

DYNAMITE
#5

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VAMPIRELLA®



BELGRADE, REPUBLIC OF SERBIA:

HOLD
STILL, MY LITTLE
BEAUTY...

THIS WON'T
HURT A BIT...ANY
MORE.

This is Professor Janko Zagorac, a leading etymologist at the University of Belgrade. How he managed to survive first Tito, then Milosevic, when many of his fellow academics had not is simple: the only thing he truly cares about is bugs.

And not just any insect—he specializes in Lepidoptera: butterflies and moths. What was the waxing and waning of political power when compared to such transcendent beauty and variety?

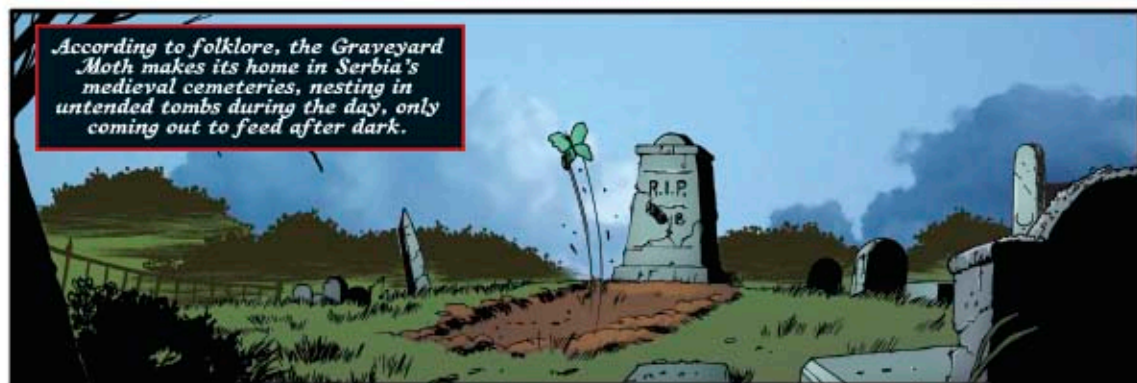
PROFESSOR ZAGORAC?
THE TAXI IS HERE. IF YOU
DON'T LEAVE NOW,
YOU'LL MISS YOUR
TRAIN.

HM? OH,
YES! THANK YOU,
MY DEAR!

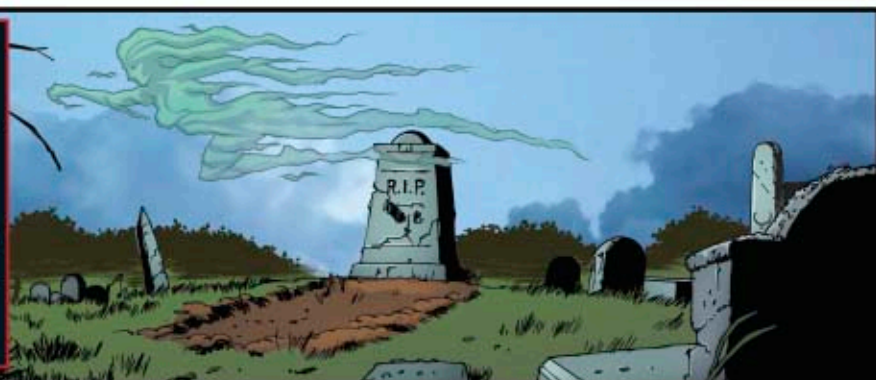
*The good professor
has scheduled a small
busman's holiday for
himself. He is
traveling to the small,
remote village of
Livada in search of
an extremely rare
moth...*

*In fact, it is so rare that many
in his field have gone so far as
to deny its very existence...*

According to folklore, the Graveyard Moth makes its home in Serbia's medieval cemeteries, nesting in untended tombs during the day, only coming out to feed after dark.

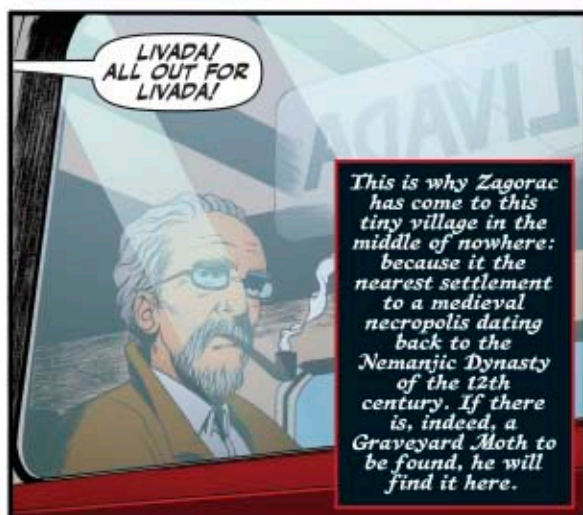


Of course, given the superstitious nature of peasants, the moth was said to be the spirit of a dead witch, come back to haunt the living. That it seemed to be a variant of *Calyptra*, better known as the blood-drinking "vampire moth," no doubt a great deal to do with its evil reputation.



LIVADA!
ALL OUT FOR
LIVADA!

This is why Zagorac has come to this tiny village in the middle of nowhere: because it the nearest settlement to a medieval necropolis dating back to the Nemanjić Dynasty of the 12th century. If there is, indeed, a Graveyard Moth to be found, he will find it here.



WELCOME TO LIVADA, PROFESSOR ZAGORAC!
YOUR SECRETARY CALLED AHEAD TO MAKE
SURE YOU WERE PROPERLY GREETED!

ALLOW
ME TO SEE
TO YOUR BAGS.
I'LL MAKE SURE
THE INN-KEEPER
GETS THEM.

THAT IS
MOST KIND
OF YOU.

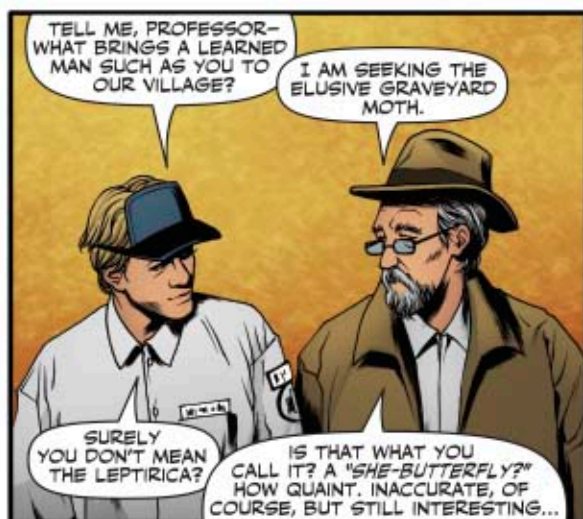


TELL ME, PROFESSOR—
WHAT BRINGS A LEARNED
MAN SUCH AS YOU TO
OUR VILLAGE?

I AM SEEKING THE
ELUSIVE GRAVEYARD
MOTH.

SURELY
YOU DON'T MEAN
THE LEPTIRICA?

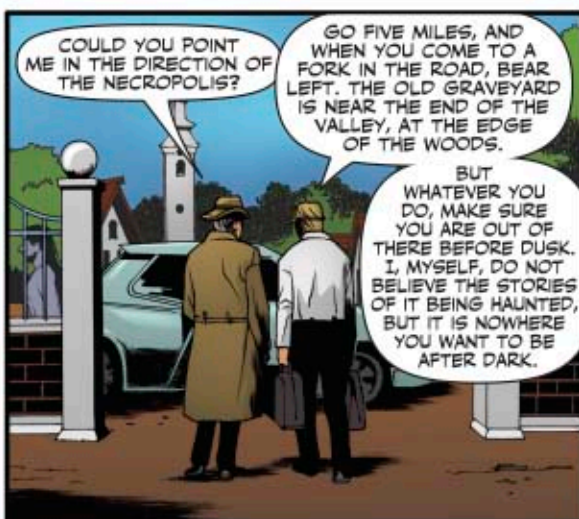
IS THAT WHAT YOU
CALL IT? A "SHE-BUTTERFLY?"
HOW QUAIN. INACCURATE, OF
COURSE, BUT STILL INTERESTING...



COULD YOU POINT
ME IN THE DIRECTION OF
THE NECROPOLIS?

GO FIVE MILES, AND
WHEN YOU COME TO A
FORK IN THE ROAD, BEAR
LEFT. THE OLD GRAVEYARD
IS NEAR THE END OF THE
VALLEY, AT THE EDGE
OF THE WOODS.

BUT
WHATEVER YOU
DO, MAKE SURE
YOU ARE OUT OF
THERE BEFORE DUSK.
I, MYSELF, DO NOT
BELIEVE THE STORIES
OF IT BEING HAUNTED,
BUT IT IS NOWHERE
YOU WANT TO BE
AFTER DARK.



There were times when Zagorac regretted never marrying and starting a family, but not on days like these. He liked being able to make field trips without having to worry about a nagging wife and mundane familial obligations...



Besides, being out on the hunt always put a little spring in his step and stirred his blood...

Two hours later, he arrives at the necropolis of the Nemanjic kings. Thousands of huge stone monuments cover the landscape, at the center of which looms a huge stone altar.

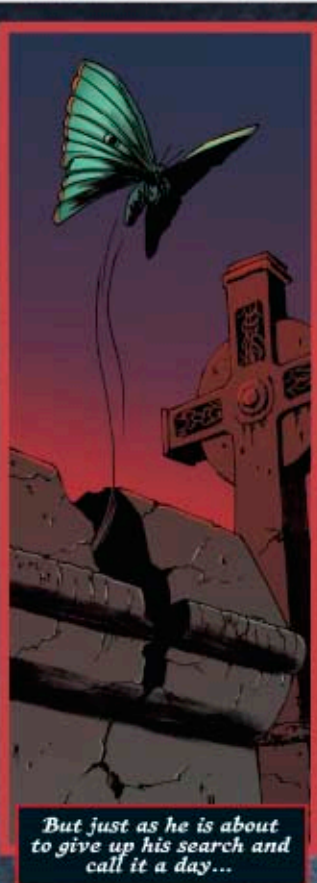


There is no knowing who the altar stone was created for, as the language that marks it is as long-dead as the ruler sealed underneath...

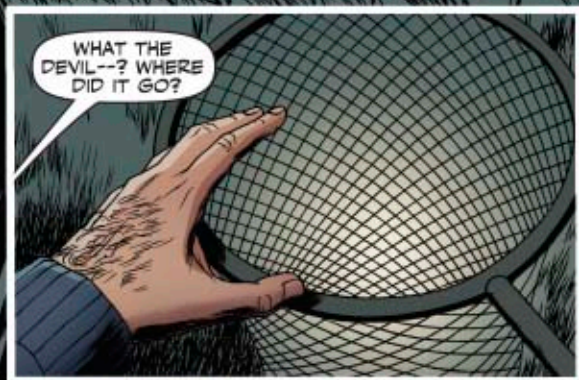
All that matters to the good Professor are the specimens that might be hiding in the overgrowth between the toppled monuments.



Indeed, Zagorac is so preoccupied by his hunt, he loses track of the time, as afternoon slides into twilight, and lengthens into dusk...



But just as he is about to give up his search and call it a day...



It is as if the very sight of her has lifted decades from his shoulders. His heart soars like that of a young man in the presence of his beloved. But there is more than mere lust at play—her sublime beauty calls to his spirit, not his flesh, and he approaches her as he would a goddess.

