



SINK #12 - "The Monkey's Baw" & SINK #13 - "The Gorbals Vampire"



STORY BY JOHN LEES

ART BY ALEX CORMACK

LETTERS BY SHAWN LEE

LOGO BY TIM DANIEL



SINK #12 was sponsored in part by Mutant Beaver Comics "A Global Leader in Exclusive Variants" and SINK #13 was sponsored in part by Lucas A. Ferrara

All tales in *SINK Volume 3: The Killing of Robbie Carmichael* were made possible in part with the patronage of "*SINK Citizen Supreme*"

Darin Ross Stater



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Previously on SMK

Sinkhill is a notorious, crime-ridden district of Glasgow, Scotland, where chaos and violence reign. But if there is order to be found in that chaos, it comes in the form of **Si McKirdie**. Based in Sinkhill, Si runs the most dangerous criminal organisation in the city, and has long held a formidable reputation as a figure of all-encompassing, possibly even supernatural power and influence.

But lately, that invincible aura has taken a few hits. The arrival in Sinkhill of masked vigilante **Mr**. **Dig** and vengeful hell-raiser **Florence Kilcolm** have each come to represent major challenges to his authority. The disappearance of one of his subordinates – a Dickhead called Jordan – has caused a rift with **Emma Callaghan**, one of Si's few friends. And he's fallen out of favour with his boss, an enigmatic figure known as **The Duke**, who oversees numerous underworld networks like Si's throughout the UK, each in search of an entity known only as the Black Door.

And a young boy called **Robbie Carmichael** has been found dead, his body discarded in a pile of trash, a massive bite taken out of his neck.

Chrissie Woods, an elderly resident of Sinkhill, believes she knows who is responsible. There is an old local legend in Glasgow about Iron-Tooth Jack, the Gorbals Vampire. Chrissie believes that Jack is real, and that he has returned. For Chrissie, the horrors of the present are connected to horrific evils she experienced as a child, seventy years ago...



Si McKirdie



Mr. Dig



Florence Kilcolm



The Duke



Emma Callaghan



Robbie Carmichael



Chrissie Woods

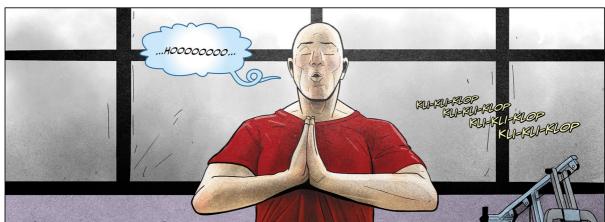


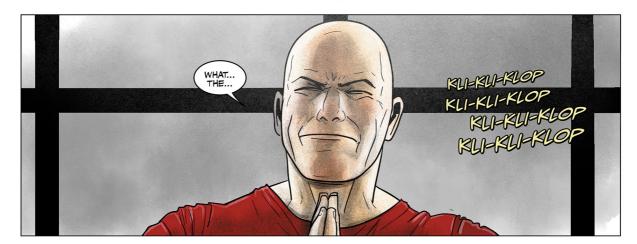
Iron-Tooth Jack



"THE MONKEY'S BAW"







































































































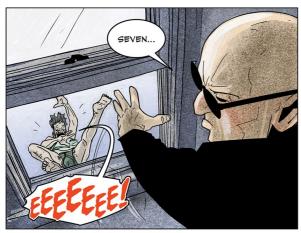




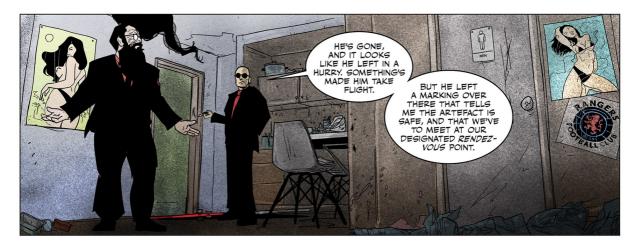
























































YOU CAN SEE WHAT HAPPENS, ONE WAY OR THE OTHER.

OR YOU CAN JUST GIVE ME THE MONKEY, FOR THE GENEROUS PRICE OF £400.









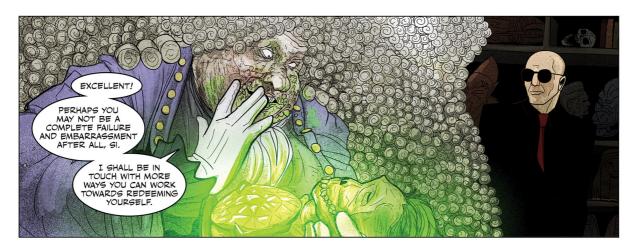




































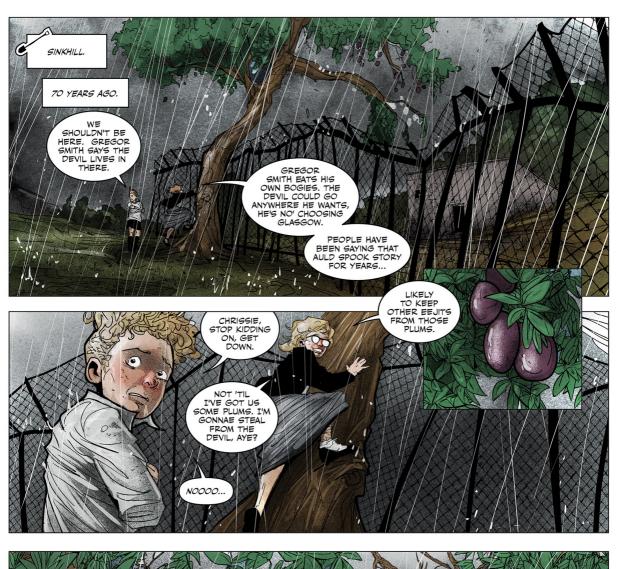


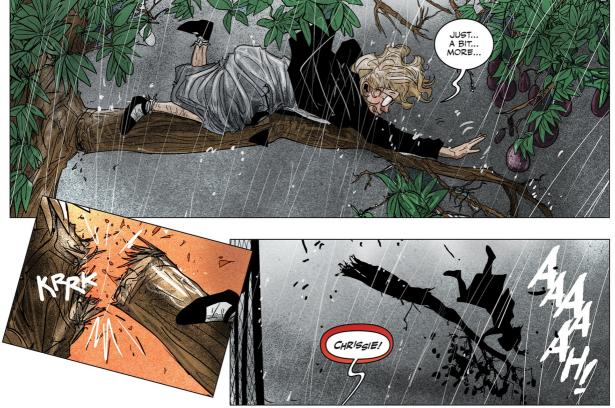






"THE GORBAL'S VAMPIRE"









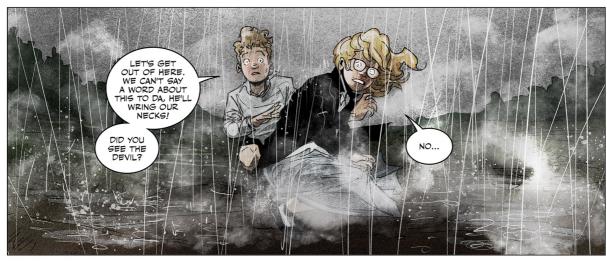




















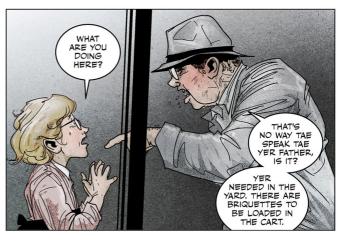




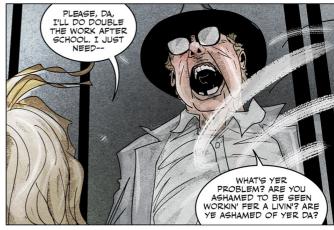
















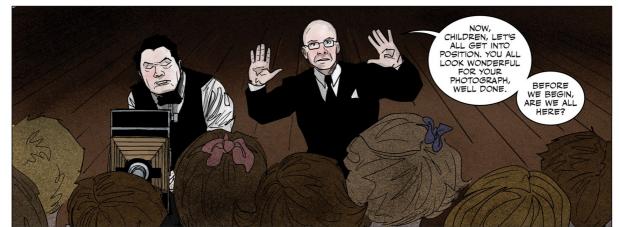
















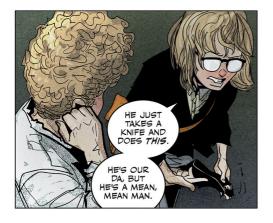
































































































































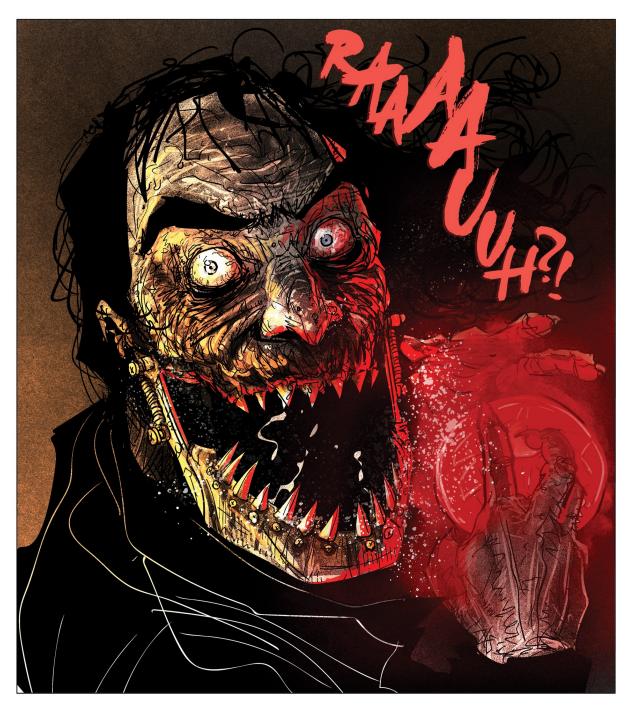


















































MONSTERS IN GLASGOW

One of the joys of releasing comics on the Kickstarter platform is that it gives us more freedom to experiment with format, and to do things we may not often get to do in the direct market. In the case of *Sink: Monsters*, we're getting to play with running a double-feature, two stories contained in a single volume. While they do both work as individual stories, I feel that they make for a richer experience taken together, each offering a puzzle piece of the same mystery, in two different eras of time.

The first story in our double-bill, *The Monkey's Baw*, is set in the present day. It reminds me a lot of *Graphite Green*, the fan-favourite story from Sink Volume 2, in that it takes a prominent Sinkhill denizen who has previously been featured on the fringes of other people's stories, and thrusts them into the limelight as central protagonist. With that story, the protagonist in question was Mr. Dig. Here, it's Si McKirdie, the enigmatic crime boss who stands at the top of Glasgow's underworld hierarchy. But even bosses have bosses, and Si's boss – Lord Augustus Glory Wetherford VI, or The Duke, for short – is one of the most repellent, loathsome characters I've ever had the twisted pleasure of writing. As we follow one hectic day in McKirdie's life, trying to appease The Duke on his visit from England, all while putting out various other domestic fires and keeping various enemies at bay, we'll hopefully offer more of an insight into what makes Si tick, as well as offering some glimpses of where the larger story of Sink might be headed.

And then there's *The Gorbals Vampire*, set in 1954. Chrissie Woods, star of our last *Sink* tale, *Cutthroat*, is once again our protagonist. But here, she's a child, struggling with poverty and a cruel father. And here, we finally get to see the full story of her encounter with Iron-Tooth Jack, the Gorbals Vampire, the incident which has shaped her whole life, right up to the present day when we met her as an old woman. I think this is one of the best comic scripts I've ever written, certainly one of the ones that means the most to me, personally. That's because I feel the story itself is dramatic, frightening and emotional. But it's also because of the history behind it.

For about as long as I've wanted to be a writer, since I was a kid, my Gran has said that her dream was for me to write a book about her life and about her childhood. She'd frequently tell me stories about growing up in post-war Glasgow and the hardships she experienced, stories that could certainly make for a great book. But between there being certain elements she was reticent to share, and me making the switch from prose to writing comics, it looked increasingly like it would never happen. This story, albeit one filtered through some vampiric genre trappings, is likely about the closest I'm ever going to get to making my Gran's dream a reality. I've yearned to tell this story for years, and ideas for doing so actually precede Sink! And now here we are, finally at the point where I feel ready to do this story justice, and it feels like the most important comic I've made in my career. My Gran is now 89 years old. Being able to put this comic in her hands is one of my biggest writing bucket list goals. And with your help, we can make it happen.

For bonus content, we're serving up two more awesome one-pagers, including *Hairy Hauns*, by Alan Gardner and Iain Laurie, and *Wah-Wah*, by Tom Moore and Paul Tonner. We've also included a cover gallery and an essay on the Adam Sandler movie that inspired *The Monkey's Baw*. Enjoy!

Your Pal.

John Lees Glasgow, Scotland April 2024







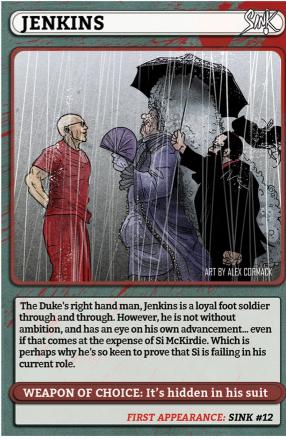


Four new SINK trading cards were added to the growing collection with the SINK: Monsters launch.









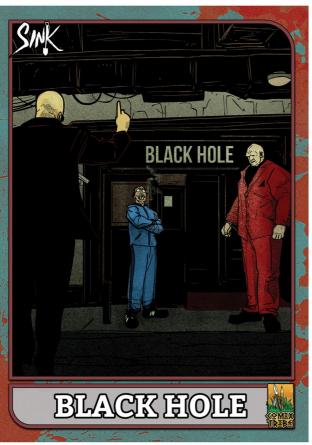




WEAPON OF CHOICE: His rock-hard head

BLACK HOL

FIRST APPEARANCE: SINK #5







ART BY ALEX CORMACK

Si McKirdie's nightclub in Central Glasgow, and one of the rare significant locations in *SINK* to not actually be located within Sinkhill. As one of Si's legitimate fronts, he prefers to avoid any violence or illegal activities occuring here. Anyone who breaches those wishes will be made to suffer considerably.

WARNING: Loud music can cause ear damage

FIRST APPEARANCE: SINK #5

<u>Uncut Gems and the Power Dynamics of</u> Character and Plot



I've wanted to write a story focused on Si McKirdie, Sinkhill's enigmatic crime lord, for a while now. I'd pencilled it in as something I'd finally get around to in Vol. 3, though at the time, I didn't know what my angle in would be, what kind of story I wanted to tell. But I finally found my "in" when I saw *UNCUT GEMS*, the critically acclaimed film from the Safdie Brothers, in early 2020.

In *UNCUT GEMS*, Adam Sandler (in one of his finest roles) plays Howie Ratner, a dealer in New York's Diamond District who starts the film in dire straits and a hundred grand in debt, and somehow manages to find his situation grow steadily more desperate from there. He has acquired a hugely valuable stone from Africa - the uncut gem of the title - which could make his fortune and solve all his problems, or might just break him in the process.

Ratner is not an easy figure to like when we first meet him. He is abrasive, arrogant, dismissive of employees. He's cheating on his wife. And he's quite clearly letting lies run off his tongue like water as he robs Peter to pay Paul and deceives and cheats friends and foes alike. This last point is just his baseline for existing: the sheer amount of constant hustling and grifting and balancing stories and debts like spinning plates - constantly, ALL THE TIME - required just to keep going and not be obliterated by the whirling blades under his feet is enough to bring you out in hives just watching it, even before you factor in the violent debt collectors chasing him down. But though just as many of the hardships brought on Howie are down to his own terrible decisions as are down to jaw-dropping, cosmically seismic levels of "WHAT ARE THE ODDS!?" rotten luck, you still can't help but feel bad for him with just how thoroughly he's put through the wringer.

I was really keen to see if I could capture that sphincter-clenching effect of perpetual tension in comics form, and Si felt, in theory, like the ideal candidate. An idea quickly took shape for a "day in the life" type story where we follow the various fires someone in Si's position is constantly having to keep under control. The Duke has arrived and is displeased, there's an ambitious henchman looking to usurp him, a rival gang leader is acting up, a valuable artifact has gone missing, Emma isn't talking to him, Florence Kilcolm is looking for him, oh, and his bodyguard's cat's gone missing. What happens when all these spinning plates are thrown off-balance?

However, in execution, I hit a stumbling block. While his unending tenacity/self-delusion ultimately becomes endearing in a way where you can't help but root for him, Howie Ratner is, ultimately, a pathetic, powerless character. He's someone helplessly under the whims of people with more strength and agency. He's someone who's going to get splashed by every puddle, have every door slam on his face, step on every rake. He's a loser.

And that's not Si McKirdie. Even when put on the back-foot, as he is in this story, the only way to portray Si in a manner that was consistent with his appearances in *SINK* thus far demanded that he be prepared and in-control, that his plans have contingencies upon contingencies, and that he be a few steps ahead of just about everyone else in the story, the reader included. He's not a punchbag, he's the one doing the punching. He's a character who is feared.

Having this kind of character at the heart of the story fundamentally changes it, even if the plot is running along ostensibly similar tracks. I found this to be a struggle at first, as I just wasn't getting that constant, pressure-cooker, "OH NOOO!" anxiety I'd been shooting for. Si was just too competent and dangerous to fit that kind of story. But once I came to terms with letting that go, and accepting this *SINK* Tale was not going to be my *UNCUT GEMS*, its own personality began to more freely emerge. I found myself with a nice dynamic of dramatic irony to play with, where – thanks to our experience with previous stories – we know Si is dangerous, we know he's not to be messed with... and then the first half of the story is just people messing with him, over and over. And so, the tension comes from this delayed gratification of knowing that, at some point, Si is going to kick into gear, and a few people are going to sorely regret underestimating him.

So, the writing of this *SINK* Tale highlighted some of the fascinating power dynamics that exist between character and plot in a story. Laurie Strode as the lead in *HALLOWEEN* is a horror, but it's a very different story if John Wick is babysitting the kids. And this process was also valuable in helping me define Si McKirdie. Having him as this mysterious figure on the fringes of other people's stories is one thing, but having him as a protagonist here helped flesh him out in my head, and give me a firmer sense of who he is.





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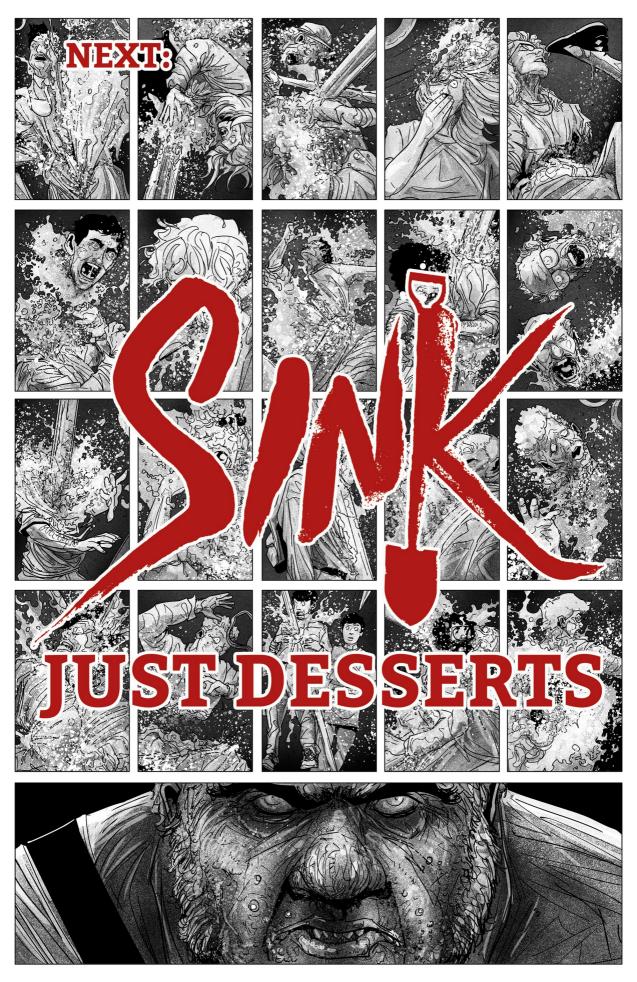
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Zack Q.

Zina Carnouche

THANK YOU!





Monsters

A Sink double-feature, encompassing two eras of Sinkhill, Glasgow's most notorious neighbourhood!

First, in the present day, crime boss Si McKirdie must navigate an array of potentially explosive headaches and mishaps, all under the watchful eye of a ghoulish superior looking for an excuse to permanently retire him.

Then, 70 years in the past, young Chrissie Woods goes hunting for the Gorbals Vampire, and finds herself in a nightmare.

Two standalone tales with a surprising connection, and one clear message: whatever the era, past or present, in Sinkhill...

...MONSTERS ARE REAL.

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