

# SPAWN

## THE DARK AGES

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12

DIGITAL  
EDITION



Todd McFarlane & Image Comics Present

# A Child's Crusade Part II The Faithful

Dedicated to Steve Firchow

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## SPAWN DARK AGES II SUMMARY:

Covenant worries that the children will not be able to hold-up in the heat of battle, but Maeve has confidence in her warriors. The army encounters a group of knights who block their passage. Although the children's army suffers some loss, they are victorious in their first skirmish. The next day, Maeve awakens to find that a hundred new children have come to join the crusade. Covenant is surprised by the volunteers, but is unable to shake the feeling that the group is being watched. Cogliostro has been shadowing the army since the beginning.

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*London. The court of King John.*

*With the death of his brother, the Lionheart, King John has inherited a kingdom in turmoil.*

*U*rged by a domineering mother, John has been forced to raise tax levies and increase the conscription of troops in an attempt to regain lands recently lost to the French crown.

*T*hese measures have led to stirrings of rebellion from among his barons, and the looming possibility of civil war.

*T*he king is about to have a new matter added to his concerns.



*H*eavy, it has been said, is the head that wears the crown. Heavier still is the heart of he who must deliver to the crown bad news.





My liege...

Yes, yes.  
That's enough of  
bowing and scraping,  
Anders. Now tell  
me what's so bloody  
important.

An army.  
Of sorts, anyway.  
From distant  
Cornwall.

An army  
against the  
crown?

We don't  
know, my liege. A group  
of runaways, led by a  
strange girl. They call her  
Maeve the Magnificent.  
She says she fights  
for God...

Yes, I've  
heard of her. She  
doesn't concern  
me.

I don't think  
she poses a direct threat,  
at least not yet, but I don't  
think you can afford  
to look--

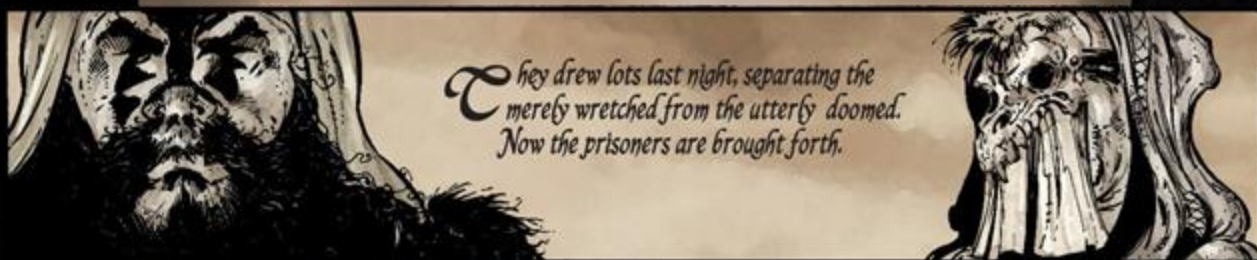
What?  
Unsympathetic? I am so  
weak that a coarse word from  
a rustic strumpet could bring  
me down? I think not. But  
still, your point is  
taken...











*They drew lots last night, separating the  
merely wretched from the utterly doomed.  
Now the prisoners are brought forth.*




*Their eyes already the dead  
sockets of lost souls. So  
terrified of what awaits, they  
can't even speak.*



*There is no  
pleading  
for mercy, no  
attempts at  
resistance.*

*Just the slow,  
faltering  
steps of broken men  
walking through  
their blackest  
nightmare.*





*They are herded into the great  
wicker cage, stuffed tight  
against its massive ribs.*

*Inside, there is quiet,  
desperate murmuring  
and shaking with fear.*

*And then fire comes.*

*Followed  
by the  
screaming.*



Inhuman screaming and wailing  
as the fire consumes the great  
sacrifice and those inside.

Screams which, it is hoped, will  
span across the worlds and reach  
the ears of the sleeping gods.

This is just the  
beginning...





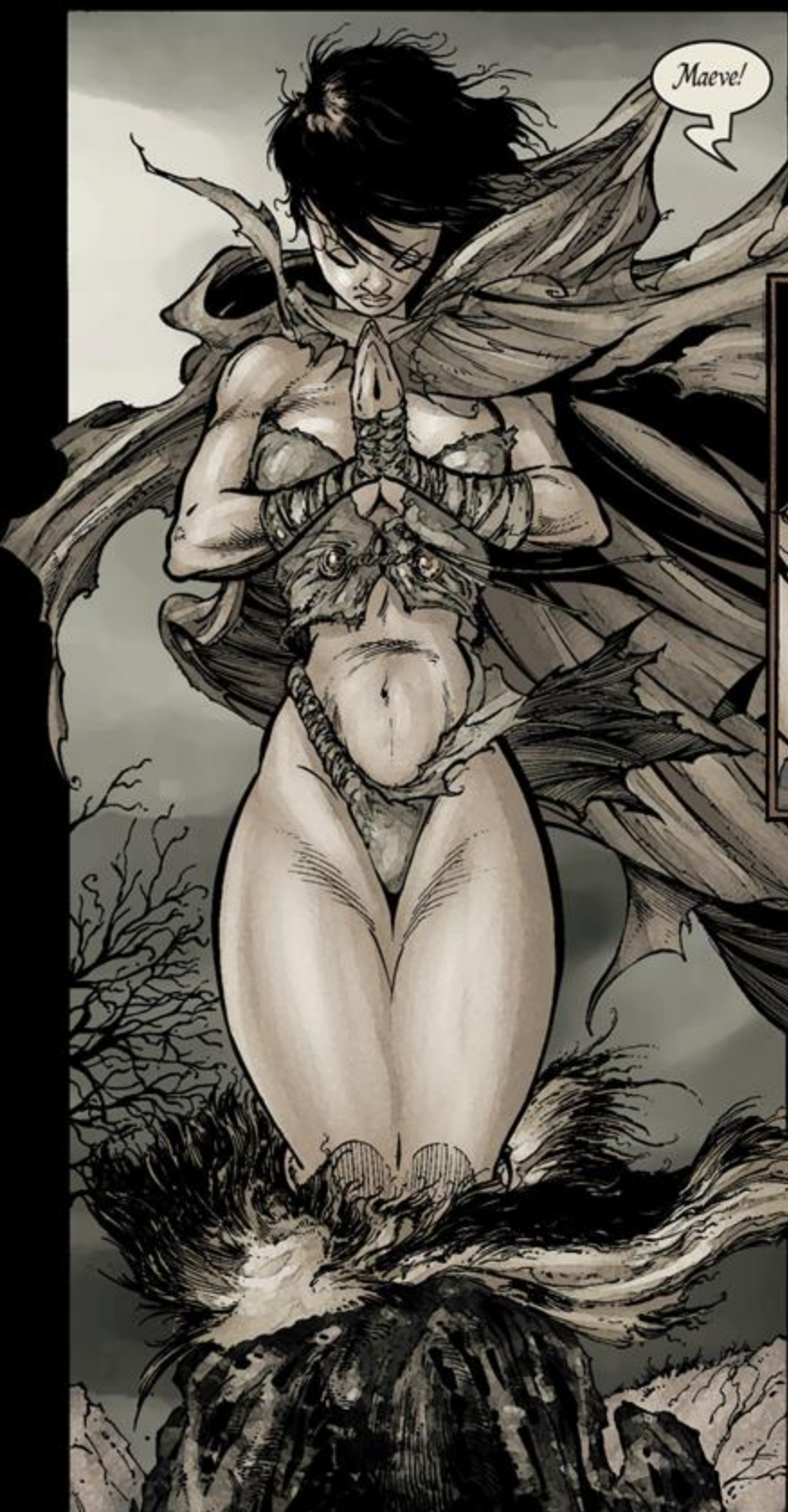
Look at them...

A band of mere babes, barely out of their swaddling. This is a fool's errand if ever I saw one... I will not lead children off to their doom, especially in the name of God.

I know all too well the folly of putting your faith in Heaven's kindnesses.

If this madness is God's will, then God is a bigger bastard than even I believed.





*Maeve!*



*Maeve!*



*Lord  
Covenant, please  
be kind enough not to  
interrupt my morning  
prayers.*

*I will  
have words  
with you.*



*Of course  
you will. You  
always do.*





Let me guess. You are in grave doubts about our task.

Come quick! The lady approaches.



They are babes in woods, no proper army. Ill-prepared for a game of soldiers, let alone the task we have ahead.

That is what you see, isn't it, Lord Covenant?

But I see Soldiers of God. Warriors whose souls are untainted, whose hearts are pure. Look at the faith and wonder in their eyes.



This is a miracle. I know you don't believe in miracles, and that, sadly, is your right.



But as for myself, I must.



Have faith in my faith, Covenant, if not your own.





No!

Uff!

Look at me!  
This is the face of  
war! I am the specter  
of death that haunts  
every shadow!

Run! Run  
home, you flee-  
bitten mites!

A pure heart  
bleeds just the same  
as a blackened one.  
Perhaps easier.

Go! All  
of you!

Return to  
your mothers  
or face my  
wrath!





Go.

No  
one?


And  
what about  
you, Lord  
Covenant.

Lord Covenant  
is trying to frighten  
us. And well he should.  
We must have no  
illusions about what  
lies ahead.

Yet I think  
it is better to die  
fighting for God's will,  
than to live hiding  
from it.

Still, anyone  
who wishes to leave  
is free to do so. There  
is no shame. Who  
wishes to turn  
back?





*Shamed by Maeve's unwavering courage,  
Covenant rejoins the ragged band.  
Despite his misgivings he cannot let  
them walk  
into battle  
alone.*

*And they travel on, through  
sun and rain, spirits high  
and hearts filled with pride.*

*Now like a candle in the  
darkness Maeve is, the  
Hellspawn thinks to himself.*

*And perhaps, in time, a little of her  
endless, incandescent hope has begun  
to rub off on him.*



*But there is one more ritual that needs to be attended.*



Step  
forth, young  
Phillip.

Phillip the  
Miller's son, I name  
thee Knight of Forest,  
Prince of Pineneedles  
and Protector  
of Cats.

Th-thank  
you milady.



Please  
accept the token  
of honor. Wear  
it proudly.

I will.







uh... your name?



Phillip, sir.

In the name of the good and righteous lady Maeve and the parliament of the wild, I dub thee sir Phillip.

Rise, boy.



"Now you are a true warrior."



Two days later.

What is it?

The bones of an ogre?

A dragon?

It's just some old branches.

This is the devil's work.











No!

The Hellspawn's right arm quakes, twisting and spasming as if possessed of a mind all its own.



It reaches for his sword, battling against its master's will.



Some surge from the Hellborne powers that still flow through his veins must be causing this strange palsy.

Some necroplasmic reaction that knows its host is in danger.

But the Hellspawn has forsworn those powers. He will not let them overtake him.



Something is wrong. Maeve, look to the children!



*The seizure subsides and the air stands perfectly still. All is quiet as a tomb.*



*Time halts for a moment, caught between the span of panicked heartbeats.*



*All around, the children scan the horizon.*



*Something is coming.*


Glory  
be...











*If the children are frightened,  
they don't have time to realize it.*

*The battle is joined, quickly  
and decisively.*

*With each arrow flown, each blow  
delivered, their confidence rises.  
These are not monsters, not demons from  
some dark pit that face them.*

*But merely men, dressed  
in animal skin and face  
paint. They are mortal and  
they can die.*



The tide turns quickly, and the strange  
faced marauders are soon routed.

HUZZAH HUZZAH YEEAH!

In the elation of a battle won they give  
chase to their retreating opponents.

Wait!

But when they reach the  
top of the rise, cheers  
of joy turn to stunned gasps.

And light hearts  
swiftly turn to lead.

By the  
saints!



*As they stare down into  
the mouth of hell.*

