

Ron Marz • Stjepan Sejic • Phil Hester



#2

BROKEN MINITY™



Image

Cover B

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The Angelus and The Darkness are the primal forces of Light and Dark in the Top Cow universe. Standing in between them and maintaining The Balance is the mysterious gauntlet, The Witchblade. Each of the three forces bond with human hosts to exert their influence on the corporeal world.

NYPD Detective Sara Pezzini and dancer Dani Baptiste each wield one half of the mystical gauntlet, the Witchblade. Sara in particular struggles to balance her life as a police officer, bearer of the Witchblade, and single mother to her daughter, Hope. Last issue, Sara discovered she was being followed by small time criminal Michael "Finn" Finnegan and confronted him at the shop of the mysterious Curator.

It was revealed that Finn was hired to keep tabs on Sara by Jackie Estacado, Hope's father. Jackie is the bearer of The Darkness, a power inherited by male members of his lineage on their 21st birthday. Finn was also given a gift by the Curator, a strange piece of jewelry which he reluctantly accepted. After placing a call to Jackie to let him know he'd failed in his charge, Finn found that the bauble was more than it seemed.

In the distant past, two forces locked in an ancient struggle - a frost giant and a dragon. In the end both seemed to perish, but in the present a young woman seemingly recovers one of their items of power. With two new forces on the rise in the Top Cow Universe, what does this mean for the pivotal trinity of The Darkness, Witchblade, and The Angelus?

BROKEN TRINITY

Witchblade created by Marc Silvestri, Brian Haberlin, David Wohl, and Michael Turner.
The Darkness created by Marc Silvestri, Garth Ennis, and David Wohl.

WRITTEN BY RON MARZ
ART BY STJEPAN SEJIC & PHIL HESTER

LETTERS BY TROY PETERI
DESIGN BY CHAZ RIGGS
EDITED BY ROB LEVIN

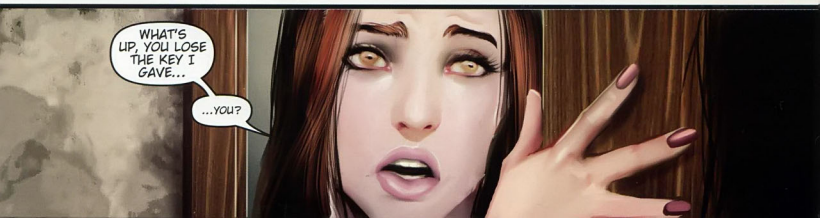
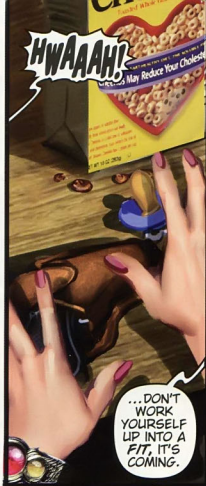
COVER A BY STJEPAN SEJIC
COVER B BY DALE KEOUHN

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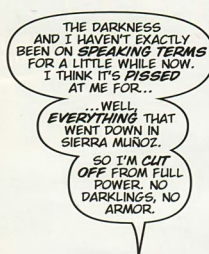
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For more on Broken Trinity visit
www.topcow.com/brokentrinity
Address correspondence to:
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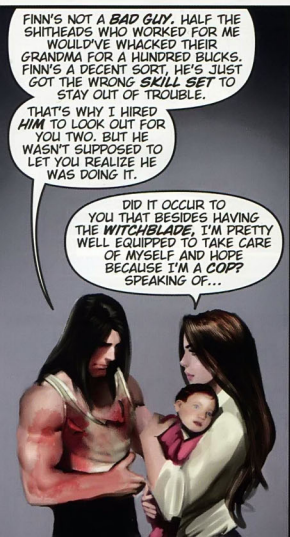




SHH, YOU DON'T WANT HER TO SEE MOMMY AND DADDY FIGHTING, DO YOU?



SHE'S GONNA SEE MOMMY KICK DADDY'S ASS IF HE DOESN'T EXPLAIN HIMSELF.





I DON'T KNOW IF YOU REMEMBER ME, HOPE. PROBABLY NOT. BUT IN A WEIRD WAY, I'M YOUR FATHER.

SORRY I HAVEN'T BEEN AROUND. IT'S...

...A LITTLE COMPLICATED.

BWOOO!

I'M GLAD YOU HAVE YOUR MOM. I KNOW SHE TAKES GOOD CARE OF YOU.

I DIDN'T HAVE THAT. THE PLACE I GREW UP, I DIDN'T REALLY HAVE ANYBODY TO TAKE CARE OF ME. AND LOOK HOW I TURNED OUT.

SO MAYBE I WON'T BE AROUND ALL THE TIME, BUT IF YOU EVER NEED ME...



SO WHAT'S THE STORY HERE? NOT REALLY. DEPARTMENTAL POLICY FOR DETECTIVES TO LET **MOB BOSSES** USE THEIR APARTMENTS AS SAFE HOUSES.

DON'T WORRY, I WON'T BE STAYING.

I NEED TO GO FIND FINN. HE LEFT ME A MESSAGE, BUT NOW HE'S NOT ANSWERING HIS PHONE.

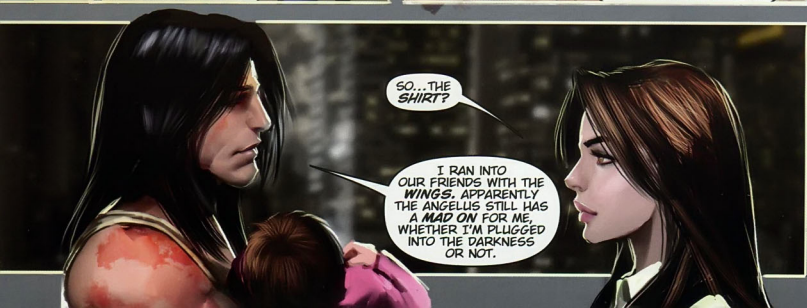


MAYBE I SCARED HIM OFF.

HERE. WANT ME TO TAKE HER?

NO, SHE'S FINE.

AND IF FINN'S MORE SCARED OF YOU THAN HE IS OF ME, HE'S NOT AS BRIGHT AS I THOUGHT HE WAS.



SO...THE SHIRT?

I RAN INTO OUR FRIENDS WITH THE WINGS. APPARENTLY THE ANGELUS STILL HAS A MAD ON FOR ME. WHETHER I'M PLUGGED INTO THE DARKNESS OR NOT.



IT'S NICE TO SEE YOU AGAIN, SARA. PRETTY OBVIOUS YOU'RE DOING A GREAT JOB WITH HER.

THANKS. I'M SURE HOPE APPRECIATES HAVING TIME WITH HER FATHER.

AND... IT'S NICE TO SEE YOU TOO.

SORRY I'M LATE, THERE WAS A...



...OOPS.

DIDN'T KNOW YOU HAD COMPANY.

THAT'S OKAY. COME ON IN.

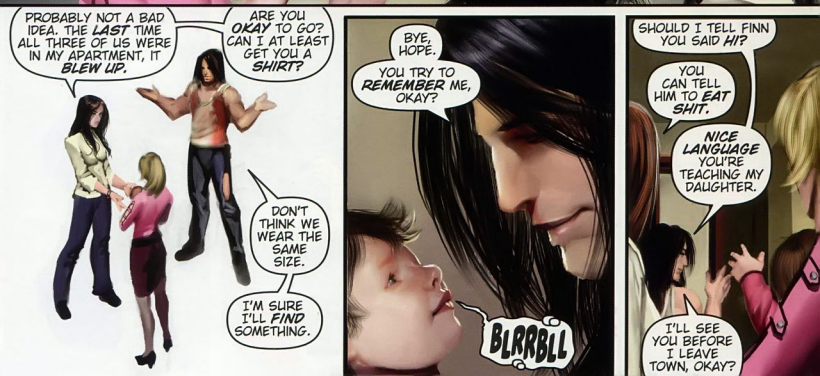
HELLO, DANI.



JACKIE. IN TOWN FOR LONG?

WASN'T PLANNING TO BE. JUST SOME BUSINESS I HAD TO TEND TO.

IN FACT, I SHOULD GO.



PROBABLY NOT A BAD IDEA. THE LAST TIME ALL THREE OF US WERE IN MY APARTMENT, IT BLEW UP.

ARE YOU OKAY TO GO? CAN I AT LEAST GET YOU A SHIRT?

DON'T THINK WE WEAR THE SAME SIZE.

I'M SURE I'LL FIND SOMETHING.

BYE, HOPE. YOU TRY TO REMEMBER ME, OKAY?

SHOULD I TELL FINN YOU SAID HI?

YOU CAN TELL HIM TO EAT SHIT.

NICE LANGUAGE YOU'RE TEACHING MY DAUGHTER.

I'LL SEE YOU BEFORE I LEAVE TOWN, OKAY?

BLRRBLL





PLEASE, SIT.
AGAIN, MY APOLOGIES.

ALL CARRY-ON ITEMS SHOULD BE STORED SECURELY EITHER IN AN OVERHEAD BIN OR UNDER THE SEAT IN FRONT OF YOU.



YOUR MOBILE DEVICES AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES SHOULD BE TURNED OFF. ONCE AIRBORNE, WE'LL LET YOU KNOW WHEN YOU CAN USE APPROVED ELECTRONIC

BUSINESS OR PLEASURE?

PARDON?

THE TRIP TO NEW YORK. ARE YOU GOING FOR BUSINESS OR PLEASURE?



MAKE SURE YOUR SEAT BELT IS PROPERLY FASTENED. TO FASTEN, INSERT THE METAL TIP INTO THE BUCKLE AND ADJUST THE STRAP SO IT'S LOW AND TIGHT AGAIN. YOUR

A LITTLE OF BOTH, I SUPPOSE.

PLEASE REMAIN SEATED WITH YOUR SEATBELT SECURELY FASTENED ANY TIME A SEAT BELT SIGN IS ON.



EVEN IF THE SIGN IS OFF, YOU SHOULD KEEP YOUR SEAT BELT FASTENED IN CASE WE EXPERIENCE UNEXPECTED ROUGH

WHAT KIND OF BUSINESS, IF YOU DON'T MIND ME ASKING?

I'M A COLLECTOR.

YOU DON'T STRIKE ME AS THE BASEBALL CARD TYPE. A COLLECTOR OF...?



OH, A GREAT MANY THINGS, I HOPE.

I JUST PICKED UP SOMETHING IN NORWAY THAT I'VE BEEN TRYING TO GET MY HANDS ON FOR QUITE SOME TIME.

THESE SIX EXITS ON THIS PLANE: FOUR DOORS, TWO ON EACH SIDE OF THE PLANE, AND TWO WINDOW EXITS OVER THE WINGS.

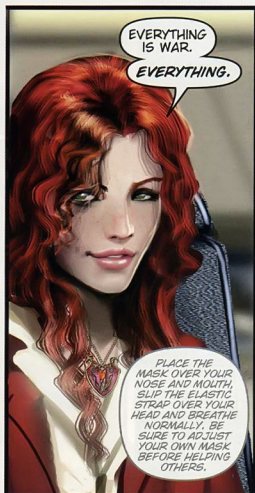


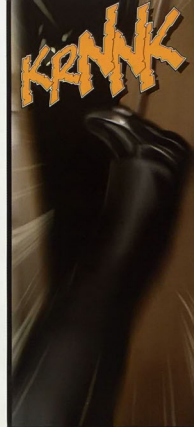
I'M INTRIGUED.

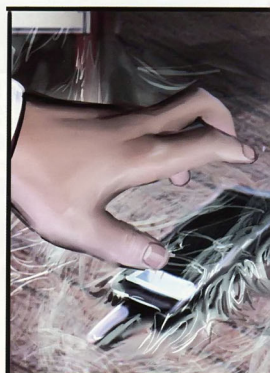
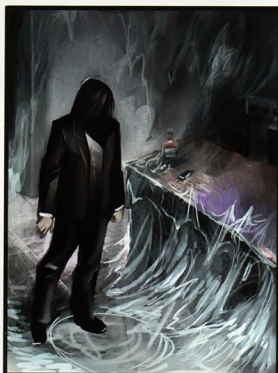
PLEASSED TO MEET YOU. MY NAME IS JORGEN NILSEN.

GLORIANNA SILVER.

SMOKING IS NOT ALLOWED ON ANY NORDIC AIR FLIGHT. TAMPERING WITH, DISABLING OR DESTROYING A RESTROOM SMOKE DETECTOR IS PROHIBITED BY LAW.







ONE POLICE PLAZA,
MANHATTAN

TOOK LONGER THAN I
THOUGHT. HAD TO MAKE
A NEW POT.

WHAT'RE
YOU WORKING ON?
GOOGLING YOURSELF,
LIKE EVERYBODY
ELSE DOES?



NO, JUST LOOKING THROUGH SOME
OLD CASES. SEEING IF THERE ARE
ANY CONNECTIONS.

THANKS
FOR THE
COFFEE,
GLEASON.



PLEASE,
CAPTAIN PEYROUX,
**NOT THAT SAME
CRAZY LADY OVER
ON SECOND AVENUE.**
THE ONE WHO SAYS
ELVIS IS PEEKING
IN HER
WINDOWS?

NO,
BUT THIS
ISN'T MUCH
BETTER.



THE LOCAL PRECINCT IS GETTING
CALLS ABOUT...WELL, MOST OF
THEM ARE CALLING IT THE
ABOMINABLE SNOWMAN.
A FEW SAID A **GIANT.**

SOUNDS LIKE
SOMEBODY PULLING A
PRANK. GO HAVE A LOOK,
AND IF YOU **FIND** THAT
SOMEBODY, MAKE IT CLEAR
THE DEPARTMENT'S
NOT AMUSED.

YOU CAN PICK UP
THE ADDRESSES AT
THE DUTY DESK
UPSTAIRS.

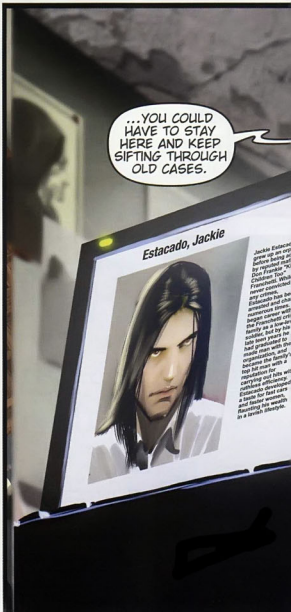


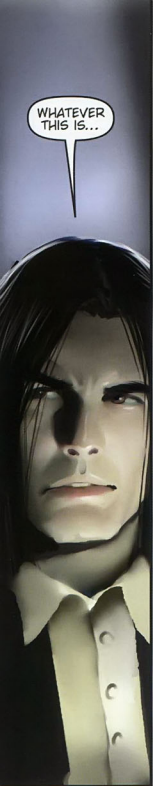
SHOULD WE
LOOK FOR THE
BEANSTALK
TOO, OR JUST
THE **GIANT**?

COULD
BE **WORSE,**
PEZZINI...



...YOU COULD
HAVE TO STAY
HERE AND KEEP
SIFTING THROUGH
OLD CASES.









LOOK
AT ME!



GHHH!

I HEARD
ALL THE STORIES
ABOUT YA BEIN'
INVOLVED IN SPOOKY
SHITE. SO TELL ME,
YA TELL ME WHAT
HAPPENED TO
ME...



...OR I'LL
PULL THE
GODDAMN HEAD
RIGHT OFF YOUR
SHOULDERS.

FINNEGAN?

THAT'S
YOU?

EASY
NOW...



...LET'S NOT
DO ANYTHING
WE'D BOTH
REGRET.

YOU'RE
POINTIN' A
GUN AT ME,
YA MONGO
SAP?



ARE YA
SIMPLE?

SHRAAK



GAVE YA
YOUR CHANCE,
ESTACADO. NOT
THE FIRST TIME
I HAD TO **BEAT**
AN ANSWER
OUTTA
SOMEBODY.



HE'S NOT
GOING TO GET
ANY VOTES
FOR FATHER
OF THE
YEAR...



...BUT
HE'S STILL
MY BABY'S
FATHER.
SO **HANDS**
OFF, WHATEVER
YOU ARE.



PEZZINI.

I GOT
DRAGGED INTO
THIS 'CAUSE
OF YA.



IS THAT...
FINNEGAN?

I DON'T
REMEMBER **ASKING**
YOU TO FOLLOW ME. AND
I SURE AS HELL DON'T
KNOW HOW YOU GOT
TURNED INTO FROSTY
THE SNOWMAN.



YOU **DISTRACT**
YOURSELVES WITH
THESE PETTY
STRUGGLES...



... WHILE
THE *TRUE*
STRUGGLE
AWAITS.



YA TURNED
ME INTO A
GODDAMN
MONSTER,
OLD MAN!



ESTACADO.

GLEASON.



IT'S THAT
GEM YA
GAVE ME! DID
YA *KNOW* IT
WOULD DO
THIS?!

I KNEW IT WAS
NECESSARY.



NO, NO
MORE OF THAT
MYSTERY SHITE!
STOP ACTIN' THE
MAGGOT, CALLIN'
YOURSELF
CURATOR AND
ALL THAT...

...AND TELL
ME WHAT YA
DONE TO ME
HERE!

I MADE
YOU WHAT
YOU *MUST*
BE.

YOU NOW BEAR
ONE OF THE
THIRTEEN.

THE **DETECTIVE**
BEARS ONE. THE
CRIMINAL IS HOST
FOR ANOTHER.

THE **GLACIER**
STONE IS A THING OF
THE ICY WASTELANDS,
AN AGENT OF
DESTRUCTION.

THOUGH IT
HAS REMADE
YOU, ITS
VAST POWER
IS **YOURS**
TO SHAPE.

BUT KNOW
THAT IT HAS
AN **EQUAL** AND
AN **OPPOSITE**.
AFTER A TIME OF
HIBERNATION, THE
EMBER STONE
HAS MADE ITS
WAY INTO THE
HANDS OF A
BEARER.

IT IS A THING OF **FIRE**,
AN AGENT OF **CREATION**. ITS
NATURE IS TO **COVET**, AND
SO IT MUST BE **BALANCED**.

THIS IS
WHY YOU WERE
CHOSEN. **THIS** IS
NOW IS YOUR
BURDEN.

BUT
I NEVER
WANTED
IT!

THE
DECISION
WAS NEVER
YOURS.



EVENTS
ARE ALREADY
IN MOTION.
YOU MUST
OPPOSE THE
SERPENT.
THE TRINITY
WILL BE
BROKEN.



WAIT...
WHAT?
WHAT
ARE YOU
TALKING
ABOUT?



FIND OUT
LATER.
YOU
HEAR
THAT?

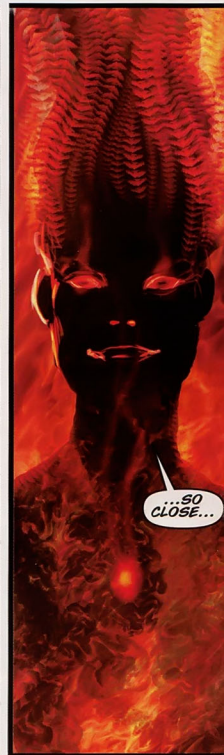
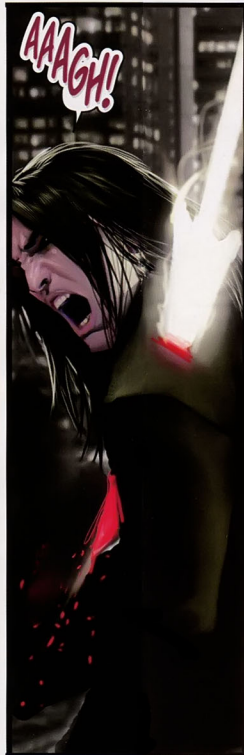
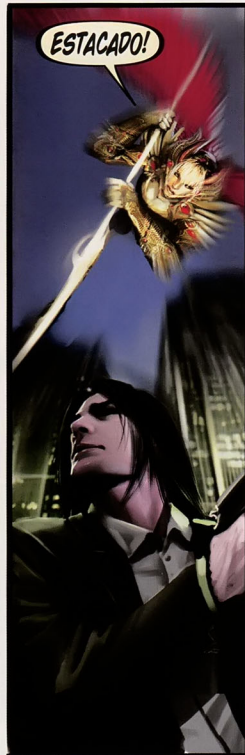


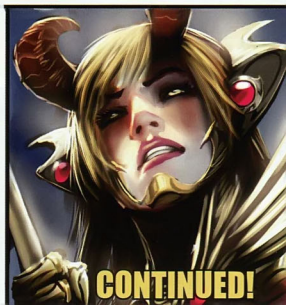
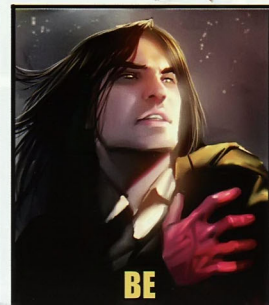
SHIT.

WHEN YOU
SAID YOU HAD A
RUN-IN WITH THE
ANGELUS, I
DIDN'T THINK YOU
MEANT **ALL** OF
THEM.

ARE THEY
COMING AFTER YOU
BECAUSE THEY THINK
THE DARKNESS IS
VULNERABLE?

JAYSUS,
WHAT KIND OF
WORLD DO YA
PEOPLE LIVE
IN?





TOP COW WORLD MOOS

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STORE SPOTLIGHT



BRAVE NEW WORLD COMICS

Newhall, CA

Whatever we can say about owners Atom! and Portlyn Freeman was echoed by the comic book industry this past July when their shop was honored with the first-ever Eisner Award for Best Spirit of Comics Retailer.

And rightly so! Aside from new and back issues of comics, toys, apparel and other related merchandise, their shop features an upstairs art gallery that overlooks the main floor. Exhibits at the gallery have ranged from local artists to a certain LA-based comic book publisher with an in-house studio full of talented pencils. Cough, cough.

Brave New World is also unique in that it features something for everyone, from art programs for children to movie nights to Singles events for the local comic book-reading, searching-for-love set. Their innovative programming is just one of the many ways this shop is more than just a comic book store.

Brave New World Comics is located in the Santa Clarita Valley at 22722 Lyons Ave. #6 at the corner of Lyons and Chestnut, Newhall, CA 91321. Their number is (661) 259-4745 and they can be found on the web at www.bravenewworldcomics.com.

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THIS MONTH'S TOP COW



DRAGON PRINCE #1

(W) Ron Marz (A) Lee Moder (C) Jeff Johnson, Stjepan Sejic

Writer Ron Marz has revitalized *Witchblade* and is the architect behind the acclaimed *First Born* and *Broken Trinity* crossover events. Now, joined by artist Lee Moder (*First Born: Aftermath*, *Painkiller Jane*), Marz debuts *DRAGON PRINCE*, a five-part modern fantasy with equal doses of magic and martial arts mayhem.

Like a lot of teenagers, Aaron Chiang feels he's never fit in, though he's never known why. But all that changes when he learns the truth of his heritage: He is the Dragon Prince, last of his kind and heir to the bloodline of all dragons. Hunted to the brink of extinction by a secret society of wizards, dragonkind's survival is now in Aaron's hands.

Featuring spectacular covers by Jeff Johnson (*Amazing Spider-Man*, *Way of the Rat*) and Stjepan Sejic (*Witchblade*)!

09.08
IN STORES

WITCHBLADE #121 • THE ART OF MARC SILVESTRI HC
DRAGON PRINCE #1 • BROKEN TRINITY #2
THE DARKNESS #5 • MADAME MIRAGE VOL. 1 TPB

FROM THE MOOS DESK



2008 TOP COW CONVENTION TOUR

Coming to a city near you!

Our next stop will be in the Charm City – Baltimore, Maryland – for the Baltimore Comic-Con during the weekend of September 27 and 28 at the Baltimore Convention Center. We'll be bringing along special guests, exclusive comics and free preview books, so if you're in the area, clear your schedule that weekend and come out to see us!

-moa

everything you need to join the herd and more

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NOISE from the HERD

a word with
RON MARZ
writer, *WITCHBLADE*

Yeah, I know you just got used to "publisher guy" Filip Sablik taking up this space. But I was asked to commandeer this column so I could jabber about my new creator-owned book, *Dragon Prince*, which comes out this month.

These days, I think of *Dragon Prince* as the Little Comic That Could. The concept originated five or six years ago with artist Jeff Johnson, one of my buddies in the comics business. Jeff and I cobbled together a modern fantasy about a 13-year-old boy who finds out that he is, in fact, the last dragon on Earth. Jeff and I pitched it to Dark Horse Comics under the title *Dragon Prince*. A limited series was approved and we started to work on it, but before we got more than a few pages into it, Jeff got hired to work full time in animation. So *Dragon Prince* languished in a drawer at Dark Horse, seemingly as extinct as the story's dragons.

Flash forward a couple of years, when I have a few dozen issues of *Witchblade* and the *First Born* crossover under my belt. I mentioned *Dragon Prince* to Top Cow V.P. of Editorial Rob Levin, and within what seemed like just a few days, Top Cow had agreed to give the book new life. This time, another buddy, Lee Moder, would provide the art (with Jeff's blessing). The Cow worked out a deal with Dark Horse, and we were back in the *Dragon Prince* business. Definitely a fairy-tale turn of events.

Dragon Prince is something a little different for me, something a little different for Top Cow. You'll probably hear the four-issue series described as an "all-ages" book. I think when people hear that, they immediately assume "it's for kids." But in this case, "all ages" means exactly that. It's for kids, for adults, for anybody in between, just like you saw 8-year-olds and 80-year-olds burying their noses in Harry Potter books.

I think you do your best work when you're collaborating with friends. So I'm blessed to be working with Lee and Jeff (who is still providing covers), and friends at Top Cow like Rob, Filip, Matt Hawkins and Marc Silvestri. Their belief in the project has allowed us to produce something we're really proud of. Lee is doing beautiful work, and we have gorgeous alternate covers by the likes of Stjepan Sejic, Brandon Peterson, Mike Oeming, Ryan Sook and David Petersen, as well as a special Baltimore Con exclusive cover by David Finch.

You're already reading a Top Cow book, so you've obviously got good taste. I hope you sink your teeth into *Dragon Prince*.

-Ron Marz



Wisconsin has the most dairy cows,
while Texas has the most beef cows.
California has the most Top Cows. :-)



A DIFFERENT BREED

HEARD IT THROUGH THE BO-VINE



Even with the recent announcement that writer Ron Marz is going to be writing *Witchblade* for Top Cow for at least the next three years and that he is the writer and architect behind the publisher's big summer event, *Broken Trinity*, the veteran scribe has found the time to collaborate with artist Lee Moder (*First Born: Aftermath*) for a brand-new, creator-owned series debuting in September.

Dragon Prince, which Marz and former CrossGen Comics colleague Jeff Johnson first conceived together several years ago, has found new life at Top Cow and will roll out in five issues. Marz gives us the skinny:

BO-VINE: What is *Dragon Prince* about?

RON MARZ: It's a fantasy story, but it's set in the here and now, basically in the world we live in. It's about a boy who learns that he is, in fact, the last dragon on Earth. He finds out that his father was the Dragon King, but was hunted down by a secret society of wizards who are responsible for wiping out dragonkind. And now that the boy is coming of age, he's starting to come into his dragon powers, which makes him a target for the wizards and their hunters.

What can you tell us about the heroes and villains in this story?

The hero, or at least the main character, is Aaron Chiang, the teen who discovers his dragon heritage. Being able to turn into a dragon might seem like a pretty kick-ass ability until you realize there are people trying to kill you because of it. The villains are the Magi, a brotherhood of sorcerers who have hunted dragons to extinction, and their Dragon Hunters, who are mystical warriors trained in both martial arts and magic.

You had this previously set up at Dark Horse with artist Jeff Johnson. Now that Lee Moder is on board, what is Jeff's role now?

Jeff's been our chief cheerleader since Lee took over. Jeff had to drop out when he landed a job at Warner Bros. Animation. Lee's working from Jeff's designs for the characters and settings, and Jeff also completed a set of covers for the issues. We also have some great alternate covers from guys like Stepan Sejic, Mike Oeming and David Petersen, plus a few others that I think will make readers pretty excited.

How did you hook up with Lee Moder? Why do you think his art style is perfect for this story?

I've been buddies with Lee for years, and we've worked on a number of things together, but it's usually been one-shots rather than a series. Lee's stuff has the same open quality as Jeff's work, and he has a really good feel for younger characters, which is obviously a necessity when your main character is 13 years old. Lee can also draw damn near anything, which comes in handy for a story that ranges from modern San Francisco to ancient Tibetan fortresses.

You've said this is an all-ages book. How so?

I think sometimes people hear "all ages" and they assume that means it's a kid's book. It's appropriate and accessible for kids, much more so than something like *Witchblade*, but it's not written down to kids. "All ages" means exactly that. You'll be able to get into this story whether you're 12 or 40. Hopefully the vibe is something like *Harry Potter*, where it's equally embraced by kids and adults.



— Moo

NOW YOU SEE HER...



PAUL DINI
KENNETH ROCAFORT

MADAME MIRAGE
TRADE PAPERBACK
Collects all six issues plus bonus material

MATERIALIZING IN COMIC SHOPS THIS SEPTEMBER

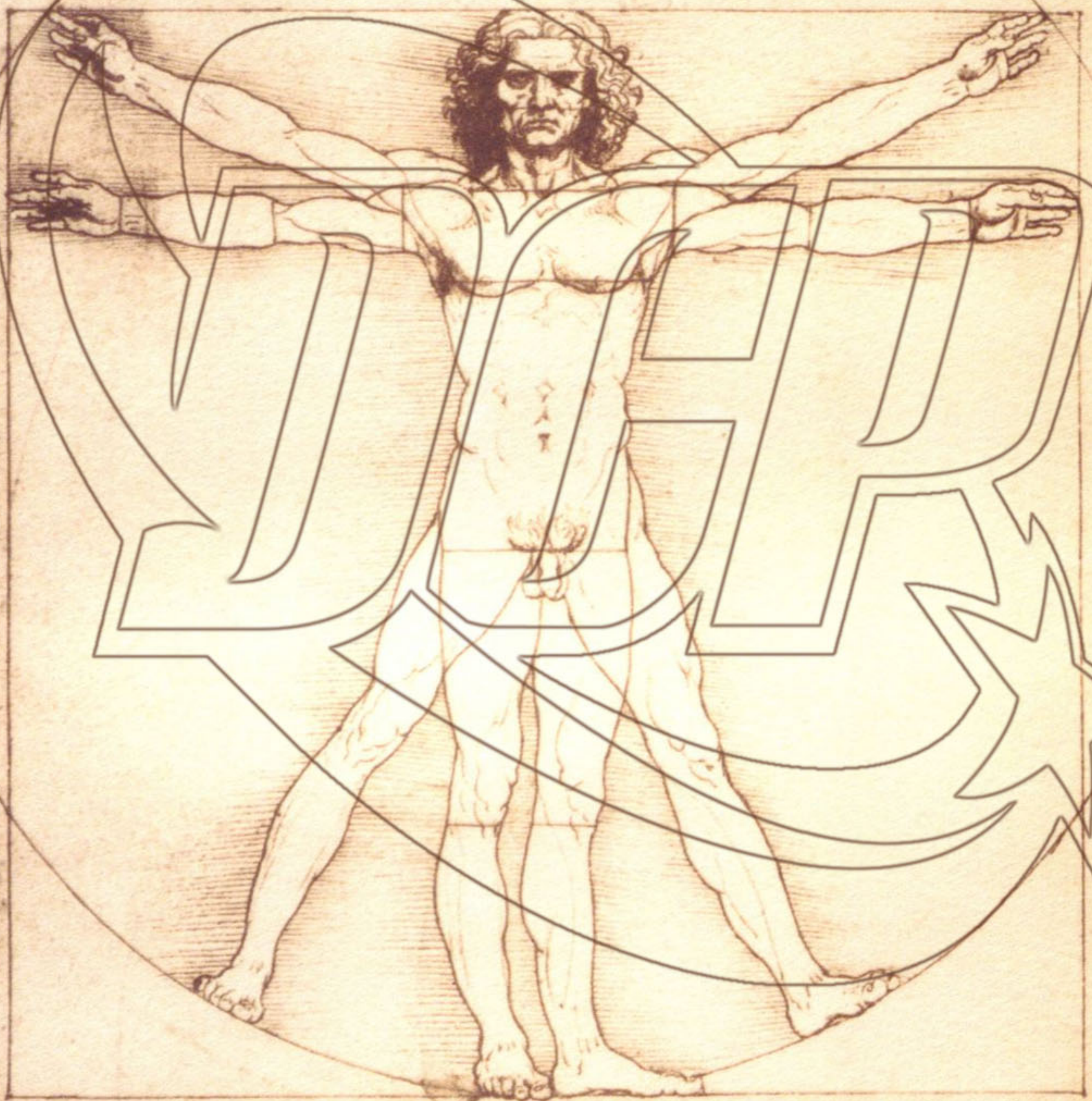
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A DIFFERENT BREED
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