TOP COW
www.topcow.com
Image
1
$4.99 US
$7.45 CAN
APRIL
BLOOD LEGACY
the YOUNG ONES
KERRI HAWKINS
E. BASALDUA
LIVESAY
T. WENGLER
DREAMER
DIRECT SALES
00111
7 09853 10534 3

Writer
Kerri Hawkins

Penciler
Eric Basaldua

Inker
Livesay

Ink Assistants:
Marco Galli and David Wagner

Colorist
Tyson Wengler

Letterer
Dreamer Design's Robin Spehar and Dennis Heisler

Editor: Renae Geerlings

Associate Editor: Scott Tucker

Editor In Chief: Jim McLauchlin

Cover
Eric Basaldua, Batt, Steve Firchow

Pin Up:
Eric Basaldua, Steve Firchow

Editorial Assistants
Phil Smith and Sina Grace

Design
Stephanie Lesniak

Production
Alvin Coats, Chaz Riggs,
Eddie Han, & Vidonm Medina

for Top Cow previews, message boards and more go to
www.topcow.com

Address Correspondence to:
Blood Legacy c/o Top Cow Productions Inc.
10350 Santa Monica Blvd. No. 100
Los Angeles, Ca. 90025
E-Mail: fanmail@topcow.com

MARC SILVESTRI_chief executive officer **MATT HAWKINS**_president / chief operating officer **JIM McLAUCHLIN**_editor-in-chief **RENAE GEERLINGS**_vp of publishing / managing editor **CHRIS CARLISLE**_vp of creative affairs **ALVIN COATS**_production manager **STEPHANIE LESNIAK**_graphic designer **SCOTT TUCKER**_associate editor **LIZ BRIZZI**_public relations/licensing **CHAZ RIGGS**_production

BLOOD LEGACY: THE YOUNG ONES™ Vol. 1, Issue 1, April 2003. FIRST PRINTING. Published by Image Comics Inc. Office of Publication: 1071 North Batavia Street Suite A, Orange, California 92867. $4.99 US, $7.45 CAN. Blood Legacy™ its logo and all related characters and their likenesses are ™ & © 2003 TOP COW Productions Inc. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. The entire contents of this book are ™ & © 2003 Top Cow Productions Inc. Any similarities to persons living or dead is purely coincidental. With the exception of artwork used for review purposes, none of the contents of this book may be reprinted in any form without the express written consent of Marc Silvestri or Top Cow Productions Inc.

PRINTED IN USA

There are creatures that walk the earth that are not like us. Powerful. Immortal. They are perhaps the ones who inspired the legend of the vampire. This amuses them.

They do not feed off of humans. They feed off of one another. They grow strong through Sharing. In their hierarchy, three things make them powerful. The power of the One who changed them. The power of those they Share with. And their age.

But these are competing factors. Young ones are not powerful enough to initiate Change, their blood is weak. Old Ones are too powerful, their blood is toxic. Only those who occupy the middle ground are capable of initiating change. In theory.*

So why is the world not populated by these creatures? They are predators, and their favorite prey is each other. There is nothing more pleasurable than to Share unto death. Young Ones are easily killed, but it is not enjoyable. Old Ones have passed into immortality, and are incapable of being killed. Again, it is those who occupy the middle ground who are the challenge.

The Change itself is torturous, and few humans survive to become Young Ones.

Some do. This is their story.

*see Blood Legacy: The Story of Ryan

Note from the Author

Greetings and salutations,

The evolution of this story is a story in itself. It was originally plotted in mid-2001 and given the green light by Top Cow. Because of competing priorities and different projects, it was placed on the back burner for awhile, and then due to world events, had to be completely rewritten.

The story originally was going to focus on the plight of women in Afghanistan, which received very little press prior to September 11, 2001. Admit it, how many of you knew what was happening in Afghanistan or had ever heard of the Taliban prior to the destruction of the World Trade Center? I myself am embarrassed to admit that I first learned of the gender apartheid taking place in Afghanistan from a Dear Abby column (or was it Ann Landers?). Mavis Leno had written a letter vividly describing the Taliban's horrific treatment of women. At that time, she was fighting a project UNOCAL was seeking approval for, one that would create an oil pipeline across the country, giving the Taliban about a $100 million a year.

I think this was around 1999. I did some research, and I was astonished that these atrocities received so little mention in the world press. When I was given the chance to put together this graphic novel, I saw an opportunity to work in a story line to shed some light on the evil that was taking place in that country, and the lack of world response (a common theme in this story).

But then September 11 happened, and obviously the story was scrapped. It was too late, and it would have appeared shallow and opportunistic as written.

So the story of Rwanda was substituted, another time when we did nothing to stop atrocities we knew were occurring.

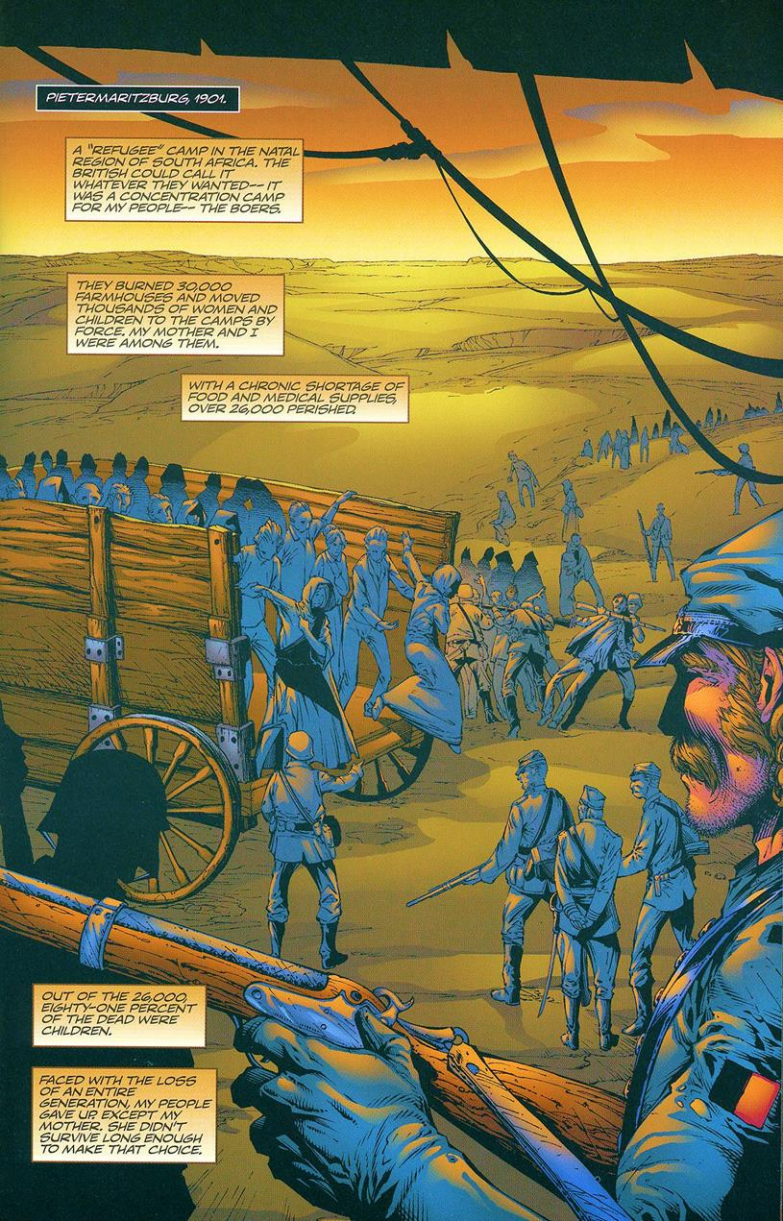
I will always regret not getting this story out sooner...

Kerri

"The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing."

Edmund Burke

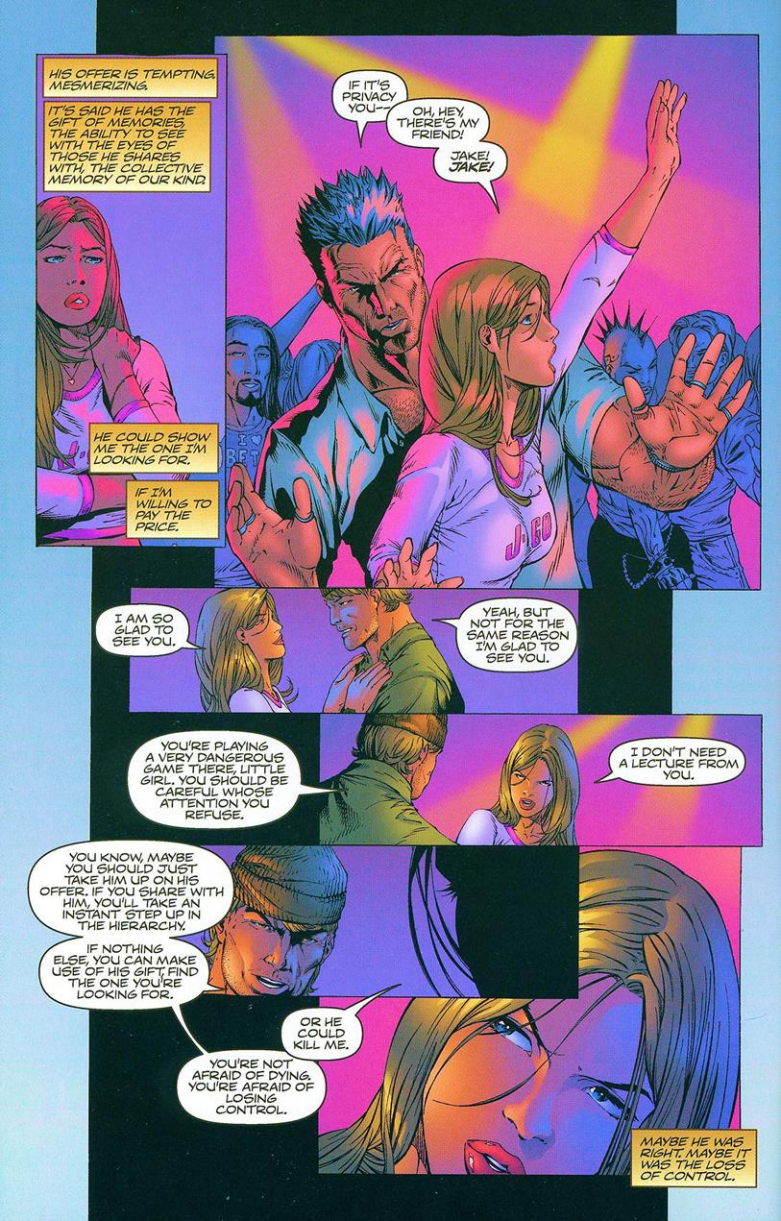
EVIL IS AN INTRINSIC PART OF THE HUMAN RACE.
I KNOW YOU GOT MONEY, KID.
I'M GONNA MAKE ME A "HOT DOG."
PEOPLE THINK THIS IS A RECENT PHENOMENON.
THEY'RE WRONG.
I SHOULD KNOW.
I'VE SPENT MY WHOLE LIFE FIGHTING EVIL.
PLEASE STOP!
AND THAT'S OVER A HUNDRED YEARS NOW.
I USUALLY ONLY BATTLE THE "BIG EVIL."


PIETERMARITZBURG, 1901.
A "REFUGEE" CAMP IN THE NATAL REGION OF SOUTH AFRICA. THE BRITISH COULD CALL IT WHATEVER THEY WANTED-- IT WAS A CONCENTRATION CAMP FOR MY PEOPLE-- THE BOERS.
THEY BURNED 30,000 FARMHOUSES AND MOVED THOUSANDS OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN TO THE CAMPS BY FORCE. MY MOTHER AND I WERE AMONG THEM.
WITH A CHRONIC SHORTAGE OF FOOD AND MEDICAL SUPPLIES, OVER 26,000 PERISHED.
OUT OF THE 26,000, EIGHTY-ONE PERCENT OF THE DEAD WERE CHILDREN.
FACED WITH THE LOSS OF AN ENTIRE GENERATION, MY PEOPLE GAVE UP. EXCEPT MY MOTHER. SHE DIDN'T SURVIVE LONG ENOUGH TO MAKE THAT CHOICE.

I USUALLY ONLY DEAL WITH THE "BIG EVIL."
BUT TODAY I'LL MAKE AN EXCEPTION.
HEY, LOOK WHAT'S COMING. I'VE GOT SOMETHING FOR YOU RIGHT HERE, BABY!
YEAH, BABY, BRING IT ON!
YOU KNOW, AS ATTRACTIVE AN INVITATION AS THAT APPEARS, I'M REALLY GOING TO HAVE TO PASS.
I'VE GOT SOMETHING BETTER IN MIND!
The bird pounds in its fury,
My ribs are but a cage,
My skull serves as a chamber,
For uncontrollable rage.
YOU LIKE GRABBING YOURSELF?
GRAB THEM
AND YOU--
YOU SHOULD KEEP YOUR TONGUE IN YOUR MOUTH!
TH-TH-THANKS.

STILL TRYING TO SAVE THE WORLD, EH ERIKA?
I'M NOT SURE THIS WORLD IS WORTH SAVING.
AND YET, BEAUTIFUL ONE, YOU KEEP TRYING.
OR MAYBE YOU JUST LIKE TO KICK SOME ASS.
EITHER WAY--
I JUST LIKE TO WATCH YOU MOVE.
YOU KNOW I LIVE TO ENTERTAIN YOU.

IF ONLY THAT WERE TRUE.
WILL YOU BE GOING TO THE CLUB TONIGHT?
I DON'T KNOW. MAYBE, MAYBE NOT. IT'S REALLY NOT MY SCENE.
NOT MY SCENE. THESE ARE MY KIND. BLOODSUCKERS. VAMPIRES. CHILDREN OF THE NIGHT. WHATEVER YOU WANT TO CALL THEM.
THEY FEED ON EACH OTHER. THOUGH. NOT HUMANS. IT'S ALL ABOUT POWER. ABOUT WHO MADE YOU. ABOUT WHO YOU SHARE WITH. IT MAKES YOU STRONG.
IT MAKES ME SICK.
I COULD BECOME MORE POWERFUL.
IF I WERE WILLING TO SELL MY SOUL.
HEY ERIKA. WELCOME TO MY CLUB.
HEY, DRAKE.
YOU DON'T SEEM TO BE ENJOYING YOURSELF. PERHAPS I COULD DO SOMETHING TO CHANGE THAT.
OH, BABY. FORGET HER. WE CAN SATISFY YOU.
I DON'T THINK SO.
I AM DRAWN TO THIS MAN AGAINST MY WILL. HE IS THE MOST POWERFUL PERSON IN THE ROOM.
IT IS A GREAT HONOR FOR HIM TO EVEN APPROACH ME.
AND HE HAS SOMETHING I DESPERATELY NEED.
SO... DO YOU HAVE PLANS FOR THIS EVENING?


HIS OFFER IS TEMPTING. MESMERIZING.
IT'S SAID HE HAS THE GIFT OF MEMORIES. THE ABILITY TO SEE WITH THE EYES OF THOSE HE SHARES WITH, THE COLLECTIVE MEMORY OF OUR KIND.
HE COULD SHOW ME THE ONE I'M LOOKING FOR.
IF I'M WILLING TO PAY THE PRICE.
IF IT'S PRIVACY YOU—
OH, HEY THERE'S MY FRIEND!
JAKE! JAKE!
I AM SO GLAD TO SEE YOU.
YEAH, BUT NOT FOR THE SAME REASON I'M GLAD TO SEE YOU.
YOU'RE PLAYING A VERY DANGEROUS GAME THERE, LITTLE GIRL. YOU SHOULD BE CAREFUL WHOSE ATTENTION YOU REFUSE.
I DON'T NEED A LECTURE FROM YOU.
YOU KNOW, MAYBE YOU SHOULD JUST TAKE HIM UP ON HIS OFFER. IF YOU SHARE WITH HIM, YOU'LL TAKE AN INSTANT STEP UP IN THE HIERARCHY.
IF NOTHING ELSE, YOU CAN MAKE USE OF HIS GIFT, FIND THE ONE YOU'RE LOOKING FOR.
OR HE COULD KILL ME.
YOU'RE NOT AFRAID OF DYING. YOU'RE AFRAID OF LOSING CONTROL.
MAYBE HE WAS RIGHT. MAYBE IT WAS THE LOSS OF CONTROL.

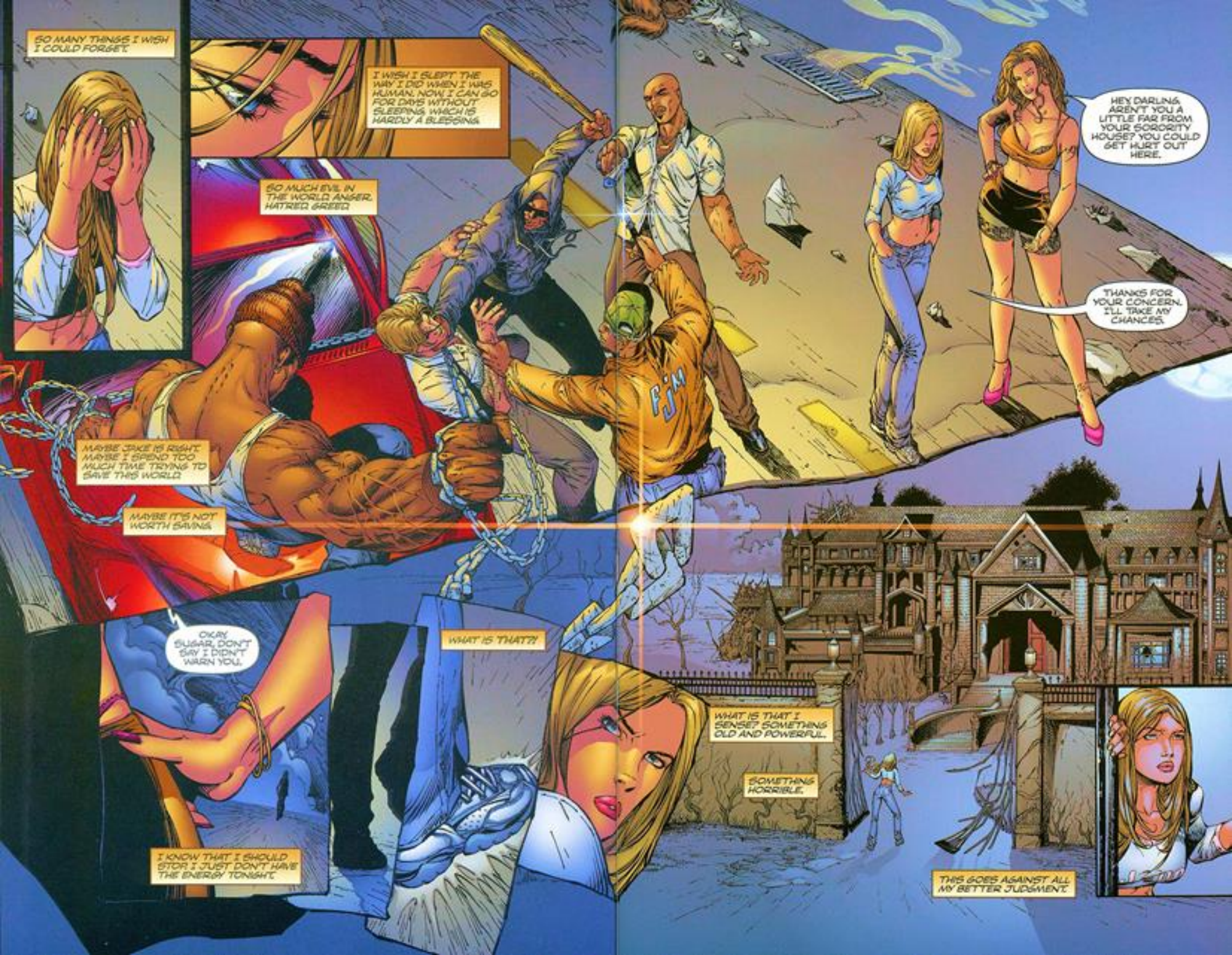
e.bas
2007
steve

BUT WITH OUR KIND THAT'S A VERY REAL FEAR.
THE MOOD IN THE CLUB DRAMATICALLY SHIFTS. THE ENERGY IN THE ROOM IS SUDDENLY AMPLIFIED A THOUSANDFOLD.
DRAKE IS AT NO LOSS FOR PARTNERS.
BUT HE HAS EYES FOR ONLY ME AS HE DRAWS FIRST BLOOD.
I need more time, but can't slow down.
That bird has such great thirst,
Necessity kills my every thought,
But I know they'll get me first.
HEY ERIKA, IF YOU DON'T MIND...
NO, NO, THAT'S FINE. PLEASE GO AHEAD.
ENJOY YOURSELF.

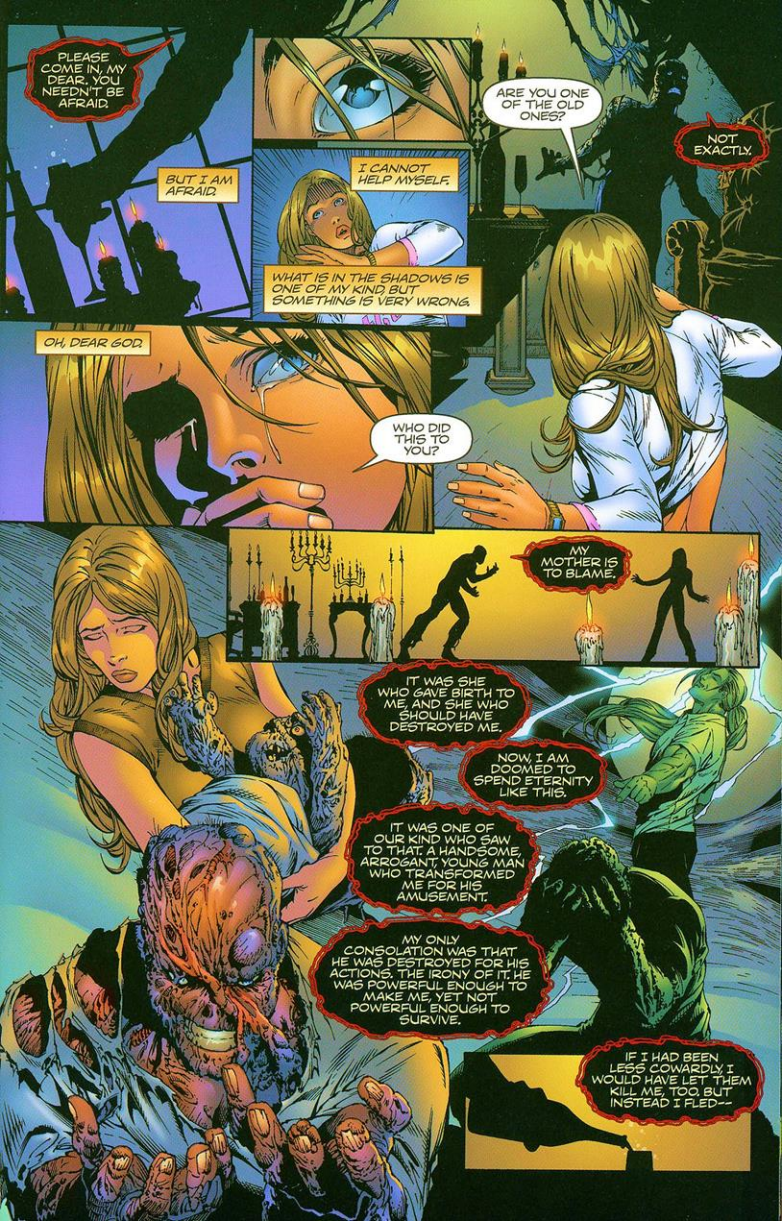
THE NIGHT AIR CLEARS MY HEAD.
BUT IT DOESN'T COOL THE FIRE.
Tears for my transparent vision,
You wonder what I see;
Dissatisfied, I don't see clear,
My dreams have set me free.
PLEASE, NO MORE. I'LL TELL YOU WHATEVER YOU WANT.
SLEEP ON, SOLDIER.
I WAS A SOLDIER--
IN MORE THAN ONE WAR.
ARBEIT MACHT FREI
1945, AUSCHWITZ-BIRKENAU, THIRTY-SEVEN MILES WEST OF KRAKOW.
CONTRARY TO WHAT MANY BELIEVED, IT WASN'T THE AMERICANS WHO OPENED THE DOORS OF AUSCHWITZ.
<STOJ!>
<WHAT'S WRONG?>
<IS THAT WHAT I THINK IT IS?>
<IT CAN'T BE.>
<BUT IT IS.>
<EYEGLASSES, THOUSANDS OF THEM.>

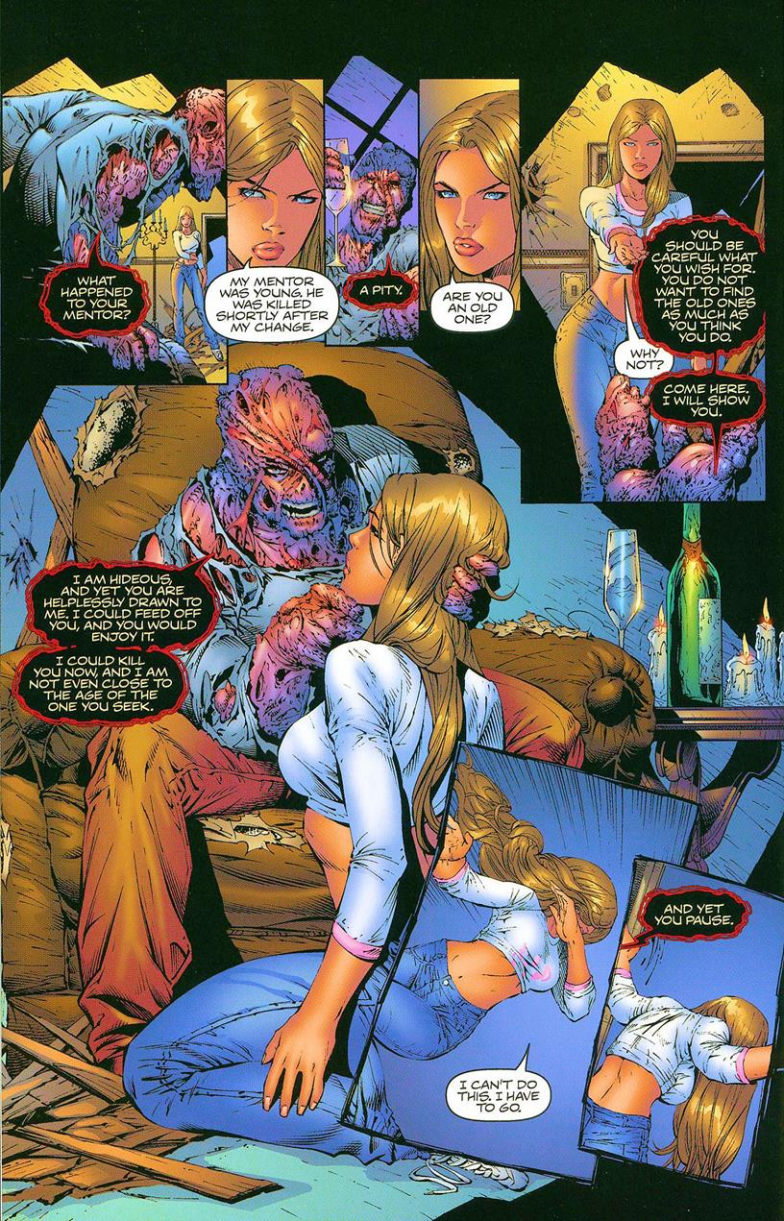
<TIGHTEN IT UP! WE'RE GOING IN.>
<THIS ISN'T GOING TO BE PRETTY. GOD HELP US.>
"THEY MUST HAVE JUST LEFT. THERE'S STILL SMOKE COMING FROM THE FACTORY."
<UM, I DON'T THINK THAT'S A FACTORY.>
<I THINK YOU MAY BE RIGHT. GET THOSE DOORS OPEN!>
GO!
<"OH DEAR GOD.">
AN ANCIENT, UNNAMED FEAR GRIPS US ALL.
IT SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE THAT ANYONE COULD HAVE DONE THIS.
<QUICKLY. WE NEED THESE GATES OPEN.>

THE EYEGLASSES WERE EXPLAINED.
IN 1944, WHEN THE FOUR BIRKENAU KREMATORIA COULD NO LONGER KEEP UP WITH THE DESTRUCTION OF HUMAN LIFE, SOME 20,000 BODIES A DAY WERE BURNED IN PITS.
WHEN THE RED ARMY APPROACHED IN 1945, THE NAZIS DESTROYED DOCUMENTS AND BURNED BUILDINGS, ATTEMPTING TO HIDE THEIR CRIMES.
THEY RAN OUT OF TIME.
RUSSIANS. POLES. GYPSIES. PRISONERS OF WAR.
AND JEWS.
A MILLION OF THEM. MAYBE MORE.


SO MANY THINGS I WISH I COULD FORGET.
I WISH I SLEPT THE WAY I DID WHEN I WAS HUMAN. NOW, I CAN GO FOR DAYS WITHOUT SLEEPING, WHICH IS HARDLY A BLESSING.
SO MUCH EVIL IN THE WORLD. ANGER. HATRED. GREED.
HEY, DARLING. AREN'T YOU A LITTLE FAR FROM YOUR SORORITY HOUSE? YOU COULD GET HURT OUT HERE.
THANKS FOR YOUR CONCERN. I'LL TAKE MY CHANCES.
MAYBE JAKE IS RIGHT. MAYBE I SPEND TOO MUCH TIME TRYING TO SAVE THIS WORLD.
MAYBE IT'S NOT WORTH SAVING.
OKAY, SUGAR, DON'T SAY I DIDN'T WARN YOU.
WHAT IS THAT?!
WHAT IS THAT I SENSE? SOMETHING OLD AND POWERFUL.
SOMETHING HORRIBLE.
I KNOW THAT I SHOULD STOP. I JUST DON'T HAVE THE ENERGY TONIGHT.
THIS GOES AGAINST ALL MY BETTER JUDGMENT.

BUT WHAT ELSE IS NEW?
THERE'S NOT A LOT I'M AFRAID OF THESE DAYS. IMMORTALITY GIVES YOU THAT BRAVADO.
IT'S FEELING PRETTY FALSE RIGHT ABOUT NOW.
BECAUSE WHATEVER LIVES HERE-- IT IS DEFINITELY OLD, AND DEFINITELY POWERFUL.
AND IT IS MOST DEFINITELY ONE OF MY KIND.

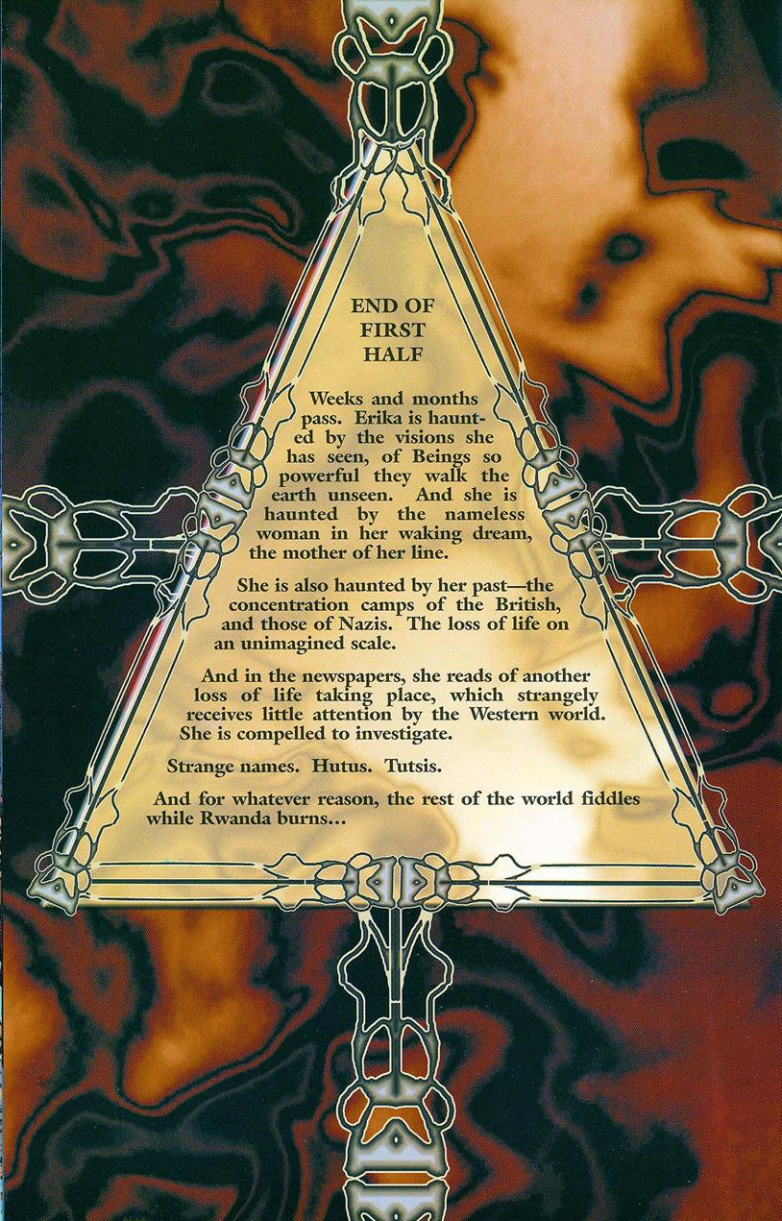

PLEASE COME IN, MY DEAR. YOU NEEDN'T BE AFRAID.
BUT I AM AFRAID.
I CANNOT HELP MYSELF.
WHAT IS IN THE SHADOWS IS ONE OF MY KIND, BUT SOMETHING IS VERY WRONG.
ARE YOU ONE OF THE OLD ONES?
NOT EXACTLY.
OH, DEAR GOD.
WHO DID THIS TO YOU?
MY MOTHER IS TO BLAME.
IT WAS SHE WHO GAVE BIRTH TO ME, AND SHE WHO SHOULD HAVE DESTROYED ME.
NOW, I AM DOOMED TO SPEND ETERNITY LIKE THIS.
IT WAS ONE OF OUR KIND WHO SAW TO THAT, A HANDSOME, ARROGANT, YOUNG MAN WHO TRANSFORMED ME FOR HIS AMUSEMENT.
MY ONLY CONSOLATION WAS THAT HE WAS DESTROYED FOR HIS ACTIONS. THE IRONY OF IT. HE WAS POWERFUL ENOUGH TO MAKE ME, YET NOT POWERFUL ENOUGH TO SURVIVE.
IF I HAD BEEN LESS COWARDLY, I WOULD HAVE LET THEM KILL ME, TOO. BUT INSTEAD I FLED--


WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR MENTOR?
MY MENTOR WAS YOUNG. HE WAS KILLED SHORTLY AFTER MY CHANGE.
A PITY.
ARE YOU AN OLD ONE?
YOU SHOULD BE CAREFUL. WHAT YOU WISH FOR. YOU DO NOT WANT TO FIND THE OLD ONES AS MUCH AS YOU THINK YOU DO.
WHY NOT?
COME HERE. I WILL SHOW YOU.
I AM HIDEOUS, AND YET YOU ARE HELPLESSLY DRAWN TO ME. I COULD FEED OFF YOU, AND YOU WOULD ENJOY IT.
I COULD KILL YOU NOW, AND I AM NOT EVEN CLOSE TO THE AGE OF THE ONE YOU SEEK.
AND YET YOU PAUSE.
I CAN'T DO THIS. I HAVE TO GO.

WHAT DO YOU KNOW OF THE ONE I SEEK?
I CAN SHOW HER TO YOU.
IT'S A HER?
IT IS MY PERVERSE GIFT, TO KNOW THE WEAKNESS OF OUR KIND. I KNOW THAT YOU SEEK THE ORIGINATOR OF YOUR LINEAGE, THE ANCIENT ANCESTOR WHO STARTED YOUR LINE.
SO HOW ABOUT IT, MY DEAR?
I AM DESPERATELY AFRAID.
AND YET I KNEEL.
MY REVULSION--

YOU MUST COMPLETE THE CIRCLE IN ORDER TO SEE.
--IS OVERPOWERED--
--BY MY NEED TO KNOW.
AS I TAKE HIS BLOOD I BEGIN TO SEE VISIONS.
THEY ARE VAGUE, UNCLEAR, BUT GRADUALLY COME INTO FOCUS. I SEE THE ONE WHO FIRST TOOK ME, THEN THE ONE WHO FIRST TOOK HIM. I BEGIN TO SEE MY ENTIRE LINEAGE, STRETCHING BACKWARD THROUGH TIME.
I SEE A FIGURE IN THE SHADOWS. UNCLEAR. INDISTINCT.

I DESPERATELY TRY TO FOCUS KNOWING THIS IS THE ONE I SEEK.
THE WOMAN IS DARK.
AND BEAUTIFUL.
AND SEDUCTIVE.
AND TERRIFYING.
ENOUGH. I HAVE SEEN ENOUGH!
RUN AWAY LITTLE GIRL. I TOLD YOU--
BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU WISH FOR.
Ridiculous fancy, it fades away,
So slowly you shed no tear,
Such silence begins you wondering,
If it was ever really here.



END OF FIRST HALF

Weeks and months pass. Erika is haunted by the visions she has seen, of Beings so powerful they walk the earth unseen. And she is haunted by the nameless woman in her waking dream, the mother of her line.

She is also haunted by her past—the concentration camps of the British, and those of Nazis. The loss of life on an unimagined scale.

And in the newspapers, she reads of another loss of life taking place, which strangely receives little attention by the Western world. She is compelled to investigate.

Strange names. Hutus. Tutsis.

And for whatever reason, the rest of the world fiddles while Rwanda burns...

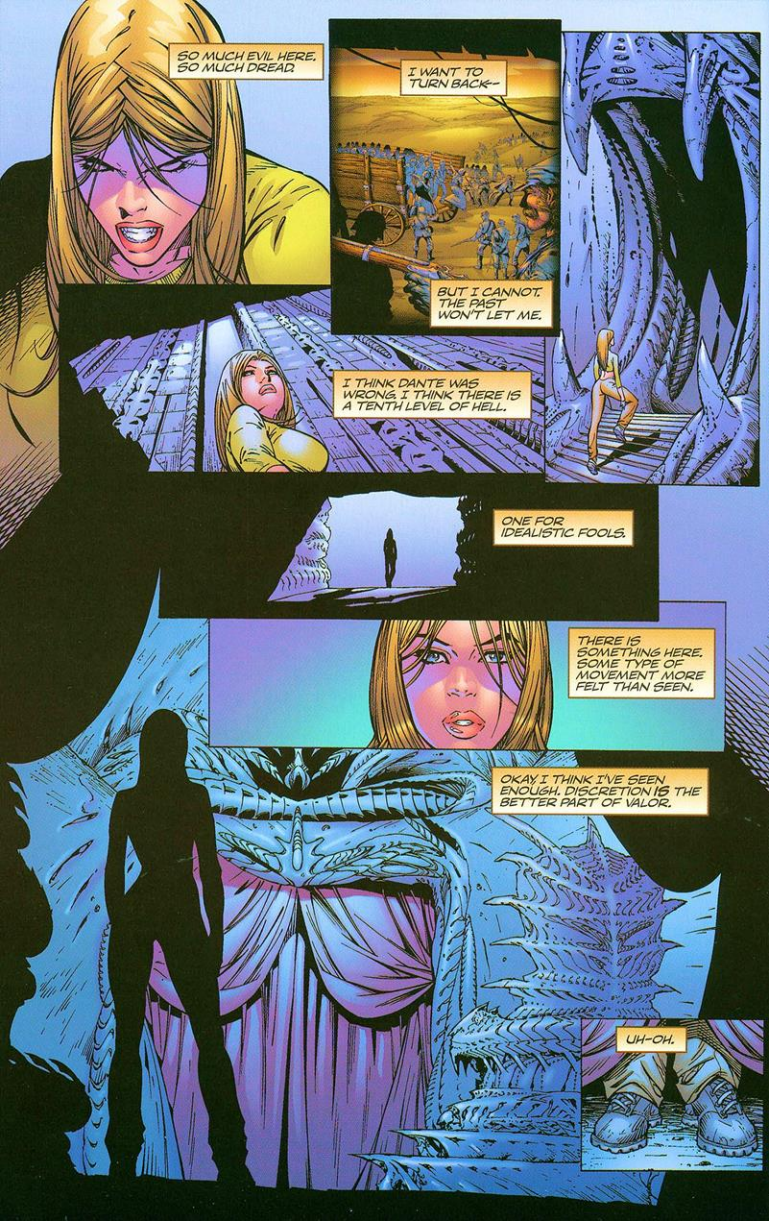
THREE WEEKS NOW I HAVE BEEN RUNNING ACROSS THE CONTINENT.
WITHOUT FOOD, WITHOUT REST, WITHOUT PEACE.
I AM SEARCHING FOR EVIL.
NOT JUST ANY EVIL...

SERIOUS EVIL.
MY GOD...
THIS IS A SLAUGHTER. I HEARD RUMORS ABOUT THE MADNESS OVERTAKING THESE PEOPLE. TWO TRIBES COMMITTING GENOCIDE AGAINST ONE ANOTHER.
I HAD NO IDEA THERE WERE THIS MANY OF THEM. THOUSANDS. HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS.

THAT TELLS ME I'M ON THE RIGHT TRACK.
WHATEVER I SENSE IS IN THE JUNGLE AHEAD OF ME.
UNFORTUNATELY...
I THINK IT KNOWS I'M COMING.
THAT WON'T STOP ME. IT WON'T EVEN SLOW ME DOWN.
<TOMORROW WE WILL KILL SOME MORE.>
<THE JUNGLE RUNS RED WITH THE BLOOD OF OUR ENEMIES!>
OKAY **THAT** WAS WEIRD ENOUGH TO SLOW ME DOWN.

DAYS PASS.
THE IMPENETRABLE JUNGLE GIVES WAY.
A JUNGLE CAT THINKS HE HAS FOUND EASY PREY.
HE CHANGES HIS MIND.
THE ONE WHO IS BEHIND THIS MADNESS--
HE IS AHEAD OF ME IN THE HEART OF THIS DARKNESS.
I KNOW BECAUSE I AM FILLED WITH A DREAD I HAVE NEVER FELT BEFORE. NOT EVEN STANDING BEFORE THE GATES OF HELL OF AUSCHWITZ.
A promise lies within my song,
It's sung just once the same,
A melancholy note in flight,
As swift as it must change.

I THINK I'VE FOUND WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR.
ALTHOUGH I HAVE THE TERRIBLE FEELING THAT IT'S FOUND ME.


SO MUCH EVIL HERE. SO MUCH DREAD.
I WANT TO TURN BACK--
BUT I CANNOT. THE PAST WON'T LET ME.
I THINK DANTE WAS WRONG. I THINK THERE IS A TENTH LEVEL OF HELL.
ONE FOR IDEALISTIC FOOLS.
THERE IS SOMETHING HERE. SOME TYPE OF MOVEMENT MORE FELT THAN SEEN.
OKAY. I THINK I'VE SEEN ENOUGH. DISCRETION IS THE BETTER PART OF VALOR.
UH-OH.

CAN I HELP YOU?
I WAS UNCERTAIN. THIS IS NOT WHAT I WAS EXPECTING.
I'M NOT SURE.
THEN PERHAPS YOU SHOULD FIGURE IT OUT.
HIS WORDS ARE POLITE.
HIS ACTIONS ARE NOT.
HOW DARE YOU COME HERE, INFANT! THINKING THAT YOU WERE A MATCH FOR ME.

DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHO I AM?
THE PAIN IS INTENSE, BUT IT IS NOT A MORTAL WOUND.
I REALIZE I HAVE COMPLETELY UNDERESTIMATED MY ENEMY.
WORSE, I REALIZE THAT HE IS ONE OF MY KIND, AND VERY OLD.

I KNOW WHO YOU ARE. I KNOW THE THINGS YOU'VE DONE.
OH MY DEAR...
YOU HAVE NO IDEA.
AND AS BEFORE, WHEN I SAW THE HISTORY OF MY LINEAGE, THE BLOOD BRINGS THE VISIONS.
BUT THESE IMAGES ARE OF HORROR, THE HISTORY OF A MADMAN UNFOLDING BEFORE ME.
THE WORST POSSIBLE SCENARIO, A MAN OF INFINITE POWER AND IMMORTAL LIFE, RUNNING RAMPANT THROUGH TIME.
THIS ONE IS EVIL INCARNATE.

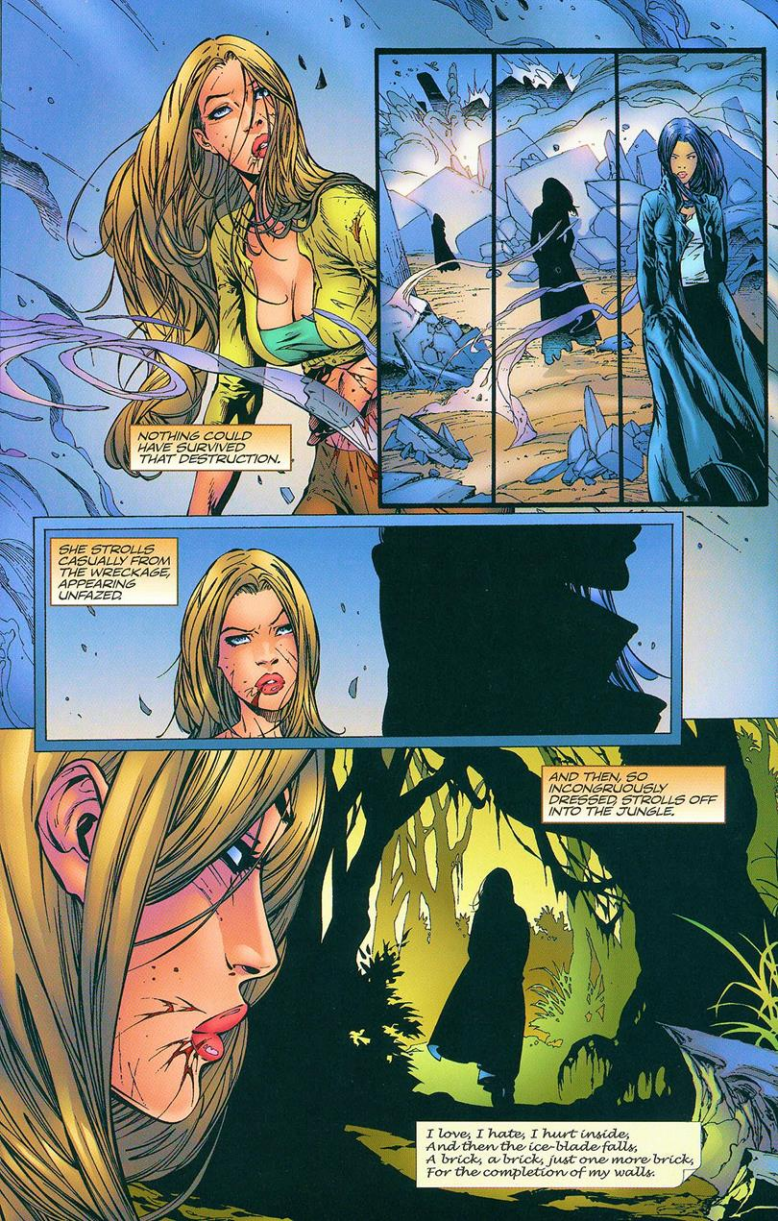
OHHH.
SO, MY DEAR...
ARE YOU HAPPY YOU'VE FOUND THE OLD ONES?
IT IS RARE THAT I GET ANY VISITORS FROM OUR KIND, SO PERHAPS I WILL ENJOY YOUR COMPANY FOR AWHILE.
IN FACT, I MAY JUST SLOWLY CONSUME YOUR INTERNAL ORGANS OVER SEVERAL DECADES, JUST FOR FUN.
THE ONLY PITY IS THAT YOU ARE A YOUNG ONE, AND NOT A VERY STRONG ONE AT THAT.

THEN PERHAPS YOU WOULD LIKE TO DEAL WITH SOMEONE A LITTLE BIT OLDER?
WHAAAT!?
BECAUSE I CAN CERTAINLY ARRANGE THAT.
THE WOMAN STEPS FROM THE SHADOWS, AND HER PRESENCE FILLS THE ROOM.
SHE APPEARS YOUNG, BUT AMONGST OUR KIND, APPEARANCES CAN BE DECEIVING.
BECAUSE THIS ONE IS IMMENSELY OLD.

YOU DON'T LOOK HAPPY TO SEE ME.
I AM ALWAYS HONORED BY YOUR PRESENCE, RYAN.
YOU'RE NOT A VERY GOOD LIAR.
ANOTHER OF YOUR MANY GIFTS?
NOT REALLY. SO WHO'S YOUR LITTLE PLAYTOY?
MY NAME IS ERIKA.
OKAY, ERIKA.
TIME TO GO.
THE WOMAN IS MESMERIZING, BUT SHE PAYS NO ATTENTION TO ME.
AND FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE, THIS ACTUALLY HURTS.

I OBEY THE WOMAN'S COMMAND-- I HAVE NO CHOICE.
BUT I CAN'T HELP BUT PAUSE.
I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU, LUKE, ACTUALLY FOR SEVERAL CENTURIES NOW.
SO WHAT FINALLY GAVE ME AWAY?
I THOUGHT I RECOGNIZED YOUR PARTICULAR BRAND OF EVIL HERE IN RWANDA.
A MILLION PEOPLE IN THE SPAN OF WEEKS. THAT'S QUITE AN ACCOMPLISHMENT, EVEN FOR YOU.
I DO MY BEST TO KEEP THE HUMAN POPULATION IN CHECK.
YES, I'VE BEEN MEANING TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT THAT...
I THOUGHT I TOLD YOU TO LEAVE.

THIS TIME I DO LEAVE.
AND AS THE BATTLE BEHIND ME BEGINS...
IT IS AS IF HELL ITSELF IS COLLAPSING INWARD.
EVEN WITH MY PRETERNATURAL SPEED.
I AM NOT CERTAIN I WILL MAKE IT OUT IN TIME.
AND AS THE DUST SETTLES...
THE SILENCE IS COMPLETE.


NOTHING COULD HAVE SURVIVED THAT DESTRUCTION.
SHE STROLLS CASUALLY FROM THE WRECKAGE, APPEARING UNFAZED.
AND THEN, SO INCONGRUOUSLY DRESSED STROLLS OFF INTO THE JUNGLE.
I love, I hate, I hurt inside;
And then the ice-blade falls,
A brick, a brick, just one more brick,
For the completion of my walls.

HEY!
THE FIGURE PAUSES, AND I SENSE SHE IS AMUSED.
THAT'S IT? YOU JUST WANDER IN THERE AND TAKE OUT THAT MONSTER? THAT'S IT? NO EXPLANATION, OR NOTHING? I WAS GOING TO DO THAT?
YES, YOU WERE DOING VERY WELL WHEN I CAME IN.
BUT YOU WOULD NOT HAVE SUCCEEDED. HE WAS TOO OLD FOR YOU TO DEFEAT.
BUT YOU STILL HAVEN'T ANSWERED WHY.
UNLIKE YOU, I AM NOT OUT TO SAVE THE WORLD. THAT WAS PERSONAL.

BUT WHY?
MANY YEARS AGO, THAT ONE BETRAYED MY FATHER.
AND ONLY I AM ALLOWED TO DO THAT.
I DESPERATELY WANT TO ASK THIS ONE MORE, BUT I AM AFRAID TO SPEAK. AS IF SENSING THIS, RYAN AGAIN PAUSES.
I WILL TELL YOU TWO THINGS. FIRST OFF, I HAVE SIMPLY PUT LUKE BACK IN HIS BOX FOR NOW. BUT HE WILL GET OUT AGAIN, AND HE WILL REMEMBER YOU.
AND THAT IS NOT A GOOD THING.
SECONDLY, THE ONE YOU SEEK. HER NAME IS MARILYN.*
*SEE BL ISSUES#3, AND #4.
AND MARILYN IS...
WELL, SHE IS QUITE SOMETHING.
BUT YOU WILL FIND OUT FOR YOURSELF.

EPILOGUE.
MUCH LATER.
I win, I lose, I never gain,
Rarely often do I weep,
I'm afraid, but yet I hold no fear, that is until I sleep.
MY THOUGHTS ARE FULL TODAY.
OF MARILYN.
OF RYAN.
AND OF THE EVIL ONE.
RYAN SAID HE WOULD GET OUT OF HIS BOX AGAIN.
I WONDER HOW SOON THAT WILL BE...
Tears for my transparent vision,
You wonder what I see,
A dreamer slaying dragons,
While my dreams are slaying me.
New York Times
SEPTEMBER 10, 2001
THE END.

Tears for my transparent vision,
You wonder what I see,
Dissatisfied, I don't see clear,
My dreams have set me free.

My promise lies within my song,
It's sung just once the same,
A melancholy note in flight,
As swift as it must change.

Ridiculous fancy, it fades away,
So slowly you shed no tear,
Such silence begins you wondering,
If it was every really here.

The bird pounds in its fury,
My ribs are but a cage,
My skull serves as a chamber,
For uncontrollable rage.

I love, I hate, I hurt inside,
And then the ice-blade falls,
A brick, a brick, just one more brick,
For the completion of my walls.

I win, I lose, I never gain,
Rarely often do I weep,
I'm afraid, but yet I hold no fear,
That is, until I sleep.

I need more time, but can't slow
down,
That bird has such great thirst,
Necessity kills my every thought,
But I know they'll get me first.

Tears for my transparent vision,
You wonder what I see,
A dreamer slaying dragons,
While my dreams are slaying me.

Ryan