

SKELLINGTON #1

FISCHER FRANKS HUNTER O'MEARA PAULOS



♦ ARGONAUTICA PRESS ♦



SKELLINGTON #1

1. “Shadowmancy: The Key in the Wall”

Script: Jason Franks

Art: Nicholas Hunter

9. “Harvest”

Script: Jason Fischer

Art: Jason Paulos

17. “Skin”

Script: Jason Franks

Art: Nicholas Hunter

27. “The Geebung Polo Club”

Poem: Banjo Paterson

Script: Jason Fischer

Art: Shauna O’Meara

Cover: Jason and Yuriko Franks

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WHEN I WAS A BOY I WAS NEVER ALLOWED MORE THAN TWO BLOCKS FROM HOME.



THE HOUSE, THE SCHOOL, THE MARKET, THE DELI--THAT WAS THE EXTENT OF MY WORLD.



IT'S NOT THAT I DIDN'T TRY TO GET AWAY, BUT... SOMEHOW, MY MOTHER WAS ALWAYS THERE WHENEVER I TRIED TO SNEAK OUT.



BY THE TIME I WAS TEN, I'D GIVEN UP EVEN TRYING.

THOSE TWO BLOCKS WERE MY ENTIRE UNIVERSE...



EXCEPT WHEN MY FATHER CAME HOME.

SHADOWMAN

PART 1: THE KEY IN THE WALL

STORY: JASON FRANKS
ART: NICHOLAS HUNTER



MY FATHER TRAVELLED
IN HIS WORK. A TEACHER
FOR SOME PRESITIGIOUS
BUT REMOTE UNIVERSITY,
HE SAID.

I GUESS THAT WAS
TRUE, IN ITS WAY.



DURING THE FEW SCANT WEEKS OF
THE YEAR HE WAS HOME, THINGS
WERE DIFFERENT IN THE HOUSE.



IT WAS LIKE SOMEONE FLIPPED
A SWITCH ON MY MOTHER; LIKE
SHE HAD BEEN TURNED OFF.



DESPITE THE RARITY OF HIS
VISITS, FATHER SPENT MOST
OF HIS TIME AT HOME WORKING.

WHEN HE GOT RESTLESS--
ALMOST ALWAYS AT NIGHT--
HE WOULD LEAVE THE HOUSE.



SOMETIMES, HE
WOULD TAKE
ME WITH HIM.



WE WOULD WALK
THE STREETS.



RIDE THE SUBWAYS.



THERE WAS NEVER A
DESTINATION, JUST A
JOURNEY.



BEFORE LONG, HE'D PACK
HIS BAG AND LEAVE AGAIN.

HE NEVER
ONCE SAID
GOODBYE.



WHEN I WAS 12, I DECIDED
THAT I WOULD GO WITH HIM.



I DIDN'T ASK.



MY FATHER WAS NOT
A MAN YOU COULD ASK
FOR THINGS.



HIS WORD WAS LAW.
I KNEW THAT IF HE
REFUSED ME, I COULD
NEVER LEAVE.



BUT I WANTED TO
GO, AND I KNEW IT
HAD TO BE BEFORE
MY MOTHER AWOKE.



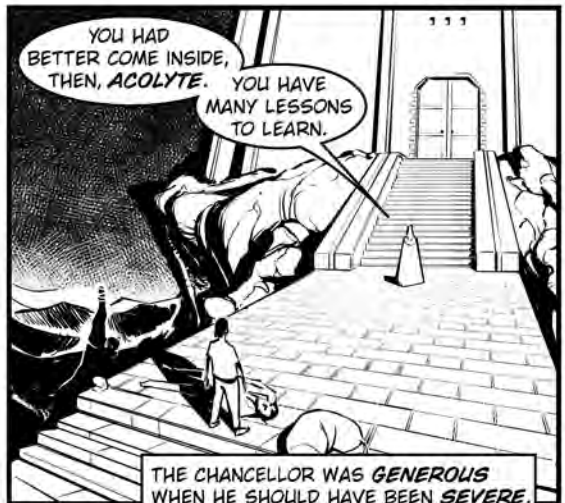
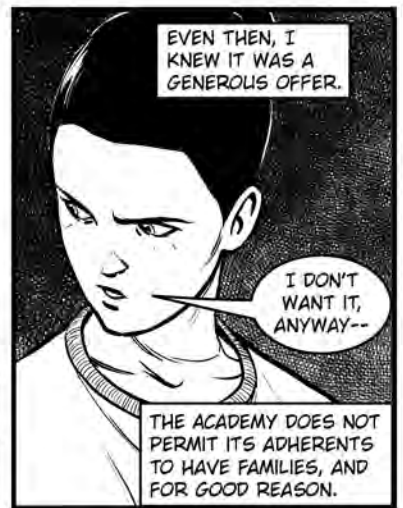
SO I FOLLOWED HIM.



AS IT TURNED OUT, THAT
WAS MORE TRUE THAN I
EVER COULD HAVE IMAGINED.







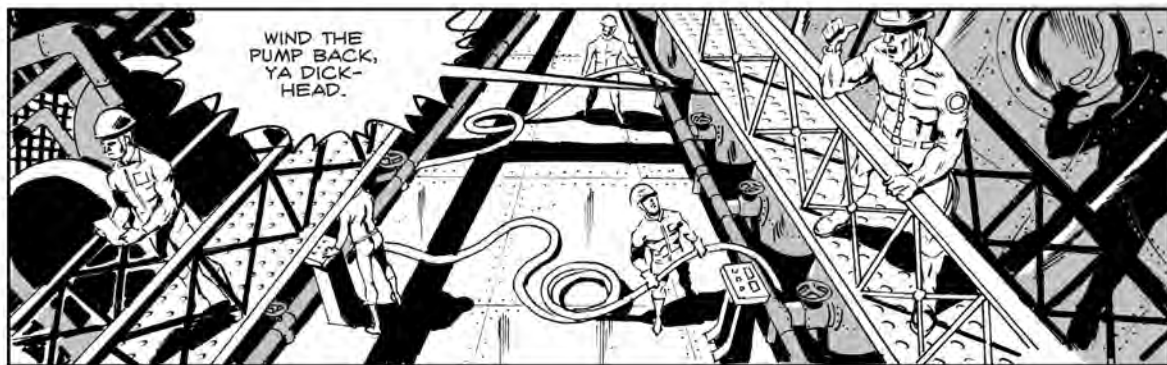


HE WAS A BOY SENT TO DO A MAN'S JOB. A FRESH FACED KID IN A WORLD OF HARD MEN.

HE WAS THE NEW BLOKE, AND GOT SENT FOR STRIPED PAINT, LEFT-HANDED HAMMERS.

ALL THE USUAL HORSESHIT.

















THEY FOUND HIM UNCONSCIOUS AMIDST THE RUBBLE NEXT MORNING ...

HEY LOOKEE HERE BOYS! WE'VE GOT A REAL LIVE TERRORIST!



TAKE HIM DOWN TO THE PEACEFUL CHAMBER.

I'LL GET THE RECLINER AND THE FLOWERS! HAW HAW!



SEEMS THE PEACEFUL CHAMBER ONLY EXISTED IN THE MOVIES ...

THE BOTTOM LINE DID NOT ALLOW FOR SUCH LUXURIES.



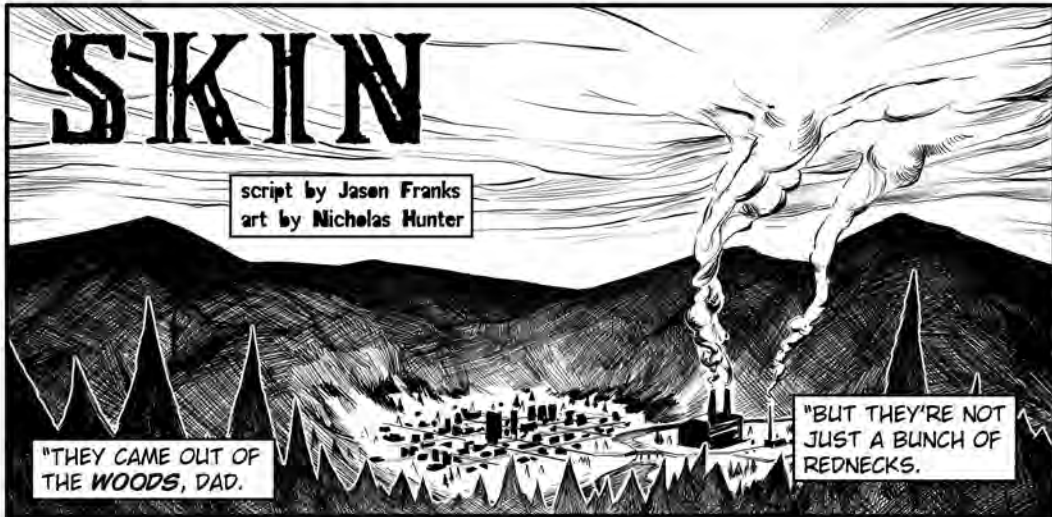
THIS WAS HOW TRISH'S MUM WOULD HAVE GONE.

WAILING AND SCREAMING, NO RECLINING CHAIR, NO DIGNIFIED ATTENDANTS.

AND NOWHERE IN THIS BRUTAL ABBATOIR DID A RAIJINN DO THE KILLING.

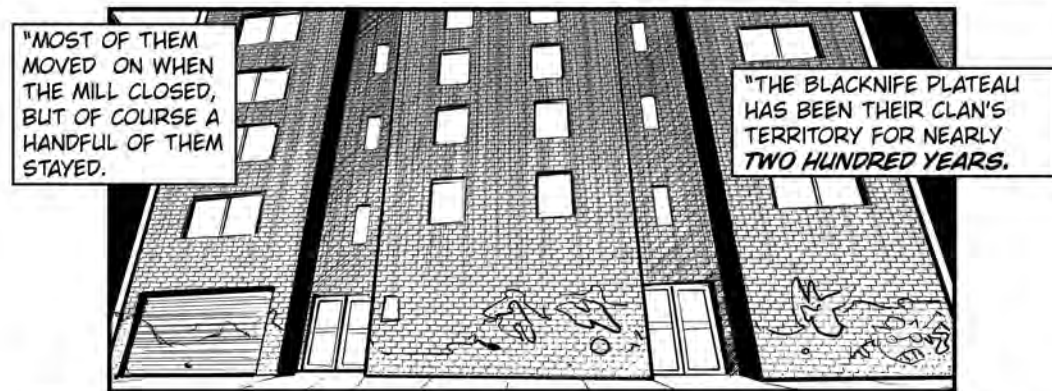
YOU'RE NEXT BOY!

THEY DIDN'T NEED TO.



"THEY CAME OUT OF THE WOODS, DAD.

"BUT THEY'RE NOT JUST A BUNCH OF REDNECKS.



"MOST OF THEM MOVED ON WHEN THE MILL CLOSED, BUT OF COURSE A HANDFUL OF THEM STAYED.

"THE BLACKNIFE PLATEAU HAS BEEN THEIR CLAN'S TERRITORY FOR NEARLY TWO HUNDRED YEARS.



"YEAH, DAD, I KNOW. IT WAS OURS LONG BEFORE THAT.

"BUT THERE'RE NO MORE JOBS IN THE TOWN AND THERE'S NO MORE GAME IN THE WOODS."



"THERE'S NOTHING LEFT HERE FOR ANYONE..."

"THAT'S WHY THEY'VE STARTED HUNTING US IN THE STREET."







"TIGE POUNDS A SLOW, SYNCOPATED RHYTHM ON THE WATER DRUM."

"RALPH TOOTLES AWAY, OBLIVIOUS TO EITHER OF THEM."

"ARN BLASTS POWERCHORDS, SLEWING ALL OVER THE BEAT."

"THREE MUSICIANS OUT OF SYNC WITH EACH OTHER, TO HELP ME FALL OUT OF SYNC WITH MY OWN SKIN."

"AS THEY START TO FIND EACH OTHER, TO FIND THE BEAT..."

"...I, TOO FIND SOMETHING NEW, BEATING INSIDE OF ME."

"SOMETHING THAT DID NOT COME FROM YOU, DAD. SOMETHING NOT FROM YOU OR MOM, OR ANY OF THOSE WHO CAME BEFORE YOU."

"SOMETHING THAT COMES ONLY FROM ME."

"SOME NEW SELF, THAT PROPERLY FITS THIS NEW SKIN."

"SOMETHING VERY NEW AND VERY, VERY STRANGE."











"THERE'S NO GOING BACK, DAD. BUT IT'S OKAY. I KNEW THAT FROM THE START."



YOU'RE... YOU CAN'T WALK AROUND LOOKIN' ALL MONSTERY AND SHIT, RIB.

UM, RIB...?



"THIS IS NOW MY SKIN, DAD."

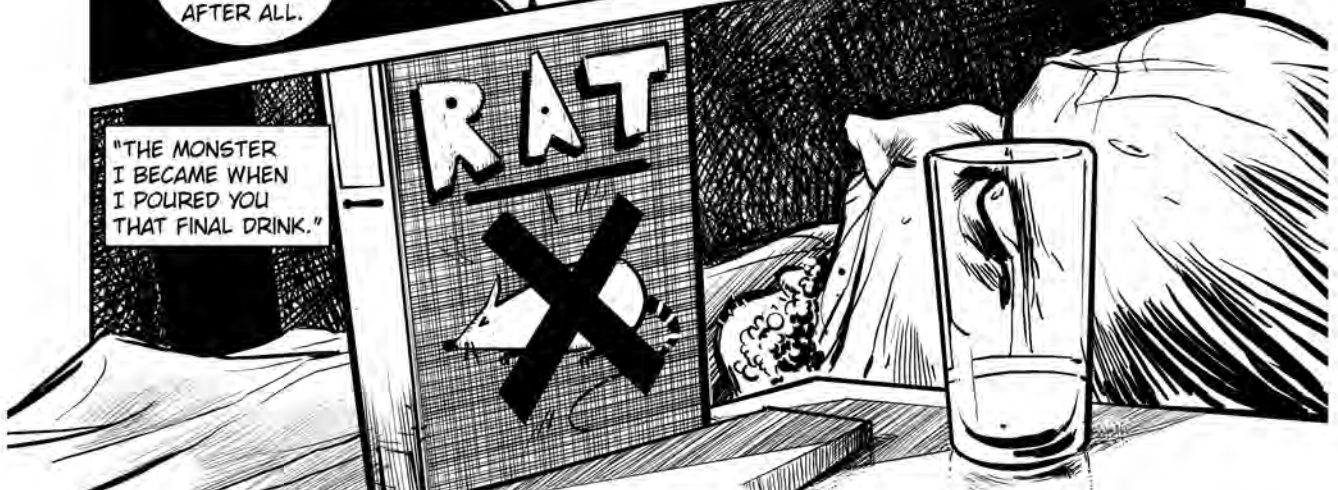
NO.

"THIS IS THE MONSTER I HAVE BECOME."



"THE MONSTER I BECAME IN ORDER TO BECOME THIS OTHER THING."

NO, I DON'T THINK RIB IS COMING BACK, AFTER ALL.



"THE MONSTER I BECAME WHEN I POURED YOU THAT FINAL DRINK."

The Geebung Polo Club

Original poem: Andrew Barton "Banjo" Patterson

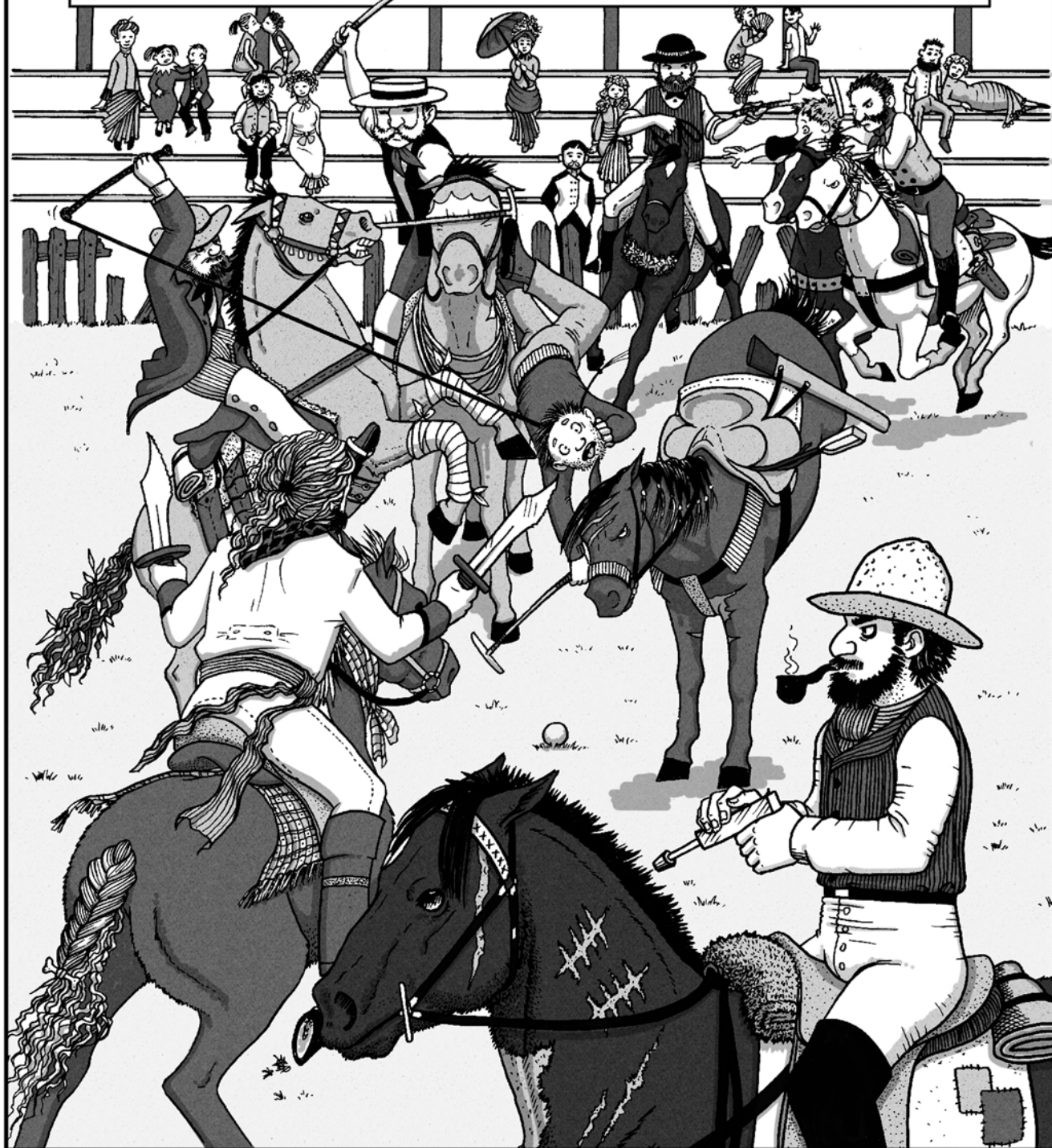
Comic adaptation: Jason Fischer

Artist: Shauna O'Meara

Editor: Mark Farrugia

FROM THE
VAULT

*It was somewhere up the country in a land of rock and scrub,
That they formed an institution called the Geebung Polo Club.
They were long and wiry natives of the rugged mountainside,
And the horse was never saddled that the Geebungs couldn't ride;*

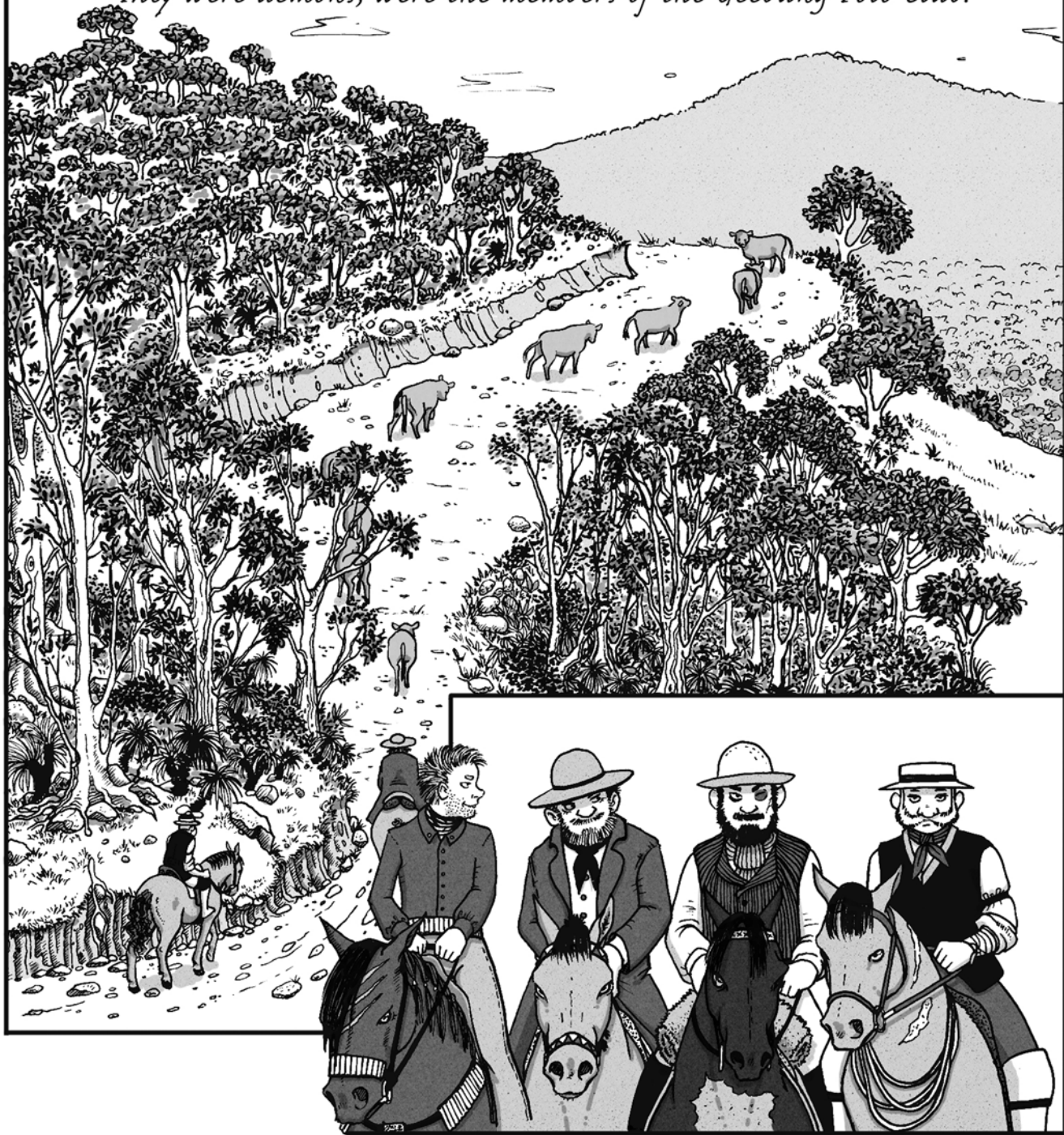


*But their style of playing polo was irregular and rash -
They had mighty little science, but a mighty lot of dash:*



*And they played on mountain ponies
that were muscular and strong,
Though their coats were quite unpolished,
and their manes and tails were long.*

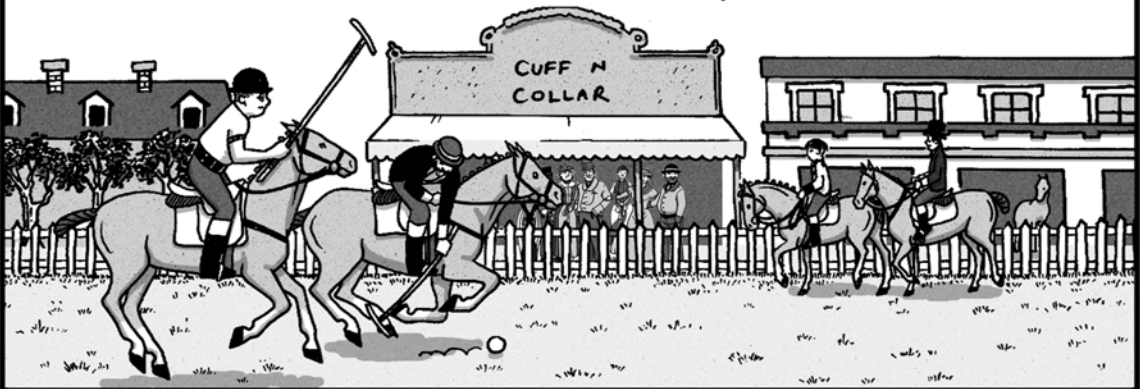
*And they used to train those ponies wheeling cattle through the scrub,
They were demons, were the members of the Geebung Polo Club.*



*It was somewhere down the country,
in a city's smoke and steam,*



That a polo club existed, called the Cuff and Collar Team.



*As a social institution
'twas a marvellous success,*



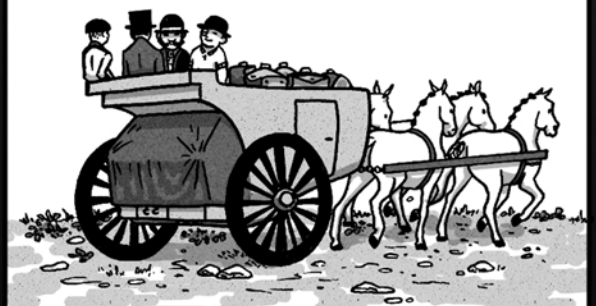
*For the members were distinguished
by exclusiveness and dress.*



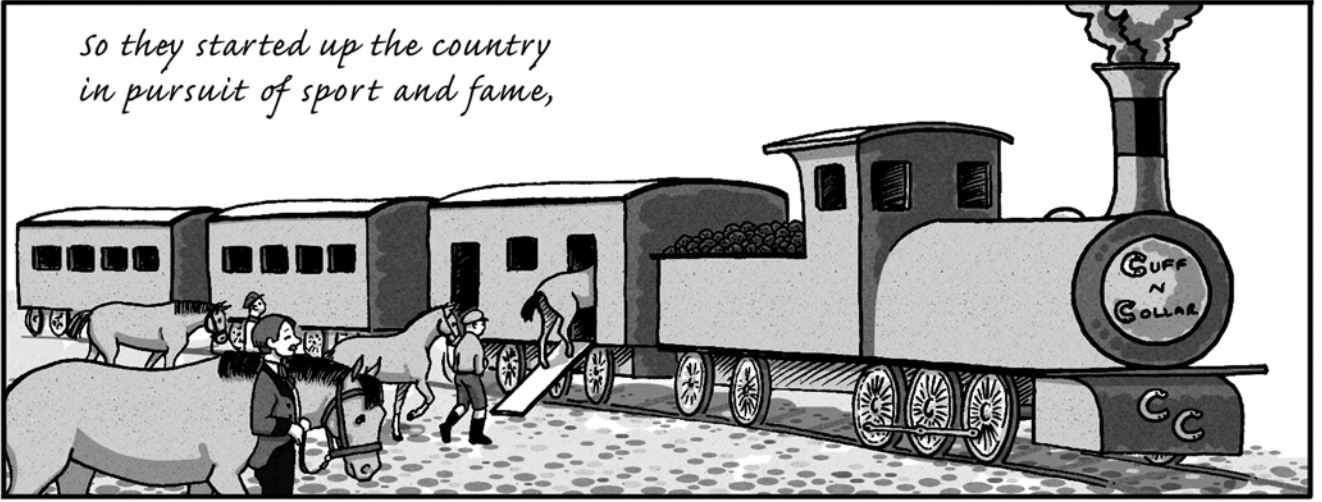
*They had natty little ponies that were
nice, and smooth, and sleek,*



*For their cultivated owners only
rode 'em once a week.*



*So they started up the country
in pursuit of sport and fame,*



*For they meant to show
the Geebung how they
ought to play the game;*



*And they took their valets
with them - just to give
their boots a rub*



*Ere they started operations
on the Geebung Polo Club.*





*Now my readers can imagine how the contest ebbed and flowed,
When the Geebung boys got going it was time to clear the road;*



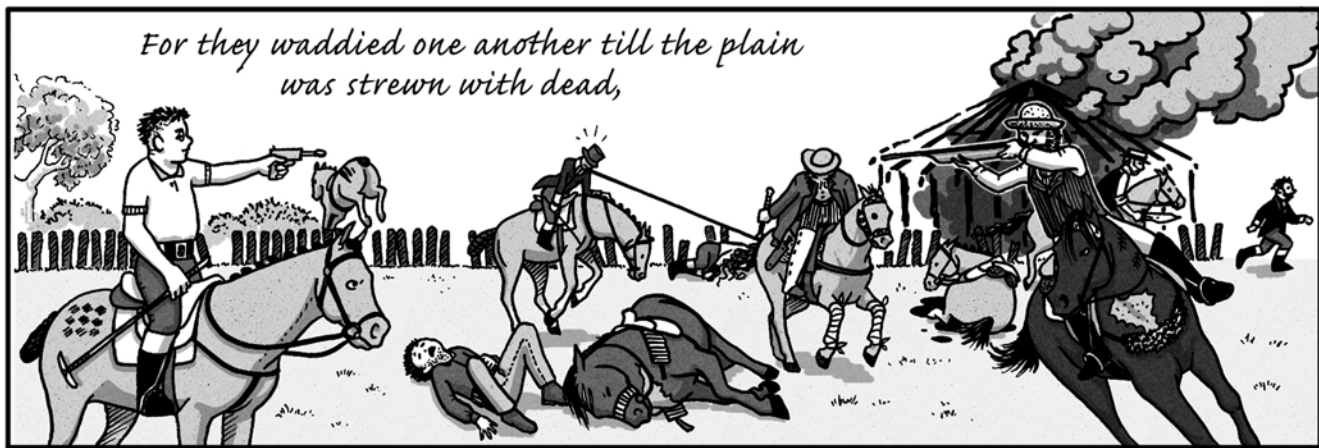
*And the game was so terrific
that ere half the time was gone*



*A spectator's leg was broken -
just from merely looking on.*



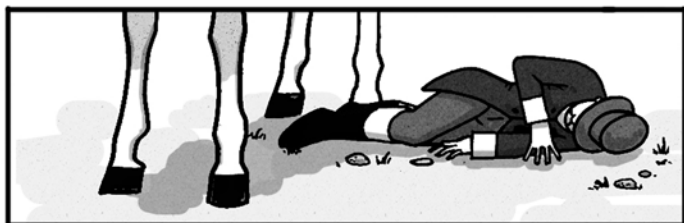
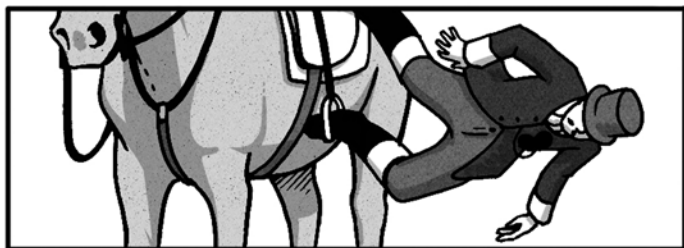
*For they waddied one another till the plain
was strewn with dead,*



*While the score was kept so even that they
neither got ahead.*



*And the Cuff and Collar captain,
when he tumbled off to die,
Was the last surviving player -
so the game was called a tie.*



Then the captain of the Geebung
raised him slowly from the ground,



Though his wounds
were mostly mortal,
yet he fiercely
gazed around;



There was no one to oppose him -
all the rest were in a trance,



so he scrambled on his pony
for his last expiring chance,



For he meant to make an effort
to get victory to his side;



so he struck at goal -
and missed it -



then he tumbled off
and died.

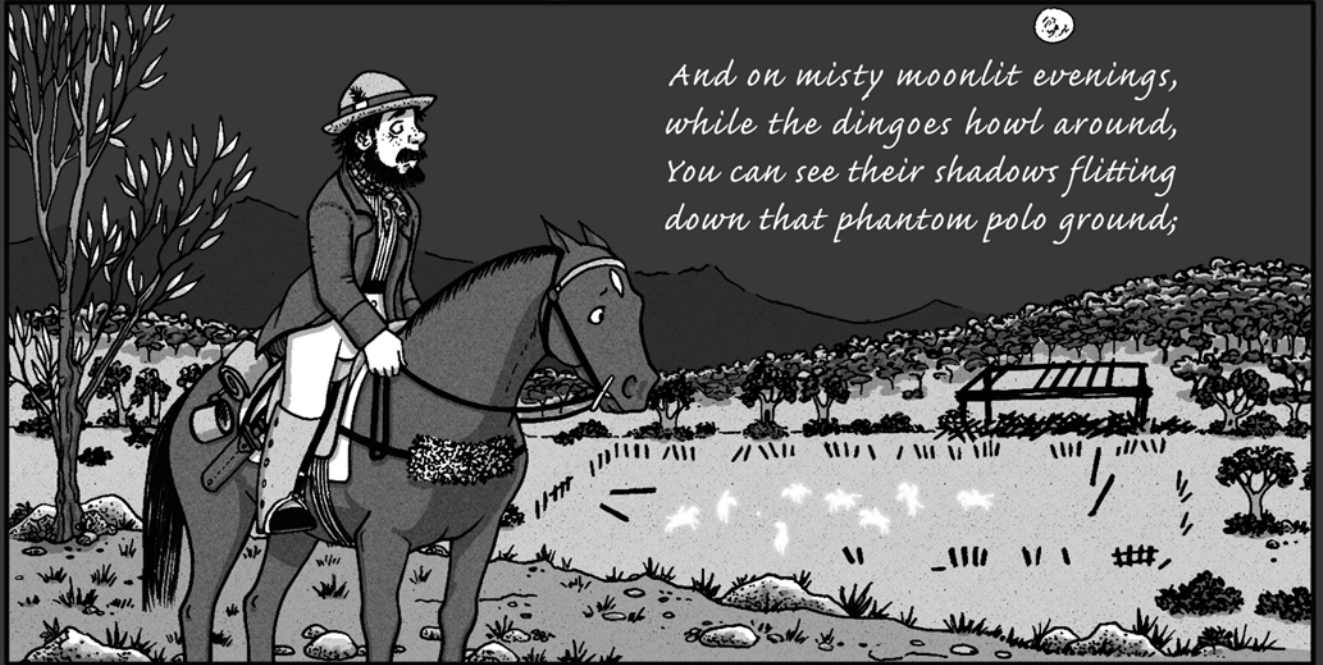




*By the old Campaspe River, where the breezes shake the grass,
There's a row of little gravestones that the stockmen never pass,*



*For they bear a crude inscription saying, "Stranger, drop a tear,
For the Cuff and Collar players and the Geebung boys lie here."*



19

*And on misty moonlit evenings,
while the dingoes howl around,
You can see their shadows flitting
down that phantom polo ground;*

*You can hear the loud collisions as the flying players meet,
And the rattle of the mallets, and the rush of ponies' feet,*



*Till the terrified spectator
rides like blazes to the pub*



*He's been haunted
by the spectres of the
Geebung Polo Club.*

FROM THE HELM

We hope that you have enjoyed the first edition of Skellington. Why Skellington, you ask? When we, your fearless editors, based our new publishing venture around our legendary namesake, we considered two different logos. The first was the stylised Argos, based on the painting by Konstantinos Volanakis. A close second was the humble skeleton warrior, as seen in the original **Jason and the Argonauts** film, realised into a jerky stop-motion existence by Ray Harryhausen. Our cover is an homage to these boney warriors, which we lovingly refer to in-house as Skellingtons.

It is no coincidence that Argonautica Press have given you this offering on Free Comic Book Day. Both Jason Franks and Jason Fischer met through the Australian comic book scene, specifically through working on projects with the beloved (and now sadly defunct) Black House Comics. This issue is a sampler of our short comic work—a love letter to the artform and an introduction to our new publishing venture.

So what is Argonautica Press? We are a joint publishing venture between award-winning Australian authors Jason Fischer and Jason Franks. Dedicated to reprinting our best known works as well as new projects, Argonautica Press launched with the re-release of Jason Franks' Auralis Award shortlisted occult rock'n'roll novel, **Bloody Waters**.

The next release on the Argonautica schedule is the reprint of Jason Fischer's **Quiver**, volume 1 of the **Tamsyn Webb Chronicles**. The sequels to this cult-

classic zombie novel are in production, and the following titles in the series are **Go To Hell** and **Dead Last**.

The estimated re-release date of *Quiver* is mid-July 2019, with the sequels in the Tamsyn Webb Chronicles following shortly.

Simultaneous to the re-release of *Quiver* should see Argonautica's first new release: Jason Franks' novel **Shadowmancy**, a dark look at a school for the mystical arts. *Shadowmancy* began life as a serialized comic illustrated by Nic Hunter, and many of Nic's lavish illustrations will grace the pages of the novel. This issue contains the first chapter of the original comic.

More information about Argonautica Press can be found at www.argonauticapress.com

And as for Skellington Magazine? Well, we can't make any promises, but we'll put out an issue 2 when we have brain squeezings to spare. Stay posted for infrequent releases full of miscellanea, the odd comic, and most likely several bad jokes from Jason Fischer. Example the first!

"What did the skeleton say before dinner? BONE appetit. His whole family found that HUMERUS."

Many thanks for reading, and we hope to see you around the ship.

Yours from the helm,

Jason Fischer and Jason Franks.
'strayia 2019



2019 RELEASES



BLOODY WATERS

A young guitar virtuoso makes a deal with the devil for a record deal and a second chance.

"A great book, superbly written, one of those things you can call truly different." - Alan Baxter, author of *Bound*.

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Tamsyn Webb must survive the zombie apocalypse with only her wits and her trusty compound bow.

"Jason Fischer lets his gruesome imagination loose on a world in crisis—the zombies are already here, and they are most definitely winning" - Kaaron Warren, author of *Slights* and the *Grinding House*.



July 2019



SHADOWMANCY

The son of a disgraced professor inherits his father's enemies at a magical academy.

July 2019

For ordering information please visit argonauticapress.com