

VAMPIRE HUNTER D

MESSAGE FROM MARS

PREVIEW
EDITION



STRANGER
COMICS

ADAPTED BY
EISNER NOMINEE
BRANDON EASTON
WITH ART BY
MICHAEL BROUSSARD

VAMPIRE HUNTER

MESSAGE
FROM
MARS

BASED ON THE
UNPUBLISHED STORY BY
CREATOR
HIDEYUKI KIKUCHI

WITH
VARIANT COVERS
BY
JAE LEE

COVER A
DCD ORDER CODE
SEP161905

SKETCH BLANK
DCD ORDER CODE
SEP161907

COVER B
DCD ORDER CODE
SEP161906

RETAILER INCENTIVE

RETAILER INCENTIVE





"D, You will have to excuse me for addressing you in this manner even though I've never met you..."

"I'm Cecile. I work as a sound technician in the Mars capitol city of Wells."



"My feelings are all mixed up... I'm so scared it seems my heart should've stopped a long time ago."



"Yet I'm calm. That's because of you, D. Because I know you're coming."

"Since I was a child I've had the ability to see the future. Some would call it a curse."

"I've seen you with a shadowy figure looming over you, delivering this message. That's why I know your name. 'D'."

"That's what he called you. What a lovely name it is."



"Besides you, I've seen other things... horrible things."

WELCOME TO THE MARTIAN COLONY OF WELLS.

YOU'RE OBVIOUSLY ONE OF US.

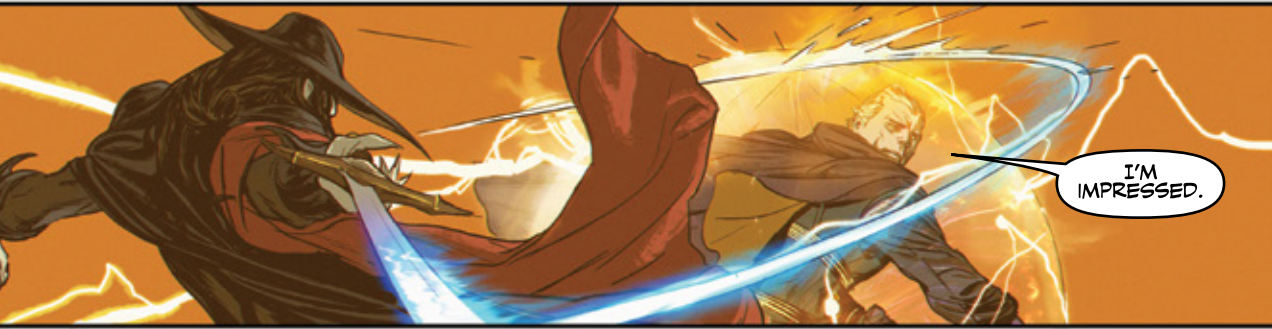
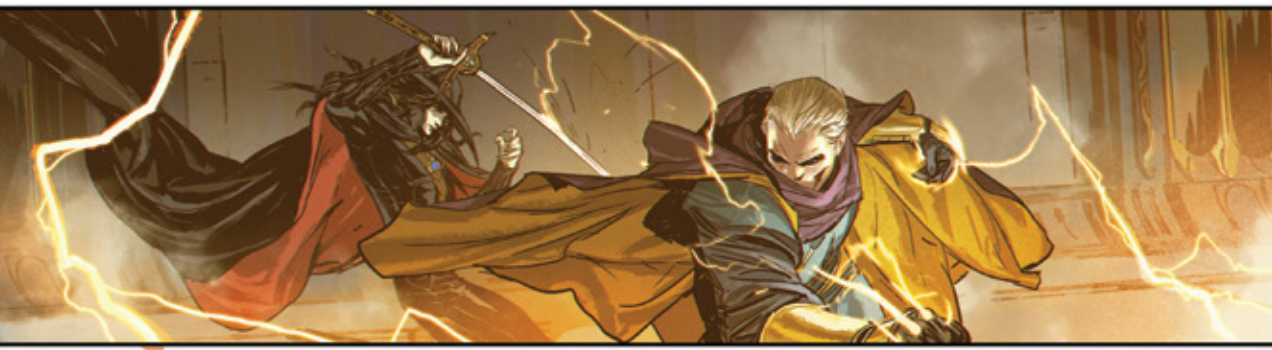
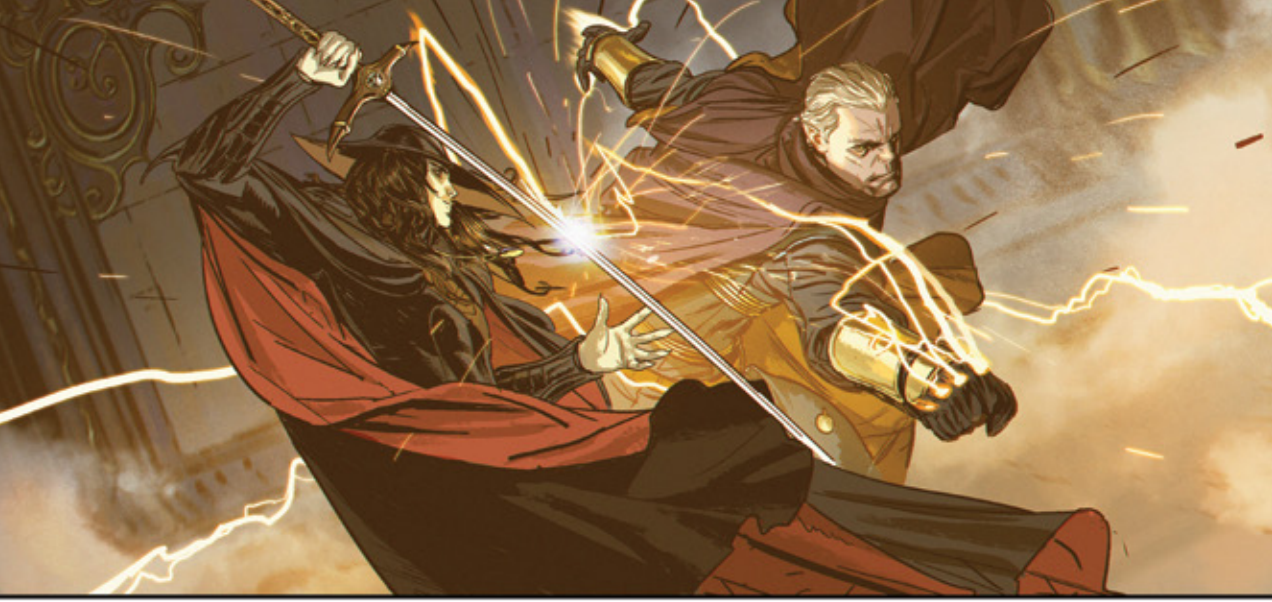


IT'S A SHAME TO KILL OUR OWN KIND, DON'T YOU THINK?



YEAH, ME NEITHER.

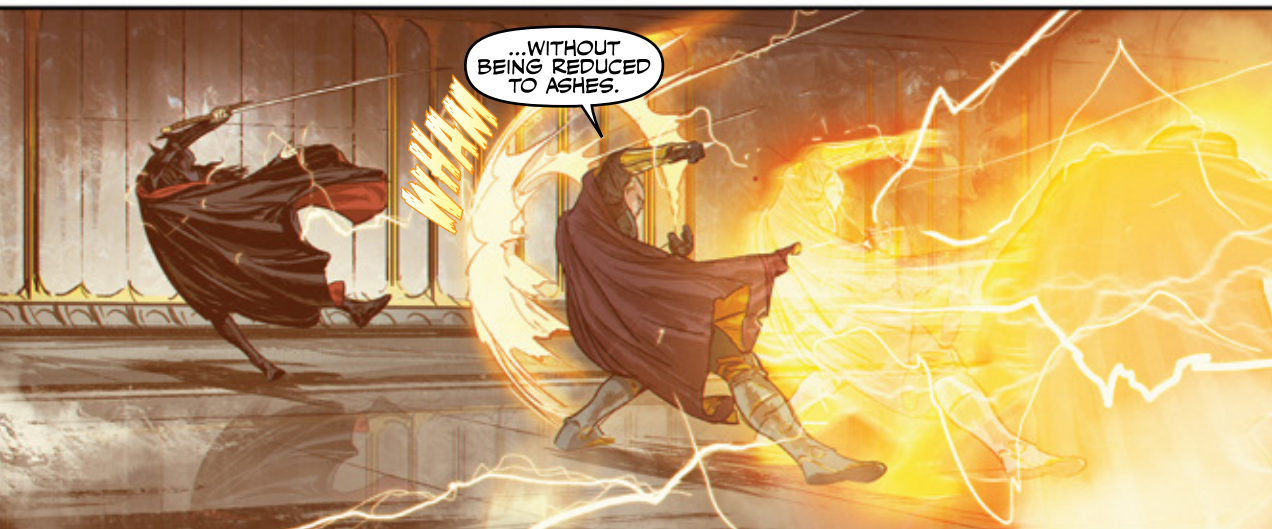




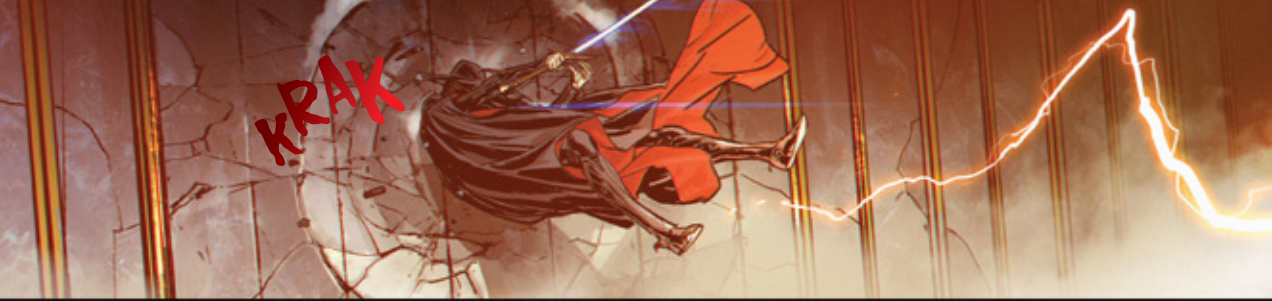
I'M IMPRESSED.



NO ONE HAS EVER GOTTEN THIS CLOSE TO ME...



...WITHOUT BEING REDUCED TO ASHES.



KRAK



IT'S BEEN CENTURIES SINCE I'VE FACED A REAL CHALLENGE.

BUT NOW IT'S TIME TO END IT.



I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'RE LETTING THIS GUY GIVE YOU SO MUCH TRO-



HRMF-





NO...
IT'S NOT...
POSS-



YOU REALIZE
HE WAS THE EASY
ONE, RIGHT?

CAN YOU START
TAKING THIS A LITTLE
MORE SERIOUSLY?

MY LIFE
DEPENDS
ON IT.

...
LET'S
GO. I DON'T
WANT TO KEEP
THE CLIENT
WAITING.

*"I've seen the horrible things
that are going to happen here."*

*"I've also seen the day that
you come to make it right."*

"The day you're going to kill me."

COVER A
MICHAEL BROUSSARD



RETAILER INCENTIVE
MICHAEL BROUSSARD



COVER B
JAE LEE



RETAILER INCENTIVE
JAE LEE



VAMPIRE HUNTER D

MESSAGE FROM MARS



CONCEPT ART BY
CHRISTOPHER SHY

THE VAMPIRE HUNTER D TEAM

WRITER BRANDON EASTON IS A COMIC AND TELEVISION WRITER FROM LOS ANGELES. HE IS AN AVID ANIME AND COMICS FAN WHO BROKE INTO HOLLYWOOD WITH THE 2011 THUNDERCATS REBOOT AND TRANSFORMERS: RESCUE BOTS. HE HAS SINCE BECOME AN AWARD WINNING COMIC WRITER, WINNING THE 2012 GLYPH AWARD FOR SHADOWLAW AND MULTIPLE 2014 GLYPH AWARDS FOR WATSON AND HOLMES, WHICH ALSO RECEIVED A 2014 EISNER AWARD NOMINATION. HIS SUCCESS LED TO WORK AT MARVEL, BOTH AS A COMIC WRITER AND A STAFF WRITER ON ABC'S AGENT CARTER. BRANDON HAS BEEN A VAMPIRE HUNTER D FAN FOR DECADES AND IS ALSO INVOLVED IN THE ANIMATED TV SERIES CURRENTLY IN DEVELOPMENT.

ARTIST MICHAEL BROUSSARD IS COMICS' PRODIGAL SON, AND VAMPIRE HUNTER D IS THE REASON FOR HIS TRIUMPHANT RETURN. MICHAEL ROSE TO PROMINENCE AS ONE OF THE BREAKOUT TALENTS FROM MARK SILVESTRI'S BULLPEN AT TOP COW COMICS, TURNING IN A SPECTACULAR RUN ON THE DARKNESS BEFORE PENCILING ARTIFACTS AND CONTRIBUTING TO TOP COW'S MARVEL PROJECTS. MICHAEL EVENTUALLY TOOK A JOB IN THE VIDEO GAME INDUSTRY AND TRANSFORMED FROM A PENCILER INTO A PAINTER. VAMPIRE HUNTER D, HOWEVER, IS HIS ALL-TIME FAVORITE PROPERTY, AND THE LURE OF IT PROVED TOO MUCH. HE LEFT THE GAME INDUSTRY AND SAN FRANCISCO FOR LOS ANGELES AND WHAT HE HOPES IS MANY YEARS OF STORIES IN HIDEYUKI KIKUCHI'S EPIC WORLD.

COVER ARTIST JAE LEE IS A SUPERSTAR WHOSE STARK, NOIR STYLE IS A PERFECT FIT FOR VAMPIRE HUNTER D. HE WILL BE PROVIDING VARIANT COVERS FOR ALL ISSUES OF VAMPIRE HUNTER D: MESSAGE FROM MARS AND THE CREATIVE TEAM COULD NOT BE HAPPIER.

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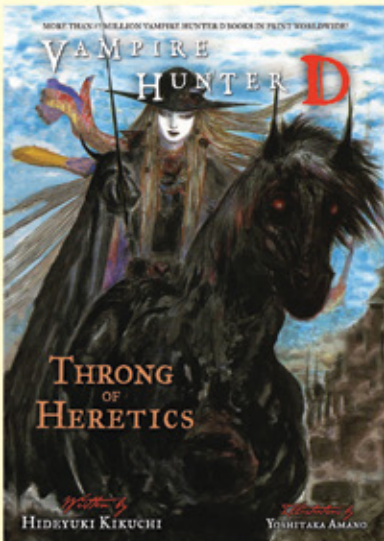
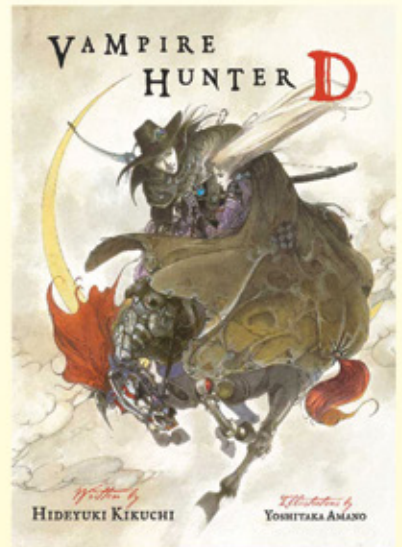
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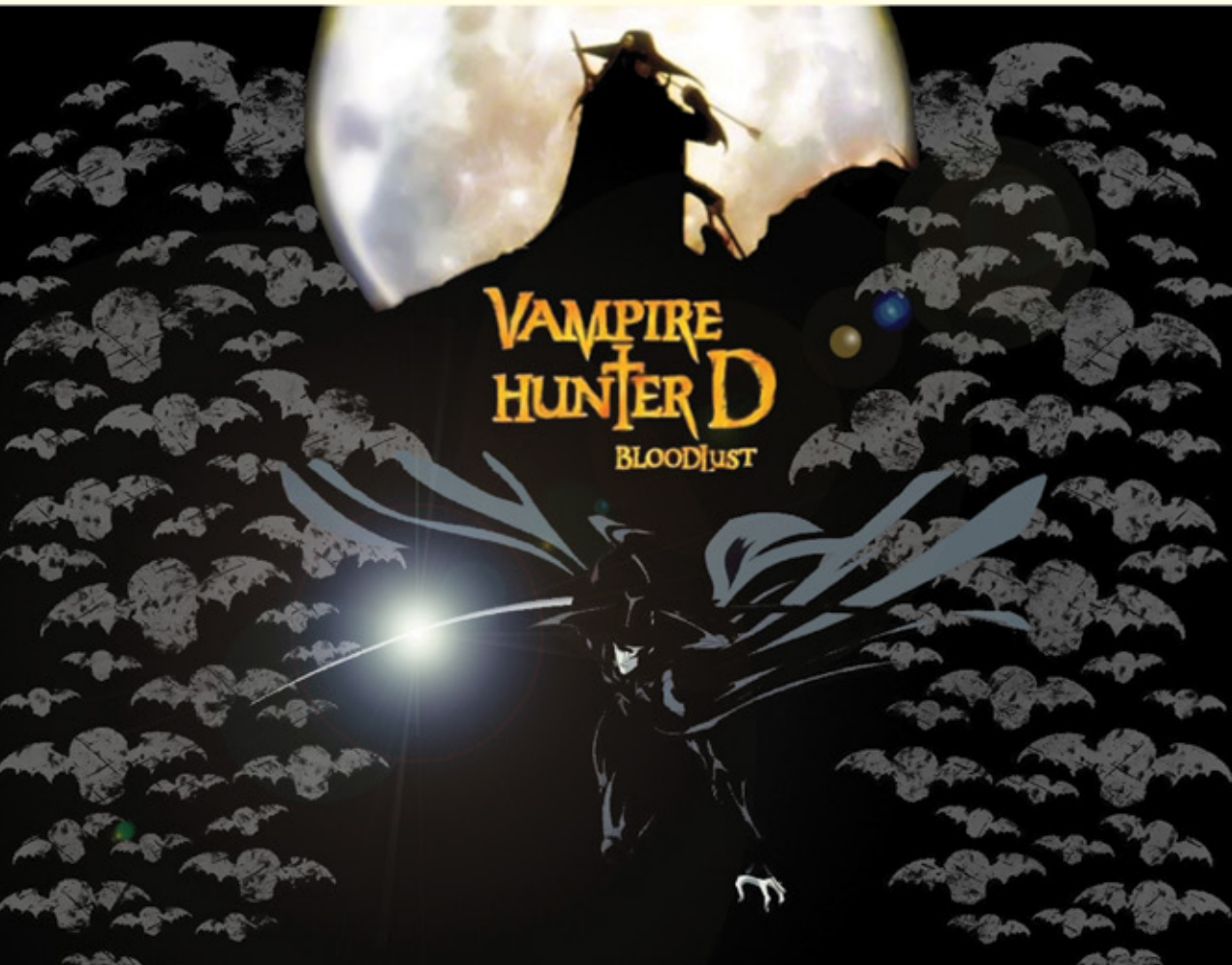
The History of VAMPIRE HUNTER D

In 1983, Hideyuki Kikuchi published the first of what has become a series of over 30 novels based on the titular character of VAMPIRE HUNTER D. The series was revolutionary at the time, combining elements of science fiction, fantasy, horror, and the American western. A stoic traveler wanders into town and is forced to defend its helpless inhabitants against someone trying to exploit them. Only in this case, the setting is a post-apocalyptic future and the antagonists are the Nobility, an ancient lineage of Vampires, whose history of violence reaches back more than 12,000 years.



Mix in the appropriate amount of tension relieving humor with the character of Left Hand, D's parasitic companion, and the popularity of the series is not hard to understand. Currently in its 33rd year in publication, it has sold more than 17 million copies and has been translated into more than a dozen languages. The series is translated by Kevin Leahy, with twenty-three of the novels having having been published in English by Dark Horse Comics. THRONG OF HERETICS, the twenty-fourth volume, will be released in the fall of 2016.

With a popular book series and a rich universe, it did not take long to crossover into other media. The first adaptation of VAMPIRE HUNTER D came in 1985 with the release of the VAMPIRE HUNTER D anime feature film, which was based on the first novel. Along with AKIRA, GHOST IN THE SHELL and NINJA SCROLL, it was one of the first movies to bring international attention to the anime industry, becoming a crossover hit in the United States. Fifteen years later, as the original was beginning to achieve that elusive state of nostalgic fondness, a second film, VAMPIRE HUNTER D: BLOODLUST, was released, cementing the franchise's place in anime history and solidifying its popularity by introducing D to a whole new generation. As a testament to their enduring popularity, both movies were re-mastered for Blu-ray in 2015, 30 years after the release of the first film. An animated television series is currently being developed by Digital Frontier and Unified Pictures, who have teamed with Stranger Comics to produce VAMPIRE HUNTER D: MESSAGE FROM MARS. It will be the first full color comic book adaptation of a Vampire Hunter D story, and is based on a previously untranslated and unpublished short story, Message from Cecile.



The Story of VAMPIRE HUNTER D

After a nuclear war devastated the Earth, vampires established themselves as the rulers of the world, calling themselves the Nobility. They reshaped and rebuilt the planet in their image, making humanity their slaves and livestock. Thousands of years later, the Nobility have declined and their power has waned. In the year 12,090 A.D., humanity has reclaimed much of the Earth, but the remnants of the Nobility are still a grave threat, as are the many monstrous creatures spawned by their experiments. D is the result of one such experiment, but instead of killing humans, he turned on his creators, becoming a renowned Hunter who travels across the Frontier, hiring out his services to eliminate supernatural threats. He is humanity's greatest protector, yet he continually faces prejudice and fear for he is a dhampir, half human-half vampire.

D's father, the vampire king, or as the Nobility call him, the Sacred Ancestor, began conducting human experimentation thousands of years ago in an attempt to overcome the weaknesses of the vampire race. In D, he finally succeeded, with one exception. While D is not vulnerable to the traditional methods of dispatching vampires, his bloodlust remains, and he must continuously fight against the vampiric nature he inherited from his father. He is a man at war with himself in a struggle between good and evil. In order to tame the demon within, he fights the demons without.



But whenever the journey takes an unexpected turn, Left Hand is always there to put things in perspective for D, often in a manner which is unwelcome and certainly unappreciated. Left Hand is a symbiotic creature that resides, as the name implies, in D's left hand. He has a variety of supernatural powers that almost make up for his sarcastic view to the world, for while others may find him entertaining, D's sense of humor is severely lacking.

Together, the two will fight until D is the only monster that remains.

What happens on that day will be interesting indeed.



Cover A by Michael Broussard

The Artist Taking VAMPIRE HUNTER D to Mars

VAMPIRE HUNTER D is one of Japan's greatest exports, and now, for the first time, D will appear in a western style comic. Painted by Michael Broussard based on an unpublished story by VAMPIRE HUNTER D creator Hideyuki Kikuchi, the tale, *Message from Mars*, shows D receiving a centuries old message from a colonist on Mars who could see the future. She has foreseen not only the vampire takeover of the colony but D's eventual arrival to cleanse the planet and save her from her fate. Broussard, who got his start under Mark Silverstri at Top Cow, left the industry for several years to perfect his painting skills while working in video game design. The offer to bring VAMPIRE HUNTER D to life, however, was enough to lure him back. With the first issue coming out in November, he took some time away from drawing to talk about it.

Michael, this is your first comic in several years. How does your style differ now?

Broussard: I really feel like I've grown a lot as an artist and a story teller since leaving the comic book industry. For one thing, I don't use a pencil anymore. In video game design, you paint everything digitally. But it's not just my art style, it's also the way I handle visual narrative. It's more cinematic because I've had to start taking movement into account in my images. So people will see a very different side of my art with a little bit of familiarity.

What does Vampire Hunter D mean to you?

Broussard: Well, it's my favorite property. For me, it embodies all the greatest aspects of not just the vampire horror genre, which I love, but anime film in general, which I love even more!

This has to be pretty exciting then. What was the moment like when you got the call?

Broussard: You have no idea. First of all, it was totally unexpected! Josh Cozine (the editor) called and said, "Would you be interested in drawing Vampire Hunter D?" Before he could finish the sentence I was like, "Do you even have to ask?" We worked together at Top Cow, and he knew how much I loved it, so when he got the gig, I was his first call.

Now for the big question... what's up with Left Hand?

Broussard: Left hand... the comic relief! He has no filter, which helps balance the relationship between the two because D barely speaks. He's the quiet but deadly warrior, while Left Hand is the sidekick who never shuts up. He's always busy trying to talk D into or out of situations, but he's also D's secret weapon, and when things get bad, he's there to bail D out too.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE STRANGER COMICS ON PAGE 410 OF SEPTEMBER'S PREVIEWS