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BURSTING FROM THE PAGES OF **BARBARIC**



# QUEEN OF 1

\$4.99



**MORECI • HOWELL • DIAZ • CAMPBELL**

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BURSTING FROM THE PAGES OF **BARBARIC**



# QUEEN OF SWORDS

**1**  
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**MORECI • HOWELL • DIAZ • CAMPBELL**





YOU SURE THERE'S GOLD ON THIS SHIP, DEADHEART? NO OFFENSE, BUT THIS PLACE LOOKS LIKE IT HOLDS AS MANY VALUABLES AS A CORPSE'S ASSHOLE.

SPEAKING OF ASSHOLES...



...WE DIDN'T BRING YOU ALONG FOR COMMENTARY.

WE BROUGHT YOU ALONG TO SERVE A SINGLE PURPOSE, SO, WHEN IT'S TIME TO HELP, *HELP*, UNTIL THEN...



...I'D LIKE TO PRETEND YOU'RE NOT EVEN HERE.

OH, OKAY. SO YOU'RE GOING TO ACT LIKE A HARD ASS THE ENTIRE TIME? THAT'S FUN. WOULD IT HELP IF I ADMITTED THAT YOU'RE TOUGH AND DANGEROUS SO WE CAN MOVE ON?

I DON'T MOVE ON WITH PEOPLE I DON'T TRUST. AND I SURE AS HELL DON'T TRUST YOU.



WATCH YOUR FEET.

KKRRRKKK



CLK



CLIK CLIK CLIK

HOLY--

SHIT.



THAT'S... THAT'S A LOT OF GOLD. LIKE, A LOT.

I'VE HAD MORE, BUT THIS WILL DO FOR OUR PURPOSES--EVERY ADVENTURE NEEDS FUNDS. NOW WE HAVE 'EM.



WHAT I WONDER IS IF--

WHO DARES??!



WHO DARES TOUCH THE RICHES BELONGING TO THE GREATEST PIRATE CAPTAIN TO EVER LIVE, ORTEGA THE SCURVY?

AND THAT IS ME. IT IS I. WHO... IT IS ME...

I AM CAPTAIN ORTEGA! **ARRRGH!**



AND YOU SHALL NOT LEAVE THIS CAVERN WITH MY RICHES...

WHY, I GUESS HE WAS SERIOUS ABOUT THAT CURSE.



...OR YOUR LIFE.



RISE, MY CREW!



RISE!



UH... DEADHEART?

YOU DIDN'T MENTION ANYTHING ABOUT HAVING TO FIGHT DEMON PIRATES!

WELL...WE'RE STEALING PIRATE GOLD. I ASSUMED AN EVENTUAL BATTLE WITH PIRATES--UNDEAD OR OTHERWISE--WAS UNDERSTOOD.

NOT TO WORRY. ALL WE NEED TO DO IS SEND ORTEGA'S DEMON SPIRIT BACK TO THE NETHER REALM.



SERRA CAN HANDLE THAT.

I CAN WHAT?!



NO TIME TO THINK, SERRA. NO TIME FOR DOUBT--

OH, GET THE FUCK OUT OF HERE. YOU REALLY THINK YOU SOME NEAR-ASS CHOL CAN SWING THIS? YEAH, OKAY. THIS I'D LIKE TO S--



BATTLE IS UPON US!

OOOHHHH SHIT!



WOW SHIT. WOW SHIT. THAT... THAT WAS...

FUCKING AMAZING. THE RAW POWER. THE DESTRUCTIVE FORCE. BUT, WAIT! WHAT AM I SAYING? LUCKY! YOU GOT LUCKY, WOMAN!

I GUESS I'LL JUST HAVE TO DO IT AGAIN THEN, HUH?



WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR, WITCH? EXPEL THAT GODS DAMNED DEMON!

I'M NOT SORE. ALL RIGHT! I CAN'T JUST SPEAK THINGS IN AND OUT OF EXISTENCE!

SO YOU CANT DO IT? THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE TELLING ME? FUCK...



WHAT GOOD ARE YOU? ABSOLUTELY WORTHLESS--

DON'T SAY THAT TO ME.



DON'T EVER SAY THAT TO ME!



RRRAAAAA!

RRAAAA!



OH...OKAY.

YEAH, CALL ME WHEN YOU CAN DO THAT, YOU STUPID BARBARIAN.

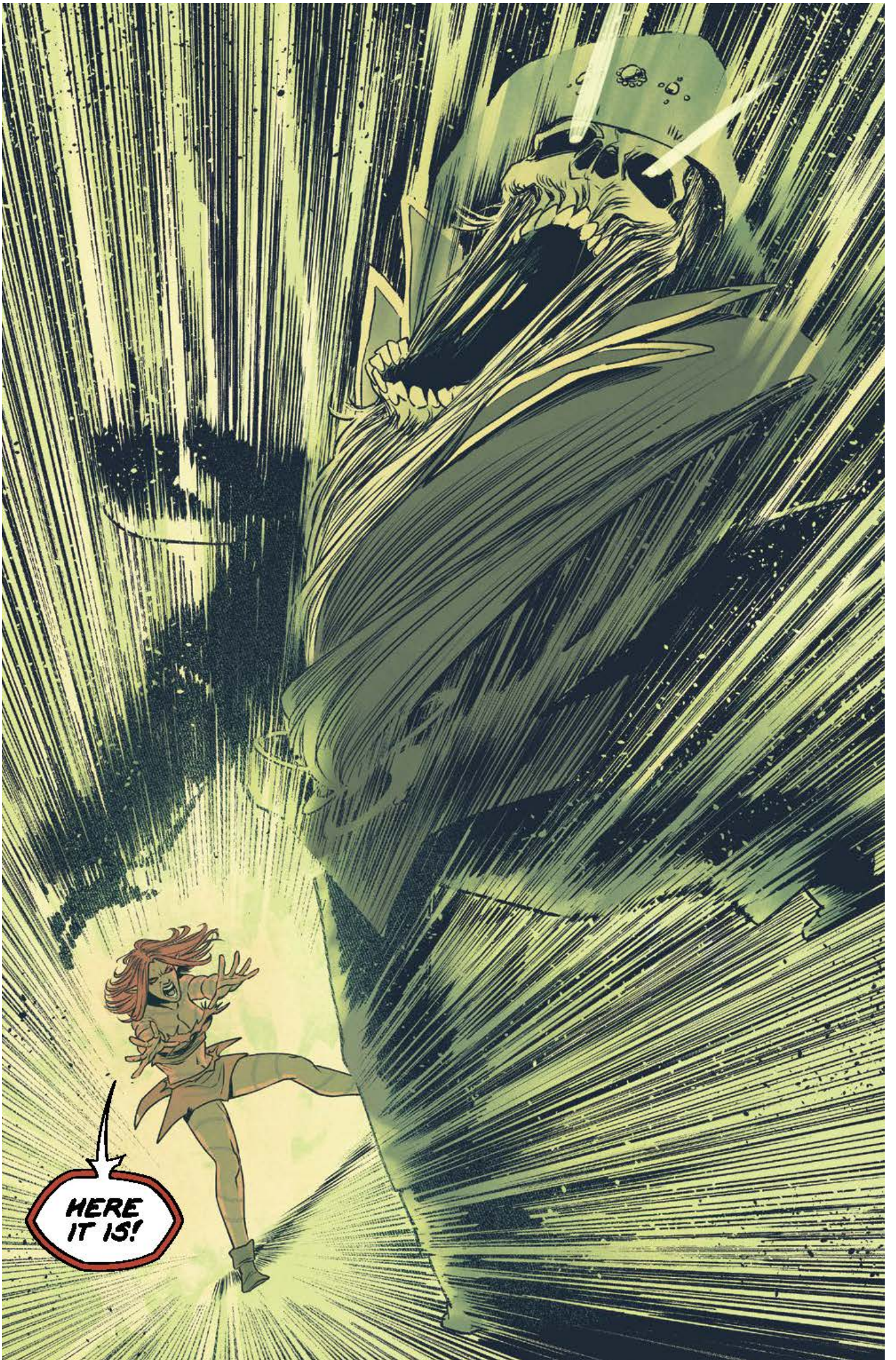


IS THIS WHAT YOU WANT? YOU WANT ME TO CONJURE ALL KINDS OF MAGIC?

YOU WANT TO SEE THIS POWER? YOU WANT TO SEE THIS DARKNESS?

THEN HERE--





**HERE  
IT IS!**

I THOUGHT I'D BE SAFE IF I STAYED HIDDEN.

MAYBE IF I CLOSED MY EYES, THE WORLD WOULD JUST...GO AWAY.

AND IT DID GO AWAY FOR YEARS.



UNTIL THE DAY SOMEONE KNOCKED ON MY DOOR--



IF YOU'RE IN THERE-- PLEASE.

SHE FOUND ME, SOMEHOW, DESPITE MY CHARMS AND MY PROTECTIONS, SHE FOUND ME.



YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT I'VE BEEN THROUGH, I JUST...THERE'S NO ONE ELSE, PLEASE...

AND WITH HER, THE WORLD CAME RUSHING BACK IN.



SOREN.

I NEED YOUR HELP.

"LOOK, NO ONE'S ASKING YOU TO LIKE IT, AND I CAN ASSURE YOU NO ONE AROUND HERE CARES WHAT YOUR FEELINGS ON THE SUBJECT ARE."

"THESE ARE GUILD LANDS, AND IF WE WANT TO PASS THROUGH GUILD LANDS WITHOUT TROUBLE..."

"...YOU PAY YOUR TOLL, SIMPLE AS THAT. AND WHAT DO YOU CARE, ANYWAY? IT'S NOT LIKE WE'RE SPENDING YOUR GOLD."

"IT'S CALLED HAVING PRINCIPLES. THEY'RE LIKE THE COUSINS OF ETHICS AND MORALS—IF THAT RINGS ANY BELLS."

"OH, HILARIOUS. YOU LECTURING ME ABOUT GOOD BEHAVIOR."

"I GUESS I'M JUST CURIOUS HOW YOU KNOW SO MUCH ABOUT THE INS AND OUTS OF THE ASSASSIN'S GUILD."

"AH, SO SHE FINALLY GETS TO HER POINT."

"YES, SERRA, I USED TO BE A GUILD MEMBER. THERE, I SAID IT. HAPPY NOW?"

"NOT REALLY, BECAUSE HERE YOU ARE, LOOKING DOWN YOUR NOSE AT ME—AND YET, ALL THE WHILE, YOU USED TO BE A FUCKING MURDERER FOR HIRE."

"LISTEN, WHEN I FINISHED KANDRICK'S TRAINING, I HAD NOTHING. I WAS AN ORPHAN RUNT WITHOUT A CENT TO MY NAME."

"I DID WHAT I HAD TO DO, AND I'M NOT GONNA APOLOGIZE TO ANYONE."

"OHMMHHH, SO YOU HAD YOUR REASONS. I GET IT, BECAUSE I CLEARLY DID WHAT I DID FOR NO REASON WHATSOEVER. I JUST FELT LIKE IT."

"... LET'S GO GET THIS OVER WITH."



WELL, LOOK WHO IT IS! MY GOOD FRIEND, KA--BEST WITH THE BLADE, BEST WITH THE SHIELD, BEST WITH A...A FUCKING ROLLING PIN!

DOESN'T REALLY MATTER, SHE'S JUST THE BEST!



PLEASE TELL ME YOU'RE HERE BECAUSE YOU WANT BACK IN THE GUILD. THAT'S GOTTA BE IT, RIGHT?

FOR YOUR SAKE, DEVLIN, I WISH I COULD SAY THAT WAS THE CASE. BUT I'M JUST PASSING THROUGH AND WANTED TO PAY MY RESPECTS. AND I'M PAYING THEM, OF COURSE, IN GOLD.

LOOK AT YOU. JUST A CLASS ACT ALL THE WAY.



HEY, HEY YOU--

YOU KNOW ABOUT THIS ONE OVER HERE? YOU KNOW WHO YOU'RE TRAVELING WITH? THIS IS THE WOMAN WHO KILLED THE SANDPERSON TWINS!

IT'S ONE THING TO OFF A WARLOCK, IT'S ANOTHER THING ENTIRELY TO OFF A PAIR-- AND A PAIR CONNECTED BY THEIR DARK POWERS!

INTERESTING. SO, WOULD YOU SAY SHE ENJOYS KILLING INDIVIDUALS WHO POSSESS MAGIC?



OH, I DON'T THINK IT MAKES A DIFFERENCE WHO OR WHAT IT IS. IF IT CAN DIE, KA HERE LIKES KILLIN' IT!



OKAY, THAT'S ENOUGH.

ALWAYS A PLEASURE, DEV--YOU BE GOOD DOWN HERE.

AND YOU BE CAREFUL OUT THERE--



I'VE BEEN HEARING TALK THAT THE PESTILENT LANDS ARE LINGERING IN OUR TERRITORIES SOMEWHERE.



"PESTILENT LANDS?" SOUNDS LIKE A BAR WHERE YOU'RE GUARANTEED TO CATCH SOME CROTCH ROT.

YEAH, SO, NOT QUITE. THOUGH I DO KNOW THAT BAR--I THINK THEY CLOSED IT DOWN.

ANYWAY THE PESTILENT LANDS IS THIS PLACE THAT...IT DOESN'T REALLY FOLLOW THE SAME LAWS OF TIME AND SPACE AS WE UNDERSTAND THEM.



IT'S A PHYSICAL SPACE... BUT ALSO, NOT, SOMETIMES, IT'S HERE IN OUR WORLD. OTHER TIMES, IT BLINKS OUT OF EXISTENCE, AND IT'S GONE.



I HEAR IT'S EVEN WORSE THAN HELL.



I HEAR IT'S FILLED WITH MONSTERS. I HEAR IT'S WHERE ALL THE BLACKENED SOULS OF THE DAMNED GO TO SERVE A DARK AND POWERFUL MASTER.

YEAH... YEAH, YOU SEE--



THIS IS WHY I DON'T DO WITCH SHIT.

DEVILN, GIVE MY BEST TO THE GUILD MASTER.



HEY, WHAT'S THE HURRY? I'D LOVE TO HEAR MORE ABOUT YOUR EXPLOITS AS A KILLER FOR HIRE.

FUCK OFF.



WILL DO--GOOP LUCK TO YA, KAY AND REMEMBER, IF YOU'RE GONNA KILL SOMEONE, NEVER KILL 'EM FOR FREE!

"I'M TELLING YOU FOR THE LAST TIME!"



AIN'T NO BARBARIANS ALLOWED IN THIS ESTABLISHMENT!

WELL, HOW ABOUT JUST ONE BARBARIAN? BECAUSE I'M THE ONLY ONE HERE.

GET. FUCKING. OUT. OR I WILL THROW YOU OUT.



I SEE. SO, YOU WANT ME TO JUST WALK OUT THE FRONT DOOR? THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE SAYING?

I DON'T CARE HOW YOU LEAVE. JUST LEAVE.



UNDERSTOOD.



**WHAM**



WHO WANTS ME TO LEAVE THAT WAY? THROUGH THE HOLE I JUST MADE?  
ANYONE? NO?

HEEEY, DEADHEART. MAYBE WE SHOULD GET GOING...



NONSENSE!  
THREE BEERS, BARKEEP!  
WHAT IS EVEN HAPPENING...

TOMORROW IS THE DAY. WE STORM THE CITADEL AND OBTAIN THIS MAGICAL ORB THAT'LL WEAKEN DOXON AND HELP US GET TO GLADIUS--AND I'LL KILL THE MAN WHO KILLED ME.

WHICH... SOUNDS REALLY WEIRD WHEN YOU SAY IT OUT LOUD.

UM, WELL... OPTIMALLY, I'D GO FOR MORE SNEAKING AND LESS RAIDING. I DON'T THINK WE WANT THE ENTIRE RUKIAN STRONGHOLD COMING AFTER US.

WHY NOT?

HA! YOU'RE GOING TO RAID THE CITADEL?! I'D PUT MY MONEY ON A DOG LEARNING TO PLAY THE PIANO BEFORE YOU THREE COULD--

HUSH.

SO, YOU FINALLY GOING TO TELL US MORE ABOUT THIS MAGICAL ORB, OR WHAT?

WHAT'S TO TELL? IT'S A MAGICAL FUCKING ORB. NO ONE KNOWS WHERE IT CAME FROM OR HOW IT WORKS. IT JUST HAS THE POWER TO DAMPEN MAGIC IN OTHERS, AND IT'S PROBABLY OLD AS HELL.

I'LL RETRIEVE IT, PASS IT TO YOU TWO, AND YOU CAN DO WHATEVER YOU PLEASE WITH IT.

AND THAT'S IT? THAT'S THE END OF THE LINE FOR YOU?

UM, YEAH. THERE ARE EASIER WAYS TO COMMIT SUICIDE THAN GOING AFTER DOXON.

I SAID I'D MAKE AMENDS WITH SOREN, AND THAT'S WHAT I'M DOING, AFTER THAT...

...I'M GOING TO FIND MYSELF A NICE, COZY ROCK TO CRAWL BACK UNDER, AND WE'LL ALL BE BETTER OFF FOR IT.





WELL, LET ME GIVE YOU THE BAD NEWS FIRST--

THERE'S NO WAY TO GET RID OF THE POWER THAT'S INSIDE OF YOU, AT LEAST. NO WAY THAT I KNOW OF.

AND... THE GOOD NEWS?  
THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT YOU DON'T HAVE TO TELL PEOPLE YOU HAVE MAGIC. NO ONE HAS TO KNOW, EVER. IN FACT...

TAKE A PIECE OF ADVICE FROM ME AND STAY HIDDEN. STAY QUIET. GO BE A BARMAID OR A FARMER OR... WHATEVER.

DO ANYTHING THAT KEEPS YOU FROM GETTING MIXED UP IN THIS STUPID, GODS DAMNED LIFE.

BUT YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND...



I CAN'T.

SURE, YOU CAN. IT'S SIMPLE-- INSTEAD OF USING MAGIC, DON'T.

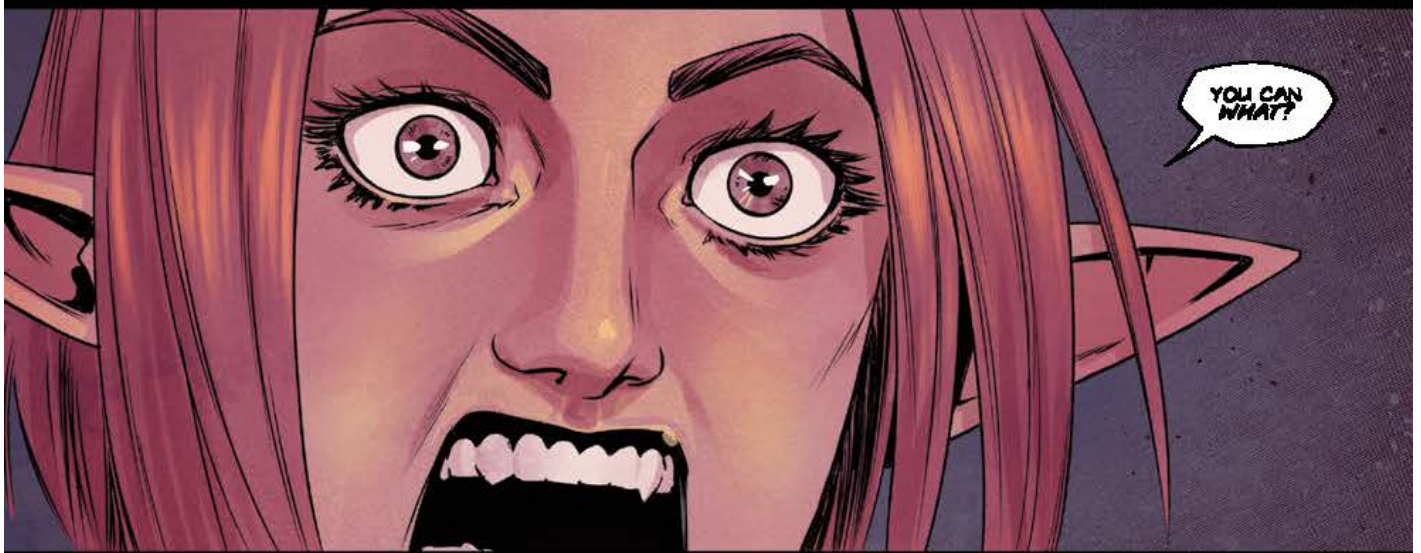
PROBLEM SOLVED.



NO, YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND! I CAN'T CONTROL IT.

SOMETIMES... SOMETIMES I JUST SAY A WORD, A SINGLE WORD, AND TERRIBLE THINGS HAPPEN.





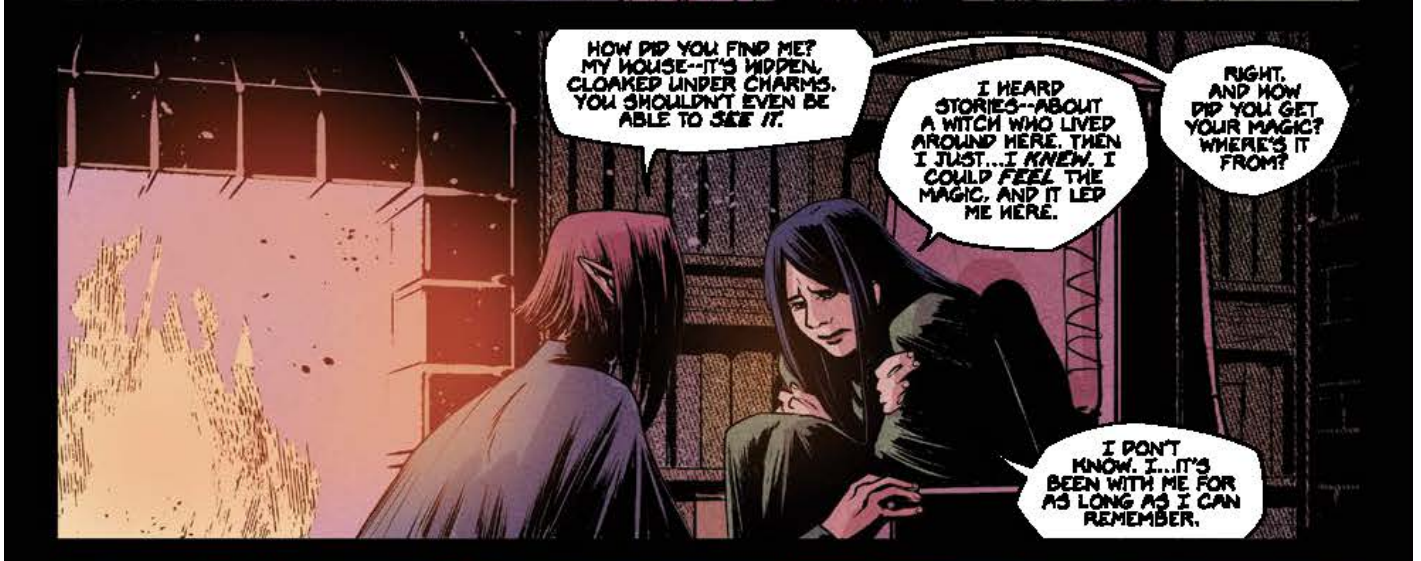
YOU CAN WHAT?



THERE WAS...THIS GROUP OF MEN, AND THEY...THEY CORNERED ME IN THE WOODS. THEY WERE GOING TO HURT ME.

AND I--I DON'T KNOW WHAT CAME OVER ME. IT HAPPENED SO FAST. I SAID "VANQUISH", AND SUDDENLY...OH MY GODS. THEY WERE JUST...JUST...

GONE.



HOW DID YOU FIND ME? MY HOUSE--IT'S HIDDEN, CLOAKED UNDER CHARMS. YOU SHOULDN'T EVEN BE ABLE TO SEE IT.

I HEARD STORIES--ABOUT A WITCH WHO LIVED AROUND HERE. THEN I JUST...I KNEW. I COULD FEEL THE MAGIC, AND IT LED ME HERE.

RIGHT. AND HOW DID YOU GET YOUR MAGIC? WHERE'S IT FROM?

I DON'T KNOW. I...IT'S BEEN WITH ME FOR AS LONG AS I CAN REMEMBER.



I THINK I WAS BORN WITH IT.



SHE'S THE ONE I'VE BEEN SEARCHING FOR, SISTER.

I NEED HER.



THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING. THIS ISN'T REAL.



LOOK AT HER, OUT THERE. JUST LOOK AT HER.

I GOT RID OF YOU, I GOT RID OF YOU!



SHE DOESN'T EVEN KNOW WHAT SHE IS. TAKE HER. TAKE HER BEFORE SHE LEARNS HOW RARE SHE IS, AND HOW POWERFUL SHE CAN BE.

I... I CAN'T. I DON'T.

SISTER...



...YOU HAVE NO CHOICE.

NO...



STOP IT... STOP IT...

I'LL COME MYSELF, THEN. I'LL COME, AND I'LL-



NO!



NO, NO, NO...