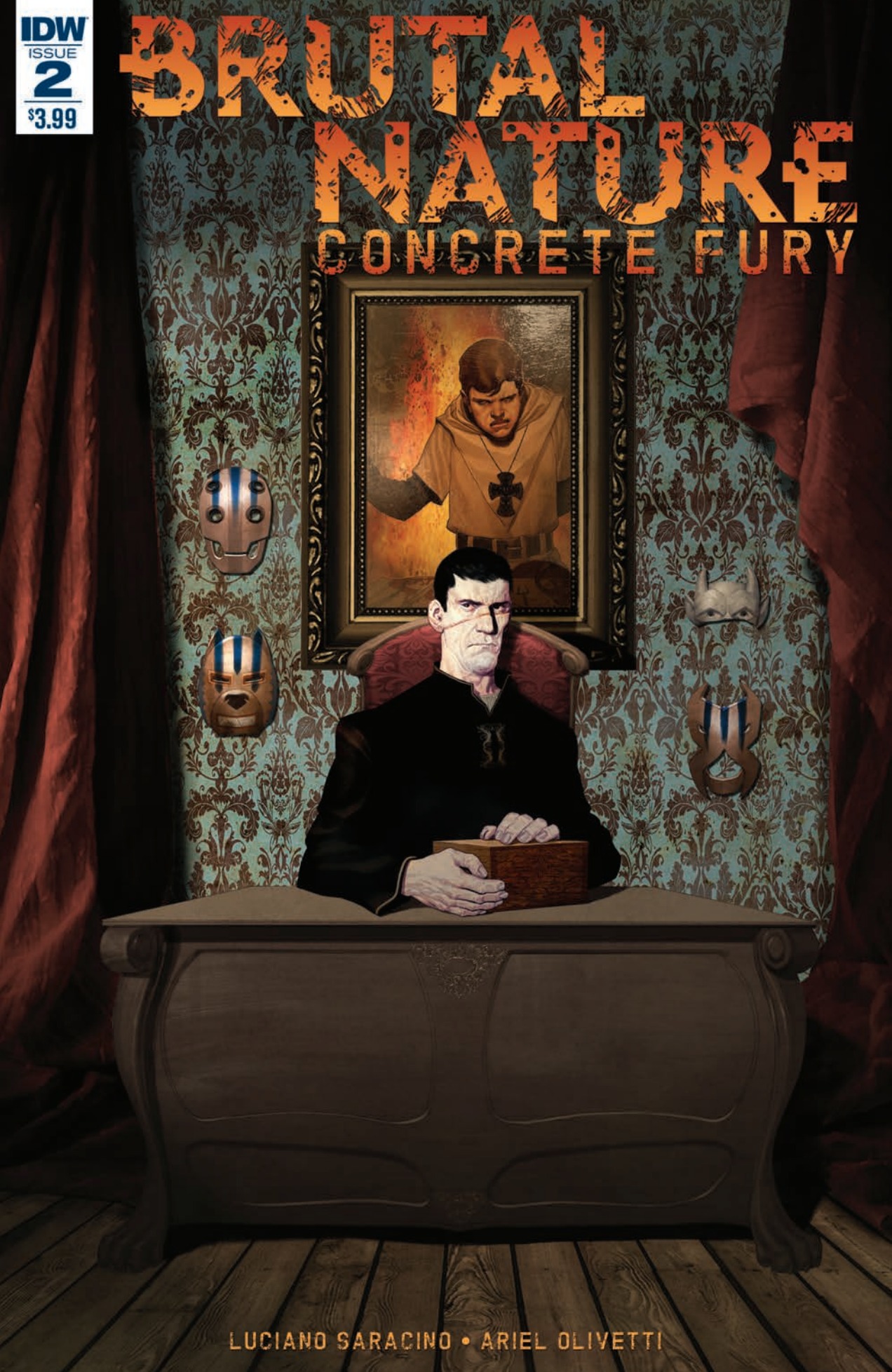


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BRUTAL NATURE

CONCRETE FURY



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BRUTAL NATURE

CONCRETE FURY

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WHAT'S THIS?

IT'S YOU.

WELL, I ONLY SEE A MASK.

IS THAT NOT WHAT WE SEE IN THE MIRROR EVERY DAY?

**BRUTAL
NATURE**
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IN THE BEGINNING, THERE WAS NOTHING, YOU KNOW? THERE'S AN IRREFUTABLE TRUTH IN THAT PHRASE.

THIS THE PART WHERE YOU RECITE THE BIBLE, OLD MAN?

NO. THIS IS THE PART WHERE I TELL YOU THE TRUTH.

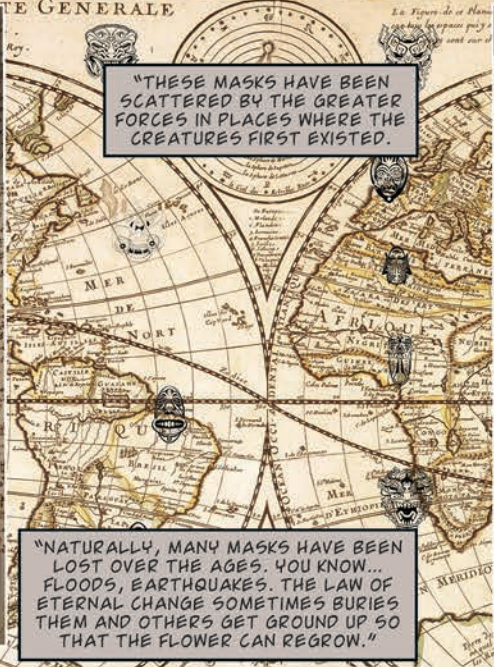


THEN, THE MASKS WERE MADE. WITH FIRE, EARTH, AIR, WATER. WITH MAGIC.

A MASK FOR EVERY LIVING BEING.

A MASK FOR EVERY CREATURE BORN.

A MASK TO GIVE LIFE TO THE FIRST OF EACH SPECIES.



"THESE MASKS HAVE BEEN SCATTERED BY THE GREATER FORCES IN PLACES WHERE THE CREATURES FIRST EXISTED."

"NATURALLY, MANY MASKS HAVE BEEN LOST OVER THE AGES. YOU KNOW... FLOODS, EARTHQUAKES. THE LAW OF ETERNAL CHANGE SOMETIMES BURIES THEM AND OTHERS GET GROUND UP SO THAT THE FLOWER CAN REGROW."



IF EVERY CREATURE WAS CREATED FROM A MASK, THEN HOUSTON, WE HAVE A PROBLEM.

DRAGONS DO NOT EXIST.

"DON'T THEY?"



THE ISSUE IS THAT THERE IS A... LET'S CALL IT "POWER"... THAT HAS NOT BEEN LOST SINCE THE BEGINNING OF TIME. WE CALL IT ICH.

IT IS A FORCE THAT DWELLS IN ONE AND ONLY ONE PERSON AT A TIME.

WHEN THE HUMAN BEING CEASES TO LIVE ON THIS PLANE, THE ICH CARRIER MOVES ON TO THE NEXT... AND SO ON.



IF I'M FOLLOWING YOUR DELIRIOUS RAMBLING, OLD MAN, YOU'RE SUGGESTING THAT I HAVE THIS ICH INSIDE MY BODY AT THIS TIME.

I'M TELLING YOU THAT YOU ARE ICH, BOY.



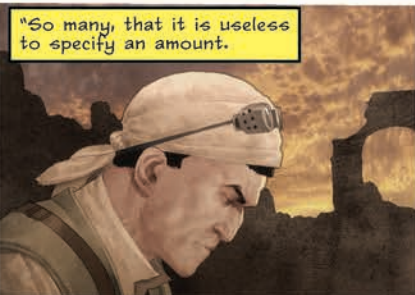
YOU'RE SERIOUSLY NOT TIRED OF THIS SAME OLD STORY, EDITH?

YOU ALWAYS RECOUNT IT WHEN YOU RETURN. AND IT ALWAYS FASCINATES ME.

WHY SHOULD THIS TIME BE DIFFERENT?



BECAUSE IT HAPPENED SO MANY YEARS AGO.



"So many, that it is useless to specify an amount."



"I'd been following the trail of a legend for a long while."

"A legend of masks and their power, as you know."



"And then..."

PAZUZU!

"... it happened."



"They had found a temple-or something like that-dedicated to Pazuzu, King of the Wind Demons. Son of Hanbi.

"Evil incarnate.



"I'll be damned if that statue's glare did not have some kind of hypnotic power. It seemed to boil one's soul, if you looked at it head on.



"And that's why, while everyone else's soul was boiling...



"...I found what I was looking-or rather that it found me.



"You've heard my heart, Edith, pounding when it fills up with life.

"Multiply that, and you'll know what was going on inside me at that moment."