

HOPE "Welcome to the Fold, Part 1" - Issue 1  
Written by Marcus Ward

PAGE ONE - ONE PANEL

PANEL ONE

THE STORY SO FAR...

Having spent time overseas in the Middle East, honorably discharged combat veteran THAD REYNOLDS now works low risks jobs as he struggles to live in the world.

But life is not what Thad remembers. Thirteen years ago, his world changed by a chance encounter with some thing. Better and worse, his world is going to change again.

Tonight...

PAGE TWO - ONE PANEL

## PANEL ONE

We are inside a warehouse. A close up of a terrified security guard, THAD REYNOLDS (30s) as a shadowy mass looms over him. He is a Latin American combat veteran that has seen much, but this is a whole new level of shit.

- 1: NARRATION (THAD):        Ever have that moment in your life  
   where you know what to do because it  
   was drilled in your head, yet you  
   just stand there ready to shit  
   yourself?
- 2: NARRATION (THAD):        I'm living that right now.

PAGE THREE - FIVE PANELS

## PANEL ONE

Another security guard, a portly man with a chicken body, Chicken Man, knocks Thad out of the way as a pallet of heavy crates comes closer.

## PANEL TWO

Thad hits the ground hard, sliding face down on the concrete floor.

1: SFX (CRATE):                   CRUNCH!

## PANEL THREE

A middle aged man with a "Dad body" helps Thad stand. This is EARL "RUSTY" BUTZ (40s). Thad wipes his brow.

2: EARL "RUSTY" BUTZ:        You alright, Thad?

## PANEL FOUR

Earl SLAPS Thad across the face.

## PANEL FIVE

Thad grabs Earl's arm.

3: THAD REYNOLDS:            Knock it off!

4: NARRATION (THAD):        Earl "Rusty" Butz. A little eccentric but always keeps his cool. Tells people he was named after a bodybuilder. But he was **really** named after a porn star.

PAGE FOUR - THREE PANELS

## PANEL ONE

Thad notices blood is on his hand.

1: NARRATION (THAD): They train you to handle pain.

## PANEL TWO

Thad turns around and gasps. He and Earl are scared out of their minds.

2: NARRATION (THAD): To face the unexpected. To overcome.

## PANEL THREE

A gory mess of blood and meat are all that remains of Thad's savior. The broken pallet and its contents collapse and crush a chunk of meat and bone.

An abnormally tall and muscular man/thing BEHEMOTH in a trench coat and fedora stands next to the mess. The face is obscured by the clothes, except for the eyes. In its oversized hands is Chicken Man's severed leg.

3: NARRATION (THAD): Nothing in the manual about this shit.

PAGE FIVE - FIVE PANELS

PANEL ONE

The Behemoth RIPS a chunk of meat off the leg with its teeth.

PANEL TWO

Thad and Earl run like hell.

1: THAD REYNOLDS:           Run, goddammit!

2: EARL "RUSTY" BUTZ:       Oh God!

PANEL THREE

Thad and Earl run through an aisle of shelves stacked with pallets.

3: EARL "RUSTY" BUTZ:       Oh Jesus!

PANEL FOUR

Behemoth chases after them like a lion after its prey.

4: EARL "RUSTY" BUTZ:       Oh shit!

PANEL FIVE

The Exit is visible and just in reach for Thad and Earl.

PAGE SIX - SIX PANELS

## PANEL ONE

Thad's foot catches on the indentation in the concrete floor.

## PANEL TWO

Thad lands with a THUD.

## PANEL THREE

Earl turns to see Thad on the ground. Thad reaches out to him.

1: THAD REYNOLDS: Rusty...

2: NARRATION (THAD): Please don't leave me like this.

## PANEL FOUR

Earl high tails it to the Exit screaming.

3: NARRATION (THAD): You fucking asshole!

## PANEL FIVE

Earl opens the door while looking back at Thad. He is unaware of some thing standing over him behind the door.

4: EARL "RUSTY" BUTZ: Sorry. You take a chance with any job.

## PANEL SIX

Earl faces what is beyond the doorway. His face is frozen in fear.

5: EARL "RUSTY" BUTZ: Shi --

PAGE SEVEN - FOUR PANELS

PANEL ONE

A Behemoth's hand CRUSHES Earl's head like a melon.

PANEL TWO

A second BEHEMOTH steps into the room licking the blood off its hand with its elongated slimy gray tongue. Two long scars extend from its mouth running down the neck.

PANEL THREE

Thad is frozen with fear as he watches the grim scene.

PANEL FOUR

The first Behemoth stands up and ROARS. Something is wrong.

PAGE EIGHT - FOUR PANELS

## PANEL ONE

Thad watches as the first Behemoth lunges at the second for spoils.

1: NARRATION (THAD):       Get a grip, Thad.

## PANEL TWO

First Behemoth tackles the second out of the room while the other claws the first in defense.

2: CAPTION-THAD:            Stay focused.

## PANEL THREE

Thad triumphantly stands up.

3: NARRATION (THAD):        You've faced worse. You can do this.

## PANEL FOUR

Blood and a little piece of Earl splash across Thad's face.

PAGE NINE - FOUR PANELS

## PANEL ONE

Thad runs like hell while the two Behemoths fight.

1: NARRATION (THAD):        Fuck this noise, man!

## PANEL TWO

Thad enters a long hallway. He hears the two Behemoths GROWL behind the door.

2: NARRATION (THAD):        Shit.

## PANEL THREE

Thad high tails it down the hallway to the Exit. The Behemoths CRASH through the door behind Thad.

3: NARRATION (THAD):        Shit.

## PANEL FOUR

Thad's hand slams the door handle. The door CREAKS open.

4: NARRATION (THAD):        Shit.

PAGE TEN - THREE PANELS

PANEL ONE

Thad flees the building into the street lit parking lot.

PANEL TWO

Thad catches his breath under a sickly tree. He reaches into his holster.

1: NARRATION (THAD):        They're coming. Be ready.

PANEL THREE

A loud SNEEZE catches Thad off guard.

2: THAD REYNOLDS:            Don't move! I'll--

PAGE ELEVEN - FOUR PANELS

## PANEL ONE

Leaning on a dumpster next to Thad is HOPE LYONE (30s), an unassuming vagrant with Middle Eastern features munching on a lemon candy bar. She eyeballs Thad's laminate.

- 1: HOPE LYONE:                    You gonna shoot me with your pastry...
- 2: HOPE LYONE:                    Thad Reynolds? Serious?
- 3: THAD REYNOLDS:                What?
- 4: NARRATION (THAD):            Good one, dumb ass.

## PANEL TWO

Thad realizes his holster is filled with frosting and creme.

- 5: THAD REYNOLDS:                Shit.

## PANEL THREE

Unbeknownst to Thad or Hope, the second Behemoth watches them from the warehouse ceiling. Its tongue SLURPS.

## PANEL FOUR

Behemoth watches as Thad tries, and fails, to convince Hope to leave. From its vision, Thad and Hope appear to be walking circulatory systems, but while Thad is a normal human, Hope's is inverted.

- 6: THAD REYNOLDS:                You need to leave.
- 7: HOPE LYONE:                    Relax, Officer. I'm waiting for the bus.
- 8: THAD REYNOLDS:                It's not safe.
- 9: HOPE LYONE:                    All these empty slots? They look dangerous.

PAGE TWELVE - ONE PANEL

## PANEL ONE

The second Behemoth ROARS as it leaps off the warehouse toward Thad. Its mouth has dropped open all the way down to its stomach revealing several rows of fanged teeth. Thad and Hope are taken by surprise.

1: NARRATION (THAD):       What the shit hole of fuck!

2: HOPE LYONE:             Friend of yours?

PAGE THIRTEEN - FOUR PANELS

## PANEL ONE

Behemoth tackles Thad to the ground. Thad grabs hold of the creature's face.

## PANEL TWO

Behemoth's tongue SLURPS Thad as it wraps around his neck and head.

1: THAD REYNOLDS:            Yuck!

## PANEL THREE

Thad's hand searches the ground for a weapon.

2: THAD REYNOLDS:            Didn't someone teach you?

## PANEL FOUR

Thad grabs hold of the pastry.

3: THAD REYNOLDS:            No tongue on the first date.

PAGE FOURTEEN - FOUR PANELS

## PANEL ONE

Thad smashes the pastry into Behemoth's eyes, blinding it.

## PANEL TWO

Behemoth jerks back hoisting Thad off the ground with its tongue. One hand claws the pastry off its eyes.

1: NARRATION (THAD): I think I pissed it off.

## PANEL THREE

Behemoth's tongue constricts around Thad's head and neck. Only one eye is visible. He struggles but to no avail.

2: NARRATION (THAD): Can't...breathe.

## PANEL FOUR

Behemoth's tongue lowers Thad into its gaping mouth.

3: CAPTION-THAD: Hoping...that girl...got away.

PAGE FIFTEEN - THREE PANELS

PANEL ONE

An ovipositor stinger STABS Behemoth through its hand and into its right eye. Yellowish blood splatters.

PANEL TWO

Behemoth stumbles in pain and rage.

PANEL THREE

Behemoth's tongue loosens its grip around Thad. He is barely conscious.

PAGE SIXTEEN - SIX PANELS

## PANEL ONE

Thad struggles to crawl away from Behemoth. It is now being attacked by a female SHADOWY CREATURE with insect traits. Parts of his uniform and body are drenched in Behemoth's blood.

1: NARRATION (THAD): Push on soldier...

2: NARRATION (THAD): This thing...needs to be stopped.

## PANEL TWO

Thad spots what he thinks is a gun a few feet away.

## PANEL THREE

A foot STOMPS on Thad's right hand.

3: THAD REYNOLDS: Yaarghh!

## PANEL FOUR

An Injured Behemoth stands over Thad. Its face, body, and arms are heavily clawed. Its tongue SLURPS its lips.

## PANEL FIVE

Thad stares in fear.

4: NARRATION (THAD): Shit.

## PANEL SIX

Thad's free hand grabs hold of a metal shard.

PAGE SEVENTEEN AND EIGHTEEN - TWELVE PANELS

## PANEL ONE

Injured Behemoth reaches for Thad.

## PANEL TWO

Thad SLASHES Injured Behemoth's hand.

## PANEL THREE

Injured Behemoth punches Thad. Thad barely dodges as the fist SMASHES into the asphalt.

## PANEL FOUR

Thad STABS the metal shard into Behemoth's fist, skewering it.

## PANEL FIVE

Shadowy Creature continues stinging the second Behemoth in the arms, body, legs, and face with multiple ovipositor strikes.

## PANEL SIX

Second Behemoth launches its tongue at its opponent wrapping around Shadowy Creature's neck.

## PANEL SEVEN

Using its ovipositors, Shadowy Creature yanks Second Behemoth off the ground. Second Behemoth ROARS and fidgets in its predicament.

## PANEL EIGHT

Shadowy Creature pulls off Second Behemoth's tongue from her neck and RIPS it to shreds with her claws.

## PANEL NINE

Shadowy Creature hurls Second Behemoth in the air like a discus.

Behemoth SCREAMS as its arms tear off from the sockets.

1: SHADOWY CREATURE: Duck, Thad!

PANEL TEN

Second Behemoth COLLIDES against Injured Behemoth, knocking it off its feet. Thad ducks.

PANEL ELEVEN

Both Behemoths CRASH into the trash dumpster tearing it apart and piercing both creatures. Thad partially stands up.

2: NARRATION (THAD): FUBAR--

PANEL TWELVE

A chunk of one of the Behemoths SMACKS Thad across the face. The thick mass knocks him backwards onto the pavement.

PAGE NINETEEN - SIX PANELS

## PANEL ONE

A bad dream. It is daylight. Thad is on patrol, in the rear, with a Fireteam in the deserts of Afghanistan. The wind is kicking up the sand.

1: CAP-FLOATING:                   Dasht-e Margow, Afghanistan 2015

2: FIRETEAM LEADER:               Pick up the pace, Grunt.

## PANEL TWO

Thad looks around with the scope on his rifle.

3: THAD REYNOLDS:                I thought I saw something,  
  Sir.

4: FIRETEAM LEADER:               Don't give me lip, Grunt.

## PANEL THREE

Fireteam Leader gestures the others to continue moving.

5: FIRETEAM LEADER:               Do as you're told.

6: THAD REYNOLDS:                Sir, yessir.

## PANEL FOUR

Thad lowers his rifle and obeys.

## PANEL FIVE

Something glares through the sand. A scope?

## PANEL SIX

An RPG is fired at the team.

PAGE TWENTY - SIX PANELS

## PANEL ONE

It is daylight. Thad wakes up SCREAMING on a dirty mattress. He is topless and has bandages around his forehead, chest, and his right hand.

## PANEL TWO

Thad looks around the room. The place is dingy and spartan. If someone lived here it was long ago.

1: NARRATION (THAD):           Need to get out of here.

## PANEL TWO

Thad tries getting out of bed but he cannot. His left hand is ziptied to the metal headboard.

2: THAD REYNOLDS:            What?

## PANEL THREE

Thad tries yanking the ziptie off his wrist. No success.

3: NARRATION (THAD):        First rodeo on a dingy mattress.

## PANEL FOUR

Thad suddenly notices a box cutter lying next to him.

## PANEL FIVE

While Thad cuts his binding he smells something odd coming from the headboard.

5: THAD REYNOLDS:            Jasmine?

6: MATT (OFF):                That's a good nose you've got there.

## PANEL SIX

Thad throws the box cutter at --

PAGE TWENTY ONE - TWO PANELS

## PANEL ONE

MATT (40s) standing by the doorway next to Hope with a tall mug in one hand while telekinetically holding the box cutter in the air with the other. Although dressed as a boat tourist, it is clear he does not belong here. On the table next to Matt is the severed head of the Injured Behemoth. Thad is shocked.

- 1: MATT:                                   It's nice to finally meet you, Thad. Don't worry. I won't tell anyone what happened last night. Hope has told me about your, antics, and I must say. Impressive.
- 2: MATT:                                   I understand you've spent the last few years trying to forget what happened in the army. And you've buried yourself in demeaning work to escape. Slightly better than boozing or pills.
- 3: MATT:                                   As I see it, we can help each other. A good man like yourself just needs a good purpose.

## PANEL TWO

Injured Behemoth's eye socket eerily glows green.

- 4: MATT (OFF):                           More importantly, you need a good job.
- 5: CAPTION:                               Next: The good job