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SHADOW SHADOW

STORIES IN CELEBRATION OF RAY BRADBURY



SHADOW SHOW: STORIES IN CELEBRATION OF RAY BRADBURY

based on the short story "Who Knocks?" by

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colors by

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based on the short story "Earth (A Gift Shop)" by

Charles Yu

adapted by

Mort Castle

art and letters by

Christine Larsen

based on the short story "Altenmoor, Where The Dogs Dance" by

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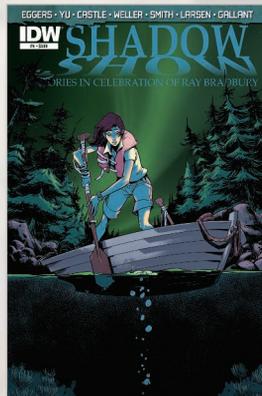
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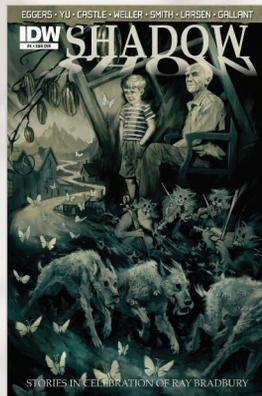
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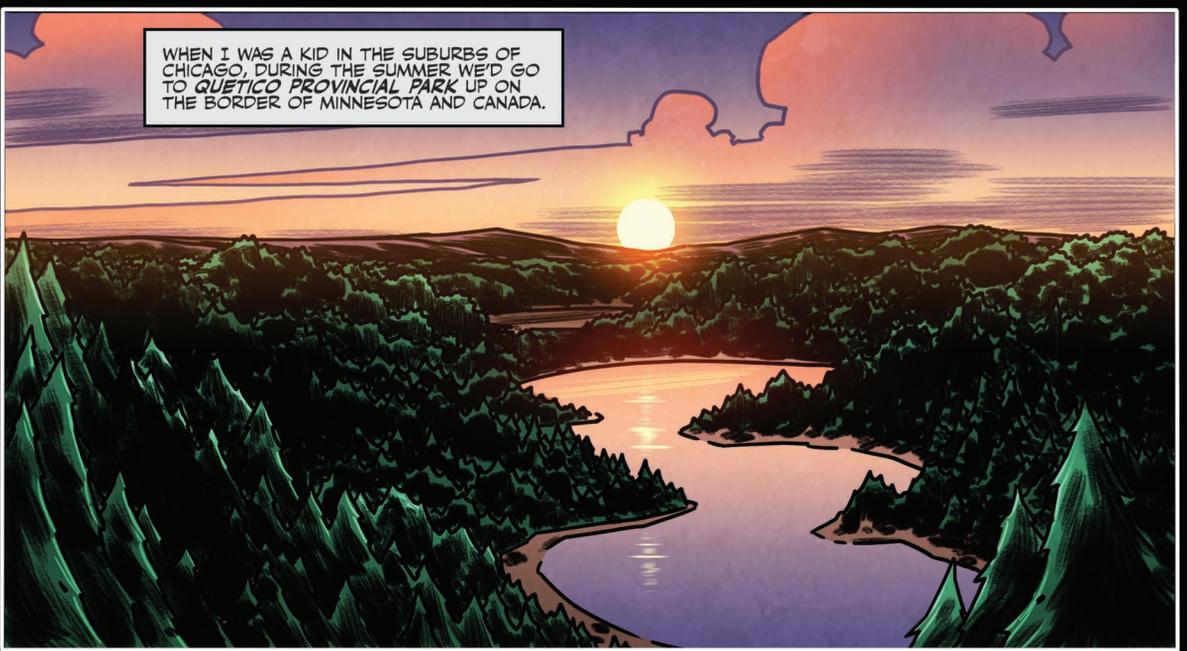
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WHEN I WAS A KID IN THE SUBURBS OF CHICAGO, DURING THE SUMMER WE'D GO TO *QUETICO PROVINCIAL PARK* UP ON THE BORDER OF MINNESOTA AND CANADA.



"PROVINCIAL" IMPLIES THAT THE PLACE WAS SMALL, BUT QUETICO WAS, AND STILL IS, A MILLION-ACRE NATURE PRESERVE—SO BIG YOU COULD GO DAYS AND DAYS WITHOUT SEEING ANOTHER SOUL.



WE WOULD GO ON CAMPING TRIPS UP THERE—WEEKS OF CANOEING AND PORTAGING, SPOTTING BEARS AND MOOSE AND DEER.



WE SLEPT UNDER STAR-SOAKED SKIES.

I MISS QUETICO, BUT I WON'T BE GOING BACK ANYTIME SOON. NOT AFTER WHAT HAPPENED TO A GIRL NAMED *FRANCES BRANDYWINE*...

FRANCES WAS UP IN QUETICO WITH HER FAMILY, CAMPED ON THE SHORE OF ONE OF THE DEEPER LAKES—A LONELY BODY OF WATER CARVED MILLIONS OF YEARS AGO BY A PASSING GLACIER.

ONE NIGHT, AFTER HER FAMILY WENT TO BED, FRANCES, RECKLESS AND DETERMINED, TOOK THE ROWBOAT OUT.

WHO KNOCKS?

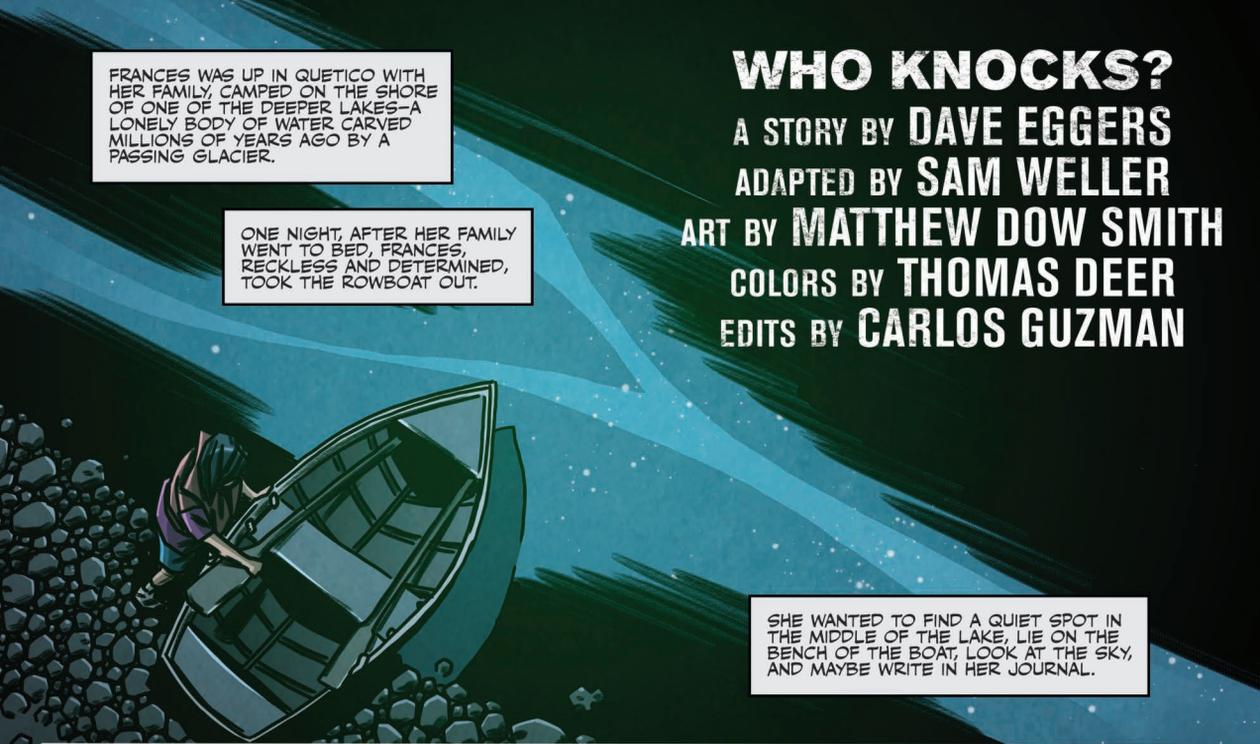
A STORY BY DAVE EGGERS

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SHE WANTED TO FIND A QUIET SPOT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE LAKE, LIE ON THE BENCH OF THE BOAT, LOOK AT THE SKY, AND MAYBE WRITE IN HER JOURNAL.



SHE LEFT THE SHORE AND ROWED FOR ABOUT TWENTY MINUTES, AND WHEN SHE WAS SATISFIED THAT SHE WAS OVER THE LAKE'S DEEPEST SPOT, SHE LAY DOWN AND LOOKED UP AT THE NIGHT SKY.



THE STARS WERE VERY BRIGHT, THE AURORA BOREALIS SHIMMERING LIKE A NEON LASSO.



THEN SHE HEARD SOMETHING STRANGE. IT WAS LIKE A *KNOCK*.

GLOP
GLOP



SHE LEANED OVER TO SEE WHAT HAD CAUSED THE SOUND. WAS IT A LOG? HAD SHE STRUCK A ROCK? PERHAPS IT WAS A FISH, A TURTLE, A STICK THAT HAD DRIFTED UNDER THE BOAT.



SHE RELAXED AGAIN, AND SOON FELL INTO A CONTENTED REVERIE.



CLOK
CLOK
CLOK



IT WAS LOUDER, THIS TIME. LIKE THE SOUND OF SOMEONE KNOCKING HARD ON A WOODEN DOOR. EXCEPT THIS KNOCKING WAS COMING FROM THE BOTTOM OF THE BOAT.



NOW FRANCIS WAS SCARED.

BAM
BAM
BAM



THE WATER WAS VERY CALM, SO SHE SHOULD HAVE MADE QUICK PROGRESS.

BUT AFTER ROWING FEVERISHLY FOR MINUTES SHE LOOKED AROUND AND REALIZED, WITH COLD DREAD, THAT SHE WASN'T MOVING AT ALL.

SOMETHING WAS KEEPING HER EXACTLY WHERE SHE WAS.



HER MIND CLAWED THROUGH OPTIONS. SHE THOUGHT ABOUT LEAVING THE BOAT, SWIMMING TO SHORE, BUT SHE KNEW THE WATER WAS SO COLD THAT SHE'D FREEZE BEFORE GETTING FAR.

AND BESIDES, WHATEVER WAS KNOCKING ON THE BOTTOM OF THE BOAT WAS IN THE WATER.



AGAIN SHE TRIED ROWING. SHE ROWED AND ROWED, ON THE VERGE OF TEARS, BUT SHE WENT NOWHERE.



SHE STOPPED ROWING. SHE WAS EXHAUSTED. HER HEAVY BREATHING FILLED THE AIR. SHE CRIED. SHE SOBBED.



SHE CALMED HERSELF AND THE BOAT WAS SILENT AGAIN.

FOR TEN MINUTES, THEN TWENTY, EVERYTHING WAS STILL AND QUIET.

AGAIN, SHE TRICKED HERSELF INTO THINKING SHE'D IMAGINED IT ALL.

BUT JUST LIKE BEFORE, JUST WHEN SHE WAS BEGINNING TO GET A GRIP ON HERSELF, THE KNOCKING CAME AGAIN, THIS TIME LOUD AS A BASS DRUM. THE FLOORBOARDS OF THE BOAT SHOOK WITH EACH STRIKE.

BOOM BOOMBOOM

AND THAT'S WHEN SHE MADE A BAD DECISION...

...SHE DECIDED TO LOWER ONE OF THE OARS INTO THE BLACK WATER, TRYING TO FEEL IF THERE WAS SOME LANDMASS, EVEN SOME CREATURE SHE COULD TOUCH.

AS SOON AS THE OAR HAD BROKEN THE WATER'S SURFACE, THOUGH, SHE FELT A STRONG, SILENT TUG AT THE OTHER END AND THE OAR WAS PULLED UNDER.

NOW SHE HAD NO OPTIONS. ALL SHE COULD DO NOW WAS SIT, AND HOPE, AND WAIT.

WAIT FOR THE MORNING TO COME.

WAIT FOR WHATEVER WAS GOING TO HAPPEN TO HAPPEN.

