

ED BRUBAKER SEAN PHILLIPS

# FATALE™



Number  
Fourteen



*Colors by Elizabeth Breitweiser*



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# *Just A Glance Away*





Southern Carpathians -  
Romania - 1943

WALT BOOKER DIDN'T EVEN  
KNOW IF THEY WERE BEHIND  
ENEMY LINES ANYMORE.



ROMANIA SEEMED TO BE  
FALLING APART... OR RATHER  
THE BRITS AND THE RUSSIANS  
WERE TEARING IT APART.



WHICH WAS  
FINE BY HIM...

THE HELL WITH  
THIS COUNTRY,  
HE THOUGHT.



HE'D ALREADY LOST *ONE  
MAN* SINCE THEY'D COME  
TO THIS PLACE TODAY.



THEY FOUND HIM WITH HIS  
*BRAINS* BASHED OUT ON  
THE FLOOR OF THE CHURCH...

LIKE SOME *INVISIBLE  
HAND* HAD SLAMMED HIM  
INTO IT OVER AND OVER.





WALT HAD NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT, AND HE'D SEEN A LOT OF STRANGE THINGS IN HIS LIFE.



AND A LOT MORE SINCE THE WAR BEGAN.



BACK IN THE STATES, HE KNEW THE MONSTERS KEPT THEMSELVES HIDDEN...



BUT THE FRONT LINES OF WAR...



NAZI DEATH CAMPS...



THE FROZEN WASTES OF RUSSIA...



THIS WAS THEIR *ELEMENT*... WHERE THEY COULD HIDE IN PLAIN SIGHT...

AMONG THE HELL AND BLOOD AND TORTURE...

















JOSEPHINE TRIED TO STAY CALM AND FOCUS... LIKE THE OLD LADY HAD TAUGHT HER.



BUT HOW CALM COULD SHE BE? SHE KNEW SHE WAS GOING TO DIE THIS NIGHT...



...AND HER CURSE WOULD HAVE NO EFFECT ON THE MEN WHO UNLOCKED THAT DOOR.



SHE SHOULD NEVER HAVE COME TO ROMANIA.



...DAMN ME FOR A FOOL...

BUT SHE'D BEEN LOOKING FOR ANSWERS FOR SO LONG NOW, THAT SHE COULDN'T STOP HERSELF.



AND SHE'D FORGOTTEN WHAT REAL DANGER FELT LIKE.





EVER SINCE THAT NIGHT IN TEXAS, WHEN THE *WRITER* HAD OPENED HER EYES...



SHOWN HER SHE WASN'T CRAZY, THAT HER NIGHTMARES REALLY *DID* WALK THIS EARTH...



...SHE HAD LOOKED AT THE WHOLE WORLD DIFFERENTLY.



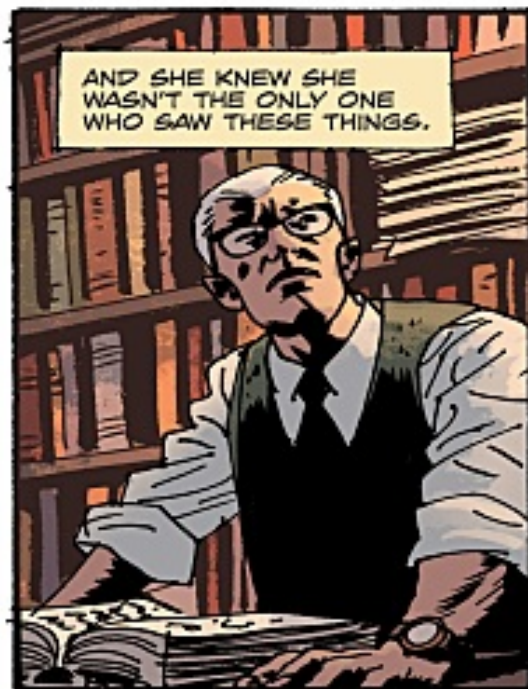
LIKE SHE SAW MORE COLORS IN IT...



AND SHADOWS THAT CAME ALIVE AND CAST DARKER SHADOWS OF THEIR OWN...



AND SHE KNEW SHE WASN'T THE ONLY ONE WHO SAW THESE THINGS.



THAT WAS HOW SHE'D MET THE OLD LADY, IN *OCCUPIED* PARIS.

THERE WAS A SMALL GLOW THAT FOLLOWED HER, LIKE A VAPOR TRAIL... OR A FADING LIGHT...





AND JO HAD TRACKED  
IT LIKE A SCENT.



WELL?  
ARE YOU  
COMING  
IN...

...OR ARE  
YOU TRYING  
TO ATTRACT  
EVERY NAZI IN  
FRANCE?



LOOK AT YOU...  
YOU MUST HAVE  
TO BEAT THE  
MEN OFF WITH  
A STICK.

I PREFER TO  
MAKE THEM BEAT  
THEMSELVES  
OFF.

HEH...  
HEH...



HER NAME WAS MIRELA,  
AND SHE QUICKLY BECAME  
JO'S CLOSEST FRIEND.

SHE LEARNED MORE  
FROM HER IN A FEW  
MONTHS THAN SHE  
HAD IN A DECADE  
OF SEARCHING.

SYMBOLS THAT WOULD  
KEEP HER HIDDEN...

WORDS THAT WOULD  
HELP HER SEE THE GEARS  
OF THE UNIVERSE...







HOW DO YOU  
KNOW ALL THIS,  
MIRELA?

MY PEOPLE WERE  
KEEPERS OF  
SECRETS...

WE SAW A LOT  
THEY THOUGHT  
WE DIDN'T.



SO... WHY  
AM I LIKE  
THIS?

HOW DID I  
SURVIVE  
WHAT THEY  
DID TO  
ME?



SORRY, GIRL...  
I CAN SEE  
THE UNSEEN  
WORLD...

BUT I DON'T  
KNOW ITS  
REASONS.



DAMN  
IT...

THERE ARE  
THOSE WHO  
KNOW MORE...  
FOLLOWERS...  
AND  
FANATICS...



SOME EVEN  
HIDE AMONG  
THE NAZIS.

BUT THESE  
ARE MEN YOU  
SHOULD STAY  
AWAY  
FROM...



...HITLER'S  
MYSTIC  
PRIESTS...

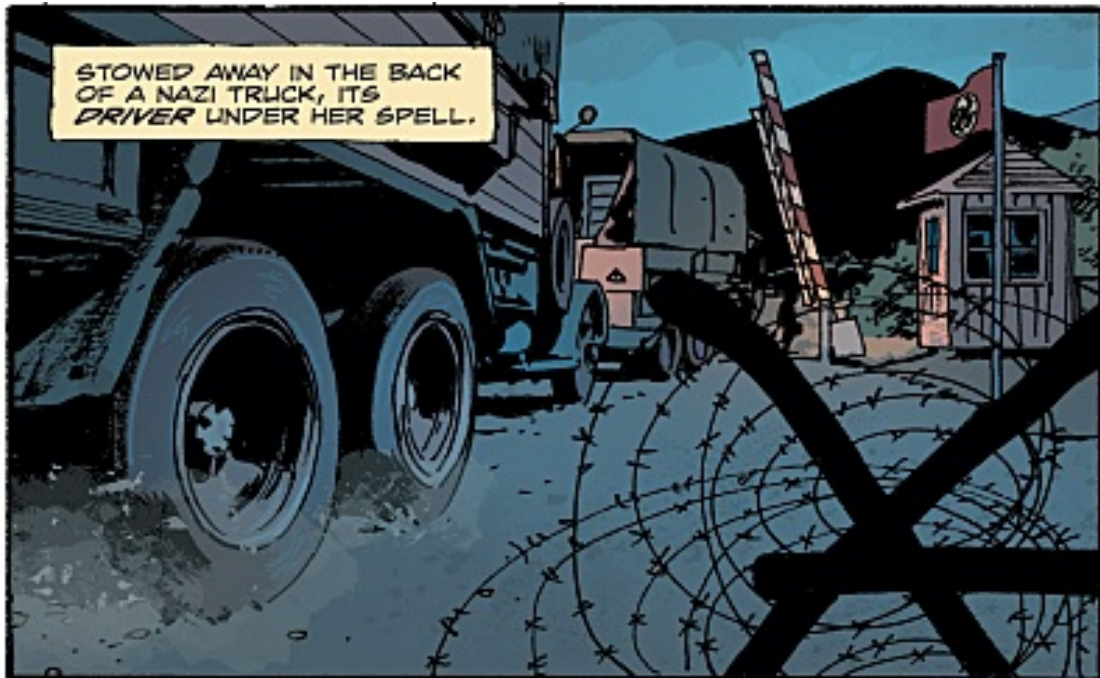


BUT OF COURSE,  
JO DIDN'T LISTEN.

INSTEAD, SHE  
FOLLOWED THE *THULE*  
*SOCIETY* TO ROMANIA...



STOWED AWAY IN THE BACK  
OF A NAZI TRUCK, ITS  
*DRIVER* UNDER HER SPELL.



THIS SECRET *SS* UNIT HAD SPENT  
THE WAR EXCAVATING ANCIENT  
BURIAL GROUNDS AND TEMPLES.



GATHERING ARCANE  
KNOWLEDGE FOR  
THE FATHERLAND.



BUT THEIR QUEST FOR *SPEARS*  
*OF DESTINY* AND *HAMMERS*  
*OF GODS* WAS JUST A COVER...





THEY MAY HAVE WORN THE NAZI'S UNIFORMS, BUT THEY SERVED A DIFFERENT MASTER ENTIRELY.



AND AS JOSEPHINE SOON FOUND OUT...

WHAT?



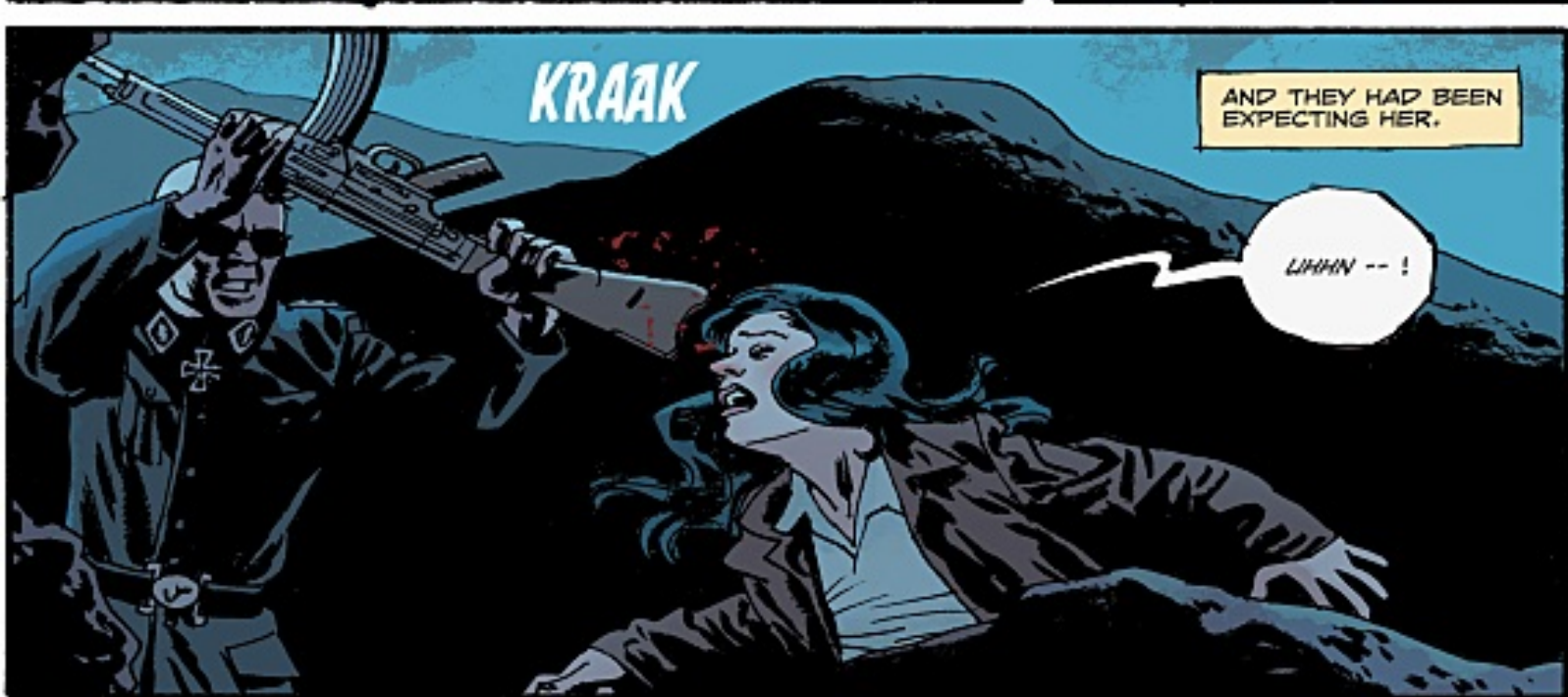
THESE WERE NO ORDINARY MEN...



KRAAK

AND THEY HAD BEEN EXPECTING HER.

LIHHN -- !





A soldier in a military uniform stands in a jungle, holding a knife in his right hand and a rifle in his left. He has a serious, intense expression. The background shows dense foliage and a mountain range.

THE AIR FELT  
WRONG.

A soldier is seen from the side, looking through a large tree branch towards another soldier in the distance who is also in a jungle setting.


LIKE THOSE EMPTY  
MOMENTS BETWEEN  
LIGHTNING AND THUNDER...

A soldier in a military uniform is covering the mouth of a man in a hooded jacket. The man has a look of fear or panic. The soldier has a stern, determined expression.


...WHEN IT SEEMS LIKE  
THE WORLD IS ABOUT  
TO CRACK OPEN.

A soldier stands in the foreground, looking towards a large military vehicle, possibly a jeep or truck, in a jungle environment. Another soldier is visible near the vehicle.

AND THE FEELING JUST  
GREW STRONGER THE  
CLOSER HE GOT...

A soldier is running through a rocky, uneven terrain. In the foreground, there is a body lying on the ground, suggesting a recent battle or execution.

AN ANXIOUS DREAD  
HOVERING EVERYWHERE...


A soldier is looking into a dark, jagged hole or crater in the ground. The scene is dark and ominous, with a mountain in the background.

WHAT THE HELL HAD  
THESE NAZIS DUG UP?










THE ONE BEFORE YOU, WHO I SAW DIE.

ALTHOUGH DEATH ISN'T EXACTLY THE RIGHT WORD...



DEVoured IS MORE ACCURATE.



LET ME GO.



DON'T BE RIDICULOUS.

THE CONVERGENCE HAPPENS TONIGHT.



WHY ELSE DO YOU THINK YOU WERE DRAWN TO THIS PLACE?



DRAWN? NO, I - I FOLLOWED YOU... I HID IN YOUR CARAVAN...



OF COURSE YOU DID.



PREPARE HER FOR THE CEREMONY...

...AND DON'T DAMAGE HER.



SHE'S FOR OUR MASTER.



WALT HAD TO KILL  
TWO MORE NAZIS TO  
GET INTO THE CAVES.



AND THE CAVES ARE MORE LIKE  
AN UNDERGROUND TEMPLE...



OR THE HIDING PLACE  
OF SOME ANCIENT SECT.



HAD THEY BEEN PEOPLE  
LIKE HIM, WHO KNEW WHAT  
THE WORLD REALLY WAS?



WAS THAT WHY THE MAP  
HAD SHOWN HIM THE  
WAY? HE WONDERS.



BUT THEN HE SEES  
THE GIRL...

AND HIS QUESTIONS  
ARE WASHED AWAY.





IT HITS HIM IN THE  
THROAT FIRST... AND  
THEN THE CHEST...



HE ALMOST FEELS  
LIKE HE'S GOING  
TO THROW UP...



SHE'S SO BEAUTIFUL IT  
HURTS TO LOOK AT HER.



BUT HE CAN'T  
TURN AWAY.



THEN HE NOTICES THE  
MAN READING FROM THE  
ANCIENT MANUSCRIPT...



THE MAN WHO  
ISN'T A *MAN*  
AT ALL.



AND WALT KNOWS EXACTLY  
WHY HE WAS *BROUGHT*  
TO THIS AWFUL PLACE...









BUT ONLY FOR  
A MOMENT.

DIE, YOU  
CHICKENSHIT  
FUCKS!

... YOU...  
FOOL...  
AMERICAN  
FOOL...

HEY --

I'M GOING TO...  
EAT YOUR  
LUNGS...

...HH...  
NNHH...

JO CAN FEEL THE  
UNRELENTING HISTORY  
IN THE STONE BLADE...

SHE KNOWS IT  
WILL HURT THIS  
CREATURE  
MORE THAN  
BULLETS DID.

AHHHH -- !

...BITCH...  
BLASPHEMOUS  
WHORE...



C'MON!

WHAT  
ARE YOU  
DOING?!

BUT THE BOOK ON  
THE ALTAR PULLS  
AT WALT...

THE OPEN PAGE  
TEARS AWAY IN  
HIS HAND WHEN HE  
TRIES TO GRAB IT...

AND FEELS LIKE SOME  
LONG-DEAD SKIN...

...GOING TO  
SKULLFUCK  
YOU... ARMY  
BOY...

I THINK  
THIS  
WAY...

WAIT.

WHAT...  
WHAT ARE  
THEY?



THEY'RE LIKE  
HIS SOLDIERS  
BACK THERE...

IS THIS SOME  
RITUAL, OR DO  
THEY *GROW*  
THEM... ?

THEY HAVE NO  
GENITALS...  
THEY'RE...

GYAAAHHHH -- !

AAAAHHH!

BACK!

GO! GET  
OUT OF  
HERE!

RRAAAARRR!





HE WAS GOING TO... SACRIFICE ME...

YEAH... BUT YOU'RE OKAY NOW.



"AND THAT THING IS HURT, *SAD*... MAYBE EVEN DYING..."



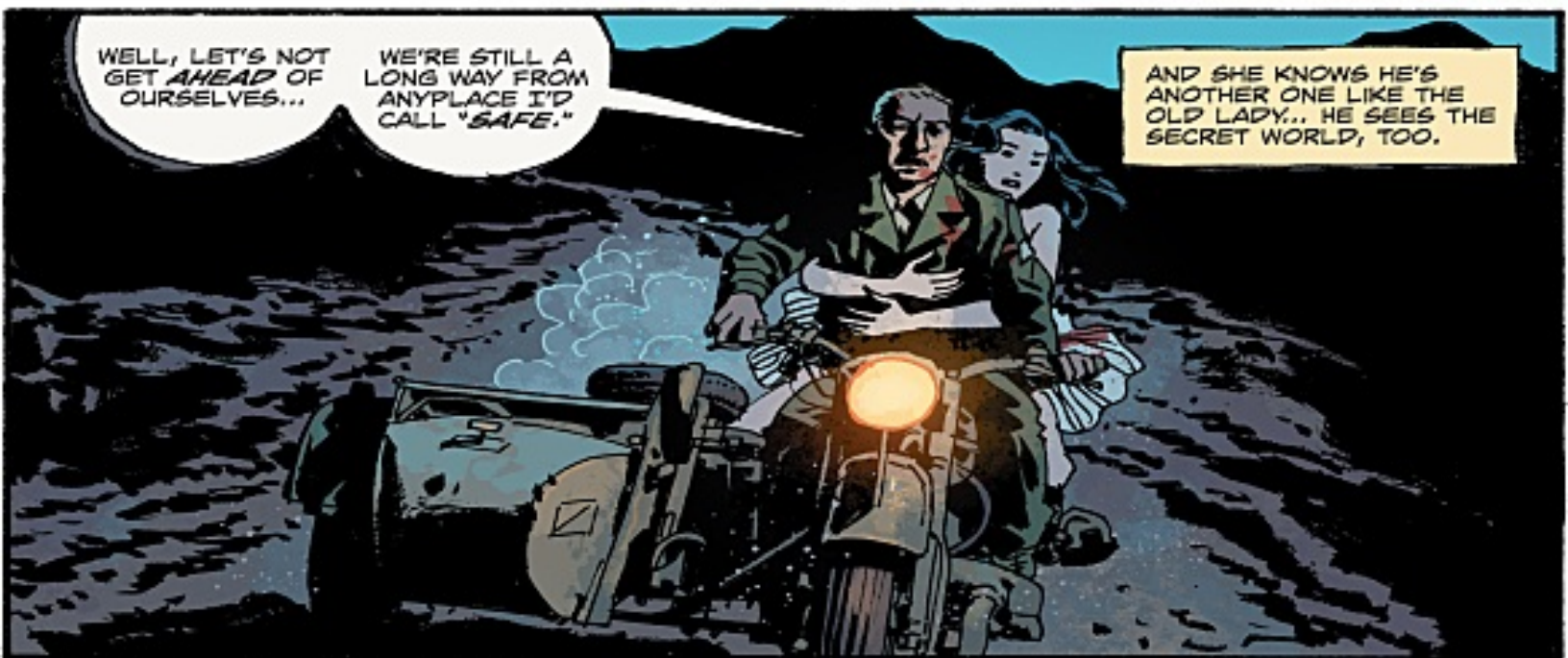
MY NAME'S WALTER, BY THE WAY...

IN CASE YOU WERE WONDERING.



IT'S ONLY THEN THAT SHE REALLY SEES THE SOLDIER.

OH... UH, JOSEPHINE... THANKS FOR SAVING ME.



WELL, LET'S NOT GET AHEAD OF OURSELVES...

WE'RE STILL A LONG WAY FROM ANYPLACE I'D CALL "SAFE."

AND SHE KNOWS HE'S ANOTHER ONE LIKE THE OLD LADY... HE SEES THE SECRET WORLD, TOO.



LATER, HE HOLDS HER WHILE SHE TREMBLES WITH FEAR...

AND HE PROMISES TO PROTECT HER, TO TAKE CARE OF HER...



LIKE SO MANY MEN HAVE BEFORE.



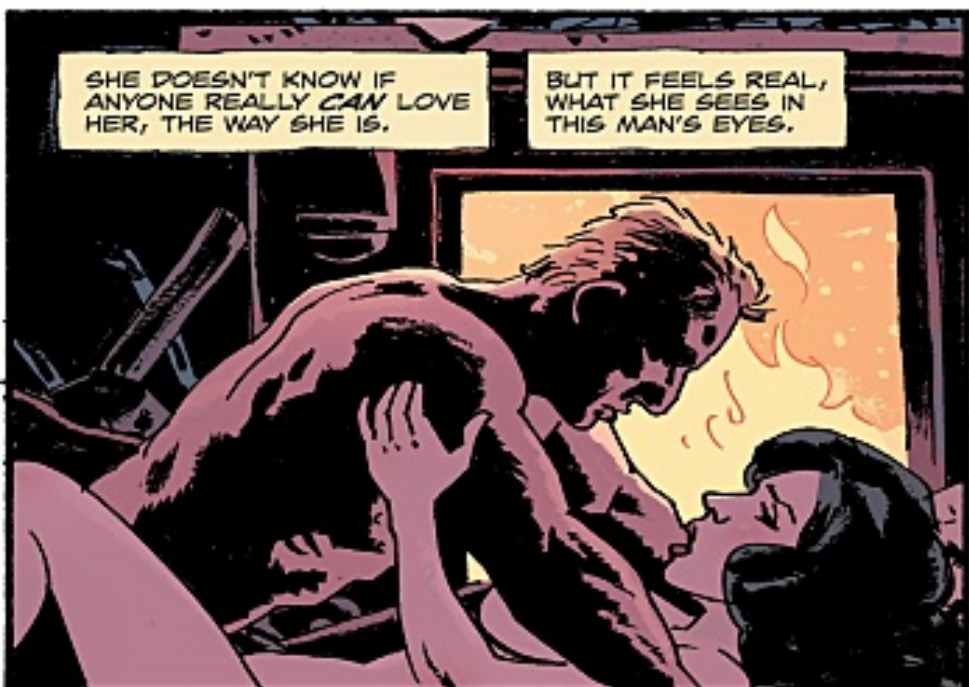
BUT THIS TIME THE WORDS SOUND LIKE A PROMISE, NOT A THREAT.

THEY SOUND LIKE LOVE, MORE THAN POSSESSION.



SHE DOESN'T KNOW IF ANYONE REALLY CAN LOVE HER, THE WAY SHE IS.

BUT IT FEELS REAL, WHAT SHE SEES IN THIS MAN'S EYES.



SHE NEEDS IT TO BE REAL.





PARIS IS LIBERATED TEN MONTHS LATER, AND WALT IS STATIONED THERE UNTIL THE END OF THE WAR.

THESE ARE THEIR HAPPIEST TIMES...



...BUT THE FEAR JO FELT THAT NIGHT INSIDE THE MOUNTAIN NEVER REALLY LEAVES.



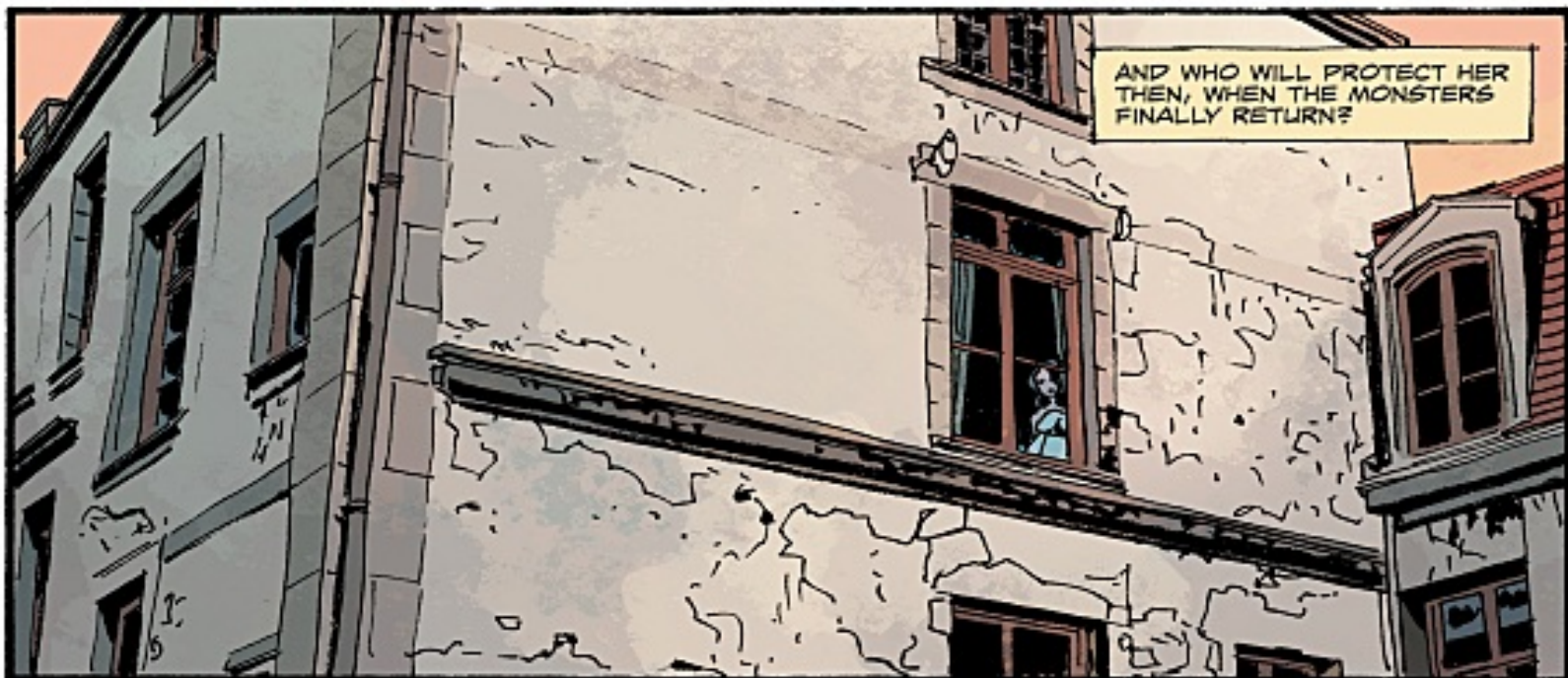
AND THOUGH SHE LEARNS TO TRUST WALT, SHE CAN SEE THE FUTURE LAID OUT BEFORE THEM...



HOW HE'LL GROW WEAK AND BRITTLE, AS THE PASSING YEARS WEIGH HIM DOWN.



AND WHO WILL PROTECT HER THEN, WHEN THE MONSTERS FINALLY RETURN?







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