

DEADLY TALES OF THE GUNSLINGER

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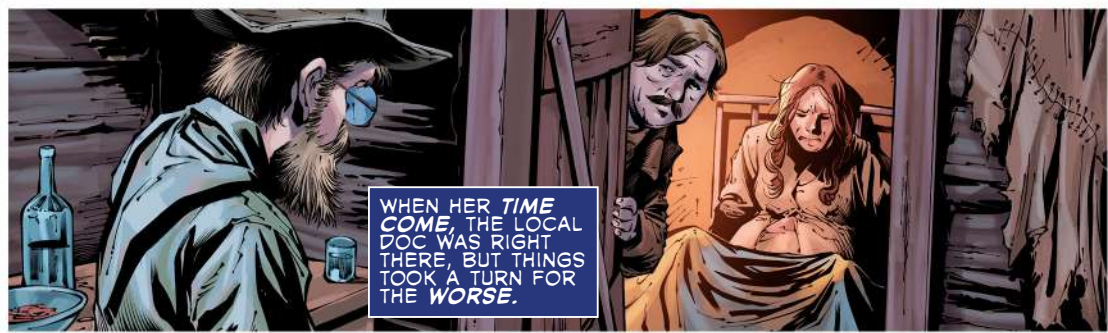
I BEEN DIGGIN' IN THE EARTH
SINCE BACK 'FORE **DANZIG** WAS
EVEN CALLED A TOWN. SEEN THREE
BOSSSES COME AND GO, BUT
RECKON THEY KEPT ME ON 'CAUSE
THERE AIN'T NO FELLA KNOWS
THESE TUNNELS LIKE **I DO**.

A MINE'S GOT A WAY OF
TALKIN' TO A MAN IF HE
LISTENS CLOSE--STONE
AND DIRT WHISPERIN'
THEIR **SECRETS** TO THEM
THAT'S PUT IN THEIR YEARS.



THE MINE'S BEEN GOOD TO ME—LET ME SET UP A SWEET LITTLE **HOMESTEAD**. NOTHING TOO FANCY, BUT IT WAS **OURS**.

AND MY **EILEEN**, BLESS HER HEART. HEAVY WITH OUR FIRST YOUNG'UN, BELLY AS ROUND AS A SEPTEMBER **HARVEST MOON**.



WHEN HER **TIME** CAME, THE LOCAL **DOC** WAS RIGHT THERE, BUT THINGS TOOK A TURN FOR THE **WORSE**.



I WAS STANDIN' JUST OUTSIDE THE ROOM, LISTENING TO EILEEN'S CRIES, LIKE A **KNIFE TO THE GUT**.

BUT THEN—IT WEREN'T JUST **HER** NO MORE.



I SHOVED THAT DOOR WIDE OPEN, NEARLY LOST MY SENSES AT THE SIGHT BEFORE ME LIKE SOME **NIGHTMARE**. **DOC** WAS ON THE GROUND TORN UP LIKE SOMETHING WILD GOT HOLD OF HIM.



MY SWEET EILEEN, SHE JUST LAY THERE, SKIN WHITE AS A **DESERT BONE**, EYES WIDE IN **TERROR**.

I HADN'T YET SEEN WHAT IT WAS SHE WAS LOOKING AT.

I WAS TOO **AFRAID**.

SHE SCREAMED AT ME TO RID HER OF THE VERY THING SHE BROUGHT INTO THE WORLD. DESPITE ALL THE HORROR, DESPITE ALL THE BLOOD, I STILL SAW *MY* FLESH AND BLOOD SITTING THERE. I TRIED TO MAKE HER SEE WHAT I DID, BUT SHE WOULDN'T HEAR IT.

SHE WANTED IT
GONE FOR GOOD.



I TOLD HER TO REST, THAT I WOULD HANDLE IT ALL...AND *I DID.*



I STRIPPED DOWN THE DOC'S HORSE AND BURIED DOC AND EVERYTHING WITH HIM JUST OUTSIDE THE FIELD.



BEGAN DIGGING A SECOND SMALLER GRAVE BUT I *COULDN'T* BRING MYSELF TO DO WHAT MY WIFE WAS ASKING.



IT WAS *STILL* MY CHILD.



I THEN TOOK THE BABY AND RODE OUT TO THE MINE.

