

TOP COW TALENT HUNT 2013: WRITER

Title: SOLOMON'S CURSE

One-Shot

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PAGE 1

Starting from page one, all captions are going to be from Sara Pezzini. She will be the one narrating the story. Since we won't see her in this issue, you can give all the captions a Witchblade look.

Setting: The story takes place in New York City, a few days after the Wall Street Crash of 1929.

PANEL 1: Medium shot of a gentleman in a 1929 pricy business suit (something like: http://www.doullbooks.com/shop_image/product/31880.jpg) standing in an elevator of a luxury hotel. He has a nice trimmed beard. There is a bellboy with him who will take the gentleman (Edward Morgan) where he wants to go. Edward is expressionless.

1. **Caption (Sara):** After I freed my partner Jake from the Coin of Solomon*, I got curious and asked the Curator about it. He told me the story of one of its ancient bearer: Edward Morgan.
2. **Caption (small and not Witchblade-like):** *Witchblade #75.
3. **Bellboy:** Where to Mister Morgan?
4. **Gentleman (Edward Morgan):** The roof terrace please.
5. **Bellboy:** Right away sir.

PANEL 2: Shot of the elevator from outside as the doors close. The bellboy just pushed the top floor button. Edward is still expressionless.

6. **Caption (Sara):** And since the Curator got to be the Survivor, a megalomaniac fool that destroyed our world to get back to his own, all of it could be bullshit. But still, it explained a lot.

PANEL 3: Same shot as before, but the elevator's doors open and the bellboy is waiting with his hand held out for a tip. They are now on the roof. Edward is still expressionless.

7. **Caption (Sara):** He told me that the coin gives its bearer two great powers: regeneration and powerful insight.
8. **Edward Morgan:** Sorry son, got nothing left.
9. **Edward Morgan:** There is no need to wait for me.

PANEL 4: We pull back for an establishing shot of the roof and the city. Edward Morgan is walking out of the elevator and in the reader's direction. He is pulling out a big cigar from his jacket. We can see a 1929 New York City with many skyscrapers in construction. The sky is heavy with clouds. It is going to rain soon. Still in the elevator in the background, the bellboy is angry and sarcastic, but try to stay polite.

10. **Caption (Sara):** He also said that like any other coin, it has two sides. For its bearer, it will always be as much a blessing as a curse.
11. **Bellboy:** Enjoy the view sir.
12. **Bellboy:** I'll be waiting for you downstairs.
13. **Bellboy (whisper):** Better not make too much of a mess on my porch.

PAGE 2

PANEL 1: Long shot of Edward on the roof. Even there, the wealth of the hotel is shown: black wrought iron terrace rail, trimmed trees in ceramic jars, and leather club chairs around a table with an ashtray, one cigarette still burning. New York City in the background is beautiful even though the country lives its worst financial crisis. No one is there except for Edward. He is alone and lights his cigar. On his wrist we can see the Coin of Solomon that has merged with the skin of its bearer. He is still pretty serious.

1. **Caption (Sara):** So back to Eddy's story. He became the bearer of the Coin of Solomon somewhere in Europe as an American soldier during World War I.
2. **Caption (Sara):** After the war, he experienced the blessing part of the coin. He got rich.
3. **Caption (Sara):** Immensely rich.

PANEL 2: Full shot of Edward who is standing on the edge of the roof, the points of his luxury shoes in empty air. He looks down while smoking his cigar.

4. **Caption (Sara):** Then the curse part came by. The Curator told me that it's the coin that caused the 1929 Wall Street Crash.
5. **Caption (Sara):** Like many during that time, Edward Morgan lost everything. Lots of people wanted him dead.

PANEL 3: Same shot as before, but no Edward. He has jumped off the roof. He is committing suicide with extreme coldness and calculation. The only thing that shows us he was there is the cigar still burning on the concrete edge of the roof.

6. **Caption (Sara):** Unaware of the coin's influence on his losses, but knowing about its regenerating properties, a plan began to emerge.

PAGE 3

PANEL 1: Full shot of Edward's fall. Maybe we can see the building behind him in a blur since he is falling pretty fast. He still looks expressionless, like he knew and accepted what was going to happen next.

1. **Caption (Sara):** Like many bankrupt businessmen, he decided to throw himself off the soon closing Waldorf-Astoria Hotel.
2. **Caption (Sara):** With the coin's power he could restart his life while everyone thought him dead.

PANEL 2: He crashes on a car: a black 1928 Buick Special (like: <http://www.pbase.com/rpdooddy/image/102121436> or another luxury car). The car is crushed by the impact. The same fate happened to Edward Morgan. Do not show too much blood, but we need to feel that anybody ending a fall like that is definitely dead.

3. **Caption (Sara):** His plan didn't work-out as he expected.

PANEL 3: The car's smashed door is open and I would like a close-up of the bloody arm of Edward Morgan. On his wrist, the Coin of Solomon glows and detaches from its bearer's arm. In the background, in the shadows between two buildings, it would be very nice if we could see the shape of a guy (in the shadows) in a trench coat lighting a cigarette. You can find the background story and the design of the coin in *Artifact issue #7*.

4. **Caption (Sara):** What Eddy didn't know was that the Coin of Solomon hated losers.

PANEL 4: Shot of the Coin and the feet of the stranger in the trench coat. We do not see much of the guy, since his identity will be revealed in the next page. The Coin of Solomon rolls and falls at the feet of the guy in the alley. Since we see only his feet, you can show that he wears used working shoes. There is maybe 4 or 5 cigarette butts next to the coin. He has been waiting there a long time.

5. **Caption (Sara):** So Edward Morgan died.
6. **Caption (Sara):** And the Coin of Solomon chose a new bearer.

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PANEL 1: Full-page shot of the new bearer standing over the coin: Steve Dakota. He is an ex illusionist / con artist. He was Houdini's protégé. He is half-American, half-Sioux. He has a trench coat, dark hair, rugged looks, and he looks like he didn't shave for a few days (He looks a bit like a 35 years old Charles Bronson). He smiles. He was waiting for the coin to come to him and he is satisfied. It could be a nice spot to insert the titles and credits.

1. **Caption (Sara):** Steve Dakota.
2. **Steve Dakota:** Hello Coin. I've been looking all over the world for you.

PAGE 5

PANEL 1: Shot of Steve crouching over the coin, looking at it. He is curious. His right hand is reaching for something in his coat inside pocket. His still lighted cigarette is now on the ground.

1. **Caption (Sara):** The story goes that Steve Dakota was part American and part Sioux. His father was a tribe shaman and Steve had been, in his youth, Houdini's protégé.
2. **Caption (Sara):** Also, he knew a lot about the Coin of Solomon.
3. **Steve Dakota:** Such a small thing, but so much power. Have to be careful now...

PANEL 2: Close-up of the hand coming out of the trench coat. Steve takes out a strange envelope. Its format is pretty standard, but it is full of scriptures and runes. The envelope is a magical item and is meant to contain the coin (without it possessing Steve).

4. **Caption (Sara):** I guess we could say that the magical mumbo-jumbo of this world and others was everyday business to him.
5. **Steve Dakota:** ... You never get a second chance at making a good first impression.

PANEL 3: I would like panel 3, 4 and 5 to be on the same tier since they are going to show the same shot, with different reactions from the coin.

Show a close-up of the coin and the opened envelope going under it as if Steve wants to get it in the envelope without touching it. The coin is... just a coin for the moment.

6. **Steve Dakota:** You want to come on a trip with me, Coin?
7. **Steve Dakota:** You and I need to be somewhere special.

PANEL 4: Same shot, but the coin starts to glow and vibrate.

8. **Caption (Sara):** The Coin of Solomon didn't want to be sealed in an envelope.

PANEL 5: Same shot. The coin still glows and vibrates, but two golden tentacles (one from each side) are throwing themselves on the hand holding the envelope.

9. **Caption (Sara):** It wanted a new bearer.
10. **Caption (Sara):** RIGHT NOW!
11. **Sound effects (Coin):** Pssshiiit

PAGE 6

PANEL 1: Shot of Steve falling on his butt. He barely escaped the tentacles that were trying to grab him. He looks surprised.

1. **Steve Dakota:** Vicious little...

PANEL 2: Same shot, almost the same position for Steve. The coin is fast and attacks him again. He raises his hand, a rune on it glows with a blue shamanic light. He speaks a magic word with confidence. The word in the speech balloon should also be of the same color as the blue light from the rune on the hand and look magical.

2. **Caption (Sara):** But Steve had other plan for the coin.
3. **Steve Dakota (magic):** STOP
4. **Sound effects (Coin):** Hishhhh

PANEL 3: Close-up of the coin that goes back to his dormant state. It falls on the opened envelope.

No dialogue

PANEL 4: Shot of Steve grabbing the envelope with the coin in it.

5. **Steve Dakota:** Now that this is settled...

PANEL 5: We pull-back to see Steve standing and putting the envelope in his inside pocket.

6. **Steve Dakota:** The hard part begins now.

PAGE 7

PANEL 1: Establishing shot of Steve walking under the rain. He is walking toward the reader. He is next to a highway in the countryside. He is leaving New York City behind him. It is late afternoon. Night is coming in a few hours. We can see a 1927 Lincoln coming his way (here is a picture of the car: http://files.conceptcarz.com/img/Lincoln/27_Lincoln-Sport-Phaeton-Locke-DV-09_GG_012.jpg). Steve holds the flaps of his trench up with one hand to keep the rain out of his coat. The other hand is in his pocket to keep it warm and dry. His head is drenched. He has a wet and unlit cigarette between his lips.

1. **Caption (Sara):** So Steve Dakota left New York City, the Coin of Solomon still in need of a bearer.

PANEL 2: Shot of Steve looking towards the car that stops next to him. We can see two beautiful women inside: 18 years old Emily, the naive but kind daughter, and one more mature (around 38-40 years old) but still in her prime, Tilly, the mother. Emily is brown headed and her mother is a blond. They fled a violent husband (and father). Tilly is suspicious and she fears that her husband will find them. She has a black eye and tried to mask it under make-up. They have nice, sexy and expensive clothes. Between the 2 women there is a big suitcase or duffel bag (full of cash). Emily leans toward Steve and starts a conversation. Tilly stay silent.

They are leaving New York City and the abusing husband / father who lost almost everything in the Crash. They want to start a new life in Chicago. They left with all the jewels they had and stole a bag of money from the husband / father, who wants to get it back.

2. **Emily:** Hello stranger! What a weather. Where are you going?
3. **Steve Dakota:** Minneapolis.
4. **Emily:** Wow that is far! You're going there on your own two feet?
5. **Steve Dakota:** Not much of a choice, saw no-one driving for quite some time.

PANEL 3: Shot of Emily and Steve discussing. Emily explains her situation to Steve and offers him a lift. She is half in the car and half outside, the rain falls on her head and shoulders. She looks innocent and is very cute. Steve Dakota looks doubtful.

6. **Emily:** My mom and I are going to Chicago. We could give you a lift.
7. **Steve Dakota:** You would lift a stranger looking like me?
8. **Emily:** Sure. We'd be happy to help you!

9. **Emily:** In exchange for one little favor...

PANEL 4: Shot of the interior of the car and Steve outside. We see Emily and Tilly. Both are now serious. Tilly still don't say anything and her attitude is cold as ice. We can now clearly see the black eye under the make-up. Emily explains what they want. In the background, Steve Dakota backed away a few feet. He becomes defensive.

10. **Steve Dakota:** What kind of favor?

11. **Emily:** We want to start a new life away from New York. Father lost almost everything and he became...

12. **Emily:** ... Violent.

PANEL 5: Close-up of Tilly's face. She turns away to hide her black eye. The shot must feel like the reader is studying Tilly's face exactly like Steve Dakota as she turns away from him.

13. **Emily (off-panel):** My mother and I just want you to be there...

14. **Emily (off-panel):** In case he finds us.

15. **Emily (off-panel):** We also want to look like a real family, so no one asks stupid questions.

PANEL 6: Steve, who opened the car's door, enters to sit on the back seat. Emily is very happy and Tilly offers a tin smile.

16. **Steve Dakota:** You got a deal girl.

17. **Emily:** I'm Emily by the way and my mother's name is Tilly.

18. **Steve:** I'm Steve.

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PANEL 1: Shot of the interior of a motel, at the front desk. We see the back of the motel's clerk listening to Steve and Emily and writing in the motel's logbook. The mother is waiting behind and hide her black eye by looking in another direction. We see through the window that night has fallen. Outside, we can also see an info panel where it is written: Motel, Vacancy. Steve is going to speak, but Emily is faster. He has two fingers in the air, like if he was going to say: 2 rooms please.

1. **Emily:** One room please, good sir!
2. **Emily (whispers in the direction of Steve):** We're a family, remember?
3. **Emily:** Two beds would be appreciated.

PANEL 2: Establishing shot of the interior of a standard two beds room. The action of the next pages is going to happen here. On the bed close to the door is sitting Steve Dakota. His trench coat with the coin still in it is resting on a chair strangely close to Steve's pillow. Emily, in her undies, is excited by her new life of adventuring and is getting under the blankets. She is the closest to Steve's bed. Tilly is already under the covers next to her. She is the one starting the conversation.

4. **Tilly:** I know we must look crazy, leaving our house to start a new life like this, but I want to thank you for your help.
5. **Emily:** Mom, you're right! Thank you Steve!
6. **Steve Dakota:** Do not worry. Try to get some sleep.

PANEL 3: Shot of the room in the dark. Everyone is sleeping.

No dialogue.

PANEL 4: We see a medium shot of Steve sleeping. On the chair, the inside pocket of his coat starts to glow and to vibrate. The coin is working its magic.

No dialogue.

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PANEL 1: Full shot of Steve in his bed sleeping. The coin glows in the coat. Two ladylike shadows in nightgown are leaning over him as if they were vampires going to drain him of his blood.

1. **Caption (Sara):** That night, Steve got his first real trial from the Coin of Solomon.

PANEL 2: Shot of Steve in bed with the two women close to grabbing him. He felt them and wakes up with a repulsive spell from his right hand. We can see another blue rune on his hand. That same hand is crackling with blue magical energy as he shouts the word “Back-off” in the same cryptic and magical way he said “Stop” to the coin earlier.

2. **Steve Dakota (magical voice):** BACK-OFF

PANEL 3: Shot of the whole room. A blue bubble, like a shield is surrounding Steve who now sits in his bed. His right hand is surrounded with blue magical energy. He grabs his right wrist with his left hand thus holding his right arm upright. Both women are projected across the room. As Tilly is thrown in the air, she hits the duffel bag or suitcase and rips it open. The cash starts flowing out of the suitcase or duffel bag.

3. **Sound effects (magic):** BLAM
4. **Sound effects (suitcase or duffel bag):** SCHRRAAK

PANEL 4: Shot of the room. Now there is cash everywhere floating in the air. Steve is standing in his undies (undershirt, pants and is barefoot), calm. No more magic. Both women are mysteriously falling on their feet. They look at Steve with sadistic grins, their eyes are now pupil-less and the same gold color as the Coin of Solomon. They are now possessed by the coin.

5. **Tilly:** So, you’re finally awake.
6. **Emily:** Why don’t you use the Coin of Solomon, Steve Dakota?
7. **Emily and Tilly:** It wants you to use it.

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PANEL 1: Both women are now walking towards Steve Dakota (off-panel). They are surrounded with cash floating in the room. Their mood has changed drastically. They are now seductive. The way they present themselves is as if they are going to obey and fulfill all of Steve's fantasies.

1. **Tilly:** Use the Coin Steve...
2. **Emily:** ... It will make you rich beyond your imagination.
3. **Tilly and Emily:** Accept your destiny and become its rightful bearer.

PANEL 2: Shot of Steve surrounded by the two sexy and beautiful women. They are touching and caressing his face and chest in a suggestive manner. His expression shows contempt but he doesn't do anything and lets the women touch him.

4. **Emily:** Use the Coin Steve...
5. **Tilly:** ... And we will be yours. We will fulfill all your secret desires.
6. **Emily and Tilly:** Become its bearer. All that and more will be yours.

PANEL 3: Close-up of Steve Dakota's face. His eyes are close and he seems at peace. Both women are still caressing him.

7. **Steve Dakota:** No.

PANEL 4: Close-up of Steve waking-up in his bed all sweaty. He looks afraid. Was it reality or a bad dream?

8. **Steve Dakota:** AHHH

PANEL 5: Shot of Steve looking towards the other bed where the two women are asleep. Over them hover the envelope containing the Coin of Solomon. The coin is shining a weird tainted gold glow through the envelope.

No dialogue

PANEL 6: Close-up of Steve's hand grabbing the hovering envelope.

No dialogue

PANEL 7: Shot of the room. We see Steve leaving and closing the room's door behind him. Both women are still sleeping unaware of Steve's departure.

9. **Caption (Sara):** So Steve Dakota won its first trial against the coin. But it was just the beginning.

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PANEL 1: Establishing shot of the City of Minneapolis from the highway leading to it. We can see a medium size city that seems to prosper. Steve Dakota is lighting a cigarette near the road sign announcing: City of Minneapolis (first line) 1 mile ahead (second line). He is standing and looking toward the city. It is really cloudy. A storm is coming.

1. **Caption (Sara):** After a few days of travel, Steve Dakota finally got to his destination.
2. **Steve Dakota:** Almost there Steve, almost there.

PANEL 2: Long shot of Steve Dakota on the porch of a very nice looking and old mansion with no neighbors that we can see. There is a Ford T parked near the door. Steve just opened the screen door and knocks on the wooden door. This is the house of Bernard Smith an art and artifact collector. He is also a powerful mage and one of Steve's mentor.

3. **Sound effects (door):** Knock Knock
4. **Bernard (Voice from inside):** Yeah! Who is it?
5. **Steve Dakota:** It's me Bernard.

PANEL 3: Medium shot of Dakota's face as the door opens. He gets the barrel of a Remington rifle right between the eyes. Steve is raising his hands to show that his intentions are peaceful.

6. **Bernard:** How the hell do I know that you're still you son?
7. **Steve Dakota:** I'm not its bearer Bernard. It tried twice...
8. **Steve Dakota:** But you taught me well.
9. **Steve Dakota:** And you know that no one can lie when confronted by Wyatt Earp's Rifle of Justice.

PANEL 4: Medium shot of Bernard hugging Steve. Steve is taken by surprise. Bernard is not the kind of guy you expect to be a great magician. He is kind of fat, beardless and losing his greyish hair. He is an emotional guy, so his eyes are filled with tears of relief.

10. **Bernard:** You're damn right about that kid.
11. **Bernard:** I was getting worried.
12. **Bernard:** Come on in and tell me your story.

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PANEL 1: Establishing shot of the inside of the house. It is bigger inside than it looked from the outside. They are in a big room that looks like a museum. There are a multitude of weapons, modern and classic, native artifacts that look magical or imbued with power of some sort. We can see bookshelves filled with old and dusty books, others filled with potions and glass flasks containing animal, human, and plant parts. On a small table between two leather chairs is a bottle of Whiskey with two glasses. Bernard is inviting Steve to sit in one of the chairs.

1. **Caption (Sara):** Steve Dakota went to see one of his arcane mentor for advice on what to do with the Coin of Solomon: Bernard Smith, a magician and an artifacts (not those artifacts) collector.
2. **Bernard:** Please sit my friend. So you got the Coin as I have foreseen it?
3. **Steve Dakota:** Yes.
4. **Bernard:** Great! Whiskey?
5. **Steve Dakota:** Sure, but you now I can't stay long.

PANEL 2: Shot of both men sitting one in front of the other and drinking their whiskey. Steve drinks his in one gulp. Bernard slowly starts to get nervous and sweaty.

6. **Bernard:** I know. The plan is then going as expected. You think you will be able to fend off its next attempts?
7. **Steve Dakota:** Hope so, I can't let it control me or all of it would have been for nothing.

PANEL 3: Medium shot of the two friends discussing. Bernard is getting over excited and starts losing control. Steve becomes suspicious.

8. **Bernard:** Can I... Can I see it?
9. **Steve Dakota:** I'd rather not. You know about its power over people.
10. **Bernard:** God dammit Steve, I've been searching for it for so long, let me only peek at it for a minute.

PANEL 4: Steve just took out the envelope from his pocket and is showing it to Bernard who has a livid face. The coin glows inside the envelope. Bernard's hands are going for the envelope.

11. **Bernard:** Yes finally.

PANEL 5: Close-up (maybe an insert in panel 7) of the envelope and the two hands. Bernard grabs the envelope from the side opposite of Steve. Steve warns him.

12. **Steve Dakota:** Let it go Bernard.

PANEL 6: Close-up (could also be an insert in panel 7) of the envelope tearing open.

Sound effects (envelope): Krrrisssh

PANEL 7: Full shot of the coin on the floor between the two men who are now standing. Bernard now wants the coin for himself and he is starting to be possessed by it. His eyes are glowing with a weird blue magical energy a bit like Steve's (He is the mentor after all).

13. **Bernard:** You have failed the coin Steve. If you do not want to be its bearer...

14. **Bernard:** I WILL!

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PANEL 1: Shot of the room where Bernard is summoning a gargoyle to help him defeat Steve Dakota. Bernard is filled with tainted blue magical energy. The energy is coming out of his extended hands, eyes, mouth and aura. Steve shields his eyes with his hands as he slowly backs away. Right between them, the Coin of Solomon glows.

1. **Bernard (normal voice):** I summon you...
2. **Bernard (magical blue voice):** GARGOYLE
3. **Sound effects (magic):** Vrrr Vrrr Vrrr

PANEL 2: The Gargoyle bursts from the other room through the bookshelves. There are books and bricks projected everywhere. Still imbued with magical energy, Bernard is now floating in the air and is pointing in Steve's direction. The gargoyle is an immense and terrible looking living statue. The beast looks very angry and is yelling. If you have room to show Steve, he is dodging bricks and books. The coin is still glowing on the floor.

4. **Bernard:** Kill him!
5. **Gargoyle:** GRAAAAAAAAAA

PANEL 3: Full shot of the fight. The beast is charging Steve and smacks him with the back of his hand. Steve is trying to block the hit with his forearm that is charged with blue magical energy in a kind of shield. The impact lifts him off the ground.

6. **Gargoyle:** DESTROYYYY
7. **Sound effects (hit):** SMACK

PANEL 4: Steve smashes into a wall.

8. **Steve Dakota:** ARRG

PANEL 5: Steve is trying to stand. His right hand is behind his trench coat (looking for a magical hunting knife).

9. **Steve Dakota:** Please Bernard...

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PANEL 1: Close-up of Steve's face and neck as the gargoyle's stone hand seizes him by the neck.

1. **Steve Dakota:** Arggll

PANEL 2: Full shot of the gargoyle chocking Steve as it lifts him in the air. Bernard, still levitating is looking satisfied. The gargoyle raises his other fist and is going to smash Steve's head. Steve's right hand is coming out with a magical hunting knife covered in runes. The coin glows beneath Steve's feet.

2. **Steve Dakota:** Koff
3. **Steve Dakota (whisper):** I implore you my friend.
4. **Steve Dakota:** koff

PANEL 3: Close-up of Steve's hand plunging his knife into the gargoyle arm.

5. **Sound effects (knife):** Krrriish

PANEL 4: As Steve is falling on the floor next to the Coin, the knife still in his hand, we see the Gargoyle and Bernard simultaneously grasping their wounded and bloodied arm. Steve's knife hurt both the beast and its master. The Coin is now glowing even more and is going to totally possess Bernard.

6. **Gargoyle and Bernard (simultaneously):** ARRRGG

PANEL 5: The beast now uses its available hand to maintain Steve on the floor. The floor starts to break. Steve is in a lot of pain. Next to his left hand, the Coin of Solomon glows furiously. The knife, no longer in Steve's hand, is on the ground a few inches away.

7. **Sound effects (floor):** CRAK

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PANEL 1: Full shot of the room, the gargoyle is still holding Steve to the ground and is slowly crushing him to a certain death. The beast is so angry that its body is very close to Steve's (important, Steve will kill the beast because of that in a few panels). Bernard is leaning over his friend and he is not filled with blue magical energy anymore. He is now the same way as the two women earlier: tainted gold eyes and a calm attitude. The coin now speaks through him.

1. **Bernard:** Use the coin Steve Dakota. You can stop this madness if you become its bearer.
2. **Steve Dakota:** NNNGG

PANEL 2: Close-up of Steve's right hand looking and finding the knife.

3. **Bernard (off-panel):** Use the coin Steve Dakota. I will teach you all that I know.
4. **Bernard (off-panel):** You will be the most powerful man in the world.
5. **Steve Dakota (off-panel):** I know Bernard.

PANEL 3: Shot of Steve plunging the knife into the creature's hearth.

6. **Steve Dakota:** I won't and you know why.
7. **Steve Dakota:** I'm sorry.
8. **Gargoyle:** ARRRRRG

PANEL 4: The gargoyle dies and crumbles on Steve. Bernard is on the ground bleeding from a mortally wound in the chest. Bernard is no longer under the coin's spell. It is back to its dormant state.

9. **Bernard:** Steve... I was weak. I'm so sorry.

PANEL 5: Shot of Steve next to his dying friend. He holds his head in his hands.

10. **Steve Dakota:** I should never have come.
11. **Bernard:** No. It is me who has failed you.
12. **Bernard:** Go now before the Coin Master finds you...

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PANEL 1: Steve Dakota is on his knees next to his dead friend. He closes Bernard's eyes and make a silent prayer. Outside a storm is starting.

1. **Sound effects (storm):** Rmbl

PANEL 2: Close-up of Steve Dakota taking what's left of the magical envelope on the floor.

2. **Sound effects (storm):** Rmmbbl

PANEL 3: Close-up of Steve's hand grabbing the coin with the remnants of the envelope so that the coin doesn't touch his skin.

3. **Sound effects (storm):** Rmmmbbl

PANEL 4: Medium shot of Steve in a hurry. He grabs Bernard's car keys on the key rack next to the door. With his other hand he reaches for the door knob.

4. **Sound effects (storm):** RMMMMBLLL

PANEL 5: This is the biggest panel of the page. At least half of it. If you'd like, you could also make it the whole page and the other panels are inserts. The storm explodes and makes the ground tremble at the same time that Steve opens the door. There are a lot of lightning bolts in the background blinding him. He tries to shield his eyes with his right hand as he backs up one step. There is a huge and human like silhouette right at the door. Because of the light caused by the lightning in the background, we only see the outline of the character. All the details are in the shadows. It is the demon Asmodeus dressed as Solomon like we saw him in the Coin of Solomon's background in Artifact #7 with the beard and the mage tunic.

5. **Asmodeus:** Not fast enough little man.
6. **Asmodeus:** I'm already here.
7. **Sound effects (storm):** BOOOM
8. **Caption (Sara):** And since the Coin of Solomon really wanted Steve Dakota to be its bearer, it summoned its maker to convince him.

PAGE 17

PANEL 1: Establishing shot of the room. There are books, bricks and dirt everywhere. As the tall Solomon looking figure enters Bernard's home, Steve Dakota backs away slowly to a magical sword hanging on a weapon rack next to a still standing wall.

1. **Steve Dakota:** Are you really King Solomon?

PANEL 2: Close-up of Asmodeus who stretches his neck in a weird and impossible angle for a human being. The skin is like a too tight piece of clothes on the demon. Bones crack. Asmodeus laughs.

2. **Asmodeus:** HA HA HA
3. **Asmodeus:** No.
4. **Asmodeus:** I just like to wear his skin.
5. **Sound effects (body of Solomon):** kkkrick kkkcrack

PANEL 3: Steve Dakota, in one movement, grabs the sword on the rack, activates it (the sword shines in a magical pure blue light) and he starts a slashing move toward Asmodeus who is off-panel.

6. **Asmodeus (off-panel):** Do you know who I am?
7. **Steve Dakota:** I'm afraid so demon!

PANEL 4: As Steve Dakota slashes the sword at Asmodeus, the demon grabs it with one of his hands as if it was an inoffensive toy.

8. **Asmodeus:** Good.
9. **Asmodeus:** Then you know I'm not some puny underling that you can destroy with a...
10. **Asmodeus:** ... Toy.
11. **Steve Dakota:** I had to try...
12. **Steve Dakota:** Asmodeus

PANEL 5: Also in one movement, Asmodeus takes the sword off the hands of Steve Dakota and throws it away out of reach. Steve is surprised.

13. **Asmodeus:** So, you do know who I am.
14. **Asmodeus:** You're smarter than you look, magician.
15. **Asmodeus:** But not smart enough to use the coin it seems.
16. **Asmodeus:** Let me tell you why you will.

PAGE 18-19

Double spread-page containing 5 long vertical panels. The first one is the face of Asmodeus and the others are flash-back showing the making of the Coin of Solomon. You could maybe make a different kind of panel design to represent this. Also, the story in the next panels happens mostly in hell. I did not give a lot of details about the look of the place or the demons for you to have fun designing the place and the characters.

PANEL 1: Close-up of Asmodeus' face as he tells the story of the Coin.

1. **Asmodeus:** Solomon was the wisest man I ever knew and a powerful sorcerer. He was also a proud man.

PANEL 2: We see part of a scene where Solomon (still in the same garment) is trying to imbue a coin with energy but it is destroyed in the process. He is disappointed. Show him in his sorcerer lair that could look like a mix of both science and magic.

2. **Caption (Asmodeus):** He wanted to build an artifact of immense power that could help him protect his people from the likes of me. No material on your plane could hold such energy.

PANEL 3: Show Solomon in hell in front of an evil Solomon that sits on a throne. On the wall on the background, the shadow of Solomon is a man and the shadow of Evil Solomon is the demon Asmodeus. For inspiration about that king of demons: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asmodeus>

3. **Caption (Asmodeus):** He dug so deep in one of his mine, that he found a way into my kingdom.
4. **Caption (Asmodeus):** He then came to me asking for help, pretending that he wanted a special metal cast into a coin as an experience.
5. **Caption (Asmodeus):** I saw through his lies immediately.
6. **Caption (Asmodeus):** What a fool!

PANEL 4: We see the hellish forge of Asmodeus where the Coin is cast by a demon smith. Both Solomon are watching intently.

7. **Caption (Asmodeus):** I gave him what he wanted: the strongest metal I could find in hell and I cursed it.

8. **Caption (Asmodeus):** Making sure that this coin of his had one side for good and one for evil.

PANEL 5: Show a war in hell. Different factions of demons are killing each other. You can show the real shape of Asmodeus in there crushing an enemy champion.

9. **Caption (Asmodeus):** When the Coin has a bearer that uses it, I become more powerful. There is a war raging in Hell and right now, I need all the power I can get.
10. **Caption (Asmodeus):** The Coin of Solomon needs to have a bearer and it chose you Steve Dakota. Assume your destiny and you will be rewarded!

PAGE 20

PANEL 1: We're back in Bernard's home. Shot of the man and the demon looking straight at each other. Steve Dakota is serious and tries to provoke the demon.

1. **Steve Dakota:** You really do like to hear the sound of your voice?
2. **Steve Dakota:** Don't you?

PANEL 2: Shot of Asmodeus who do not find that funny at all. He is pissed. He yells and spits in anger. His right hand, in a black magical aura transforms into a lion's paw with claws.

3. **Asmodeus:** RARRRRRR

PANEL 3: Long shot of Asmodeus, with his lion hand, slashing Steve Dakota who is projected outside through the door and into Bernard's car (an old Ford T). The Coin of Solomon in the remnants of the envelope falls on the ground near Steve. The coin glows.

4. **Asmodeus:** If your will is too strong, maybe your life will be worth it?
5. **Sound effects (impact on car):** THUD

PANEL 4: Shot of the two protagonists. Steve Dakota doesn't have time to recover and Asmodeus, very pissed, is on him and slashes him in the belly. Steve yells in pain and is now mortally wounded. The Coin is glowing and pulsing again.

6. **Asmodeus:** Now, use the coin to heal yourself or die.
7. **Steve Dakota:** AAAAARG

PAGE 21

PANEL 1: Full shot of Asmodeus standing triumphant over a dying and bloodied Steve Dakota on the ground. The coin glows more powerfully now. With blood trickling out of his mouth, Steve's eyes starts to glow blue.

1. **Steve Dakota:** I can't use the Coin...
2. **Steve Dakota:** Because it is not for me.

PANEL 2: Full shot of Asmodeus being banished in hell by Steve. Dakota raises his hand, now crackling with the same blue energy coming out of his eyes, as he uses what's left of his magical abilities to open a rift in the fabric of reality that starts to send Asmodeus back to hell. Asmodeus is taken by surprise.

3. **Steve Dakota:** Your name is Asmodeus.
4. **Steve Dakota:** But I also know your real name demon.
5. **Steve Dakota:** I banish you...
6. **Steve Dakota (blue runic and magical):** LUST.

PANEL 3: Show Asmodeus as he is absorbed by the rift (like an implosion). He tries to grab Steve, but fails. On the ground, the Coin still glows.

7. **Asmodeus:** NOOOOOOO

PANEL 4: Shot of Steve and the absence of Asmodeus. The demon is gone and the only proof that he was there is a blue and black scar that the closing rift left. Steve Dakota is getting painfully up and holds his mortal wound with his left hand. The coin on the ground has stopped glowing. Except for Steve, all is calm and silent. No more thunderstorm.

8. **Steve Dakota:** Uggh

PANEL 5: Close-up of Steve grabbing the Coin with the remnants of the envelope.

No dialogue

PANEL 6: Steve leaves Bernard's wrecked place with his dead friend's damaged car.

9. **Caption (Sara):** So this is how Steve Dakota defeated the Demon King Asmodeus, one of the Coin of Solomon's creators.

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PANEL 1: Establishing shot of Steve finally arriving home. He gets out of the car in front of a humble house. A beautiful black haired woman is coming toward him from the porch: his wife Lucy.

1. **Caption (Sara):** Steve Dakota was finally home.
2. **Lucy:** My god Steve what happened to you?

PANEL 2: Close-up of their passionate kiss and maybe their last.

3. **Caption (Sara):** Is the Coin of Solomon a curse or a blessing?

PANEL 3: Medium shot of the couple walking. Supporting her dying husband that still loses lots of blood, Lucy brings him in the house.

4. **Caption (Sara):** No one really knows. It has one side forged for good and one for evil.
5. **Steve Dakota:** I had to fend off Asmodeus.
6. **Steve Dakota:** But I have the coin, Lucy my love.
7. **Steve Dakota:** Please, help me get to Connor.

PANEL 4: Shot of the couple entering a kid's room. On a sweaty bed is a feverish and dying 8 years old kid: Connor. Steve's son. The boy is unconscious.

8. **Caption (Sara):** One thing is sure: when you use it, you always have to pay a price.
9. **Steve Dakota:** Daddy's finally home son.
10. **Steve Dakota:** I brought the remedy I told you about.

PANEL 5: Medium shot of Steve, now livid, stroking his son's black hair as he lets the Coin drop on his son's forearm.

11. **Caption (Sara):** The Curator never told me if Steve Dakota lived or died after that night, but I know one thing...

PANEL 6: Shot of the family. The Coin becomes a part of the kid's forearm. Connor wakes up and starts to breathe as if he was coming back from the dead. Lucy is crying for the loss of her

husband and for the joy of seeing her son alive. Steve's head is leaning on the bed mattress. He seems dead or asleep. He is smiling.

12. **Connor:** Ahhhh

13. **Captions (Sara):** Steve Dakota paid the price for his son to live.

THE END