

RICK REMENDER

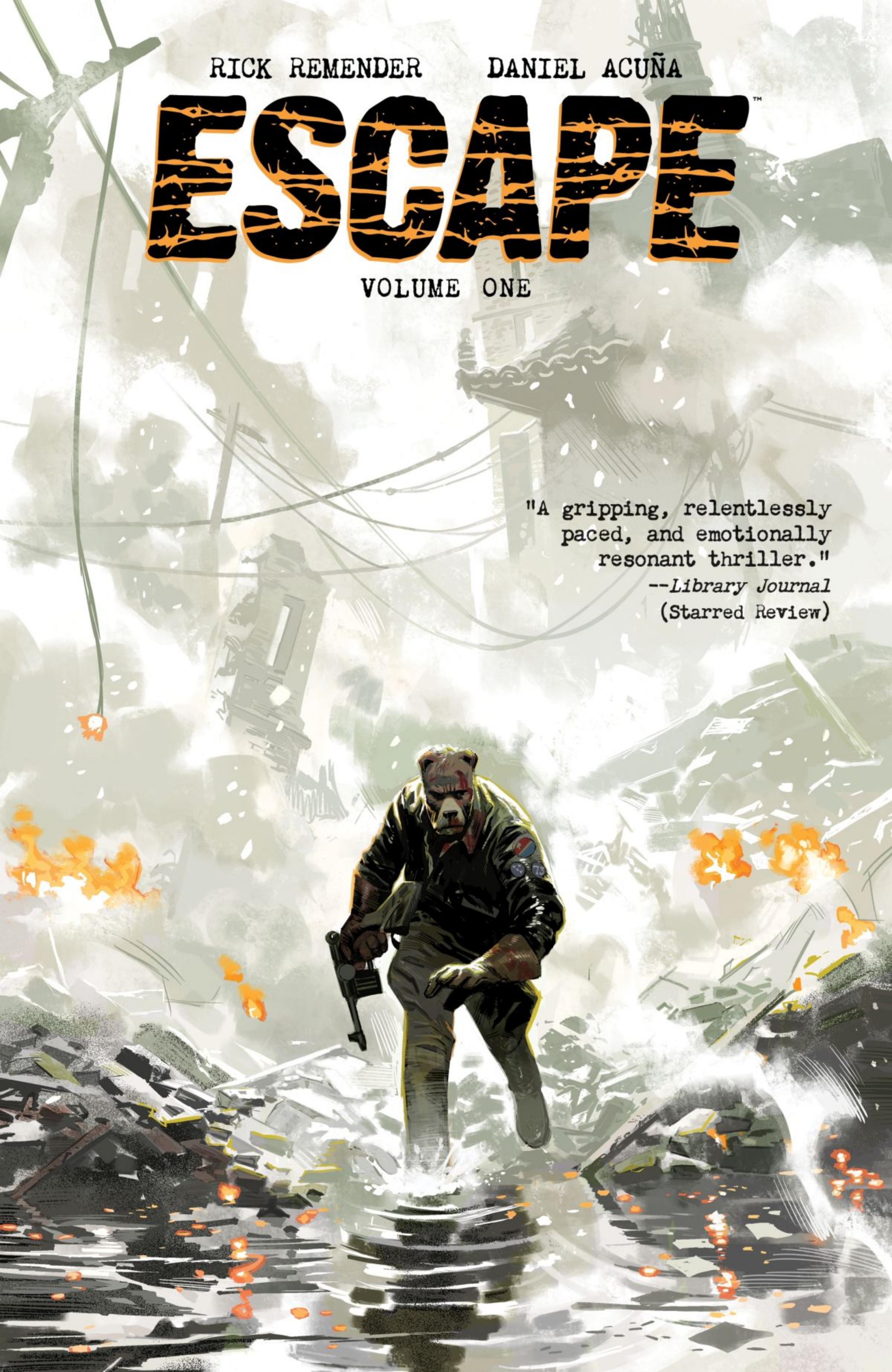
DANIEL ACUÑA

# ESCAPE™

VOLUME ONE

"A gripping, relentlessly  
paced, and emotionally  
resonant thriller."

--*Library Journal*  
(Starred Review)





...SPENT ALL WEEK THINKING EVERY DAMN THING I DO IS THE LAST TIME I'LL DO IT.

EVERY SMOKE, EVERY BREATH, EVERY TRIP TO THE LOO IS LIKE A BLOODY FAREWELL TOUR.

WOKE UP CRADLING MY COFFEE LIKE IT WAS A DYING FRIEND.



NOT ME.

I ROLL OUT, TAKE THREE DEEP BREATHS, A COLD RINSE, AND A PIPE FOR BREAKFAST.

HERE I THOUGHT YOU DRANK BROKEN GLASS AND CHEWED NAILS...



ICY NERVES AND AN EMPTY BELLY--A REMINDER HOW THEIR VICTIMS LIVE.



IF I WANT TO EAT, I HAVE TO EARN IT.

IF I WANT TO GET WARM...?

A detailed comic book illustration of a cockpit. A pilot in a flight suit is seated at the controls, looking forward. A speech bubble above him contains the text "I HAVE TO BURN SOME BATS." The cockpit is filled with various instruments, dials, and structural beams. The background shows a bright, hazy sky. In the bottom right corner, there is a stylized, cartoonish character with a large red bow and a wide, toothy grin.

I HAVE TO  
BURN SOME  
BATS.

# ESCAPE

## CHAPTER 1: "ONLY ONE WAY OUT"

FROM...

**RICK REMENDER** ★ WRITER  
**DANIEL ACUÑA** ★ ART & COLOR

-AND-

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**GABE DINGER** • ASSISTANT EDITOR  
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TWENTY-SEVEN MISSIONS, LISTENING TO THAT BLOODY NIHILIST PRAYER...

NOT HEARING IT AGAIN'S REASON ENOUGH TO SEE THIS THROUGH.

TOO ROUGH FOR YOU, TEA-AND-CRUMPETS?



A VULGAR LITTLE CRUTCH TO SALVE YOUR CONSCIENCE.

THEY'RE STILL LIVING SOULS, MILTON.

BATS *AIN'T* PEOPLE, FLYNN.

THE NARENIAN ARMY BURNED THROUGH ALL MY SYMPATHY.



TORCHED VELOURENNE FLAT.

COUPLE HUNDRED THOUSAND CIVVIES DEAD.



CLOSER TO A MILLION, BULLDOG.

BACK HOME, HALF MY TOWN'S LIVIN' LIKE MOLES--KIDS SLEEPIN' IN SUBWAY TUNNELS, HIDIN' FROM THOSE BAT BOMBS.



LIEUTENANT FLYNN'S JUST TRYIN' TA KNOCK IT THROUGH YOUR SKULLS--

--JUST 'CAUSE THE BIG CHEESE IS A BASTARD DON'T MEAN THE WHOLE BLOCK'S ROTTEN.



PRECISELY, MAGOO.

EVIL LEADERS *DON'T* NECESSARILY EQUAL AN EVIL POPULATION.



YEAH, SURE--  
CALL OFF THE  
BOMBING, SAY WE'RE  
REAL SORRY...  
MAYBE KNIT 'EM A  
SWEATER.

RIGHT. BATS  
BAYONETTIN'  
BABIES, TORCHIN'  
OLD FOLKS TO SAVE  
RATIONS...

BUT SURE,  
MAYBE  
THEY'RE NOT  
ALL BAD.



AIN'T JUST  
THEIR BRASS  
DOIN' IT,  
LIEUTENANT.

IT'S THE  
SOLDIERS  
PULLIN' THE  
TRIGGER.

SAME  
BASTARDS  
WE'RE  
ABOUT TO  
LIGHT UP.



EVEN THE BARELY  
LITERATE KNOW THE  
NARENIAN GRUNTS HAD  
NO CHOICE: FOLLOW  
ORDERS OR WATCH  
THEIR FAMILIES  
HANG FOR IT.

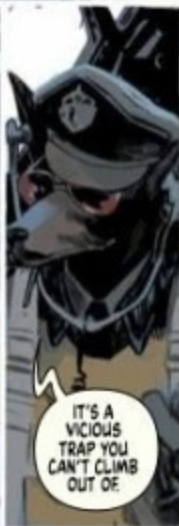
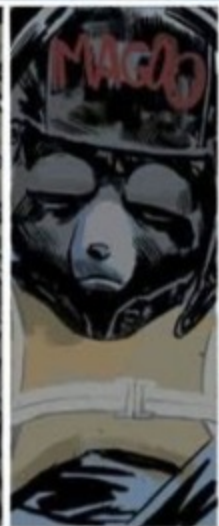
INSURANCE,  
PLAIN AND  
SIMPLE.



AND AFTER  
SLAUGHTERING  
CHILDREN, THEY  
KNOW EXACTLY  
WHAT'S WAITING  
IF THEY GET  
CAUGHT.

ENSURES  
THEY FIGHT  
TO THE  
DEATH.

WHAT  
WOULD ANY  
OF YOU  
DO?



IT'S A  
VICIOUS  
TRAP YOU  
CAN'T CLIMB  
OUT OF.



TELL YA  
WHAT I'D  
DO...



I'D STAND UP BEFORE THE BASTARDS EVER GOT THEIR CLAWS IN.

BUT THE BATS EITHER JOINED IN OR TURNED THEIR HEADS...

THEY LET IT HAPPEN.



THESE THINGS DON'T HAPPEN OVERNIGHT, MILTON.



YOU GET TWENTY PERCENT OF THE POPULATION IN CONTROL OF THE MILITARY--SAY THEY'RE BAD SORTS--

SAY THEY'RE MONSTERS.

EXACTLY.



AND YOU-- YOU'RE JUST AN ORDINARY BLOKE.

HOME WITH YOUR FAMILY.

THEN ONE NIGHT, THE DOOR FLIES OFF ITS HINGES, FIVE STORMTROOPERS, RIFLES AT YOUR WIFE AND DAUGHTER.



THEY SAY, "YOU AND THE BOY COME JOIN US, OR WE RAPE AND KILL THE WOMEN."

WHAT DO YOU DO?

I FIGHT 'EM.

YOU'VE GOT NO GUN.



YOU PUT ON YOUR BOOTS. YOU SAVE YOUR WIFE. SAVE YOUR DAUGHTER.

YOU TELL YOURSELF YOU'LL RISE UP LATER...

BUT BY THE TIME YOU TRY...



ONCE THAT SNOWBALL STARTS ROLLING, IT'S **EXTREMELY** HARD TO STOP.

A FIGHT THEY SHOULDA STARTED BEFORE THE FIRST FLAKE HIT THE GROUND.



IF **TWENTY** PERCENT OF THESE TOUGHS CAN PUT THE BOOTS TO THE **EIGHTY** PERCENT OF MILK DRINKERS...



HELL, MAYBE WE'RE FIXIN' TO BLOW THE WRONG SON'S-A BITCHES STRAIGHT TO KINGDOM COME.

**CAPTAIN!**



SCOPE'S BLANK-- BUT I'M CATCHIN' SIGNS OF SURFACE-TO-AIR BATTERIES LIGHTING UP--

