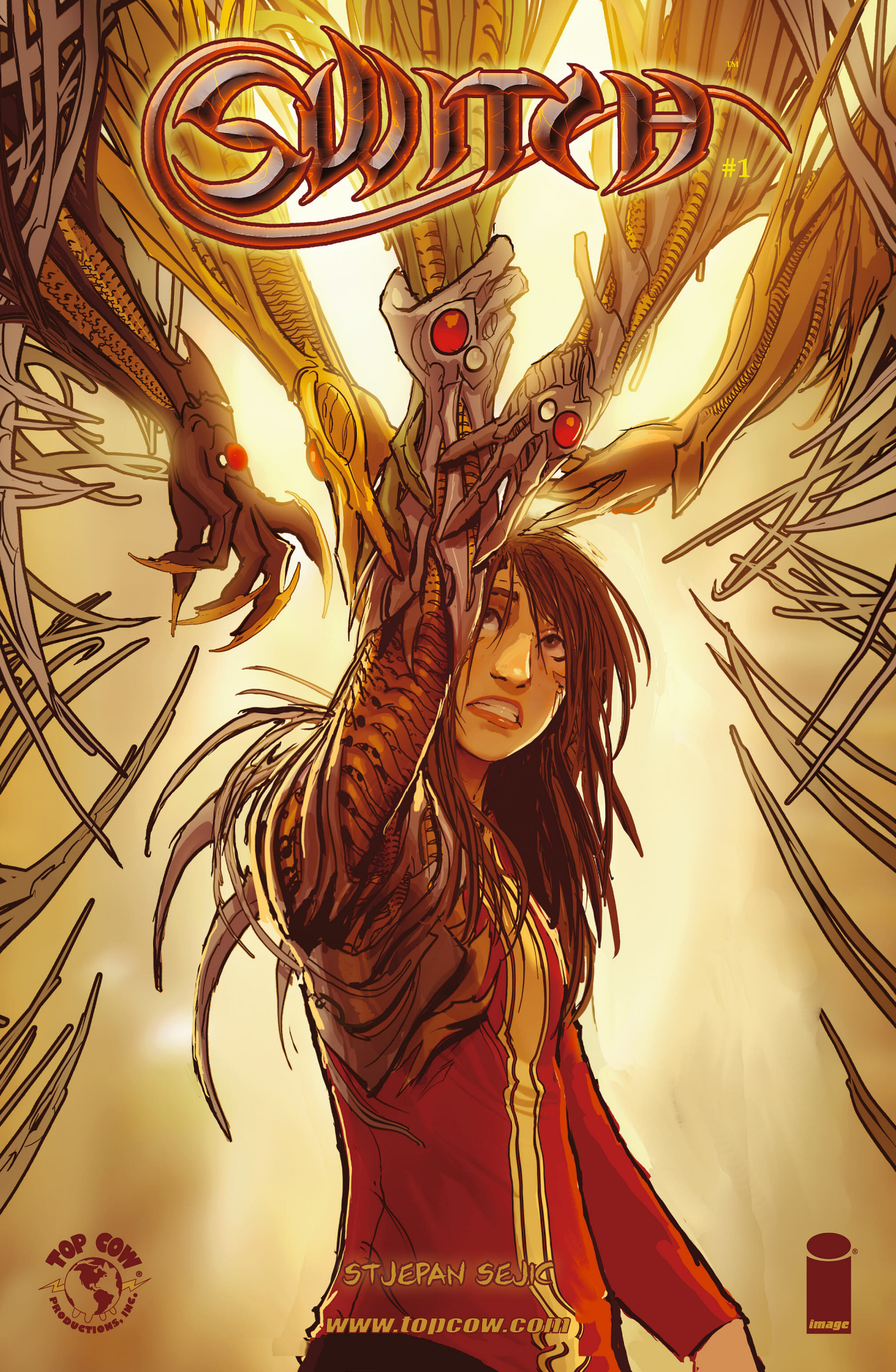


SWITCH

#1



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AWW, LOOK AT HIM, LITTLE WITCHBLADE. AIN'T HE CUTE? YEAH... TURNS OUT THAT'S A HE.

AND THESE ARE HIS PARENTS.


HIS DAD, *THE DARKNESS*. PHYSICAL EMBODIMENT OF THE...WELL... DARKNESS.



AND THIS IS THE LITTLE FELLA'S MOM. *ANGELUS*, PHYSICAL EMBODIMENT OF LIGHT.



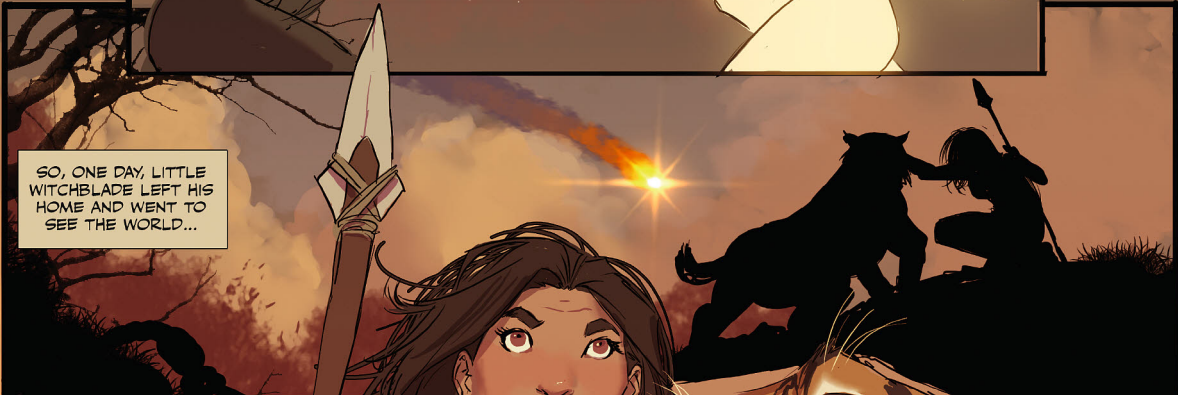
SO...UM, YEAH.



MOM AND DAD DIDN'T REALLY GET ALONG.



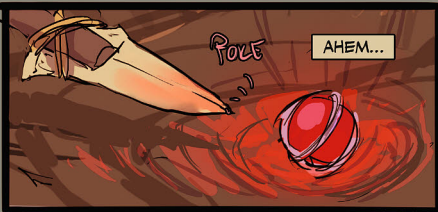
IT WAS...A DYSFUNCTIONAL FAMILY TO SAY THE LEAST.



SO, ONE DAY, LITTLE WITCHBLADE LEFT HIS HOME AND WENT TO SEE THE WORLD...



AND, TO FIND SOME FRIENDS.



AHEM...

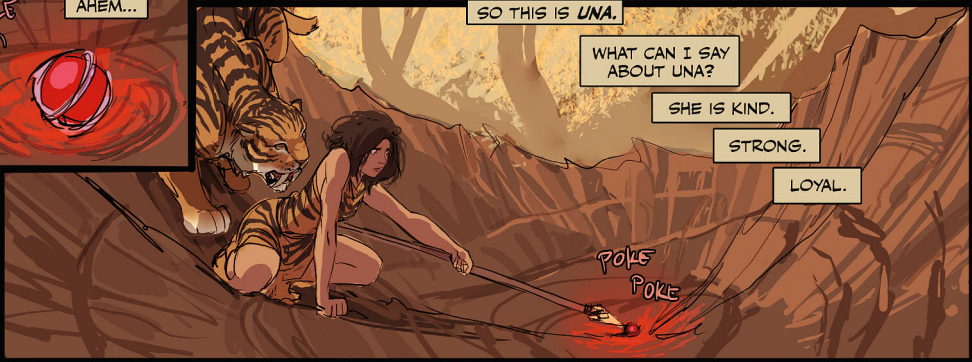
SO THIS IS UNA.

WHAT CAN I SAY ABOUT UNA?

SHE IS KIND.

STRONG.

LOYAL.



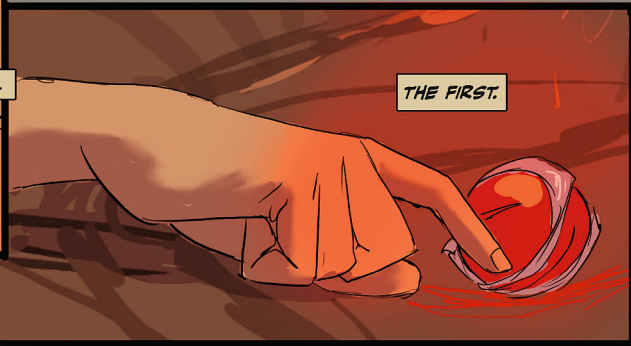
BRAVE.

OKAY...SO SHE IS A CAVEWOMAN.

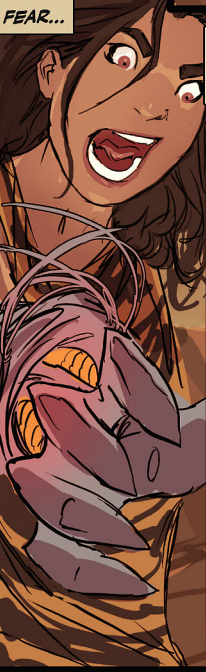


AND SHE WAS...

THE FIRST.

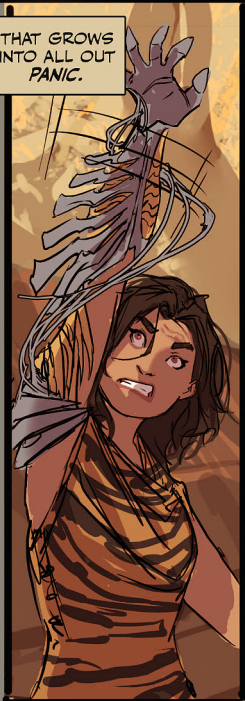


NOW, AFTER THIS POINT, THINGS GO EERILY SIMILARLY FOR BEARERS. THERE'S SHOCK...

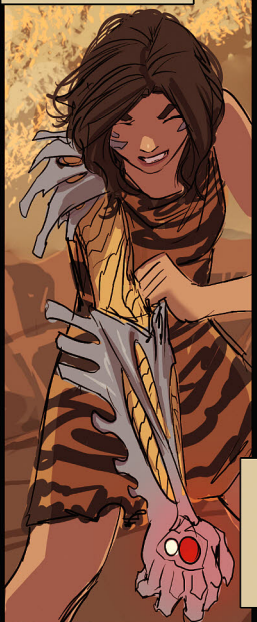


FEAR...

THAT GROWS INTO ALL OUT PANIC.



THEN THEY TRY RESISTANCE...



AND THEN, INEVITABLY, ACCEPTANCE.



MIGHT AS WELL CALL THEM THE "FIVE STAGES OF DEALING WITH THE WITCHBLADE." AND OVER TIME... SO MANY WENT THROUGH THEM.



UNA WAS THE FIRST.

MANY FOLLOWED.

QUEENS.

WARRIORS.

SCHOLARS.

ADVENTURERS.

ALL EXCEPTIONAL WOMEN
IN THEIR OWN WAY, AND
ALL POSSESSING A
HEART OF COURAGE.

AND EVERY SINGLE ONE
OF THEM, A BEARER
OF THE WITCHBLADE.
SO, YEAH...BLADE HAD
HIGH STANDARDS.



TIMES CHANGED, BEARERS
CAME AND WENT...AND FOR
THE LAST FEW DECADES,
BLADE WAS DORMANT.



AND THEN IT
FELT THE CALL.



A NEW BEARER WAS READY.

THE TIME WAS RIGHT!

THE WITCHBLADE
KNEW THAT THE
BEARER WAS TO BE
AN EXCEPTIONAL
WOMAN...



LIKE THOSE
BEFORE HER.

A PARAGON
OF COURAGE...

EXCEPTIONAL
WILLPOWER...



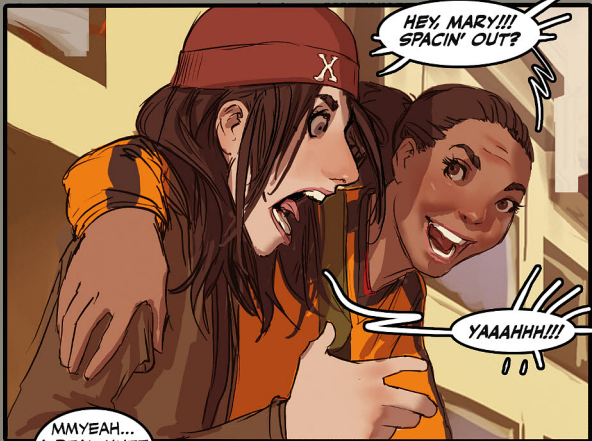
AND, MOST LIKELY,
GREAT BEAUTY.



SO...WHY DID IT CHOOSE ME?

I HAD MY THEORIES, BUT THE ONE I SETTLED WITH -- AT LEAST FOR A WHILE -- WAS: YOU EAT ENOUGH STEAK, AND AFTER A WHILE YOU'LL FIND YOURSELF CRAVING A BURGER.

AS IT HAPPENS, I WAS WRONG ON THAT ONE, BUT WE'LL GET THERE LATER.



HEY, MARY!!! SPACIN' OUT?

YAAAH!!!

MMYEAH... A REAL KNEE SLAPPER THERE.

AW, COME ON! BY THE WAY, SINCE WHEN DO YOU WEAR BEANIES? I BARELY RECOGNIZED YOU!

YOU ROCKIN' A BALDSPOT?

ON THE CONTRARY... NOT HIDING A LOSS.

WHATCHA COVERING THEN?

IT'S A NECESSITY -- NOT A FASHION CHOICE.



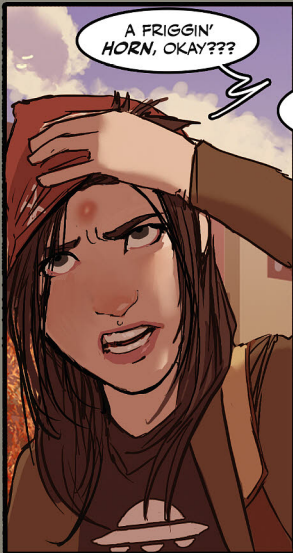
THE HELL IS WRONG WITH YOU, RUDY? JEEZ!

HAAAAHA! OH MAN, TOO EASY... ALSO, SEE WHAT I DID THERE? SPACIN' OUT? PRICELESS.

I...HAVE A THING FOR UFOLOGY.

RUDY THOUGHT IT WAS DUMB.

I REGRET NOTHING!



A FRIGGIN' HORN, OKAY???



EW...UM...ON THE BRIGHT SIDE, YOU JUST PROVED THAT UNICORNS EXIST.

I BELIEVE IN EXTRATERRESTRIALS, NOT FAIRYTALES!

AND THE DIFFERENCE IS?

I HATE YOU!