



Issue #2
\$3.99

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ANGEL

BLOOD & TRENCHES



FRONT LINES



FROM THE MOMENT THE SUNLIGHT
TOUCHES ME, I KNOW I HAVE ONLY
SECONDS TO TAKE ACTION.

AND THAT THAT ACTION
MUST BE THE LAST THING
MY CAPTORS WOULD EXPECT.



I'M BURNING BEFORE I
EVEN HIT THE GROUND.

THIS IS WHY MY ESCAPE
WAS SO UNEXPECTED.



I HURL MYSELF
HEADLONG INTO
THE DEEPEST DRIFTED SNOW...



...BUT THE RESPITE
LASTS BARELY MORE
THAN A SECOND.



I DEPEND NOW ON
MY MEMORY OF
THIS ROUTE, DRIVEN
MORE THAN A DOZEN
TIMES AT NIGHT.



THE RICKETY, OLD
HENHOUSE IS
WHERE I REMEMBER.



ONE HARD HIT IS
ENOUGH TO SEND
ITS CANOPY OF
SNOW TUMBLING
ONTO MY BACK.


THIS WILL LAST
LONGER, AND
BRING ME
CLOSER TO
MY GOAL.



BUT BEHIND ME I HEAR
THE UNMISTAKABLE
INDICATION THAT MY
CAPTORS HAVE
GOTTEN OVER THEIR
INITIAL SHOCK.




KLICK
KLAK
KLICK



THE SHOT CAN DO ME NO
PERMANENT DAMAGE...


...BUT IT IS ENOUGH TO
THROW ME OFF MY STEPS.



MY GOAL SEEMS AT ONCE
SO CLOSE, AND YET SO
VERY FAR AWAY.



IT SEEMS ALMOST A
MIRACLE WHEN I MAKE
IT TO THE BRIDGE...



...BUT I KNOW BETTER THAN
TO COUNT ON MIRACLES!



THE DROP IS JUST
ENOUGH FOR ME TO
BREAK THROUGH.

THE WATER BELOW SEEMS
EVEN COLDER THAN THE
ICE THAT COVERS IT.



'S GONE
UNDER!



'S NOT
GETTIN' AWAY
THAT EASILY!
FIRE! FIRE!



WAIT! LOOK!
THE WATER'S
FLOWING THAT
WAY!



IF HE'S RIDING
CURRENT, HE'LL
BE ON THE OTHER
SIDE OF THE
BRIDGE!



SWEEP
THE AREA, LADS!
MAYBE WE'LL HIT
'IM BY LUCK!

STOP!



DAMMIT ALL,
STOP WASTING
AMMUNITION!

YOU SHOULD
KNOW BETTER
THAN THAT!



IF HE WASN'T
CONSUMED BY THE
FLAMES, AND HAS
BEEN SWEEP ALONG
BY THE WATERS...

...THERE'LL BE
NOTHING TO STOP HIM
STAYING HIDDEN UNDER
THE ICE FOR HOURS IF
HE SO CHOOSES!



WHAT CAN
WE DO THEN,
SIR?

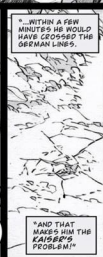
I'LL SEND
OUT AN ALERT
TO ALL STATIONS
DOWNSTREAM.


IF HE POPS
UP ANYWHERE
BETWEEN HERE AND
THE GERMAN LINES,
SOMEONE IS SURE
TO SPOT HIM.



AND
NOW... I NEED
TO CONTINUE THE
INTERROGATION
OF THE HOSPITAL
PERSONNEL.

LADY
D'ASCONNE
IN MOST
PARTICULAR!





I DON'T KNOW HOW FAR I
HAVE TRAVELED, PUSHING
AGAINST THE CURRENT.

ABOVE THE ICE, DAY HAS
FADED INTO EVENING...



...AND I FEEL IT IS
SAFE TO VENTURE
OUT INTO THE OPEN
AIR AGAIN.



BREAKING
THROUGH THE ICE
IS A STRANGE
EXPERIENCE.

SOME ANCIENT
MEMORY MAKES MY
LUNGS WANT TO GASP
AND GULP, FILL
THEMSELVES WITH
LIFE-GIVING AIR.



BUT THE TIME FOR
THAT IS LONG PAST.




OUT OF THE BUOYANCY
OF THE WATER, I AM
SUDDENLY AWARE OF
THE TOLL OF MY
ENORMOUS EFFORT OF
THE PAST FEW HOURS.


IT TAKES ALMOST EVERY
OUNCE OF STRENGTH I HAVE
TO CRAWL TO THE BANK.



AND THERE IS STILL A
CLIMB AHEAD OF ME.

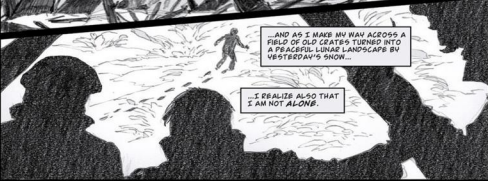


AT THE TOP I AM FROZEN FOR
A MOMENT BY WHAT I SEE.



THIS PART OF THE FOREST
HAS BEEN BLASTED AND
BURNED BY SHELL FIRE.

I REALIZE I HAVE CROSSED
THE FRONT LINES...



...AND AS I MAKE MY WAY ACROSS A
FIELD OF OLD CRATES TURNED INTO
A PEACEFUL LUNAR LANDSCAPE BY
YESTERDAY'S SNOW...

...I REALIZE ALSO THAT
I AM NOT ALONE.





"WE HAD BEEN UNDER
CONSTANT BARRAGE.

"THEN, AFTER ALMOST
A FULL DAY... SUDDENLY
THEY STOPPED.

"THERE WAS A LONG SILENCE
THAT WAS SOMEHOW WORSE
THAN THE CANNON FIRES...

"...THEN SUDDENLY A
TERRIBLE ROAR.

"LIKE ALL THE HOUNDS
OF HELL HAD BEEN LET
LOOSE AT ONCE.

"IN THE NEXT INSTANT
THEY WERE UPON US.

"SOME OF US BROKE
AWAY IN THE CONFUSION.

"WE SCRAMBLED
FROM THE TRENCH
AND RAN OUT INTO
NO MAN'S LAND.

"THEY CAME FROM
NOWHERE, AS IF THEY
FELL FROM THE SKY.

"BEFORE THEY COULD EVEN
MOVE, MY COMRADES WERE
BEING TORN TO SHREDS.

WE RAN.

WE RAN...
UNTIL WE COULD
NO LONGER HEAR
THE SCREAMS.

"ONLY FIVE OF US GOT AWAY."

"WE WANDERED ACROSS NO MAN'S LAND, WAITING FOR THE ENEMY TO SEE US AND FIRE..."

"BUT NOTHING HAPPENED."

"FIVE, OUT OF THIRTY."

"UNTIL..."

MUELLER!

"I HAD SEEN DEATH IN ENOUGH MEN'S EYES TO KNOW HE HAD ONLY MOMENTS TO LIVE."

"HE BEGGED ME NOT TO LEAVE HIM OUT THERE TO ROT."

"BEGGED ME TO FIND A WAY TO GET HIM HOME..."

"AND FOR THREE DAYS WE HAVE BEEN HIDING IN THESE WOODS, TRYING TO FIND A WAY TO DO JUST THAT."

WAIT... YOUR COMRADE DIED BECAUSE HE WAS ATTACKED BY VAMPIRES?

LET ME SEE THAT BODY!

WHAT'S HE DOING! GET HIM AWAY FROM MUELLER!!

STOP! WHATEVER YOU'RE DOING...

I THOUGHT HE'D BEEN SHOT...

BUT THE MARKS ARE HERE. HE WAS BITTEN.

BUT SOMETHING ISN'T RIGHT.

THE AMOUNT OF TIME HE TOOK TO DIE.

THEY WANTED HIM TO BE ABLE TO TRAVEL. TO MOVE AWAY FROM THE ATTACK POINT.

THEY AREN'T JUST FEEDING...



...THEY'RE RECRUITING.

AND THAT MEANS WE HAVE TO ACT QUICKLY...



WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING TO DO WITH THAT BAYONET?

THE BLADE ISN'T IN THE BEST SHAPE...



...BUT I DON'T HAVE TO DO THIS NEATLY.

IT ONLY MATTERS THAT IT GETS DONE.



WHAT GETS DONE?

SERGEANT! DON'T LET HIM NEAR MUELLER! HE'S INSANE!

KILL HIM! KILL HIM NOW!



LISTEN TO ME, YOU'VE SEEN THOSE CREATURES. YOU KNOW THEY'RE REAL.

MUELLER WAS... INFECTED BY THEM. HE'S NOT MUELLER ANY MORE, HE'S ONE OF THEM.

OR SOON WILL BE!



NO, HE'S NOT. HE'S SOMETHING MUCH, MUCH WORSE THAN DEAD!

ARE YOU MAD? MUELLER IS DEAD!



WE'VE HEARD ENOUGH! SERGEANT! SHOOT!

YOU SEEM TO HAVE LEFT ME NO CHOICE, STRANGER.



SCHULTZ!

HOW GOOD OF YOU TO DEFEND ME, SCHULTZ!







YOU SEE...
NOT ENTIRELY
INDESTRUCTIBLE!



WHAT... WHAT
HAPPENED
TO HIM?

WORRY
ABOUT THAT
LATER.

SOLDIER,
DID HE BITE
YOU?

NO, I
DON'T THINK
SO.



GONE! NO
TRACE OF
THEM!

THEIR
ATTACKERS
MUST HAVE
TAKEN THE
BODIES FOR
BURIAL.



BE SURE.

BUT... WE'RE NOT
DONE YET. THERE'S
STILL THE MATTER OF
YOUR COMRADES WHO
WERE ATTACKED IN
THE TRENCHES...



WHICH MEANS MY
GUESSES WAS RIGHT.
THEY'RE NOT JUST
FEEDING...



THERE
WAS SO MUCH
VIOLENCE...

WHY IS THERE
SO LITTLE
BLOOD?

THEY... TEND
TO BE CAREFUL
ABOUT THAT.

WE HAVE TO
FIND THOSE
BODIES!



ST-STRANGER...



THEY FIGHT BRAVELY,
FOR THE MOST PART.

BUT WE ARE
OUTNUMBERED.

AND NOT ALL SEEM
SO WILLING TO FIGHT.

IT SEEMS AS THOUGH
IT WILL ALL BE OVER
IN SECONDS, THEN...

STOP!

LOOK!

YES,
I KNOW
YOU.

YOU... KNOW
ME, BLOOD
SACK?

BEFORE HE DIES, I
WANT A BETTER LOOK
AT THIS WOLF AMONG
THE SHEEP!

CRUXUS!

AND YOU
KNOW ME!



GOD IN HEAVEN!

HE'S ONE OF THEM!
HE'S ONE OF THEM!

BUT... HE...
HELPED...
US...?!



ANGELUS?
CAN THAT
REALLY BE
YOU?

I HAD
HEARD... STORIES.
RUMORS. YOU HAD
A PROBLEM WITH
SOME GYPSIES...



THE ONLY
PROBLEM I HAD
WAS WHICH ONE
TO BAT FIRST. NOW BACK
AWAY, CRUIUS.
THESE HUMANS
ARE MINE.



I THINK
NOT!
GRAB HIM!



CALL OFF
YOUR MEN,
CRUIUS!

I'VE KILLED
ENOUGH FOR
ONE DAY!



AND YOU'LL
KILL NO
MORE!

I DON'T CARE
HOW FAMOUS
YOU ARE! WHEN A
VAMPIRE KILLS
HIS OWN KIND...

STOP!



THIS IS
NOT A MATTER
OF US TO
DECIDE!



SOMETHING
STINKS HERE,
ANGELUS...

BUT IT IS FOR
OUR LEADER TO
JUDGE WHAT TO
DO WITH YOU.

YOUR...
LEADER? ISN'T
THAT YOU,
CRINUS?



THINGS HAVE
CHANGED SINCE
LAST WE MET,
ANGELUS.

THERE ARE
NEW FORCES
AT PLAY IN THE
WORLD.

BIND THE
HUMANS!
BRING
THEM!



TRULY AMAZING,
IS IT NOT, ANGELUS?

IN OUR CENTURIES WE
HAVE SEEN THE HUMANS
STRIVE CONSTANTLY TO FIND
NEW AND BETTER WAYS TO
KILL THEMSELVES.



BUT THIS WAR IS
WORSE THAN ANYTHING
WE HAVE KNOWN.

EXACTLY.

A WHOLE
CONTINENT HAS BEEN
LAID BEFORE US AS A
KILLING FIELD.



AT FIRST, WE WERE
DISORGANIZED. WE DID
NOT FULLY APPRECIATE
WHAT HAD BEEN
MADE FOR US.

BUT THERE WAS
ONE WHO UNDERSTOOD.
ONE WHO IS OLDER, ONE
WHO IS WISER THAN
ANY OF US.

HE BROUGHT US
TOGETHER—AND HE
OFFERED OUR SERVICES
TO THE KAISER. FOR
A PRICE.



PRICE?

IF THE ONE YOU
SPEAK OF IS WHO I
THINK IT IS, THE PRICE
MAY BE MORE THAN
ANYONE SHOULD BE
WILLING TO PAY!

YOU'LL
KNOW SOON
ENOUGH!



THIS IS WHAT
WE NOW CALL
HOMB.

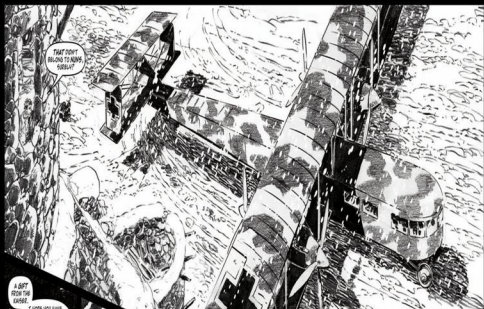


OF COURSE, WE
HAD TO KILL ALL THE
NUNS WHO FORMERLY
RESIDED HERE.

BUT... EVEN IN
TIME OF WAR WE
ARE ALLOWED A
LITTLE FUN,
NO?

OF... COURSE.

BUT WHAT
ABOUT THAT,
GRIMUS?



A GIFT
FROM THE
CHAIR.

I HOPE YOU HAVE
THE OPPORTUNITY
TO EXPERIENCE IT,
ANGELUS. NO SMOOP
DOWN UPON UNEXPECTED
PEAKS—AND BEING
THE THUNDER!

WE SEEM TO
BE GOING DOWN
A LONG WAY,
GENUS.

HEE, IN THE
CATACOMBS, NO
AIR. MOSTLY FREE
FROM OUTSIDE
LIGHT.

AND TO BE
SURE, WE HAVE
THOSE STONE
CORPSES WITH NO
COOL LIPS.

THEY
LOOK—LESS THAN
COMFORTABLE,
GENUS.

COMFORT WILL
BE OF LITTLE
CONCERN TO YOU,
ANGELUS...

YES, THE
LITTLE SORCES
OF ETERNAL SORROW
DO NOT KEEP THIS
PLACE IN THE BEST
REPAIR.

WE HAVE TO GO
DEEP TO AVOID THE
POSSIBLE FINGER
OF SUNLIGHT.



...UNLESS YOU CAN
EXPLAIN WHY THERE
IS SO MUCH OF THE
STENCH OF A SOUL
ABOUT YOU!

NEXT: INTERLUDE

ANGEL

Behry-Digital

5 2 4 9 9



IDW