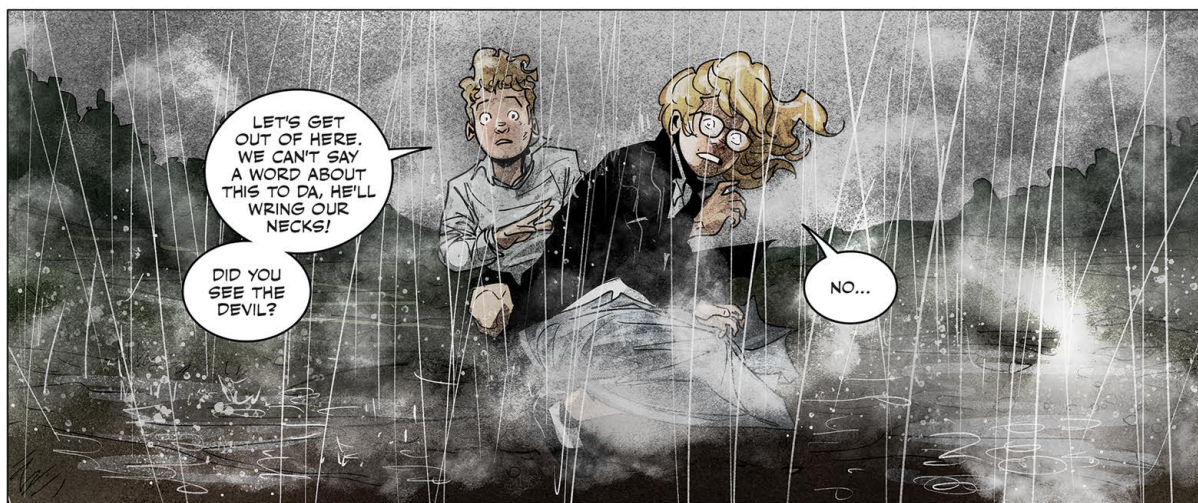
KRRK

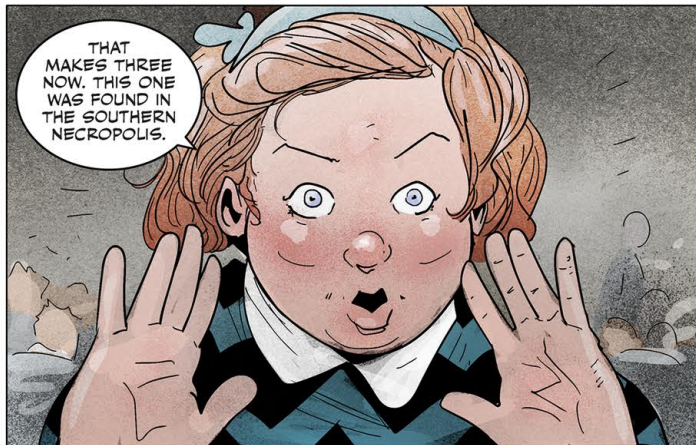


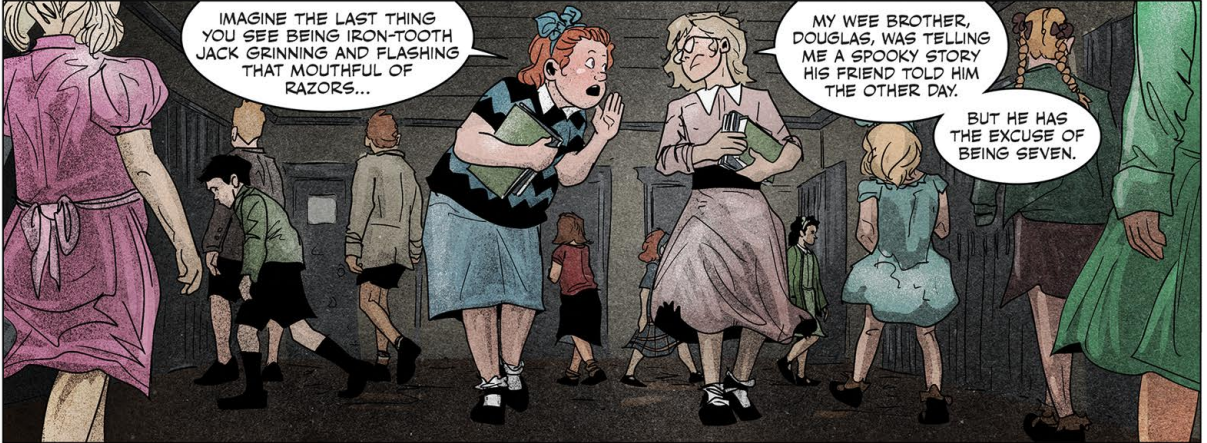
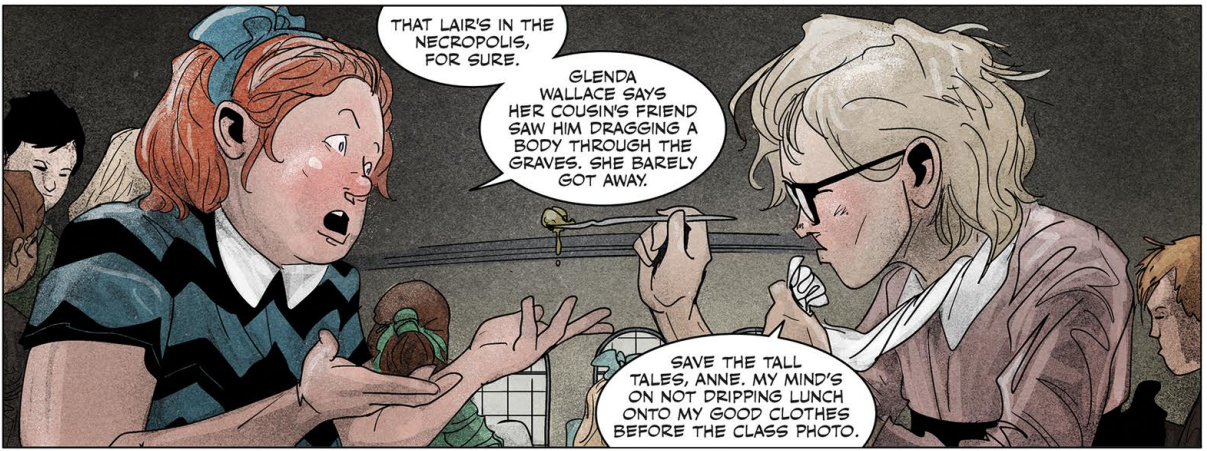
CHRISSIE!

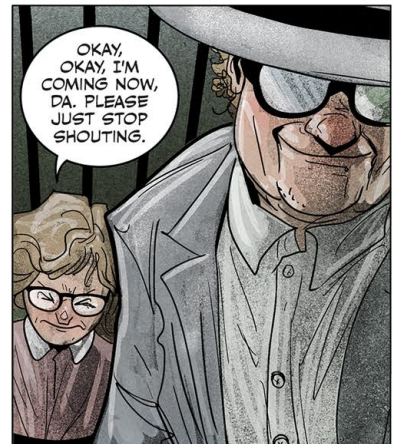
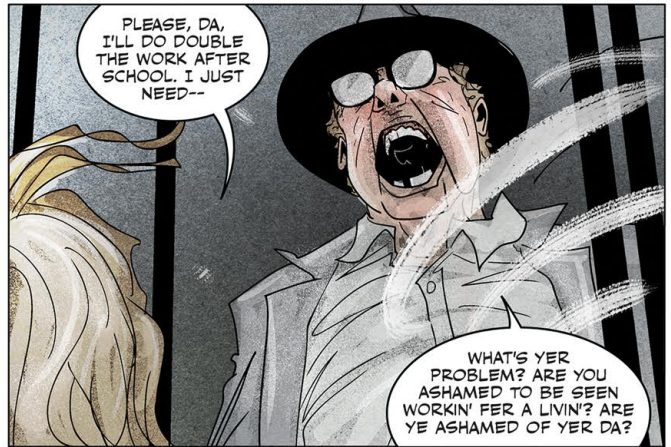
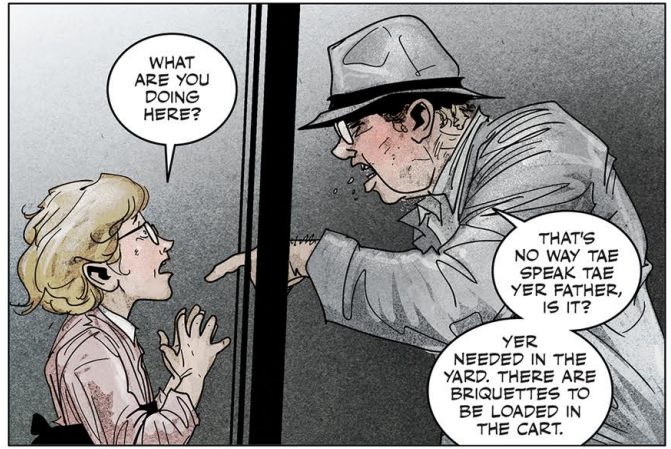
AAA
AH!





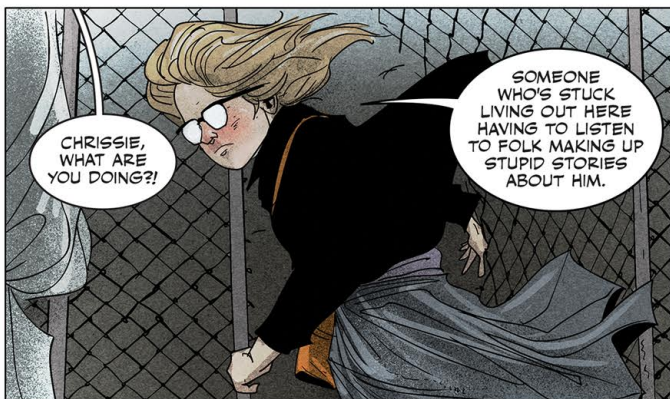
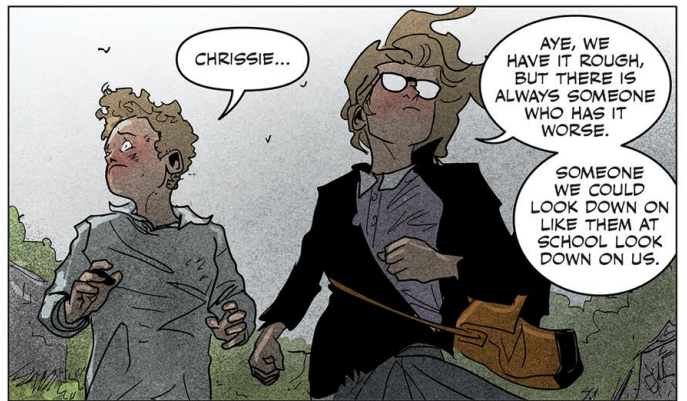
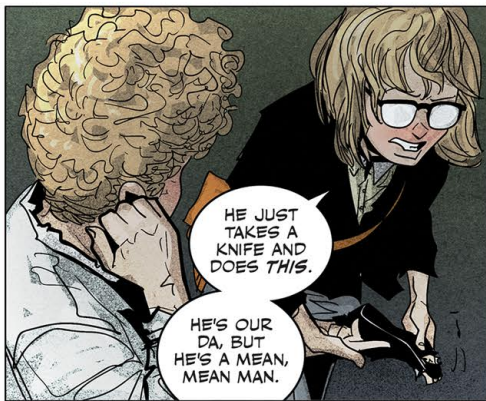
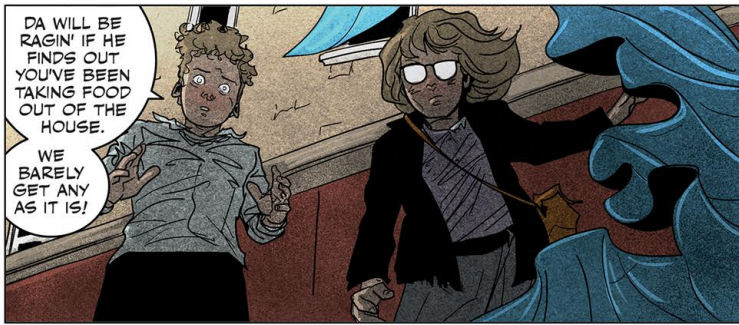


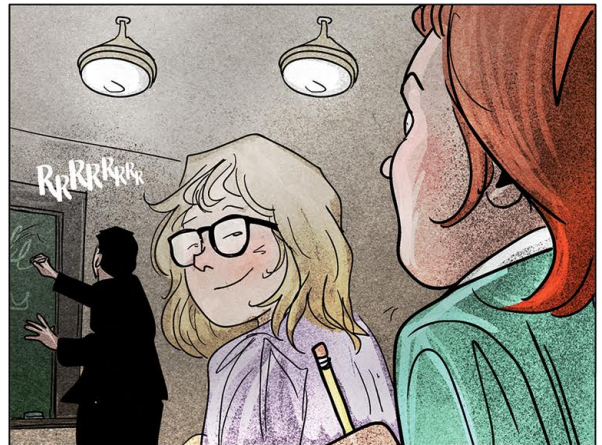
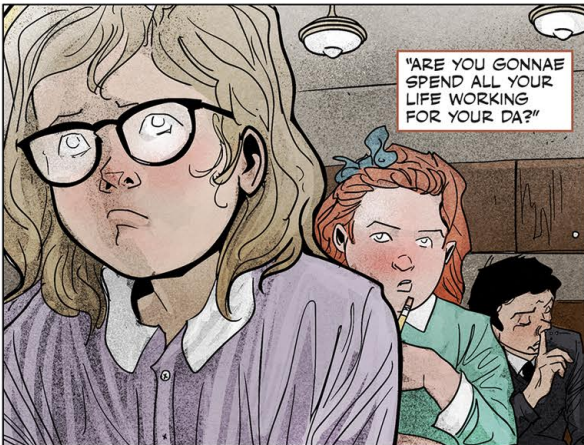
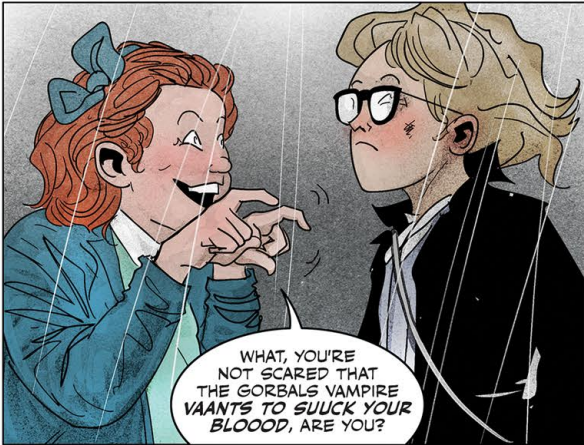


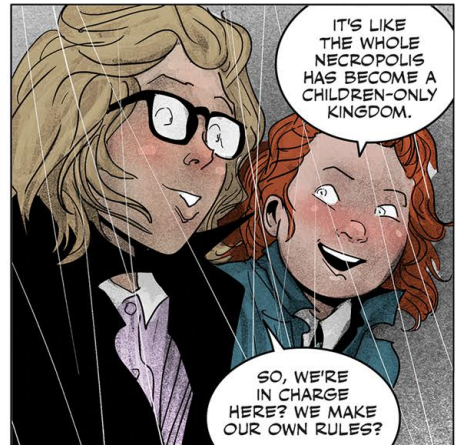


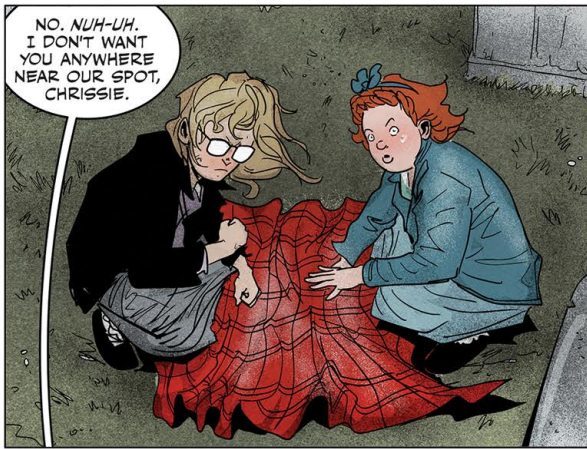


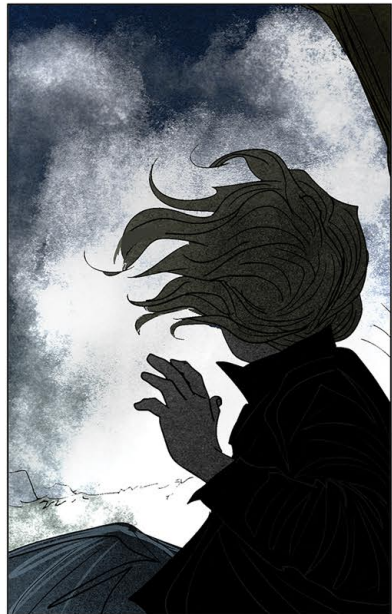
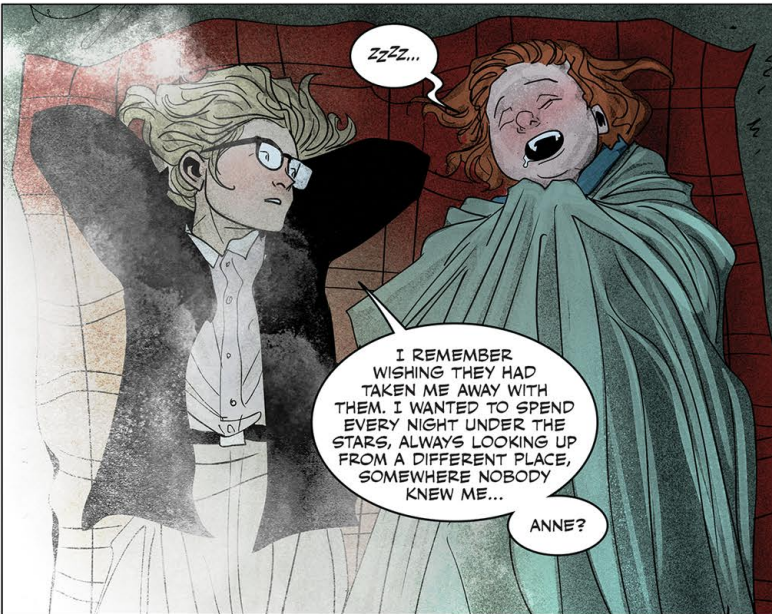
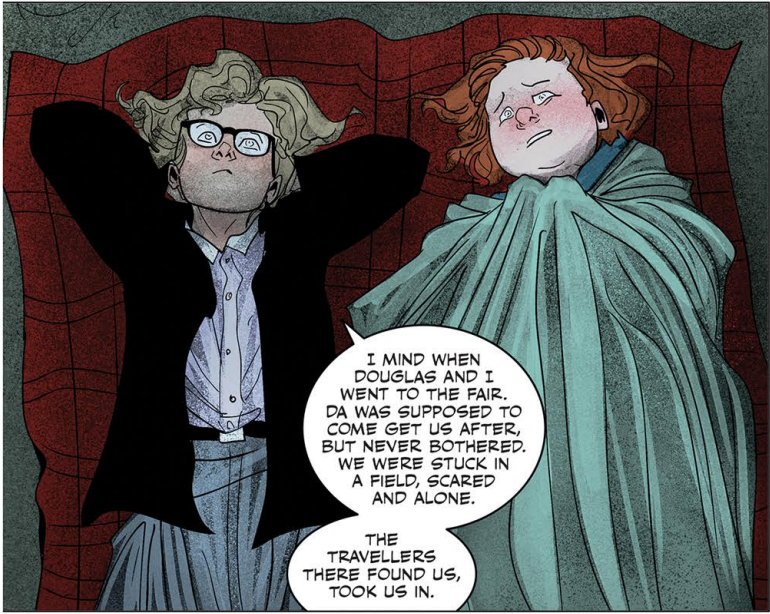










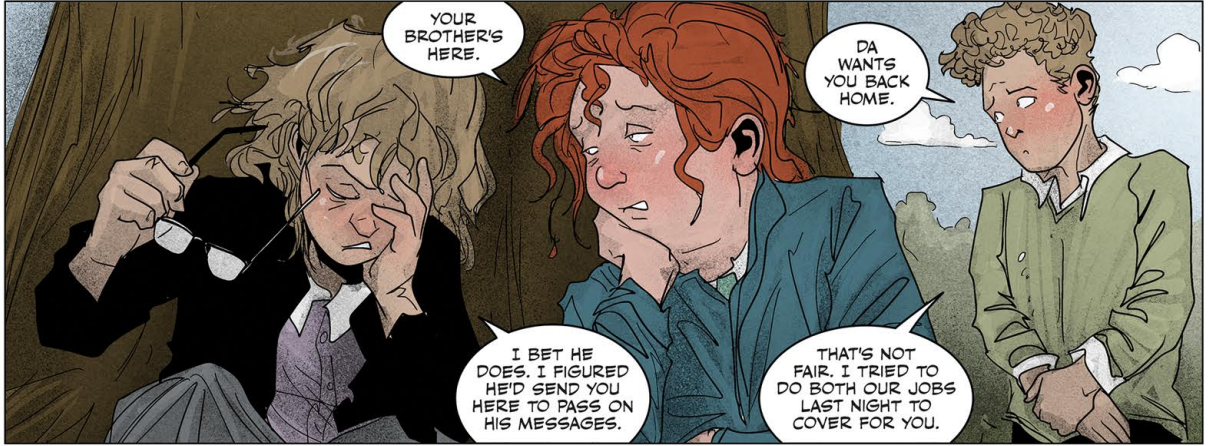




YOU'RE
NEEDED.



CHRISSIE!



YOUR BROTHER'S HERE.

DA WANTS YOU BACK HOME.

I BET HE DOES. I FIGURED HE'D SEND YOU HERE TO PASS ON HIS MESSAGES.

THAT'S NOT FAIR. I TRIED TO DO BOTH OUR JOBS LAST NIGHT TO COVER FOR YOU.

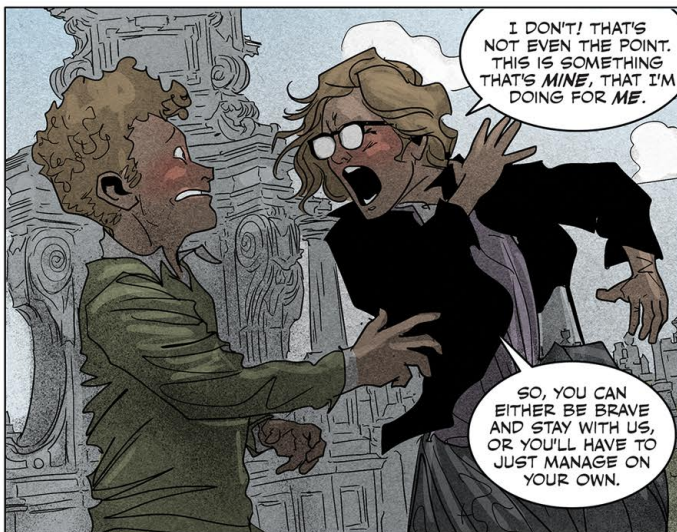


BUT IT WASN'T ENOUGH, AND HE'S NOT HAPPY.

HE'S TAKING IT OUT ON ME!

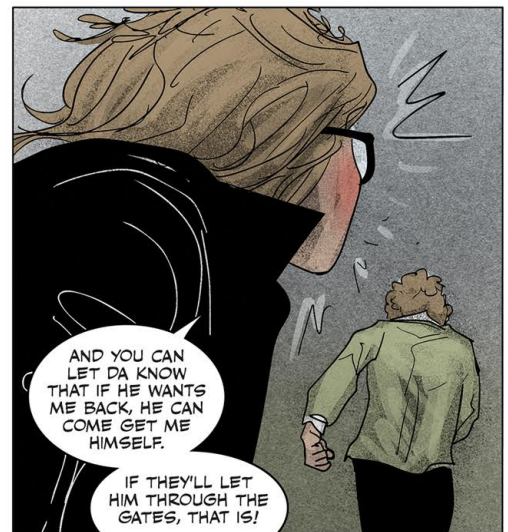


CAN'T YOU JUST COME HOME? YOU SAID YOU DON'T EVEN BELIEVE IN VAMPIRES.



I DON'T! THAT'S NOT EVEN THE POINT. THIS IS SOMETHING THAT'S MINE, THAT I'M DOING FOR ME.

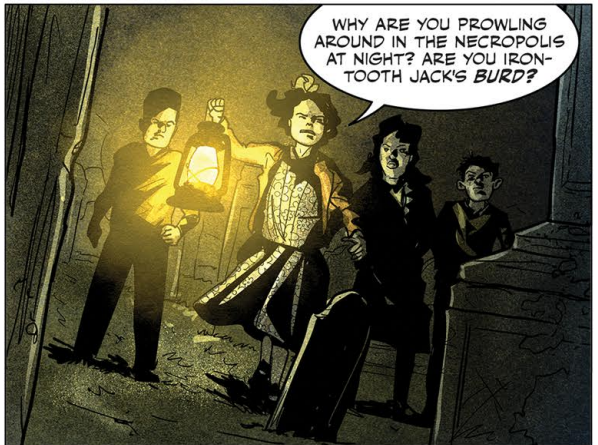
SO, YOU CAN EITHER BE BRAVE AND STAY WITH US, OR YOU'LL HAVE TO JUST MANAGE ON YOUR OWN.



AND YOU CAN LET DA KNOW THAT IF HE WANTS ME BACK, HE CAN COME GET ME HIMSELF.

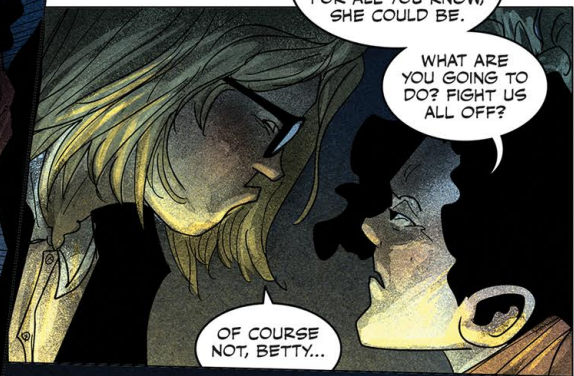
IF THEY'LL LET HIM THROUGH THE GATES, THAT IS!







GET BACK FROM HER.



HOW? IS SHE YOUR MAW OR SOMETHING? I MEAN, FOR ALL YOU KNOW, SHE COULD BE.

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO? FIGHT US ALL OFF?

OF COURSE NOT, BETTY...



BUT I RECKON I'LL HAVE TIME TO HIT YOU SQUARE BETWEEN THE EYES. A ROCK ISN'T MUCH GOOD ON A VAMPIRE, BUT IT SHOULD DO FOR YOU.

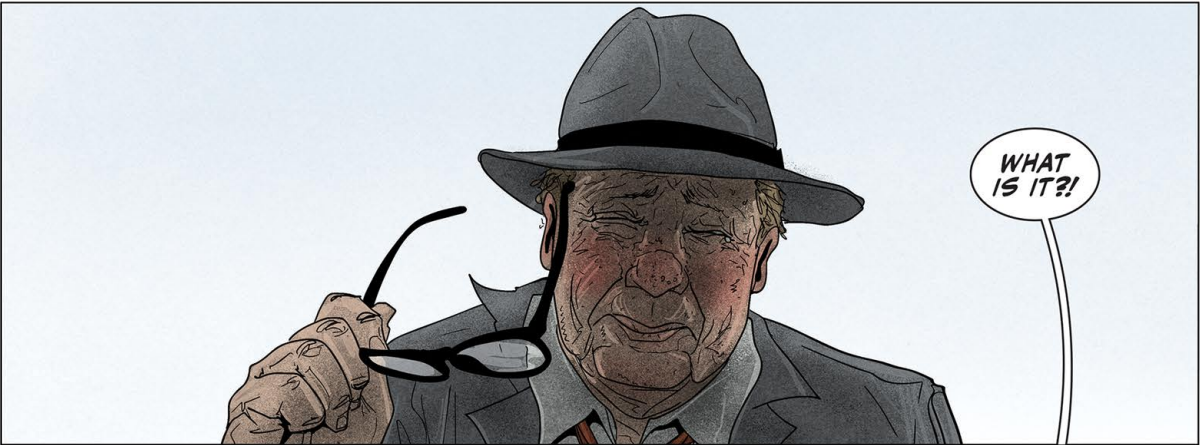
YOU MIGHT HAVE BETTER CLOTHES AND NICER HAIR THAN ME, BUT YOU CANNAE HIDE A FUCKED NOSE.



WELL? WHAT'LL IT BE?



COME ON. IT STINKS HERE.





IRON-TOOTH JACK'S LATEST VICTIM HAD BEEN FOUND THAT MORNING. AND NOT IN THE SOUTHERN NECROPOLIS.

THEY DIDN'T KNOW HOW DOUGLAS HAD ENDED UP IN THE GORBALS FROM SINKHILL. NOBODY MUCH CARED TO ASK.

BECAUSE NOW THEY HAD THEIR IRON-TOOTH JACK.



IT WAS BIG DUNNIE WALKER, A LOCAL LAD WITH MENTAL PROBLEMS.

POLICE FOUND HIM THERE, NO FANGS, BUT WITH A KNIFE IN HIS POCKET.

AND SO ENDED THE GREAT HUNT FOR THE GORBALS VAMPIRE.

THOSE KIDS HAD BEEN SCARED, BUT THRILLED. WE MADE OURSELVES BELIEVE IN THIS MONSTER BECAUSE IT WAS SOMETHING UNEXPLAINED, SOMETHING MAGICAL...



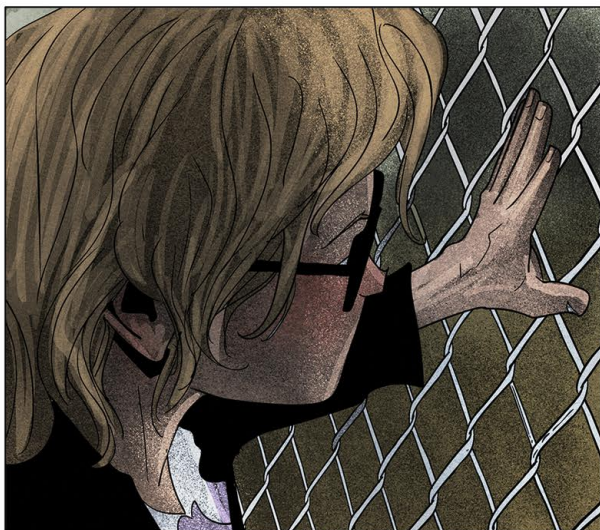
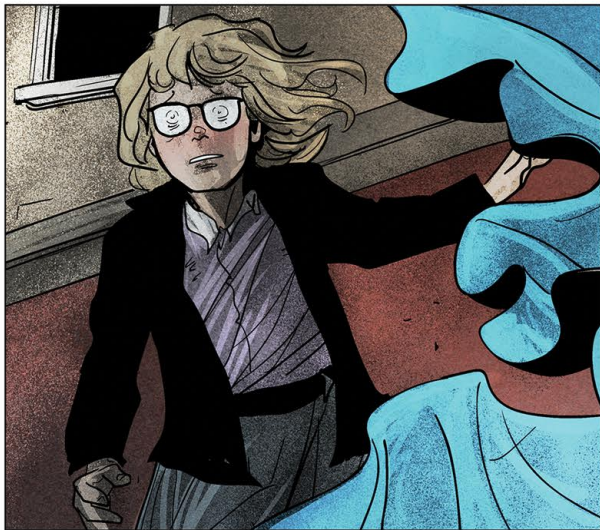
BUT THERE'S NO MAGIC IN REAL HORROR.

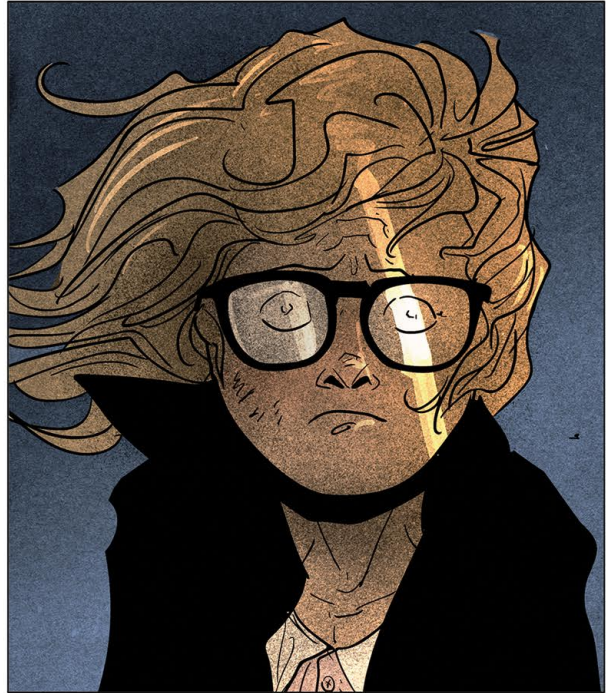
HE LOOKED UP TO YOU, CHRISSIE. HE WAS TRYING HIS BEST TO DO EVERYTHING YOU'D HAVE DONE, THE WAY YOU'D HAVE DONE IT.

HE WAS A GOOD BOY.

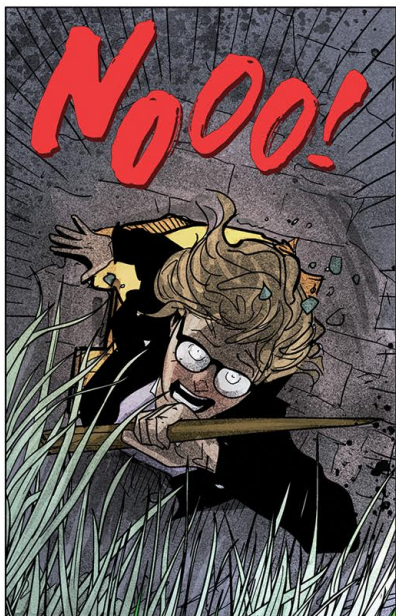
YOU SHOULD HAVE TOLD HIM THAT WHEN HE WAS ALIVE, DA. HE WAS TERRIFIED OF YOU. WE BOTH WERE.

BUT YOU DON'T SCARE ME ANYMORE.











THE GORBALS
VAMPIRE HAD BEEN
REAL ALL ALONG,
AND I'D KILLED HIM.

I KNEW I COULD NEVER
TELL ANYONE. WHO WOULD
BELIEVE SUCH AN INSANE
STORY FROM A GRIEVING
GIRL, ESPECIALLY WITH
THE BODY GONE?



MONSTERS IN GLASGOW

One of the joys of releasing comics on the Kickstarter platform is that it gives us more freedom to experiment with format, and to do things we may not often get to do in the direct market. In the case of *Sink: Monsters*, we're getting to play with running a double-feature, two stories contained in a single volume. While they do both work as individual stories, I feel that they make for a richer experience taken together, each offering a puzzle piece of the same mystery, in two different eras of time.

The first story in our double-bill, *The Monkey's Baw*, is set in the present day. It reminds me a lot of *Graphite Green*, the fan-favourite story from Sink Volume 2, in that it takes a prominent Sinkhill denizen who has previously been featured on the fringes of other people's stories, and thrusts them into the limelight as central protagonist. With that story, the protagonist in question was Mr. Dig. Here, it's Si McKirdie, the enigmatic crime boss who stands at the top of Glasgow's underworld hierarchy. But even bosses have bosses, and Si's boss – Lord Augustus Glory Wetherford VI, or The Duke, for short – is one of the most repellent, loathsome characters I've ever had the twisted pleasure of writing. As we follow one hectic day in McKirdie's life, trying to appease The Duke on his visit from England, all while putting out various other domestic fires and keeping various enemies at bay, we'll hopefully offer more of an insight into what makes Si tick, as well as offering some glimpses of where the larger story of Sink might be headed.

And then there's *The Gorbals Vampire*, set in 1954. Chrissie Woods, star of our last *Sink* tale, *Cutthroat*, is once again our protagonist. But here, she's a child, struggling with poverty and a cruel father. And here, we finally get to see the full story of her encounter with Iron-Tooth Jack, the Gorbals Vampire, the incident which has shaped her whole life, right up to the present day when we met her as an old woman. I think this is one of the best comic scripts I've ever written, certainly one of the ones that means the most to me, personally. That's because I feel the story itself is dramatic, frightening and emotional. But it's also because of the history behind it.

For about as long as I've wanted to be a writer, since I was a kid, my Gran has said that her dream was for me to write a book about her life and about her childhood. She'd frequently tell me stories about growing up in post-war Glasgow and the hardships she experienced, stories that could certainly make for a great book. But between there being certain elements she was reticent to share, and me making the switch from prose to writing comics, it looked increasingly like it would never happen. This story, albeit one filtered through some vampiric genre trappings, is likely about the closest I'm ever going to get to making my Gran's dream a reality. I've yearned to tell this story for years, and ideas for doing so actually precede Sink! And now here we are, finally at the point where I feel ready to do this story justice, and it feels like the most important comic I've made in my career. My Gran is now 89 years old. Being able to put this comic in her hands is one of my biggest writing bucket list goals. And with your help, we can make it happen.

For bonus content, we're serving up two more awesome one-pagers, including *Hairy Hauns*, by Alan Gardner and Iain Laurie, and *Wah-Wah*, by Tom Moore and Paul Tonner. We've also included a cover gallery and an essay on the Adam Sandler movie that inspired *The Monkey's Baw*. Enjoy!

Your Pal,

John Lees
Glasgow, Scotland
April 2024



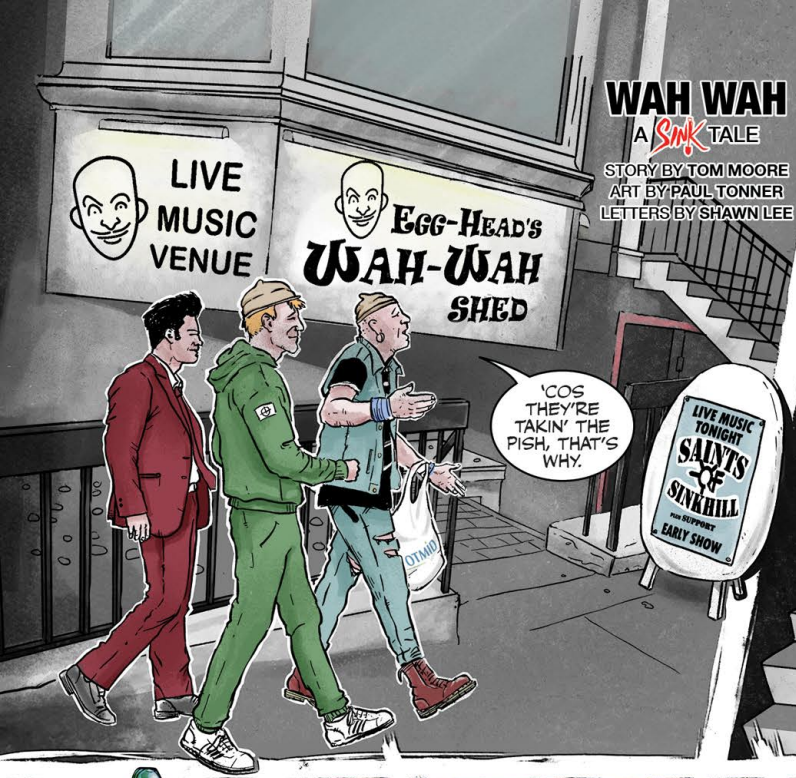
A godless fiend
that never sleeps,
roon the u-bend
is where it creeps,
hairy hauns crawls
up the chute,
tae turn yer
bumcheeks inside oot!



A horrid sight,
that curs-ed wight,
aw matted hair
and dods o' shite.
It'll get ye next
if yer too slow,
so better think
twice before...



STORY BY ALAN GARDNER
ART BY IAIN LAURIE
LETTERS BY SHAWN LEE



WAH WAH

A **SINK** TALE

STORY BY TOM MOORE
ART BY PAUL TONNER
LETTERS BY SHAWN LEE







Four new SINK trading cards were added to the growing collection with the *SINK: Monsters* launch.





UNSUNK HILL HOUSE



UNSUNK HILL HOUSE





ART BY ALEX CORMACK

Located on the outskirts of Sinkhill, Unsunk Hill House is the oldest building in the area, dating back to the origins of Sinkhill as it's currently known. In recent years, it has become known as the abode of Si McKirdie. As such, despite the scenic surroundings, most stay far away.

Its trophy room is full of dangerous artefacts

FIRST APPEARANCE: *SINK* #5







JENKINS



JENKINS





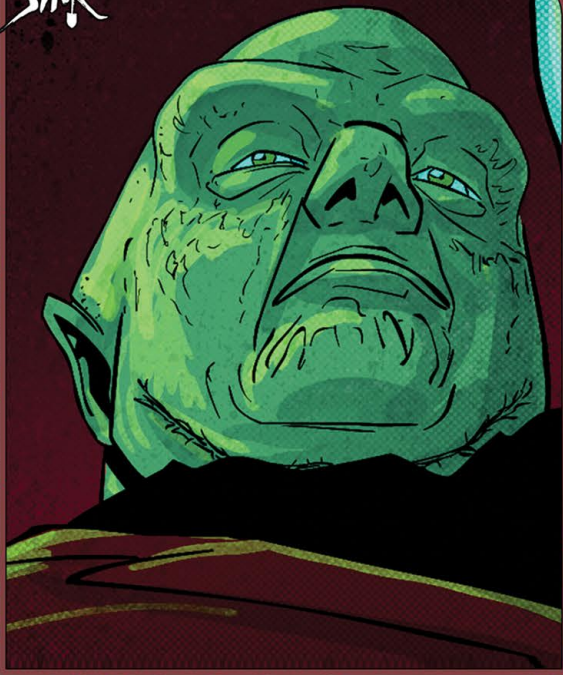
ART BY ALEX CORMACK

The Duke's right hand man, Jenkins is a loyal foot soldier through and through. However, he is not without ambition, and has an eye on his own advancement... even if that comes at the expense of Si McKirdie. Which is perhaps why he's so keen to prove that Si is failing in his current role.

WEAPON OF CHOICE: It's hidden in his suit

FIRST APPEARANCE: *SINK* #12

SINK



ENFORCER FRANK



ENFORCER FRANK

SINK



ART BY ALEX CORMACK

A longtime employee of Si McKirdie, Frank is a loyal Enforcer, meaning it is his job to protect Si and act as his muscle. He currently has the very important role of guarding Black Hole, Si's nightclub in Central Glasgow. Frank also has a cat, who he loves very much.

WEAPON OF CHOICE: His rock-hard head

FIRST APPEARANCE: SINK #5

SINK



BLACK HOLE



BLACK HOLE

SINK



ART BY ALEX CORMACK

Si McKirdie's nightclub in Central Glasgow, and one of the rare significant locations in *SINK* to not actually be located within Sinkhill. As one of Si's legitimate fronts, he prefers to avoid any violence or illegal activities occurring here. Anyone who breaches those wishes will be made to suffer considerably.

WARNING: Loud music can cause ear damage

FIRST APPEARANCE: SINK #5

Uncut Gems and the Power Dynamics of Character and Plot



I've wanted to write a story focused on Si McKirdie, Sinkhill's enigmatic crime lord, for a while now. I'd pencilled it in as something I'd finally get around to in Vol. 3, though at the time, I didn't know what my angle in would be, what kind of story I wanted to tell. But I finally found my "in" when I saw *UNCUT GEMS*, the critically acclaimed film from the Safdie Brothers, in early 2020.

In *UNCUT GEMS*, Adam Sandler (in one of his finest roles) plays Howie Ratner, a dealer in New York's Diamond District who starts the film in dire straits and a hundred grand in debt, and somehow manages to find his situation grow steadily more desperate from there. He has acquired a hugely valuable stone from Africa - the uncut gem of the title - which could make his fortune and solve all his problems, or might just break him in the process.

Ratner is not an easy figure to like when we first meet him. He is abrasive, arrogant, dismissive of employees. He's cheating on his wife. And he's quite clearly letting lies run off his tongue like water as he robs Peter to pay Paul and deceives and cheats friends and foes alike. This last point is just his baseline for existing: the sheer amount of constant hustling and grifting and balancing stories and debts like spinning plates - constantly, ALL THE TIME - required just to keep going and not be obliterated by the whirling blades under his feet is enough to bring you out in hives just watching it, even before you factor in the violent debt collectors chasing him down. But though just as many of the hardships brought on Howie are down to his own terrible decisions as are down to jaw-dropping, cosmically seismic levels of "WHAT ARE THE ODDS!?" rotten luck, you still can't help but feel bad for him with just how thoroughly he's put through the wringer.

I was really keen to see if I could capture that sphincter-clenching effect of perpetual tension in comics form, and Si felt, in theory, like the ideal candidate. An idea quickly took shape for a "day in the life" type story where we follow the various fires someone in Si's position is constantly having to keep under control. The Duke has arrived and is displeased, there's an ambitious henchman looking to usurp him, a rival gang leader is acting up, a valuable artifact has gone missing, Emma isn't talking to him, Florence Kilcolm is looking for him, oh, and his bodyguard's cat's gone missing. What happens when all these spinning plates are thrown off-balance?

However, in execution, I hit a stumbling block. While his unending tenacity/self-delusion ultimately becomes endearing in a way where you can't help but root for him, Howie Ratner is, ultimately, a pathetic, powerless character. He's someone helplessly under the whims of people with more strength and agency. He's someone who's going to get splashed by every puddle, have every door slam on his face, step on every rake. He's a loser.

And that's not Si McKirdie. Even when put on the back-foot, as he is in this story, the only way to portray Si in a manner that was consistent with his appearances in *SINK* thus far demanded that he be prepared and in-control, that his plans have contingencies upon contingencies, and that he be a few steps ahead of just about everyone else in the story, the reader included. He's not a punchbag, he's the one doing the punching. He's a character who is feared.

Having this kind of character at the heart of the story fundamentally changes it, even if the plot is running along ostensibly similar tracks. I found this to be a struggle at first, as I just wasn't getting that constant, pressure-cooker, "OH NOOO!" anxiety I'd been shooting for. Si was just too competent and dangerous to fit that kind of story. But once I came to terms with letting that go, and accepting this *SINK* Tale was not going to be my *UNCUT GEMS*, its own personality began to more freely emerge. I found myself with a nice dynamic of dramatic irony to play with, where – thanks to our experience with previous stories – we know Si is dangerous, we know he's not to be messed with... and then the first half of the story is just people messing with him, over and over. And so, the tension comes from this delayed gratification of knowing that, at some point, Si is going to kick into gear, and a few people are going to sorely regret underestimating him.

So, the writing of this *SINK* Tale highlighted some of the fascinating power dynamics that exist between character and plot in a story. Laurie Strode as the lead in *HALLOWEEN* is a horror, but it's a very different story if John Wick is babysitting the kids. And this process was also valuable in helping me define Si McKirdie. Having him as this mysterious figure on the fringes of other people's stories is one thing, but having him as a protagonist here helped flesh him out in my head, and give me a firmer sense of who he is.





Iron-Tooth Jack sketch by Joe Mulvey



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THANK YOU!



NEXT:

SINK

JUST DESERTS



Monsters

A Sink double-feature, encompassing two eras of Sinkhill, Glasgow's most notorious neighbourhood!

First, in the present day, crime boss Si McKirdie must navigate an array of potentially explosive headaches and mishaps, all under the watchful eye of a ghoulish superior looking for an excuse to permanently retire him.

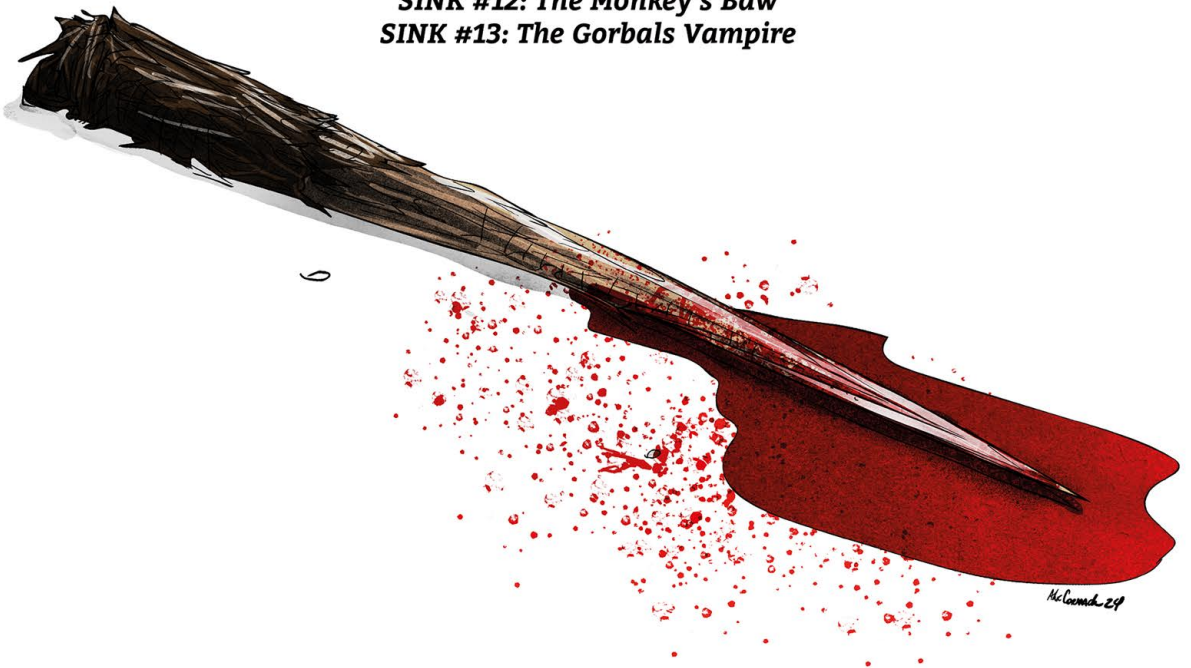
Then, 70 years in the past, young Chrissie Woods goes hunting for the Gorbals Vampire, and finds herself in a nightmare.

Two standalone tales with a surprising connection, and one clear message: whatever the era, past or present, in Sinkhill...

...MONSTERS ARE REAL.

COLLECTS:

***SINK #12: The Monkey's Baw
SINK #13: The Gorbals Vampire***




Sink.ComixTribe.com
