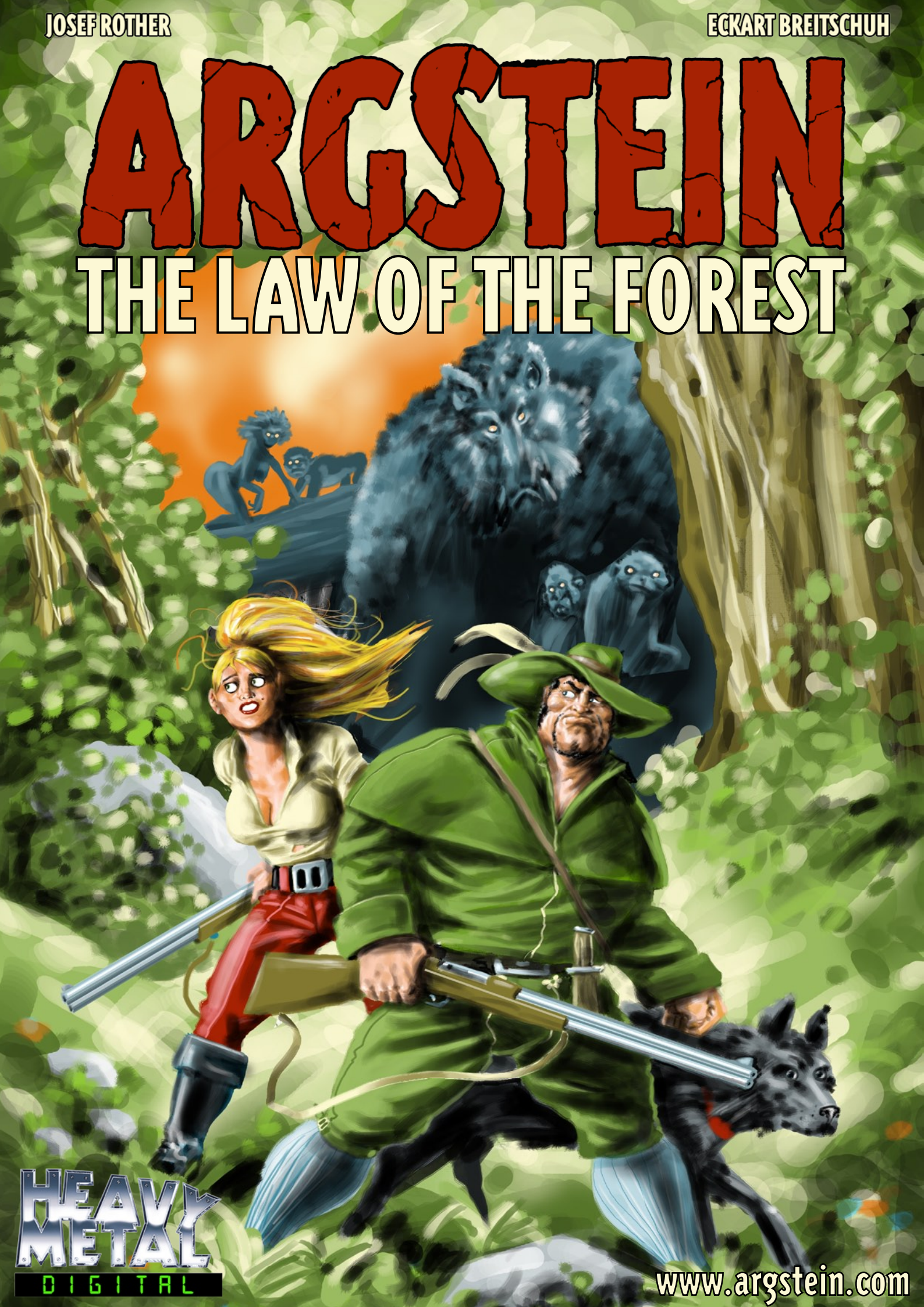


JOSEF ROTHER

ECKART BREITSCHUH

ARGSTEIN

THE LAW OF THE FOREST



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ARGSTEIN

THE LAW OF THE FOREST

Writer
JOSEF ROTHER

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ECKART BREITSCHUH

Colors
ECKART BREITSCHUH & MANUEL CLAVEL

Lettering
JOSEF ROTHER



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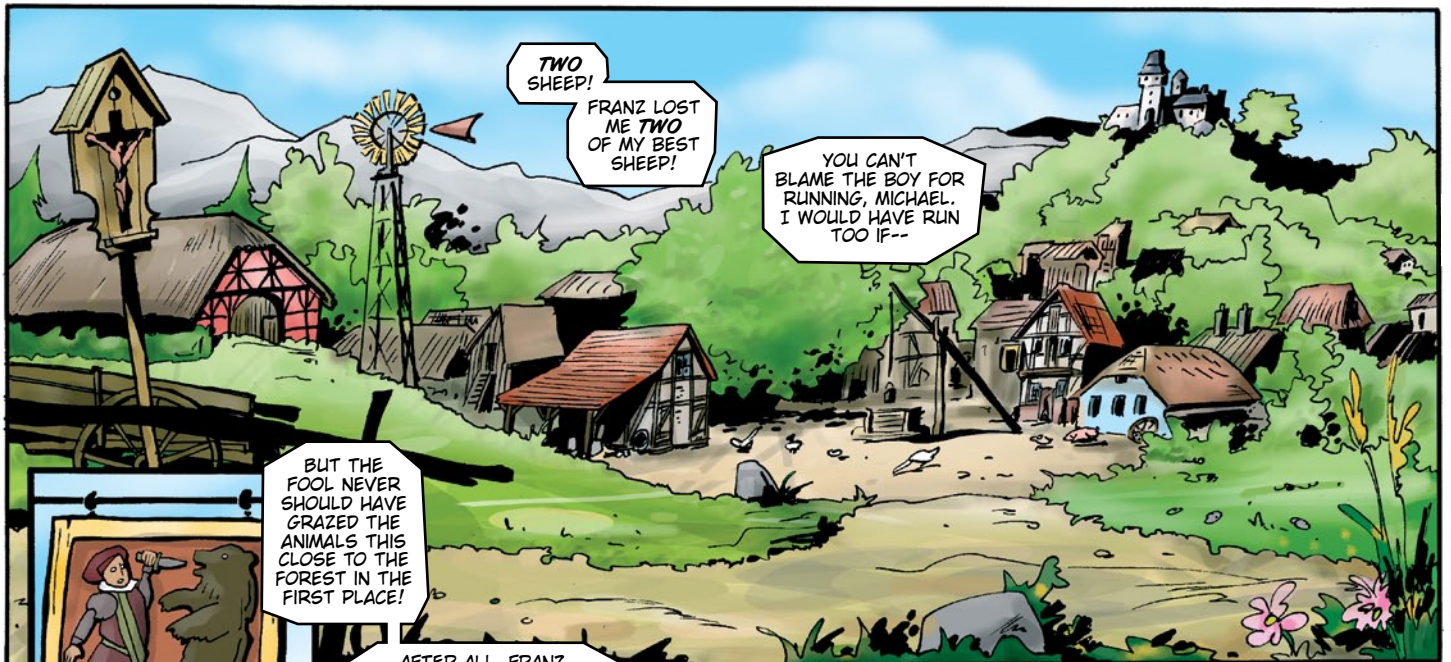
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TWO SHEEP!

FRANZ LOST ME TWO OF MY BEST SHEEP!

YOU CAN'T BLAME THE BOY FOR RUNNING, MICHAEL. I WOULD HAVE RUN TOO IF--

BUT THE FOOL NEVER SHOULD HAVE GRAZED THE ANIMALS THIS CLOSE TO THE FOREST IN THE FIRST PLACE!

AFTER ALL, FRANZ KNOWS ABOUT THE WOLVES AND THE BEARS... AND...

...AND THE OTHER ONES...

I COULD TELL YOU THE STORY OF KAINZ AND HIS BAND OF BLOODHOUNDS.

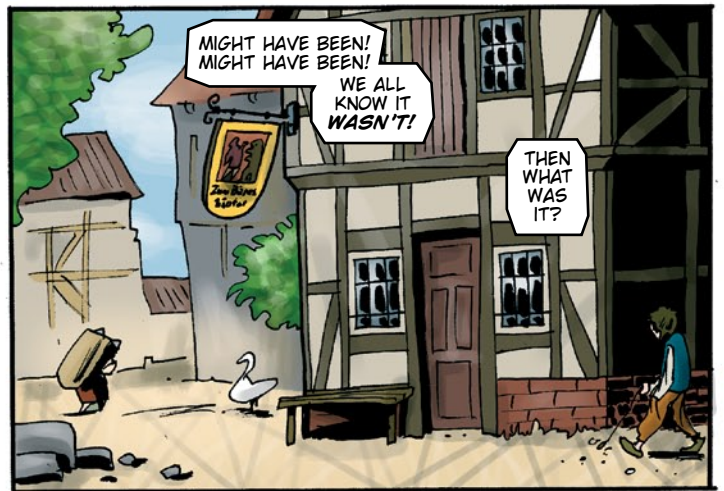
HOW THEY HELD ALL THE VALLEY IN THEIR THRALL OF FEAR AND MAIMED THE BARON.



AND WAS IT A WOLF? A REAL WOLF I MEAN?

FRANZ DIDN'T SEE. HE HEARD THE LEAVES RUSTLING AND RAN.

SO IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN A REAL ANIMAL.



MIGHT HAVE BEEN! MIGHT HAVE BEEN!

WE ALL KNOW IT WASN'T!

THEN WHAT WAS IT?



I SAY THE BARON AND HIS FÖRSTER* SHOULD DEAL WITH THESE... CREATURES ONCE AND FOR ALL.

THEY COME OUT OF THE WOODS AND--

NO, NO, THEY NEVER LEAVE THEIR PARTS. THEY ARE FORBIDDEN TO APPROACH THE VILLAGE.

THE FÖRSTER WOULD NEVER LET THEM.

OR THE TALE OF THE PRUSSIAN DEAD THAT FOUGHT ALONGSIDE THEIR COMRADES AT WATERLOO?

*Pronounced "Förster"



SCREW THE FÖRSTER!
HE'S IN LEAGUE WITH
THE CREATURES.

I TELL YOU,
HE IS ONE
OF THEM!

HOW ABOUT THE
STORY OF BARON
RUPPRECHT AND
THE RED MAN?

MAYBE IF YOU BUY
ME A SCHNAPS*, I WILL
TELL IT TO YOU.

*Pronounced "Shnups"



STOP BOTHERING US,
BLIND, OLD FOOL.

YOUR STORIES AREN'T WORTH
A SINGLE DROP OF SCHNAPS.

THEY AREN'T
WORTH A
SINGLE DROP
OF MY PISS!



TELL ME, XAVER ELCH.

TELL ME
THE STORY
OF BARON
RUPPRECHT.



BUT I CAN'T BUY
YOU A SCHNAPS...



KASPER? KASPER REHMS? IS THAT YOU?
BUT YOU
HAVE HEARD
THIS TALE A
HUNDRED
TIMES.

PLEASE
TELL IT AGAIN,
XAVER ELCH.

I WILL,
KASPER.
I WILL.



TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO THE
VALLEY OF ARGSTEIN* WAS A
GOOD PLACE FOR ALL PEOPLE.

RICH AND
FERTILE WAS
THE LAND. EVERY
BAUER MANAGED
TO MAKE A GOOD
LIVING OFF HIS
CROPS.

AND OUR VILLAGE OF
PECHTER WAS THE ENVY
OF ALL THE OTHER
VILLAGES IN THE LAND.

*Pronounced "Ark-Shtine"



"THE VALLEY
WAS RULED BY
BARON RUPPRECHT
VON ARGSTEIN.





"WHEN BARON RUPPRECHT HEARD THESE WORDS, A CRIMSON WRATH TOOK HOLD OF HIS FACULTIES.

"AND HE GRABBED HIS HIRSCHFÄNGER* KNIFE, AND HE SCREAMED, AND HE PLUNGED THE BLADE INTO THE GOOD FÖRSTER'S HEART, AND THE RIGHTEOUS MAN DIED.

***Pronounced "Heersh-Fanger"**



"BUT WHEN HE SAW WHAT HE HAD DONE, BARON RUPPRECHT WAS DISTRAUGHT.

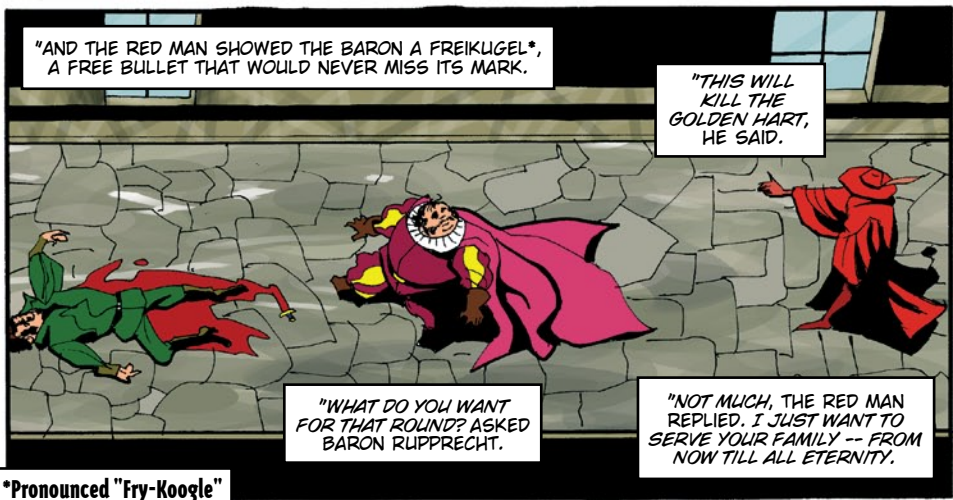
"I HAVE MURDERED MY BEST SERVANT, HE CRIED, MY MOST LOYAL AND HONORABLE FOOTMAN.



"AND HE WAS ABOUT TO BOW TO THE LORD AND PRAY FOR FORGIVENESS WHEN A MAN ENTERED HIS HALL...

"...A MAN DRESSED ALL IN RED...

"HE SAID: I CAN HELP YOU, BARON RUPPRECHT.



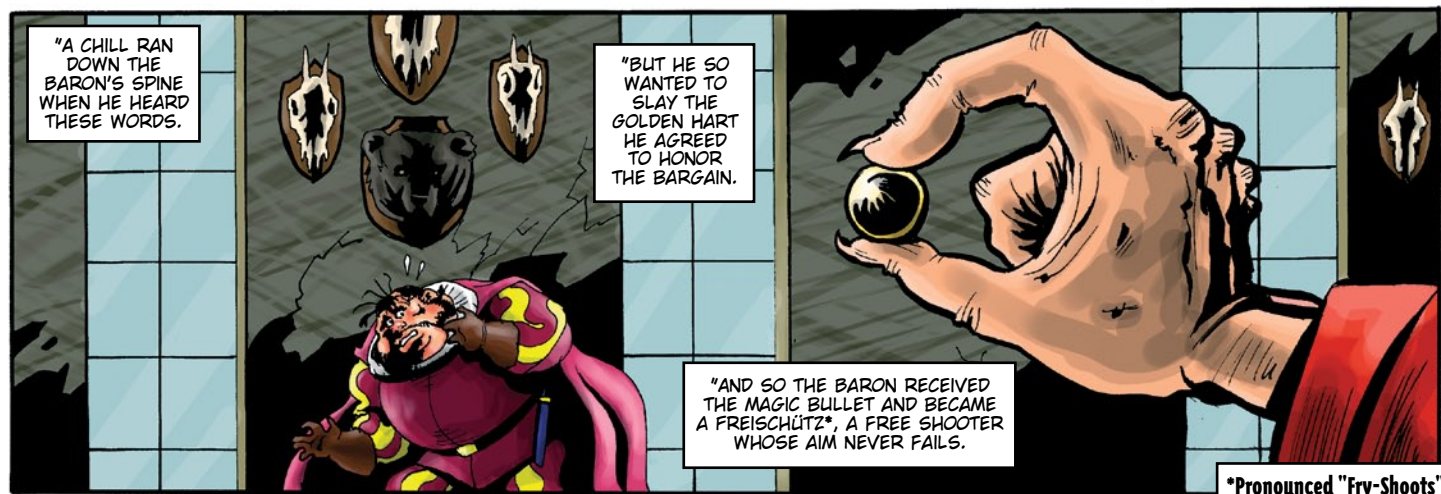
"AND THE RED MAN SHOWED THE BARON A FREIKUGEL*, A FREE BULLET THAT WOULD NEVER MISS ITS MARK.

"THIS WILL KILL THE GOLDEN HART, HE SAID.

"WHAT DO YOU WANT FOR THAT ROUNO? ASKED BARON RUPPRECHT.

"NOT MUCH, THE RED MAN REPLIED. I JUST WANT TO SERVE YOUR FAMILY -- FROM NOW TILL ALL ETERNITY.

***Pronounced "Fry-Koogle"**



"A CHILL RAN DOWN THE BARON'S SPINE WHEN HE HEARD THESE WORDS.

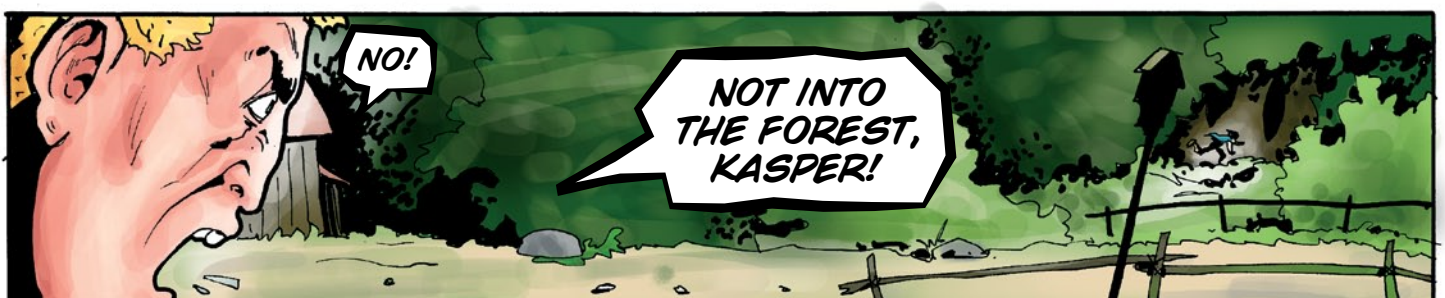
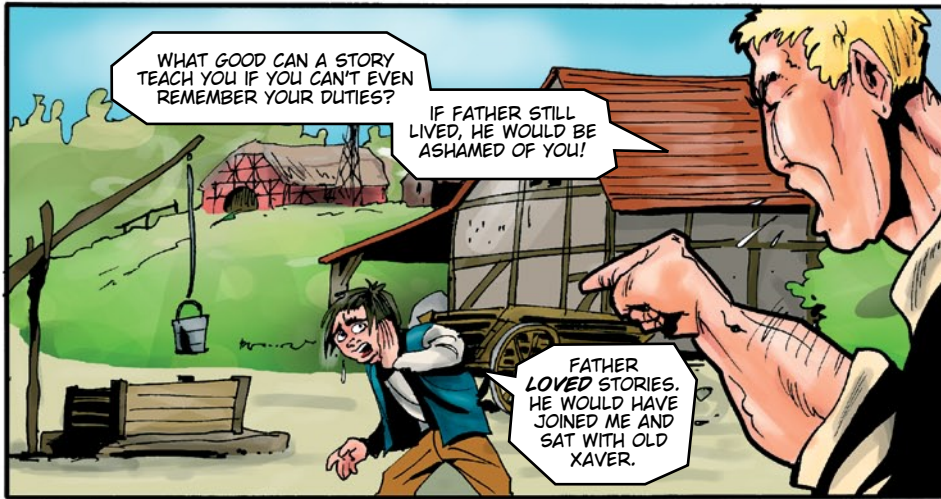
"BUT HE SO WANTED TO SLAY THE GOLDEN HART HE AGREED TO HONOR THE BARGAIN.

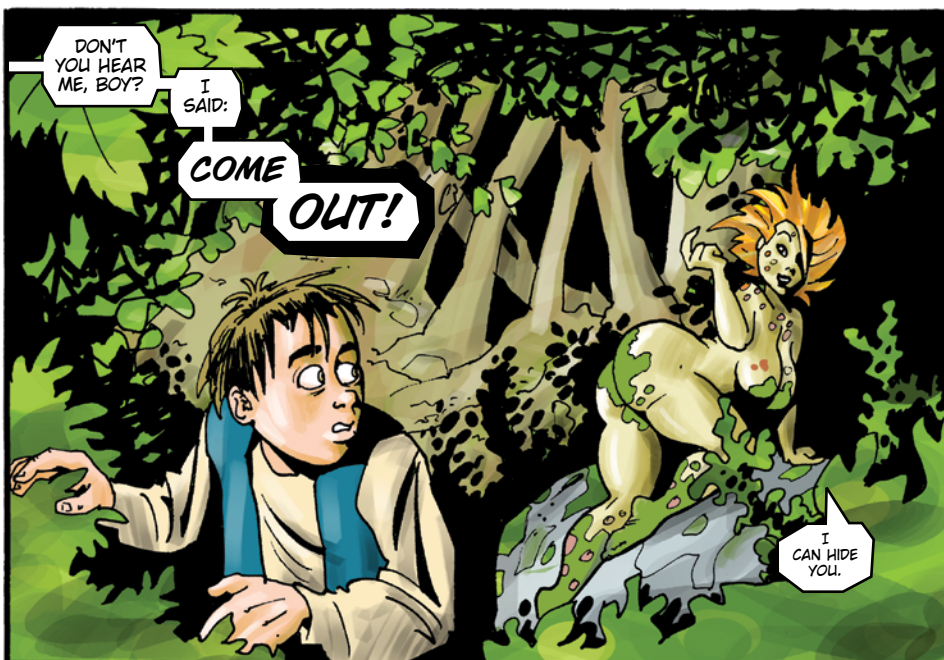
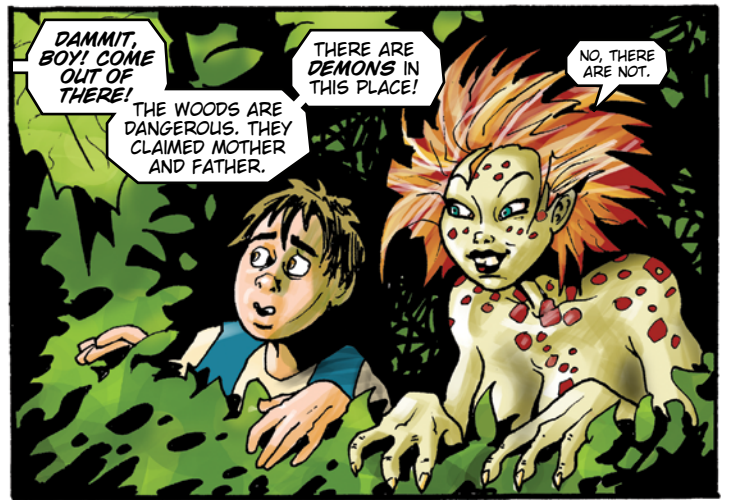
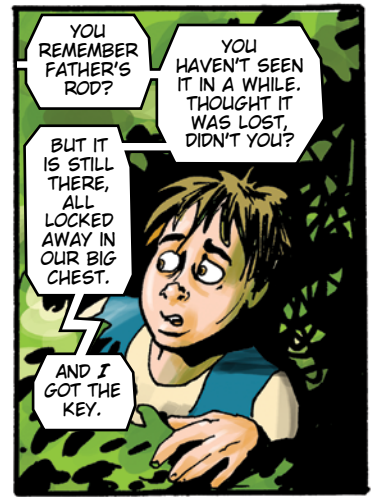
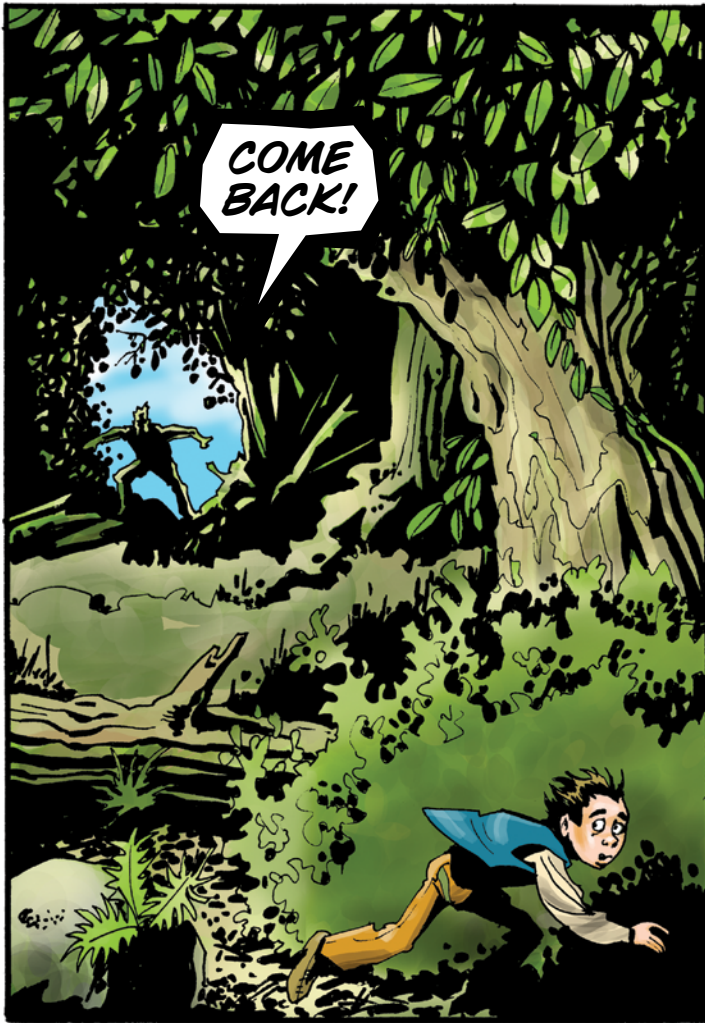
"AND SO THE BARON RECEIVED THE MAGIC BULLET AND BECAME A FREISCHÜTZ*, A FREE SHOOTER WHOSE AIM NEVER FAILS.

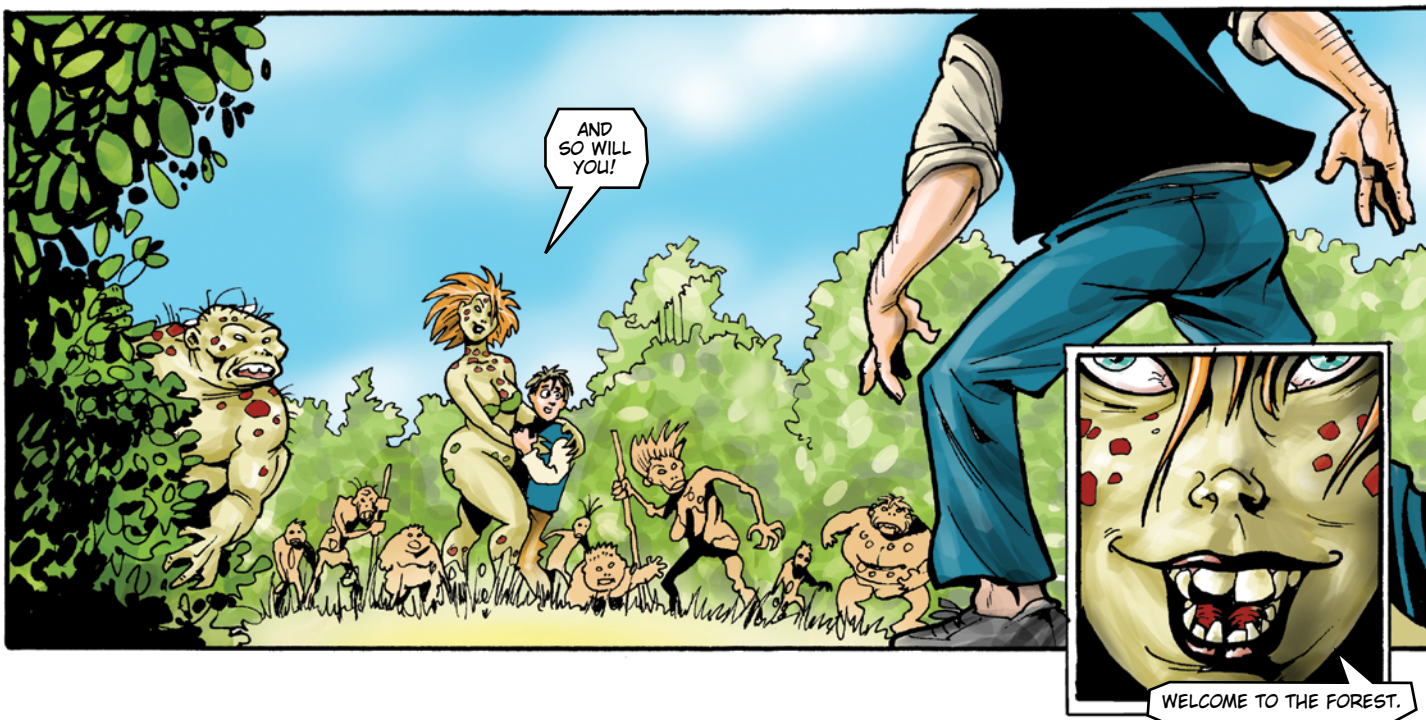
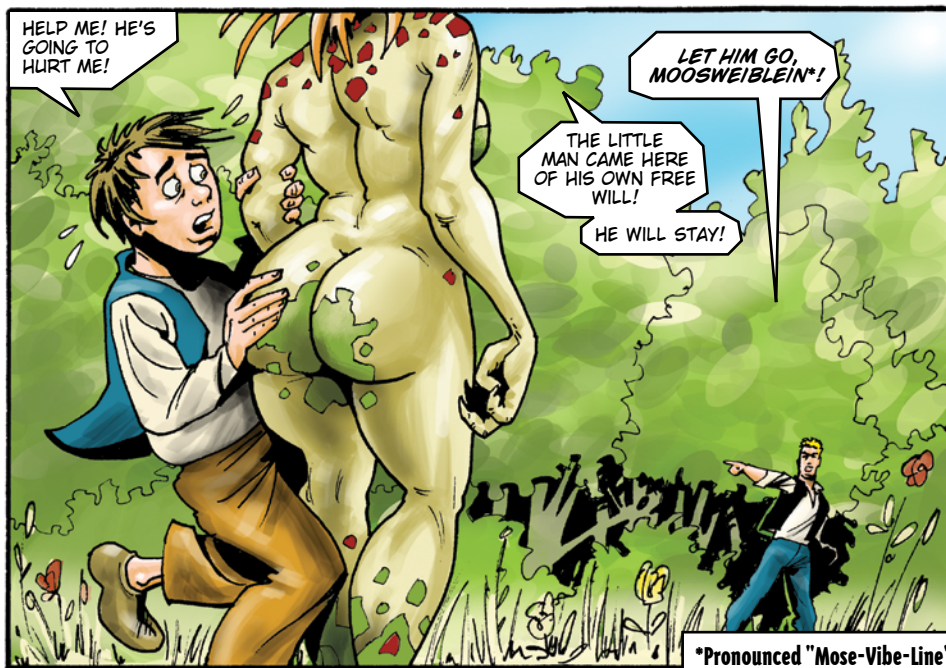
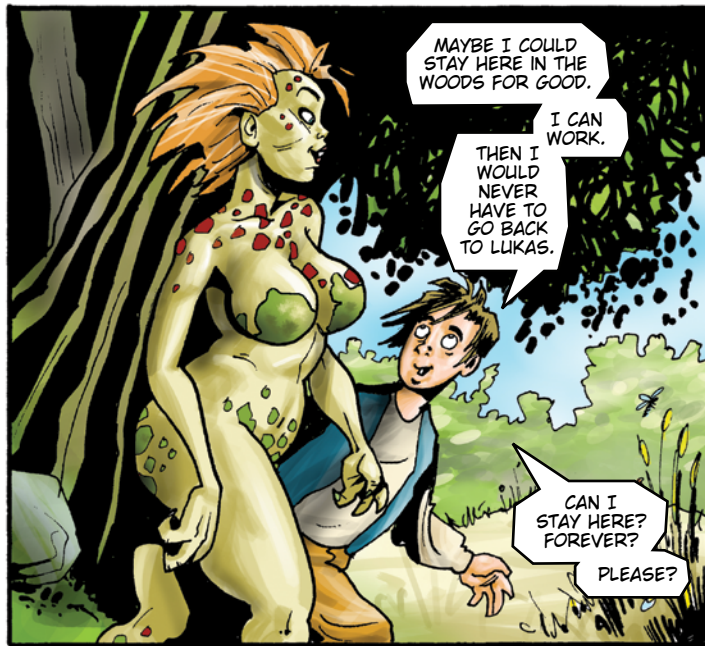
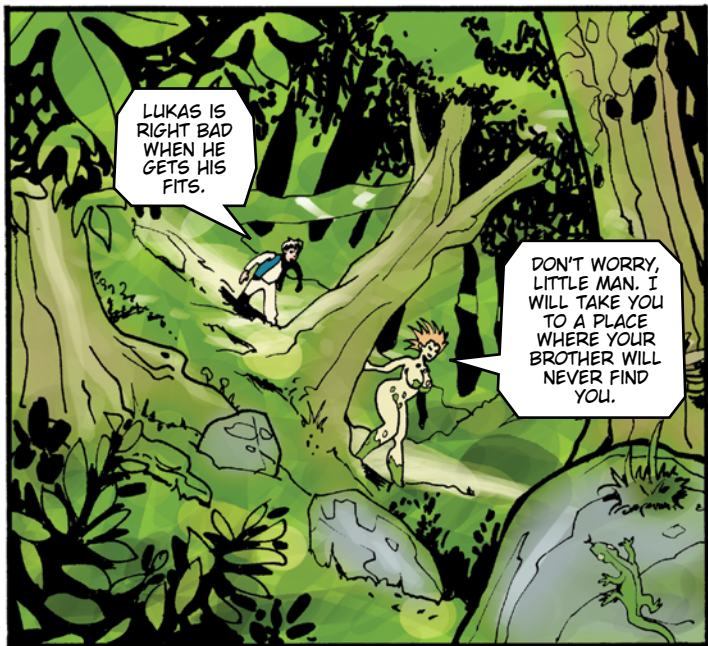
***Pronounced "Fry-Shoots"**

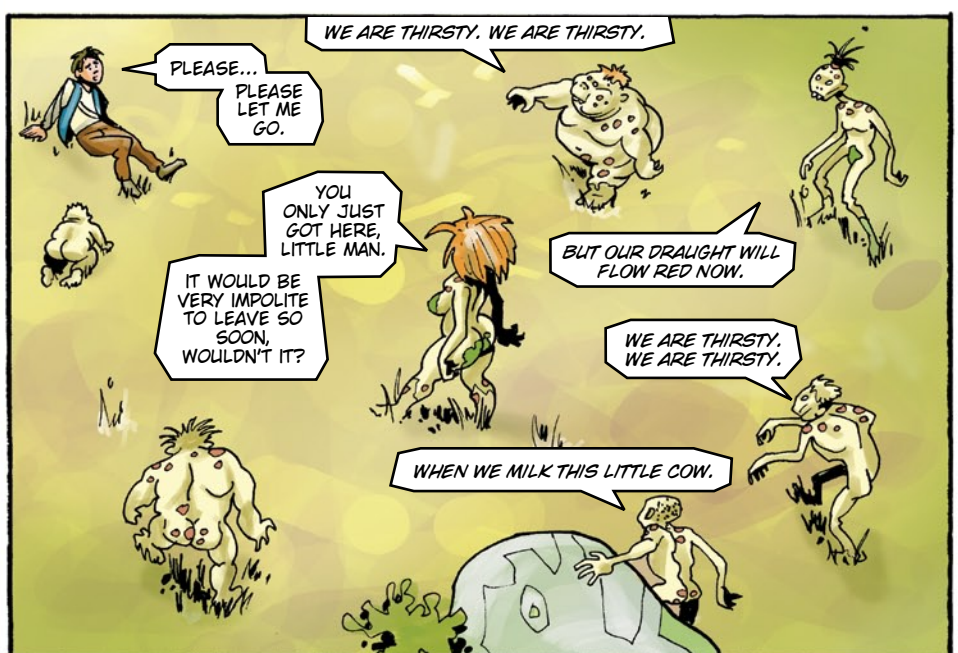
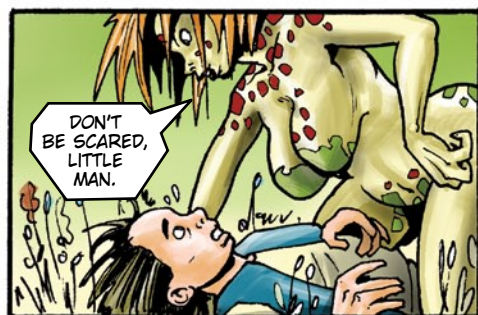
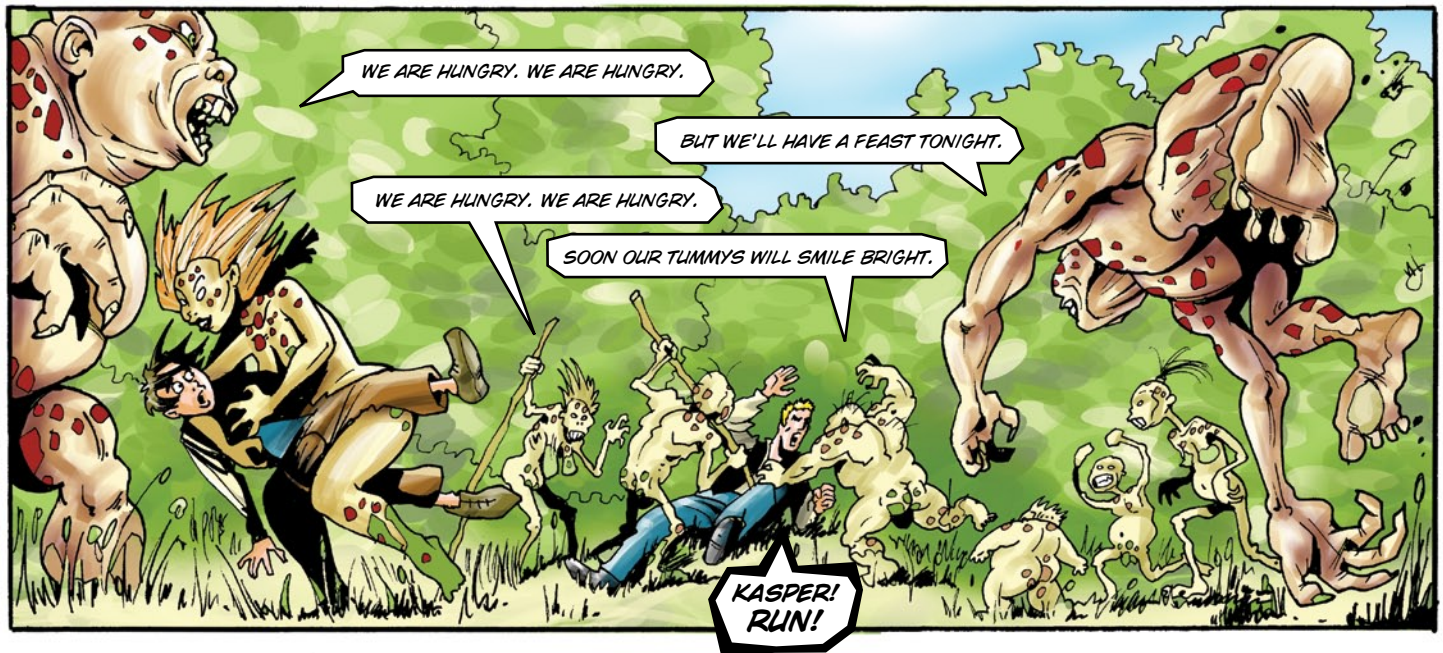


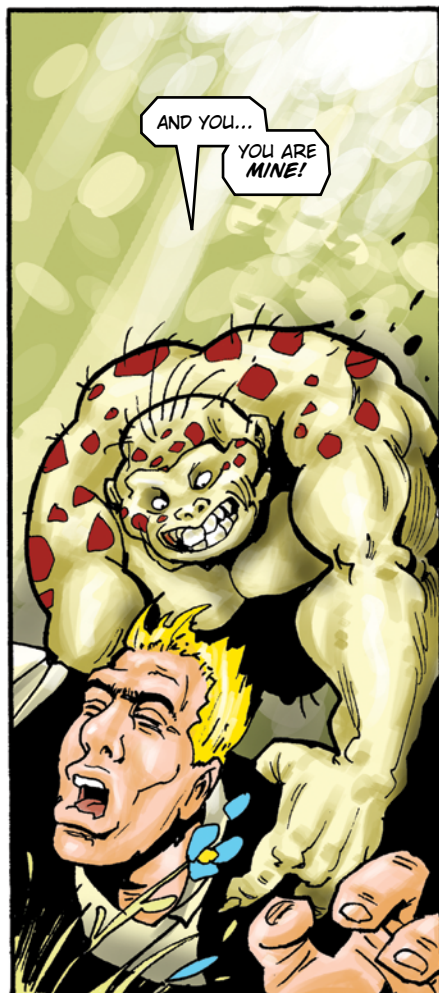


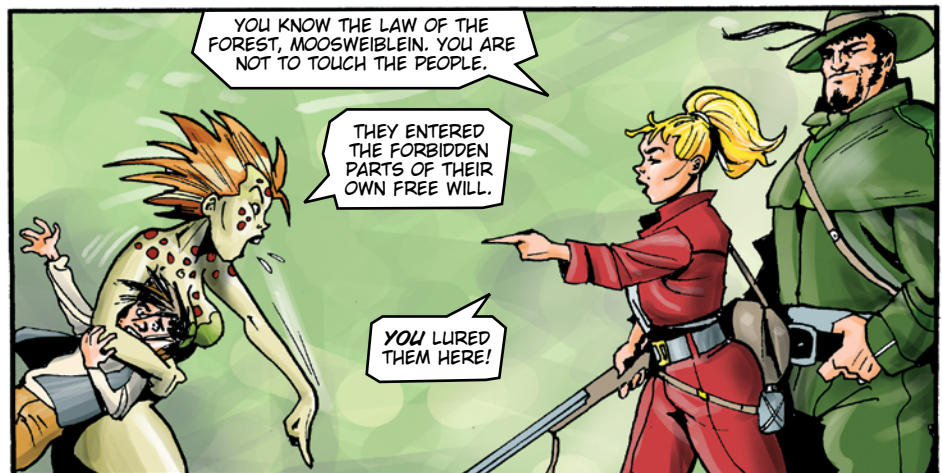
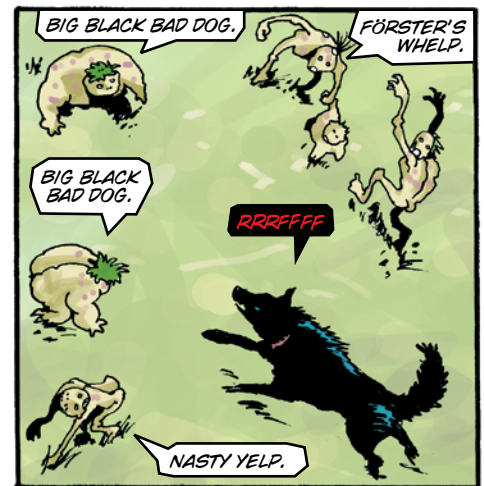


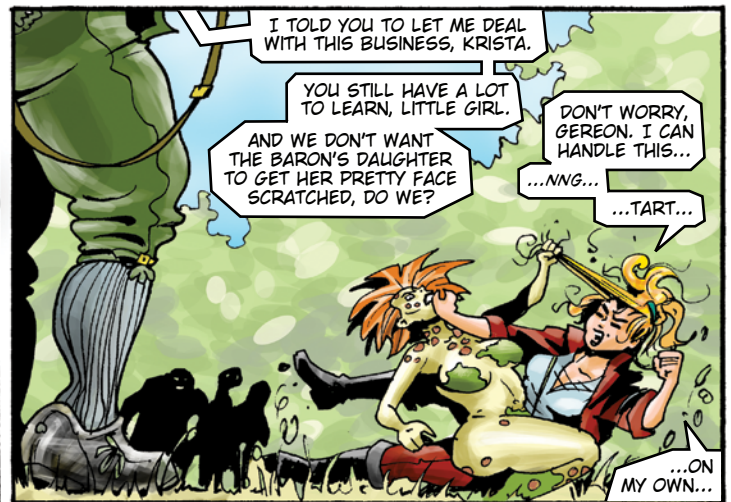


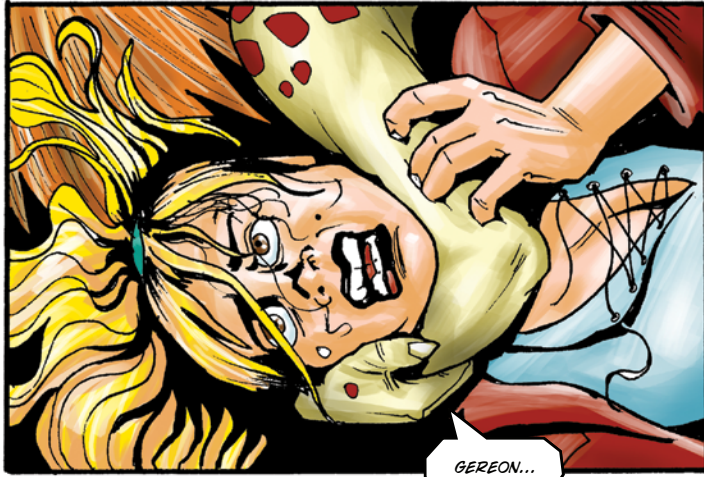












GEREON...

HELP ME...



NOW YOU'RE TALKING.



RRRRRRRR



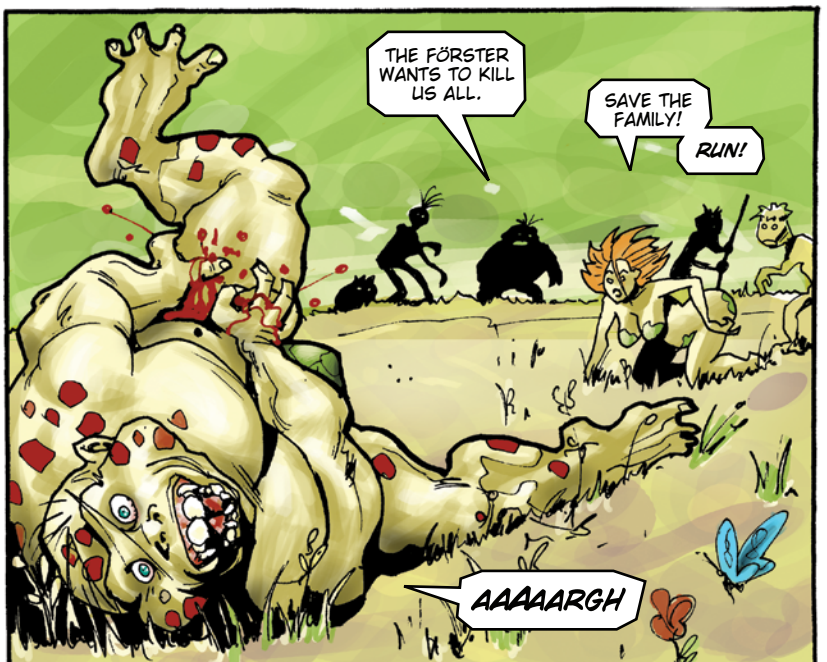
YOU HIT MY WIFE!

HHRRRRFFFF



SHE'S ALSO YOUR *SISTER*, YOU DEMENTED WOODPECKER!

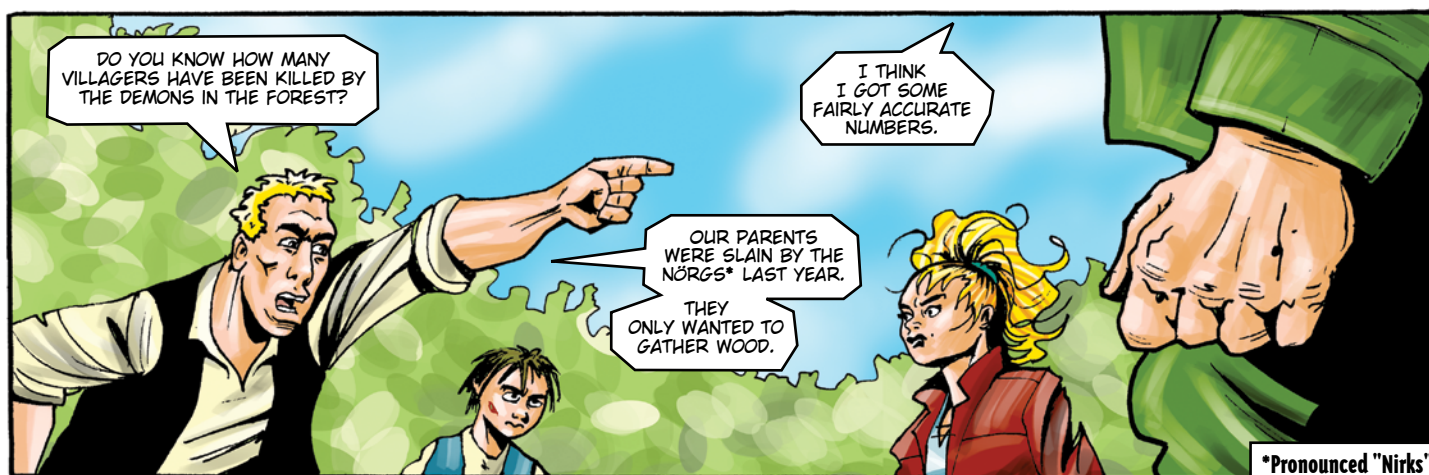
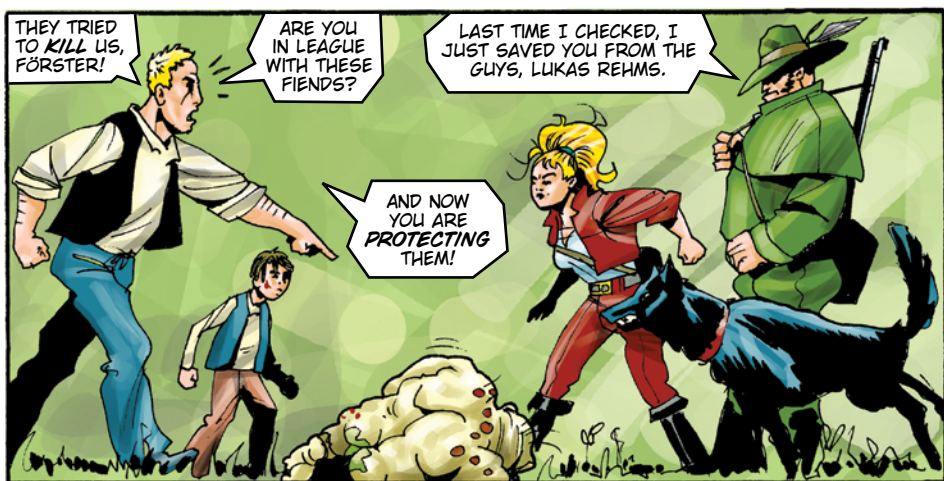
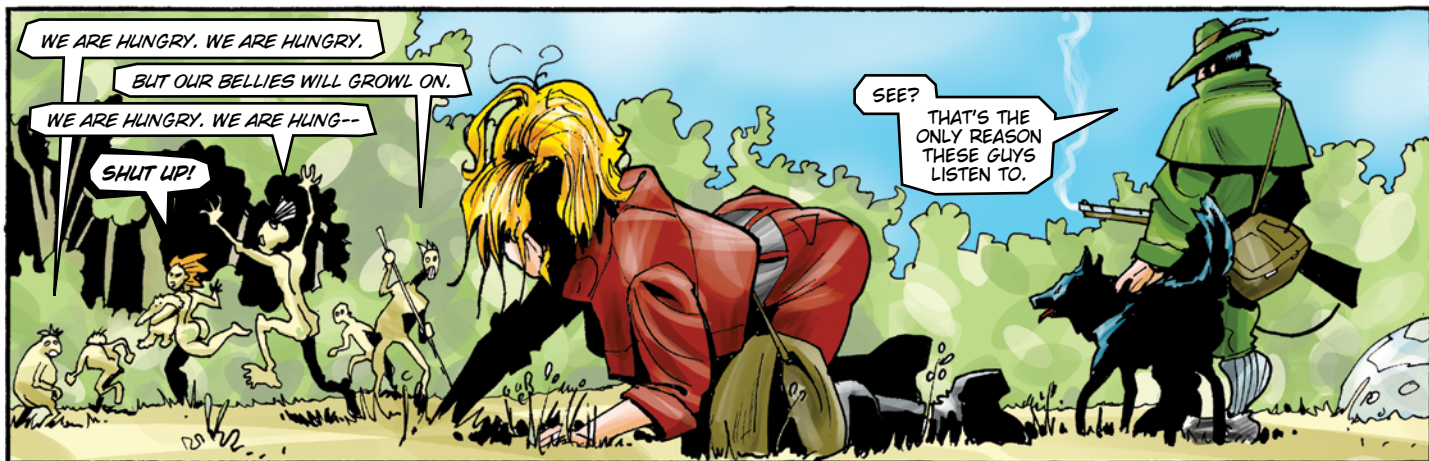
BLAM



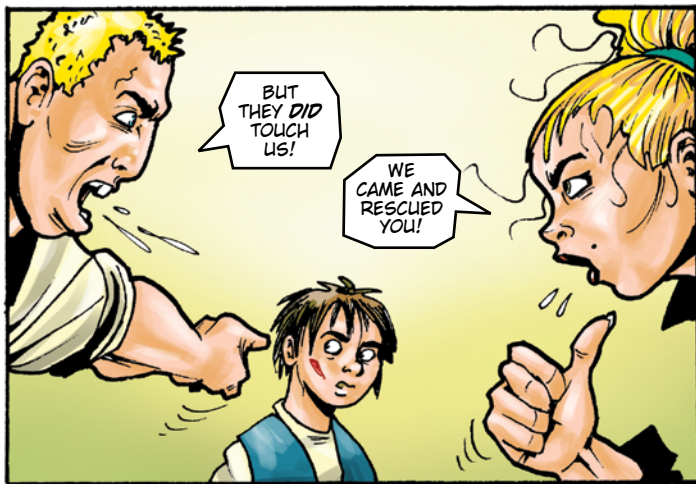
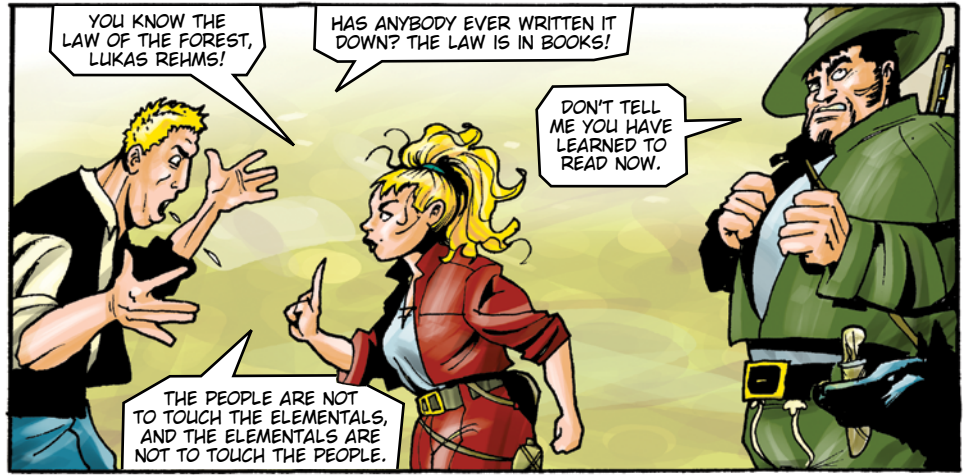
THE FÖRSTER WANTS TO KILL US ALL.

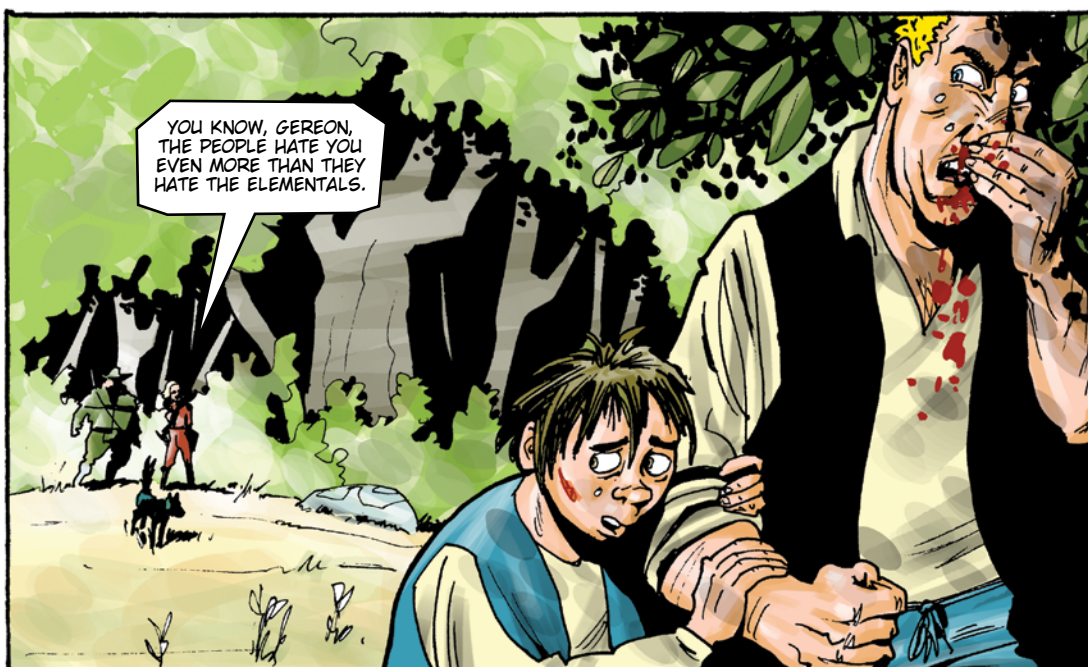
SAVE THE FAMILY!
RUN!

AAAAARGH



*Pronounced "Nirks"









"YES."

"YES, I SEE IT."

"GOOD, CHILD."

"AND NOW LOOK UP IN THE TREES. RIGHT ABOVE THE HART."



"WHAT'S THAT?"

"THAT IS AN AUFHOCKER*."

"NASTY LITTLE BUGGERS, THESE GUYS. CARRION EATERS."

"MIND YOU, THEY PROVIDE THEIR OWN CARRION."

*Pronounced "Owf-Hocker"

"PAY ATTENTION. IN A MOMENT HE WILL..."



"THERE!"



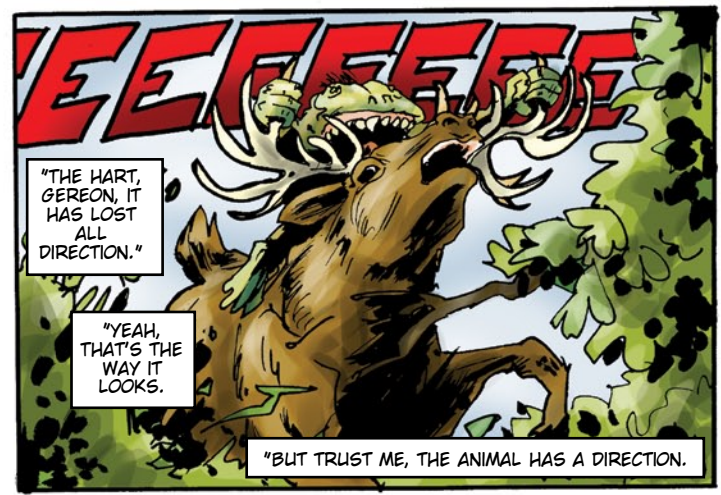
"THE AUFHOCKER ALWAYS JUMPS ON THE BACK OF ITS PREY."



"SEE THAT MOUTH?"

"NASTY PIECE OF WORK."

"PRODUCES A PANIC SCREAM THAT NOTHING CAN RESIST. SPOOKS THE PREY."



"THE HART, GEREON, IT HAS LOST ALL DIRECTION."

"YEAH, THAT'S THE WAY IT LOOKS."

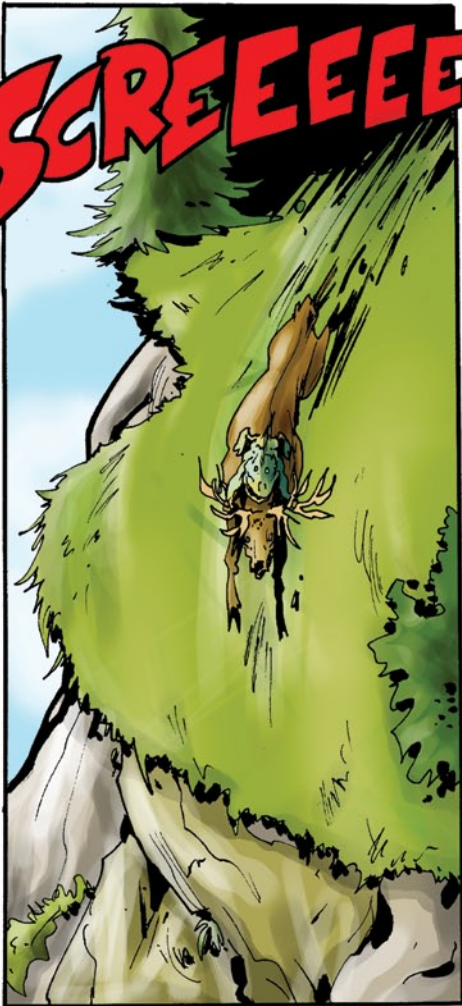
"BUT TRUST ME, THE ANIMAL HAS A DIRECTION."



"THE AUFHOCKER RIDES IT THROUGH THE WOODS..."

"...AND HE KNOWS EXACTLY, WHERE HE IS LEADING THE HART..."

SCREEEEEEEEEEEE



"SOMETIMES THE FALL WILL BREAK THE PREY'S NECK."

"IF THE POOR SUCKER IS LUCKY."

"SOMETIMES IT IS STILL ALIVE..."



AND THIS IS HOW THE AUFHOOKERS FEED.

GOOD THING THESE WRETCHES DON'T EAT PEOPLE.





BLAM



BLAM

VERDAMMT!
VERDAMMT!
VERDAMMT!



BLAM

BLAM
BLAM

BLAM



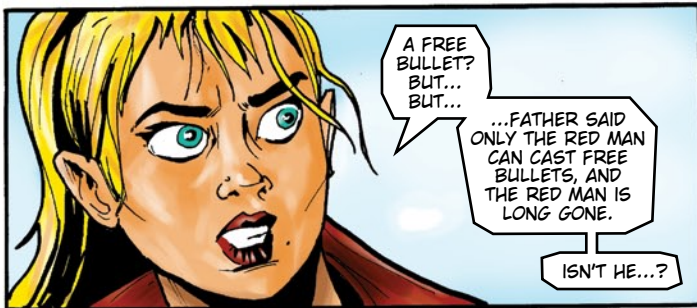
THIS SOUNDS LIKE A BLOODY MASSACRE!

"IF WE DON'T GET THERE IN TIME..."

THE MOSS PEOPLE!
SOMEONE HAS...

OH GOD!

BLAM





I MIGHT HAVE GUESSED...

I SAID: DROP YOUR WEAPONS!

OR THE LADY GETS A SHOT IN THE GUT.

HRRAAFF!



THE YOUNG LOIT SOUNDS RATHER IMPATIENT. GUESS WE BETTER DO AS HE SAYS.



THAT FREE BULLETS YOU GOT IN YOUR PRETTY, NEW RIFLE, LUKAS REHMS?

WHAT IF THEY ARE?

YOU BETTER NOT MESS WITH THEM. THEY NEVER FAIL.

WILL ALWAYS FIND YOUR HEART, FÖRSTER.

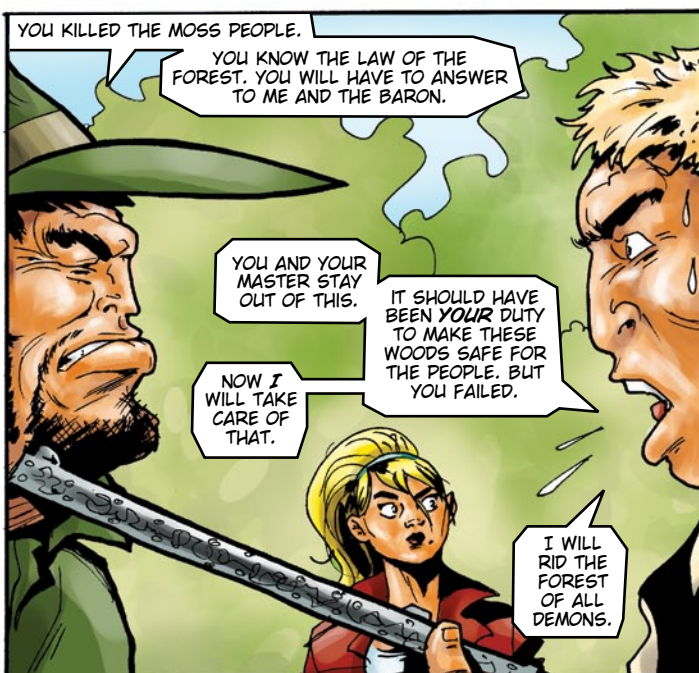
I WON'T HAVE ANY FREISCHÜTZ IN MY WOODS.

RRRRRRRR



I HEREBY PLACE YOU UNDER **ARREST**, LUKAS REHMS.

I AM THE ONE WITH THE GUN!



YOU KILLED THE MOSS PEOPLE.

YOU KNOW THE LAW OF THE FOREST. YOU WILL HAVE TO ANSWER TO ME AND THE BARON.

YOU AND YOUR MASTER STAY OUT OF THIS.

NOW I WILL TAKE CARE OF THAT.

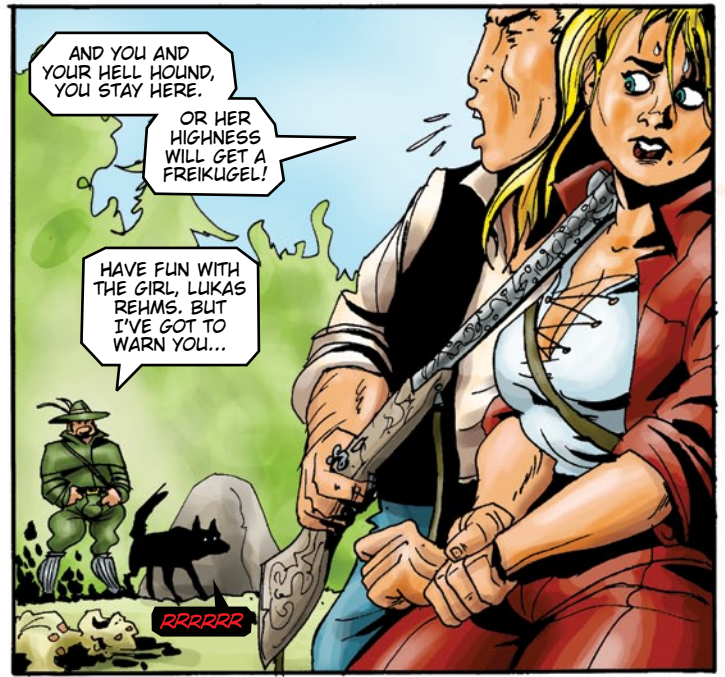
IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN *YOUR* DUTY TO MAKE THESE WOODS SAFE FOR THE PEOPLE. BUT YOU FAILED.

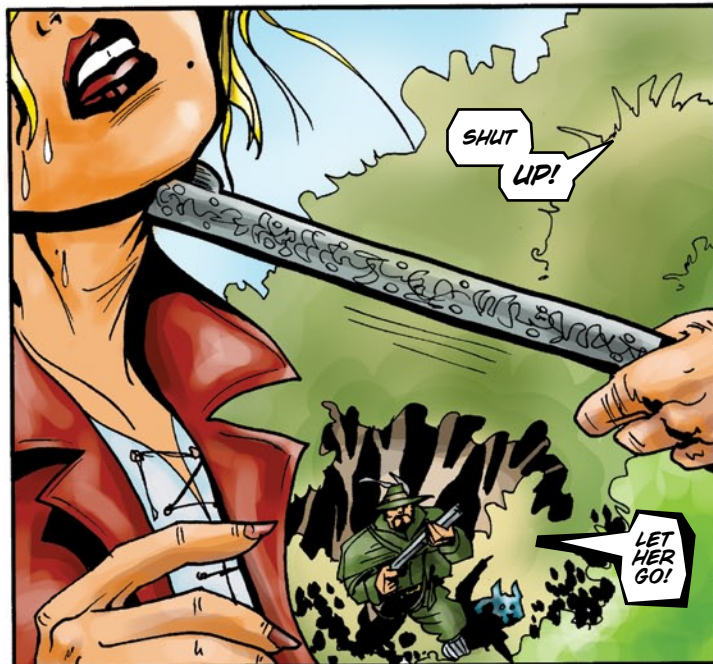
I WILL RID THE FOREST OF ALL DEMONS.

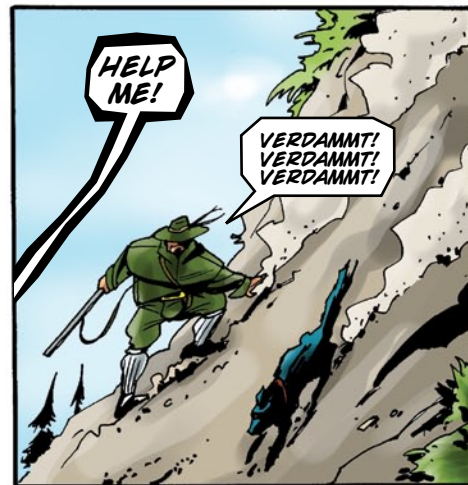


WHAT WITH YOUR FREE BULLETS, IT LOOKS TO ME LIKE YOU ARE WORKING WITH A DEMON YOURSELF.

THERE SEEM TO BE SOME PARTIES MORE WILLING TO HELP THE PEOPLE THAN YOUR KIND, FÖRSTER.



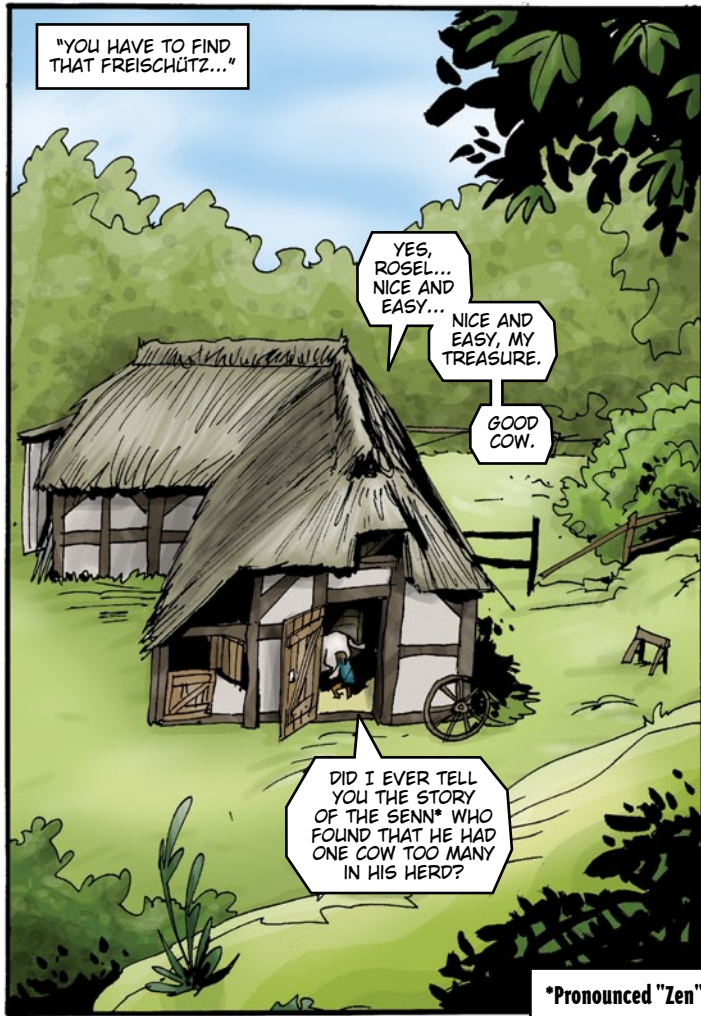














SO YOU BETTER
BE HONEST WITH
ME, SON...
...OR I'LL
HAVE TO THROW
YOU TO MY LITTLE
DOGGIE...

RRRRRRRR



I DON'T KNOW WHERE
LUKAS IS.

HE LEFT EARLY THIS
MORNING, AND HE
HASN'T BEEN BACK.

HE TOLD ME TO LOOK AFTER
THE FARM AND THE COW.

HE SAID
HE'D BE GONE
FOR SOME TIME.



PLEASE
BELIEVE ME,
FÖRSTER.

I DON'T
KNOW
WHERE
HE IS.



YOU SEEN A STRANGER
AROUND THESE PARTS?
DRESSED ALL IN RED?

N-NO.
NO, I
HAVEN'T.



ARE
YOU
SURE?

LUKAS
TOLD ME NOT
TO TALK ABOUT
THE MAN.

RRRRRRRR



WHAT
MAN?

LUKAS IS
GOING TO
THRASH ME.
HE SHOWED
ME FATHER'S
ROD. IT'S STILL
THERE AND--



WHAT
MAN?

HE...
HE GAVE
LUKAS A
RIFLE...
AND...
...AND
BULLETS.

HE SAID
THEY WOULD
NEVER FAIL.

LIKE IN THE
STORY OF BARON
RUPPRECHT...

RRRRN



AND THAT MAN...

...THAT MAN WAS ALL DRESSED IN RED...

IF I DON'T FIND YOUR BROTHER SOON, HE WILL BE IN BIG, BIG TROUBLE.



SO YOU BETTER TELL ME WHERE HE--

BLAM



VERDAMMT!



"VERDAMMT! VERDAMMT! VERDAMMT!"

IIIIIEEEIIII



YOU'RE RIGHT, RHEIN. THAT WAS OUR LITTLE FREISCHÜTZ AGAIN.



WHAT SAY, WE GO AND PICK UP HIS TRAIL, OLD FRIEND?

HIFFFF



YOU AREN'T GOING ANYWHERE, FÖRSTER!



POOR BROTHER.

DEAD BROTHER.

BAD MAN WITH BAD GUN.

YOU MURDERED ONE OF MY SUBJECTS!

I THOUGHT YOU'D KNOW BETTER THAN TO TOUCH MY TRIBE.

RRRRR



RRR RRR RRRRRRR

EASY, RHEIN.

STAY PUT.

SNFFF

YOU STINK, FÖRSTER.



IS THAT JUST YOUR REGULAR MAN STENCH?

OR MIGHT THAT BE...

...FEAR?

LET ME LEAVE, LORD SCHWARZER KEILER*.

HOW COULD YOU KILL ONE OF MY CHILDREN?

I DIDN'T. I ONLY FOUND THE BODY.

*Pronounced "Shvurtser Kyler"



THEN WHO DID IT?

I DO NOT KNOW, MY LORD. BUT I WILL FIND OUT.



I CAN TELL YOU WHO DID IT --

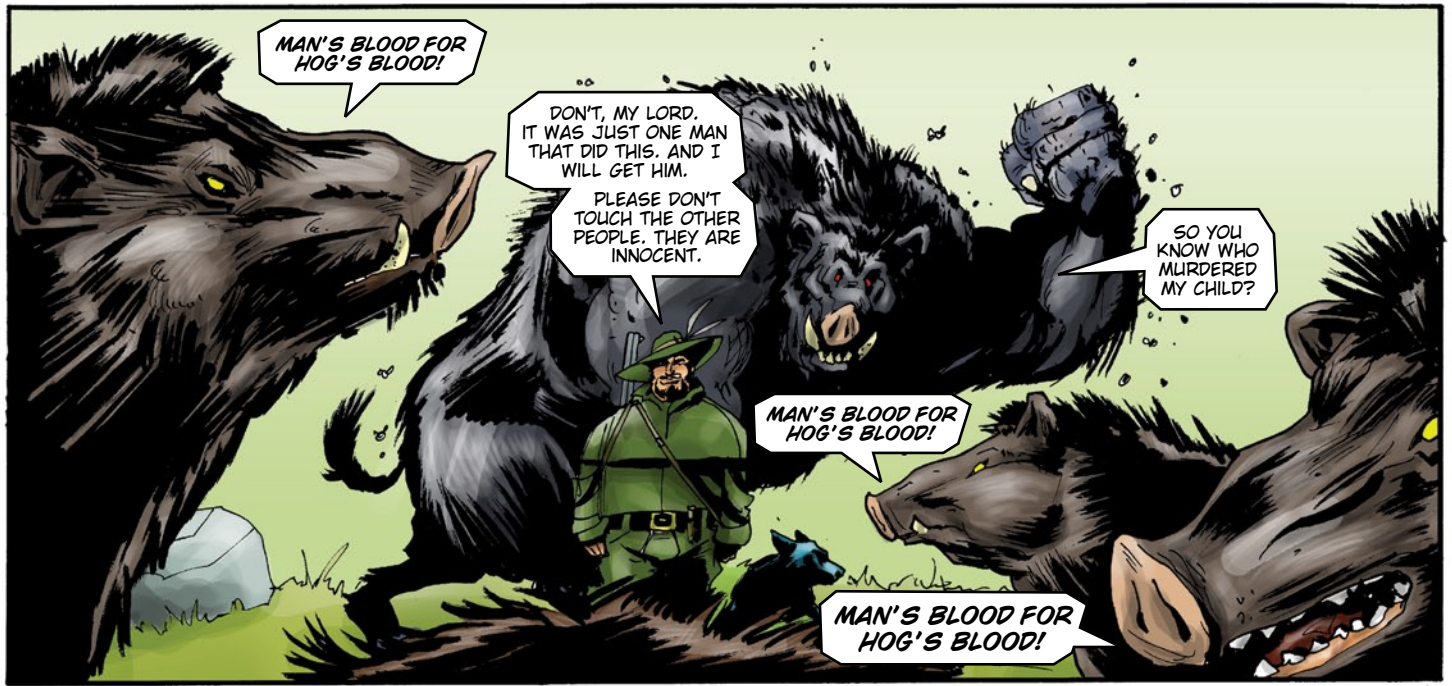
PEOPLE DID IT!

IT'S ALWAYS PEOPLE!

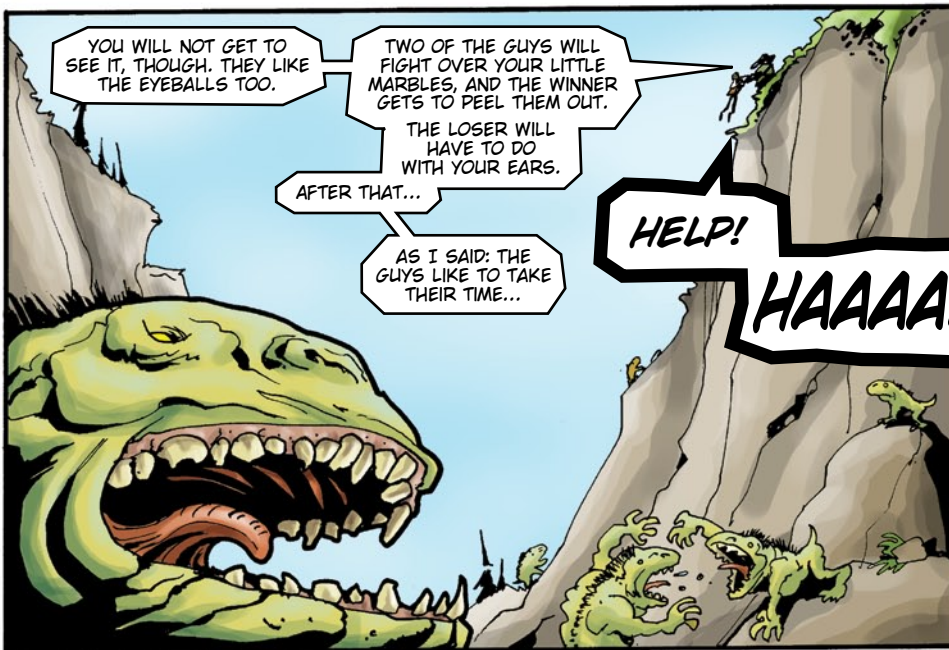
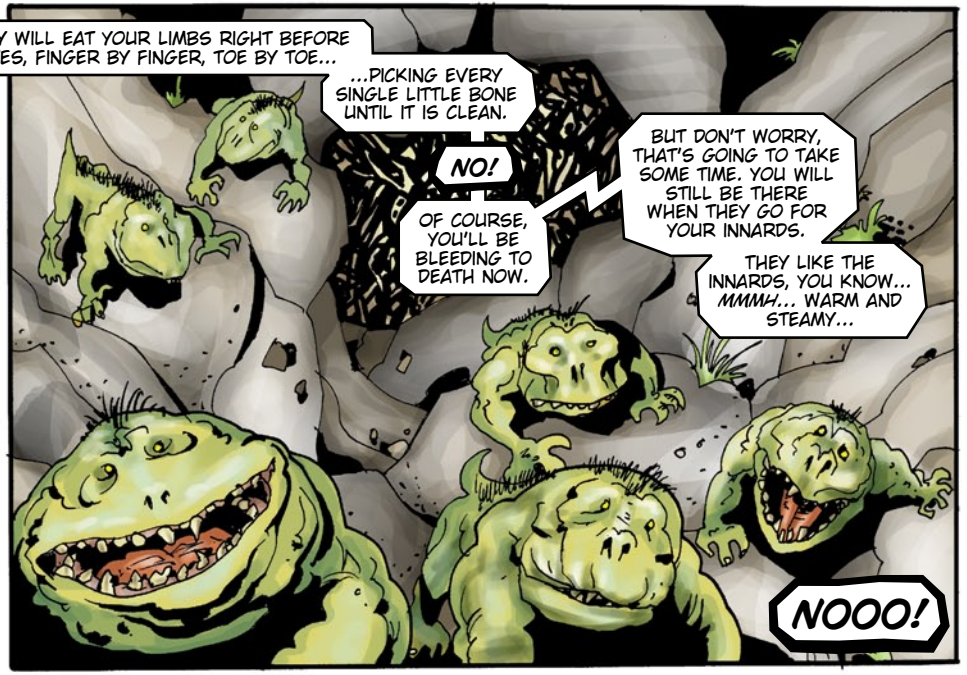
YOU TELL US NOT TO KILL THE PEOPLE, BUT THE PEOPLE KILL US!

I THINK IT IS TIME WE HAD OUR RETRIBUTION ON YOUR KIND.

MAN'S BLOOD FOR HOG'S BLOOD!











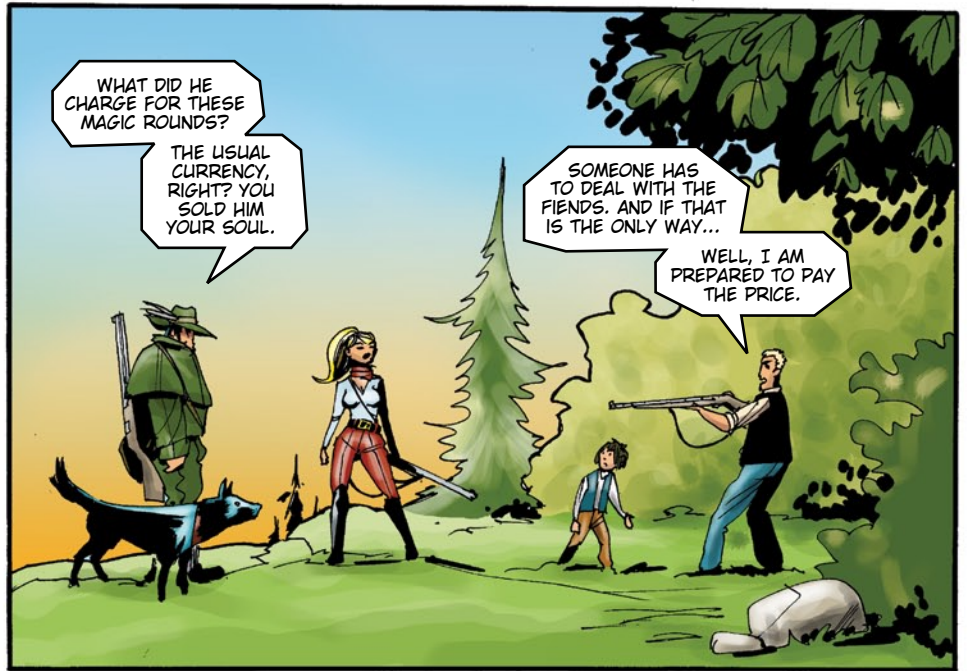


I DON'T KNOW WHAT GAME YOU ARE PLAYING, FORSTER.

I NEVER PLAY GAMES.

BUT THE RED MAN...

...YEAH, THE RED MAN LIKES HIS GAMES...



WHAT DID HE CHARGE FOR THESE MAGIC ROUNDS?

THE USUAL CURRENCY, RIGHT? YOU SOLD HIM YOUR SOUL.

SOMEONE HAS TO DEAL WITH THE FIENDS. AND IF THAT IS THE ONLY WAY...

WELL, I AM PREPARED TO PAY THE PRICE.



SO WAS I...
...TWENTY YEARS AGO...



YOU?

YOU HAD...?



DEALINGS WITH THE RED MAN? YEAH.

DID I KILL MYSELF SOME FOREST FREAKS? YEP, I DID.

COST ME DEARLY, BE SURE OF THAT. COST THE WHOLE VALLEY DEARLY.

BUT THAT IS A LONG STORY, YOUNG MAN. AND I'M NOT HERE TO TELL STORIES.



EVER WONDERED WHY THE RED MAN WOULD WANT YOU TO KILL THESE CREATURES THAT YOU CALL DEMONS?

YOU'D THINK THEY'D BE HIS GUYS, WOULDN'T YOU?



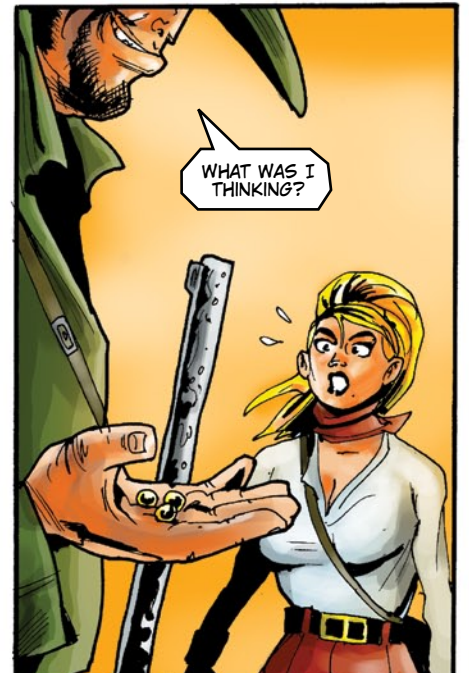
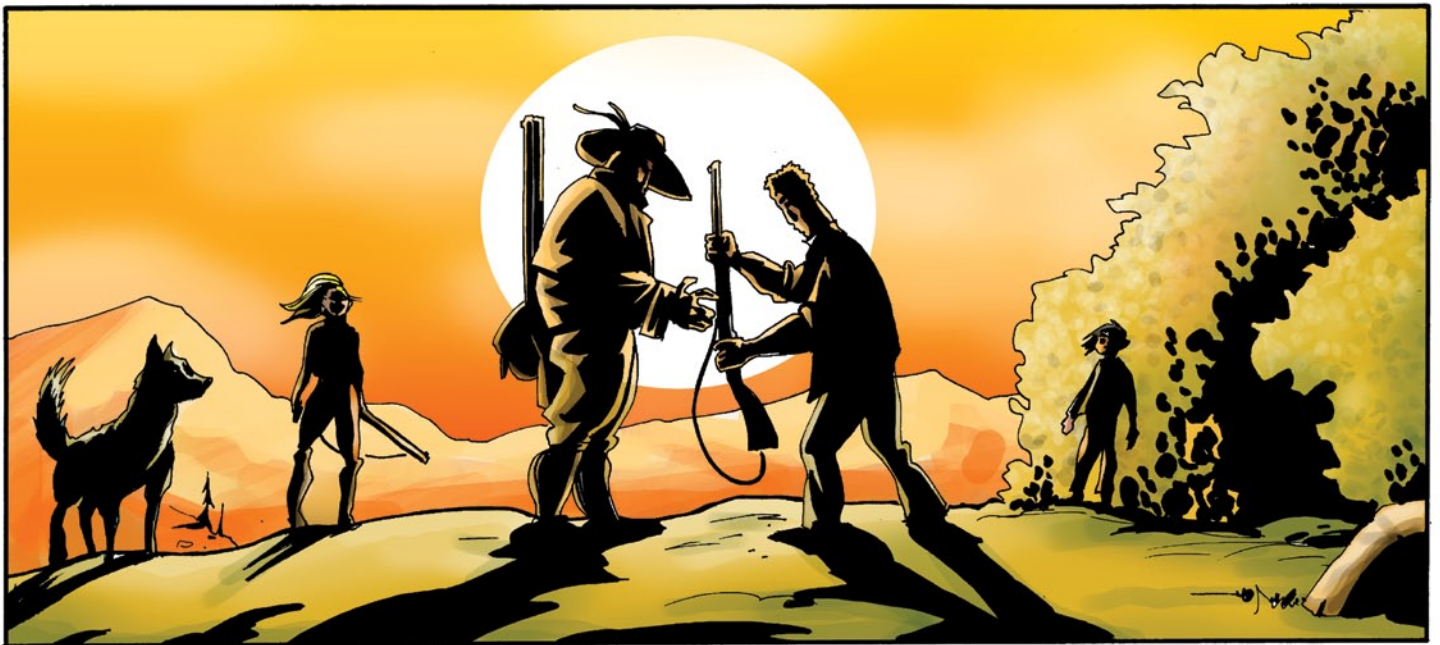
WELL, LUKAS REHMS, I THINK I GOT NEWS FOR YOU --

THEY ARE NOT!

SEE, THE RED MAN CAN'T GET TO THE ELEMENTALS.

THEY GOT BETTER NOSES THAN WE DO. THEY SMELL WHAT HE IS, AND THEY WON'T HAVE ANY DEALINGS WITH HIM.

THAT'S WHY HE WANTS TO SEE THEM ALL DEAD.

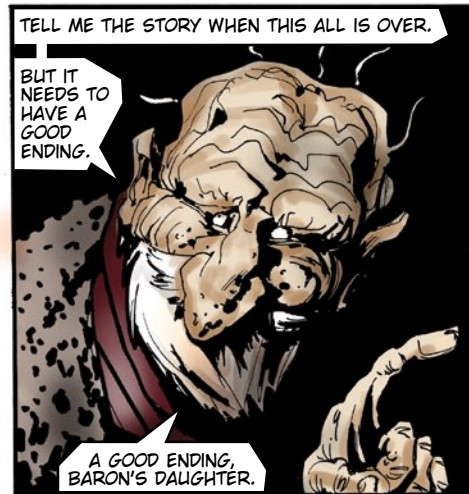




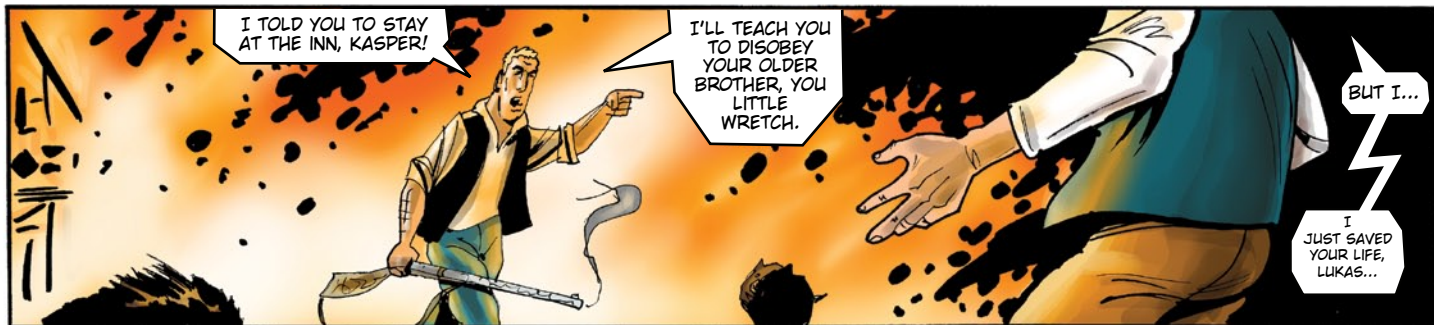














FACE THE WRATH OF THE FOREST!

LORD SCHWARZER KEILER!

LEAVE THESE PEOPLE ALONE!



FÖRSTER!

I'D BEEN WONDERING WHEN YOU WOULD SHOW UP.

YOU SPEND TOO MUCH TIME IN OUR WOODS. YOU SHOULD STAY WITH YOUR OWN KIND.

I SAID I WOULD TAKE CARE OF THIS BUSINESS.



AND DID YOU TAKE CARE OF IT?

THE CULPRIT IS IN MY CUSTODY.



GIVE HIM TO ME!

HE IS IN MY CUSTODY!

AND YOU WILL NOW LEAVE THE VILLAGE!

YOU HAVE BROKEN THE LAW OF THE FOREST, BUT I WILL LET YOU GET AWAY THIS TIME IF YOU AND YOUR PEOPLE LEAVE AT ONCE.



YOU WILL LET ME GET AWAY THIS TIME?

HOW VERY GENEROUS OF YOU, FÖRSTER.

RUN ALL YOU WILL, DEMONS!



YOU KILLED MY BROTHER, AND I WILL MAKE YOU PAY!

BSAM

HOG'S BLOOD FOR MAN'S BLOOD!

BAD MAN!
BAD GUN!

DEAD BOARS!

VERDAMMT!







DO YOU REMEMBER
YOUR OLD SINS,
FÖRSTER?

WHAT
YOU DID
TO MY
PEOPLE?

WHAT YOU
DID TO YOUR
OWN KIND?



YOU HAVE
NEVER BEEN
PROPERLY
PUNISHED
FOR YOUR
CRIMES!



DO YOU
WANT TO BE
PUNISHED
NOW?



YOU KNOW,
FÖRSTER, I
NEVER LIKED
YOU.

I HAVEN'T
FORGOTTEN
WHAT YOU
DID TO THE
TIERHERR*.

*Pronounced "Tear-Hair"

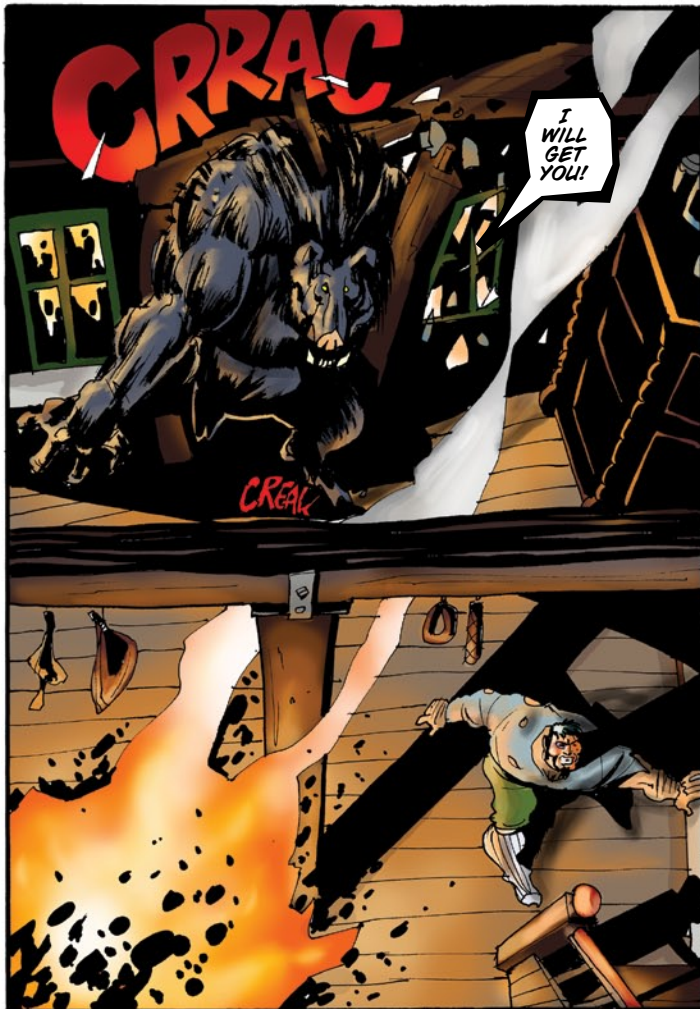


YOU'VE HAD
THIS COMING
FOR YEARS,
AND I WON'T
LET YOU GET
AWAY
THIS TIME.



YOU THINK YOU CAN
HIDE FROM ME IN THAT
RICKETY SHED?

I WILL
GET YOU,
LITTLE
MAN!



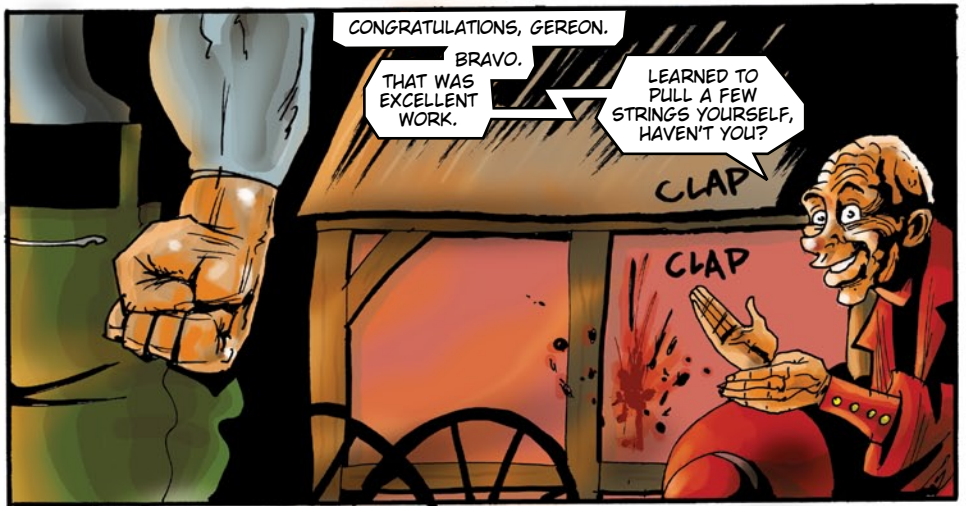














German-born yarnspinner **Josef Rother** is a regular contributor to *HEAVY METAL MAGAZINE*, where his tales explore the fantastic and the uncanny. He has worked with artists as diverse as David Lloyd and Donna Barr. In 2012, Heavy Metal published *Josef Rother's NIGHTMARES ON THE TOWN*, collecting some of his best stories. Josef's *FATHER DRACULA* series chronicles the exploits of a notorious vampire lord after his conversion to Catholicism. These days, Dracula only drinks the communion wine, the transsubstantiated Blood of Christ and very nourishing to vampires. As a translator, Josef has put German words into the mouths of almost every DC and MARVEL superhero, including Alan Moore's *SWAMP THING*. Josef only wears black and is never seen without his distinctive (and black) pirate bandana.

www.josefrother.com

Freelance illustrator and writer **Eckart Breitschuh** lives in Hamburg, Germany, with his wife, webdesigner Lorraine Flack, and their three children. He made his comic book debut drawing *LINDENSTRASSE*, a cartoon version of Germany's most popular soap opera.

In 1998, the mini-series *WANDA CARAMBA: DYING FOR A SCREW* established Eckart's buxom crimefighter Wanda Caramba as a household name among German comic book readers.

The sequel, *WANDA CARAMBA: BEAR CAGE*, won the 2001 ICOM Independent Comic Award for Best Script. Eckart's further comic book accomplishments include *GRIMM*, an irreverent, new look at the notorious brothers' fairytales (2002 ICOM for Best Script), and *APOCALYPSE: THE REVELATION OF JOHN* with theologian Dr. Andreas Köhn.

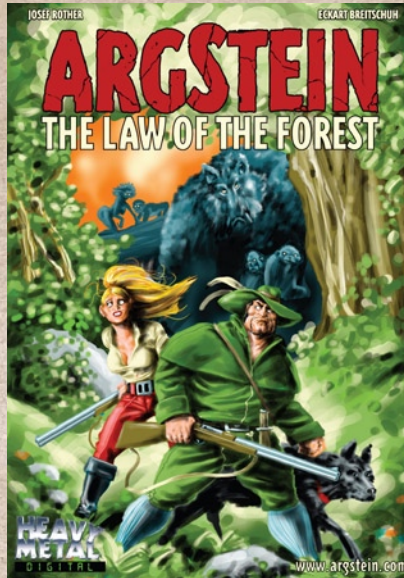
In June 2005, Eckart's first collaboration with writer Josef Rother, *A MOTHER'S LOVE*, was published in *HEAVY METAL MAGAZINE*.

www.eckart-breitschuh.de



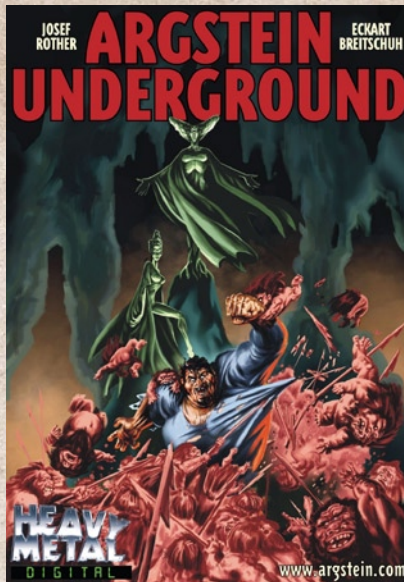
GET THEM ALL

ARGSTEIN
Book One



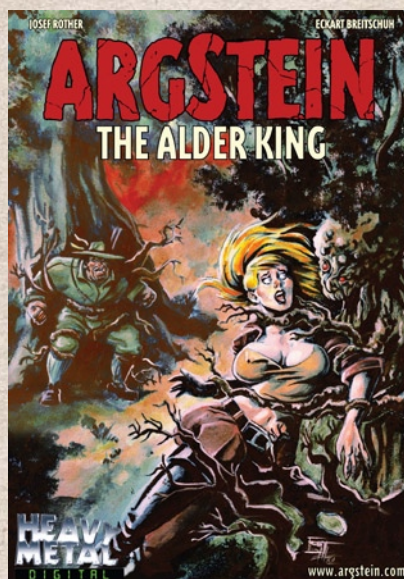
**THE LAW OF
THE FOREST**

ARGSTEIN
Book Two



ARGSTEIN
UNDERGROUND

ARGSTEIN
Book Three



THE ALDER KING
[Coming Soon]

AT HEAVY METAL DIGITAL!

ARGSTEIN

THE LAW OF THE FOREST

Germany. The 1800s.

Creatures roam the forest, and only
the fist and the rifle of the Förster stand
between the murderous demons
and the human denizens of
the Argstein valley.

But when a hunter begins to stalk
the monsters, the Förster fights him.
Why does he protect the creatures?
And is it true that the Förster made
a pact with the devil?

Argstein: The Law of the Forest
introduces an exciting fantasy and horror series
by Josef Rother and Eckart Breitschuh.

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