

STOP ME IF YOU'VE HEARD THIS ONE BEFORE...


MY NAME'S JACKIE AND I LIKE SHARP SUITS, FAST CARS, LARGE CALIBRE HANDGUNS AND EATING IN EXPENSIVE RESTAURANTS. MY SECOND FAVORITE PASTIME IS DRIVING BEAUTIFUL WOMEN TO THE EXPENSIVE RESTAURANTS IN THE FAST CARS, AND WEARING THE SHARP SUITS SO I CAN IMPRESS THEM ENOUGH TO GET THEM INTO BED.

MY FAVORITE PASTIME IS GOING TO BED WITH THEM.


MY DAD DIED BEFORE I WAS BORN, WHICH IS A SHAME BECAUSE RIGHT NOW I'D QUITE LIKE TO KILL THE SON OF A BITCH MYSELF--BUT MORE ON THAT LATER.

I GOT TAKEN IN BY MY UNCLE FRANKIE, KNOWN TO HIS FRIENDS AS BUTCHER FRANCHETTI AND TO HIS ENEMIES AS "OH GOD NO, DON'T KILL MY CHILDREN, DON FRANCHETTI". UNCLE FRANKIE'S A GOOD GUY WITH A BAD TEMPER WHO SOMETIMES HAS ONE OR TWO PROBLEMS...

SO SOMETIMES HE GETS ME TO SOLVE THOSE PROBLEMS FOR HIM, WHICH I FIGURE IS THE LEAST I CAN DO. WHAT WITH MAKING ME PART OF HIS FAMILY AND ALL.




SO THIS IS ALL FINE UNTIL A COUPLE DAYS AGO, WHEN I TURN TWENTY-ONE AND FIND OUT I'M THE LATEST INHERITOR OF THE **DARKNESS**--WHICH IS AN ANCIENT POWER ENABLING ME TO DO JUST ABOUT ANYTHING, SO LONG AS IT'S VIOLENT AND MESSY AND SCREWS PEOPLE UP.




THIS IS GOOD BECAUSE IT MAKES ME ONE SERIOUS BADASS, BUT IT'S BAD BECAUSE IT TURNS OUT THAT ONLY ONE GUY PER GENERATION CAN WIELD THE DARKNESS--AND IT'S PASSED ON BY BIRTH. AS SOON AS YOU CONCEIVE, THE CHILD INHERITS IT, AND YOU DROP DEAD.

AS OF NOW, MY SECOND FAVORITE PASTIME IS IRRELEVANT AND MY FAVORITE ONE IS MORE DANGEROUS THAN RUSSIAN ROULETTE.




BUT MY PROBLEMS ARE ONLY JUST BEGINNING. THE **BROTHERHOOD OF DARKNESS**, A BUNCH OF GOOFS WHO WEAR BLACK AND PROBABLY READ TOO MANY CRAPPY FANTASY NOVELS, THEY GET IN TOUCH AND TELL ME I HAVE TO FULFILL THIS CRAZY PROPHECY ATTACHED TO THE DARKNESS POWER: I GOTTA LEAD THEM TO THEIR DESTINY AS LORDS OF THE UNDERWORLD, OR SOME CRAP.

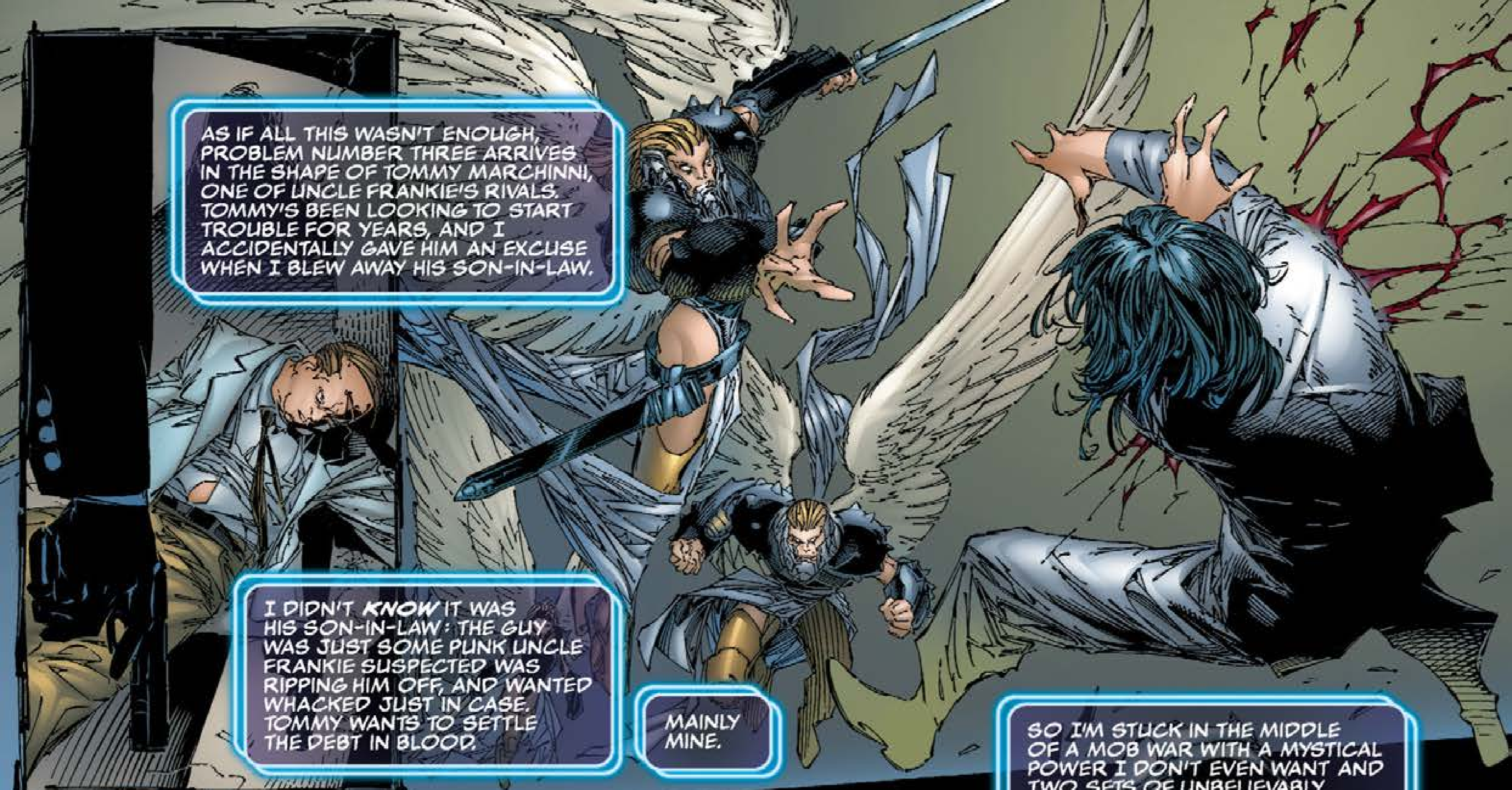
I SAY NO THANK YOU.



PROBLEM NUMBER TWO THEN KICKS MY DOOR DOWN AND BUSTS IN SHOOTING: TURNS OUT THE **ANGELUS**, THE AGE-OLD ENEMY OF THE DARKNESS, KNOWS I'VE JUST MANIFESTED MY NEW POWER AND WOULD VERY MUCH LIKE TO WIPE ME OUT BEFORE I POSE ANY KIND OF THREAT TO THEM.



THEY SEND THE **ANGELUS WARRIORS** TO DEAL WITH ME.



AS IF ALL THIS WASN'T ENOUGH, PROBLEM NUMBER THREE ARRIVES IN THE SHAPE OF TOMMY MARCHINNI, ONE OF UNCLE FRANKIE'S RIVALS. TOMMY'S BEEN LOOKING TO START TROUBLE FOR YEARS, AND I ACCIDENTALLY GAVE HIM AN EXCUSE WHEN I BLEW AWAY HIS SON-IN-LAW.


I DIDN'T KNOW IT WAS HIS SON-IN-LAW: THE GUY WAS JUST SOME PUNK UNCLE FRANKIE SUSPECTED WAS RIPPING HIM OFF, AND WANTED WHACKED JUST IN CASE. TOMMY WANTS TO SETTLE THE DEBT IN BLOOD.

MAINLY MINE.

SO I'M STUCK IN THE MIDDLE OF A MOB WAR WITH A MYSTICAL POWER I DON'T EVEN WANT AND TWO SETS OF UNBELIEVABLY DANGEROUS MAGICAL BAD GUYS WITH DESIGNS ON MY PERSON, AND TO TOP IT ALL--



I CAN'T EVEN GET LAID ANYMORE.



NOW DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHY I WANT TO KILL MY OWN DAD?

SO THE PUNCHLINE-- CAN YOU HEAR ME AT THE BACK? YOU'RE GONNA LOVE THIS.

THE PUNCH-LINE IS...

I'M
THE
HERO.



