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JOE BENITEZ'S

THE DEVIL IN THE LAKE #1

Lady & Mechanika

BENITEZ
CHEN
OUM
SOTELO
HEISLER



HIDDEN AMONGST THE FURTHEST REACHES OF THE SIBERIAN MOUNTAINS, SURROUNDED BY TOWERING PEAKS AND SHROUDED BY SUPERSTITION, LIES LAKE LABYNKYR.

THOUGH IT RESIDES IN ONE OF THE COLDEST REGIONS KNOWN TO MAN, ITS WATERS NEVER FREEZE, EVEN IN THE HEART OF WINTER.

THE FEW VILLAGERS TENACIOUS ENOUGH TO DWELL IN THIS FRIGID DOMAIN STAY FAR AWAY, AND WARN THEIR CHILDREN TO NEVER SWIM ITS WATERS.

FOR THEY HAVE ALL HEARD THE TALES PASSED DOWN FOR GENERATIONS UPON GENERATIONS, TALES ABOUT SOMETHING LURKING WITHIN THE DEPTHS OF THE LAKE.

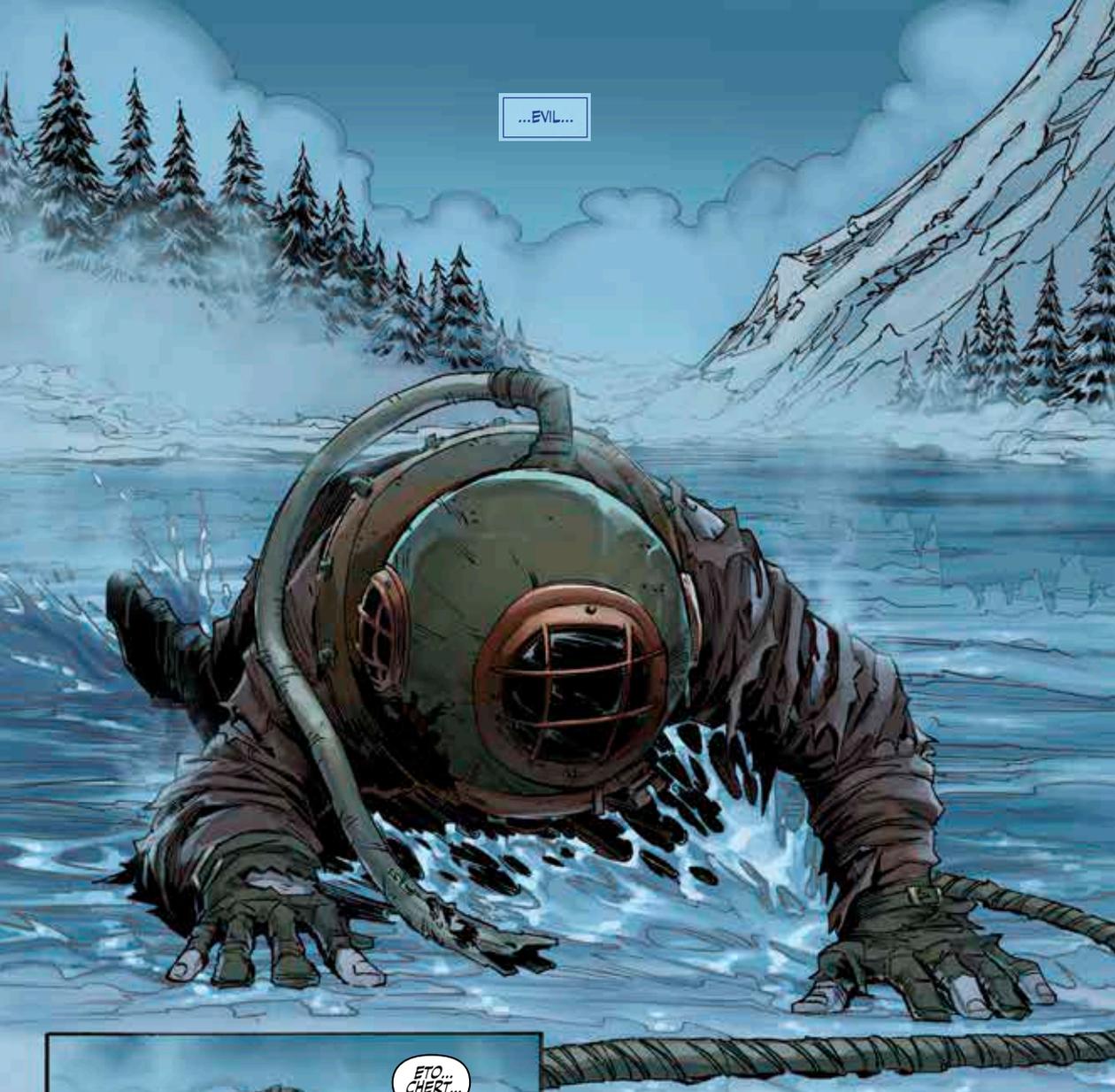
SOMETHING ANCIENT...

SOMETHING VAST...

SOMETHING...



...EVIL...



ETO...
CHERT...



CHER...r...



LONDON HOME OF MARIA ALEXANDROVNA, GRAND DUCHESS OF RUSSIA.

...THE LABYNKYRSKY
CHERT, THEY CALL IT. THE
DEVIL IN THE LAKE.

AND YOUR
FRIEND WENT
IN SEARCH OF
THIS LAKE
MONSTER?

WITH HER
HUSBAND, YES.
THEY--

--NO, NO, NOT
THE RASPBERRY!
I WANTED THE
STRAWBERRY BISCUITS.
HAVE COOK PREPARE
A NEW TRAY.

AT
ONCE, YOUR
HIGHNESS.

THIS ALL STARTED, YOU SEE,
WHEN ONE OF THE LOCAL FOLK
FOUND A FOSSIL BY THE LAKE
SHORE, A GIANT TOOTH OVER A
FOOT LONG. ONLY IT TURNED
OUT NOT TO BE A FOSSIL
AT ALL.

THE RUSSIAN
IMPERIAL UNIVERSITY
TESTED IT AND DISCOVERED
IT WAS ONLY A FEW YEARS
OLD. THE SCIENTISTS
WERE ALL ABUZZ.

IMAGINE IT! A LIVING
DINOSAUR! IT WOULD EXPLAIN
ALL THE LEGENDS AND RUMORS
OF A MONSTER IN THE LAKE. THE
UNIVERSITY BEGAN PLANNING AN
EXPEDITION RIGHT AWAY, TO SEARCH
THE LAKE FOR MORE EVIDENCE
OF THESE CREATURES.

AN UNDISCOVERED
SPECIES, THEY CONJECTURED,
POSSIBLY FROM THE PREHISTORIC
AGE, SURVIVING FOR MILLENNIA IN
THIS REMOTE AND ISOLATED
BODY OF WATER!

MY FRIEND
ELIZABETH FAIRFIELD,
MRS. OWEN NOW, HER HUSBAND
IS A PALEONTOLOGIST HERE AT
CAMBRIDGE. WHEN HE HEARD THE
NEWS, WELL, NAUGHT WOULD DO
BUT HE MUST TAKE PART
IN THAT EXPEDITION.

SO ELIZABETH CONTACTED ME, AND I
CONTACTED THE IMPERIAL UNIVERSITY.
I ARRANGED FOR THEM TO JOIN THE
EXPEDITION, AND THEY BROUGHT
THEIR SON ALONG, A LITTLE BOY
OF ONLY EIGHT YEARS.

THEY TREATED IT LIKE A
HOLIDAY, A HARMLESS ADVENTURE.
I DON'T THINK ANYONE BELIEVED
THEY WOULD FIND AN ACTUAL
DINOSAUR.

BUT THEY DID?
THEY FOUND
SOME KIND OF
CREATURE IN
THE LAKE?

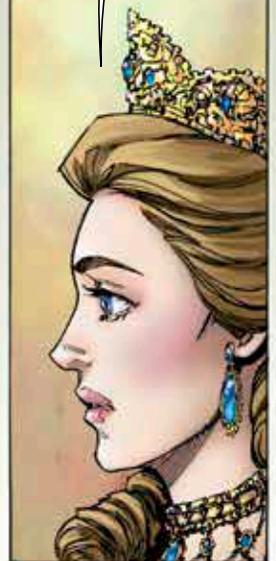
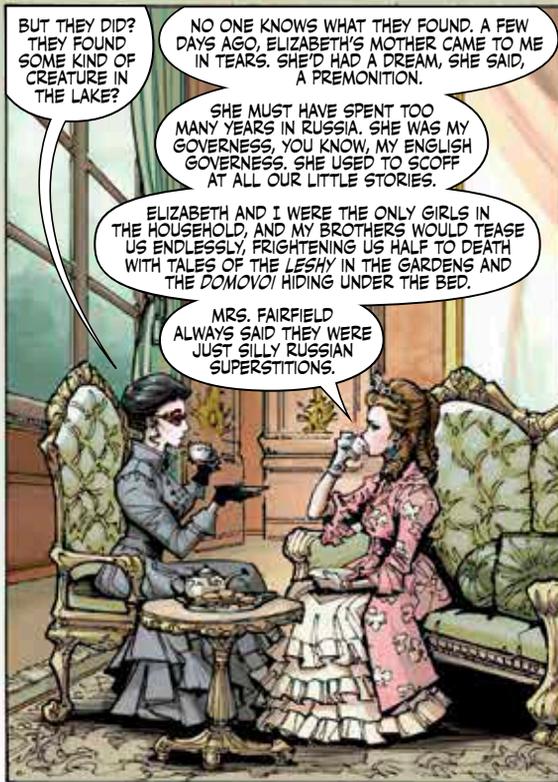
NO ONE KNOWS WHAT THEY FOUND. A FEW
DAYS AGO, ELIZABETH'S MOTHER CAME TO ME
IN TEARS. SHE'D HAD A DREAM, SHE SAID,
A PREMONITION.

SHE MUST HAVE SPENT TOO
MANY YEARS IN RUSSIA. SHE WAS MY
GOVERNESS, YOU KNOW, MY ENGLISH
GOVERNESS. SHE USED TO SCOFF
AT ALL OUR LITTLE STORIES.

ELIZABETH AND I WERE THE ONLY GIRLS IN
THE HOUSEHOLD, AND MY BROTHERS WOULD TEASE
US ENDLESSLY, FRIGHTENING US HALF TO DEATH
WITH TALES OF THE *LESZY* IN THE GARDENS AND
THE *DOMOVOI* HIDING UNDER THE BED.

MRS. FAIRFIELD
ALWAYS SAID THEY WERE
JUST SILLY RUSSIAN
SUPERSTITIONS.

BUT NOW HERE SHE WAS,
SPEAKING OF DREAMS AND
PREMONITIONS! SHE WAS
CONVINCED SOMETHING
HORRIBLE HAD HAPPENED
TO HER DAUGHTER.





SO I REACHED OUT TO THE UNIVERSITY, JUST TO ALLAY HER FEARS, I THOUGHT. BUT THEY SAID THEY HADN'T HEARD FROM THE EXPEDITION IN WEEKS!

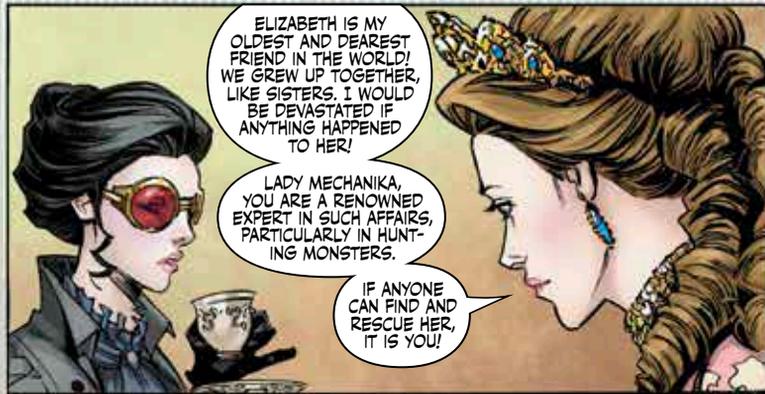
THEY HAD BEEN SENDING REPORTS EVERY DAY, USING ONE OF THOSE AIR TELEGRAPH DEVICES. BUT THEN ONE DAY, ALL COMMUNICATION SUDDENLY STOPPED.

THE UNIVERSITY WANTED TO SEND A SEARCH PARTY, BUT THE LAKE IS IN A VERY REMOTE LOCATION, ACCESSIBLE ONLY BY LAND, THROUGH MOUNTAIN PASSES WHERE THERE ARE NO ROADS.

WITH WINTER COMING, THE JOURNEY WOULD BE TOO DIFFICULT AND TOO DANGEROUS.



BUT NOT FOR YOU.



ELIZABETH IS MY OLDEST AND DEAREST FRIEND IN THE WORLD! WE GREW UP TOGETHER, LIKE SISTERS. I WOULD BE DEVASTATED IF ANYTHING HAPPENED TO HER!

LADY MECHANIKA, YOU ARE A RENOWNED EXPERT IN SUCH AFFAIRS, PARTICULARLY IN HUNTING MONSTERS.

IF ANYONE CAN FIND AND RESCUE HER, IT IS YOU!



I SHALL DO MY BEST, YOUR HIGHNESS, BUT YOU MUST UNDERSTAND...



IF THERE IS SOME KIND OF MONSTER IN THAT LAKE, I'M SORRY TO SAY BUT IT MAY ALREADY BE TOO LATE.

I UNDERSTAND. I PRAY THAT IS NOT SO, BUT IF IT IS, THEN YOU MUST AVENGE HER! FIND THE CREATURE AND DESTROY IT!



I'VE HIRED A GUIDE WHO CAN TAKE YOU TO THE LAKE, AND TWO OF MY OWN IMPERIAL GUARDS WILL ACCOMPANY YOU. I'VE ALREADY TAKEN CARE OF ALL THE ARRANGEMENTS.



YOU USUALLY WORK WITH A PARTNER, DO YOU NOT? I ASSUME HE WILL BE ACCOMPANYING YOU AS WELL?

ACTUALLY, I DON'T THINK MR. LEWIS WILL BE COMING ON THIS TRIP, NO.

WHY EVER NOT? I MUST SAY, I WOULD FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE IF THERE WERE TWO MONSTER EXPERTS ON THE JOB.



IT...IT'S COMPLICATED...

SIBERIA.



DEVUSHKA...



HERE FOR YOU.

OH! MY HANDS DON'T NEED...



VERY, VERY COLD OUTSIDE.



THANK YOU. SPASIBO.

ARE YOU LADY MECHANIKA?



LADY MECHANIK