

DARIN S. CAPE

FELIPE KROLL

SHP
COMICS
#0

WOODSTAKE™



WOODSTAKE™

PROLOGUE

WRITTEN BY
DARIN S. CAPE

ART BY
FELIPE KROLL



LETTERING
ES KAY

PROOFREADING
KIM WHITENER

EDITOR
SHAWN HAINSWORTH

WOODSTAKE created by Shawn Hainsworth

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MARCH, 1927
UPSTATE,
NEW YORK

IN THE NEW WORLD,
AN ANCIENT EVIL AWAKES,
LONGING FOR SUSTENANCE
AND REVENGE.

TOO WEAK TO
CATCH HIS PREY...

...THE CREATURE
RELIES ON HIS POWERS
OF PERSUASION...

COME
TO ME.

THE REVENANT FORCES
HIS VICTIM TO BOW AS
THE SERFS USED TO
BOW BEFORE HIM.

AS THE TINY CREATURE'S BLOOD COURSES THROUGH HIS VEINS, A MEMORY RETURNS, HIS LAST BEFORE THE LONG DARKNESS.



A NEAR FATAL BLOW FROM THE ENEMY WHO HAD FOLLOWED HIM ACROSS AN OCEAN...



...ALMOST ENDS HIS DEATHLESS LIFE.

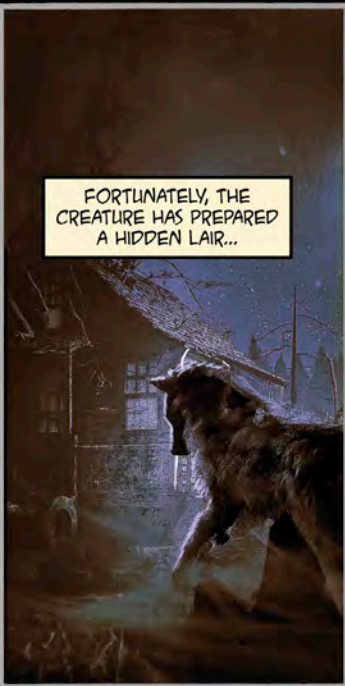


≈GASPE≈

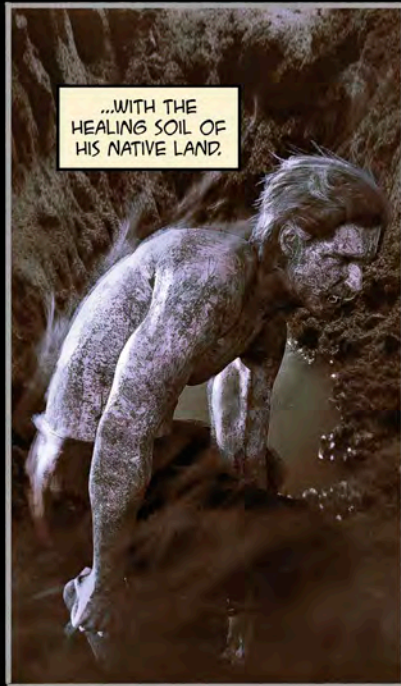


ERRGHH!



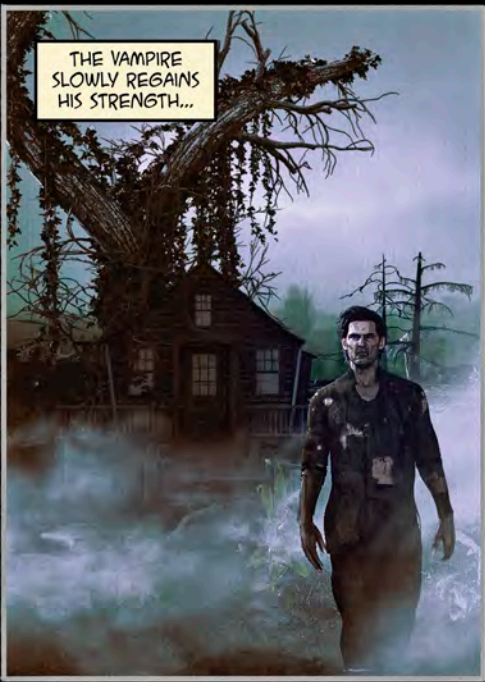


FORTUNATELY, THE
CREATURE HAS PREPARED
A HIDDEN LAIR...



...WITH THE
HEALING SOIL OF
HIS NATIVE LAND.





THE VAMPIRE
SLOWLY REGAINS
HIS STRENGTH...



...UNTIL HE IS
ONCE AGAIN ABLE
TO SHAPESHIFT.



ONE NIGHT, AFTER
THE KILL, HE HEARS
THE SOUND OF A DOG
BAYING...

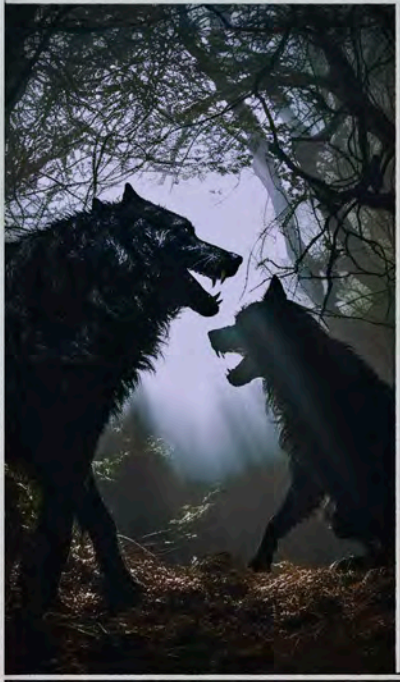
HIS HEART
LEAPS...



...FOR WHERE
THERE IS A DOG...



...THERE WILL
BE A HUNTER.



JACK HEYWARD
IS IN LOVE.

HE HAS LOVED LUCY
WESTIN FOR AS LONG HE
CAN REMEMBER AND SOON,
SHE WILL BE HIS BRIDE.



LUCY IS A SHY,
ETHEREAL YOUNG
WOMAN, WHO SEEMS
TO LIVE IN A WORLD
OF HER OWN.

THE NEIGHBORS
WARN JACK...



...AGAINST MARRYING A
WOMAN WHO CANNOT HELP
HIM WORK THE FARM.



BUT, JACK IS A
STUBBORN MAN...




...NOT TO
BE SWAYED BY
THE OPINION OF
OTHERS...




...AND HE
ADORES LUCY.



LUCY WESTIN HAS DRAWN
THE ATTENTION OF
ANOTHER CREATURE...




...BUT NOT AS MERE
SUSTENANCE.



HE DESIRES TO
MAKE HER HIS QUEEN
OF THE NEW WORLD...

BUT HE
MUST BE
PATIENT...

...AND PREPARE HER TO
RECEIVE THE PRECIOUS
DROP OF HIS INHERITANCE.



...TO BESTOW
UPON HER THE GIFT
OF ETERNAL LIFE.

SHERIFF OBADIAH WOOD HAS NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT.

FLOYD MOORE IS DEAD...



...KILLED ALONGSIDE HIS DOG.



HIS GUN, FIRED ONCE, STILL IN HIS HANDS...



...NO GUNSHOT WOUNDS OR SIGNS OF BLUNT FORCE TRAUMA.



THE DOG'S THROAT RIPPED OPEN...



...AS IF BY A WOLF.





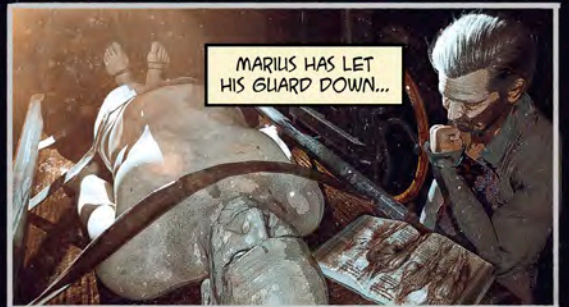
THE MOMENT MARIUS VAN HELSING HAS DREADED FOR MORE THAN 30 YEARS HAS ARRIVED.



IS THAT A DEAD BODY?
CAN I SEE IT?



WHEN YOU ARE OLDER,
ALEXANDRU.



MARIUS HAS LET
HIS GUARD DOWN...



...ALLOWING HIMSELF TO BELIEVE HE HAD KILLED THE FOUL CREATURE.



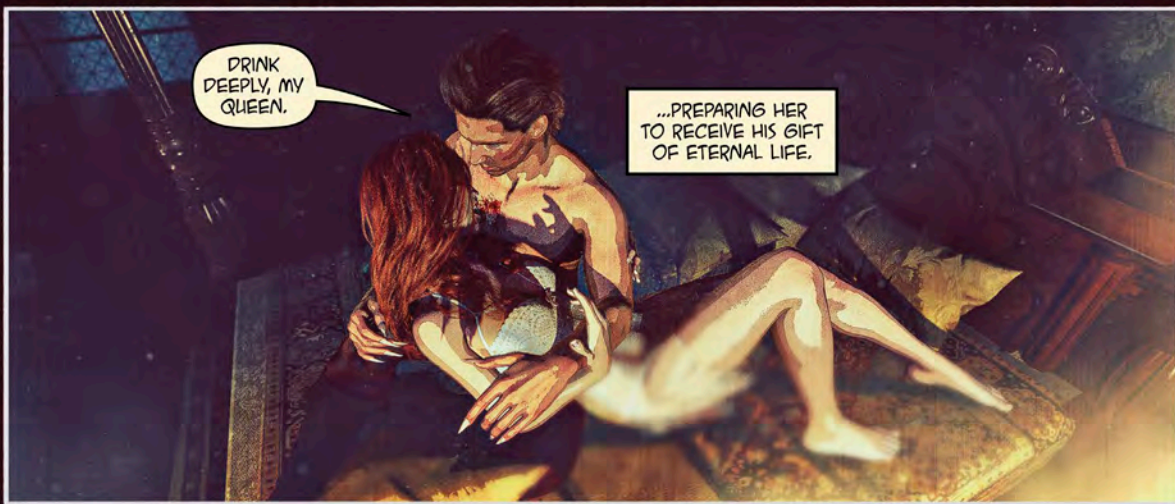
TIME IS SHORT.
HAVING FED ON HUMAN BLOOD...

...IT WILL NOT BE LONG BEFORE THE VAMPIRE SEEKS HIS REVENGE.



COME TO
ME, LUCY
MY DEAR.

BUT THE CREATURE
THINKS ONLY OF LUCY,
VISITING HER NIGHTLY...



DRINK
DEEPLY, MY
QUEEN.

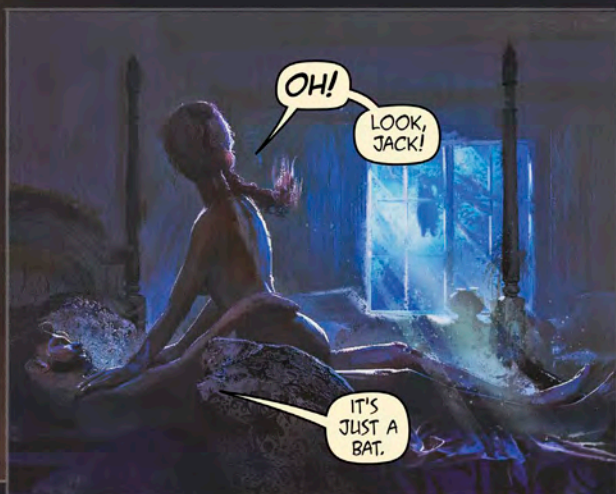
...PREPARING HER
TO RECEIVE HIS GIFT
OF ETERNAL LIFE.



Musical notes

LUCY IS PALE AND
WEAK DURING THE
CEREMONY, BUT
SHE IS HAPPY.

JACK WILL HAVE
ONLY ONE NIGHT
OF HAPPINESS...



OH!

LOOK,
JACK!

IT'S
JUST A
BAT.



...BEFORE THE
CREATURE CLAIMS
HIS PRIZE.



IN THE MORNING,
LUCY IS GONE.





**KNOCK
KNOCK**

COME
IN.



MORNIN'
POC. YOU'RE
UP EARLY.

I MUST
SPEAK TO YOU
ABOUT SOMETHING
VERY URGENT.



SHE'S GONE,
SHERIFF.

**LUCY'S
GONE!**



DID YOU
TWO HAVE A
FIGHT?

IT IS
AS I FEARED.
THERE IS NO TIME
TO LOSE.



HOW MUCH FURTHER, DOC?

IF I KNEW, I WOULD TELL YOU.



WHAT EXACTLY ARE WE LOOKING FOR?



I WILL KNOW IT WHEN I SEE IT.



GREAT!
SHHH.



I HEAR SOMETHING.



TATA!

CLICK

ALEXANDRU!

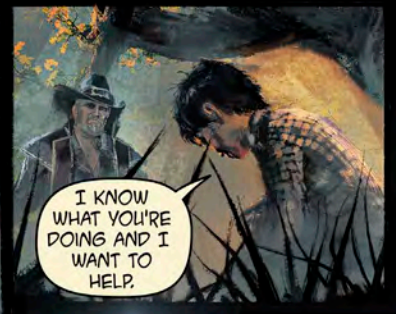


I TOLD YOU TO STAY HOME.

HUFF HUFF

I WAS READING BUNIC'S* DIARY.

*GRANDFATHER IN ROMANIAN



I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING AND I WANT TO HELP.



SO, NOW YOU CAN READ ROMANIAN?



I FOUND SOMETHING...

...WOLF TRACKS!

THERE ARE NO WOLVES IN THESE WOODS.





SEE!

WELL, I'LL BE.

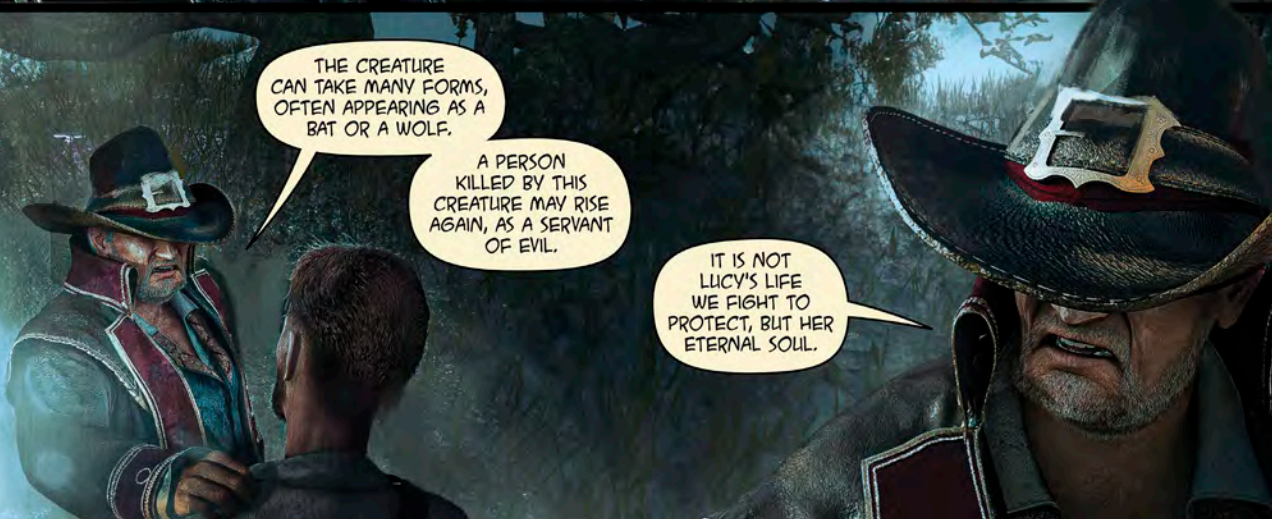
ALRIGHT.

WHAT IN HELL'S GOIN' ON HERE, DOC?



MANY YEARS AGO, AN EVIL CREATURE FLED MY NATIVE COUNTRY.

I PURSUED IT HERE AND MORTALLY WOUNDED IT. BUT NOW I FEAR IT HAS RETURNED.



THE CREATURE CAN TAKE MANY FORMS, OFTEN APPEARING AS A BAT OR A WOLF.

A PERSON KILLED BY THIS CREATURE MAY RISE AGAIN, AS A SERVANT OF EVIL.

IT IS NOT LUCY'S LIFE WE FIGHT TO PROTECT, BUT HER ETERNAL SOUL.



THE OLD MASON HOUSE.

THIS IS THE PLACE. LISTEN. IT'S TOO QUIET... NO BIRDS.



PUT THESE ON.



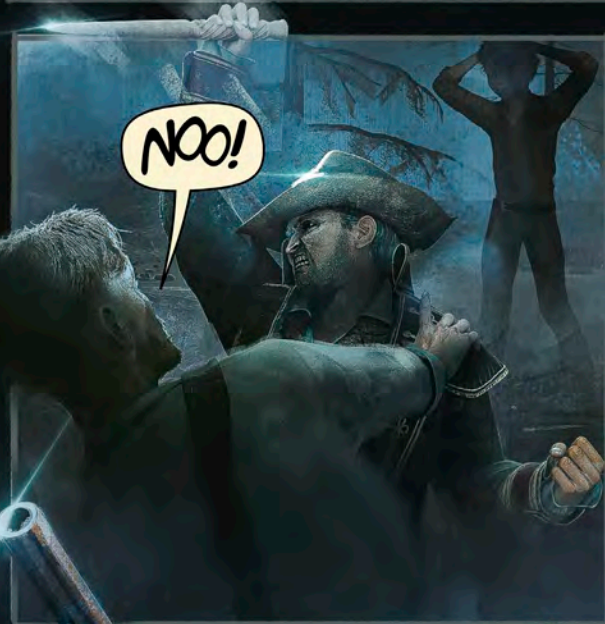
THAT WILL DO YOU NO GOOD, MY FRIEND.

THE UNDEAD CANNOT BE HARMED BY BULLETS.

NEVER FAILED ME BEFORE.



STAND BACK, ALEXANDRU.





WE MUST NOT LET IT ESCAPE!

AHHHRR!

BANG
BANG
BANG

SOBE
THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING...



ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, TATA?

YES, BUT WE HAVE FAILED.



THE CREATURE WILL RETURN, AND WHEN IT DOES, I WILL BE EITHER DEAD OR TOO OLD TO FIGHT.

IT WILL BE UP TO YOU, ALEXANDRU.

I'M NOT AFRAID.



YOU MAY KISS HER ONE LAST TIME.

SHE IS NOW GOD'S TRUE DEAD AND HER SOUL IS WITH HIM.



JACK HEYWARD BURIES LUCY HEYWARD...

...WITH HIS OWN HANDS IN FRONT OF THE HOUSE THEY WERE TO SHARE.

MANY YEARS LATER, IN A PRIVATE CEREMONY, JACK MARRIES FREYA HANSEN.

THEY ARE UNABLE TO HAVE CHILDREN.



MARIUS VAN HELSING SELLS HIS HOUSE AND CHANGES THE FAMILY NAME...

...HOPING TO PROVIDE HIS SON WITH A FEW EXTRA DAYS TO PREPARE WHEN THE CREATURE RETURNS.



ALEXANDRU ATTENDS MEDICAL SCHOOL IN ALBANY AND THEN RETURNS TO TAKE OVER HIS FATHER'S PRACTICE.





SHERIFF OBADIAH WOOD LIVES INTO HIS NINETIES.

HIS SON, JIM, FOLLOWS IN HIS FOOTSTEPS...

...BECOMING THE SHERIFF OF SULLIVAN COUNTY IN 1961.



THE MASON HOUSE IS BURNED DOWN SHORTLY AFTER LUCY'S DEATH.



MARIUS PURIFIES THE SITE, DRIVING OUT THE STAINS OF EVIL.



BUT THE CREATURE IS CLEVER, AND HAS SPREAD BOXES OF HIS NATIVE SOIL FAR AND WIDE.



THE YEARS PASS AS HE LIES DORMANT...

...ONCE AGAIN, DREAMING OF REVENGE.

1931



1946



1965



A LETTER TO THE READER...

PAGE 1, Panel 1.

Large panel. A small clearing on the edge of a forest in upstate New York. An abandoned house sits rotting in the fading light of the day. A large tree stands towering over the house, branches piercing shattered windows, as the forest reclaims the land. In the dirt of the foundation, a pair of eyes open, red and vengeful, as a vampire draws a deep breath of the fetid, dusty air.

Welcome to SHP Comics!

I'm Shawn Hainsworth, AKA Darin S. Cape, Founder and Independent Publisher of **SHP Comics**, and the comic you hold in your hands is a labor of love and what I believe will be the beginning of something special. First, I want to thank you for taking the time to pick up our very first issue, the Woodstake Prologue! As the title suggests, this issue is just the beginning of a much larger story – just one of the many genre-bending titles that SHP Comics will be delivering monthly to your favorite comic book store and digital platform.

What can you expect from SHP Comics?

SHP is an independent publisher focused on delivering genre-bending storytelling melding **horror**, **sci-fi**, and **adventure** into daring and intelligent tales. SHP is dedicated to pushing the boundaries of storytelling and subverting the reader's expectations in the best ways possible!

While we love a good superhero comic, SHP stories ditch the capes and tights in favor of dark, gritty, and fun storytelling, going where other publishers won't. In addition to watching a vampire trip on LSD in **Woodstake** (issue #3), check out our mind-expanding, epic sci-fi, **The Killing Machine**. I have been working on each of these stories for many years, fine-tuning the characters and plot lines, rewriting obsessively and honing each one to a fine point. I guarantee that each of these stories will pull you in deeper and deeper with each issue, and will pay off with a great ending, leaving you both satisfied and wanting more.

We are an interactive, community-driven publisher. We strive to engage with readers on a personal level, delivering unique content directly to our fans and we want to hear from you! SHP has a vision to bring a sense of discovery back into comics and storytelling. There are always new and exciting worlds to explore, and SHP Comics wants to take you there.

SHP is Comics on the Edge.

I sincerely hope you'll stick around and keep reading. I can't wait for you to see what we've got cooking.

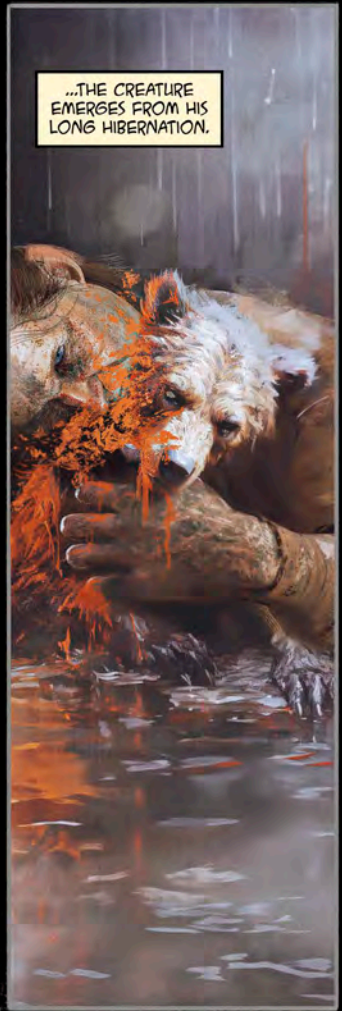
A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Darin S. Cape". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with thick, dark strokes.



A
TASTE OF
THINGS TO
COME...



EARLIER
THAT YEAR...



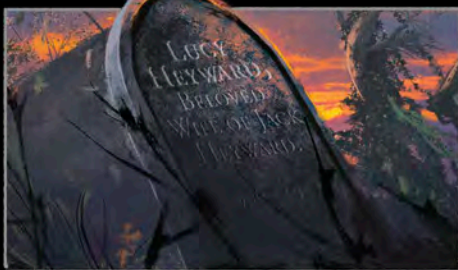
...THE CREATURE
EMERGES FROM HIS
LONG HIBERNATION.



THE STENCH
OF VAN HELSING
IS GONE.



BUT JACK HEYWARD, THE
ONE WHO WOUNDED HIM,
LIVES IN THE SAME HOUSE AND
HAS TAKEN ANOTHER WIFE.



SOMETHING'S
SPOOKED THE
ANIMALS.

COME TO
THE TABLE, JACK.
YOUR DINNER'S
READY.



BUT WHAT INTERESTS HIM MOST IS TALK OF A FESTIVAL.

MAX HAS LOST HIS MIND, RENTING HIS LAND TO A BLUNCH OF LONGHAIRS.

I HEAR THERE COULD BE MORE THAN FIFTY THOUSAND OF THEM.



FIFTY THOUSAND YOUNG PEOPLE. IT'S ALMOST TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE.

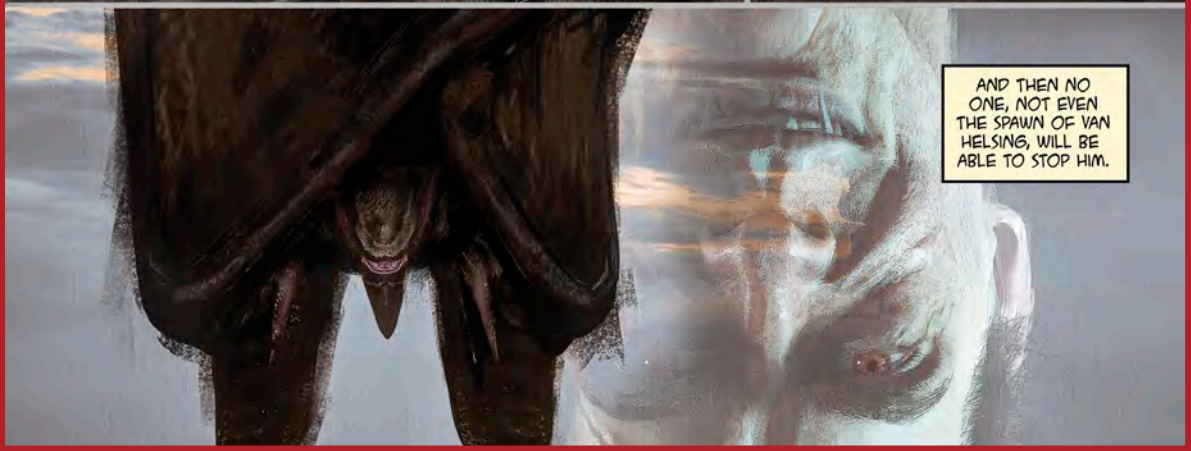
GOD DAMN WAR PROTESTORS!



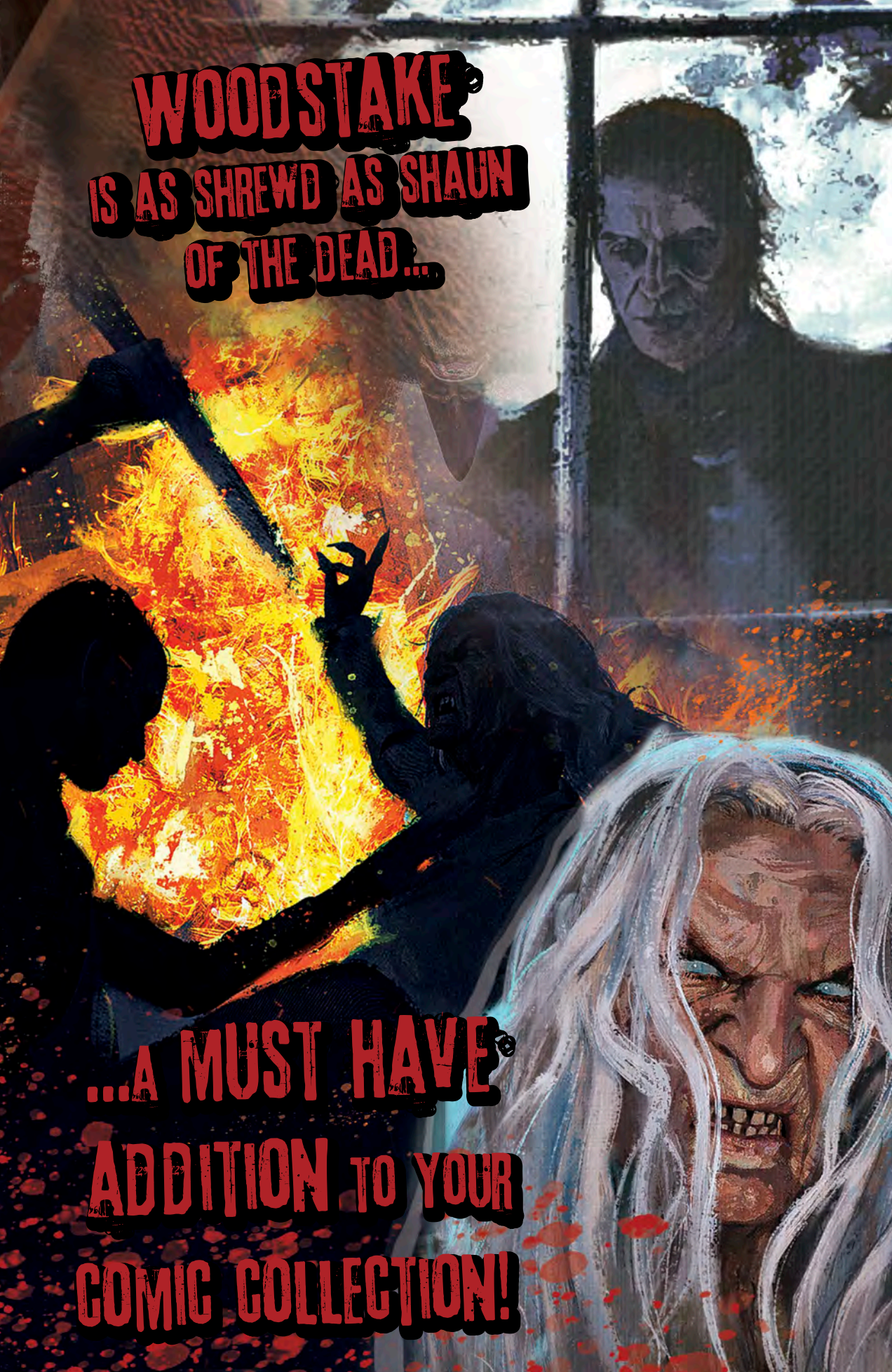
IT WILL BE A FEEDING FRENZY. BUT MORE THAN THAT, HE CAN REBUILD HIS FAMILY IN THIS CURSED LAND.

I WOULDN'T MIND GETTIN' ME SOME OF THAT FREE LOVE. JUST DON'T TELL MY JOSEPHINE.

HA HA HA



AND THEN NO ONE, NOT EVEN THE SPAWN OF VAN HELSING, WILL BE ABLE TO STOP HIM.



**WOODSTAKE
IS AS SHREWD AS SHAUN
OF THE DEAD...**

**...A MUST HAVE
ADDITION TO YOUR
COMIC COLLECTION!**

WOODSTAKE

BEHIND THE SCENES



FIRST DRAFTS

Chapter 1

July, 1927

Sullivan County, New York

Even with the sun finally going down, it was still blisteringly hot. It had been over ninety degrees all week, and humid, the kind of weather that put Sheriff Obadiah Wood's teeth on edge. Yet here he was being dragged through the woods by the doctor and Jack Heyward. The men pushed through the overgrowth; their legs being stabbed by the small pricklers that seemed to be everywhere. Mosquitos filled the air, soundless sucking on their exposed legs, forearms, and the backs of their necks.

"How much further, Doc?"

"If I knew, I would tell you," Marius replied, glancing up at the sky. "But we must move quickly. The sun will be down in an hour."

Marius held a black medical bag in one hand and several sharpened wooden stakes in the

A squirrel stands nearby, at the base of a tree, alert. Its tail flicks rapidly.

The creature holds out its hand, focusing all of its concentration on the squirrel.

The squirrel freezes. The creature croaks out its first words. Its voice is raspy but still powerful.

CREATURE

Come to me.

The squirrel hesitates for a moment, then scampers toward the creature.

The creature grabs the squirrel ravenously, biting into its throat, ripping its flesh, snapping its tiny neck, sucking. Blood dribbles down its lips.

The creature tosses the squirrel away and grins, feeling life return to its dead limbs.

EXT: HAIGHT STREET, SAN FRANCISCO - EVENING

The corner of Haight and Ashbury, run down, boarded up windows.

SUPER: San Francisco, July, 1969

I originally wrote Woodstake as a novella and then as a screenplay. Over a period of almost five years, I refined and sharpened both the characters and the plot. I hope you will love the completed story as much as I do.

CHARACTER SKETCHES

Jon Harper
First Draft

Long Hair

Short Hair



Nina Murray
First Draft



Old
Heywood



Sheriff
Wood

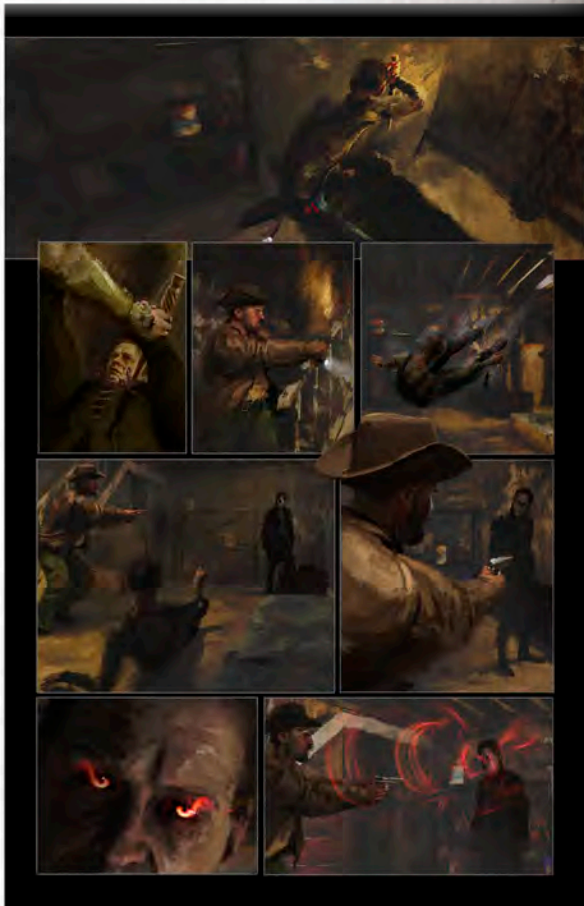


Vladimir

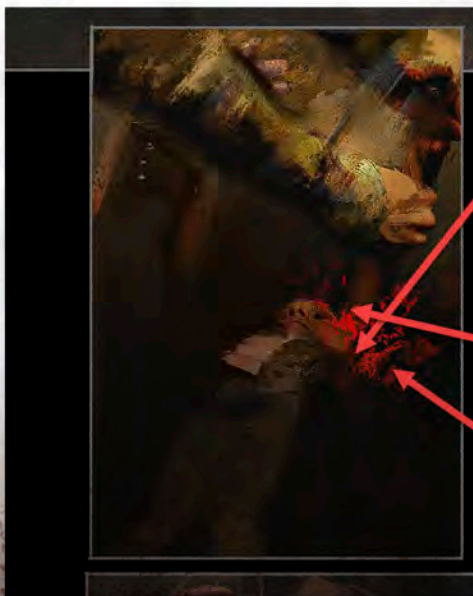


ART BY FELIPE KROLL

Felipe has a very unique style combining 3D models and digital painting. On the left is the 3D model for page twenty nine of Issue #1, *Goin' Up the Country*. Using the model allows us to adjust the viewer's perspective for each panel. When we have the page finalized, Felipe works his magic to create this unique style. Note the change in perspective in panel 2.



Here are the notes I sent to Felipe regarding panel 2. I thought it would be more realistic if Vladimir's left hand grabbed the stake. We went through multiple versions of this panel in order to get the perspective and the action just right.



It is this hand, Vladimir's left, which I want grabbing Jack's wrist

I would also like Vladimir's head lifted with his eyes open, looking at Jack

Final note. Let's make Vladimir's blood a different color, more bluish or brown than bright red



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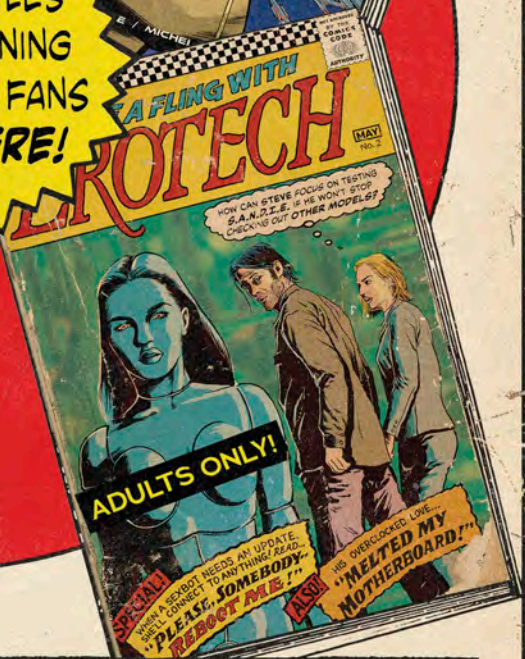
**WOODSTAKE
VARIANT COVER BY
KATIE SKELLY.**

SHP COMICS DOES IT AGAIN!

HERE THEY ARE! THE BIGGEST HITS FROM YOUR NEW FAVORITE COMICS PUBLISHER! A SEXY OFFICE COMEDY, A CABAL OF VAMPIRES AT WOODSTOCK, AND THE ORIGIN OF ALL LIFE IN THE UNIVERSE!
WOW!!!

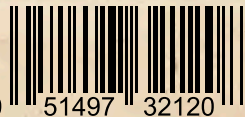


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