Ritsugen Manga

READ...
IF YOU DARE.

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During the war against Lucifer, the archangel Temozarela led the agents of light. In the years that followed, Temozarela watched as God's attention shifted from his seraphim to his new creation—man. Jealousy caused Temozarela and his disciples to abandon their heavenly post and attempt to corrupt humanity to prove the superiority of the seraphim to God. During the Crusades he attempted to begin his plan, but Belial sealed him in the Damas Parada for 500 years. Now, released by Ivan Isaacs, Temozarela is free again, but too weak to carry out his dark desires. His disciples have begun to sanctify the ground in the American West, spreading plague and death in preparation for the Unholy Sabbath.

Ivan Isaacs was a young priest with a passion for ancient cultures when he was recruited to study the Damas Parada. Little did he know that this mission would be his last—at least his last in life. After helping revive an ancient battle for Heaven and Earth, Ivan and his beloved Gena were slain. In order to get revenge and alone for endangering the world, Ivan made a pact with the devil Belial, his soul in exchange for a second chance at life...and supernatural strength. Now Ivan wanders the old west, hunting down Temozarela's disciples and keeping a journal of his tragic tale.

Gena Isaacs was an only child, so her father Jacob adopted Ivan to keep her company. In time the two developed a mutual love that went beyond sibling affection, much to their father's dismay. Jacob sent Ivan to seminary but the young would-be lovers' feelings remained. Before Ivan could act on his feelings, Gena was captured and killed by agents of Temozarela.

Coburn's Posse

With the West filled with outlaws, corrupt lawmen and superstitious townsfolk, these companions are the only ones Coburn trusts. Father Lucian is a Vatican envoy sent to investigate what happened at Stonetale Abbey. Novice is a Civil War veteran and mute who aids Coburn with his heavy gaUing gun. Cairo is an old friend of Coburn's who throws his knives with deadly accuracy.

Lizzie inherited leadership of the Angel Gang from her father. She's loved by her men, and feared by everyone else. She has more of a conscience than some of her fellow outlaws, but her hands are not clean of blood. Her rational world was shattered when her path crossed that of Ivan Isaacs. Now trouble seems to be her only friend. A hanging, a lynching even a zombie curse—she just can't see to get a break these days. During the St. Baldas massacre, she was bitten by one of Temozarela's zombies and her blood now bears his curse.

The devil Belial makes Ivan his agent in the mortal world so that he may battle the agents of the fallen Arch-Angel Temozarela, who is planning an upheaval of Heaven and Hell. Belial used to be Beethoven, a Catholic priest in the Middle Ages who he was a prosecutor in trials of heresy. After Temozarela shattered his faith, Beethoven turned himself into the demon Belial in order to get his revenge.

Coburn is the only federal marshal investigating possible links between an outbreak of plague and other mysterious events happening around the Old West. After Lizzie is found to be the only survivor of the St. Baldas massacre, Coburn takes her into custody. Together they follow Ivan Isaacs, the only one who knows the truth about what's going on.
THE STORY SO FAR...

Until now, federal marshal Coburn has been counting on captured outlaw Lizzie to help him in his investigation. Ever since she was saved from Temozarela's minions by Ivan Isaacs, Lizzie's been strangely linked with the avenging priest, and Ivan is the only one with the answers Coburn needs. After a long trek across the desert, Coburn and his posse found Ivan at last, but something was wrong. Ivan's body was battered and his spirit sleeping; the spirit of Belial was in temporary control. Separated by a huge ravine, Coburn thought his prize would escape once more. But Lizzie, who carries the zombie plague in her blood and needs Ivan's help to live, wasn't about to let Ivan get away. When Ivan and his undead steed leaped into the river, Lizzie followed, and the two were swept away. Now Coburn is back to square one, his only leads lost or dead.
THE MASS FOR THE NEW APOCALYPSE HAS ENDED.

THE STAGE IS SET FOR THE FINAL DISASTER TO STRIKE THIS FORSAKEN LAND. A LAND WHERE MAN NO LONGER FEARS GOD'S HOLY WRATH.
DO YOU STILL MAINTAIN YOUR SILENCE?

ARE YOU MOLLING ME...

...LEAVING ME TO WITHER HERE IN THIS CURSED PAIN?

EVEN IN THIS SANCTUARY EXISTS SOLELY TO DISOBEDY YOU. IN EVERY BLADE OF GRASS, EVERY GRAIN OF SAND, MY PATH OF SATISFICATIONS LEADS.
EVEN THE ENDLESS THROBBING OF MY BLEEDING VERTICAL IS UTEHLY SWEET, IT IS NOT BY YOUR WILL, BUT MY CHOICE, THAT THIS IMPERFECT BODY NOW STANDS. IT STANDS NOT IN PLACE OF THE GORGEOUS VESSEL OF LIGHT YOU HAVE TAKEN FROM ME.

AND OF SOMETHING THEY DO NOT YET REALIZE—YOUR ARROGANCE.
BREAK THAT SILENCE OF YOURS AND ANSWER ME, GOD...

TELL ME THAT THOSE IMPERFECT CREATIONS OF YOURS WILL NEVER ABANDON YOU.

WHEN THE PILGRIMS OF THE SANCTUARY ARRIVE HERE, I WILL PROVE YOU OTHERWISE...

...AND DECLARE...
THAT EVEN YOU CAN BE MOST MISTAKEN!
DIDN'T YOU TELL ME...

YOU'D KILL ME IF WE EVER MET AGAIN?

I'M ONE OF THEM NOW.

WHY DID YOU FOLLOW ME?

YOU SHOULD HAVE LET ME BE.

I DON'T KNOW...

...WHY I FOLLOWED YOU...

GO BACK.
I'M... SCARED!!

I'M AFRAID...

ABSOLUTELY TERRIFIED, IN FACT.

TO BE ALIVE.

YOU KNOW WHAT I'M FEELING...

I'M SURE OF THAT.

YOU CAN CALL ME PATHETIC. I DON'T CARE!

YOU CAN PITY ME ALL YOU WANT!

YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO'LL HEAR ME OUT.

JUST HOW FRIGHTENED I AM.

I WANT TO TELL EVERYONE... ANYONE...

IT'S FUNNY...
I WANT TO LIVE!!

I CAN'T STAND BY AND DO NOTHING WHILE MY ENTIRE BEING DISINTEGRATES LIKE THEM!

YOU... YOU CALLED ME GENA, RIGHT?

I GUESS YOU SAVED ME...

...BECAUSE I REMIND YOU OF SOME WOMAN FROM YOUR PAST.

ALL MY COLLEAGUES DIED FOR ME!

THEY SACRIFICED THEIR LIVES TO SAVE MINE!

I'M GUEST.

CALL ME BY ANY NAME YOU WANT.

I'LL DO WHATEVER IT TAKES.

...TO GET OUT OF THIS HELL!

I WON'T LET IT END... NOT LIKE THIS!

DO YOU WANT AN ANSWER FROM ME?

IF YOU WANT "GENA"...

...I'LL BE YOUR "GENA."
HAAA

HAAAAH

WHERE DO YOU KNOW ABOUT HER?

THE WOMAN I LOVED

YOU SAY YOU'LL BE THAT WOMAN FOR ME?

YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT SHE MEANT TO ME.

WHAT I DID TO HER.
THUD

YOU'D BETTER STOP YOUR GIBEYEH.

GO BACK!

DONT EXPECT ME TO ANSWER QUESTIONS!

THAT EVEN GOD HIMSELF WOULDN'T BE FIT TO ANSWER.

HERE'S ONLY ONE THING THAT I CAN GIVE YOU.
There is a time to love and a time to hate me.
"Don't expect me to answer questions that even God himself didn't deem fit to answer."

Well, then, I'm lucky.
AT LEAST NOW I HAVE SOMEONE I CAN HATE.
IDiot!

This is no hotel. You're staying at right now understand?

THE BOUNTY's ON YOUR LIFE HEAD.

Don't think it's out of kindness that we're keeping you breathing.

DAMMIT!

My WOUNDS are starting to fill up with pus. Do something. Will you?

HEY!

UGH!

CRUNCH!
WHAT IS IT?
HUSH!

HMM...

SHIT, MAN.
DON'T MAKE ME TENSE UP LIKE THAT.

BETTER TO BE SAFE THAN SORRY.

THUD!

UGH!!
CLICK

DAMN BITCH!

WHO DO YOU THINK YER MESSIN WITH?

ARGH! GODDAMN!

I WOULDN'T REACH FOR THAT IF I WERE YOU.
I DON'T WANT TO KNOW WHO YOU ARE.

WHAT I NEED IS YOUR HORSE.

THE FASTEST ONE YOU HAVE...

I AM THE LEADER OF THE REBEL ANGEL GANG. AFTER ALL.
GOD'S JUDGMENT WILL COME LIKE A THIEF IN THE NIGHT.
JOSHUA!

YES, I'M DONE PRAYING.

IT'S A VILLAGE ABOUT 15 MILES NORTH OF HERE.

EXCELLENT, WE SHALL ASSIST YOU THERE.

GOOD.

AND GOD'S ANSWER?

SHORT AND CLEAR...

...AS ALWAYS!

WE FOUND IT.

WE'LL FOLLOW YOU.

GO AHEAD.

YES!
MESSANGERS OF GOD!

GO INTO THE ENEMIES' MIDST...

...AND PUNISH THEIR WICKED WAYS!

FILL THEIR ARROGANT EARS...

...WITH THE ANGRY VOICE OF GOD.
BEHOLD, ON THE DAY OF JUDGMENT FOR ALL THOSE WITH EARS READY FOR GOD...

...THE SEVEN ANGELS WILL READY SEVEN TRUMPETS TO THEIR LIPS, AND THE MUSIC SHALL REND THE VERY SKY.
THOSE WHO HAVE VOWED TO WORSHIP GOD WILL RISE...

AND PIERCE EVIL WITH THE HOLY WORD AND THwart IT WITH DIVINE GRACE

THEY WILL APPEAR BEFORE THOSE GUILTY OF FAITHLESSNESS, DOUBT AND RESENTMENT... AND THOSE SINS WILL BE HARSHLY JUDGED.
ARGH.

Coburn non's not the time to be sitting around.

There's nothing we can do...

...until Cairo locates their whereabouts.

So, two generations of Coburns have been toyed with by that father-daughter pair.

Shit!

TICK

TICK

TICK

Hmmm...

TICK
FATHER

THE WIRE YOU WERE ASKING FOR... IS HERE.

DAMN, I'VE BEEN HUNG UP TO DRY.

FLUTTER

CO- COBURN!!
ABANDON
ALL
HOPE...

...THAT OUR
DECISION
WILL BE
ACCEPTED
AS JUST.

WHY WAS
SUCH A
USELESS
DECISION
REACHED?

WE ARE
PRIESTS
WHO HAVE
SWORN BY
THE WORD
NO ONE IN
THE HOLY
CITY WILL
ACCEPT THIS
DECISION.

THIS
CAMPAIGN

IS BEYOND
RATIONAL
JUSTIFICATION. IT IS A
MATTER OF
FOOLISH
FAITH.
WE WILL BE CONDEMNED.
OF THAT I HAVE LITTLE DOUBT...
WE WILL BE ACCUSED OF CASTING ASIDE MORALITY, ETHICS... AND EVEN GOD’S WORD.

WE ARE NOW ADVANCING FORWARD, WITH OUR EYES BLINDFOLDED, GUIDED SOLELY BY THE WORD OF GOD.

WE MUST NOT CONCERN OURSELVES WITH TRANSGRESSING HUMAN LAW, HUMAN MORALITY.

IT IS GOD’S LAW, GOD’S MORALITY THAT WE MUST ADHERE TO. IF WE STRAY, WE WILL NOT OVERCOME THIS CRISIS OF FAITH THAT LIES BEFORE US.

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THE FACE WE ARE ABOUT TO SEE...

IF NOT TODAY THEN SOME DAY IN THE FUTURE...

...PEOPLE WILL DENOUNCE WHAT WE’VE DONE.

THIS IS...

THEN...

...WHY MAKE THIS DECISION?

THE BURDEN THE HOLY BROTHERHOOD MUST SHOULDER

DIVINE PLANS OFTEN REQUIRE SACRIFICE

THE FACE WE ARE ABOUT TO SEE...
...is a representation of God that mere human beings cannot bear.
SHIT!!

THE GODDAMN VATICAN...
THEY'RE MAKING A DAMN FOOL OF ME...

SHIT!

I HAVE TO TELL YOU SOMETHING.

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

SHIT!!

IF THE VATICAN MEANT TO BIND MY HANDS LIKE THIS...

...WHY DID THEY TELL ME TO HELP YOU IN THE FIRST PLACE?

YOU PRIESTS TAKE CARE OF BUSINESS?

IS THIS THE WAY...

HEY, FATHER
They belong to a secret, autonomous sect directly answerable to the pope. They're called the "Order of Saint Vertinez."

They are the ones responsible...

...for beginning Ivan's tragedy many years ago.
Perhaps they are breeding another tragedy...

...right at this moment.
DO YOU KNOW WHY YOUR VILLAGE HAS BEEN CURSED?

IT'S BECAUSE ALL OF YOUR ROOTS HAVE GROWN TWISTED, BENDING AWAY FROM GOD.

YOU BEGAN TO TAKE TOO MUCH PRIDE IN THE LARGE AND SMALL THINGS YOU'VE CREATED.

IF YOU HAD HEARD GOD'S VOICE...

AND SAVED YOURSELVES FROM SIN...

...SONGS OF PRAISE, INSTEAD OF TERRIFIED SCREAMS...

WOULD BE ISSUING FORTH FROM YOUR MOUTHS NOW...

AHHH...
AND OUR GUNS AND KNIVES...

...WOULD HAVE BEEN YOUR DEFENDERS INSTEAD OF YOUR DESTROYERS!
REJOICE, LITTLE CHILD OF GOD...

...THAT YOUR SINS HAVE BEEN WASHED AWAY BY BLOOD.

AMEN!

SATAN TEMPTS US WITH THE PURE FACE OF AN ANGEL, AND THE SWEET WORDS OF HONEY.

BY THE GRACE OF GOD, WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN THE POWER TO DISCRIMINATE AND THE AUTHORITY TO FULFILL THIS HOLIEST OF MISSIONS.

DON'T BE DISTRACTED BY THEIR FLEETING LOOKS OF INNOCENCE.

...AND THEIR FLOWERY WORDS OF PROTEST!

THerefore, do not waver, hesitation reveals your faithlessness in God. Do His Word and rejoice!
REJOICE IN WHAT?

IN THE END, YOUR GOD IS A CRUEL, CRAVEN, AND ARROGANT KING...

...ESPECIALLY TO THOSE STRAGGLERS WHO COULD NOT FOLLOW HIS WAY.
OWISH!

I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND.

WHAT DO YOU THINK WE CAN DO BY CHASING THEM?

FROM WHAT YOU TELL ME, THEY'RE FANATICS AND THEY GOT THE POPE'S SUPPORT BEHIND THEM.

DO YOU REALLY THINK YOU CAN STOP THEM?

I'M FULLY AWARE OF THAT...

BUT STILL...

...THIS IS MY MISSION!

BLACK AND WHITE, GOOD AND EVIL....

THE MOST DANGEROUS THING IS THAT THEY NEVER WAVER IN THAT EXECUTION.

AND THE EXECUTION OF THE WORD.

IT SEEMS TO ME YOU'RE THE ONE WHO NEVER WAVERED.

EH?

HMM, IT'S NOT LIKE CAIRO TO TAKE SO LONG.
FLAP FLAP

CLICK

WHAT YOU'RE ABOUT TO DO IS CALLED "PERSECUTION."
THE BIBLE SHOWS US THAT NO ONE CAN PERSECUTE THE FAITHFUL AND RECEIVE FORGIVENESS...

...UNLESS THEY REPENT THEIR WORTHLESSNESS BEFORE GOD!
WILL YOU NOW...

...REPEL OF YOUR FOOLISHNESS?

SO BE IT.

OK

TING TING!

TING TING!

TING TING!

TING TING!
SO YOU TURN YOUR BACK ON GOD AND TRUST LUCK INSTEAD.

JUST LIKE AN ANIMAL HOW FUTILE!
YOU FILTHY HERETIC... YOU BEAST...

NO.

WHY DON'T YOU TRY PURIFYING ME IN THE NAME OF YOUR GOD?

CLICK

EVEN CLEANSER GOD WOULD TELL A SPLIT BACK TO YOUR DISGUSTING FORM OF FLESH

YOUR STENCH OF SIN SICKENS ME...

DIET OH
WELL SAID.

MAY YOUR BODY BE CLEANSED BY THE DESERT'S DUST AND THE EARTH'S WORMS.
You vile heretic.

You taint the beautiful, hands God gave you. It's time you gave one back.
CLOP

STILL STANDING?

オ
IT OCCURRED TO ME THAT WE MIGHT JUST AS WELL BE

BRIDESMAIDS AT A WEDDING AS FAR AS THIS CASE IS CONCERNED.

THE ORDER OF SAINT VERTINEZ WAS AN AUTONOMOUS ORGANIZATION FROM THE BEGINNING.
THEIR EXTREME DECISIONS DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THE VATICAN'S POSITION.

HAHA....

I SEE...

THEY'RE THE ONES WHO WASH THE VATICAN'S DIRTY LAUNDRY.

THAT'S... THAT'S NOT TRUE!

WHAT MAKES YOU SAY SUCH THINGS?

BUT...

...PERHAPS COBURN IS RIGHT.
"God wears many faces, and some of them must remain hidden from plain view."
IT SEEMS WE'VE INTERRUPTED THEIR DINNER.
Ratatatat!

Grin

What the hell are you doing? Don't ever go shootin' your big bad gun right in my ear!

Just because you're already half deaf doesn't mean I have to be, too.

Coburn!

Huh?
THERE'S SOMETHING YOU SHOULD SEE.

DAMN...

SOMEONE HAD A FIELD DAY.

THEY'RE MEMBERS OF THE VERTINEZ ORDER!

WHO COULD HAVE DONE THIS TO THEM?

HOW CAN THIS BE?!
CAIRO.

WHY WOULD CAIRO...

BATTLE PRIESTS FROM THE ORDER OF SAINT VERTINEZ?

WHO KNOWS? THEY MIGHT HAVE BEEN CAUGHT DOING SOMETHING VERY VERY NAUGHTY.

STILL... IT'S UNLIKE HIM TO FIGHT LIKE THIS AND HE HAVEN'T TAKEN BACK...

...THE KNIVES HE USED.

THANKS.
THAT INDIAN...

HE DREW LUIK LIKE SOMEBODY HE WOULD JUST COME ACROSS ON THE ROAD.

I THINK HE WAS A FEDERAL INVESTIGATOR.

HE HAD THIS WITH HIM.

IT'S BROTHER LUCIAN.

WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE TRAVELING WITH FEDERAL INVESTIGATORS.

THOUGH OUR LOSSES WERE HEAVY...

...THIS ENCOUNTER COULD NOT HAVE COME AT A BETTER TIME.

YOU'RE LATE ANTOINE. WE'RE PlANNING TO JOIN THE OTHERS AT THE NORTHERN FORG. WHEE!!!
...that alone may justify the sacrifice of our brothers.

If they rescue us, we're in carrying out our mission...
NO...

NO!

CAIRO...
Holy Virgin Mary, Thou who leadest us toward resurrection.

Guide this poor soul in his return to the holy maker's embrace.
MAY HIS SOUL FIND REST IN HEAVEN.

SHUT UP, PADRE.

THE GOD HE BELIEVED IN WAS NOT YOUR GOD.

IF YOU CAN'T GIVE HIM AN INDIAN RURAL, DON'T GIVE HIM ANYTHING AT ALL.

COBURN!

WHILE WE'RE ON THE SUBJECT, I HAVE SOMETHING TO REQUEST.

FROM NOW ON...

STOP SAYING YOUR SILLY PRAYERS IN FRONT OF ME.

COBURN...

I DON'T WANT TO HEAR YOU RECITING BIBLE VERSES.

OR CHANTING LITANIES EITHER

FROM NOW ON...
...the cross will be nothing more than...

...the sign of the enemy to me!
WHY ELSE WOULD YOU BE COMING THIS WAY?

WHEN THERE ARE WELL-WORN ROADS DOWN BELOW?

I'M LOOKING FOR SOMEONE.

DO YOU KNOW MEMBERS OF THE REPEATED CONSCRIPTED ARMY?

THAT NOW MAKE A LIVING AS BANDITS?

HEY!

I GUESS YOU'RE LOST

CLICK!
I'm sorry for you. You should've just said that you're lost.

It's been a while, Andreas!

You haven't changed a bit.

Sometimes being gutsy will only cost you your life.

Will you tell your father that I'm here?

...to return his left eye?

You...
...THE FEMALE LEADER OF THE REBEL ANGEL GANG, LONG RUMORED TO BE DEAD, MATERIALIZES RIGHT BEFORE MY EYES!

WHAT'S MORE, SHE BRINGS ME THE EYE HER FATHER, DECKARD, TOOK FROM ME.

I'VE BEEN HIDING WITH THIS GANG FOR OVER FIVE MONTHS NOW. THE CAVALRY'S AFTER MY NECK.

SO... WHERE IS THAT LEFT EYE OF MINE?

SO...

HOW CONSIDERATE OF YOU TO APPEAR! I'VE BEEN BORED OUT OF MIND.

GRIN!!
YOU CAN'T LET YOUR GUARD DOWN, FATHER.

GIVEN HALF A CHANCE, SHE'LL TAKE YOUR RIGHT EYE, TOO!

BUT REMEMBER THIS, IF YOUR STORY TURNS OUT TO BE SOME PIECE OF COOKAMAMIE RUSSIA...

I WON'T BE SATISFIED JUST KILLING YOU HERE AND NOW. WHERE IS THAT LEFT EYE OF MINE?

YOUR YOUNGEST SON, ALONZO...

...SUFRS FROM SOME CONTAGIOUS DISEASE.

I HEARD IT'S QUITE SERIOUS.

I WANT TO SEE HIM.

THERE'S SOMETHING I HAVE TO CONFIRM.

SHUT UP, CISCO!

ENOUGH!

I DON'T WANT TO HEAR ANY MORE BS.

I'M NOT HERE TO TALK ABOUT THAT.
HE WAS DELIRIOUS FOR THREE DAYS...

BUT WHEN WE WENT TO BURY HIM THE NEXT MORNING...

...HIS EYES WERE WIDE OPEN.

...AND THEN HE DIED.

HE HAD ALREADY EATEN THREE MEN UNDER HIS CHARGE.

WHILE THEY WERE SLEEPING AT NIGHT.

WE FOUND A KID DYING IN THE DESERT AND GAVE HIM A LIFT...

ALL OF A SUDDEN, THE KID BIT ALONZO IN THE NECK.

THE WOUND STARTED PUSING AND ALONZO FELL UNCONSCIOUS.

IT WAS IN SAN ANTONIO.
BLOOOO

OH... MY GOD...

That's no disease...

TO BE CONTINUED...

IVAN ISAACS WILL RETURN IN
PRES+ VOLUME 12: A CHOIR OF WOLVES

IN WHICH A CIRCUS COMES TO TOWN, AND AN UNLIKELY SAINT PROTECTS HER HOME.
Canticle of the Sword

For centuries, the Order of St. Vertinez has used whatever means necessary to protect Catholic interests around the world. The autonomous order reports to no one, not even the Pope, for its deeds would leave blood on the soul of any man. Years ago, while investigating an ancient artifact in the American West, the Order inadvertently released the fallen archangel Temozarela from centuries of imprisonment. Now the Order has returned to clean up its mess, and this time, no one will live to tell the tale.

"A genuinely thrilling book."
- Greg McElhatton, icomics.com

"Part Spaghetti Western, part Resident Evil... Action Junkies will not be disappointed"
- Scott Green, Ain't-It-Cool-News