So seldom, but every so often an illustrated tale is brought to the forefront which is so exceptional, so extraordinary, and so unequivocally profound that it shatters the current standard of what is considered professional excellence, transcending far beyond the fundamental essence of what is marked as truly superb storytelling. It is a watershed moment in time. A rare gift of genius, whose echoes of apex talent will reverberate down through the decades to each generation. Such superior standouts include Denny O'Neil and Neal Adams' celebrated revival of the dread Batman during the early 1970’s; Stan Lee and Jack Kirby’s colossal Galactus trilogy in *Fantastic Four* #48-50 (Marvel, 1966); Lee and John Buscema’s battle epics, “The Power and the Prize” and “The Good, the Bad, and the Uncanny,” in *Silver Surfer* #3-4 respectively (Marvel, 1968); Mike W. Barr and Jerry Bingham’s stunning graphic novel, *Batman Son of the Demon* (DC, 1987); and of course, Chris Claremont, Dave Cockrum and John Byrne’s celebrated “Phoenix Saga” in *X-Men* #101-108 (Marvel, 1976-77) and the tragically unforgettable “Dark Phoenix Saga,” from *X-Men* #129-133 (Marvel, 1980). All are undisputed masterpieces of the medium.
Great stories begin and end with great characters. A super-strong central character is the single most important element in storytelling—the Gold Standard. This is absolutely key! Without exception, iconic characters form the foundation of unforgettable writing by establishing identification. And identification penetrates to the very core of human emotion. Seasoned scribe Chris Claremont would strike the perpetual motherload when he teamed-up with the super-talented British artist John Bolton, to create the brave and beautiful heroine Marada Stahair, surnamed "The She-Wolf." An absolute gem in every aspect, this saga was written with sublime sophistication, passionate panache and unavowed courage. And the artwork? Well, these lush illustrations are nothing short of truly breathtaking! Bolton delivers his vivid vision in spaces with a masterful blend of bold and elegant brushwork, so akin to the ultra-famous and unmistakable style of the great Alex Raymond himself, leaving the reader salivating for more like a Pavlov dog.

Ironically enough, it nearly never happened. Marada was born by accident. Brought forth out of necessity to circumvent the problematic legal and financial shackles of the licensed property Red Sonja, which was owned by the Robert E. Howard Estate. Red Sonja is a high fantasy sword and sorcery heroine, created by writer Roy Thomas and artist Barry Windsor-Smith for Conan the Barbarian #23-24 (Marvel, 1973). Thomas in turn had based his concept on Howard's Red Sonja of Rosalino from the historical fiction short story "The Shadow of the Vultures," first published in The Magic Carpet Magazine (January, 1934). The original Sonja was a 16th century gunslinger of Polish-Ukrainian origin harboring a fierce grudge against the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent, while Sonja is an expert swordsman living in the completely fictional Hyborian Age. Both have distinctive red hair with fiery tempers to match and are greatly respected for their prowess on the field of battle. Some theorize that Howard may have drawn his initial inspiration for Sonya from the famous French "Maids of Orleans" herself, Joan of Arc.

The Marada saga was originally written and illustrated as a Red Sonja story, but once a large portion of the pages had been completed, there was a problem...A BIG PROBLEM! Claremont explained, "Marada wasn't ours—that is, John Bolton's and mine—to begin with; her genesis began as a fully owned Marvel property with the fully owned Marvel magazine, Bizarre Adventures. So, here we were, with a pile of pages of spectacular fully finished artwork by John and we can't print it because there was some hang-up with Howard Estate who owned the Red Sonja license. What to do?
In a rarely granted interview with artist John Bolton, he added, “It was my work on Kull for Bizarre Adventures (#28) that drew Chris Claremont to my work. Chris took up [Ralph] Macchio’s offer to write a Red Sonja story, again be featured in Bizarre Adventures. During a visit to the U.K., Chris and I met up and he pitched the idea of collaborating on the story. Fate, however, interceded and with the story more or less wrapped-up, Marvel lost the license to Red Sonja. As luck would have it, Marvel had recently launched Epic Illustrated and this seemed the perfect home for Marada and it is well documented that Jim Shooter’s mother selected the name Marada.”

If character is paramount, then choosing the proper name is its twin peak. Claremont offered his view, “Stan Lee hired me and I began working at Marvel in January 1969 as a gofer, learning the trade right under the tutelage of Stan ‘the Man’ himself. He taught me that great names transcend time and embed themselves in people’s psyches; Spider-Man, Batman, Superman. DR DOOM! A great name is invaluable! All of us had notebooks that we tucked away full of cool sounding names for future use. And Jim did what the best editors should do—he gave support and offered ideas—Jim’s mom came up with the name Marada. During those days (1970’s), the Marvel bullpen had a laissez-faire attitude. When Stan gave a particular title to a writer or artist, he was fully willing to trust them with the material and let them do what they did best—create great stories! When you have such talents as Jack Kirby and Steve Ditko, you simply turn them loose and let them run like thoroughbreds. You stay out of their way! Stan understood this better than anyone and stressed to the editorial team that they were there to help and support the talent, not to stifle them in any way by trying to keep them under their thumbs.”

And what about Marada’s unique last name “Starhai” and sur-name, “She-Wolf?” Claremont answered, “Those were me—a catchy cover gloss because I wanted the name to be really cool.”

Thus, the first three (originally black and white) episodes were slated to appear in Epic Illustrated #10-12 (Feb, April, and June of 1992), but some adjustments needed to be made to fully mold Red Sonja into Marada. Bolton explained, “Chris and I set about retooling the story. We changed Sonja’s hair from red to silver-white. I then designed a new costume and Marada was born.”

And how much of the artwork needed to be redone? Bolton answered, “When Chris originally sent me the plot there already was some uncertainty as to Marvel retaining the rights to Red Sonja. So, Chris wisely limited the appearance of Sonja (in her bikini armor) to just about one page. I was only midway through the story at that point and thus, there was very little reworking to be done. I basically needed to only redraw the Sonja flashback page by changing her costume.”

Claremont likewise added, “Marada’s armor and outfit is much more practical and realistic for battle scenarios than Red Sonja’s skimpy scale-mail bikini—a rather ridiculous outfit for full-fledged combat confrontations. John’s stock and trade is designing period piece costumes and scenes. Everything is adaptable in comics and sometimes, black and white art can cover a multitude of sins.” Bolton offered, “It was important to me that Marada should be a sexy and alluring “armored-up” heroine. I added the impractical cloth which hangs down between her legs as a way to convey movement in the action sequences.”

At last, Marada was ready to be launched in the anthology title, Epic Illustrated. Epic was a prestige, large format sized magazine published by Marvel Comics from the spring of 1980 to February of 1986. It was headlined with stunning full painted covers by such superstars as Frank Frazetta (#1), Michael Wm. Kaluta (#4, 26), Neal Adams (#9), Barry Windsor-Smith (#76), Tim Conrad (#9), Jerry Bingham (#32) and of course, the man who contributed more covers than any other, Bolton himself (#10, 18, 22-23, 31). This magazine was revolutionary and trend setting as it presented more mature and explicit content for its readers, while all the same offered the writers and artists’ ownership rights and royalties instead of the industry standard, “work-for-hire” contracts. It was in every aspect, a bold and brave publication in which Marada would fit most marvelously.

Claremont shared his thoughts, “Epic contained more adult oriented, higher quality material. We didn’t have to worry about the comic’s code. I had always been very interested in the sword and sorcery genre and wanted that to be the structure of the story. When I originally sat down to write, I wanted to steer away from the cliché Red Sonja adventure with both the script and the visuals. I was striving for a more serious and realistic saga—a dark fantasy adventure.”

“So, I sat down with Archie and Editor-in-Chief Jim Shooter to discuss options. I told Jim our troubles—how John had put all this time and effort into the story, and was being faced with a house with naked pipes hanging loose in the kitchen, with holes in the floor of the bathroom, raw walls, unpainted bits, oh, it was awful—and noted, causally, in passing, that Archie was willing to print our story, could we maybe buy it back and sell it to Epic, please? He said, yes. So I argued for a few more minutes more, really warming to my task. He said ‘yes’ again—Marvel would transfer title and ownership to us no problem. Sounds like a great idea.”

“And that’s exactly what we did instead of paying the Howard estate a pile of cash. You see, that’s part of what made Marvel so great—the flexibility for creators and creator-owned material. To Jim’s credit, when Marada became a creator-owned property, John and I had already been paid our page rate, but Jim did not make us pay back the money, but magnanimously choose to recoup it from the sales of Epic. Jim was at times, the most empathetic and generous of bosses and at other times he was your worst nightmare. But, he understood the vital importance of maintaining the delicate balance between the creative talent and the corporate brass. Marvel Comics was an independent company at this time (early 1980’s), and Jim knew that a successful publisher needed top-notch creator staff.”
It read: "Her mother was the first-born of Caesar. Her father, a prince in his own land, a slave in Rome. At the age of four, Marada saw her father broken on the rack, disembowelled and, finally, drawn and quartered. It was a public execution and, though the Prince was a long time dying, he uttered not a sound. That night, Marada’s mother fled the Eternal City, taking her child to be raised free, far from the place that had claimed the life of her beloved. That was twenty years ago. The child is a woman now, and that woman a warrior known and respected throughout the Empire."

Claremont then revealed some very interesting insights into his premise for setting the historical foundation for Marada. "The story unfolds during the first generation of Julius Caesar, in the tumultuous century bracketing the birth of Jesus Christ. Rome was bidding the final farewell to her Republic and experiencing the bunting pains of growing into an Empire—the dominant force upon the face of the earth. I was writing historical fiction with Julius Caesar being the grandfather of Marada.

"What most don’t know, but what I discovered in my research is that Julius Caesar had two daughters. The first was named Julia (c. 76 B.C. – 54 B.C.), who was the fourth wife of Pompey and who died in childbirth while Caesar was in Britain. But, it was this mysterious second daughter, who supposedly died in infancy, that I was basing my historical premise on. My thought was, 'What if, this daughter of Caesar did not die, but survived and lived on into adulthood?' And, it was this daughter of Julius Caesar that would be Marada’s mother.

Marada would debut as the headline feature cover story in Epic Illustrated #10 (February, 1982), with the script by Claremont, pencils and ink-wash by Bolton, letters by Tom Orzechowski and editorial by Jo Duffy, Goodwin, Ralph Macchio and Shooter. Bolton depicted Marada on the cover as a beautiful, but fierce silver-haired sword-wielding warrior in full mail with her devil-horned tormentor, the disgusting demon Lord Y’garon. It is a dark and intense scene that set the ideal stage for the pulse pounding adventure within. When asked about what type of medium he chose, Bolton answered, "The Marada covers were painted in oil—a medium that at the time I liked. But, oils take longer to dry and they don’t ‘recognize’ deadlines, so later on in my career I started painting covers in acrylic. In all, I painted four Marada covers."

When asked about his greatest influences, Bolton offered this insight, "My influences are deeply embedded in the past and are from a variety of sources, but all connected by one underlying theme—the interesting and the bizarre. From Dali, Bruegel and Turner to German Expressionism—too many to mention. I also love cinema: De Mille and Hitchcock being amongst my favorites. You have to embrace all kinds of inspiration however you can find it, from real life, film and literature. In my current work, I am looking at Italian medieval masters."

Claremont wrote an intriguing brief prologue to the saga that first appeared in the top margin for the second episode installment in Epic Illustrated #11 (April, 1982), which was likewise included when the first two episodes, retitled "The Shattered Sword," were reprinted in full color a few years later in Marvel Graphic Novel #21 (1985). This prologue did not appear in Marada’s first appearance in Epic #10.
"I wanted to set the stage from the point when Caesar invaded the Isle of Britain (in 55 and 54 B.C.). My idea was that during the invasion, Caesar had captured a Celtic Prince, who in turn, fell in love with Caesar’s daughter. When Caesar returned back to Rome, this Celtic Prince and Caesar’s daughter were married and had Marada."

Of course, Caesar was then assassinated by (Marcus Junius) Brutus, Servilius Casca and 60 or more conspirators on the "Ides of March" March 15, 44 B.C. This produced an immense and unstable power vacuum that launched civil war between the leaders of the conspirators, Brutus and Gaius Cassius Longinus and those who were loyal to Caesar’s house, Mark Antony and Gaius Julius Caesar Octavian, who would later become Augustus Caesar, the first Emperor of Rome.

"Et tu, Brute?"
Gaius Julius Caesar

Born July 12/13, 100 B.C. Roman General, Statesman and Consul, Grandfather of Marada Stanhart. Assassinated by Brutus and 60 conspirators on the "Ides of March," March 15, 44 B.C.

Claremont continued, “So, Caesar had been assassinated and any children of his direct lineage would be considered a serious threat to the surviving powers who were now violently vying for the throne. If Brutus and Cassius had been victorious at the battle of Battle of Philippi (in Macedonia, 42 B.C.), then the entire lineage of Caesar would have been wiped out.

“We are dealing with the fringes of Roman reality here. Would Marada, being of the direct bloodline of Julius Caesar, have a legitimate claim to the throne? Octavian had been adopted by Caesar, but was not a biological son of the dictator. These facts fit in very uncomfortably with Octavian’s (Augustus) bid for the rulership of Rome and the ambitions of his scheming wife.

“Marada and her father and mother are now major liabilities in the eyes of the ruling powers that be. Her father is arrested and publicly executed and Marada’s mother, in fear and disgust, flees Rome to raise her daughter in obscurity, far from harm’s way.

“At the opening of the first episode ‘The Shattered Sword,’ Marada (now 24 years old) is being returned back to Rome by a Roman Tribunal who is trying to procure favor from the Emperor. I was exploring the idea of Marada slowly circling her way back to Rome and a possible confrontation with Emperor Augustus Caesar.

“It was so much more fun writing Marada because she is based in historical reality, instead of completely make believe Hyboria (Red Sonja). I wanted to present an established practical landscape.”
Epic Illustrated #10
The Shattered Sword Part 1

We open with a violent and unexpected jolt, in the "pre-dawn half-light" of the remote desert of the highlands of Galilee, as a deadly arrow shaft slices through the exposed neck of a mounted Parthian mercenary. His strong, yet startled steed rears up on its hind legs in painful anxiety as the rider's body whipsfghts from the saddle to fall dead in the desert dunes. Without warning, the Parthian caravan is ambushed by a charging band of raiders, "lead by a red-bearded giant of a man," who cries, "At them, my Bravos! If they run, let 'em go! If they fight, cut 'em down!" The Parthians, renowned for their skill and bravery in battle, choose to stand and fight and are all slain to the man, so skillfully depicted in an energized one panel shot of the skirmish.

The stout leader of the victorious raiders rears in its galloping steed to a halt as he spots a lone survivor, the driver of the palanquin (carriage), pull back the curtains with dagger in hand to slay the passenger within. The mounted warrior shouts a stern warning, "Hold, fellow!" but he is ignored for which the driver pays with his life. He then tropes up to the side of the carriage and notices the dead driver's curious gesture, thinking, "The driver is no Parthian. He's Egyptian — and his mystical aura marks him as some kind of priest, and a sorcerer! This caravan was organized by Tribune Gaius Marcellus Fulvus. But I think the Roman would be as surprised as I am to learn the driver's true identity. Another power is involved here: arcane, malefic — and deadly dangerous." Clarenmont is beginning to unveil the darkly ominous and underlining subject matter here with this cryptic foreshadow. He then introduces the identity this significant supporting character when the warrior announces, "Be of good cheer, Starhaier. Your rescue is at hand — courtesy of Donal MacLlwey."

Donal cuts to a lovely full figured shot of the beautiful heroine herself, Marada Starhaier. But, the Welshman is startled by what he sees as the silver-tailed beauty glows at the sound of his commanding voice. Marada sits silently vulnerable by crossing her arms over her chest as if in anticipation of being assaulted, meeting Donal with a gaze full of fear and uncertainty. This is not the fearless, feisty and ferocious fighter he met years ago in, "Bloody clearing near the Rhine River", in a pitched battle with a war party out of Germania. No, back then she had battled with such superior sword skills and ferocity that the men who fought alongside this warrior woman bestowed upon her the title, "She-Wolf!" But, this lady before him now is docile, an empty half-shell of her former self. And Donal is gravely concerned, questioning what could possibly have happened in the past week since he had last seen her that had so dramatically altered her personality so.

Donal gently lifts Marada up into his arms saying, "Up you go, lady!" — indicating that, to his knowledge, she is still a virgin. He gathers his men and faces east and, "as the first crease of fire sees the crest of the heights...he draws a sacred sign [with the tip of his blade] in the air before him, and cries ancient words of power..." as his band of
Our storyteller hosts have now taken us to the rough craggy stronghold of Ashandair—a place of learning, mystery, and power. Claremont writes, "It is a remote place, made more so by its reputation. Even Druids shun this part of the isles, this keep that is far older than Stonehenge. For legend says that those who rule Ashandair are not human, but sithie—the immortal gods of goddesses of faery. Like all legends, these have some truth to them."

A maxim that will present itself and time again during this saga: Claremont is at the top of his game, superbly scripting with such creative cleverness that is rarely encountered in this medium. Furthermore, he is just beginning to ingenuously impart upon the mind of the reader the subtle juxtaposition, the inner workings between the natural and the supernatural worlds with a skillful interweaving of history, myth, legend, and lore.

When asked about his initial ideas behind this mystical rocky keep, Claremont explained, "I thought of Ashandair as a fictional stronghold somewhere on the stormy north-western coast of England. John did the visual design of the place." The site refers to Irish earthen mounds, which in Irish folklore, are believed to be the home of the Aos Sí—an Irish word for, 'the people of the mounds.' In Irish and Scottish mythology, the Aos Sí (sometimes spelled Síth) is a supernatural race comparable to fairies and elves. They are said to live underground in fairy mounds, across the western sea, or in an invisible world that consists with the world of humans.  

Claremont further writes that, "Donal MacLennayr is Wardlor of the keep, master of the Force Temporal. But he does not rule here. That responsibility is the province of his aged mother, Rhiannon, Mistress of the Arts Arcana." This second major supporting character is the High-Witch or High-Priestess of Ashandair, and was most likely based from the prominent figure of Welsh mythology of the very same name who originally appeared as a beautiful woman dressed in gold silk brocade and riding atop a shining white horse always just out of reach from her male pursuers.

Rhiannon reveals an unsettling observation to Donal about their new guest, "Take care, my son. There is the stench of blackest sorcery about the woman." The next morning, Donal tries to pry from Marada the reason for her completely changed demeanor, even testing her renowned skills at swordplay, at which she pathetically fails, claiming, "I am not a woman's piece to fight, Lord Donal. Only... to submit."

The Wardlor is perplexed, asking, "What happened to you in Damascus, Starhawk? What changed you so?" Marada simply replies, "I came face to face with my true self." Donal storms from the chamber in angry frustration telling her that she shames the memory of her father and mother. And then, even though she has not wept in twenty years, we read, "But now, her eyes burn and salt tears sting her cheeks as she doubles over, her soul gripped by unimaginable desolation...and grieves for her shattered self, for things supremely precious that she has lost forever." We are left to ponder these cryptic dires.

Claremont changes scenery to a dark, still and chilly night that cloaks the ancient middle-eastern city of Damascus in Syria...to "a certain palace that fronts the plaza of the sacred way... This is the residence of a man who is greatly feared by king and commoner alike—the evil wizard Simyon Karashur. Bolton presents a very unsettling scene with the pitiless wizard overseeing the horrendously sadistic torture of Gaius Marcellus Fulke, the Roman Tribune who rescued Marada from this, "fist from half hands, who is now being literally roasted alive above a molten pit of swirling flame."

Karashur departs to the high tower of his palace with arrogant disdain as his Roman captive screams in agony. Yet, the wizard simply mocks, "How foolish, how typically arrogant of you to think you could cross swords with me and survive, much less triumph."  

Now, Claremont has fully pulled back the curtain, leading us behind the scenes to reveal extremely dark and malevolent occultic practices. The wizard has entered a very private and sacred upper chamber, sometimes referred to in the Holy Bible as, the "high places," where evil gods (devils) were called upon and worshiped. Herein, there is a magical or mystical circle etched in the floor with four black candles surrounding it. The wizard lights each one and
begins his evil evocation, "I have seen more emperors, more empires, than you can possibly imagine, Tribune. The difference between us, my dear Fulva, is that you serve the dreams and desires of man. I, the dreams and desires of gods. And the gods desire one thing...the life and soul of Marada Starhair, called the She-Wolf! She has power... both temporal and arcane - though she knows it not."

What exactly is happening here? This is a glimpse of high ceremonial black magic at its deepest and darkest levels - satanic to the very core. Claremont expounded, "The mystical circle is meant to be a protective barrier for the wizard who is performing the conjuration of the spirit being summoned forth. It serves to either keep the critters within or without the protective circle."

Minister Schoenebelen agrees with this assessment and adds, "Magic is all about control and the quest for greater power. The purpose of the mystical circle is to keep out the demonic. The circle is used as the inner area of protective cover, the magician standing within, to call forth and build upon tremendous energies to be released at the wizard's wishes without the circle. They are usually built 9-feet in diameter because practitioners of the occult arts believe that this measurement is in direct symmetrical alignment with the earth's dimensions. Once a circle is constructed of magical circle out of particleboard. You could also use sulfur, also known as brimstone, though I would advise doing this outdoors since you would most likely burn your house down using such inflammatory substances.

"In the corresponding panel, there is a magical circle engraved on the stone floor that appears to possibly be an Ouroboros - a serpent or dragon eating its own tail. Though in actuality, the circle should be completely enclosed and not open at one end - that would spell certain doom for the magician. The wizard likewise lights the black candles. This is symbolic of releasing darkness into the atmosphere and the burning incense can form a strong material basis for the spiritual entity to manifest itself. The wizard wears a mitre on his head, which will function as a 'cone of power.'"

When asked about Simyon Karashnur's boast of seeing, "more emperors" and "more empires" than Tribunal Fulva can possibly imagine and whether or not he was indicating that the wizard was centuries old, Claremont answered, "Probably. Simyon is transcendentally evil. He is speaking in a transcendentally bombastic tone...as all evil wizard's speak." Evil wizards seem to make for excellent villains and Simyon is certainly no exception.

Turning back to the high chamber, Karashnur continues his evocation, "I have the bitch's clothes, armor, weapons. I have intimate keepsakes belonging to both her and her accursed dam. From them, I can fashion the means of her blessed damnation." Ominous flames suddenly erupt from the center of the mystical circle to bathe the entire chamber in a ghastly green glow, while "black lightning explodes from the wizard's hands." And then, from these eerie "eldritch" energies, a vile ethereal form begins to take visual shape - "into a human avatar of an other-dimensional demon." Simyon classifies this hellish creature as a "Reaver" - an unholy hybrid creature created from the perverted combination of the evil essence of the "dark lords of the abyss" and a piece of the soul, or "the fundamental self" of Marada herself. The Reaver chooses to materialize as a foreboding and vicious version of the She-Wolf, with a relentless glare full of murderous intent and equipped with the warrior's former armor. Basically, this foul abomination is conjured into existence to be an "astral bloodhound." if you will, to seek out and hunt down Marada in order to abduct and deliver her unto the hands of its malevolent masters.

Claremont expounded further, "Again, my goal with Marada was to do a series of stories that you just couldn't publish in other regular

...
titles. I was going for a more European style of storytelling, infused
with much more graphic textual and visual sophistication. I wanted an all-inclusive presentation for this saga...equally eloquent, but much
more realistic and more sensual than usual - darker and more dis-
turbing in nature. More adult oriented with longer looks at various
shots and scenes that are cool and not seen nor allowed in traditional
comic books.

"With regards to the Reaver, I was just searching for a good, cool
sounding name and describing an icy, disgusting and formidable
ontime."

There is a tremendous amount of significant subtle subtext being
suggested here in this scene by the clever Clarentom that begs to be
explored in deeper details. The writer unleashes his thoughts: "I envi-
nioned this evil wizard as a man who had come from the Far East, possibly Persian descent, whose castle was in Damascus. His goal is
to thwart and ultimately destroy the rising power of the Roman
Empire, which was growing by leaps and bounds at this point in
history. By this time, Rome had conquered, or was in the process of
conquering all of Europe, Asia Minor, Middle-East, North Africa and
even Britain -- a real threat to the regions in the east.

But, Rome had a much more difficult time expanding her borders
eastward. You must understand that the people of the eastern lands
had very different ideas of how to live - civilizations of very different
customs. Above all else, they held to much older and firmly estab-
lished belief systems - religions deeply steeped in arcanine black
magic, which required the worship of mysterious dark devil-gods
who demanded total devotion [human blood sacrifice in many
instances]. These easterners greatly feared and resented the rise of
western dominance and its influence, and in their mindset Rome rep-
resented a major threatening power to be reckoned with and fiercely
opposed.

And so, this is all out warfare, not just between good and evil, but an
epic clash between the completely conflicting ideologies of the west
and the east. Not much has changed today as evidenced in the Holy
Scriptures that inform, "The thing that hath been, it is [is] which
shall be, and that which is done [is] that which shall be done: and
there is no new thing [thing] under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 1:1).

Clarentom continued his insightful input, "by the time The Shattered
Sword opens, we know that Marada is a renowned warrior, well
respected throughout the Empire. But now, with the introduction of
Simpson and his sinister agenda, I am revealing that Marada must
face very real risks, both physical and spiritual in the life she leads.
Not all these dangers are rational or even easily identifiable, such as
being hacked apart on the battlefield. It's just not that simple. We
come to see that there are far greater threats coming her way...some
very dark and malevolent metaphysical beings - monsters from the
abyss. Devils and demons who hunt human souls."

And what about the intriguing panel in which Simpson claims, "I have
intimate keepsakes belonging to both her and her accursed dam."
What is the wizard referring to? Dam is variant word for dame, origi-
nally used for 'lady' or 'mother.' Clarentom said, "I believe dam is a
Latin word for 'mother.' What I was doing was providing a possibil-
ity for backstory. Perhaps Simpyon had kidnapped Marada's
mother sometime in the past. Perhaps he still holds her captive or
perhaps not. Building subtext here. How did Marada come to be in
the priesthood? Keep it open-ended...never be limited to a specific
environment. Laying down much more texture..."

Interestingly enough, dam is likewise the Hebrew word for 'blood,'
which classifies perfectly as an "intimate keepsake." For, "the blood
is the life." and what is more intimately personal than that? When
asked if these, "intimate keepsakes" might also include vaginal fluid,
Clarentom answered, "Maybe. I'll leave that for you to decide."

The Reaver is unleashed and Marada envisions this in her dreams,
walking suddenly from her nightmare and screaming in abject terror.
Donal, Rhiannon and officers of the Nighthawk immediately rush into
her apartment to investigate. The Sorceress-Queen comforts the
troubled girl, but notices something quite concerning about
Marada's bare back saying, "I do not know. To the naked eye, her
flesh is unmarked, yet I sense deep scars - recently made - across
her back. The psychic residue of these wounds is unspeakably foul.
Donal, as is the creature that formed them. Marada's dream suggests
that he is not finished with her."

Rhiannon's divination is interrupted by the innocent voice of a lovely
lass, standing with the drapes drawn aside, while wipping sleep from
her eyes, "Papa? Grandmother? What's going on?" This is Donal's
young intelligent and inquisitive daughter, Ariamhod (Ari), the third
main supporting character. A gentle dove, Ari is introduced in a small
panel, yet full figured shot that Clarentom selected out by saying,
"Notice how Ariamhod is standing there slightly pigeon-toed. This is
John's forte - utterly realistic posturing that you so rarely see in
comics."

The author was asked, "Do you mean detail?"
“Marada is perceived as someone uniquely vital to Rome and her future as a world power. The clandestine spiritual powers of the east perceive Marada’s destiny and see her as merely a means to an end. They desire to control her. Possess her and then toss her back into the political mix of Roman rule. They wish to upset the balance of power.”

This is exactly what Sinyon was alluding to when he conjured up the Reaver saying, “She has power – both temporal and arcane – though she knows it not.” Clarenmont explained, “By this point, we are fully aware that Marada is a seasoned and well-renowned warrior. Her temporal prowess and skills in the art of war in the physical S-O world are indubitable. However, Sinyon is revealing something that even Marada does not know, that deep down within herself, she possesses untapped arcane abilities [in her dormant] in the unseen mystical world. She is potentially a major player in this theatre and there is a collaborative response residing within her.” So, Sinyon’s evil masters conspire to capture and manipulate Marada for their demonic desires and ultimately use her as their political pawn.

The story shifts to a lovely four-page sequence of a much more serene nature as Marada and Ari become fast friends. Ari tells Marada that her mother died giving birth to her and that she was raised by her father and grandmother who are teaching her “...the sciences and the great art – magic, you’ll call it” – she’s a young apprentice witch in training. Ari asks Marada if she would teach her how to properly throw a dagger at a wooden target, but Marada declines, saying, “The She-Wolf is dead, Ariannah. The woman warrior is no more, I will not hold or use a weapon, ever again. Please do not ask me to. Or ask me why.”

We are then presented with panels that showcase the lofty majestic vision of John Bolton. From the ancient wonders archived in the great fortress of Ashandriar, through chambers of wood and stone and purest crystal, filled with artifacts from every part of the world, every age of man’s – and, indeed, the earth’s – existence...”to the epic awesomeness of idyllic emerald English forests where “the breezes soft, the air thick with the heady scent of wildflowers,” to the marvel of magnificent towering waterfalls and the pure azure-blue waters of virgin lakes. Marada and Ariannah soon “become inseparable companions and, through the girl, Marada discovers the myriad, madcap wonders of childhood – and a joyous innocence that she had been denied.”

Clarenmont and Bolton are developing a mother-daughter relationship here as well as an evolving love-interest between Marada and Donal as the narrative relates, “Gradually, the harsh lines fade from her face, the haunted, hunted look from her eyes. She finds those eyes turning more and more towards Donal Maclyriwyr...and discovers, to her surprise, that when he smiles, she smiles back. And when he reaches out to her... she does not pull away.”
We cut to an alluring subterranean scene where the lovely Marada and Ari are enjoying themselves bathing in a hot spring. Bolton excels exponentially here, as Claremont explained, “This was originally a non-code book done in black and white (ink-wash), and John’s illustrations of Marada are so damn sexy and yet, completely tasteful, as John is so good at doing. I wrote the story ‘Marvel style’, as a fully detailed and realized plot, but with no panel breakdowns. I broke it down by pages and offered my take on the ‘beats’ of the story. I described my ideas for all the visual elements and left the pacing to John. Of course, I gave John full freedom to express himself visually - let the master artist invoke the emotions and subtext as he sees fit.

“John’s artwork is pure power and eloquence. When you are working with such top talents as Jack Kirby, Frank Miller, Dave Cockrum, Neal Adams and John Bolton, you step back and let them establish the beats of the story. The last thing you want to do as a writer is to try and hog and/or direct the story - that’s called ‘coasting’ to Newcastel! (An English idiom that describes a foolhardy or pointless action). You simply shut up and stay out of their way! That’s why the dialogue and narrative were not written until after the art was completed.”

Claremont then described in detail how the lettering was completed by Tom Orzechowski, “The Marada lettering was done as overlays on Photostats – not pasted onto the original artwork as was the norm of the day. The original art was sent by John from London to the Marvel offices in New York City. Then the Photostats of the artwork were made and sent from New York to Tom in San Francisco where he lived. We did not want to risk losing the original art, being sent across the Atlantic and then across country as well. Back then, you usually had to live within 50 miles or so of New York to work in comics. There was no scanners nor internet and art would get lost in the mail all the time.”

Bolton offered his thoughts, “My preference is for the open ended script. I have worked with many great writers who leave me to visualize the story - they do not tell me how it should look and this gives me complete freedom.”

Of special interest in this hot springs grotto scene, is Bolton’s ever-artful delicacy in handling the complex coloring (first printed in Marvel Graphic Novel #21). He explained, “I originally rendered the story in black and white ink-wash, but, Marvel wanted to re-print the graphic novel in full color. I was remiss to color the black and white original, so I opted to color reproductions of the pages. It took some time to acquire the correct paper. Marvel kept supplying me with highly good reproductions on various kinds of papers, but these were causing me a few problems as the ink colors I was using were not giving me the subtly wanted. In the end, I got there. These colored pages are ‘originals’ in their own unique way and I am very pleased with the way they came out. So, there is a black and white ink-wash version as well as a hand colored ink version of these Marada pages.”

Claremont begins to gently nudge us ever nearer to the pivotal pivot point with some revealing dialogue. When Ari complaints about her body hurting from exercise, Marada tells her, “With the pain comes strength. So that, when you need your body, it won’t ...

DANNY YOU...........ARIANA HOH HOH

I CAN SEE THEM! YOUR BACK MUST HAVE BEEN LIA OPEN TO THE SUN!

AREN'T THERE ARE NO SCARS?

MIND YOUR MANNERS, CHILD, AND LEAVE ME BE!

I'M SORRY, MARADA! I S MEAN IT...

I'M SORRY!

ARI, WAIT! I...

DONAL! PLEASE... I'D LIKE TO BE ALONE!

ARIES, WHAT'S THE MAT...

THE MEMORIES SIT LIKE A CANCER WITHIN ME...

IT'S BEEN ALMOST A YEAR YET... I'M STILL READY AS IF IT HAPPENED ONLY YESTERDAY. THE WOUNDS ARE SO RAW THAT I LASH OUT EVEN AT THIS CHILD I CARE FOR AS IF SHE WAS MY VERY OWN.

FREEDOM IS NOT A GIFT, SHARRA. IT MUST BE EARNED, OR POINTED FOR...

A GNARLED TREE OF THE SOUL BECOMING EVERY FACET OF MY BEING.

GOODNESS, WELL... I NEVER BE FREE OF THEM!!

ARI asks, “You sound sad, Marada. Is something wrong?” Marada responds, “No. Just... memories – things I haven’t thought of in quite a while.”

Bolton then delivers a playful panel in which Ari teases Marada about her obvious romantic interest in her father, which she unconvincingly denies. Marada rises to dry off and Ari is startled, asking her friend, “Marada? Where did you get those terrible scars?” Marada is curt, “There are no scars. But, Ari persists, “I can see them! Your back must have been laid open to the bone!”

Marada fires back in abject anger, “There are no scars! Darn you, Arianhodd! Ari flies the grotto sobbing. Marada rises from the hot spring to dress and morns within herself, “It’s been almost a year yet... I still react as if it happened only yesterday. The wounds are so raw that I lash out even at this child I care for as if she were my own. The memories sear like a cancer within me... a gangrene of the soul, beclouding every facet of my being.”

What Arianhodd saw on Marada’s back might be labeled, for the lack of a better term, “soul scars” - wounds inflicted by supernatural beings and can only be seen from a spiritual standpoint - the same scars that Rhimmoh detected a bit earlier. Donal enters to console her saying, “I see no scars, yet I know you - for I see them in
Minister Schnoebelein weighs in on the so-called "Stygian Stench," which is directly associated with the occult. "Well, back in the early days of being saved, I had renounced all of my occult involvement and was weary of seeing things in the Yezidah (Hebrew word for spiritual realm). So, the Ruach HaKodesh (Hebrew word for Holy Spirit) began to allow me to smell in the spiritual realm. I would be about (Christian) prayer warriors and they would smell like frankincense, etc. [Um] when I would get around peopleI stayed in the occult, they would literally smell foul like brimstone (sulfur) — and no, it was not just their hygiene. Some were very well groomed, but they simply reeked. Since then (25 years), the Ruach HaKodesh has gifted me with discernment of spirits and I can SEE things on people. That saved me the unpleasantness of smelling the stink of evil or despair."

Minister Schnoebelein was asked, "When you say you can "see things" on people, can you describe what you can see? Is it some kind of glow or aura around the person, or can you see some spirit that may be on them?" He replied, "Sometimes the first, sometimes the second, sometimes both. It depends on the Ruach. See, what New Age types call the aura is just a manifestation of what the Bible calls the soul. Most folk's souls extend slightly outside their body, unless they are extremely weak or ill."

Bolton's choice of color hues in this spooky scene is worthy of note, and his rendering of the stone texture of the tower's walls is superbly realistic. He explained, "I choose colors to convey atmosphere and..."
moods. For me, it's a straightforward formula. When Y'garon shows up, colors become cold, i.e. blues and greens. When the scene is set in a more natural situation the colors become softer. I have to judge how the colors in the frame work, then the whole [single] page, and finally, across the entire spread of both pages. With each project I use a different technique and medium. The style I end up going with is often dictated by the content and emotion of the story."

Returning back to this most significant of scenes, we have arrived, perhaps, at the most impressive page of the entire book – the rape of Marada. The artist stated, "Working on any story, a tremendous amount of work goes into the preparation of each page long before the final pencils are done. By this point, I've already decided on the look of the character(s), what they are wearing in the various scenes, which I have specifically designed appropriate to their action that will be taking place. It is quite similar to storyboarding a movie. I become the director, costume and lighting designer... everything except the script writer."

All five panels of the page are simply superb - Bolton at his very best - as he perfectly demonstrates his subtle skills, vast experience and tremendously tasteful version by handing such a dangerously difficult scene with extreme carefulness.

Panel #1: Marada bribes herself for certain death, pulling tight on her iron shackles and bending down in the contact stance as Y'garon stands tall with arrogant aplomb, declaring, "Ah! Defiance! Courage! Excellent! Thou shalt make a most fitting consort for the Tried."

Marada is herself, screaming, "CONSORT?!!"

Panel #2: The demon lord smiles lustfully saying, "Aye! Didst thou think one of the Nobohara would set foot on your pathetic world merely to take a human life?" He backhands her with a debasing slap across her face, and she falls down upon her back...

Panel #3: Y'garon leans down over Marada's prostrate figure, trapping his massive girth as he removes her armor and clothing. She is totally trapped, explaining the horror, "I fought, Donal. As hard and fiercely as I knew how, with all my strength and skill. To no avail."

Panel #4: "Y'garon now pulls Marada to himself to ravish her, but Bolton is ever mindful to not show the evil beast between her legs. Marada continues, "My resistance pleased the demon lord. He delighted in showing me... how ineffectual it was."

Panel #5: Bolton ingeniously sits up and tightens in for an over-the-shoulder shot as Y'garon penetrates Marada, which is occurring off-panel; the intensity of the moment being conveyed upon Marada's facial expression as she says, "How helpless I was."

This horrendous ordeal is completed in the first panel of the following page as Marada finishes her dissertation to Donal. "In his passion, the monster's claws raked my back, cutting me to the bone. I thought, I prayed, I feared, the wounds were fatal. But with a contemptuous wave of his hand, Y'garon healed me. Y'garon took part of my soul and replaced it with a piece of his - so that, when that endless night finally came to an end and he returned to his maggot-ridden realm, I...begged him to stay."

Minister Schnoeblen verified the authenticity of this unsettling scene. "What most people do not realize, or perhaps do not wish to accept, is that the fact that Satan and his minions possess the power to heal. But why would the devil do this? Well, if by healing someone, he can create a false faith behind the barrier, i.e. belief in a false god, then he has accomplished his task. He always seeks to enhance a person's faith in the kingdom of darkness, usurping the genuine faith and worship that belongs to Yahweh (God) alone. When Y'garon rapes Marada, they have now become intimate or 'one flesh' as the Bible describes, and thus, he creates an ungodly soul to lie to her. In biblical understanding, the soul of a person – Hebrew nephesh - is their mind, will and emotions. Through this diabolic act, the demon lord has forcibly incrust his image of himself within Marada in order to open up her soul for an infestation of pure evil. Now, part of her 'spiritual estate' if you will, belongs to the devil."

Obviously, this was tremendously taboo and potentially disastrous subject matter that Claremont and Bolton had decided to explore, especially for a graphic novel in the early 1980's. The story has now taken on a very bizarre and darkly erotic twist that, believe it or not, has its roots firmly grounded in historical reality. But, to discover the actual origin source of spiritual beings mating with human women, we must endeavor to venture far, far back to the dawn of creation itself - to the long forgotten Amat/Unus-Prado/Pre-Flood world, found in the Book of Genesis it reads:

"And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

This is a direct Divine decree of punishment from the Yahweh Himself (more commonly known as Yahweh – the personal name of God) at the nachash (Hebrew word for "serpent", who is the "shining one", who is none other than his satan), just after the devil had deceived Adam and Eve to partake from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, which God had strictly forbidden. Yes, the very first man and woman may have gained knowledge of good and evil, but they would not have any power over it. And more importantly, because of their willful disobedience, they forfeited their "child-like" innocence, were banished from the Garden of Eden, lost their direct communication with God and had death pronounced upon them and all of their offspring thereafter. Death now had dominion in the world. A very hefty price to pay.

Nonetheless, notice carefully to what God says to the serpent, an archetype of satan from this point forward; firstly, that He curses the serpent "above every beast of the field," and that "upon his belly he will go" and "eat dust" all the days of his life. This statement hints at the very strong possibility that originally, the serpent either walked on
Enter the Nephilim

This unsettling and highly controversial concept is further cemented in Genesis chapter six, where we read:

“And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them.

“Tha sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair, and they took them wives of all which they chose.

“And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also [is] flesh; yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.

“There were giants in the earth in those days; and after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare [children] to them, the same [became] mighty men which were [wear] of old, men of renown.” 17

So, what in the name of merciful heaven is going on here? It seems that ha satan was attempting to not only re-create man in his own image by having his fallen angels interbred with human women who, in turn, gave birth to “giants” – translated from the Hebrew nephilim – but also in doing so, eventually pollute the entire bloodstream of the human race to thwart the coming of the Messiah who was prophesied to “bouse” (crush) his head.

The Hebrew term nephilim is defined as “an evil beast,” “a living abomination,” “to fall to the ground from heaven,” “to be cast down,” or “to become a ruin.” Nephilim is the plural form for nephil, which spelled out with the Hebrew letters is nun-pay-tam – pictographically meaning, “to speak control over life.” Klein further explored these insights. “God doesn’t do this; on the contrary, He’s in speaking freedom. God’s purpose, through covenant, is the opposite of satanism. In other words, this satanic strategy of interbreeding between man and devils represents satan’s attempt at controlling mankind for his own purposes. Since the moment they were first conceived the nephilim have been trying to control mankind, which is exactly the opposite of what God would do.” 18

The Book of Enoch

The mysterious Book of Enoch offers more in-depth detail about these strange and unprecedented events. This book is credited to the pre-flood prophet Enoch, who God honored as one of only two men (the prophet Elisha being the other) in the history of the earth to not see death. Not only is the Book of Enoch directly quoted from in the New Testament Epistle of Jude, but also a near complete copy of the book was found among the Dead Sea Scrolls in the caves at Khirbet Qumran, located in the West Bank.

Klein offered a very intriguing and thought provoking insight. “The book of Enoch is an ancient writing attributed to the Enoch of Genesis 5:22. It was originally included in the Hebrew Bible but was later deleted by the Catholic Church at the Council of Constantinople in AD 533. Although it is currently considered non-canonical, it was accepted as scripture in Yeshua’s [Jesus'] time and is heaviy quoted in the letters of Jude, 2 Peter, and the book of Revelation. The book of Enoch also appeared more often than any other book of the Bible among the Dead Sea Scrolls.” 19

The Book of Enoch records:

“And it came to pass when the children of men had multiplied that in those days were born unto them beautiful and comely daughters.

And the angels, the children of the heaven, saw and lusted after them, and said to one another: ‘Come, let us choose wives among the children of men and beget us children.’ And Semjaza, who was their leader, said unto them: ‘I fear ye will not indeed agree to do this deed, and I alone shall have to pay the penalty of a great sin.’ And they all answered him and said: ‘Let us all wear an oath and all bind ourselves by mutual imprecations not to abandon this plan but to do this thing.’ Then swear they all together and bound themselves by mutual imprecations upon it. And they were in all two hundred: who descended in the days of Jared on the summit of Mount Hermon, and they called it Mount Hermon, because they always had sworn and bound themselves by mutual imprecations upon it.

Messianic Jewish minister John Klein offered his expertise on this subject. “Some have called the whole story nothing more than a fascinating myth, invented to explain why snakes crawl on their bellies. But what is actually being revealed in the Hebrew text is much more sinister.

“Here God is literally making a prophecy about two sets of offspring, satan’s and man’s. The Hebrew word zarah, referring to satan’s offspring, is the same Hebrew word used for Adam and Eve’s offspring. But we’re not talking about spiritual descendants; the Hebrew word means blood relatives, or physical descendants.

“In other words, satan has kids and mankind has kids in exactly the same context. His kids and your kids are equally real in a physical sense.

“Satan was not satisfied with the partial victory he’d won (in the Garden of Eden). He immediately implemented a scheme that spanned throughout time and called for nothing less than the complete assimilation of man into satan’s own unholy legions.”

limbs and flew with wings – like a dragon. The Book of Revelation points toward this idea of the serpent being a dragon as well:

“And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the devil, and satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.” 11

The English word dragon here is translated from the Greek word dracon, which is the “great serpent” and “a name for satan” 12 Likewise, that “old serpent” is translated from the Greek words archaioi, which means, “that has been from the beginning, original, primal, old.” 13 and ophis; that is “a snake,” “a serpent,” “the serpent who was an emblem of cunning and wisdom,” and “the serpent who deceived Eve, regarded by the Jews as the devil.” 14

So, we understand that God was speaking to none other than ha satan himself, the devil. But, notice carefully what the Lord says in the next verse when He declares war on the devil and to “put asball” (Hebrew word for “hatred” or the “state of feeling actively opposed or hostile toward”). 15 between ha satan and the woman and “between thy seed and her seed.” The most pressing point here, the one that must be hammered home upon the readers mind is that ha satan will have “seed,” or offspring - children that will be born from a hidden ( occult) secret satanic bloodstream. Chilling to say the least.
And these are the names of their leaders: Semjaza, their leader, Arakka, Rameel, Kokabei, Tamriel, Ramiel, Danef, Ezzeqel, Baraqel, Jesel, Armatas, Batsael, Aranel, Zaguel, Samespeel, Satarel, Turel, Junjael, Sariel. These are their chiefs of tens.

"And all the others together with them took unto themselves wives, and each chose for himself one, and they began to go in unto them and to defile themselves with them, and they taught them charms and enchantments, and the cutting of roots, and made them acquainted with plants. And they became pregnant, and they bore great giants, whose height was three thousand ells: Who consumed all the acquisitions of men. And when men could no longer sustain them, the giants turned against them and devoured mankind. And they began to sin against birds, and beasts, and reptiles, and fish, and to devour one another's flesh, and drink the blood. Then the earth laid accusation against the lawless ones.

"And Azazel taught men to make swords, and knives, and shields, and breastplates, and made known to them the metals of the earth and the art of working them, and bracelets, and ornaments, and the use of armor, and the beautyfying of the eyelids, and all kinds of costly stones, and all colouring tinctures. And there arose much godlessness, and they committed fornication, and they were led astray, and became corrupt in all their ways. Semjaza taught enchantments, and root-cuttings, "Armamoc the resolving of enchantments, Saraciel (taught) astrology, Kokabeel the constellations, Ezzeqel the knowledge of the clouds, Arajiel the signs of the earth, Sharmiel the signs of the sun, and Sariel the course of the moon. And as men perished, they cried, and their cry went up to heaven."

This is not fictional bunk! And, to dismiss it as such would be utterly foolish. The old adage, "Fact is more fantastic than fiction" is often quite true. Whether you label it sorcery, enchantment, divination, astrology, black magic, or what have you, this remarkable record may very well be unveiling the actual true origin of how witchcraft was first introduced unto mankind. Thus, the Holy Bible and the Book of Enoch provide us with an unshakeable foundational base concept for the ravishing of Marada at the hands of a fallen angel or devil. This is an age-old and recurring theme that has reverberated down through all the major civilizations of history: from Nimrod's Babylon to Egypt, from Assyria to Nebuchadnezzar's neo-Babylon, from the Medo-Persian empire to Greece, and finally to Rome -- the mythology of the gods coming down to mate with mortal women and begotting giants or titans is timeless and undeniable. And remember, mythology was our ancestor's religion, their belief systems and overall cultural ideologies; not simply silly superstition as many so-called expert historians would like to dismiss as such.

Claremont shared his thoughts: "Remember Davy Crockett and the Alamo? The most fantastic stories begin with a kernel of truth. I'm playing with the reality of Caesar's life and the lives of his children -- always asking 'what if,' and exploring these possibilities. As to the rape scene, I was trying to figure out how best to demonstrate to such a proud warrior as Marada that she may not be nearly as strong nor undefeatable as she may think. Y'goron is having and humiliating her in the vilest manner possible and seeking to break her will and shatter her spirit -- a sexually intimate violation that penetrates down so deeply that it threatens to corrupt her immortal soul. Simply put, Y'goron is having his wicked way with her."
Author Thomas W. Friend digs a bit deeper informing us that Pan, the “pied-piper” is none other than, “Lucifer, satan, the devil.” 23 He is described as:

“Pan – A Greek nature and fertility deity, originally native to Arcadia. As such he is god of goats and flocks and is usually represented as a very sensual creature: a shaggy human to the teins with pointed ears, goat’s horns and legs. He wanders among the mountains and valleys, pursuing nymphs or lording them in their dance. He is quite musical and is the inventor of the Syrinx, or ‘Pipes of Pan.’” 24

And again, “Pan – his cult was centered in Arcadia, where he haunted the woodlands, hills and mountains, sleeping at noon and then dancing through the woods as he played the pipes, which he invented. As a lusty leader of satyrs, he chased the nympha; he later was incorporated into the retinue of Dionysus. His symbol was the phallus, and he was invoked for the fertility of flocks, or an abundant hunt. Every region in Greece had its own Pan, who was known by various names, and Pan eventually came to symbolize the universal god. He is recognized in Neo-paganism and neo-pagan witchcraft and as an aspect of the horned god.” 25

John Klein further tells us, “Fallen watchers [angels] – are called sayyr (Hebrew). Greek mythology refers to satyrs who are half-man, half-beast. Could this be a reference to the Hebrew word sayyr? The books of Jude and 2 Peter both speak of angels who did not keep their position of authority and are bound in chains, in darkness, awaiting judgment. In all these cases, the Hebrew word used for these angels is sayyr, whose pictographic meaning is, ‘watches to destroy [consume] men’s souls.’ These words perfectly describe devils.” 26

There is yet an additional connection between Pan, ha satan and their direct association with the goat and the wilderness that harkens even further back in the deep past to the afore mentioned Book of Enoch and the Book of Leviticus in the Holy Bible.

Enoch wrote:

“Then said the Most High, the Holy and Great One spake, and sent Uriel to the son of Lamech, and said to him: ‘Go to Noah and tell him in my name ‘Hide thyself!’ and reveal to him the end that is approaching: that the whole earth will be destroyed, and a deluge is about to come upon the whole earth, and will destroy all that is on it. And now instruct him that he may escape his seed may be preserved for all the generations of the world.’ And again the Lord said to Raphael: ‘Bind Azazel hand and foot, and cast him into the darkness: and make an opening in the desert, which is in Dudaæ, and cast him therein. And place upon him rough and jagged rocks, and cover him with darkness, and let him abide there for ever, and cover his face so that he may not see light. And on the day of the great judgement he shall be cast into the fire. And heal the earth which the angels have corrupted, and proclaim the healing of the earth, that they may heal the plague, and that all the children of men may not perish all the secrets that the Watchers have disclosed and have taught their sons. And the whole earth has been corrupted through the works that were taught by Azazel: to him ascribe all sin.” 27
So, Azazel is one of leaders of the 200 fallen angels who descended to earth in the days of Jared (Enoch’s father) to mate with human women. God was none pleased with this act and sent his Archangel Raphael to: “Bind Azazel hand and foot, and cast him into darkness; and make an opening in the desert, which is in Duda’el.”

OK, so where exactly is Duda’el? Perhaps no mortal knows for sure. It is obviously located somewhere in a rather remote wilderness-desert region. Answerbag may provide a clue to this intriguing enigma:

“Azazel was chained and cast into the ‘Cave of Duda’el’ in the great desert of Duda’el. It was a pit of jagged, sharp stones and was then covered with darkness. Shemhazai was hung by one leg, upside down (a.k.a. Orion a.k.a. the Hanged Man of the Tarot) over Duda’el (?) exactly halfway between Heaven and Earth. He is in a completely isolated environment.

“In the Book of Enoch, we are told that as punishment for his sins, the fallen angel of war, Azazel, was thrown into a pit in the ‘Wilderness of Duda’el’, and left there to await Final Judgment. Although no one knows to whom the name ‘Duda’el’ refers, ‘Duda’el’ also means ‘Great Desert’ and ‘Fiercely Caldon.’ Furthermore, there is one place in Israel that fits that description: the Negev, which has one of its borders on Gaza.? 29

An additional direct link to the name Azazel is located in the Book of Leviticus, where we read:

“But the goat, on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat, shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make an atonement for him, [and] to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness. And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send [him] away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.” 29

Interesting, to say the least. Is there a connection here between the Azazel goat in Leviticus and the fallen angel who bears the exact same name in the book of Enoch or is this merely a coincidence? The English term “scapegoat” is translated from the Hebrew aza’el, which means “entire removal,” “scapegoat,” and refers to the goat upon which all the sins of Israel were pronounced by the High Priest and then set loose into the wilderness to wander.

Author Alfred Edersheim further explores this fascinating piece of sacred history during the time of King Solomon’s Temple in Jerusalem:

**Choosing the Scape-goat**

In the eastern part of the Court of Priests, that is, close to the worshippers, and on the north side of it, stood an urn, called Cabix, in which were two lots of the same shape, size, and material... the one bearing the inscription ‘a JEHOVAH’ for Jehovah (Yahweh), the other ‘a-Azazel...’ he shook the urn, thrust his two hands into it, and at the same time drew the two lots, laying one on the head of each goat.

“The lot having designated each of the two goats, the high-priest tied a tongue-shaped piece of scarlet cloth to the horn of the goat for Azazel – the so-called ‘scape-goat’ – and another round the throat of the goat for Jehovah (Yahweh), which was to be slain.

“All the while the ‘scape-goat,’ with the ‘scarlet-tongue,’ telling of the guilt it was to bear, had stood eastwards, confronting the people, and waiting for the terrible load which it was to carry away unto a land not inhabited.”

“And, as to add to the significance of the rite, tradition has it that when the sacrifice was fully accepted the scarlet mark which the scape-goat had borne became white, to symbolize the gracious promise in Isaiah 1: 18. 30

“Then a strange scene would be witnessed. The priests led the sin-burdened goat out through Solomon’s Porch,” and, as tradition has it, through the eastern gate, which opened upon the Mount of Olives. Here an arched bridge spanned the intervening valley, and over it they brought the goat to the Mount of Olives, where one, specially appointed for the purpose, took him in charge... At last they reached the edge of the wilderness. Here they halted, viewing afar off, while the man led forward the goat, tore off half the ‘scarlet-tongue,’ and struck it on the projecting ledge of rock... the goat had borne upon him all their iniquities into a land not inhabited.” 30

In Greek mythology, Pan was a lascivious, lust-laden god, a creature of unrestrained sexual lust, who relentlessly chased after nymphs (minor female nature deities) to order to copulate with them. In fact, the term nymphomania (from the root word nymph) was created by modern psychology as referring to a “desire to engage in human sexual behavior at a level high enough to be considered clinically significant.” 32 His perverted sexual practices knew no boundaries and included rape, incest, sodomy, homosexuality, masturbation and bestiality. He is also closely associated with the cult of Dionysus. Author Tom Horn explains:

“Ancient followers of Dionysus believed he was the presence that is otherwise defined as the craving within man that longs to ‘let itself go’ and to ‘give itself over’ to baser earthly desires... the worshippers of Dionysus attempted to bring themselves into union with the god through a ritual casting off of the bonds of sexual denial and primal constraint by seeking to attain a higher state of ecstasy. The uninhibited rituals of ecstasy (Greek for ‘outside the body’) was believed to bring the followers of Dionysus into a supernatural condition that enabled them to escape the temporary limitations of the body and mind and to achieve a state of enshrinement, or, outside the body and inside the god... But Dionysus embodied the absolute extreme in that he sought to inflame the forbidden passions of human desire.”

“...the Bacchae women (married and unmarried Greek women had the ‘right’ to participate in the mysteries of Dionysus) migrated in
frenzied hillside groups, dressed transvestite in lawn skins and accompanied by screaming, music, dancing, and licentious behavior. When, for instance, a baby animal was too young and lacking in instinct to sense the danger and run away from the revelers, it was picked up and suckled by nursing mothers who participated in the hillside rituals. On the other hand, when older animals sought to escape the marauding Bacchae, they were considered “resistant” to the will of Dionysus and were torn apart and eaten alive as a part of the revered ritual. Human participants were sometimes subjected to the same orgiastic cruelty, as the rule of the cult was “anything goes,” including lesbianism, bestiality, etc. Later versions of the ritual (Bacchante) expanded to include polyphilia and male revelers, and versions of sexual behavior were often worse between men than they were between men and women. Any creature that dared to resist such perversion of Dionysus was subjected to sparagmos (tom apart) and omophagia (consumed raw).

“Tearing apart and eating alive of a sacrificial victim may refer to the earliest history of the cult of Dionysus. An ancient and violent cult ritual existing since the dawn of paganism stipulated that, by eating alive, or by drinking the blood, of an enemy or an animal, a person might somehow capture the essence or ‘soul-strength’ of the victim.”

Whatever the case may be, it is quite apparent that Pan, the savagely uninhibited wild god of the wilderness, is an ancient archetype of the devil.

Returning back to the saga, Donal tries to console Marada, but she remains nonplussed and distant. She confesses, “Since childhood, I’ve prided myself and... depended on my ability to defend myself against any foe, surmount any obstacle. But Y’garon took me against my will, and there was nothing I could do.” She goes on to share the fact that now her dreams of being the master of her own fate have been shattered and that her soul is, “twisted inside-out.”

Donal warns her not to turn her back on what she is. But, Marada replies with him with doubt and derision, “What am I, Donal? Warrior? Woman? Both? Perhaps it is foolish of me to think my skill at arms made me safe, inviolate. I don’t know. At least now I have no illusions.” Here the first episode concludes.

Claremont offered his view upon Marada’s reflections. “Up to this point, Marada has been rather arrogant in her physical prowess and battle skills. She had prided herself on always being able to outfight any man. Out drink any man. Out gamble any man. Basically out man any man. Now, she realizes that is certainly not the case and the all-important question lingers, can she bounce back from such a gross and insultingly intimate violation of her person?”

A profound question that many of us will come face-to-face with in our own daily lives... and how we react to these personal trials and tribulations will define our character - reveal who we really are and what we really believe deep down in our own heart and soul and could ultimately determine our fate. These are all universal theme and timeless truth that makes the saga of Marada Stairhair, the She-Wolf so very, very special.

Bulots opens Part 2 with a stunning splash of Donal consoling Marada as the Reaver appears behind them in the darkness, poised for an ambush. This splash was discarded in the subsequent color re-printings of the saga, most likely for pacing considerations. A fierce fight ensues, as Donal and Ari stand toe-to-toe against the mighty Reaver of the Abyss to protect Marada, who can but cover in fear at the sight of her diabolic,double-ginger. Donal is mortally wounded and Ari is abducted by the hell spawn, transported to the unholy realm of the Malchora. And now, Marada must carefully weigh her options and can but ponder in silence the awful fate that is certainly to befall Ari if she does not rescue her young friend. She comes to Donal’s bedside and collapses in sorrow at the sight of her fallen beloved. Claremont offered his insight here. “The panel of Marada kneeling at Donal’s side as she lay dying I really liked. I originally wrote this with Marada expressing all of her pent-up emotions out loud, crying with all this verbose dialogue all over the place. And then, when I saw how powerfully John drew this panel, I knew it was better of it. If you cannot comprehend the extreme emotion and deep felt sorrow in the visual alone, then you are reading the wrong story.”

Despite her overwhelming fear, Marada decides that she must try to rescue Ari and has Phiannon cast a spell to transport her from the earthy stronghold of Celtic Ashanadra... to that of: “A realm as alien and inexplicable as the surface of the moon, possessing a fundamental wrongness that rubs her nerves raw. The air is thick with the stench of primal corruption” – the abode of the demon-lord Y’garon. Shuffling through this dark and dank suffocating swamp of twisted trees and foliage, her long dormant battle instincts are immediately put to the test in a series of quick engagements with attacking demonic imps and a huge octopus-like creature. She rocks her way through these hellish hordes and stoically strolls into the moldering temple where Y’garon and the evil wizard Simyon await her. Ari is chained to the wall and screams to Marada to free, but the She-Wolf has not been cast and the She-Wolf will not turn aside. She strides forward with her fierce eyes fully fixed upon the grotesque demon-lord who seems once again at his would be consort with lustful intent.
Clarament explained, “This is Marada’s ‘Clint Eastwood’ moment. The slight dip of her head and body positioning is John once again brilliantly creating a very distinctive visual scene that incorporates a solid and elegant reality. He guides the reader through this amazing fantasy world and yet, at the very same time, grounds them in a reality more plausible and believable with sublime characterization.”

Y’garon ignores her weapons and hogs toward Marada, ready to ravish her prize. But, despite her initial apprehensions, she is up to the task, drawing first blood from the arm of the demon-lord with an expert throw of her battle-axe. And, for the very first time, fear flashes across the groomsman face of the pit-friend. Clarament weighed in for this significant scene. “It will prove to be a fatal fakery on Y’garon’s part that he has broken Marada completely. Yes, the rage broke her spirit and will to fight for a short period of time, but it did not destroy her completely. Her former belief in herself and her ability to fight her way out of any predicament had been shattered, but now we see that she is fighting back to save a loved one from the awful fate she had experienced. She must cast aside all her fears and anxieties, exercise her personal demons to save Air from the clutches of her tormentors.”

The following panels that depict this climactic confrontation are sure delight to behold, once again Bolton at his very best and the moment we have all been waiting for as Marada unsheathes Donald’s sword of enchanted dried steel, while Y’garon brandishes his blade of scolding hell-fire.

When asked about his mastery of the female form and his approach to more complex sequences as battle pages, Bolton offered his thoughts, “Sometimes I will use live models, but for Marada I crafted small clay figures to give me an accurate idea of where the light should fall on the figures and how the corresponding shadows would appear. Of course, an action scene does take a lot longer to break down and deciding how the scene will flow from panel to panel, I approach it exactly the same way as any other frame, meaning that I have to draw every detail, every expression, while being ever mindful of movement and camera angles. Truth be told, it’s not unlike being a film director... the lighting, the costumes, the locations, etc. all have to be right.”

“I will begin with a very rough ideas on the edge of the script. I use an A5 sketchbook and I begin drafting rough thumbnails. Then, having sketched the pages with my initial ideas, I rework further through them with more detailed pencils. At this point, I can see if any panels and pages clash and whether I have the right continuity and atmosphere to control the pacing of the story. In many ways, ink wash is similar to color work, so elegant and beautiful in creating great atmosphere with subtle lighting and shadowing techniques, and hopefully stands the test of time.”

The melee increases in intensity as the combatants cross blades in a series of fierce parries. And then, after an expert feint on her part, Marada slashes open the beast’s belly with a magnificent horizontal strike. Blood oozes as the beast walls in a haze of anguished unbelief at the way this engagement is unfolding. Clarament interjected, “The subplot being suggested here is, ‘Be careful of what you wish for.’ Y’garon had implanted a piece of himself within Marada’s soul in order to control and dominate her all along. However, what the demon did not bargain on, nor even consider in his gross arrogance was her undying courage and will to battle back. This will prove to be his undoing.”
This second episode closes as Ari transports them back to the earthy plane, ready for yet another adventure.

Claremont offered, “Remember that Marada was chained up, drugged and bound without any weapons when Y’garon vanished her in Simyon’s tower. Now however, they stand on even ground for their sword duel. Marada possesses great swordsmanship skills and is more than able to slay the demon-lord. Y’garon is flesh and blood himself, like everyone else. The fact that Marada can injure Y’garon and draw his blood with her physical weapons may not be so much the fact that her weapons are magical in nature, but that she possesses the power within herself to destroy evil. It is Marada, not her weapons that make the difference.”

For the very first time ever, the entire Marada the She-Wolf saga (all five episodes) will be collected in one single volume and released by Titan Books in November of 2013. Owen Johnson, Senior Press and Marketing Executive at Titan shared this exciting news, “The new book will be fully re-mastered and fully restored. The artwork has been professionally scanned from every page of the original art, then digitally color-corrected to John’s exacting specifications, including white balance and color balance clean-up, with the lettering re-canned and restored separately and re-integrated with every page.

“The book will also include” unseen art and features including a historical overview of the creation of the character and story, as well as the period in which Marada is set, brand new introduction by original editor Jo Duffy, new interview material with Chris Claremont and John Bolton, and thumbnails and sketches from John’s sketchbooks.”

And what might the future hold for Marada? Will there be any further adventures of the star-crossed heroine. Claremont hopes so. “I have written some notes about Marada returning back to Rome and would love to do more stories, but I would not be able to do anything without John. John is the KEY!”

Bolton responded, “You never know. One should never say never. would really enjoy doing another Marada [story]. As I was finishing “Shattered Sword”, Chris and I were discussing another story set in Rome, and then...stuff just happened. Because of Chris’ inspired story, Marada is one of the most interesting and exciting characters I have illustrated. It enabled me to produce some of the finest work I’ve ever done, which I am still very proud of to this day. And hopefully, this isn’t the last we see of Marada.”

Amen, John.

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**John Bolton**
End Notes

#2 Marvel Graphic Novel #21 – Maradza The Ship-Hoist pg. 63 (Marvel Comics, 1985). This portion of the quote was taken from Chris Claremont’s own words at the end of the graphic novel where he reminisces about how Maradza came about.
#3 ibid. pg. 4
#4 William Schneebelen – phone interviews on August 2, 2013. Bill was formally a very high ranking 5th-degree Hermetic Witch as well as a Voodoo Priest, Wiccan High Priest, 2nd-degree member of the church of satan, 9th-degree Mason, Knight Templar, member of the mysterious Illuminati and an actual Vampire initiate. He is now a Messianic Jewish Minister and founder of With One Accord Ministries.
- www.1A25.com – Dubuque, Iowa. He is an expert on the occult and its inner workings and teaches full time on such dark and controversial subjects matter as witchcraft, satanism, vampirism, UFO’s, Masonry, Moonism, LSD, delerience, spiritual warfare, endtime prophecy and the like.
#5 Wikipedia: Aes Si and stefae.
#6 ibid. Rhamen.
#7 William Schneebelen – phone interviews on August 2, 2013.
#8 Deuteronomy 12: 23; “Only be sure that thou eat not the blood: for the blood is the life; and thou mayest not eat the life with the flesh.”
#9 Pharaohakia (sorcery) and its related word forms appear many times in the Holy Bible. A few examples include:
- Isaiah 47: 9 - “But these two [kings] shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood: they shall come upon thee in their perfection for the multitude of thy sorceries, and for the great abundance of thine enchantments.”
- Isaiah 47: 12 - “Stand now with thine enchantments, and with the multitude of thy sorceries, wherein thou hast laboured from thy youth: so do thou shalt be able to profit, if so be thou mayest prevail.”

- Acts 8: 9, 11 - “But there was a certain man, called Simon, which before time in the same city used sorcery, and bewitcht the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one.”
- “And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitcht them with sorceries.”

Revelation 5: 21 - “Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.”

Revelation 10: 23 - “And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee: and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee for thy merchants were great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.”

#10 Genesis 3: 14-15; Authorized King James Version.
#11 Revelation 12: 9; Authorized King James Version.
#12 BibleStudyTools.com, baked from The KJV New Testament Greek Lexicon.
#13 ibid.; archais.
#14 ibid.; aple.
#15 ibid.; aple, meaning “shameful” and “hated” from the root word apler, meaning “to be hostile to,” “to be an enemy to,” and “to treat as an enemy.”

#16 Lost in Translation; Rediscovering the Hebrew Roots of Our Faith Volume 1 by John Klein and Adam Spears – (Covenant Research Institute, 2007), pgs. 86-89.
#17 Genesis 6: 1-4; Authorized King James Version.
#18 Lost in Translation; Rediscovering the Hebrew Roots of Our Faith Volume 1 by John Klein and Adam Spears – (Covenant Research Institute, 2007), pgs. 90, 92.
#19 Genesis 5: 23-24 - “And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years.”

“And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.”

#20 Lost in Translation; Rediscovering the Hebrew Roots of Our Faith Volume 1 by John Klein and Adam Spears – (Covenant Research Institute, 2007), pgs. 206. 207.
#21 The Book of Enoch section 1, chapters 6-8.
#22 Wikipedia: Pan-god.
#26 Lost in Translation; Rediscovering the Hebrew Roots of Our Faith Volume 1 by John Klein and Adam Spears – (Covenant Research Institute, 2007), pgs. 86-87.
#27 The Book of Enoch, section 1, chapter 10.
#28 antisraelbag: www.antisraelbag.com/q_view/165457
#29 Leviticus 16: 10, 21-22, Authorized King James Version.
#30 Isaiah 1: 18, “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”
#31 The Temple – its Ministry and Services by Alfred Edersheim (Merrill Books, 1994). The entire in-depth analysis of the ezanah or “soapgoat” is located in pgs. 248-259.
#32 Wikipedia: Amanah.
#33 Dionysus: The Psychotic Apostle of the demon Apollo/ Osiris by Thomas R. Horn (NewsWithViews.com; August 18, 2013).