

ED BRUBAKER SEAN PHILLIPS

FATALE™

Number Nine



Previously...

In 1978, B-movie actor Miles and his friend Suzy, who's on the run from a bizarre cult, take shelter with Josephine in the Hollywood hills. Miles falls under Jo's spell and agrees to help her, while Suzy finds out some of Jo's secrets and flees right back into the hands of the cult...



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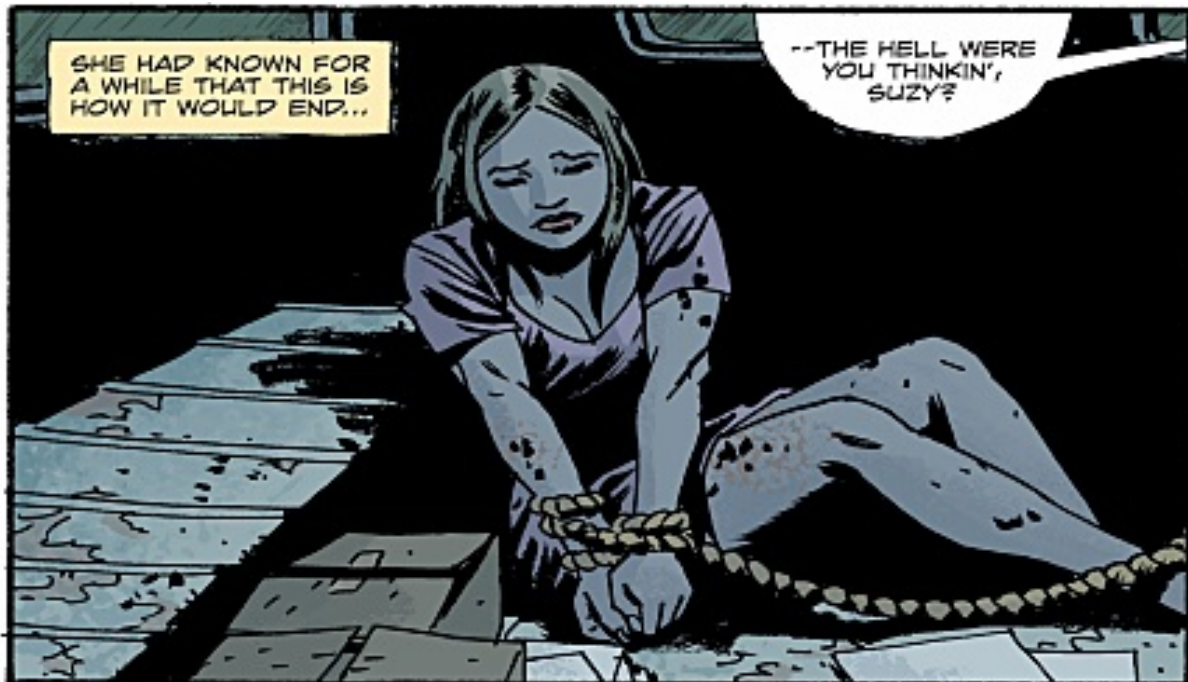
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Chapter Four

SHE HAD KNOWN FOR A WHILE THAT THIS IS HOW IT WOULD END...

--THE HELL WERE YOU THINKIN', SUZY?



...THAT THESE PEOPLE SHE'D LOVED WOULD BE THE ONES WHO KILLED HER.

THINK YOU COULD DO WHAT YOU DID AND JUST... JUST... RUN AWAY?

FROM US?



KNOWN IT IN THAT WAY YOU DON'T WANT TO ADMIT, EVEN TO YOURSELF.

THINK WE'D JUST LET THAT GO?



BUT THAT HAD BEEN THE TRAJECTORY OF HER LIFE...

NUH UH, BABY... NO WAY...



...GIVING HER LOVE TO ALL THE WRONG MEN AND BEING PUNISHED FOR IT.



...SLUZZY... DADDY'S GOT A PREZZIE FOR YOU...

HANSEL HAD BEEN DIFFERENT AT FIRST. HIS TOUCH AND HIS VOICE WERE LIKE MAGIC...

BUT HE WANTED EVERYONE ELSE TO TOUCH HER, TOO.

SOLD HER TO CREEPS AND POLITICIANS AND OLD MEN...

UNTIL SHE'D SHOWED THEM HOW BROKEN SHE REALLY WAS...

AFTER THAT, SHE KNEW IT WAS JUST A MATTER OF TIME.

MAYBE THAT'S WHY SHE'D KILLED BROTHER STANE, NOT JUST BECAUSE OF THAT FILM...

MAYBE SHE WAS SICK OF WAITING...

AND THEN MILES HAD SHOWED UP AND RUINED IT ALL.

HEY - !

KRAAK

AT LEAST SHE CAN PROTECT HIM, SHE THINKS...



BECAUSE SHE KNOWS SHE WON'T BE ABLE TO LIE TO HANSEL...



EVEN THOUGH HE'S A MONSTER...



...LIKE ALL THE OTHERS SHE'S LOVED.



SHIT...
FUCKIN' HELL...



WELL, DON'T JUST FUCKING STAND THERE, MAN...

PICK HER UP... SOMEONE MIGHTA HEARD THAT...



SOUNDS LIKE A BLAST, MAN.

LIKE BEIN' BACK IN THE FUCKIN' JUNGLE.

RAT TALKED ABOUT WAM LIKE IT WAS SOME CHAMPIONSHIP GAME FROM HIGH SCHOOL...



...WHICH HAD ALWAYS FREAKED MILES OUT A BIT.

CHRIST, I HOPE NOT.



LEAVE IT TO A STUNTMAN TO MISS BEING AT WAR.

WHAT KINDA WEAPONS ARE WE LOOKIN' AT?



PROBABLY HATCHETS, KNIVES...

MAYBE A SHOTGUN OR TWO.



RIGHT... GOOD...



BUT THAT KIND OF CRAZINESS WAS WHAT THEY NEEDED, IF THEY WERE GOING TO INFILTRATE THE METHOD CHURCH'S COMPOUND.

PRETTY SURE I CAN PICK US UP SOME AK'S... WHAT'S OUR TIME FRAME?

SOON... THE NEXT FEW DAYS WOULD BE BEST.



JOSEPHINE FELT
HAPPY AND SCARED
AT THE SAME TIME...

INSTEAD OF RUNNING AWAY
FROM TROUBLE, NOW SHE
WAS RUNNING TOWARDS IT.



BUT SHE WAS
TAKING CONTROL.
ACTING INSTEAD
OF REACTING.



AND SHE HADN'T
FELT LIKE THIS IN
A LONG TIME...
POWERFUL...



PRACTICALLY VIBRATING
WITH POTENTIAL.



SHE AND MILES MAKE
LOVE THAT NIGHT
UNTIL THEY PASS OUT.

IT'S LIKE NOTHING EXISTS
OUTSIDE THAT BEDROOM.



AT LEAST UNTIL MORNING...

GONE?! WHAT THE HELL DO YOU MEAN?

IT ISN'T MY FAULT...

I WENT TO CHECK ON HER AND HER BED WAS EMPTY...

SHE RAN OFF.

YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO BE TAKING CARE OF HER!

AND YOU JUST LET HER -

MILES, EASE UP.

DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN IF THEY FIND HER?

YES... BETTER THAN YOU DO, I'M SURE.



MILES KNOWS HE'S NOT GOING TO FIND HER, BUT HE KEEPS LOOKING ANYWAY...

HOWARD



ALL HER OLD HANGOUTS...

THE PLACES SHE MIGHT TRY TO SCORE...

WE SELL USED LPs



HE CRISS-CROSSES L.A. FROM HOLLYWOOD TO THE BEACHES...

MOVING FROM ANGRY TO FRANTIC TO RESIGNED...



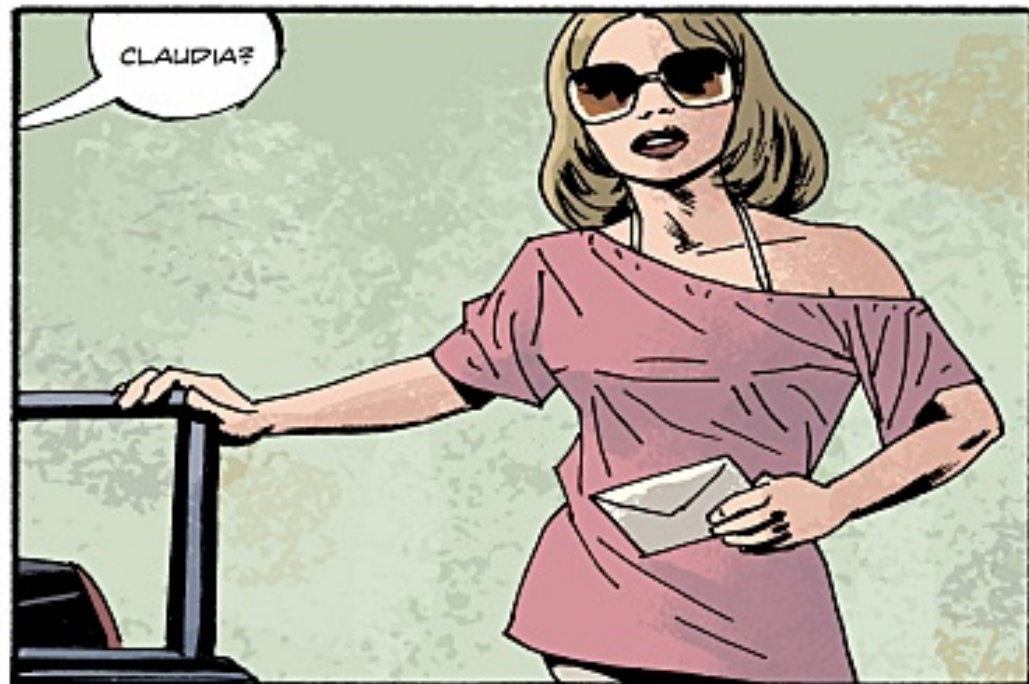
HE PRAYS SHE STOLE SOME MONEY FROM JO'S HOUSE... GOT ON A BUS OUT OF TOWN...



BUT HE KNOWS SUZY... KNOWS IT'S JUST AS LIKELY SHE RAN RIGHT BACK TO THE METHOD COMPOUND...

...CRAZY FUCKING GIRL...







JESUS...

YEAH, I MENTIONED HIS PRIVATE COLLECTION THE WAY YOU DID...

AND HE WAS ALL "HOW THE FUCK COULD YOU LET HIM GO?"



THE FUCKER HIT YOU?



IT'S NO BIG DEAL...

HE'S OLD... DOESN'T HIT THAT HARD.



SO, WHAT'RE YOU UP TO NOW?



NOTHING... JUST ERRANDS.

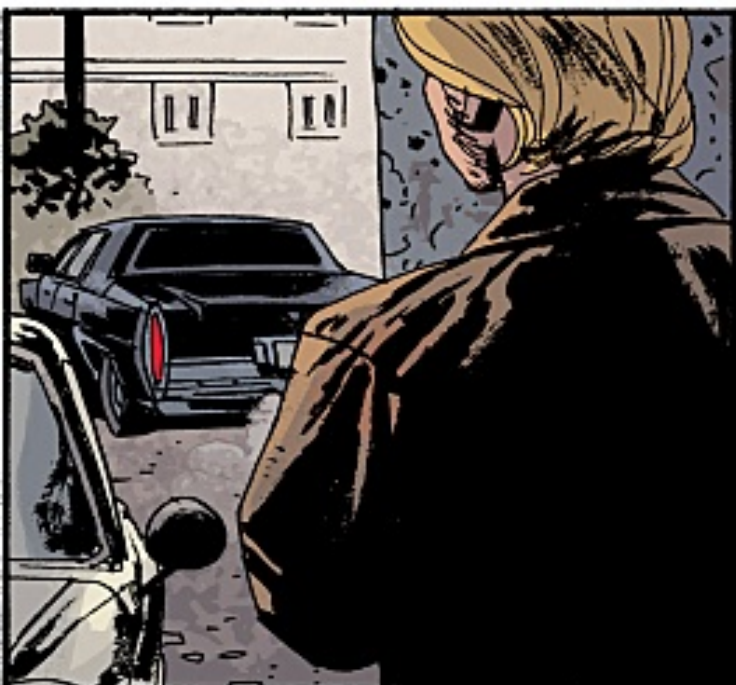


WANNA COME GET A DRINK?

I'VE GOT SOME GOOD COKE IN THE LIMO.



NAH... I'VE STILL GOT THINGS TO DO.



IT'S ONLY AFTER CLAUDIA LEAVES AND MILES REALIZES HE FEELS *SORRY* FOR HER...



THAT HE HAS A MOMENT OF *CLARITY*...



...ABOUT HOW MUCH HE'S *CHANGED* IN THE PAST WEEK.

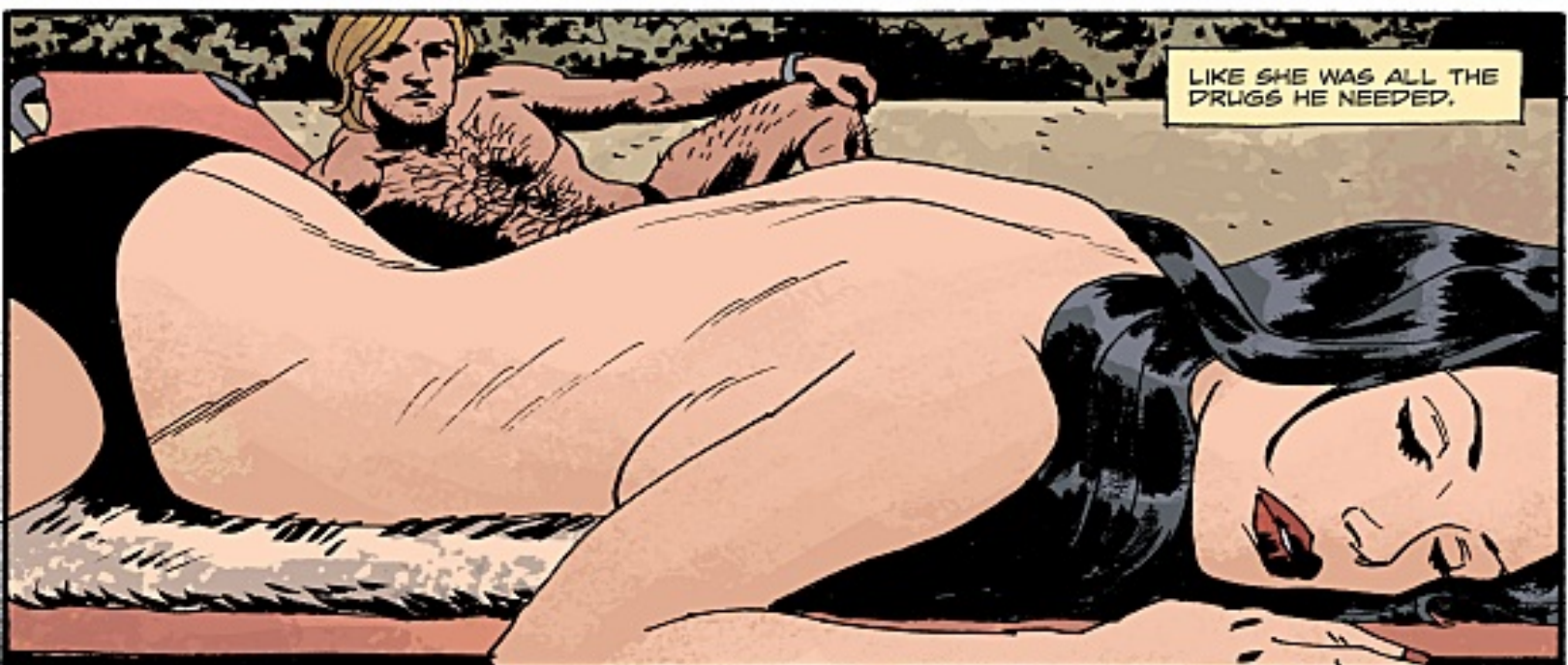


HE HASN'T USED ANYTHING BUT *POT* SINCE HE FIRST SLEPT WITH JOSEPHINE.

AND HE HASN'T EVEN MISSED IT. NO CRAVINGS... NOTHING.



LIKE SHE WAS ALL THE *DRUGS* HE NEEDED.



AND NOW HE WAS PREPARING TO THROW AWAY HIS *LAST CHANCE*... ALL TO HELP HER.

BECAUSE THEY NEEDED A *NEW DISTRACTION* TO LURE THE METHOD...

AND *THAT'S* WHAT CLAUDIA HAD JUST DROPPED INTO HIS LAP.

FOR ONE BRIEF MOMENT, HE TRIES TO UNDERSTAND WHAT'S HAPPENING TO HIM...

TRIES TO THINK ABOUT POOR SUZY, LOST OUT THERE AGAIN, OR WORSE...

BUT HE'S LIKE A DROWNING MAN BURSTING THROUGH THE SURFACE ONE LAST TIME...

...BEFORE BEING SUCKED BACK UNDER.

THE ONLY THING THAT *STICKS* IN HIS MIND ANYMORE IS *JO*.



YOU'RE ABSOLUTELY SURE? IT'S HER?



YES, NO QUESTION... TAKEN SOME TIME IN THE '30S.

SUZY SCREAM HAD THAT PHOTO ON HER...



...AND YOU KILLED HER BEFORE BRINGING HER TO ME?

B - BUT - IT WASN'T LIKE THAT, HANS... SHE - SHE -



HIS PRAYERS WERE BEING HEARD, HANSEL THOUGHT. FINALLY.



SUZY WAS BEING DRAWN BACK TO HIM, TO SHOW HIM THE WAY TO FIND HIS PREY.



AND THIS FOOL, HIS OWN MAN...

HANSEL, PLEASE... LISTEN, WAIT - LISTEN TO -




...HAD DENIED HIM THE GIFT OF HIS GODS.

LIKK -- !







THERE WAS STILL **ONE THING** THAT WAS BUGGING HIM...



WHAT MISS JANSEN HAD SAID ABOUT HOW SUZY WAS ALWAYS "SNOOPING."



MILES DIDN'T DOUBT THAT FOR A SECOND.



NO, HIS QUESTION WAS...

WHAT...?
A KID?



...WHAT HAD SHE FOUND?



MILES?
ARE YOU READY?

COMING!



I FORGET HOW LATE IS FASHIONABLE IN THIS TOWN... BUT I THINK WE'RE FAST IT.


MY GOD... YOU LOOK AMAZING.



THANKS, I HAVEN'T BEEN TO A PARTY IN... WELL, A LONG TIME.

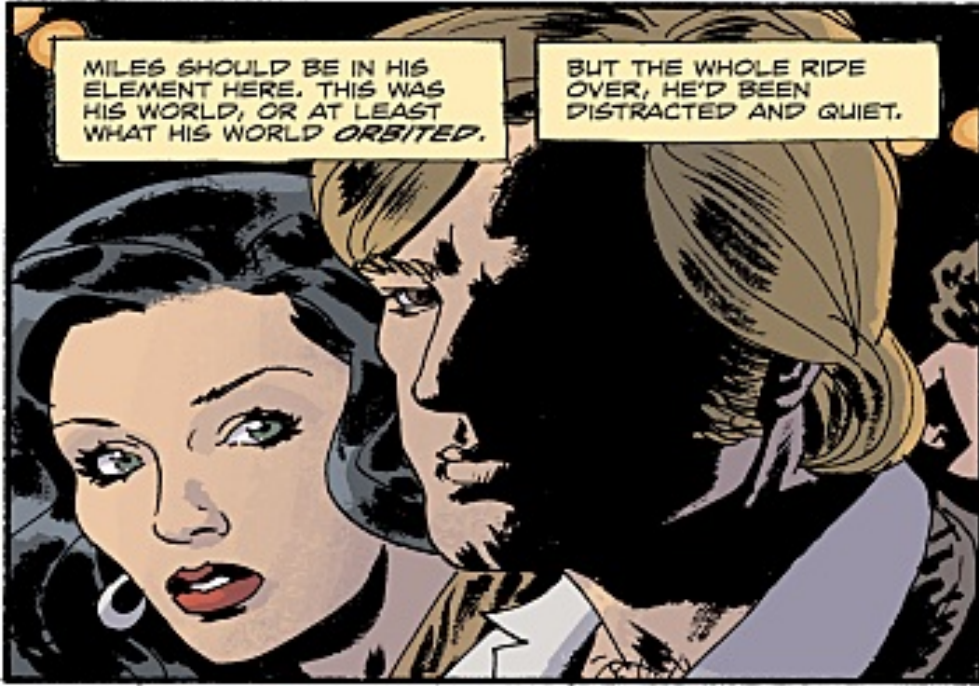


AND IT WAS SAFE TO SAY SHE'D NEVER BEEN TO A PARTY LIKE ONE OF GAVIN WILDER'S...




IT WAS ONE OF THOSE "EVERYONE WHO'S ANYONE" KIND OF AFFAIRS SHE USUALLY JUST READ ABOUT IN THE PAPERS.

HOLLYWOOD ROYALTY AND ALL THAT CAME WITH THEM.



MILES SHOULD BE IN HIS ELEMENT HERE. THIS WAS HIS WORLD, OR AT LEAST WHAT HIS WORLD ORBITED.



BUT THE WHOLE RIDE OVER, HE'D BEEN DISTRACTED AND QUIET.

SHE ALMOST THINKS, NOT HIMSELF... BUT THEN, SHE WOULDN'T REALLY KNOW.

WHAT IS IT?
ARE YOU WORRYING ABOUT SUZY?

WHAT?

NO... I MEAN, I *SHOULD* BE... BUT...

AND JOSEPHINE HATES HERSELF SO MUCH RIGHT THEN.

SHE'S SEEN THAT LOOK SO MANY TIMES... THAT CONFUSION... THAT STRUGGLE...

ONLY *THIS* TIME, SOMETHING'S DIFFERENT...

WHO'S THE LITTLE BOY... IN THE *PICTURE* WITH YOU?

WHAT? MILES, WHAT DID YOU...?

I KNOW, I *SHOULDN'T* HAVE... *SORRY*...

THAT'S MY SON.

WELL... WHY ARE YOU -

MILES?

YOU ARE MILES, RIGHT?

UH, YEAH...?

GREAT... YOU LOOK JUST LIKE YOUR *HEADSHOT*. GAVIN'S BEEN WAITING FOR YOU.





YOU SEE CLAUDIA OUT THERE?

NOT YET, NO...



THAT GIRL... HUGE PAIN IN THE ASS...



... BUT STILL WORTH EVERY DIME I PAID YOU.



JESUS... IS THIS...?



IS THIS SOME KINDA SATANIC SHIT?

YOUR GUESS IS AS GOOD AS MINE.



WELL, WHAT THE HELL DO YOU WANT FOR IT?



A PART IN YOUR NEXT MOVIE?



AH, KID... LET'S NOT PLAY KID KID KID... THAT GAME AGAIN...

HOW ABOUT WE GO STRAIGHT TO DOOR NUMBER TWO ... A SHITLOAD OF CASH?

BECAUSE WE
BOTH KNOW
YOU'RE NOT AN
ACTOR...



FINE, THEN...
*FIFTY
GRAND.*



THAT'S
MORE LIKE
IT.



SEE, YOU'RE
JUST NOT
HUNGRY
ENOUGH FOR
IT ANYMORE,
KID.

NOW WHERE THE
HELL DID YOU
GET THIS?



I INHERITED
IT... FROM A
FRIEND...



HANSEL HAD BEEN
BEGGING FORGIVENESS
FOR HOURS...

CHANTING THE
UNWRITTEN WORDS
OVER AND OVER
AGAIN...







THEY HAD TO.

...?



YOU'RE A FRIEND OF SUZY'S, RIGHT?

KNOW WHERE I CAN FIND HER?



OH... MOTHERFUCKER.



MILES... TALK TO ME. WHAT HAPPENED IN THERE?

YOU... YOU HAVE TO...



YOU HAVE TO TELL ME WHAT THE HELL YOU'VE DONE TO ME...



OKAY... BUT NOT HERE.



ALL RIGHT... THEY'RE MOVING...

DON'T FOLLOW TOO CLOSE... WE DON'T WANNA BE SEEN.

To Be Continued



FATALE Number Nine Ed Brubaker Sean Phillips

Rated M / Mature