

# A BEAST IS A BEAST

By Katie Marcum

All that holds the horrors of the Frontier at bay is  
one woman and her eldritch revolver.

"Weird West"/Western Horror

## PAGE 1

Panel 1: A cowboy boot with heavy spurs snaps a twig. It's dusk in the woods, eerie light with a blue-ish tinge to it coming through in patches.

1. SFX: Crack!
2. CAL (CAPTION): A witch can be tricky if you don't pay mind to what you're dealing with.
3. CAL (OFF): I know you're here, Millie. Might as well show me who.

Panel 2: In the darkness between the dusky light, a pair of wide eyes look out from a bush, the shadow of a beak between them. Cal is walking past, her spurs clinking.

4. SLX: Click
5. CAL (CAPTION): Tricky in all kinds of ways.
6. CAL (CAPTION): Familiars...
7. OWL: Who?
8. CAL: I'm not in the mood for these games, girl. Show yourself.

Panel 3: More of Cal is revealed. She has a hand on her leather gunbelt. The attached holster is embossed with an arcane sigil. A revolver is inside, wrapped in a strange, gooey substance. Like small tentacles. Behind her, another creature is emerging from the dusk. This one shares features with a fox, big ears and a pinched nose.

9. FOX: Yip!
10. CAL (CAPTION): Shapechanging...
11. CAL: I said, show me Millie...

Panel 4: Full profile shot of Cal. She has her gun drawn, looking to the side. Its tentacles are framed in the light. She is all sharp angles, from her hat to her jaw to her duster. She falls somewhere between a cowboy and a monster hunter. A hulking creature with glowing eyes is looming behind her.

12. CAL (CAPTION): They can twist the world to how they see fit.

13. CAL: **RIGHT GODDAMN NOW!**

14. BEAST: Grrrrrrr...

Panel 5: A huge chicken-like foot steps on a log, a greatly oversized analog to Cal stepping on the twig.

15. SFX: Cr...**RAAAAAA**...CK!

Panel 6: Cal dives to the side as a huge bear claw swipes at her.

16. CAL (CAPTION): And throw those abominations at anyone who steps into their business.

**PAGE 2**

Panel 1: Cal rolls away from the swiping bear claw, and the creature is set off balance for a moment as its momentum takes it. It has the legs of a massive bird, the torso of a bear, and all kinds of animal-homunculus shapes mixed in.

1. CAL: Hell...

2. CAL: Millie!

Panel 2: The beast turns with speed, and Cal stares her down.

3. CAL: You don't want this, Millie. Come on now... it's me, **Cal**. This **isn't** how I wanted us to end up...

Panel 3: The beast lunges, and Cal takes a half step back.

4. CAL: But you don't leave me much choice here.

Panel 4: Cal raises her gun and her duster covers the lower half of her face. Red symbols of magic float towards her gun from behind the jacket, and the gun emits a faint red light from within. The tentacles around it are clearly moving, wrapping down her arm.

Panel 5: The gun fires, and the creature rears back. Red smoke trails up from the barrel and out from the creature's back, showing where it was hit.

1. SFX: **BANG!**

**PAGE 3**

Panel 1: The bullet went clean through the creature, but it's baring its teeth in a sinister smile. The hole is stitching up with the same type of tentacles that surround the gun. When the beast speaks, it's inhuman.

1. BEAST: He... he... he...

Panel 2: Cal's eyes widen. Her coat drops, and we can see the skin around her mouth is cracked and dry, faint magical energy just beneath the surface.

2. CAL: Fuck.

Panel 3: Cal runs for the cover of the trees, the creature bounding behind her. Cal has her fingers up to her mouth, letting out a piercing whistle.

3. CAL (SFX): **FWEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEET!**

4. BEAST: Come along now, Cal!

Panel 4: Cal turns to fight. She is firing her gun at the creature again as it pounces, its size really on display. Cal's other hand is reaching back for something.

5. BEAST: This is **exactly** how I wanted us to end!

6. SFX (GUN): **BANG! BANG!**

Panel 5: Cal's horse is bolting through the panel, dragging her away from the creature. Cal is holding his reins in one hand, one foot in the stirrup as she fires another shot off at the creature.

7. SFX (GUN): **BANG!**

8. CAL: 'Atta boy, Whistle!

**PAGE 4**

Panel 1: On Whistle's back now, Cal is pushing magic from herself into her revolver. The tentacles are reaching out to pull at her hand, magic at the tips of her fingers infusing the gun with power.

1. CAL: Should of known better than to think talking would work...  
She's too far gone.

2. CAL: A beast is a beast, ain't that right boy?

Panel 2: Rushing through the trees alongside the horse and rider, the shadowy creature is giving chase.

3. CAL (OFF): And there's but one way to properly deal with a beast.

Panel 3: Cal ducks as the creature dives out from the brush, sailing over her and just missing taking her off of Whistle's back.

4. BEAST: **GRAAAAAAAAAAAH!**

Panel 4: Whistle and Cal break from the treeline, the beast hot on their trail. Cal is leaned over Whistle's neck, going top speed.

5. CAL: Steady now, boy!

Panel 5: Cal stands in the stirrups, aiming her gun, back at the beast. The magical sigils float around her head, and the skin around her mouth dries and cracks with the magic just beneath the surface.

Panel 6: A giant bear arm grabs Cal around her waist as her gun goes off, dragging her off the horse.

6. SFX (GUN): **BANG!**

7. CAL: Shit!

Panel 7: The magic bullet strikes a common farm bell, sending soundwaves of magic reverberating off of it.

8. SFX (BELL): **DONG! DONG!**

**PAGE 5**

Panel 1: The magical reverberations are visible in the air. Cal is laying on the ground, a massive bear claw resting on her chest. Her face is scrunched in pain. The inhuman speaking from the beast is beginning to fracture as it speaks out of frame.

1. MILLIE: No... Hell... No... Cal...

Panel 2: The bear arm begins to shrink down to a regular human arm, thin and weak. The human fingers are clutching at Cal's shirt. Cal is looking down in shock.

2. CAL: Millie?

Panel 3: Cal is holding a frail woman in her arms. The vestiges of the bestial form are fading away.

3. CAL: Millie, I'm so sorry. I shouldn't have-

4. MILLIE: Shush now.

Panel 4: The hand tightens on Cal's shirt. Millie leans in, her face contorted in pain. Tears are rolling down Cal's cheeks, but she's got a determined expression.

5. MILLIE: You said it yourself. Only one way to deal with a beast proper.

6. MILLIE: And this magic's too much for me to hold off long.

Panel 5: Millie is leaning into Cal, who holds the woman close. Her revolver tip is beneath Millie's chin, and she speaks words of magic that surround them both. It's a somber moment.

Panel 6: Shadow and negative space hide the moment of Millie's death, but the bang of Cal's gun is undeniable.

7. SFX (GUN): **BANG!**

8. CAL (CAPTION): I'm sorry, Millie.

**PAGE 6**

Panel 1: Cal is adjusting the shaft of a buggy (out of frame) to latch it to Whistle. She does not have her gun belt on. Dawn is coming over the horizon. There is a fresh grave with a shoddy wooden cross sticking out of the head of it, the gun belt laid across it.

1. CAL (CAPTION): Magic shouldn't be trifled with like some kind of idle toy.

Panel 2: She puts her hand on the cross and the leather strap, ducking her head.

2. CAL (CAPTION): It dares you to let it in. Let it fix just one thing. Make your life just that little bit easier.

Panel 3: She pulls her holster belt on, her gun at her side again.

3. CAL (CAPTION): And there's not a person out in these parts who couldn't do with their life being a little bit easier.

Panel 4: Cal is stepping up into the front part of the buggy.

4. CAL (CAPTION): It's a beast, magic is...

Panel 5: Front shot of Cal in the buggy, a sign behind her advertising her magic services. It's pulpy and clearly reads as a kind of snake-oil marketing. She has a frown tugging at her mouth as she rides away from Millie's farm. She has some regrets, even if she can't fully confront them.

5. CAL (CAPTION): And it makes beasts of us all.