

BLACK BIRD

*Wake the
World*

Issue 12
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**Olivers Tomb
A Comic By
Eric Orchard**

**Harkness
Chapter Three
By Jesse Wright**

**Artwork
By Bafefit**

Plus More...





Created by Paige Rothfus and Moses Powell Eckstein

Cover Art: Bafefit

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**For Questions or comments please email:
talkblackbird@gmail.com**

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Pumpkin Carver by Mark Rothweiler



Slender Man by Mark Rothweiller



Zatanna by Mark Rothweiler

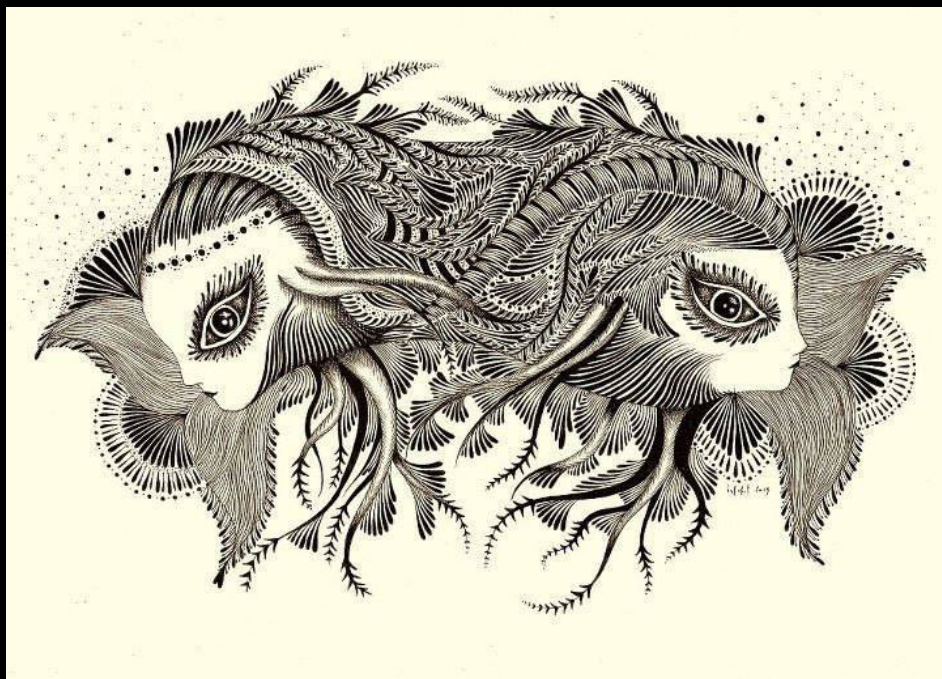


Wedding Gift by Mark Rothweiler

Bafefit

This young talent, originally from Puglia, transplanted to Rome where he now lives and works. Bafefit's works are characterised by his skilful use of the rapidograph: pen and ink which was initially created for technical drawing and which has been pushed to the extremes of its capabilities by artists. The portraits are of a world with a predominantly dark atmosphere and characters are caught between the thin line between life and death.

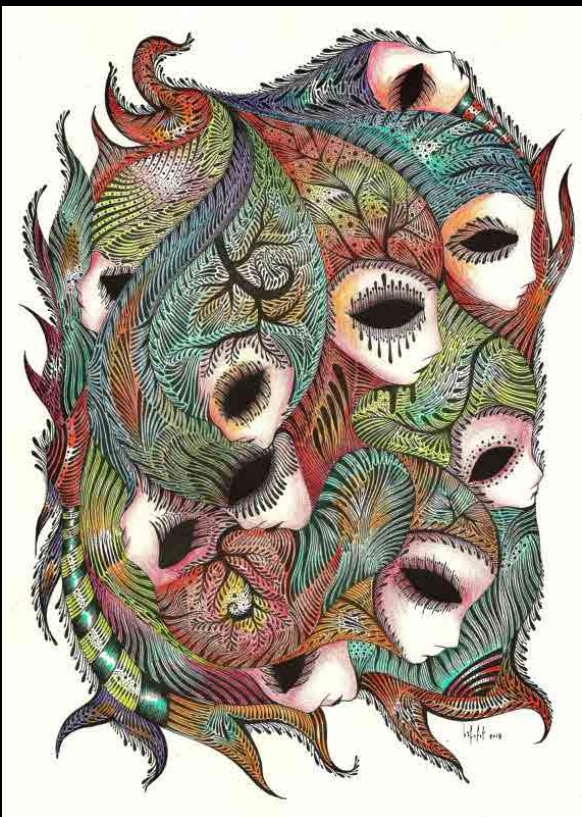
Bafefit is bestowed with an extraordinary inventive irony. He prefers to express his imagination working on late nineteenth century paper. The results are pictures capable of containing the narrative of real and living stories; placed in a particularly dark atmosphere congruous with the with the artist's vision. Skilled with ink, Bafefit is also known abroad, particularly in France, where he participated in the publication *Métamorphose en bord de Ciel* by Mathias Malzieu, along with the artists Nicoletta Ceccoli, Ciou and Benjamin Lacombe.



Prior to his Paris exhibition, which opens its doors in May, over forty of Bafefit's works will be exhibited in Mondo Bizarro Gallery, in what is the first solo of "golden boy" of hyper-contemporary Italian art. This event promises to be exceptional and in addition to works on paper, a site-specific project will be presented. Quite the best way to approach the work of an original artist and visionary.

Bafefit was born in 1980. His works have been published on 'DY' magazine (USA), "GRAB" and "Bang Art". His ink's works are often carried out on XIX century's paper bought at markets and antique shops.



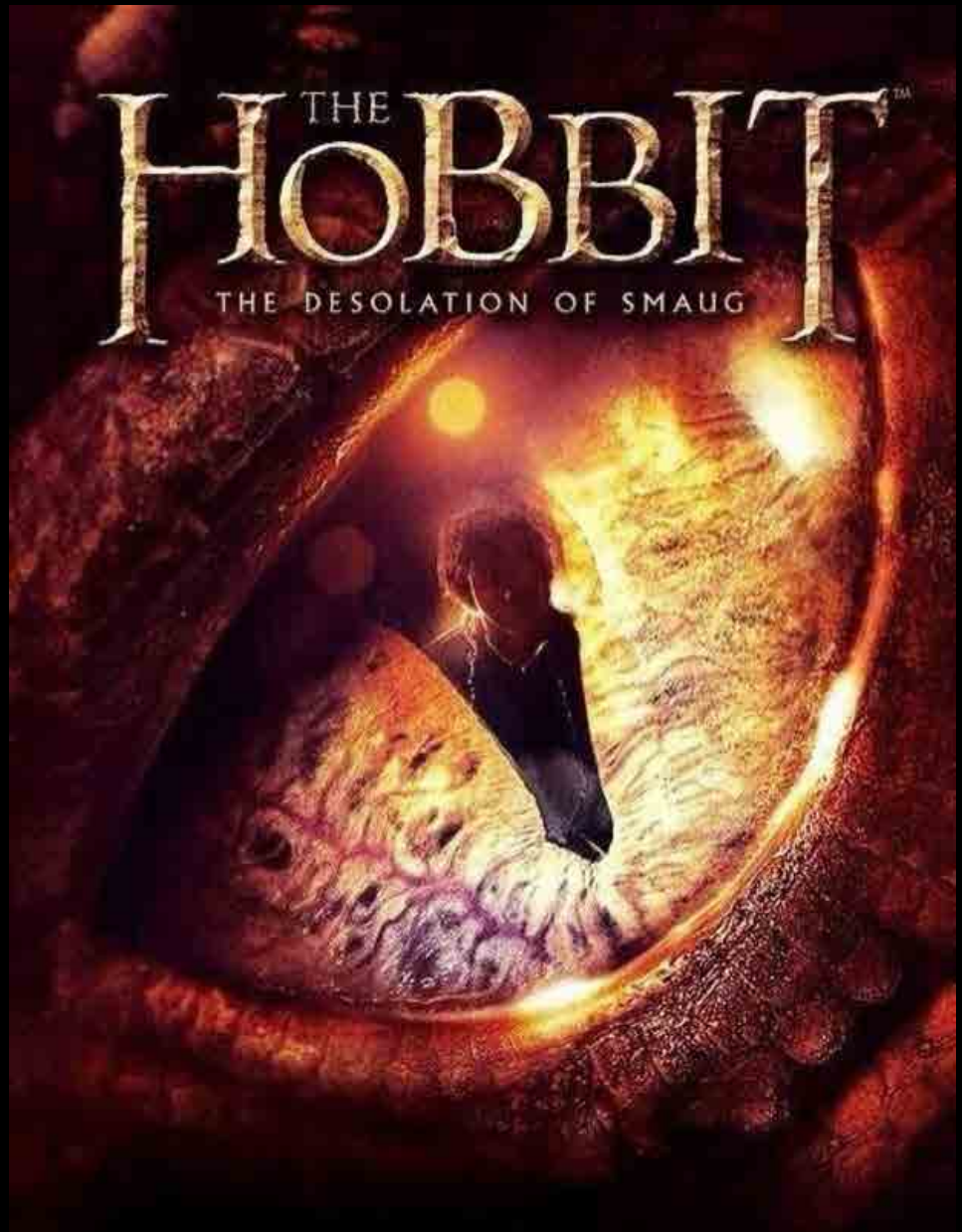


FACEBOOK PAGE : <https://www.facebook.com/pages/bafefit/54768299873>
OFFICIAL SHOP : <https://www.etsy.com/it/people/bafefit>

I have absolutely loved *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* since I read them as a child. If you haven't read them, do it. Do it now. You cannot understand what you are missing out on. I will tell you the films are good, but for the love of all things, I am begging you to read the books.

I had some trouble with the first film. You can read all about it in my review of *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey*. To make it short, I felt as though they tried to take not enough story and stretch it over too long of a period. I felt like they did a much better job with this one. The pacing was good, I didn't get bored. I thought that they had enough story to fill the time that I was in the cinema. It was interesting enough to keep me going and there weren't the same dead spots that I kept noticing in the first one.

After seeing this, I can better understand them breaking it into three films. I was very confused, and admittedly frustrated, after seeing just the first installment. I had thought they were too concerned with the money they'd make and not concerned enough with the quality of their creation. Don't get me wrong, I understand the need to profit from something like



The Hobbit

The Desolation of Smaug



A Film Review
by Beatrice Love
funnyfixation.com

this, but there have to be limits. I'm not so suspicious anymore, though. This one made more sense to me from an artistic viewpoint.

Now for the obligatory, "Why did they make that change from the book. That made no sense!" part of the review.

...Wait, no, I'm not going to do that. There were definitely changes from the book to the film, but I didn't really hate most of them. The one I'm thinking of in particular (The barrel scene, for those of you who know what that is) was completely different from the book. It's easy to see why they changed it, though. The way they did it was a lot more movie-friendly, I think.

I really didn't like what they did with the character of Legolas, though. I didn't mind that he had a part in the film as he was always one of my favourite characters. One of the things that was so amazing about him was that he was different from the other Elves. If you don't know very much about The Hobbit or Lord of the Rings, that may not make a lot of sense. The different races all have very definite traits. The elves are neither a kind nor an open minded group of beings. They are amazing in many ways, but not those ways. Legolas was always wonderful and it made

him even *more* wonderful that he was an elf. In this film, they made him angry and jealous and everything that the elves are. It was like they had someone who looked like and had the name of Legolas, but was a completely different character. It didn't make sense to me and I don't feel bad saying that I had a huge problem with that. I feel betrayed.

I didn't mind the (ridiculous amount of) special effects, but I also couldn't help but notice that they have a very particular style about them. The film is going to look very dated very soon. That isn't an issue for me. Some of my favourite films are horribly dated, but I could see it being a problem for others. Just give a few years and you'll see what I mean if you can't see it now.

As for the actual story, it was The Hobbit. It was a wonderful fantasy for all people, young and old. It was beautiful and suspenseful and adventurous and fun and daring and everything that you need to be entertained. It was worth seeing and I'm sure I will see it again. If fantasy is your thing, check it out for sure. If fantasy isn't your thing, you'll probably still like it. It was fairly well done and I enjoyed it.

Harkness

A Novel by Jesse Wright

Chapter 3

*This is my
This is my
This is my autopsy
So come and lay your hands on me
I have nothing left to hide
In you will confide
(But one of us still clings to his secrets)*

*- Harkness, "Room 413: Part II"
From the album Autopsy*

Chapter 3

Then.

The two young men hustled into Deve and his younger brother Jonathan's spacious room, shutting the door behind them so that Jonathan would be less likely to notice and want to come in and bother them.

It was a sunny May afternoon in Geneseo, Illinois; both boys had been waiting impatiently the whole day at middle school for class to get out so they could meet at Deve's house to discuss more important matters.

"You've got them with you?"

Deve asked grabbing two folding chairs on the far side of the room, near the bunk beds. He opened the chairs and set them down facing each other. Sage, a stocky boy with thick strawberry-blond hair and no shortage of pimples, sat down and pulled his dirty duffel bag onto his lap. "Yeah, they're in here."

"Sweet," Deve said, collapsing down into his own chair.

To look at the two of them you wouldn't imagine they'd naturally be close friends. Deve, tall and athletic, was more of a preppy type that you'd expect to find on a golf course somewhere. Sage always looked like he'd be most comfortable at an unsanctioned wrestling match. Outdoors. In the rain.

Still, the two had become fast friends in the fifth grade, where they'd fittingly met in music class. In an attempt to get the

children thinking about middle school band in a few years, their teacher was assembling the students to play real band instruments as a group. Sage was on percussion, and Deve had intended to play saxophone but had left his instrument at home the first day. Demoted to percussion himself, the two had a great time banging the bejesus out of the drums, and had been virtually inseparable ever since.

Talk of forming their own band soon followed, with Sage already an experienced bass player and Deve having been given an acoustic guitar for Christmas the year before.

All they needed was a name. According to the two boys, having a name and a badass logo took huge precedence over things such as knowing any songs, having a drummer, or ever having played in front of people before. Having a name was an instant injection of relevance. Of legitimacy. A name was something you could carve into a desk at school. A name was something you could impress girls with. A name was essential.

Sage's older brother Mark was dating a aspiring graphic designer. Samantha. A buxom, black haired girl who always seemed a little strung out. She was a reasonably talented artist, though, and had been taking courses at the local junior college and everything. She agreed to draw up potential

logos that he could later review with Deve, in exchange for Sage walking himself to and from the mall, as opposed to having his older brother drive him. That allowed Samantha and Mark the car to themselves for the night. It was considered a win-win. The band names they'd thought up were as follows: Grime, Crossfire, Iron Raven, Dead Men Walking and Harkness. Sage was a big proponent of simply calling themselves Harkness, even though it was Deve's last name, because it was a cool, exotic sounding word that rhymed with Darkness. Deve wasn't sold on the idea, he thought it would be weird to name their band after himself. Still, at Sage's urging, he finally consented to letting Harkness be part of the five names they'd have on their shortlist. Sitting across from his friend, Sage pulled a blue folder out of his duffel bag. In it was a small stack of index cards with a rubber band holding them together. Samantha had drawn up the logos on the unlined side of the cards with a black Sharpie.

"You ready?" Sage asked, pulling the rubber band off and laying the pile face down on his lap.

Deve nodded somberly. His heart was beating very fast. Their whole future could very well be laying in that pile. "Ok, here we go. Entry number one." He held up the first one, for the name Grime. It was

written in a squiggly, oozing font, with drips coming down off of it into puddles at the bottom of the card.

“Hmm. That one’s kind of cool. I might like it better without the actual drips and puddles, though, and just have it be kind of a melting word.”

“I kind of like the puddles,” Sage said with a shrug, angling the card back and looking down at it. “We’ll put that in the maybe pile. Ok, so number two.”

The next logo was somewhat bizarre. It had the word Crossfire in a boxy font, with literal Christian crosses coming out of some of the letters. There were also flames at the bottom of the card.

“Woah. Now that’s a bad idea,” Deve commented.

“I know, right? Are you getting a KKK vibe, too?”

Deve frowned. That hadn’t crossed his mind, but a logo combining crosses and fire was a recipe for some uncomfortable misunderstandings. Even the word “cross fire” seemed a little iffy to him now.

“Let’s toss that one,” Deve said.

Next up was Iron Raven. They both liked it a lot, with a claw coming down from the top of the card. Ravens were cool--Deve was a big Edgar Allen Poe fan--a claw logo was a simple and memorable statement, and the logo worked. They did agree that the name sounded an

awful lot like the actual band “Iron Maiden”, but still, it was cool. They happily added it to the maybe pile.

The Dead Man Walking card was a complete bust. It had little cartoon zombie figures walking around on the card. They nixed it quickly.

“And last, but not least, we have, your namesake,” Sage said, picking up the last card off of his lap.

It was simple. The word Harkness, with the “H” reflected as if it were being hit from below by spotlights at offset angles. There were spires

**It was simple.
The word Harkness,
with the “H”
reflected as if it
were being hit from
below by spotlights
at offset angles.**

coming up from some of the middle letters, and the “s” at the end was accentuated with a jagged spike.

It was beautiful.
It was perfect.

“That’s it,” Deve said quietly, the uncertainty of using his own last name for their band being washed away in an instant. The logo didn’t look like the others; it had still come from the same junior college burnout hand, but it looked like it had been professionally

rendered.

It shone through the card, standing out in bold, heavily shaded letters.

Sage nodded wholeheartedly. “I was hoping you’d say that.”

Now.

Deve’s driver opened the limo door at the specified location on Borchardt Avenue at 5:48 PM on a warm early June evening, less than three weeks after Stu had driven out to Deve’s cabin. He had flown in the previous afternoon and Blueschist Records had put

him up in a stately suite at The Beechwood in their home city of Worcester.

Borchardt avenue was in a working class part of town near the river, a lot of warehouses, cheap hotels and machining factories. His destination at address 1654 was unremarkable, an old, hard-looking eight story building. A man in a Red Sox baseball cap stood smoking near the door, and intercepted him when he got out of the vehicle.

“Mr. Harkness, right on time,” the man said with a smile, shaking his hand. In fact, Deve was almost an hour and a half late. “My name’s Lewis, I’ll escort you upstairs. The others have already arrived.”

Deve had shaved his

mustache and dyed his hair jet black. Though he still didn't look much like a rocker, he looked a world away from how he had three weeks previous. He wore a white American Eagle button up shirt and some slim fit Levis that he had bought the night before.

"Ok," Deve said with a nod to Lewis, then turned to his driver. "Thanks Buckley," he said, handing the toothy red-faced man in a tight suit a ten dollar bill.

Buckley nodded gratefully and handed Lewis a duffel bag with Deve's things. He watched the pair enter the building through the enormous metal door.

"So what is this place?" Deve asked as they walked through a worn-looking empty lobby.

"Just an out of the way place the Blueschist likes to maintain," Lewis replied, walking toward the far right corner of the lobby. "We lease the entire 7th floor to have space when we need a venue-style setting without any fanfare. I think this used to manufacture coffins here, years ago."

Deve frowned and followed Lewis. The man slid a card in a slot by a pair of heavy double-doors, and they clicked loudly before he pushed them open.

"Just this way."

They took a freight elevator up to the seventh floor, enduring a rather rickety and

bumpy ride.

They stepped out into a series of narrow hallways, painted stark white, reminding Deve of hospital corridors. Lewis led him to a small room that had his name written in marker on a sheet of computer paper taped to the door.

"This will be your dressing room, if you need it." Louis said, snapping the light on and setting Deve's bag down on a rough-looking wooden table. "There's a restroom in there as well."

"I think I'm ok for now", Deve replied.

"Very well. I'll return you here afterward to change and shower, if you'd like. Just off this hallway is the performance area."

Lewis led him through a set of doors to a large room that was littered with cardboard boxes. Up ahead was an enormous black curtain that hung down from the ceiling some forty feet above them. The curtain was split directly ahead, the seam held together toward the bottom with an opening that extended upward in a Y shape. The amplified sounds of guitar strings being strummed echoed through the room.

Through the opening Deve could see an elevated platform on the other side of the curtain, with a few people walking around on it.

Lewis led him forward to the curtain, separating it where it had been held together

with velcro.

"You ready?"

"Guess so," Deve said dryly. Opening the curtain, Lewis escorted him through.

The warehouse space was huge, easily large enough to hold a respectable concert. The room was sparsely populated, however, with technicians bustling around here and there. Instruments were set up on stage, and one of the techs was speaking into a walkee-talkie about lighting.

Deve's heart caught in his throat when he saw it.

There, above the stage, in white lettering on a black background, was the word. Harkness.

The logo was almost identical to the way Samantha had drawn it with a Sharpie on an index card all those years ago.

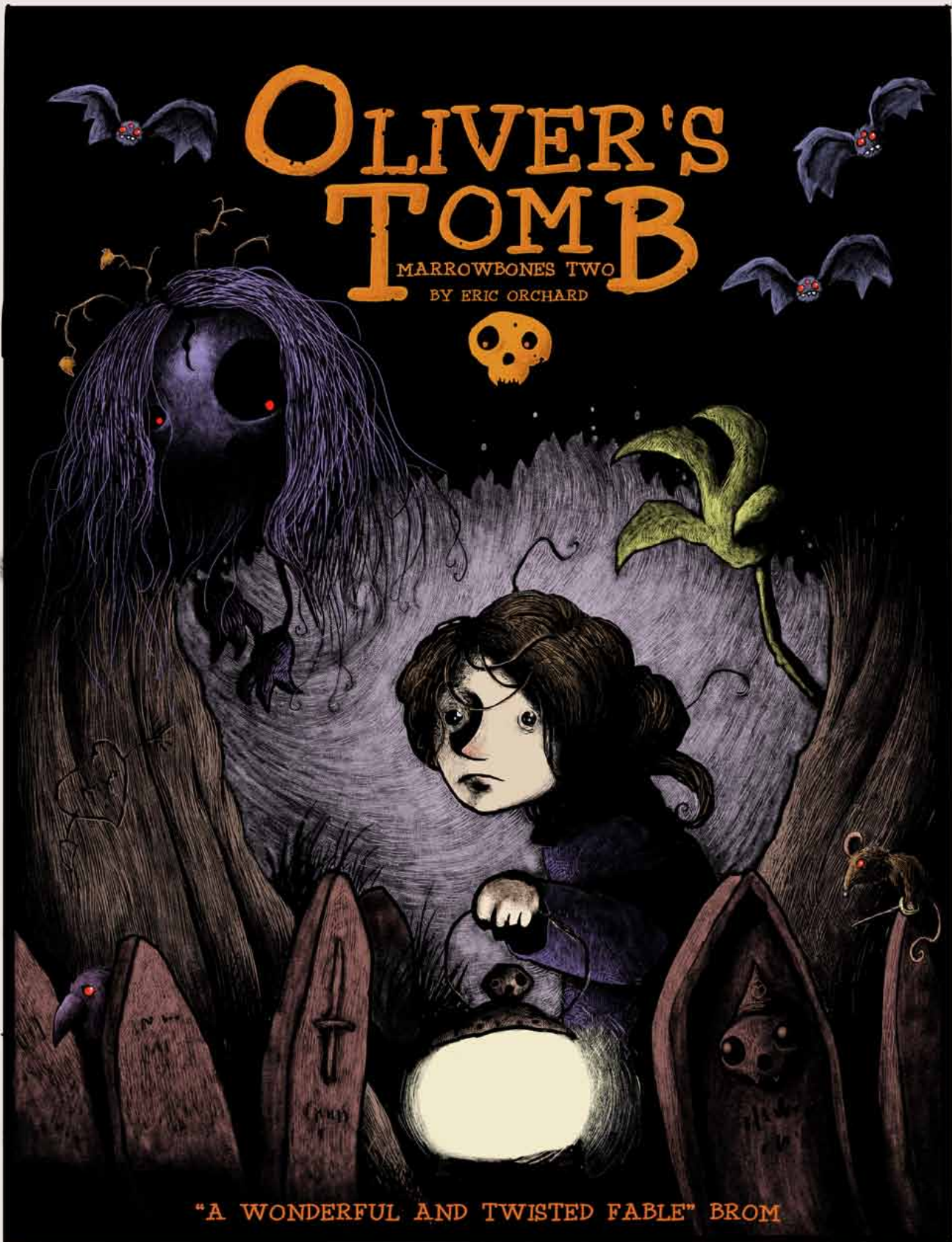
Deve's throat clicked when he saw it. The familiar logo flashed like a firecracker in his brain. His mind immediately went back to his childhood bedroom. He and Sage sitting in old folding chairs. His friend holding up that card, with that word, in that font.

The room spun around him. He struggled to keep his balance. The sign stood overhead, looking down, him unable to look away.

Oh Sage, he thought to himself. How am I going to do this?

With an enormous amount of effort he forced his eyes closed.

The world reluctantly went black.



For more of Eric's art check out his blog at ericorchard.blogspot.com

Loook.....
 people
 are talking about
 Marrowbones!



"A wonderful and twisted tale"

Brom

"(issue one) was enough to convince
 me there are more stories of
 Marrowbones Swamp I want to read"

Forbidden Planet
 International Blog

"You should get this!"

Troll In The
 Corner

"Fantastically illustrated"

Malta Comic Con

"Creepy fun!"

Todd Lockwood

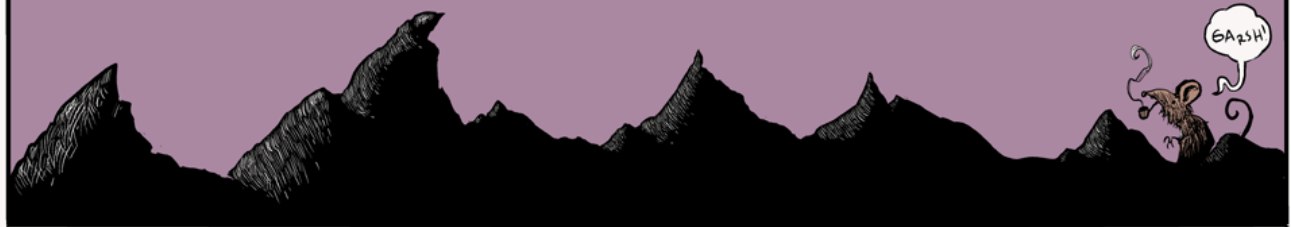
"His characters are alive and there's a
 real sense of intimacy between them.

After seeing the map at
 the end of the book, the only
 thought I had was "I can't wait
 to see what issue two holds!"

Behind The Panels

"his ability to effortlessly merge
 innocence with a
 gothic aesthetic
 is a wonder to behold"

Geek Of Oz



A QUICK NOTE ON CHRONOLOGY

FIRST OFF, THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR BUYING MARROWBONES ISSUE 2! I HOPE YOU HAVE AS MUCH FUN READING IT AS I DID MAKING IT. IF YOU READ ISSUE ONE I WANT TO LET YOU KNOW THAT ISSUE TWO COMES BEFORE ISSUE ONE CHRONOLOGICALLY. THERE! CONTINUITY ISSUE SOLVED.

ERIC





'SIC GORGIAMUS ALLOS SUBJECTUS NUNC'
ADDAMS FAMILY CREDO





Welcome
back kids!



Tonight, we
visit that
tangled garden
of horror -
Crownsnest
Cemetery.



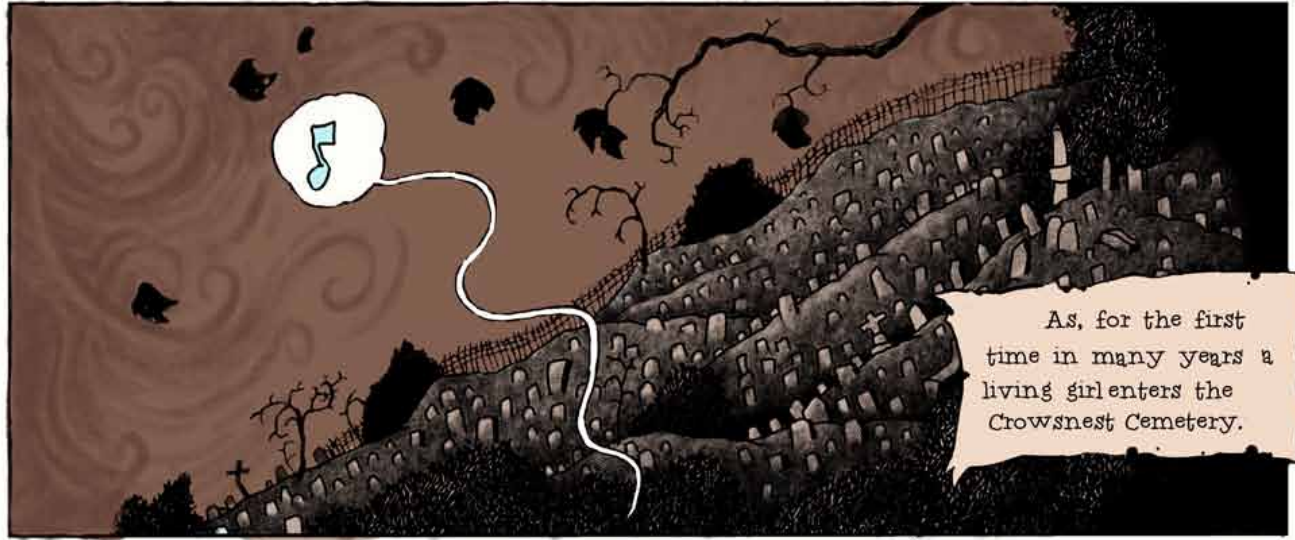
Nora has been
working at
Ravensbeard
Inn for a week.
And while
she loves it,
Marrowbones can
be a lonely place
for a little girl.



Despite
all the bustling
guests and one
distracted werewolf
Nora has no
friends here.



She doesn't
realize it yet
but she is starting
to get quite lonely.
And this is
where tonight's
tale begins...



To be continued.....

One and the Same: A Collection

by Kelly Sarna

The Secret River

I arrive at the hidden field right on time. We always meet here because it is not only private and secluded but also beautiful. This time however, that is not the case. I land on the luscious green grass with a thud and turn my head to find what looks to be some sort of family party in the midst. There is what appears to be dozens of people all standing under this giant gazebo, consuming heaps amount of food. From the looks of it there is everything imaginable displayed on multiple tables. Cookies, Pies, Vegetables, Fruits, Meats, you name it, it's there. A grill is even located in a small corner where I see a man wearing a chef's hat and a apron that reads, "Kiss the Cook", he's grilling hot dogs, burgers, and brats to perfection.

I find this huge amount of activity intriguing. Normally when we meet no one is there. I'm quite bummed that we won't have privacy, yet I'm fascinated. This gives me plenty of opportunity to people watch while I wait for her.

I head on over to the playground that is located off to the right of the gazebo. I glance around the park. Even the park is filled with little children running around and screaming everywhere. The park consists of two slides, monkey bars, and a huge tower that overlooks the whole park. I remember coming here when I was little and swinging on the swings and imagining I was flying. The swings have always been my favorite past time and still is. Because of this

I hop on one of the swings and start the motions of moving my legs back and forth. I must admit, it is a beautiful day for a picnic.

While on the swing, I try to get a better look at the family outing. I see the women all located on one corner, probably talking about the latest episode of Glee or what's "in season." I then notice the men are all hunched in a corner, probably swapping stories of football scores and automobiles.

Still on the swing, I begin to wonder how long I've been waiting. I peer at my watch. It reads: 2:20pm. She's 20 minutes late, I think to myself.

As if on cue, a seventeen year old teenage girl by the name of Arianna Cromwell comes running down the big steep hill, her wavy, long blonde hair dancing in different directions from the wind. "Lily!" she yells while frantically throwing her hands up in the air, trying to get my attention.

The moment I see her, a huge smile spreads across my face. God, I love this girl, I thought to myself. I try to impress her by jumping off the swing, but only manage to fall face forward on the ground. I hear Arianna giggling in the distance. Great, I've made a complete and total fool of myself in front of the woman of my dreams.

"Are you ok, Lily?" Arianna asks me, while lifting me up.

"I'm fine. Mortified, but fine." I try my best to fix my hair, and get all the woodchips off of clothing, hair and yes even my mouth. "I'm such a dork."

"But you're my dork." Arianna says while lightly kissing me on the lips. She smiles. But that smile

quickly fades when she glances around at her surroundings. "Um, Lil, I think we might need to relocate."

I look around, and sure enough the people over at the gazebo have stopped what they were doing and are now gawking at us, with open mouths and all. The children have stepped away from the park and are now rushing to their parents. I can't tell what has shocked them more, the fact that I fell humiliatingly off the swings, or the fact that we're a gay couple.

The entire family outing continues to stare and gawk at us. At this time I start to get rather uncomfortable. "Maybe, we should go somewhere else." I whisper into Arianna's ear.

"No, Lily. It's fine." she reassures me. She grabs both of my hands and pulls herself and I up off the ground. Then she does the unthinkable next. She runs over to the group of people and yells, "Excuse me, rudeness! Enough with the gawking and staring for Christ's sake! We're gay teens and are in love, get over it!"

I know Arianna is only doing this to protect me, but I still cringe at the fact that she's basically "outing" us to a bunch of strangers. Arianna has always been there to pick me up when I've fallen, or has fought off my bullies for me. I look at the group of people at the gazebo. After Arianna's little display, they just appear insulted and fortunately continue to go about their business.

When Arianna gets back to me, I say, "Arianna, you didn't have to do that."

"Yes, I did. They were picking on my little Lily Pad."

I smile at the sound of my nickname. "Well, let's at least go somewhere more private, like down by the river."

Arianna shrugs. "Ok, whatever you say." To make the families even more uncomfortable, Arianna entwines her fingers into mine as we walk down by the river.

The river is even more gorgeous than the overall park itself. There are dozens of trees all around and a nice bench right beneath them. The river is also quite clean and free of litter and garbage.

Arianna and I sit down on the bench and she rests her head on my shoulder.

"I love you, Lily Pad."

"I love you too, Annie."

Arianna giggles at the sound of her nickname. She lifts her head up off my shoulder, and kisses me softly on the lips.

A huge smile spreads across my face. God, I love this girl, I think to myself yet again. We may have only been secretly together for two months, but I know that I absolutely adore this girl.

We peer out at the river and its tranquility. Over here, it's peaceful, away from everybody. This place is ours; our Secret River.

The Talk

"Lily, don't you ever get sick of this?"

"Sick of what?"

Arianna lifted her head off of me and looked directly into my eyes. "Sick of all the secrecy. How can this relationship work when no one knows about us?"

I wasn't sure what to say to that. "You know why we can't do that."

"Yeah, I know. I know. You're

not ready. But we've been coming here for months! I want to be able to take you on a date and wear cute fancy dresses and buy ridiculously expensive food. I want to walk down the school halls, see you and yell, "That's my girlfriend!" really loud. Don't you want that?"

"I..." I tried to respond. Again, I had no clue how to answer her question. I mean I do, I really do want to go public, but..." I grabbed her hand to relieve the tension, but she pulled it away.

"But..." Arianna looked really angry. No, not angry. Hurt. I know I'm breaking her heart; I just know it.

"But, I just can't go through with it, I don't know." At this time I got really uncomfortable, that's something I've never felt with Arianna. I've always been able to be myself around her...but not now.

Arianna slowly got up off the bench, and moved closer to the river. I noticed she was staring at the calm gentle movements of the water. This private place may be quiet and serene, but the tension was so loud, it was almost deafening.

Arianna's back was away from me. All I saw was her wavy, blonde hair that was perfectly still on her back. Oh, how I wanted to kiss her on the cheek, stroke her hair and confess my undying love for her. But I knew that I couldn't.

Suddenly, Arianna spoke. "Is it someone else, is that it?" Her back was still to me, making her words muffled and soft.

I got up off the bench, walked towards her and motioned for her to face me. I noticed a single tear was rolling down her cheek. I have never seen her like this. Normally she's loud, outspoken and isn't afraid of anything. To see her like this was horrible. It was

like seeing a ferocious mountain lion turn into a scared little mouse. She continued to speak. "What, do you not want to be seen with me? Is that it?"

I shook my head. "That's not it at all! I want to be with you, really!"

"Well you have a funny way of showing it."

I then confessed the real reason as to why I don't want to go public. "All my life I've been known as Lily, the smart, goody-too shoes; the role model if you will. If people were to find out about us, no one would treat me the same. Instead of being known as Lily: the smart one, I'd be known as Lily, the gay one." I looked into Arianna's sad eyes and distraught expression immediately knew I had said the wrong thing.

"Well, glad to know how you feel about us gays. What was I to you? Just your gay little experiment? You're not the smart one, Lily. You're a manipulative little bitch!" Arianna began to walk away.

"Please don't leave Arianna! I didn't mean it like that!" I said with tears in my eyes.

Arianna couldn't even stand to be in the same place with me, something that I never thought possible.

As Arianna was leaving the beautiful serene river, I cried out, "Wait, Arianna! I LOVE YOU!" It was too late. Arianna was gone, leaving me broken-hearted. I dropped down on the ground and cried amongst myself.

The First Meeting

Here I am waiting for Arianna at our secret river, but she's nowhere in sight. "Figures," I sigh to myself.

It has been two days since our

argument and Arianna still hasn't said two words to me. I don't blame her though. I did say some pretty harsh things to her; words that I completely regret now. It's not that I don't want to be in a relationship with Arianna, I do. I really do. I just don't think I can handle the mocking and teasing. I can see it now.

I'll be walking down the school hallways, simply minding my own business (perhaps holding Arianna's hand), when random people throughout the halls will call me names such as, "dyke", "gay", "fag" and countless others. I don't think I can go through with that. I remember when I first met Arianna; she didn't seem afraid of anything. It was around Mid-March and I had just transferred to North Valley High School.

"Class, we have a new student joining us today. Her name is Lily Collins and she's transferred here from West Valley High School." Mrs. Flanders, my new English teacher said to the entire classroom full of students.

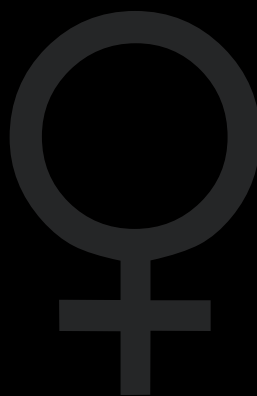
There I was standing in the front of the room, completely mortified. I really hoped I didn't have to tell the class information about myself, something that I had done in every other class.

As if she read my mind, Mrs. Flanders said, "Now, Lily, tell the class a little bit about yourself."

I froze. Man, I hate talking in front of large crowds. Especially my peers; they could easily make fun of me later on in the hallways. "Well...I'm Lily." I started to say, but the nervousness started to take over. "I just transferred here from...um, from West Valley High School."

"I just said that. Have any interesting facts about yourself?" Mrs. Flanders obviously wasn't

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making me sit down until I gave her a stupid little interesting fact.

I tried to thinking of anything I could say, but my mind was coming up blank. "Well, I'm really good in Math and Science, that's partly why I transferred, the AP classes. That and the fact that we moved to a different house that was in this school district."

Great, I'm rambling, I thought to myself. This usually only happened when I was scared or nervous, which I currently was.

I stared out at all of my fellow classmates. Of course no one was paying attention to anything I had to say. Except this girl that was seated in the far left side of the room. She had wavy blonde curly hair that was pulled up in a high ponytail and her clothing style was a white t-shirt with a black leather jacket over it and regular blue jeans. From the looks of it, she seemed to actually be smiling at me. She probably just thinks I'm an acting like an idiot or something.

"Lily, you can take the seat over there by Arianna." Mrs. Flanders stated, pointing in the direction of my seat. I walked over at my seat, and I just so happened to be sitting next to the girl that was freakishly smiling at me earlier.

Great, I bet she's going to torment me throughout the entire class, I thought to myself. But it was actually the opposite.

The girl with the wavy blonde hair, stuck out her hand and said while smiling, "Hi, I'm Arianna Cromwell."

I didn't want to seem rude, so I politely shook her hand. "Lily Collins."

"Excuse me, Collins, Cromwell. We're in the middle of class. The introductions can wait for later." Mrs. Flanders yelled.

Arianna simply rolled her eyes and ignored her. "So, you transferred from West Valley? I know a few people that go there." She tried to say more, but I interrupted her.

"Um, sorry, but I'm trying to focus on the lesson. Can this wait?" I tried my best to be as quiet as possible. I always hate breaking the rules. Call me a goody-too shoes, but I hate getting in trouble.

"Whatever." Arianna stated and faced in the direction of the blackboard.

I smiled at that fond memory. Oh, how rambunctious Arianna was and still is. She's never been afraid of anything. I smiled thinking about the first real inkling I had of Arianna practically stating she liked me.

I was lounging on her bed, Arianna was arranging her clothes a certain order in her dresser. We had just gotten back from a trip to the mall.

"Did you see that guy totally checking you out?" I stated, remembering the cashier that couldn't keep his eyes off of Arianna when we were grabbing a coffee from Starbucks.

It took a moment for Arianna to reply. "No, can't say that I did."

I was confused. "How could you have missed it. He was practically drooling over you."

Arianna turned away from her dresser. "Oh, no he wasn't!" She smiled while stepping away from her dresser and plopping down next to me on her bed.

"Ok, then fine. What guys are you into? The skaters, the coffee house poets? No, you like the nerdy guys don't you?" I giggled. Normally I would never act this way in front of any of my other friends, but with Arianna it was different. She made me more outgoing. It's like I could be the

real me in front of her.

Arianna sat up and groaned. "Guys are such losers! They think the word 'Hello' means they can get in any women's pants. Like we're that easy. Please!"

I smiled.

"I'm just glad they're not my chose." Arianna laid back down on her bed and it was then that I noticed her hand "accidentally" was on top of mine. Arianna smiled at me. But this was different, almost flirtatious.

Caught in a awkward position, I didn't know what to do except laugh awkwardly. "What time is it?" I asked, hoping this would get rid of the awkward tension.

Arianna grabbed her cellphone off her nightstand. "5:30pm, why?"

I jumped off the bed in a hurry. "I should probably leave."

"Um, ok."

I quickly grabbed my belongings and head out of Arianna's bedroom.

I remember that moment like it was yesterday, when in fact it was two years ago. I remember feeling awkward and uncomfortable about Arianna's hand touching mine. I didn't know what to think of it. But now how I would wish for her hand to touch mine, and her lips to kiss mine. Hell, I would love to just speak to her. So I pulled out my phone and dialed her number.

"Hello?"

"Arianna, I'm so sorry. Please forgive me?"

The Encounter

Arianna and Lily had thought they had the place to themselves. But they were completely wrong when Arianna's mother, Alena, opened the door to Arianna's room and came across them in her bedroom...

exposed.

"Oh my god!" Alena Cromwell muttered. She couldn't believe what she was seeing.

"Mom!" her daughter, Arianna gasped. Arianna and her partner, Lily, had previously been exposed before her mother had opened the door. Now they stood awkwardly before her in only their bras and underwear.

"Get out!" Alena screamed.

Arianna grabbed hold of her girlfriend, Lily. She whispered into her ear, "You don't have to go, I'll protect you. I'm so sorry for this."

But her mother didn't grab hold of Lily. Instead she has grabbed Arianna.

"You're not welcome here anymore. Both of you are forbidden to step foot in this house ever again!"

Arianna tried to resist her mother's pulling and pushing. When she finally managed to be free of her grip, Arianna looked directly into her mother's eyes and said, "No, I'm not leaving. You can't make me."

Alena did the first thing that came to her head. She slapped her own daughter hard across the face. Here her daughter was in her bedroom fooling around with this girl. She should have seen the signs and hints; they were all there. The secretiveness, the time she had found a flier for a gay club in her bedroom.

Arianna couldn't believe she had been kicked out of her own house. Not only that, but she couldn't believe that her mother had done such a thing.

There, she was, with her partner, Lily, outside her house, wearing nothing but bras and underwear. She just wanted to cry and scream, but she knew she had to put on a brave face, at least for Lily's sake.

So she grabbed a hold of Lily's hand and walked her further down the sidewalk. Where they were going, she hadn't a clue.

ALDENIRA Photography

We are Aleksandra Devic and Nikola Radovic, students at Academy of Arts in Novi Sad (Serbia). After a few years of solo career in photography and art, now we are united in this project called ALDENIRA Photography. We are trying to mix fashion photography with some kind of conceptual photography. We are mostly making the clothing and by that giving a more unique look to our work. We are still at the beginning of this project so our models are mostly our friends. Plans for the future? Well... hoping to grow into industry standard artists and to be inspiration for some new young people who are getting into photography world.





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