

MAX PAYNE 3

**EXPLICIT
CONTENT**

AFTER THE FALL

HOUSER
LAKE
BLANCO
WILSON

©REG FERN

PRESENTED BY

MARVEL

**CUSTOM
EDITION**

1 of 3

NOT FOR RESALE



HOBOKEN, NJ:
11:00 pm.

I'd been sitting at the bar for three hours or about five years, depending on how you looked at things.

Then, the same response mechanism that had taken me down so many times before kicked into gear.

I would later realize it was going to be one of my usual weaknesses that took me down.

Was it the booze? A girl? My temper? Or the *delusion* I could make a difference?

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Girl sure had balls.
I had to give her
that.

WHAT?
WHAT'D YOU
SAY?!

YOU HEARD
ME. I'M NOT
FRIGHTENED OF
YOU, YOU SPRAY-
TAN GUIDO
DOUCHE.

Before I knew what I was doing, I was pulling a gun on the coked-up kid of New Jersey's most powerful mob boss, and yet again, my life was tumbling into chaos.

EARLIER THAT DAY...

NAAAARRRGH!

I didn't even remember which woman I was remembering. In some ways, maybe it didn't matter?

Was it my mother?

I'M SURE DAD IS JUST... JUST WORKING LATE AGAIN...

Rose, my only child?

Michelle, my wife, my future?

Or Mona, that perfect and seemingly immortal harpy? In the end, they all left me.

YOU'RE NO MORE ABLE TO KILL ME THAN I AM YOU.

THERE'S MORE THAN ONE WAY TO KILL SOMEONE, MAX.

And then there was the woman I tried hardest of all never to think about...

...but no matter how hard I tried, I was always remembering something or other.

11:52

ELEVEN YEARS AGO...

It had always been the same: No matter how many people I killed or how well, I could never escape from the fact that the people I cared about ended up worse for knowing me.

FOR A
PARANOID LUNATIC,
JACK LUPINO SURE
KNOWS HOW TO
ORGANIZE A
SCORE.

I KEEP
TELLING HIM, LAY
OFF THE GODDAMN
V, THAT SHIT IS A ONE
WAY TICKET TO THE
NUT HOUSE.

STICK TO
COCAINE LIKE A
NORMAL HUMAN
BEING.

WE GOT
COMPANY.

BLAST
HIS ASS,
BOYS.



Now, my days were calmer. A nonstop jamboree of frivolity, clean living and, most important of all, a healthy outlook on life.



THE 1970s...

My Father never wasted time with television.

He was too busy majoring in telling other people how to live.

YOU'VE... YOU'VE GOT TO BE TRUE TO SOMETHING, MAX. OTHERWISE, LIFE IS POINTLESS.

YOU'VE GOT TO BE ABLE TO LOOK DEATH IN THE EYE WITHOUT FEAR, WITHOUT REMORSE. I LEARNED THAT WHEN WE WERE AMBUSHED DURING TET.

And minoring in hypocrisy. He was a family guy--when it suited him.

BUT IT'S HIS BIRTHDAY, JACK. PLEASE...

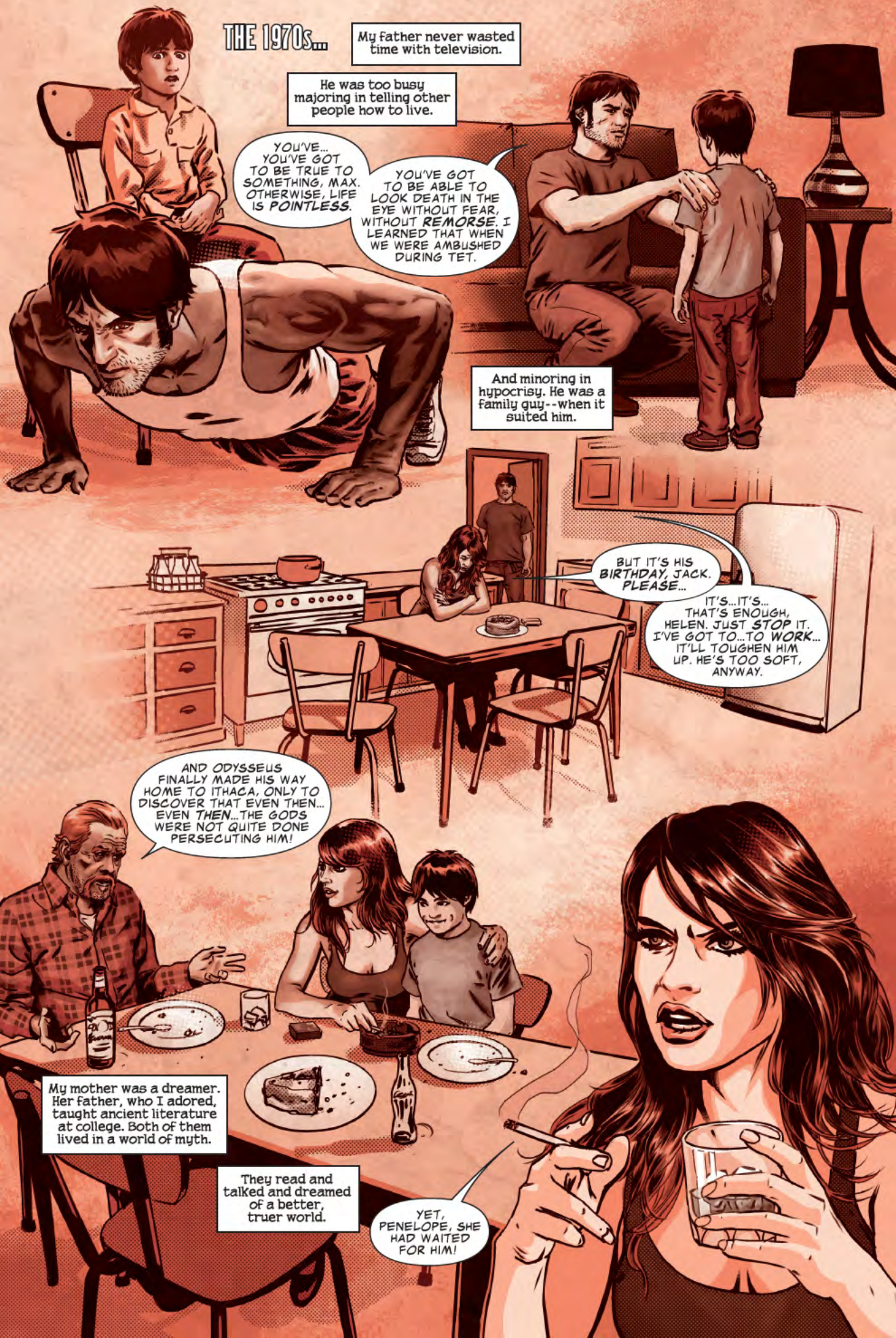
IT'S...IT'S... THAT'S ENOUGH, HELEN. JUST STOP IT. I'VE GOT TO...TO WORK... IT'LL TOUGHEN HIM UP. HE'S TOO SOFT, ANYWAY.

AND ODYSSEUS FINALLY MADE HIS WAY HOME TO ITHACA, ONLY TO DISCOVER THAT EVEN THEN... EVEN THEN...THE GODS WERE NOT QUITE DONE PERSECUTING HIM!

My mother was a dreamer. Her father, who I adored, taught ancient literature at college. Both of them lived in a world of myth.

They read and talked and dreamed of a better, truer world.

YET, PENELOPE, SHE HAD WAITED FOR HIM!



HELLO?
HELLO? WHO'S
THERE?

CLICK

She turned a blind
eye to some things.

I WILL
TEACH YOU
TO RESPECT
ME, HELEN!

IT'S OKAY,
JACK. IT'S OKAY.
YOU'RE HOME. YOU'RE
SAFE. WE'RE
ALL SAFE.

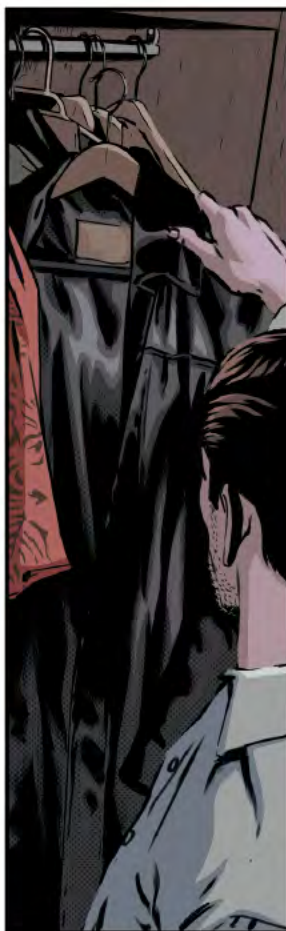
Yet my father had his
own demons. He had done
and seen things in Vietnam,
and now we all lived with
the consequences.

And hoped we
could all forget
about others.

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I wanted to protect
her, but I didn't
know how.

I didn't even know what I was looking for. Everyone I cared about was gone, or close to going, one way or another.



I was getting dressed to go and see people who wouldn't care.

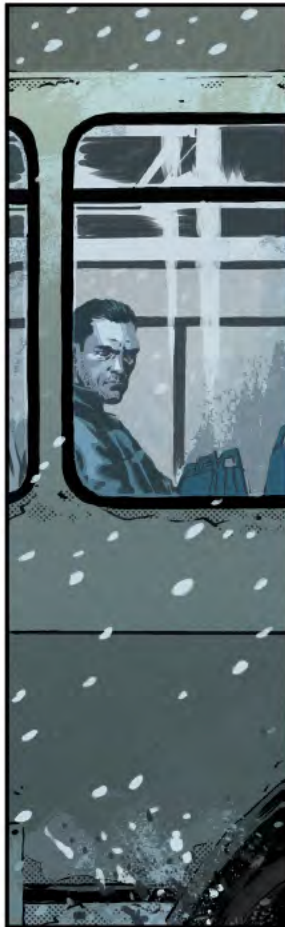
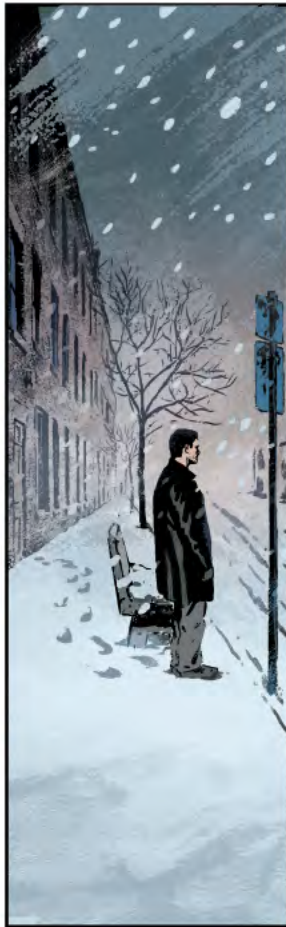
I felt like what I was--an old soldier putting on a uniform to fight a battle I no longer knew how to win.



I ached everywhere. I was too old to be carrying on like this. Sometimes, I idly wondered which bit of me would fail first.



Middle-aged panic was something I had grown pretty used to.







While people
like me lived...



...I've buried
so many.

THE LATE 1970s...

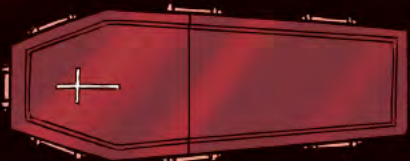
WE SEND BACK
TO YOU, FATHER, OUR
BELOVED MOTHER,
DAUGHTER AND WIFE,
HELEN PAYNE.

I KNOW YOU'RE
HURTING, MAX. I KNOW
HOW MUCH YOU LOVED
YOUR MOTHER, I DO.
BUT TRUST ME...

I JUST
WANTED TO
SAVE HER, BUT
I DIDN'T KNOW
HOW.

...TRUST ME
WHEN I SAY, IT
DOES GET
BETTER.

OKAY.



I loved my grandfather, but
I should have told him then and
there I knew he was full of shit.

HEY, I LOVED
MY WIFE AS BEST
I COULD...MAX...MAX,
WHERE ARE YOU?
COME SAY HI
TO CHERYL.

My mother was dead. I don't know if it was the
booze or the beatings or the betrayal that got her.

Three years
later, my father
joined her.



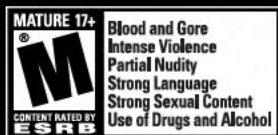




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