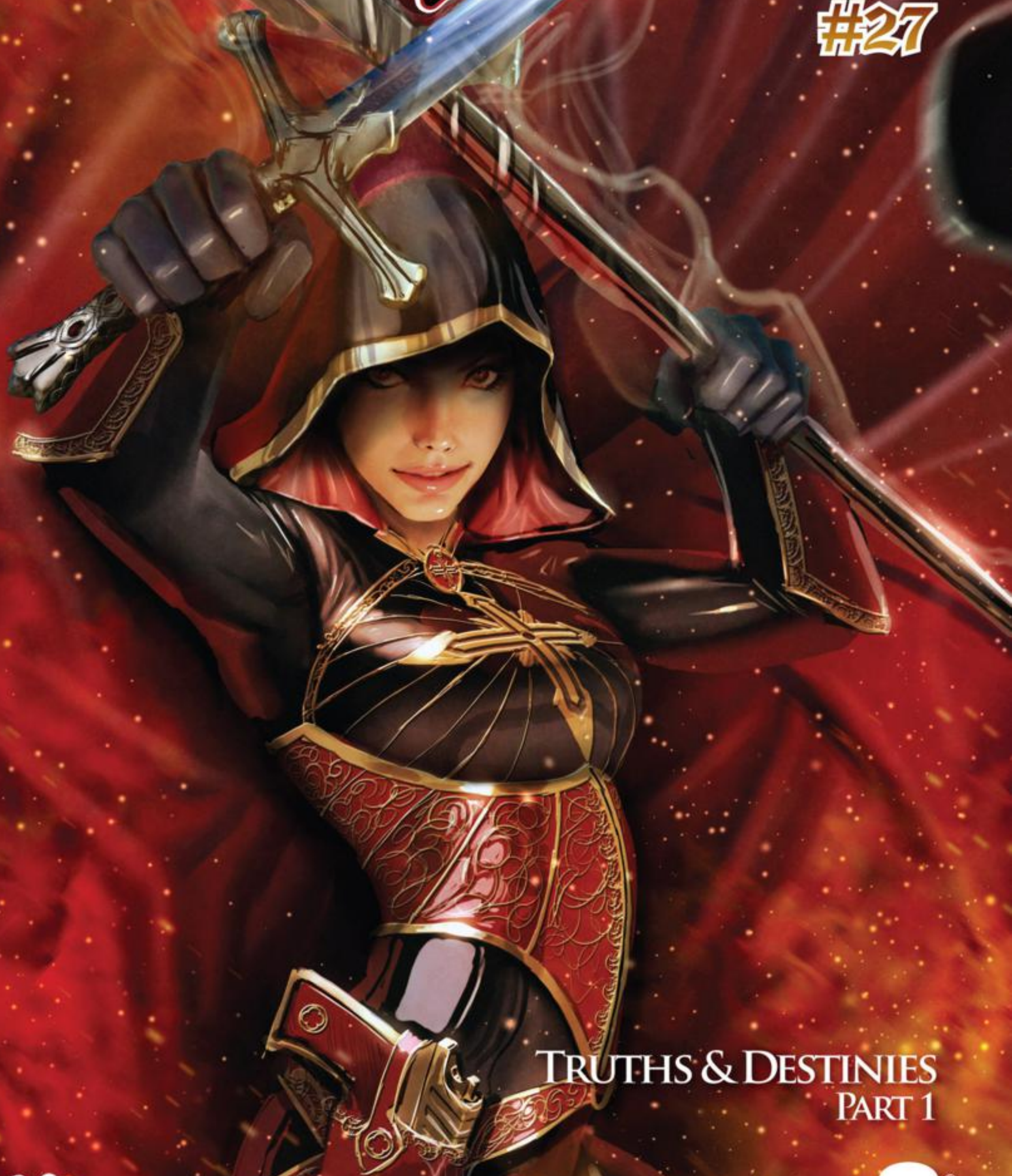


ARTIFACTS™

#27



TRUTHS & DESTINIES
PART 1

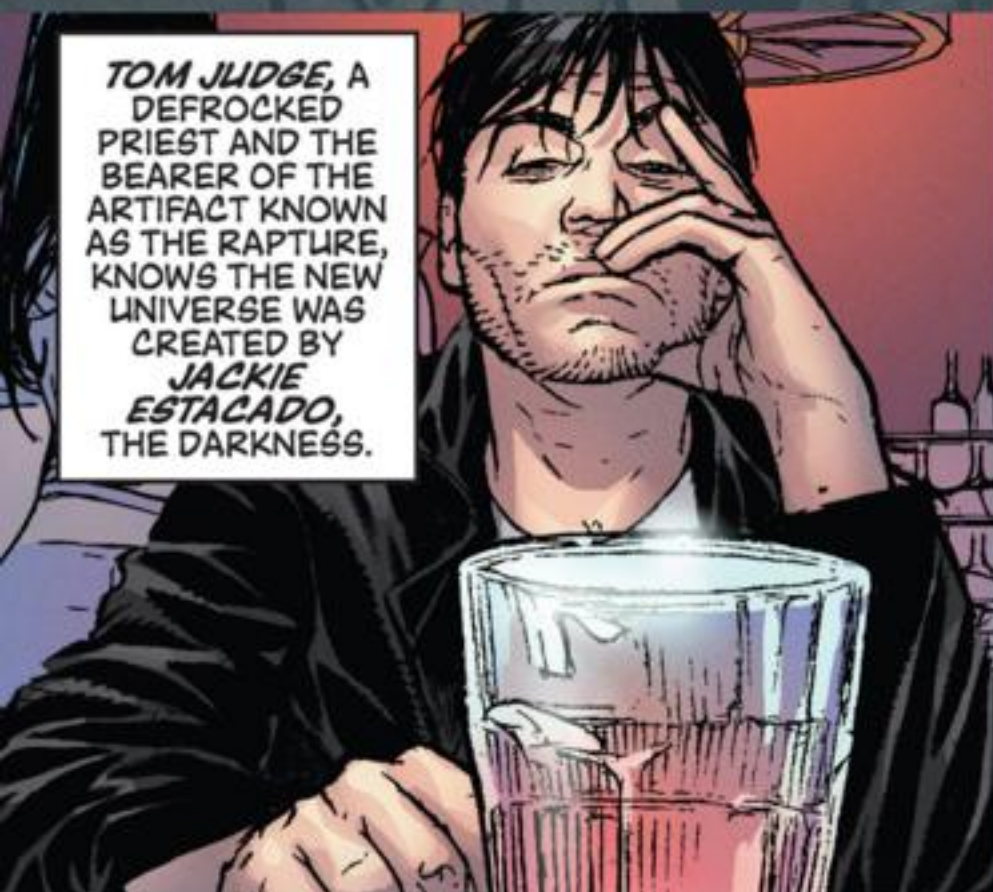
RON MARZ • MARCO TURINI
ANDY TROY • BILL FARMER



PREVIOUSLY IN ARTIFACTS

THE GATHERING OF THIRTEEN MYSTICAL
ARTIFACTS DESTROYED THE WORLD...
AND CREATED ANOTHER IN ITS IMAGE.

TOM JUDGE, A
DEFROCKED
PRIEST AND THE
BEARER OF THE
ARTIFACT KNOWN
AS THE RAPTURE,
KNOWS THE NEW
UNIVERSE WAS
CREATED BY
**JACKIE
ESTACADO,**
THE DARKNESS.



BELIEVING HE COULD SET THE UNIVERSE RIGHT
BY ELIMINATING THE ANOMALY OF JACKIE'S
WIFE, TOM GATHERED OTHER ARTIFACTS
BEARERS TO ATTACK ESTACADO.



HOWEVER, WITCHBLADE
BEARER **SARA PEZZINI**
CONFRONTED AND
STOPPED TOM, REFUSING
TO ALLOW AN INNOCENT
LIFE TO BE SACRIFICED.



NOW TOM AND THE OTHER
ARTIFACTS BEARERS ARE
RESIGNED TO AN ONGOING
BATTLE AGAINST THE FORCES
OF THE DARKNESS.



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MARCO TURINI * ARTIST
ANDY TROY & BILL FARMER * COLORIST
TROY PETERI * LETTERER
BRYAN ROUNTREE, BETSY GONIA,
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TRUTHS & DESTINIES PART 1

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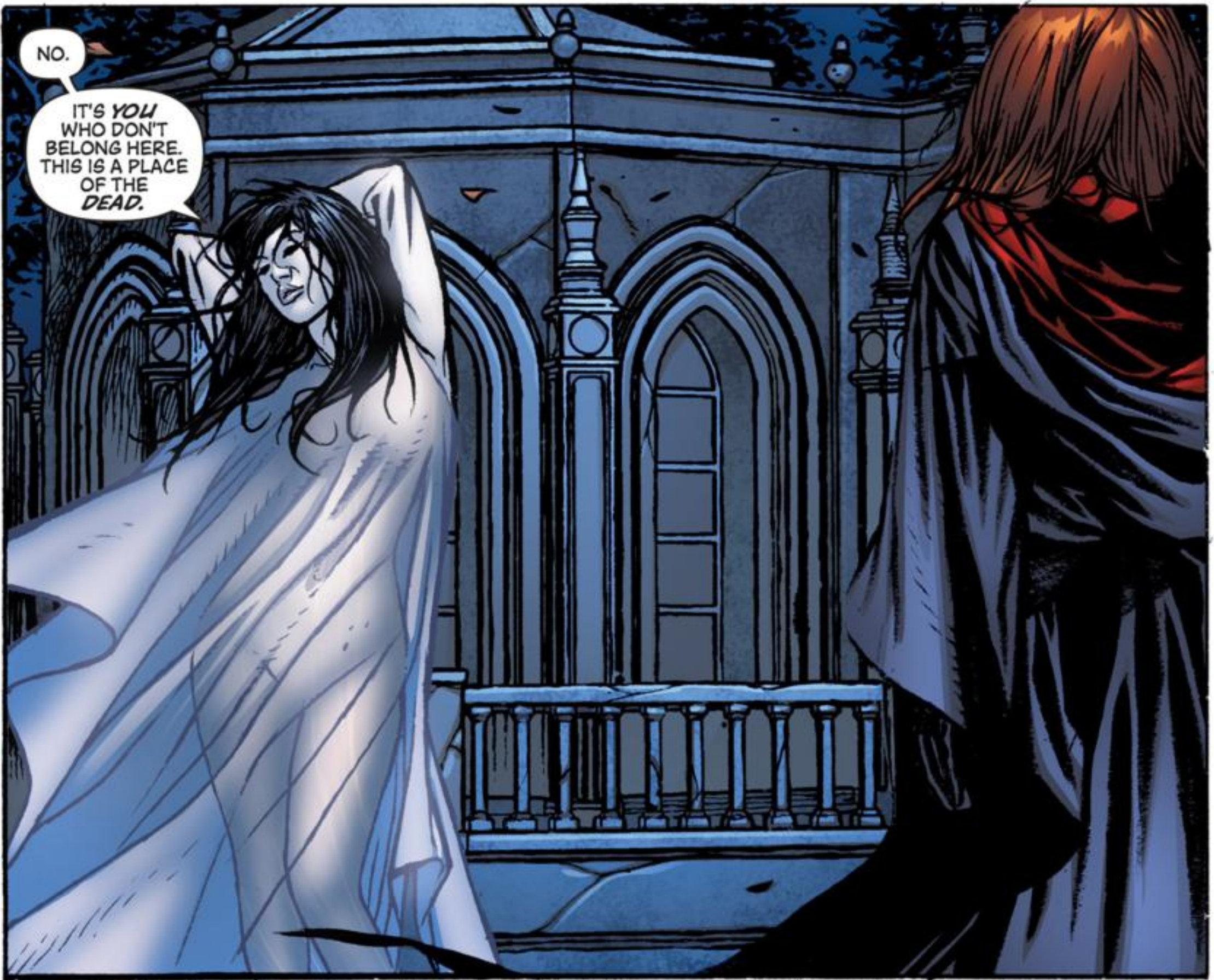
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*Krakow,
Poland.*







NO.

IT'S *YOU* WHO DON'T BELONG HERE. THIS IS A PLACE OF THE DEAD.



WHO ARE *YOU* TO COME HERE?



I AM THE *MAGDALENA*.

I SERVE AS THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH'S *BASTION* AGAINST ALL MANNER OF EVIL...

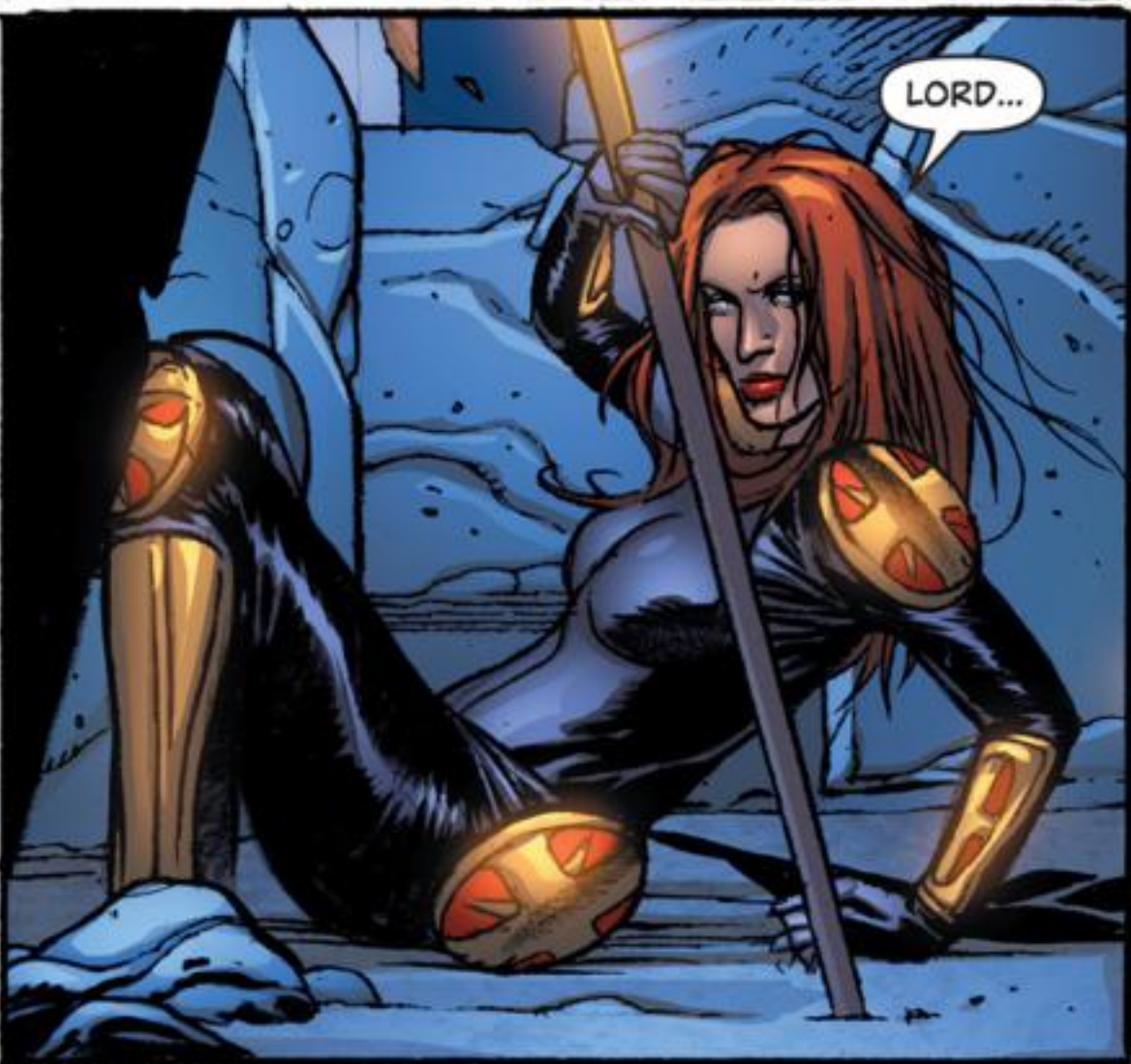


...INCLUDING *REVENANTS* RISEN FROM THE GRAVE.

IS *THAT* WHAT YOU DO?











ALWAYS SUCH A PLEASURE
TO SEE A **PROFESSIONAL**
IN ACTION.

TOM
JUDGE.

YOU JUST
SHOW UP TO
SPECTATE?



TRUTHFULLY
DIDN'T LOOK LIKE
YOU NEEDED
ANY **HELP**,
PATIENCE.



ALSO DIDN'T LOOK MUCH
LIKE AN **OFFICIAL** CHURCH
FUNCTION HERE. THE HOLY
SEE SEND YOU ON THIS
LITTLE ERRAND?

THE CHURCH
DOESN'T NEED TO
KNOW **EVERYTHING**
I DO. THIS WAS
MORE OF A ...
FREELANCE
ASSIGNMENT.



FUNNY
YOU SHOULD
MENTION.

AS IT HAPPENS,
I HAVE ONE OF
THOSE FOR YOU
AS WELL.



AND HERE I
THOUGHT YOU
CAME ALL THIS
WAY JUST FOR
A **VISIT**.

HANDY THAT
THESE ARTIFACTS
SEEM TO BE ABLE
TO **FIND** ONE
ANOTHER.

THIS WASN'T
SOMETHING
WE COULD'VE
DISCUSSED THE
LAST TIME I
SAW YOU?



I FIGURED *ESTACADO* WOULD WIND UP DEAD, OR *WE* WOULD. EITHER WAY, PROBLEM SOLVED.

BUT NOW THAT WE KNOW THIS IS GOING TO BE A *LONG-TERM* SCENARIO OF TRYING TO HOLD BACK THE DARKNESS AND THE ANCIENT ONES...



...WE NEED A *PLAN*. THAT INCLUDES *FINDING* THE OTHER ARTIFACTS.

THE GLACIER STONE'S IN EUROPE, SO I THOUGHT WE'D START THERE.



WHERE'S YOUR *ASSISTANT*? ISN'T *SHE* SUPPOSED TO BE HELPING YOU?

TILLY HAS HER *OWN* BUSINESS TO ATTEND TO EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE, AS SURPRISING AS THAT SOUNDS.

I COULD ASK THE SAME OF *YOU*. WHERE'S THAT NICE FELLOW WHO FOLLOWS *YOU* AROUND?



KRISTOF *ALSO* HAS HIS OWN LIFE.



LOOK AT *US*. ALL DRESSED UP FOR THE PROM, AND NEITHER OF US HAS A *DATE*.



WILL YOU *HELP* ME, PATIENCE?

WHEN DO WE *LEAVE*?

"THERE WAS REALLY NO WAY OF KNOWING THE *EXACT* LOCATION OF THE GLACIER STONE..."



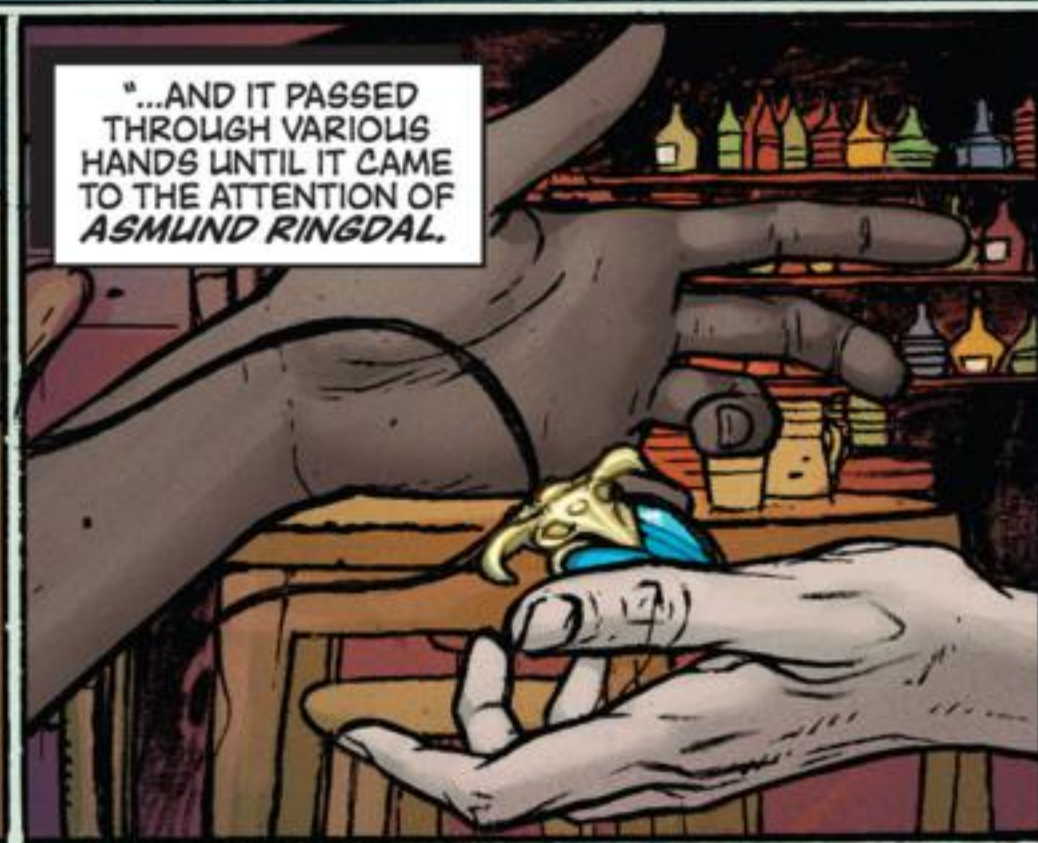
"...BUT THEN I LEARNED IT HAD BEEN *FOUND* ON A GLACIER IN NORWAY."



"THE FINDER JUST THOUGHT HE'D COME ACROSS SOME LOST *JEWELRY*. SO HE *SOLD* IT..."



"...AND IT PASSED THROUGH VARIOUS HANDS UNTIL IT CAME TO THE ATTENTION OF *ASMUND RINGDAL*."



"RINGDAL FANCIES HIMSELF THE MODERN-DAY *ALEISTER CROWLEY*..."



"...A PRACTITIONER OF THE DARK ARTS, AND A COLLECTOR OF SUPERNATURAL ITEMS."



"HE ACQUIRED THE GLACIER STONE, AND BROUGHT IT BACK TO HIS *MANSION*, JUST ABOVE THE ARCTIC CIRCLE IN NORWAY..."





...WHERE IT
REMAINS EVEN
NOW.



FOR THE
AMOUNT THAT
I *PAID* FOR THAT
INFORMATION, I
EXPECT IT'S
ACCURATE.

SO WE'RE
SUPPOSED TO
JUST KNOCK ON
RINGDAL'S FRONT
DOOR AND *ASK*
FOR THE GLACIER
STONE?



SOMEHOW
I SUSPECT A
LESS *DIRECT*
APPROACH
MIGHT BE A
LITTLE MORE
EFFECTIVE.



SECURITY
SYSTEM?

THERE *ISN'T*
ONE, AS FAR AS
I'M TOLD.
NOT THE
ELECTRONIC
KIND,
ANYWAY.



FINE.



IF
THERE *ARE*
SUPERNATURAL
WARDS IN
PLACE...

...*THOSE*
I CAN
HANDLE.

HOW
ABOUT A PACK OF
ROTTWEILERS?
BECAUSE RINGDAL'S
SUPPOSED TO HAVE
ONE OF *THOSE*,
TOO.



NICE OF YOU
TO MENTION IT
NOW.

MAYBE
RINGDAL
ISN'T EVEN
HOME.



WHAT
I WAS TOLD
INDICATED HE
CAME *STRAIGHT*
HERE AFTER
OBTAINING
THE GLACIER
STONE.



RINGDAL'S
STUDY,
PRESUMABLY.
THE GLACIER
STONE SHOULD BE
IN THERE...



...SOMEWHERE.

HIS
DECORATOR
SUCKS.



EVEN IF
RINGDAL *ISN'T*
HERE, WHY
AREN'T THE
DOGS COMING
AFTER US?

I DON'T
KNOW...



...AND AT
THIS POINT,
I DON'T
REALLY
CARE.



BUT IF WE
CAN FIND WHAT
WE'RE LOOKING
FOR QUICKLY
ENOUGH...



...IT WON'T
MATTER.



THE GLACIER
STONE IS
HERE. I CAN
FEEL IT.



WAIT.

THERE.



SEE
HOW IT JUST
STOPS?



SECRET
PASSAGE?
THIS GUY'S
GOT IT ALL.



OR
MAYBE HAD
IT ALL...



...IF THE
BLOOD TRAIL
ENDS WHERE
I THINK IT
DOES.



SOME
SORT OF
CEREMONIAL
CHAMBER.
PROBABLY
FOR BLOOD
SACRIFICES.



THERE WAS
A SACRIFICE,
ALL RIGHT.

I ASSUME
THAT'S
RINGDAL...







...OR
YOU'LL BE
ADMINISTERING
YOUR *OWN*
LAST RITES.

LET'S
EVERYBODY
TAKE IT
EASY...



TOM!

CALL
OFF LITTLE
RED RIDING
HOOD!



EVERYTHING'S
FINE.
NOBODY'S
GOING TO GET
HURT...







...AT
LEAST WE KNOW
WHERE THE
GLACIER STONE
IS.



TO BE CONTINUED!

ARTIFACTS™

#28



“TRUTHS AND DESTINIES”
CONCLUSION!

