



1 OF 6

FEB 2015

- ROB -
WILLIAMS
- DOM -
REARDON

The GRIEVOUS JOURNEY of *🌿*
**ICHABOD
AZRAEL**
T (and the DEAD LEFT in His WAKE) *🌿*



HELL WILL NOT STOP HIM



1 OF 6

FEB 2015
COVER VARIANT

- ROB -
WILLIAMS
- DOM -
REARDON

The GRIEVOUS JOURNEY of
**ICHABOD
AZRAEL**
(and the DEAD LEFT in His WAKE)



HELL WILL NOT STOP HIM

The GRIEVOUS JOURNEY of
**ICHABOD
AZRAEL**
(and the DEAD LEFT in His WAKE)



SCRIPT
- ROB -
WILLIAMS

ART
- DOM -
REARDON

COLOURS
- PETER -
DOHERTY

LETTERS
- ELLIE -
DE VILLE

R E B E L L I O N

Creative Director and CEO
JASON KINGSLEY

Publishing Manager
BEN SMITH

Graphic Novels Editor
KEITH RICHARDSON

Reprographics
KATHRYN SYMES

Chief Technical Officer
CHRIS KINGSLEY

2000 AD Editor in Chief
MATT SMITH

Graphic Design
SIMON PARR & SAM GRETTON

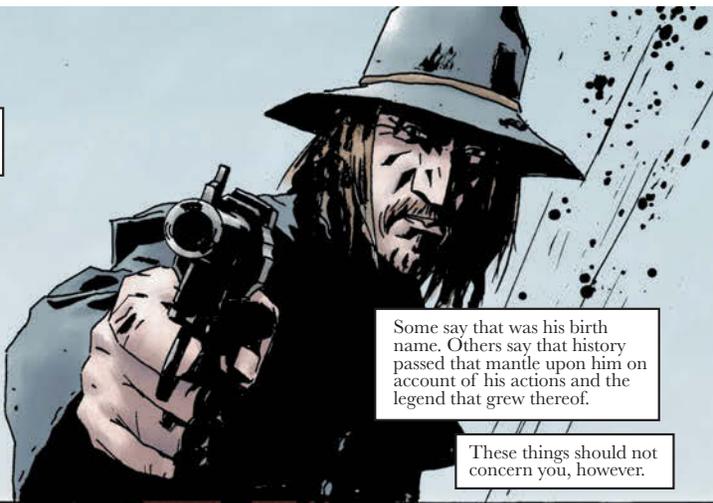
PR & Marketing
MICHAEL MOLCHER

The Grievous Journey of Ichabod Azrael (and the Dead Left in His Wake) #1 published by Rebellion, Riverside House, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 0ES. All contents © 2010, 2015 Rebellion A/S. All rights reserved. Ichabod Azrael is a trademark of Rebellion A/S. Reproduction, storage in a retrieval system or transmission in any form or by any means in whole or part without prior permission of Rebellion A/S is strictly forbidden. No similarity between any of the fictional names, characters, persons and/or institutions herein with those of any living or dead persons or institutions is intended (except for satirical purposes) and any such similarity is purely coincidental. Printed in Korea by TriVision Inc, 3807 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 1109, Los Angeles, CA 90010.



His name is Ichabod and he was a killer. That much cannot be denied.

Later on, of course, he would be known as Ichabod Azrael. An unusual moniker.



Some say that was his birth name. Others say that history passed that mantle upon him on account of his actions and the legend that grew thereof.

These things should not concern you, however.

BANG

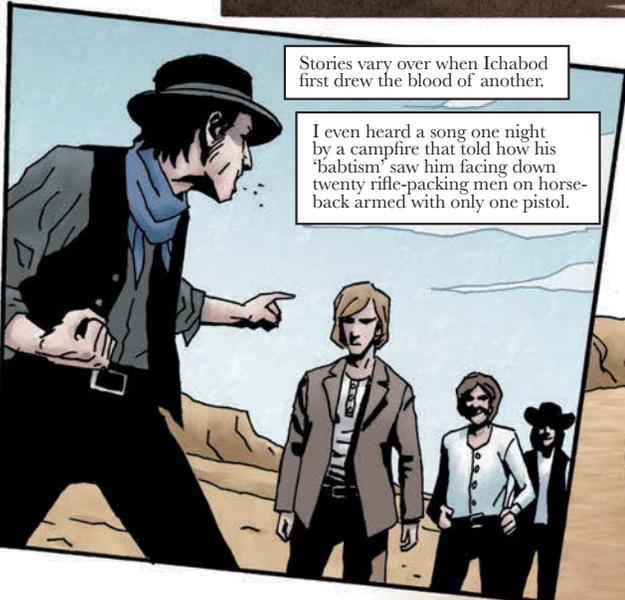
All that matters at this juncture is that his name was Ichabod...

... and he was a killer.

I wish I could tell you that Ichabod's father was taken to drink or discipline by belt and fist. That life immediately treated the boy as it would a loathed enemy.

But, the way I heard it, his upbringing was a hard but normal one for the age.

I guess some people are just born mean.



Stories vary over when Ichabod first drew the blood of another.

I even heard a song one night by a campfire that told how his 'baptism' saw him facing down twenty rifle-packing men on horseback armed with only one pistol.



The next dawn Ichabod owned twenty new horses...

... or so the song went.



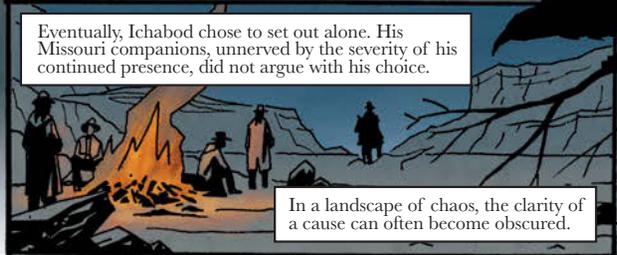
He ran with a notorious group of bushwhackers in the virgin days of the War Between the States.

A great deal of mayhem and mishap occurred at their hands. Many pro-Union men visited kingdom.



Many brave men of the South did similar.

They were days of heavy darkness. Loss was a kinsman to all.



Eventually, Ichabod chose to set out alone. His Missouri companions, unnerved by the severity of his continued presence, did not argue with his choice.

In a landscape of chaos, the clarity of a cause can often become obscured.

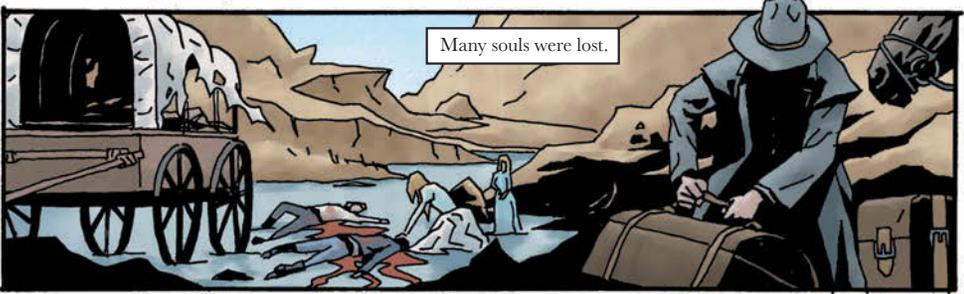


Some just seized the opportunity to kill with impunity.



These were dangerous days to be abroad.

God-fearing families gathered their possessions and fled the region so they might find some semblance of safety.



Many souls were lost.

Ichabod's notoriety grew. And that is not a good thing for an outlaw.

Eventually, the city of Corinth held one funeral too many at his hands, the loss of an idealistic new lawman being the final capacious wound.



And so Bloody Bill Sterling and his boys were hired.

Killed more men than marriage, so Bloody Bill's legend went.

His was an unerring aim, almost supernatural in nature and available for hire to any cause, regardless of its moral merit.



A reckoning was coming for Ichabod.



Yet the ghost of luck rode with him a while longer, for it was then that he disappeared. No word was heard of him for a full four months.

Some posited that he was killed. Finally defeated in a knife fight by a monstrous strong Injun, I heard.



Others said that the devil himself took him in that winter to finalise the minutiae of a previously agreed legal contract.

One man I spoke to claimed he knew the real truth of Ichabod's invisibility – that he had a secret love who would take him in for long periods and offer him solace.

That she, a rare natural beauty of angelic grace, was the only thing on this Earth that could tame his clawing rage and give him something akin to peace.

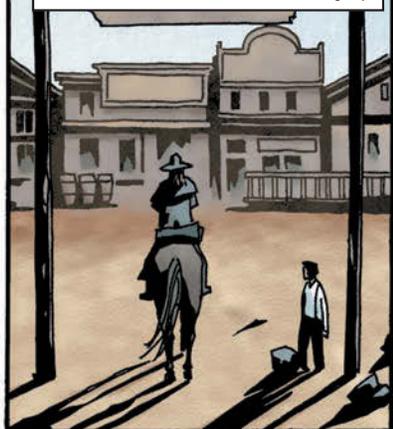


Of course this was nonsense.



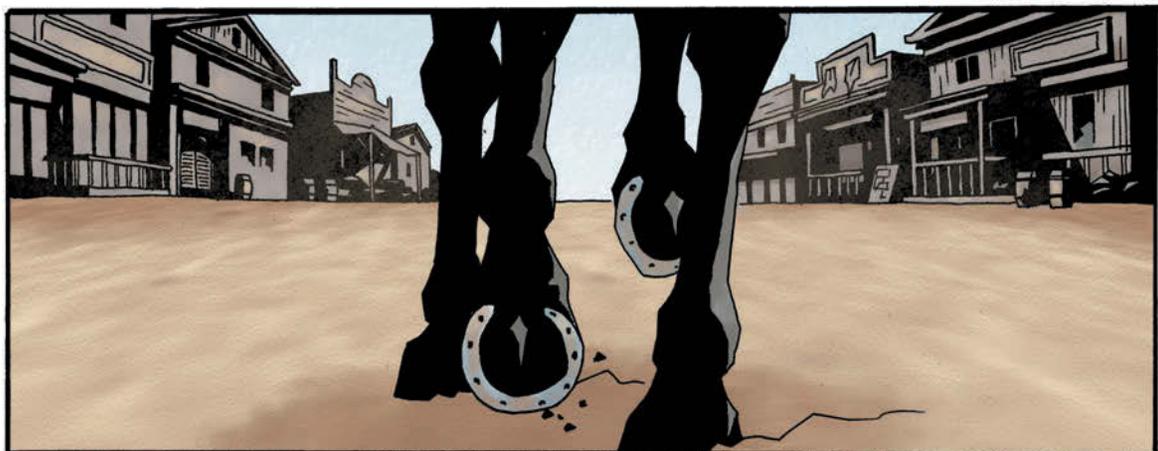
The snows eventually passed, however.

Sure enough, Ichabod returned to Corinth, as a predator always will to bountiful lands filled with amenable prey.



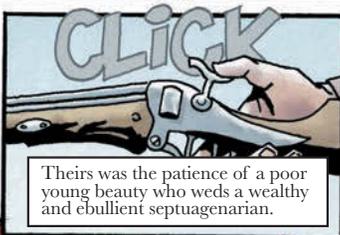
PLACE THAT ACCUSING STARE SOMEWHERE ELSE, BOY.

AGE DOES NOT PETER ME FROM DISCIPLINE.

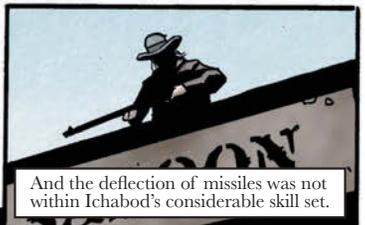




Yes, Bloody Bill and his men laid in wait.



Theirs was the patience of a poor young beauty who weds a wealthy and ebullient septuagenarian.



And the deflection of missiles was not within Ichabod's considerable skill set.

BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM



He took down seven of them, nonetheless.



Even in considerable agonies his shot was fearsome.



His steed had perished and Ichabod was wounded grievous, his life-blood easing away to memory.



Yet somehow, through an impure determination, he avoided Bloody Bill and exited Corinth.



He died just steps beyond the city limits.



And then...



... the second part of Ichabod's story begins.





A man to whom fear was a friend would, no doubt, have been mightily unnerved by this most unexpected of occurrences.

Many, I'm sure, would have bade farewell to their sanity and seen their consciousness drift to dust as a result.



But if fear had ever visited Ichabod Azrael he did not comment upon its tenancy.



He had enjoyed no miraculous escape. The fulsome ventilation of his mortal wounds testified to that.

Yet the awful pain of his recent disagreement with 'Bloody' Bill and his boys had vanished like his conscience many years hence.

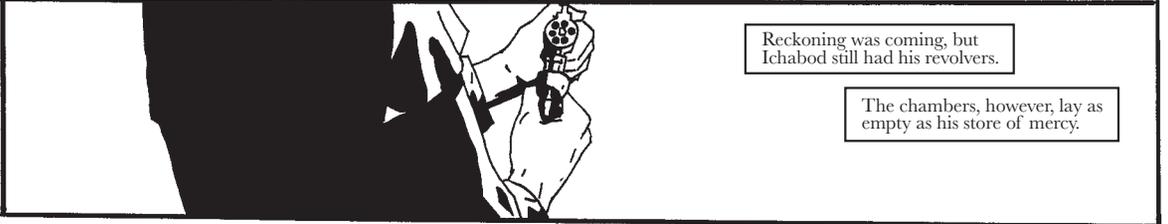


Ichabod was many things but a fool was not among their number.

He was dead and his path to Kingdom had long been unattainable.

So, he decided, this must be the other place.

Which meant that unrealised agony currently rode in his direction.



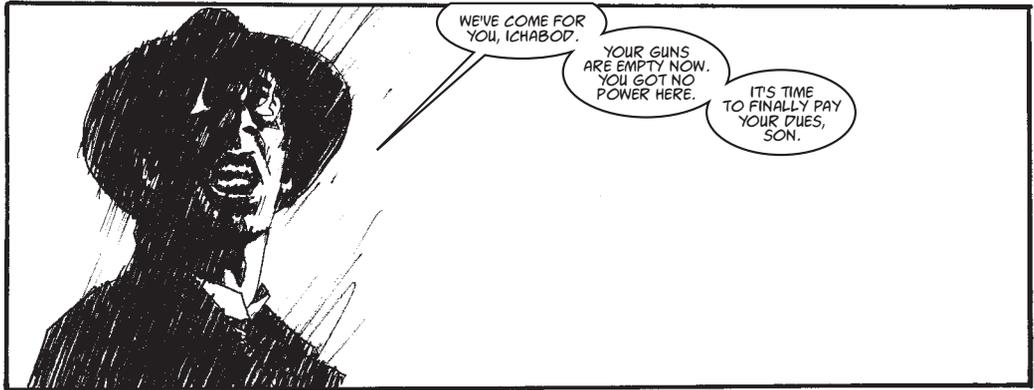
Reckoning was coming, but Ichabod still had his revolvers.

The chambers, however, lay as empty as his store of mercy.



And now the killing time had arrived.

ICHABOD!!!



WE'VE COME FOR YOU, ICHABOD.

YOUR GUNS ARE EMPTY NOW. YOU GOT NO POWER HERE.

IT'S TIME TO FINALLY PAY YOUR DUES, SON.



Ichabod considered those words. They had an effect on him.

His crimes were many – and even those freed by iniquity never truly escape the knowledge that theirs is but a temporary pass from justice.

He found at that moment, to his surprise, that he could leave behind a blackened life of bubbling blood, smashed bone and fractured teeth with relative ease.

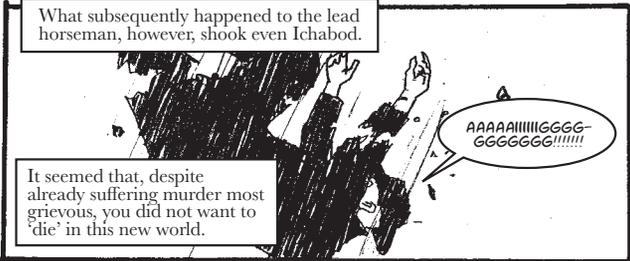


But there was one thing he could not leave behind.





The grace, speed and impossibility of Ichabod's attack took his assailants by surprise.



What subsequently happened to the lead horseman, however, shook even Ichabod.

AAAAAIIIIIIIIII GGGG-
GGGGGGG!!!!!!

It seemed that, despite already suffering murder most grievous, you did not want to 'die' in this new world.



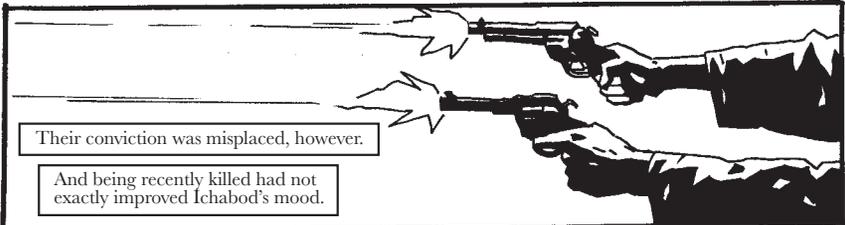
As ever, where there was life there was also something to fear.

The unknown to be sucked down into.



The other Horsemen had no desire to follow their compatriot on the road to antediluvian agonies.

With numbers as their advantage, they still felt confident of their chances of success.



Their conviction was misplaced, however.

And being recently killed had not exactly improved Ichabod's mood.



AHHHH...



HOW... HOW
IN THE...



CLICK

HELL.

IS THAT WHERE YOU WERE GOING TO TAKE ME, FRIEND?

THAT... THAT'S NOT MY DECISION TO MAKE...

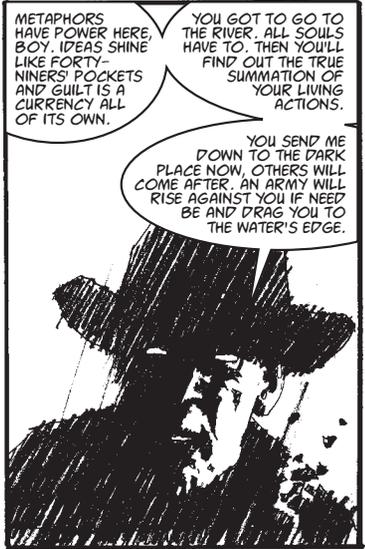
PULLING THAT TRIGGER WILL AVAIL YOU NAUGHT. THE NOOSE STILL HANGS FROM A TREE THAT YOU GREW WITH YOUR LIFE'S NEFARIOUS ACTIONS.



WHAT THREAT IS A ROPE TO ME, BOY? I AM ALREADY MURDERED.

KINGDOM WEPT, IT WAS A METAPHOR. YOU AIN'T THE SHARPEST SPUR ON THE BOOT, ARE YOU?

A STRANGE TIME TO CHOOSE TO INSULT ME.



METAPHORS HAVE POWER HERE, BOY. IDEAS SHINE LIKE FORTY-NINERS' POCKETS AND GUILT IS A CURRENCY ALL OF ITS OWN.

YOU GOT TO GO TO THE RIVER. ALL SOULS HAVE TO. THEN YOU'LL FIND OUT THE TRUE SUMMATION OF YOUR LIVING ACTIONS.

YOU SEND ME DOWN TO THE DARK PLACE NOW, OTHERS WILL COME AFTER. AN ARMY WILL RISE AGAINST YOU IF NEED BE AND DRAG YOU TO THE WATER'S EDGE.



THERE'S RULES HERE, SON. RULES THAT HAVE TO BE OBEYED.

NOW, I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU TOOK ME AND MY BOYS DOWN. I DON'T KNOW HOW THERE'S WORKING BULLETS IN THEM GUNS WHEN NONE CAN EXIST HERE.

THERE'S SOMETHING UNUSUAL ABOUT YOU FOR A MORTAL SOUL, I'LL ADMIT. BUT YOU'RE GOING TO THE RIVER REGARDLESS.



THIS RIVER. WHERE IS IT?

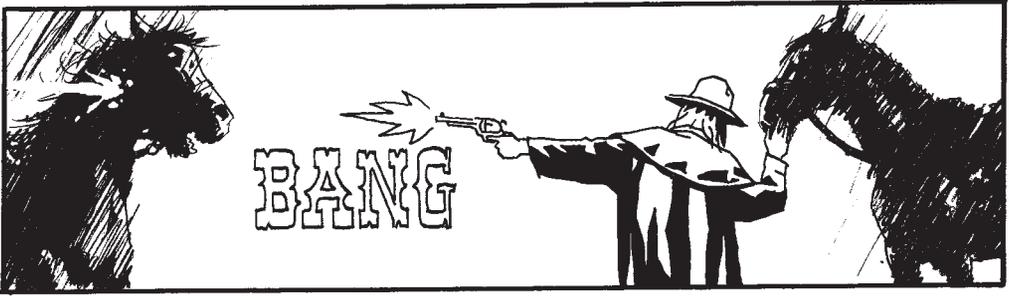
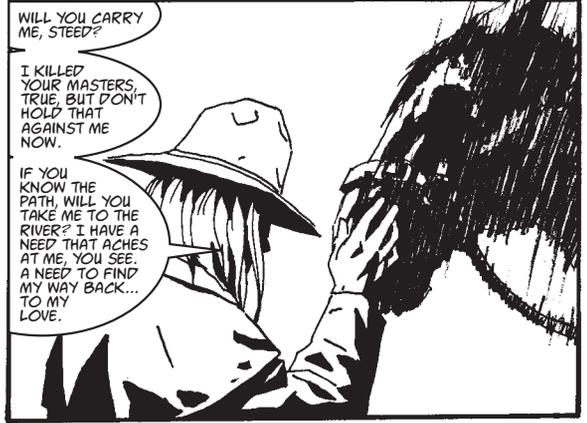
THAT WAY. OVER YONDER. IT'S A TERRIBLE DIFFICULT ROUTE THOUGH.

I COULD... I COULD LEAD YOU THERE IF YOU...



I'LL FIND IT.

BANG!!!



To Ichabod, the blurred steed seemed to be following a definite, recalled path in its journey to The River.



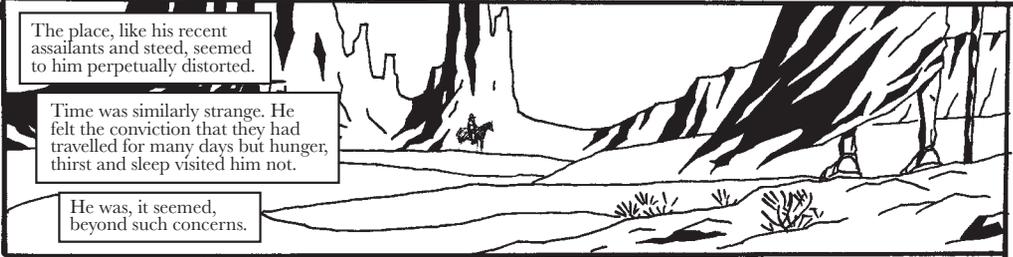
He was happy to bow to its knowledge of a landscape that, while greatly resembling the one he had walked upon in living days, perpetually shifted, pulsed and denied him ease.

Like a rattlesnake, coiled and agitated.

The place, like his recent assailants and steed, seemed to him perpetually distorted.

Time was similarly strange. He felt the conviction that they had travelled for many days but hunger, thirst and sleep visited him not.

He was, it seemed, beyond such concerns.



He was being watched, however. A wanted man had an instinct for surveillance. It was how he stayed alive.

He would off forget that this definition of his status could no longer be claimed.



The boy, he recalled. The Boy With Dead Eyes. His had been the shot that took Ichabod's life.

His aim had been the navigator of the dull, wet thump that forced the failing breath from Ichabod's lips.



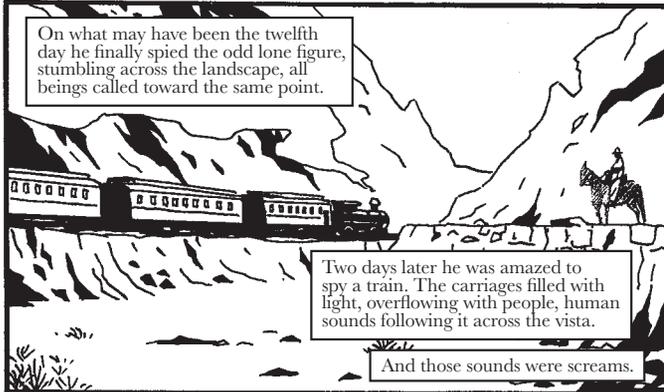
BANG



That took him away from her.



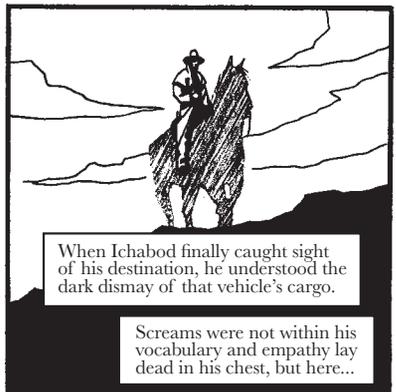
On what may have been the twelfth day he finally spied the odd lone figure, stumbling across the landscape, all beings called toward the same point.



Two days later he was amazed to spy a train. The carriages filled with light, overflowing with people, human sounds following it across the vista.

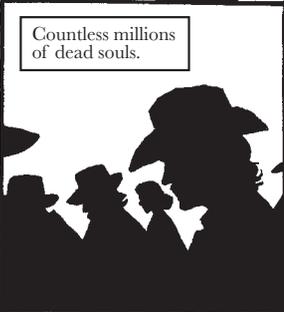
And those sounds were screams.

When Ichabod finally caught sight of his destination, he understood the dark dismay of that vehicle's cargo.



Screams were not within his vocabulary and empathy lay dead in his chest, but here...

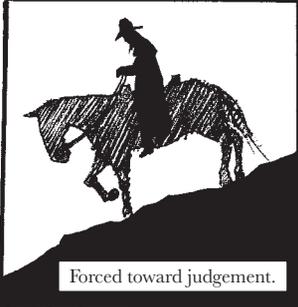
... he understood that emotion strong and true.



Countless millions of dead souls.



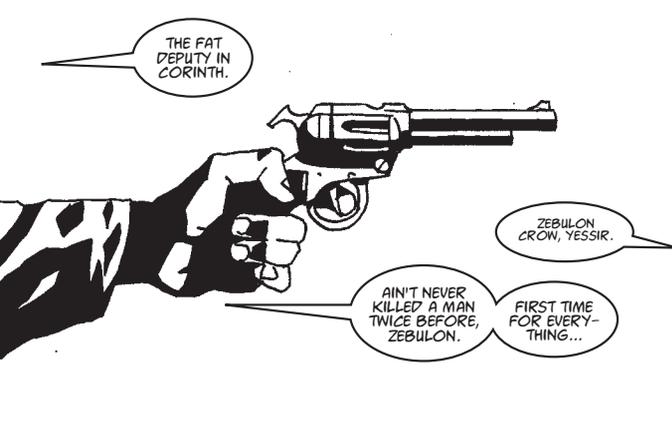
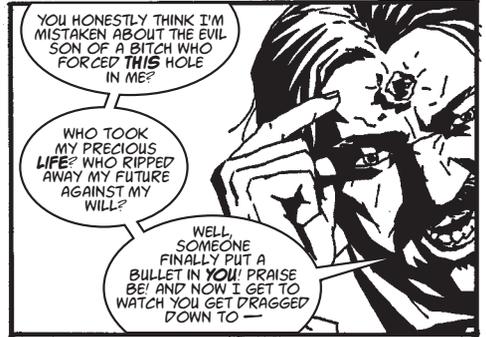
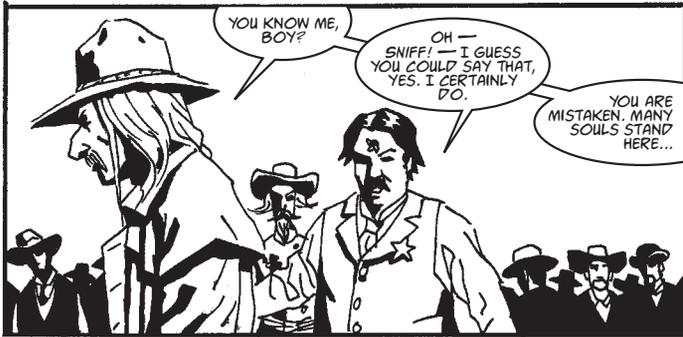
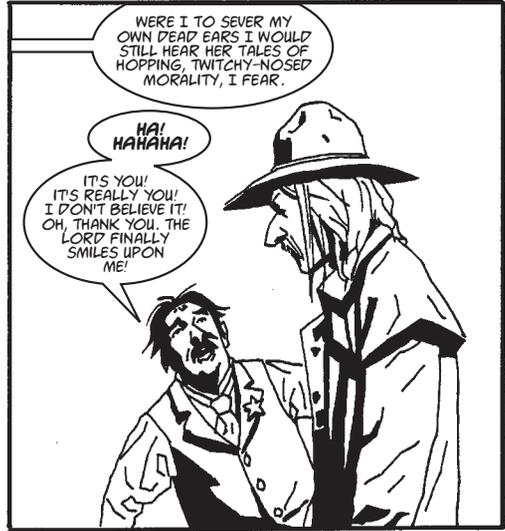
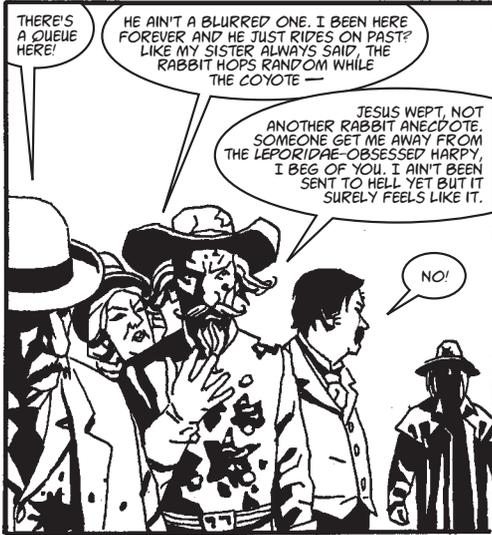
All come to The River.

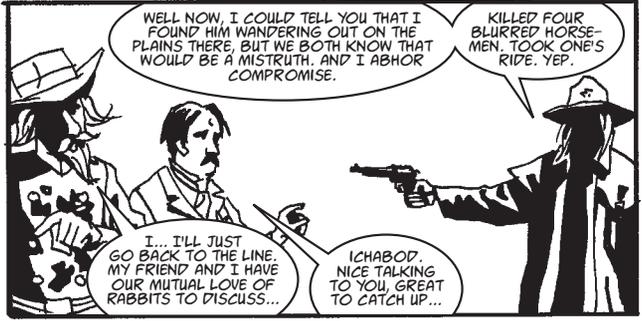
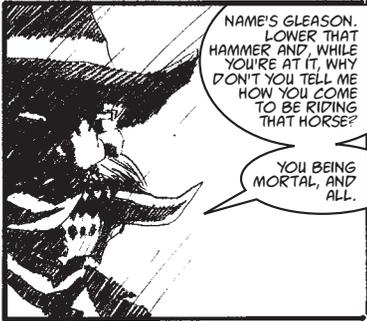
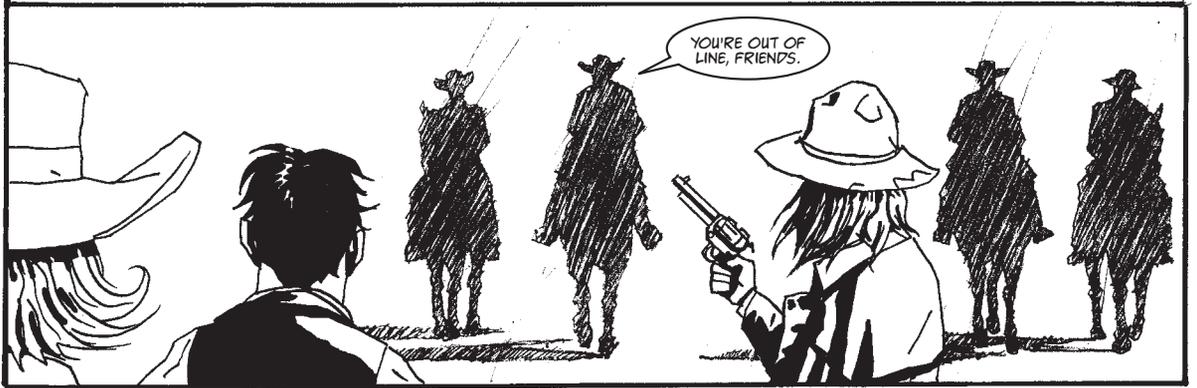


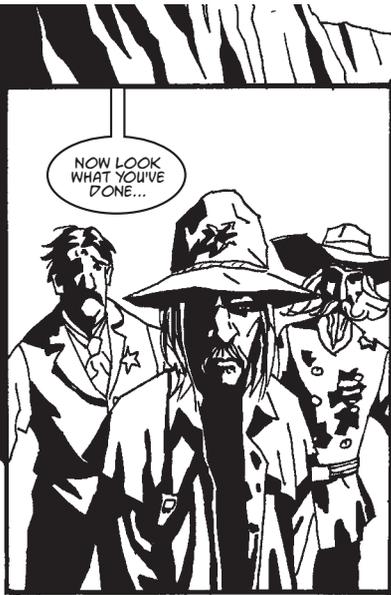
Forced toward judgement.

They waited in neverending line to be taken on to their next destination. Ichabod planned to commandeer their transport and alter its course, returning him home.

He had immoral ways to convince individuals that his chosen path was their own.







'TURN AROUND AND WAIT FOR JUDGEMENT!'



MY APOLOGIES FOR MOUNTING YOU IN THIS MANNER, SIR. REST ASSURED THAT SEXUAL CONGRESS IS THE FURTHEST THING FROM THE MIND OF GENERAL NATHANIEL M. BEAUREGARD AT THIS POINT.

OH NO.

YOU WISH MY PROCLIVITY WERE OTHERWISE? YOU ARE A GOOD-LOOKING BOY, IF SLIGHTLY OVERWEIGHT, AND IT'S BEEN DECADES SINCE MY LAST EROTIC ADVENTURE, BUT —

OH. I SEE NOW WHAT YOUR REFRAIN REFERRED TO, MY APOLOGIES.

THAT HURT, DAMN YOU!

A rare and terrible speed of thought and of deed had always been Ichabod's to call upon in risk-filled moments.

But, dazed as he was by the demon's blow, he had no way of avoiding the Blurred Horsemen's net.

And so captivity and eternal doom loomed o'er him.

And then, for the first time in his history, alive or otherwise, something truly extraordinary happened:

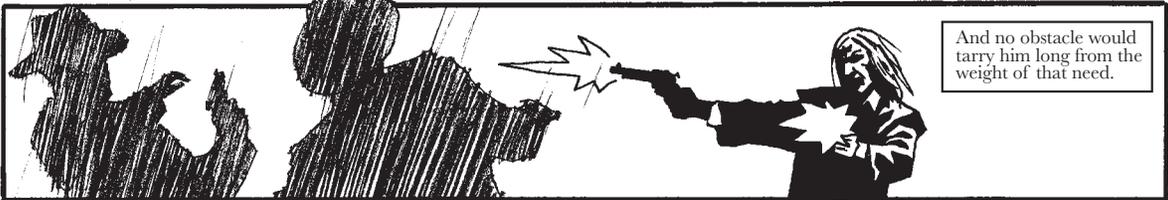
Another soul came to Ichabod's aid.

HA!



Companionship, or the fate of others, had never been Ichabod's concern, and in this instance, naught had changed.

His desire here, regardless of the weight of numbers against him, was pure and absolute.



And no obstacle would tarry him long from the weight of that need.



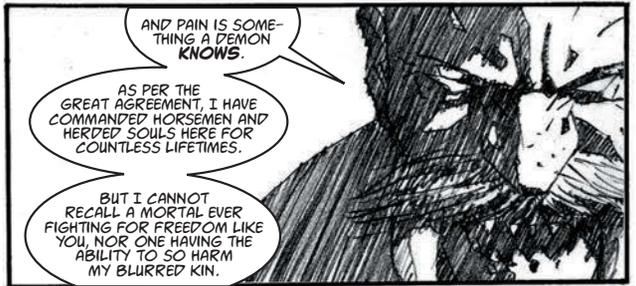
He believed that the putrefying vessel crossing the Great River had the ability to return him to the world of warmth and colour.

That its oarsman could be violently persuaded to take him back.

To her.

BAF







SHE IS AWFUL PRETTY, I'LL GRANT YOU THAT. ALTHOUGH HER INTEREST IN ONE AS POLLUTED AS YOURSELF DOES SEEM SOMEWHAT UNLIKELY.

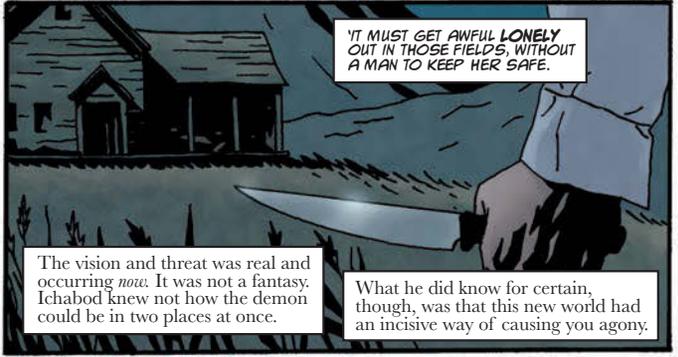
KILL... YOU...

I DON'T OFTEN GO FOR MORTALS BUT MAYBE I'LL HEAD DOWN TO THE COLOUR WORLD AND VISIT THAT LITTLE LADY MYSELF.



'PROCURE THE MIND OF A LOCAL BOY.'

'POP ON OVER WHILE SHE SLEEPS. JUST TO CHECK UP ON HER, YOU UNDERSTAND.'



'IT MUST GET AWFUL LONELY OUT IN THOSE FIELDS, WITHOUT A MAN TO KEEP HER SAFE.'

The vision and threat was real and occurring *now*. It was not a fantasy. Ichabod knew not how the demon could be in two places at once.

What he did know for certain, though, was that this new world had an incisive way of causing you agony.



'WITH YOU AWAY, WHAT WILL THAT POOR HELPLESS GIRL DO FOR WARMTH AND COMPANIONSHIP?'



'I TELL YOU, SOME OF THE DIRE OCCURRENCES THAT BEFALL THE INNOCENT IN THESE TROUBLED TIMES...'

'IT'S A CRYING SHAME.'



WATCH.



Ichabod was freed from his appalling grasp, although not from the torture of the demon's ferocious violation.

He did not fully understand what had just occurred, whether his love was safe...



... who the old man in question was...

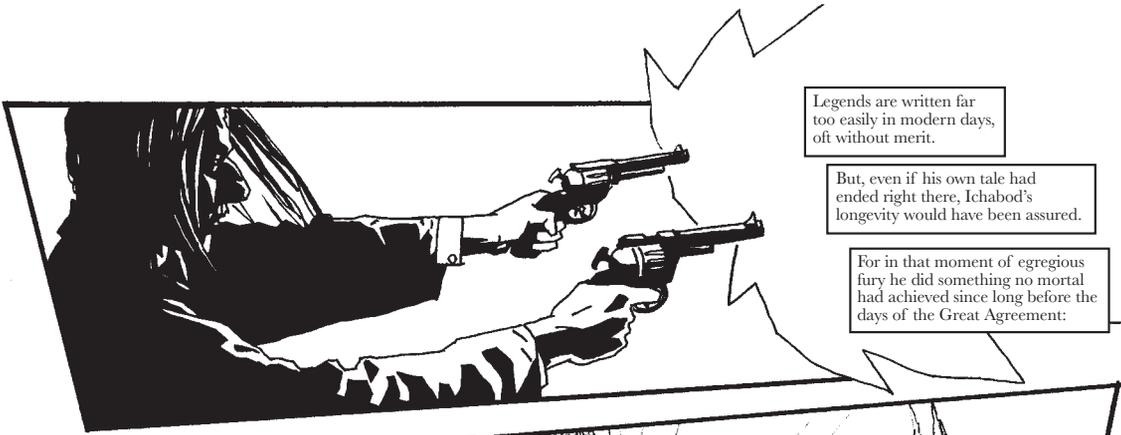
... or what his continuing connection to Ichabod may be.



But he did know one thing...

... And that was rage.





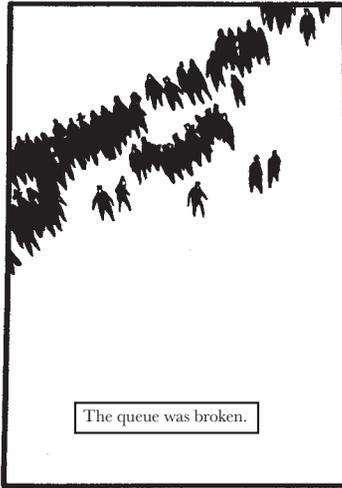
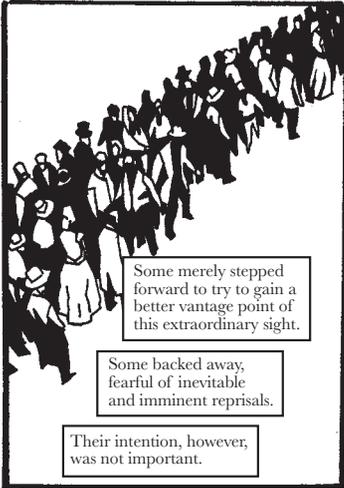
Legends are written far too easily in modern days, oft without merit.

But, even if his own tale had ended right there, Ichabod's longevity would have been assured.

For in that moment of egregious fury he did something no mortal had achieved since long before the days of the Great Agreement:

He ended a demon.

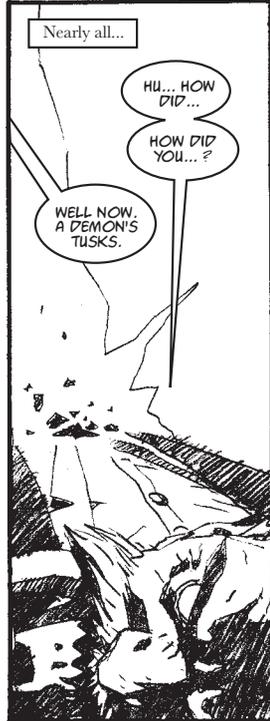






A grave frozen fear fell upon all, the sort that none could even explain. As if their soul knew something secret and awful that their conscious mind did not.

The desire for flight and panic was overwhelming and all accepted it without query.



Nearly all...

HU... HOW DID...
HOW DID YOU...?

WELL NOW,
A DEMON'S
TUSKS.



A FINE
AND RARE
TROPHY.



YOU WOULD
LOOK INTO MY
HEART?

THIS
IS MY HEART,
DEMON!

TELL ME
HOW I GET
BACK!

TELL ME
HOW I GET BACK
OR I TAKE THE
OTHER TUSK!

FRIEND...



WE HAVE TO
GO.



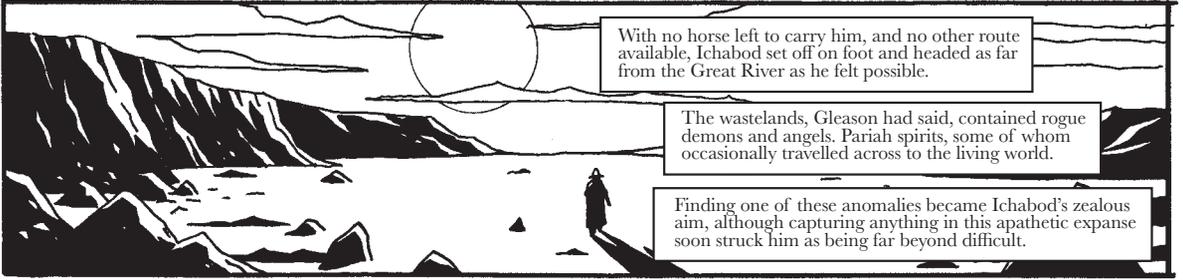
WE HAVE TO GO NOW!





BOOOOM





With no horse left to carry him, and no other route available, Ichabod set off on foot and headed as far from the Great River as he felt possible.

The wastelands, Gleason had said, contained rogue demons and angels. Pariah spirits, some of whom occasionally travelled across to the living world.

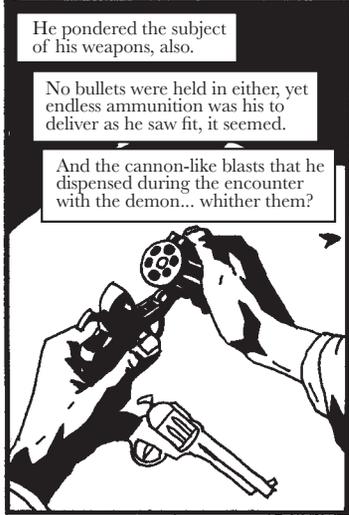
Finding one of these anomalies became Ichabod's zealous aim, although capturing anything in this apathetic expanse soon struck him as being far beyond difficult.



The nights came without timescale or sense of reason, a random, ambiguous occurrence.

During these hours strange, unrecognised lights shimmered and danced across the sky's plateau. Some moved with an alacrity akin to shooting stars.

Ichabod briefly wondered if these were freshly killed souls, newly arriving.



He pondered the subject of his weapons, also.

No bullets were held in either, yet endless ammunition was his to deliver as he saw fit, it seemed.

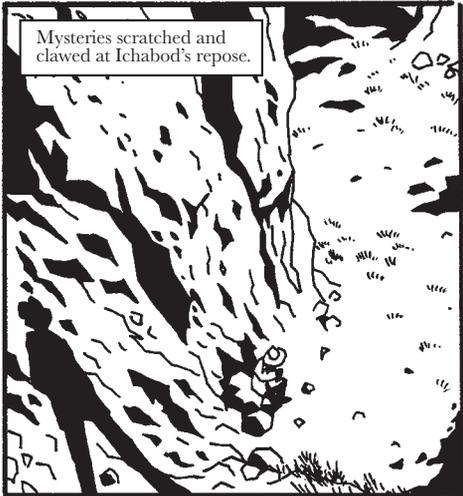
And the cannon-like blasts that he dispensed during the encounter with the demon... whither them?



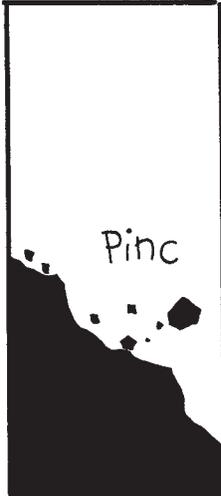
And the old man? Twice now, he had appeared before Ichabod: once in Corinth, and then again to protect Ichabod's love from the demon.

Black and white jarring against blood-fuelled colour.

Like an uninvited visitor from beyond the living.



Mysteries scratched and clawed at Ichabod's repose.



Pinc



Pinc



And they were not alone, it seems.



HO, FRIEND. BLESSED MERCIES. WHAT A RARE COINCIDENCE THIS IS!

INDEED, ICHABOD. WHAT STRANGE, STRANGE, PECULIAR FATE THAT WE SHOULD MEET YOU ONCE AGAIN.

I WAS JUST SAYING TO ZEBULON HERE, 'ZEBULON,' I SAID, 'WE COULD WANDER FOR CENTURIES AND NEVER MEET ANOTHER SOUL, LET ALONE SOMEONE WE KNEW...'

... AND VALUED.

AND VALUED, AND HE REPLIED...



I TOLD YOU HE WOULDN'T BELIEVE US.

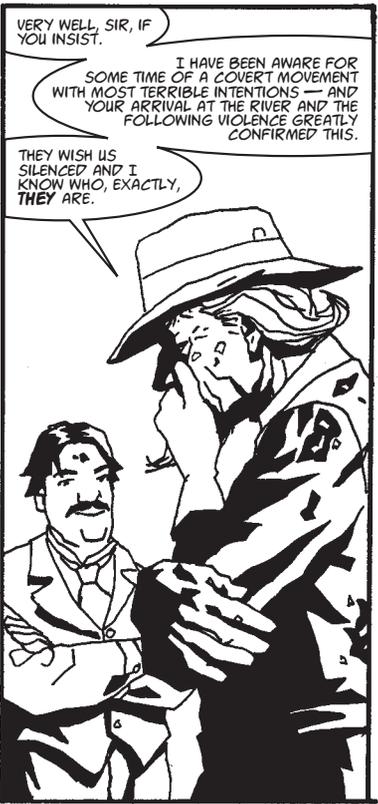
HMPH. IT WAS YOUR UNCONVINCING, OVERWEIGHT PERFORMANCE THAT CAUSED HIM TO SEE THROUGH OUR CUNNING DECEPTION.

YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO TELL HIM.

MY CLANDESTINE KNOWLEDGE OF THE GREAT CONSPIRACY IS TOO TERRIBLE TO SPEAK ALOUD, SIR. I BEG YOU TO NOT HAVE ME AIR IT IN COMPANY.



IF YOU HOLD INFORMATION, AND IT INVOLVES ME, YOU WOULD BE ADVISED TO REVEAL IT.



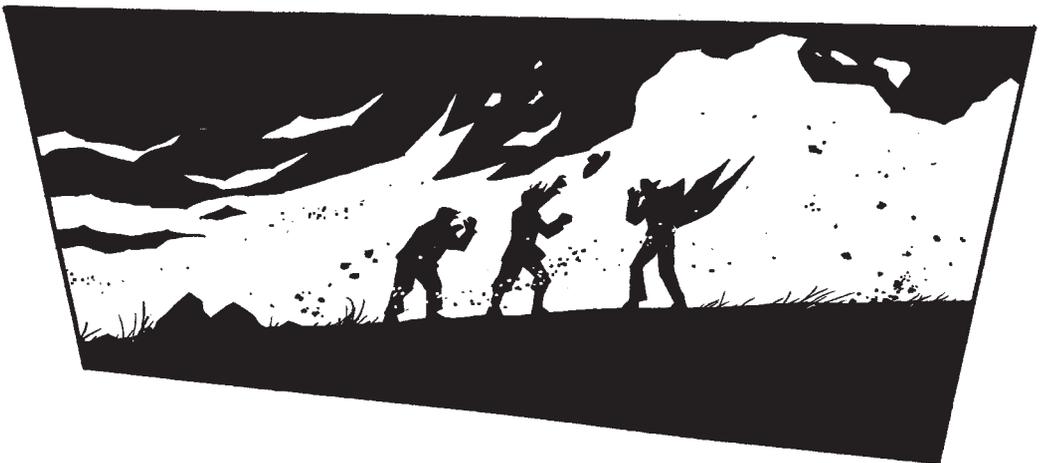
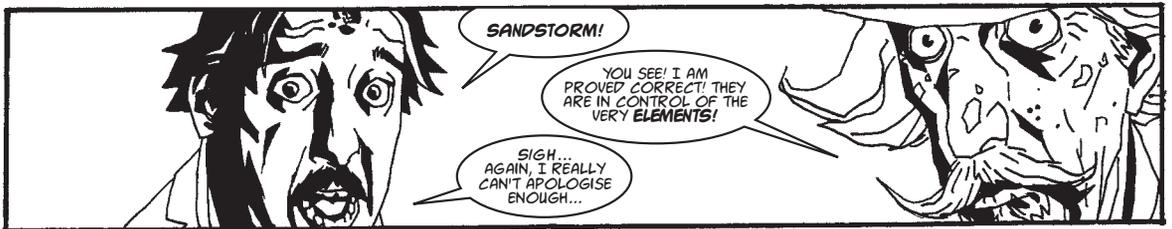
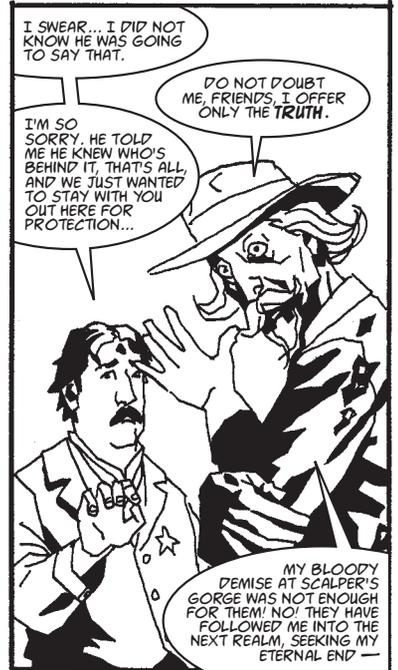
VERY WELL, SIR, IF YOU INSIST.

I HAVE BEEN AWARE FOR SOME TIME OF A COVERT MOVEMENT WITH MOST TERRIBLE INTENTIONS — AND YOUR ARRIVAL AT THE RIVER AND THE FOLLOWING VIOLENCE GREATLY CONFIRMED THIS.

THEY WISH US SILENCED, AND I KNOW WHO, EXACTLY, THEY ARE.



SPEAK.



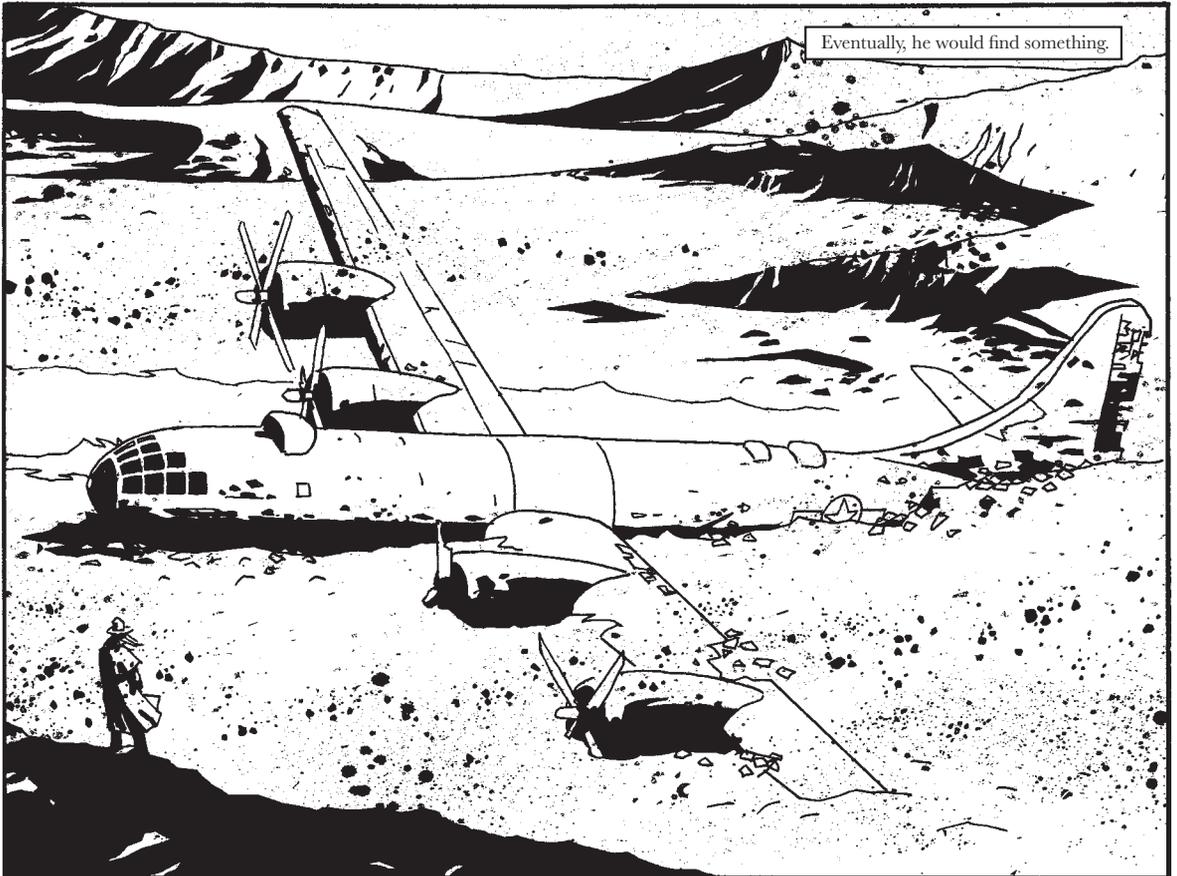
Visibility quickly disappeared like the money of an inebriated and blind gambler in a dishonest casino.

Ichabod's irritation towards General M. Beauregard was instantly forgotten, replaced by a dizzying discombobulation.

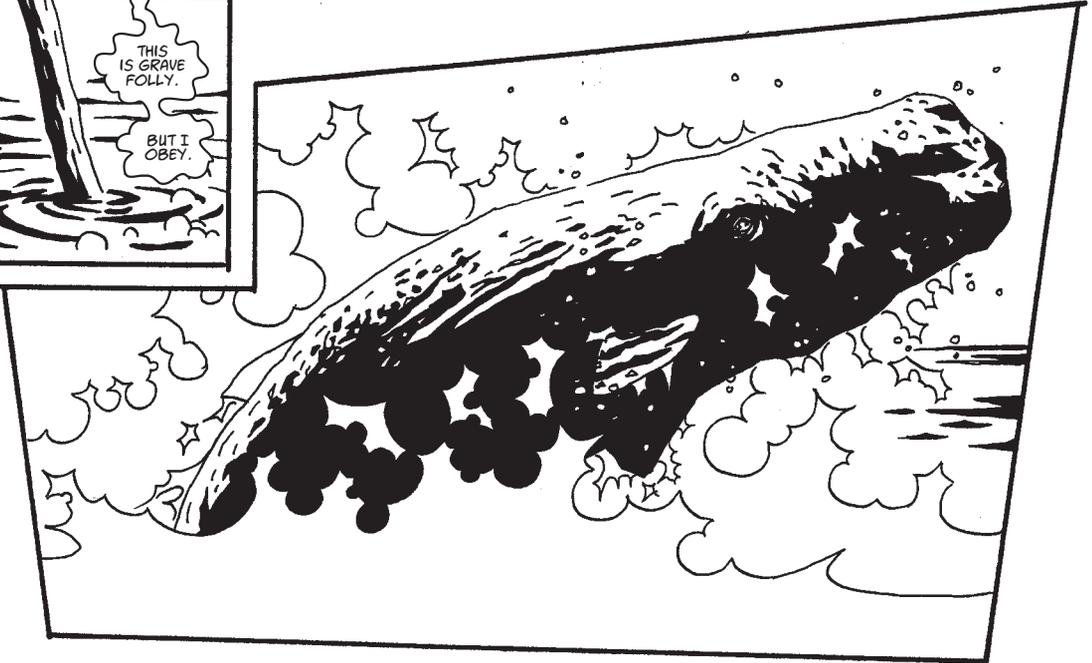
It felt for all the world as though the very nature of this environment was attempting to keep Ichabod from reaching his goal.

He cared little for nature, however, and defied it thus...

Place one foot in front of another and repeat, he thought. That was ever enough.



Eventually, he would find something.



NEXT ISSUE DEMONIC INTERVENTION!

NEXT ISSUE



THE JOURNEY CONTINUES
MARCH 25TH 2015

THE GALAXY'S GREATEST COMIC
JUDGE IT FOR YOURSELF!



2000AD

AVAILABLE IN SHOPS AND ONLINE EVERY WEDNESDAY

WWW.2000ADONLINE.COM