

DUGGAN

BROWN

O'HALLORAN

SABINO

GRAY

FALLING IN LOVE ON THE PATH TO HELL

VOLUME TWO





for our girlfriends

FALLING IN LOVE ON THE PATH TO

STORY & ART

GERRY DUGGAN & GARRY BROWN

CHAPTER NINE STORY & ART BY GERRY DUGGAN & MARK TORRES

COLOR ARTIST

CHRIS O'HALLORAN

LETTERER

JOE SABINO

WE TO HELL



地獄

VOLUME TWO

DESIGNER

ELLIOTT GRAY

EDITOR

VIRGINIA DUGGAN

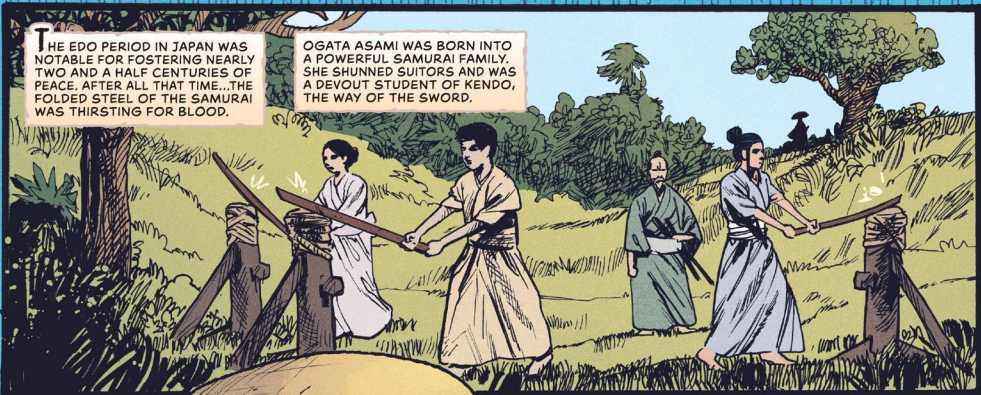
PRODUCTION ARTIST

RICH FOWLKS



THE EDO PERIOD IN JAPAN WAS NOTABLE FOR FOSTERING NEARLY TWO AND A HALF CENTURIES OF PEACE. AFTER ALL THAT TIME...THE FOLDED STEEL OF THE SAMURAI WAS THIRSTING FOR BLOOD.

OGATA ASAMI WAS BORN INTO A POWERFUL SAMURAI FAMILY. SHE SHUNNED SUITORS AND WAS A DEVOUT STUDENT OF KENDO, THE WAY OF THE SWORD.



HER FAMILY HAD ENOUGH BLADES, WHAT THEY NEEDED WAS A BRIDE.

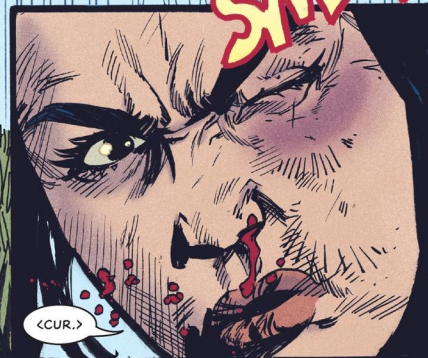
«COME, IT'S TIME, GIRL.»



«I GAVE MY ANSWER TO FATHER.»



«UNHAND ME, ISOJI.»



«CUR.»

ASAMI BLACKENED HER BROTHER'S EYE, BUT YIELDED THE BRAWL WHEN HER ELDERLY PARENTS ARRIVED.

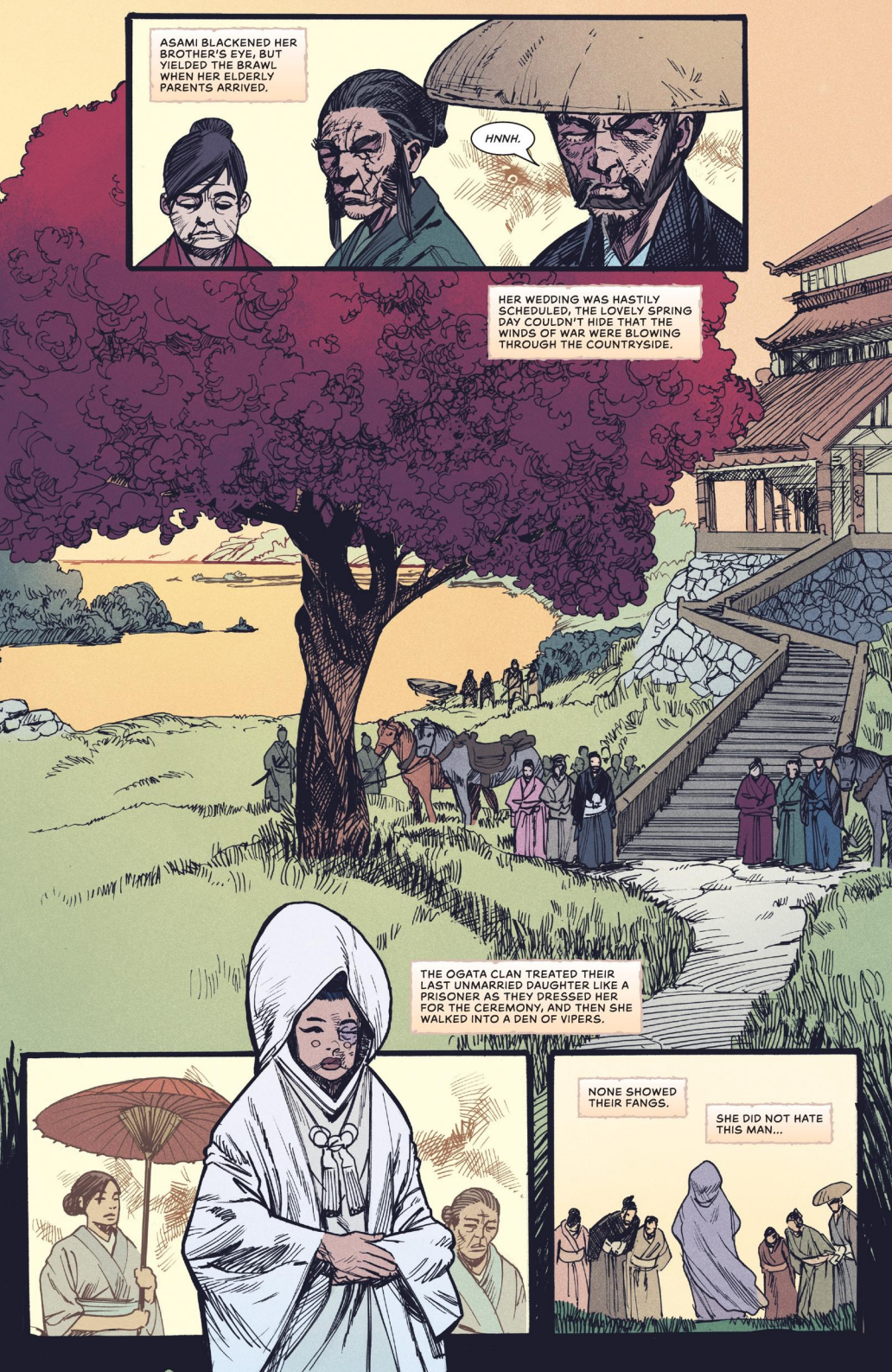
HNNH.

HER WEDDING WAS HASTILY SCHEDULED, THE LOVELY SPRING DAY COULDN'T HIDE THAT THE WINDS OF WAR WERE BLOWING THROUGH THE COUNTRYSIDE.

THE OGATA CLAN TREATED THEIR LAST UNMARRIED DAUGHTER LIKE A PRISONER AS THEY DRESSED HER FOR THE CEREMONY, AND THEN SHE WALKED INTO A DEN OF VIPERS.

NONE SHOWED THEIR FANGS.

SHE DID NOT HATE THIS MAN...





...BUT SHE DID NOT
LOVE THIS MAN. THE
MARRIAGE WOULD
PLEASE HER FAMILY.



THE JOINING WOULD
BRING FAVOR WITH
THE DAIMYO.



HER FAMILY DIDN'T
KNOW WHAT LAY IN
ASAMI'S HEART...



...IF THEY DID, THEY WOULD
KNOW THAT IT HAD ALREADY
BEEN BOUND...TO THE SWORD.

AS SHE MADE HER ESCAPE, SHE RECALLED A PASSAGE FROM THE HAGAKURE THAT SHE ALWAYS DESPISED: "A WOMAN SHOULD CONSIDER HER HUSBAND FIRST, JUST AS HE CONSIDERS HIS MASTER FIRST."

ASAMI WOULD BE NO WIFE, NO MOTHER.

LET HER FAMILY ARRANGE A MARRIAGE WHEN SHE WAS IN HER URB.

<THEN--
IT IS
WAR.>

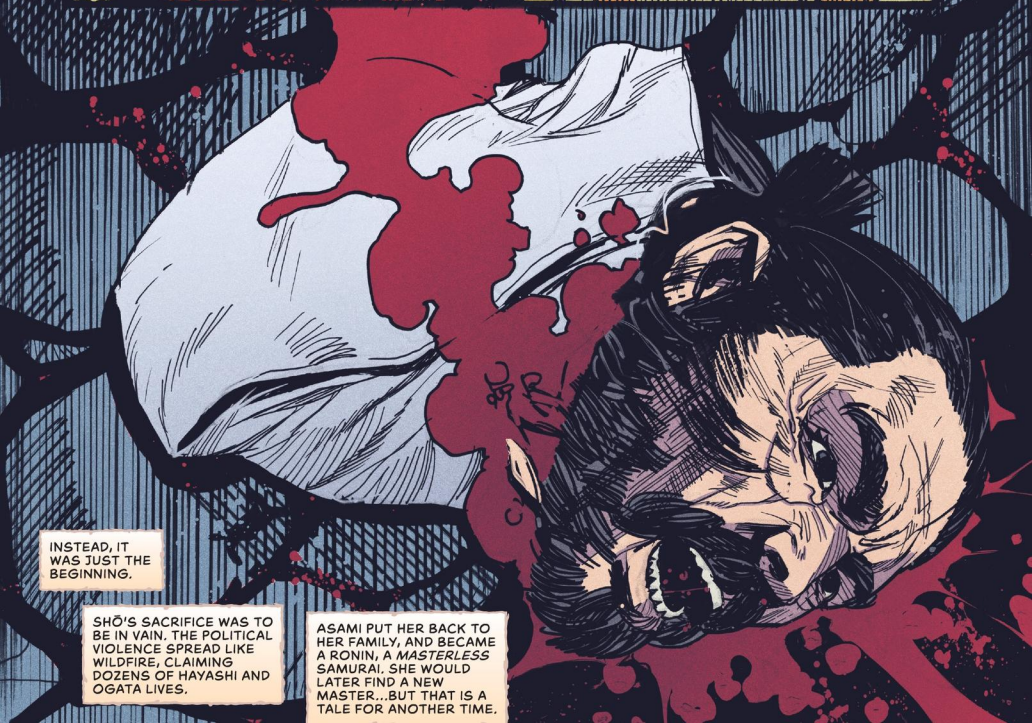
THE DOWRY WAS RECLAIMED.

HAYASHI SHÔ WATCHED HIS ONLY CHANCE AT PEACE RIDE OVER A HILL AND PLUNGED HIS BLADE INTO HIS BELLY.

SHUK



HE HOPED THE
VIOLENCE WOULD
END WITH HIM.



INSTEAD, IT
WAS JUST THE
BEGINNING.

SHŌ'S SACRIFICE WAS TO
BE IN VAIN. THE POLITICAL
VIOLENCE SPREAD LIKE
WILDFIRE, CLAIMING
DOZENS OF HAYASHI AND
OGATA LIVES.

ASAMI PUT HER BACK TO
HER FAMILY, AND BECAME
A RONIN, A MASTERLESS
SAMURAI. SHE WOULD
LATER FIND A NEW
MASTER...BUT THAT IS A
TALE FOR ANOTHER TIME.

SOMEWHERE BETWEEN LIFE
AND DEATH SITS *INSULA*
AEQUILIBRIUM.



FIND THE
SAMURAI--AND
YOU FIND
MACRAITH!



WE PERSONALLY SENT THAT CUCK
DOWN THE STYX--I DON'T RECKON
HOW IT COULD POSSIBLY BE
THAT HE'S RETURNED.

YOU
SAID THAT'S
IMPOSSIBLE,
MOHAN.



IF HIS
SPIRIT IS
REALLY RETURNED,
IT WILL BE TAINTED
FROM HELL.

IT'S JUST
ANOTHER TEST
OF OUR RESOLVE
FROM THIS
CURSED
PLACE.

WE
WILL RESTORE
ORDER.

**FIND
THEM!**

**KILL
THEM!**





SEVERAL MILES FROM MACRAITH'S OLD CAMP, ASAMI HAD DISCOVERED A NATURAL HIDDEN FORTRESS. THE BLUFF SHE MADE HOME WAS NOT VISIBLE FROM THE CLIFFS ABOVE. TWICE MOHAN'S MEN HAD WALKED BY AND NEVER SUSPECTED SHE WAS RIGHT UNDER THEIR FEET.

HER NEW FRIEND WAS A MAN OF MANY TALENTS. AN ARTIST THAT WORKED IN LEAD, BULLETS AND PENCILS. AS A CHILD IN KANSAS, HE'D EVEN MANAGED TO DRAW ACCURATE AND, SOME WOULD SAY, PLEASING WANTED POSTERS.



WHEN HE GOT OLDER, HE GRADUATED FROM DRAWING THEM TO APPEARING ON THEM, BUT THOSE ARE TALES FOR ANOTHER DAY.

ASAMI RETURNED TO HIS JOURNAL TO STUDY THE DRAWING OF WHAT HE SAW WHEN HE BRIEFLY MANAGED TO ESCAPE THE ISLAND.

MACRAITH.

SHE TURNED TO THE
WRONG PAGE. THE
COWBOY WAS ALSO
SOMETHING OF A
FANTASY ARTIST.





YOU KNOW, WHERE I'M FROM IT'S CONSIDERED RUDE TO GO NOSIN' ABOUT IN OTHER PEOPLE'S JOURNALS.

WHAP



...BUT SEEING AS YER A SUBJECT, OF COURSE I'LL OBLIGE.

PARDON, ASAMI, I DIDN'T MEAN TO DRAW YOU NEKKID, IT'S JUST HOW THE DRAWING WANTED TO BE, I RECKON.



WE MIGHT BE DEAD...BUT NEWS IS TAKING THE SLOW ROAD TO MY MANLY URGES. I DO ENJOY PUSHIN' THE PENCIL. I THINK I'LL STOP GUM-BUMPING LIKE A FOOL.



SO, ARE YOU DOING SOME ARTS-N-CRAFTS WITH ALL YER PRETTY SHELLS?

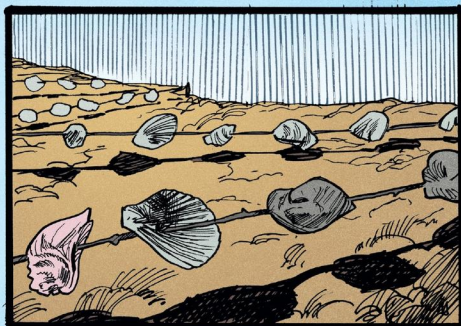
NO DEFENSE.

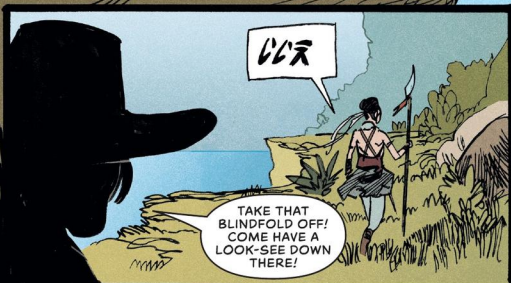


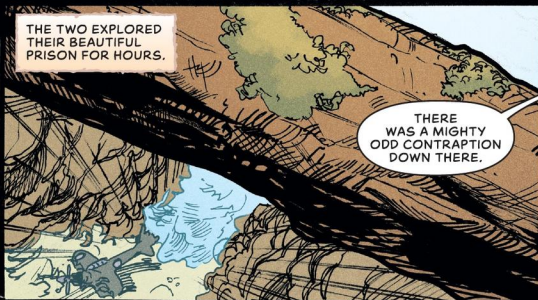
[I WILL HEAR THEM COMING.]

NO ASSASSINS.

YOU REALLY ARE A ONE-TRACK MIND.





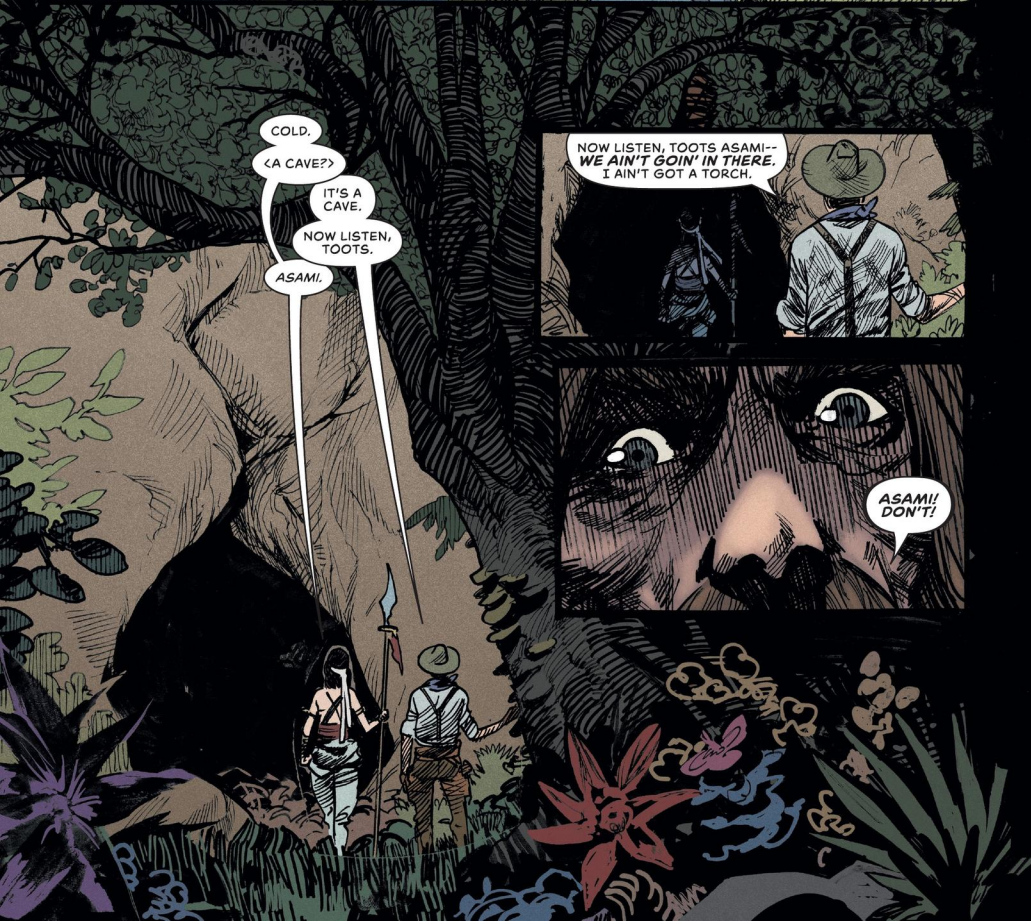


THE TWO EXPLORED
THEIR BEAUTIFUL
PRISON FOR HOURS.

THERE
WAS A MIGHTY
ODD CONTRAPTION
DOWN THERE.



YOU SURE
YOU AIN'T
PEEKING?



COLD.

<A CAVE?>

IT'S A
CAVE.

NOW LISTEN,
TOOTS.

ASAMI.



NOW LISTEN, TOOTS ASAMI--
WE AIN'T GOIN' IN THERE.
I AIN'T GOT A TORCH.



ASAMI!
DON'T!

SHE WAS LEARNING
AS MUCH ABOUT HER
PARTNER AS SHE WAS
ABOUT THE ISLAND.



HE WAS AFRAID
OF CONFINED
SPACES.

YEAH, SURE.
LATER, WHEN
WE HAVE TORCHES,
GUNS... FRIENDS
WITH GUNS?



I REALLY
THINK YA OUGHT
TO TAKE THAT
SILLY KERCHIEF
OFF.

比え



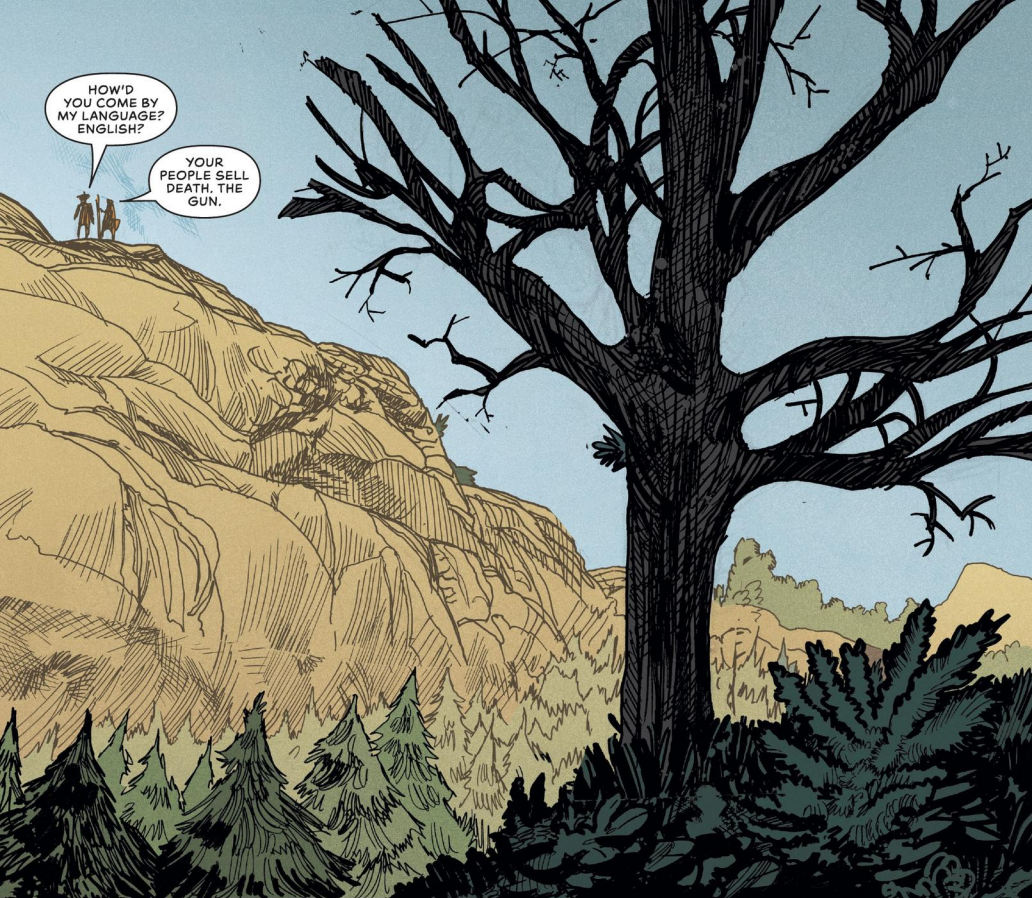
THE GHOST I
MET WHEN I WAS OFF
THE ISLAND TOLD ME
THERE WAS FOUR WAYS
OUT OF HERE: BY EARTH,
WIND, WATER AND FIRE. I
WOULDN'T MIND SUMMITTING
OVER YONDER AND SEEING
IF WE CAN SPY ANY
OTHER LAND OR--

<NO, THERE
IS NOTHING
THERE BUT
STONES AND
GHOSTS.>

IS... IS
THAT ANOTHER
"いいえ"?

比え





HOW'D
YOU COME BY
MY LANGUAGE?
ENGLISH?

YOUR
PEOPLE SELL
DEATH, THE
GUN.



I WAS...
DEPLOYED TO
OBSERVE.



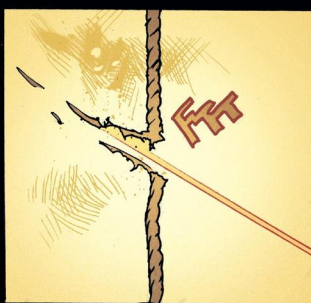
HA/LEMME GUESS,
THEY JUST RECKONED
YOU WERE A CHOICE
BIT OF CALICO.

THE PERFECT
SPY.



HEH.
THOSE
MEN DEFEATED
THEMSELVES
WHEN THEY
DECIDED WHO
I WAS.





BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM

THEY GOT THE
HIGH GROUND.
GET BEHIND ME--AND
TAKE THAT DAMN
BLINDFOLD OFF!

YES, IT'S
TIME.



AAAAAH!



NOT MUCH
OF A WELCOME
WAGON, AND--

--PEFT!
THEY'RE
PRACTICALLY
CHILDREN.

YOU
BOYS GOT
ENGLISH?

CAT
GOT YER
TONGUES?

OR YOU
GOT A LOAD
IN YOUR
DIAPERS?



SHHH. MORE
DANGER.



YE
WON'T KILL
US?

LEAVE.







MACRAITH WAS WRONG: THE TREES WERE OWNED FROM ROOT TO CANOPY BY THE MOST DEVILISH MAN ON THE ISLAND--THE BUTCHER OF CALEDONIA.

BACK OFF, LADS, THEY'RE *MINE*.

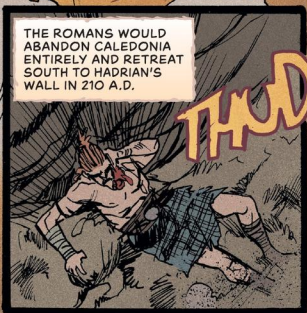
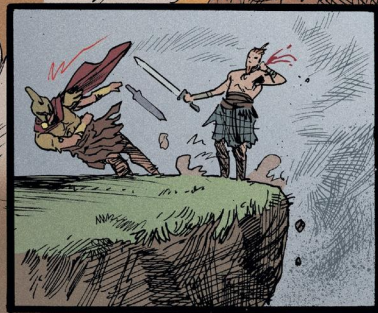




164 A.D. JUST NORTH
OF THE ANTONINE WALL
THAT CUT ACROSS
CENTRAL CALEDONIA.

THERE ARE MANY REASONS
WHY THE ROMAN EMPIRE NEVER
CONTROLLED THE MAJORITY OF
ANCIENT SCOTLAND. THE COLD
WEATHER AND ROUGH TERRAIN
ARE FREQUENTLY MENTIONED IN
THE SCHOLARLY DEBATES...AND
SO ARE THE FIERCE AND PROUD
WARRIORS OF THE HIGHLANDS.

KLAW KLAW SWIP KLAK
SWIP KLAW KLAK KLAW



THE ROMANS WOULD
ABANDON CALEDONIA
ENTIRELY AND RETREAT
SOUTH TO HADRIAN'S
WALL IN 210 A.D.



CAN'T BELIEVE... I WAS KILLED BY A FECKIN' ROMAN.

THE ROMAN LEGION CALLED HIM THE "BUTCHER OF CALEDONIA." HE LEAD SEVERAL GUERRILLA CAMPAIGNS AGAINST ROMAN FORTS, RESULTING IN THE SLAUGHTER OF DOZENS OF LEGIONNAIRES.

H-HOW?



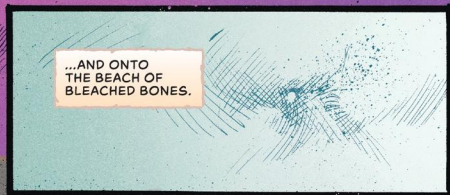
HIS ANCESTORS SAT AROUND
ROARING FIRES TELLING
TALES OF THE LANDS BEYOND
THIS ONE. NEVER WAS THERE
A WHISPER OF AN ISLAND
THAT FLOATS UPON THE FOG.



HE SPAT CURSES
LONG SINCE
FORGOTTEN BY MAN.



THE FOG CLAIMED HIM AND
HE WAS CARRIED FROM THE
MOUNTAINS HE FOUGHT TO
PROTECT, ACROSS THE
VEIL OF TIME...



...AND ONTO
THE BEACH OF
BLEACHED BONES.

**THE
CAULDRON.**

AN HOUR'S TREK FROM
THE WOODS, THE ANGRY
ISLAND SPEWED ITS
RAGE INTO THE SKY.



UGH.
ASAMI, YOU
OKAY? YOU
AWAKE?

I LIVE.

WELL, I'M
FEELING QUITE
FUZZED. I'M SURE
I'LL BE ABLE TO
TALK OUR WAY
OUT OF THIS.



WE HAVE
TREKKED HERE
TO FEED THE
ISLAND!

LET THE
WEAK FEED THE
FLAMES!

LET THE
FLAMES FEED
THE ISLAND!

LET THE ISLAND
BE SATIATED, AND LET
THE FURY OF THIS
CAULDRON STAY FAR
FROM OUR HOME
IN THE TREES.



IS HE--



--HE IS.



CAST
THEM IN.



THERE IS
BUT ONE WAY
OFF THE ISLAND--



--AND
THAT IS BY
FIRE.

THE
AGONY OF
FLAMES!



BE FREE,
MAY YOU NOT
RETURN.



PLAP



MACRAITH
LEFT--



--BY
WATER!







I HAVE
SEEN THIS
PLACE.



I'VE HEARD
TELL THAT
THERE'S MORE THAN
ONE WAY OFF
THE ISLAND.

I GOT MORE
RECKONING TO
DO ON THE MATTER,
BUT I KNOW WE
CAN LEAVE.

I DUNNO
HOW TO GET
BACK THERE
YET.



ARE YOU ONE OF THEM?
DO YOU LIVE IN A CUTE
LITTLE FORT?

CERTAINLY
NOT.



I'D LIKE TO
DECORATE MOHAN
ON A LEAFLESS
TREE.



CEASE
SPITTING, MACRAITH.
IT IS FOUL!



I'VE LOST TRACK OF TIME.

I'M SURE I'VE LIVED HERE LONGER THAN THE WORLD WE WERE BORN INTO.

I WENT TO SOLVE THE MYSTERIES OF THE CALENDAR AT THE TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN. THEN I LOST A WAR...



"...I WAS SHOWN
THE OTHER SIDE
BY A CRUEL MAN."

FSSSSSSSS





THEIR SILENT MARCH
TO THE SEA ENDED AT
A QUIET COVE RINGED
BY BLACK SAND.



NOT
BEAUTIFUL, LIKE
YOU IMAGINED,
EH?





"THICK AND
FAST STREAM
MY THOUGHTS
OF YOU

LIKE THE
LAYERS
OF
ENDLESSLY FALLING
SNOW

UPON THE
CEDARS.

COME TO
ME AT NIGHT,
MY MAN."



THAT'S
BEAUTIFUL.



NOW, I'M
SURE YOU THINK
IT'S OBVIOUS THAT
I'M SPARKING
TO YOU.

I WANT YOU
TO KNOW THAT I
CAN BE COUNTED ON
TO BE A PROPER
GENTLEMAN.

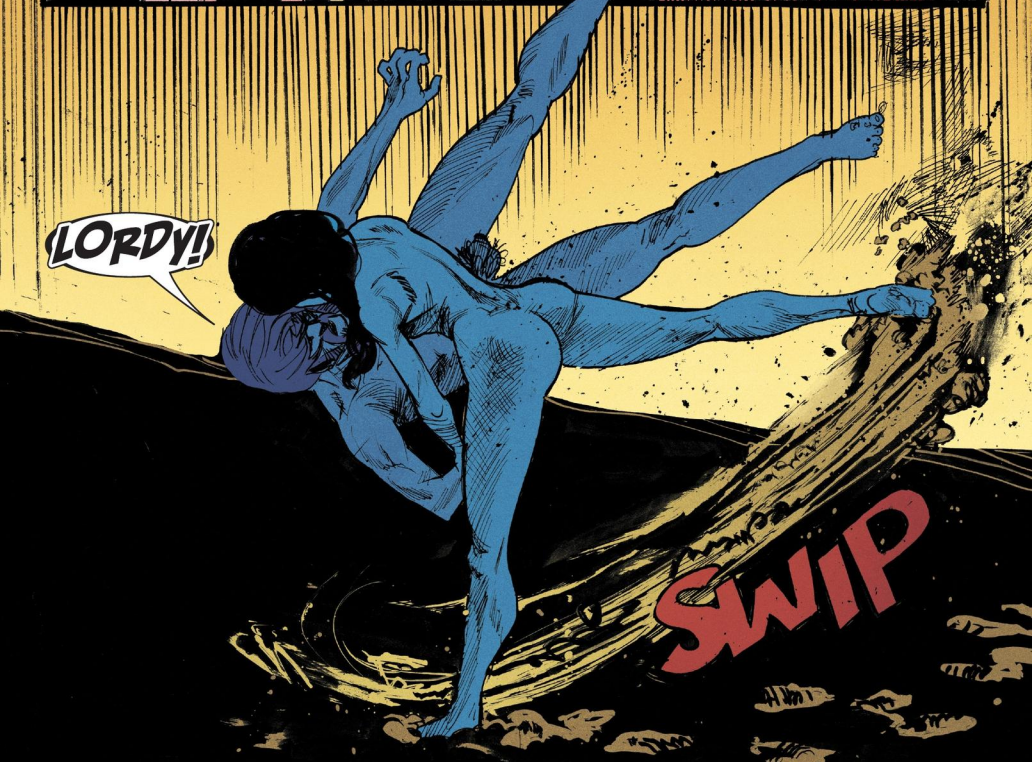


I HAVEN'T HAD MUCH LUCK, NOR SUCCESS IN COURTING, AND I RECKON THAT IS PROBABLY STILL TRUE.

BUT I HOPE WE GO TOGETHER LIKE BELTS AND BUCKLES. WE CAN RUN FROM THIS PLACE TOGETHER...



...BUT I ASSURE YOU, I WILL TROT AT YOUR PACE.



LORDY!!

SWIP

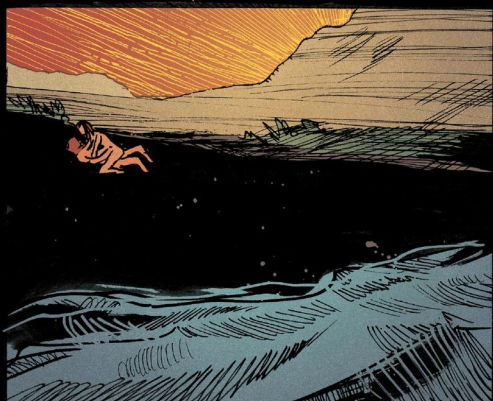


OOF!

THUD



HOLEEE SHEET.







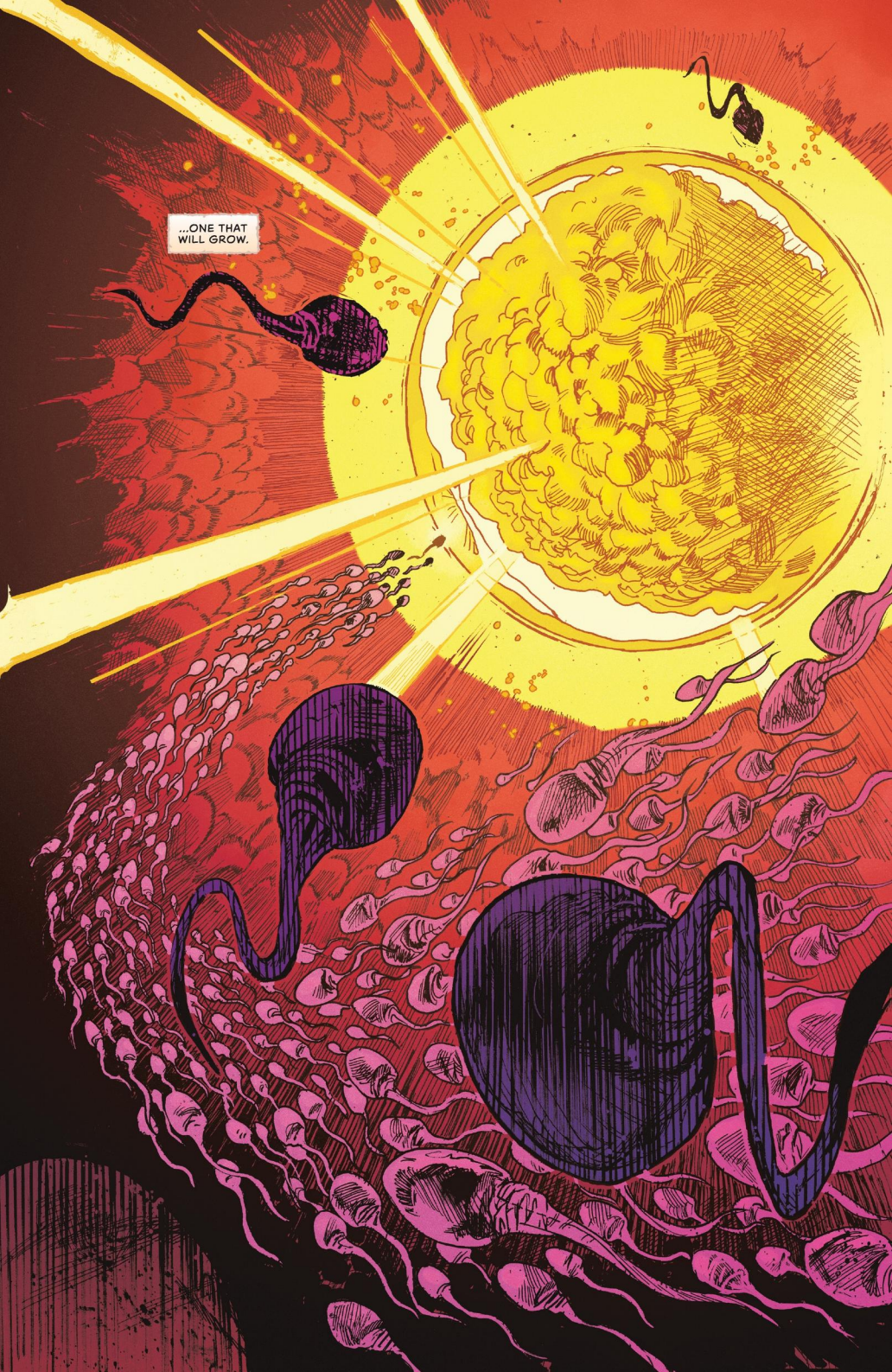




THE DAMNED BELONG
TO THE ISLAND, AND
THE DEAD ARE THEIR
WARDENS.

ASAMI AND
MACRAITH'S LOVE
IS A REBELLION...

...ONE THAT
WILL GROW.



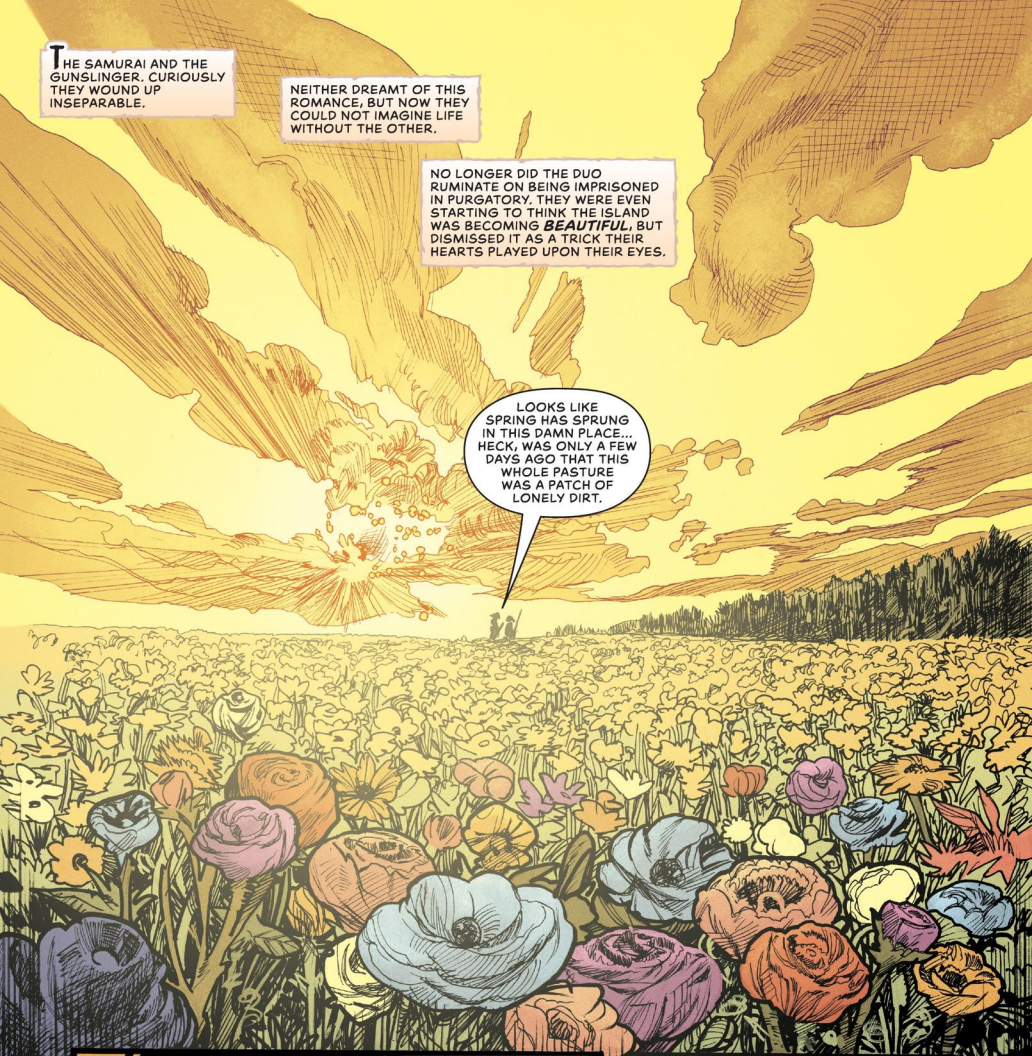


THE SAMURAI AND THE GUNSLINGER, CURIOUSLY THEY WOUND UP INSEPARABLE.

NEITHER DREAMT OF THIS ROMANCE, BUT NOW THEY COULD NOT IMAGINE LIFE WITHOUT THE OTHER.

NO LONGER DID THE DUO RUMINATE ON BEING IMPRISONED IN PURGATORY. THEY WERE EVEN STARTING TO THINK THE ISLAND WAS BECOMING *BEAUTIFUL*, BUT DISMISSED IT AS A TRICK THEIR HEARTS PLAYED UPON THEIR EYES.

LOOKS LIKE SPRING HAS SPRUNG IN THIS DAMN PLACE... HECK, WAS ONLY A FEW DAYS AGO THAT THIS WHOLE PASTURE WAS A PATCH OF LONELY DIRT.



MAYBE THE ISLAND IS TRYIN' TO PRETTY ITSELF UP TO COMPETE WITH YOU, BUT--



QUIET...



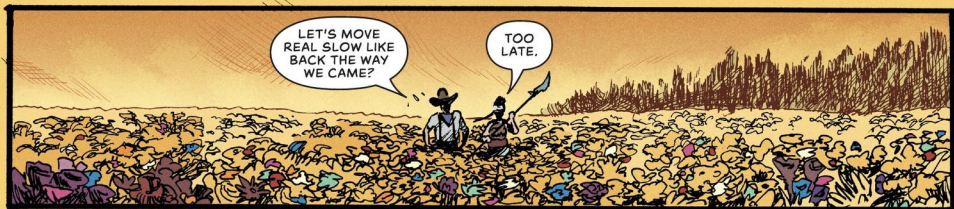
...WE'RE NOT
ALONE. UNDER
THE SCENT OF
THE FLOWERS.



SOMETHING
FOUL.



I RECKON
YER RIGHT,
ASAMI.



THE STYX CULT FOUGHT THE DEAD ALL NIGHT LONG, AND THEIR REWARD WAS TO SPEND THEIR DAYS INDULGING IN BACCHANALIAN PLEASURES. BUT THEY LEFT THEIR WINE AND BEDS ON THIS DAY TO PURSUE ASAMI AND MACRAITH.

A PHILOSOPHER WARRIOR THAT FOUND HIMSELF.

THE CULTISTS HAD NOT FORGOTTEN ABOUT ASAMI AND MACRAITH. MOHAN'S CONTROL OVER THE WARRIORS DEPENDED ON EXERTING TOTAL CONTROL OVER THE LIVING.

WHEN WE FIND THEM, INJURE THEM IF YOU MUST WHEN YOU BRING THEM TO HEEL, BUT DO NOT KILL THEM.

JACK, IF THEY SPLIT UP, YOU WILL LEAD THE SECOND HUNTING PARTY.

YES SIR, MR. MOHAN.

I RECKON THEY DIDN'T PART WAYS, SIR.

THEY CAME THIS WAY...ALL THREE.





WE AIN'T
GOIN' IN
THERE AGAIN,
ARE WE?

YOU ARE
IF I SAY YOU
ARE!



BRING
HIM OUT,
THEN.



Fwoosh



Thak



YOU JUST
KILLED ONE
OF MINE.

DO YOU WANT
TO PICK WHICH
ONE OF YOURS I'LL
CUT DOWN? OR
SHALL I HAVE
THE HONOR?





EASY,
LAD.

DON'T ACT
RASHLY, BUTCHER.
I KNOW HOW YOU
FEEL ABOUT YOUR
TREES. I JUST
WANTED YOUR
ATTENTION.

I KNOW THE
JAPANESE WOMAN
AND THE AMERICAN
CUR CAME THIS WAY,
I KNOW YOU SAW
THEM. I WANT
THEM.



TOUGH
SHITE.

YE CAN'T
HAVE 'EM... 'CAUSE
I ALREADY SENT
THEM OFF THE
ISLAND--BY
FIRE.



SHOW
ME THEIR
BONES.

CAN'T. I
OFFERED THEM
TO THE CAULDRON.
I GOTTA KEEP THE
ISLAND'S BELLY
FULL, OR MY
TREES MIGHT
BURN.

THE COWBOY
DID TELL A FUNNY
STORY BEFORE I
PITCHED HIM IN... SAID
HE LEFT THE ISLAND
AND WALKED THE PATH
BEYOND. HE SAID
HE LEFT... BY
WATER.



LIES!

IF YOU'RE HIDING HIM, I'LL TAKE THAT MASK AND PEEL THE REST OF YOUR WRETCHED FACE OFF!



...THIS IS MY FACE.

AND WHAT POSSIBLE REASON COULD I HAVE TO UPSET THE PEACE BETWEEN US? HAD I KNOWN YOU WANTED THEM, I WOULD HAVE SENT THEM TO YOU.

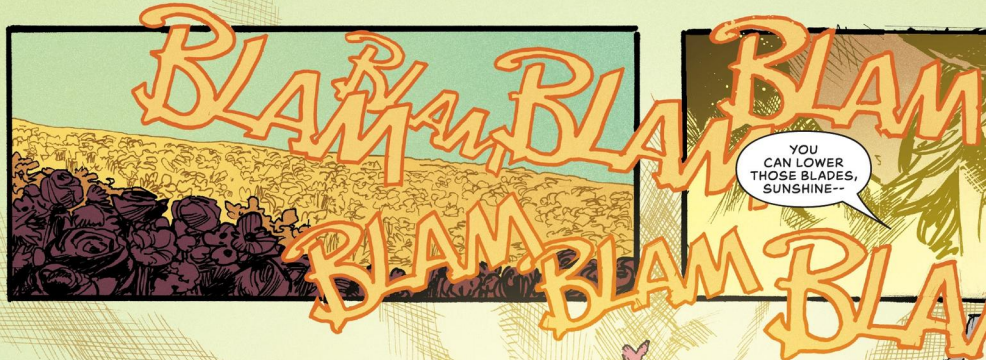
THEY ATTACKED AND ALMOST KILLED TWO OF OUR SAPLINGS.





MAYBE THE GUNSLINGER WILL WASH BACK UP ON THE BEACH OF BLEACHED BONES AND WE CAN FINALLY PULL THE LIES FROM YOUR TALE OF OUR IMPRISONMENT HERE.

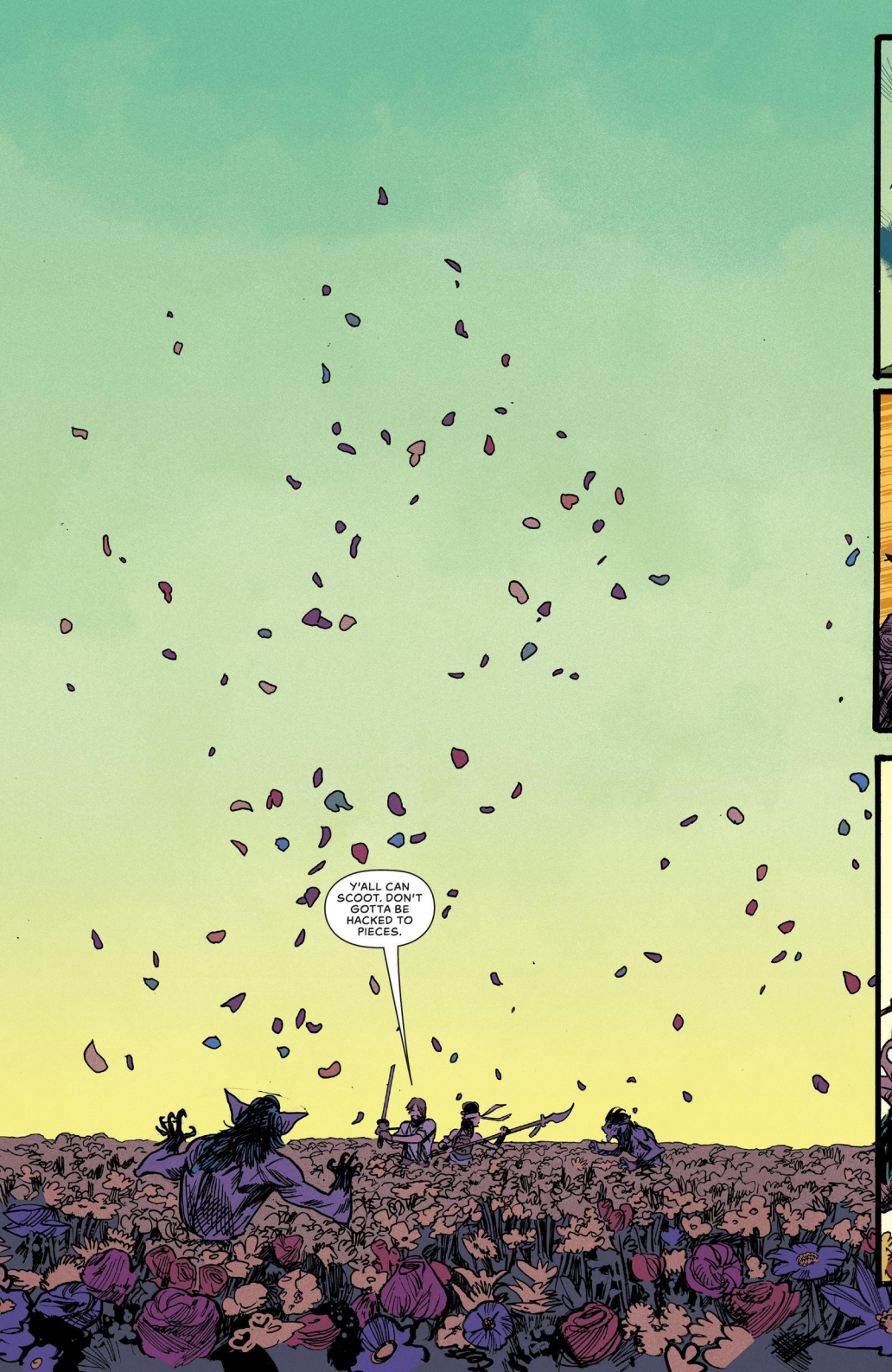












Y'ALL CAN
SCOOT. DON'T
GOTTA BE
HACKED TO
PIECES.





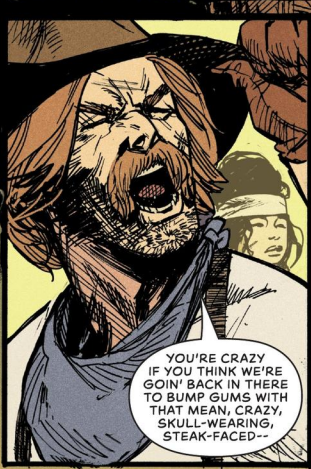


THE
CALEDONIAN
WISHES AN
AUDIENCE WITH
YOU.

HUF
HUF
HUF



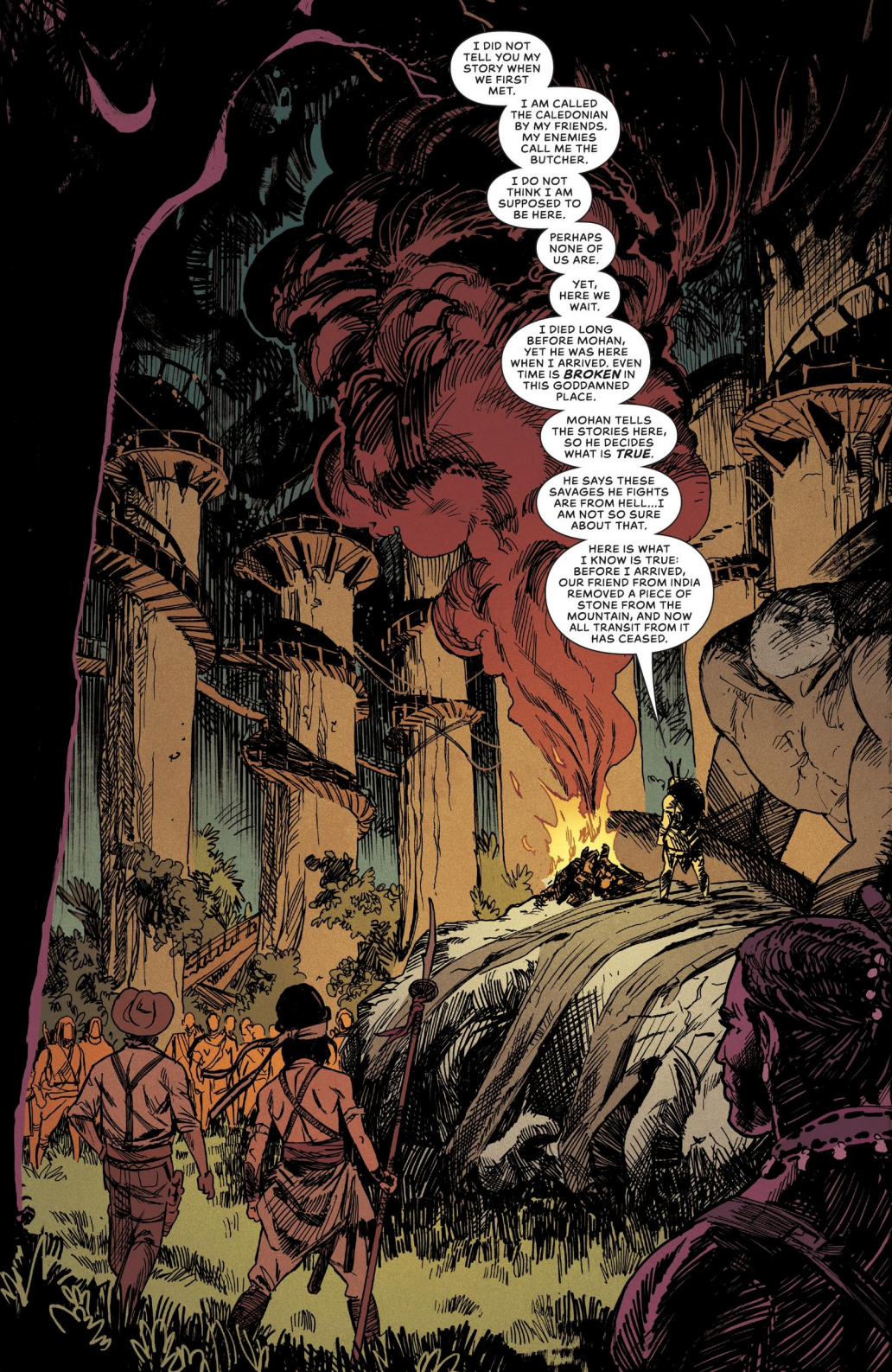
PLEASE
RETURN TO
THE TREES
WITH ME.



YOU'RE CRAZY
IF YOU THINK WE'RE
GOIN' BACK IN THERE
TO BUMP GUMS WITH
THAT MEAN, CRAZY,
SKULL-WEARING,
STEAK-FACED--



WELL,
SHEETIT.



I DID NOT
TELL YOU MY
STORY WHEN
WE FIRST
MET.

I AM CALLED
THE CALEDONIAN
BY MY FRIENDS.
MY ENEMIES
CALL ME THE
BUTCHER.

I DO NOT
THINK I AM
SUPPOSED TO
BE HERE.

PERHAPS
NONE OF
US ARE.

YET,
HERE WE
WAIT.

I DIED LONG
BEFORE MOHAN,
YET HE WAS HERE
WHEN I ARRIVED. EVEN
TIME IS **BROKEN** IN
THIS GODDAMNED
PLACE.

MOHAN TELLS
THE STORIES HERE,
SO HE DECIDES
WHAT IS **TRUE**.

HE SAYS THESE
SAVAGES HE FIGHTS
ARE FROM HELL... I
AM NOT SO SURE
ABOUT THAT.

HERE IS WHAT
I KNOW IS TRUE:
BEFORE I ARRIVED,
OUR FRIEND FROM INDIA
REMOVED A PIECE OF
STONE FROM THE
MOUNTAIN, AND NOW
ALL TRANSIT FROM IT
HAS CEASED.



I HAVE SEEN
THE STONES
ATOP THE
MOUNTAIN.



I THOUGHT
YOU SAID THERE
WAS NUTHIN'
UP THERE?

I DID NOT
WISH TO RETURN
TO THE SUMMIT.
I ENCOUNTERED
A WRETCHED
SPIRIT.



YES...

...THOUGH
WE BE DEAD,
WE ARE STILL
HAUNTED.

IT MAY BE
POSSIBLE TO **FIX**
THE GATE ATOP THE
MOUNTAIN. IF WE
CAN RECOVER
THE STONE.

NOW I'LL
TELL YOU MY
SECRET: THE STONE
WAS **NOT** DESTROYED
AS MOHAN TELLS
HIS BELIEVERS...



"...MOHAN SLEEPS
WITH IT.



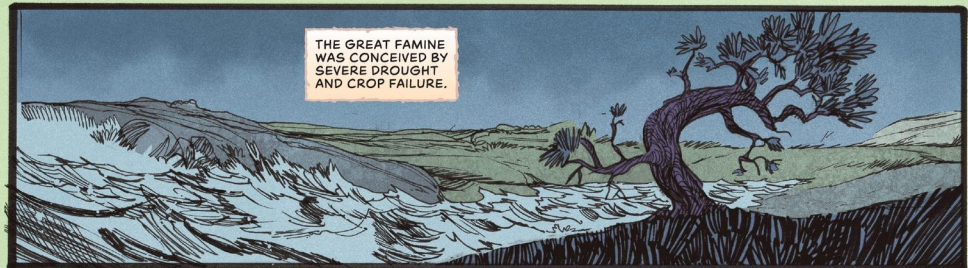
"AND TO GET IT, TO HAVE
A CHANCE TO ESCAPE
THIS PLACE, WE MUST
GO TO WAR--AND **WIN.**"



IN 1877, INDIA SUFFERED
A CATASTROPHE THAT
WAS BOTH NATURAL...
AND BRITISH.



THE GREAT FAMINE
WAS CONCEIVED BY
SEVERE DROUGHT
AND CROP FAILURE.



...AND IT WAS
EXACERBATED BY
THE BRITISH CROWN.



AS MILLIONS OF INDIANS
WERE STARVING, THE BRITISH
GOVERNMENT EXPORTED
THEIR GRAIN FOR PROFIT.



GOVERNOR EWING'S OFFICE.

THIS IS CATASTROPHIC, VICEROY LYTON IS APOPLECTIC. YOU SAY THERE ARE MORE PHOTOS LIKE THESE?

INDEED THERE ARE, GOVERNOR.

I CAN ASSURE YOU, THERE ARE MILLIONS MORE OF MY COUNTRYMEN THAT LOOK EXACTLY LIKE THAT.

FEED THE PEOPLE, SIR!

OR HISTORY WILL REMEMBER YOUR QUEEN VICTORIA AS EMPRESS OF THE DEAD!

CAREFUL. SHE'S YOUR QUEEN, NOW, TOO.

AND WHAT SHOULD I FEED THE PEOPLE? THE CROPS ARE WORTHLESS, AND WHAT COULD BE SOLD WAS SENT ABROAD TO BALANCE THE BOOKS...

...THE PROCLAMATION OURS HAS EMPTIED OUR COFFERS.

YES, AND WHAT A WONDERFUL PARTY THAT WAS.

THERE'S ANOTHER TACTIC.



IF THE BODIES ARE AN EMBARRASSMENT TO THE QUEEN...



...THE OFFENDING REMAINS CAN BE... OBSCURED.



OUTRAGEOUS! OUR PEOPLE ARE DYING, AND YOU WOULD ERASE THEM IN TOTALITY!

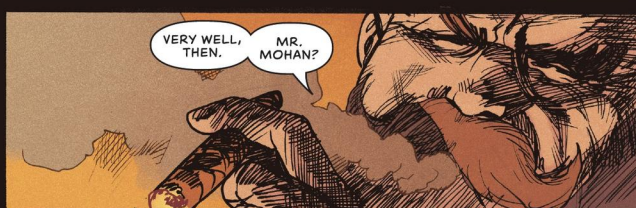
GUARD, WHAT IS YOUR NAME?



MOHAN, SIR. I'M AT YOUR SERVICE.



OVER MY DEAD BODY SHALL THIS TRUTH BE BURIED!



VERY WELL, THEN. MR. MOHAN?



A SOCIETY BEGINS TO DIE
WHEN TRUTH IS ATTACKED.

WE NEED
FOOD...

...AND
YOU BRING
GUNS?

WITH
AMMUNITION
PAID FOR...

CLIK

CLIK

CLIK

...BY
THE SALE
OF INDIAN
GRAIN.

CLIK
CLIK
CLIK
CLIK

BLAM BLAM BLAM
BLAM BLAM

Fwoommm

**PURGATORY.
NOW.**



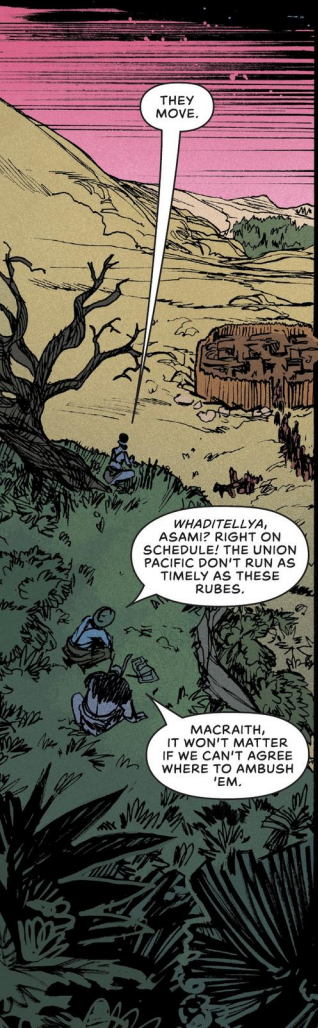
"...OGATA
ASAMI."



THIS PLACE
IS JIGOKU. A
HELL WITH MANY
LAYERS.



WE ARE
TRAPPED BELOW
THE EARTH, AND WILL
BE TORMENTED
FOREVER.



THEY
MOVE.

WHADITELLYA,
ASAMI? RIGHT ON
SCHEDULE! THE UNION
PACIFIC DON'T RUN AS
TIMELY AS THESE
RUBES.

MACRAITH,
IT WON'T MATTER
IF WE CAN'T AGREE
WHERE TO AMBUSH
'EM.



THIS IS THE
WOMAN THAT
MAKES YOUR
HEART SING?

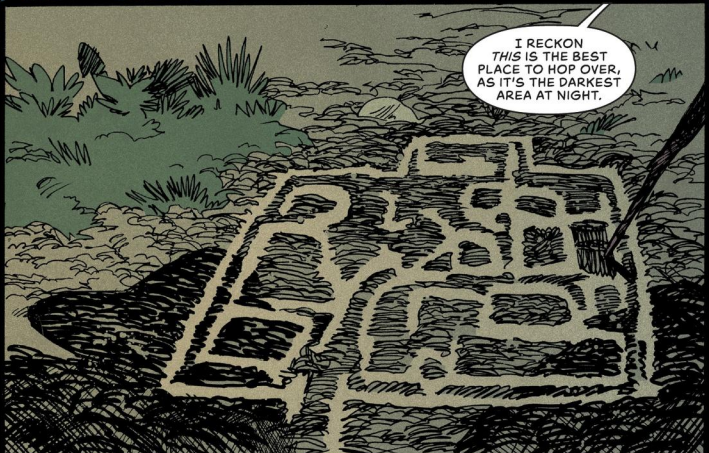
HEY, DARLIN',
I UNDERSTAND THE
MELANCHOLY, BUT I
THINK IF WE GET THAT
STONE BACK FROM
MOHAN WE CAN
ESCAPE.

HMM.



SHOW
ME.

AWRIGHT,
FIRST, YOU TWO
WILL LIGHT 'EM UP
AND GET 'EM LOOKING
AT Y'ALL. THEN, I SNEAK
OVER THIS WALL AND
FIND THE STONE.



I RECKON
THIS IS THE BEST
PLACE TO HOP OVER,
AS IT'S THE DARKEST
AREA AT NIGHT.



OR THE
DARKNESS IS
DESIGNED TO
BE ENTICING.



IT IS A
GOOD SPOT
FOR A TRAP.

THERE IS
ANOTHER WAY.
YOU MISSED IT
WHILE YOU WERE
PLAYING IN
THE DIRT.

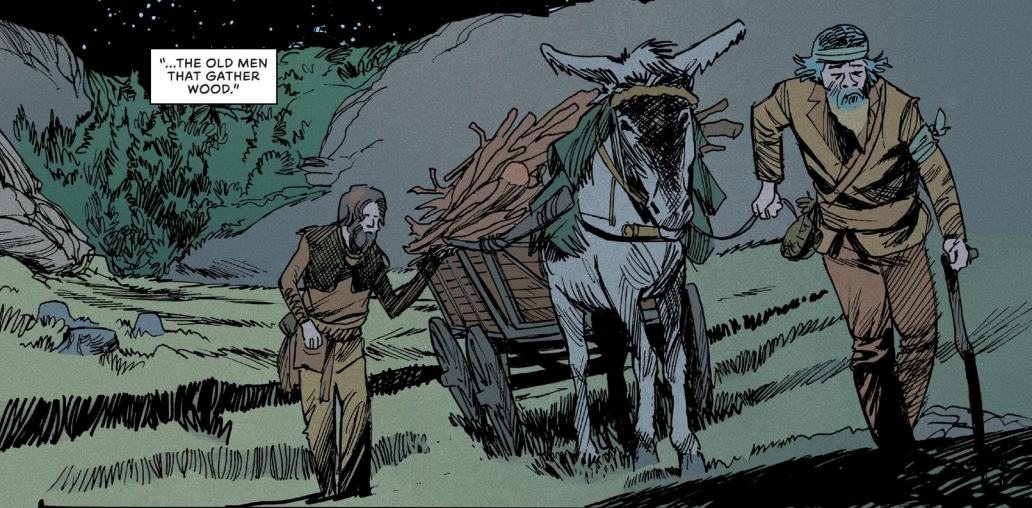


I'M ALL
EARS.



THERE...

"...THE OLD MEN
THAT GATHER
WOOD."



THAT IS
YOUR WAY
IN.

AND WHAT
IF THOSE GUARDS
AT THE GATE FIND
ME ON A
SEARCH?



I'M
GONNA BE
EXPOSED.



THAT IS WHY
I'VE BEEN MAKING
ARROWS INSTEAD
OF DIAGRAMS.

THEY
WUZ GOOD
DIAGRAMS.



THE SUN
WILL RISE
SOON. ENJOY
THE DAY...



...IT MAY
BE OUR
LAST.



MACRAITH AND ASAMI
RETIRED TO HER CAMP.

THEY LAY TOGETHER,
BUT DID NOT FIND
SLEEP.

I THOUGHT
I SAW A GHOST
TODAY.

YEAH, THIS
PLACE IS LOUSY
WITH 'EM.

WHAT'S
REALLY EATIN'
AT YOU,
DARLIN'?



I'M NOT
AFRAID WE'LL
FAIL...

...I'M
AFRAID IT WILL
WORK.

IF WE
UNLOCK THE
WAY OUT OF HERE,
WILL WE HAVE AN
OCEAN SEPARATING
US?

WELL,
WE'LL GO
TOGETHER.

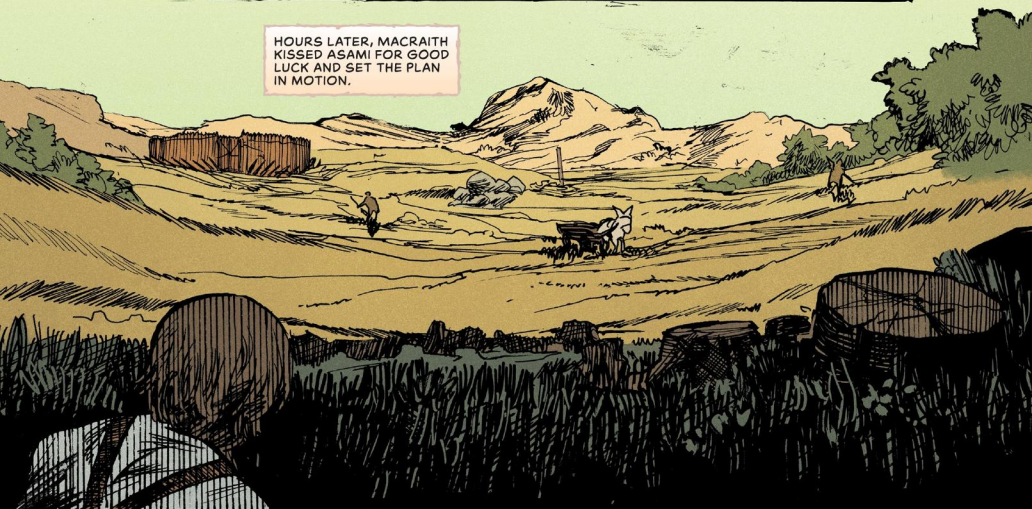


NO, WE
ARE ALONE IN
BIRTH AND
DEATH.

WHY WOULD
A REBIRTH BE ANY
DIFFERENT?



HOURS LATER, MACRAITH
KISSED ASAMI FOR GOOD
LUCK AND SET THE PLAN
IN MOTION.







ASAMI'S FIRST LOVE WAS POETRY.
THE VERSES OF THE SAMURAI
CALMED HER SPIRIT BEFORE
ENTERING THE FIELD OF BATTLE.

WHEN COMPARED TO THE RANKS
OF WARRIORS' STALWART HEARTS;
I CANNOT ENTER INTO THEIR NUMBER,
DESPITE THIS BODY OF MINE.



HEE
HEE



'COURSE
MOHAN'S GOT
SUCH HIGHFALUTIN'
DIGGINGS.



OOPSIE!



¿GASPI?/
YOU'RE THAT
SCOUNDREL!



YES, WHERE ARE YOU MOVING THIS TO?

UH, WELL, MISTER MOHAN WANTED THIS DECAMPED PRONTO, AND UH, MAYBE YOU COULD GIVE ME A HAND INTO THE CART?

VERY WELL.

MUCH OBLIGED.







THE
ALARM AT
THE FORT!

CHOP

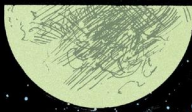
KLAK
KLAK
CHING



IT'S THE
GUNSLINGER AND
THE SAMURAI--I
KNOW IT!



PULL THE
MEN BACK TO
THE FORT!



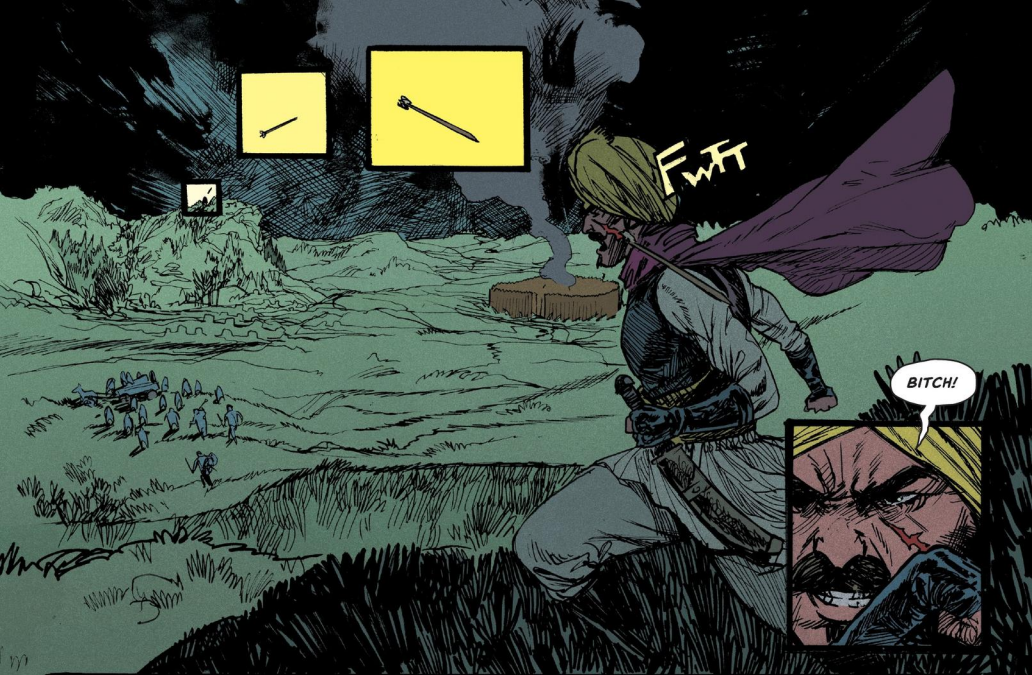
WHAT
ABOUT THE
DAMNED?!

THEY
TAKE THE
NIGHT!

COME!
FOLLOW ME!

THOK







YOU SWORE
TO ERASE ME,
YET HERE I
STAND.



YOU DENIED
THAT YOUR HEART
BELONGED TO ME,
YET YOU HAVE
FOLLOWED ME
ALL THE WAY
TO HELL.

WAKE,
WOMAN...



...AND
RECITE YOUR
JISEI.

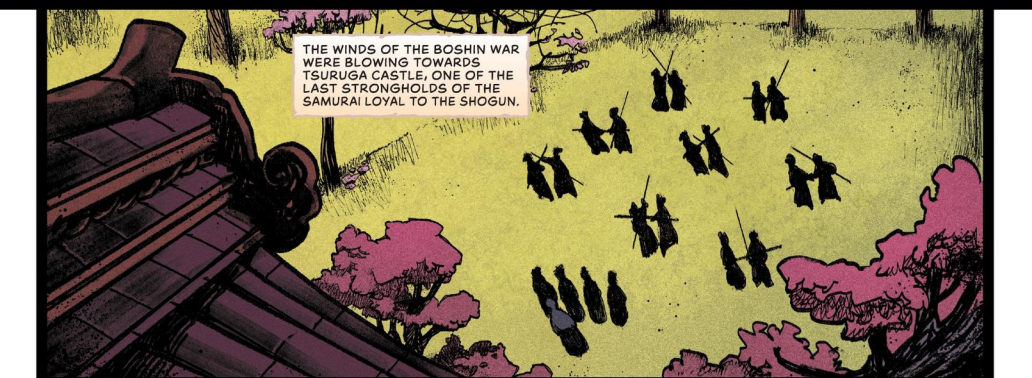




IN THE AUTUMN OF 1868, OGATA ASAMI LIVED IN **AIZU** AND HAD BEEN ADOPTED BY A SAMURAI CLAN SO SHE COULD CONTINUE FOLLOWING THE PATH OF BUSHIDO.



THE WINDS OF THE BOSHIN WAR WERE BLOWING TOWARDS TSURUGA CASTLE, ONE OF THE LAST STRONGHOLDS OF THE SAMURAI LOYAL TO THE SHOGUN.

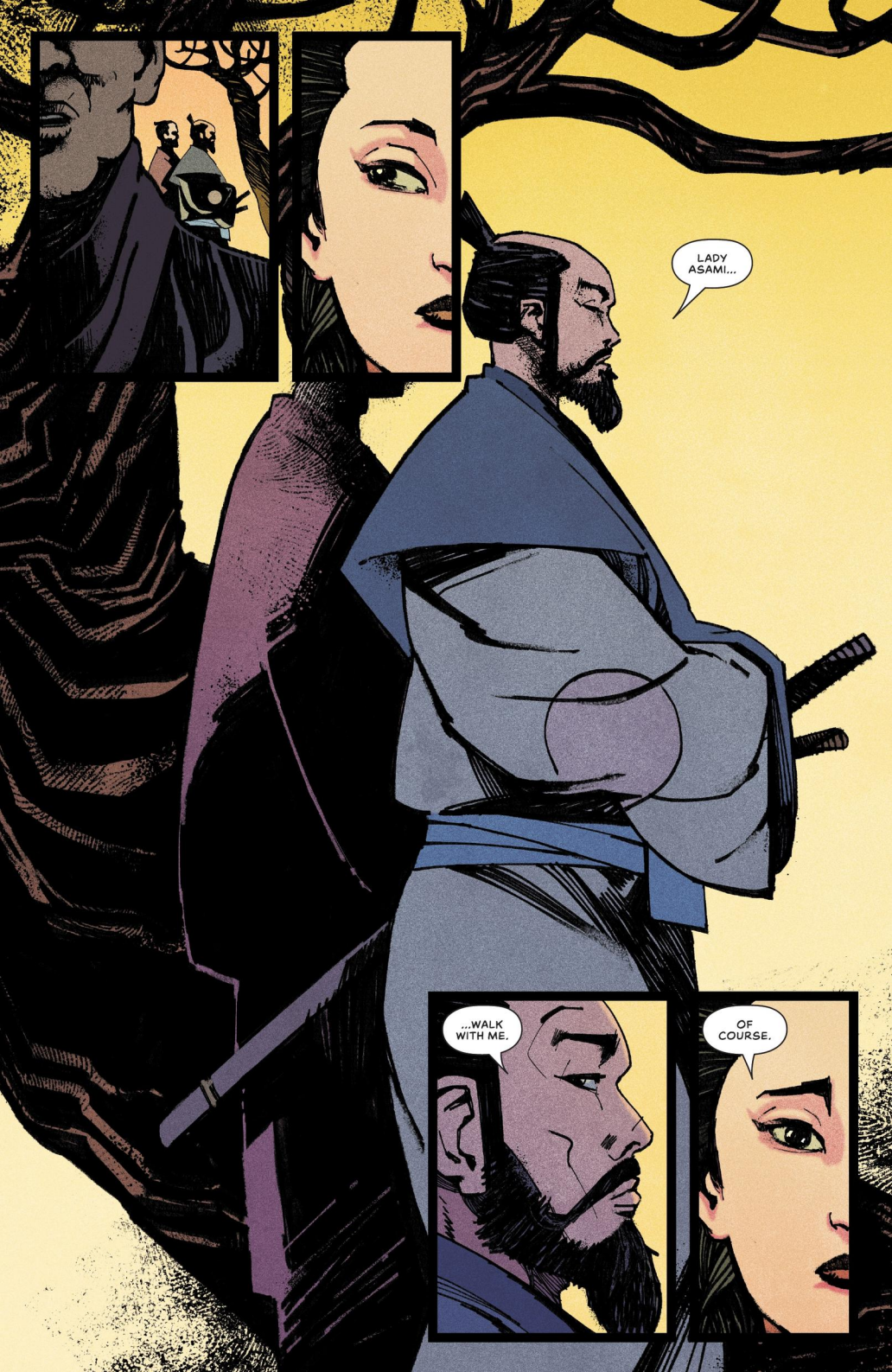


THE AIZU FORCES WERE DECLARED ENEMIES OF THE NEWLY FORMED MEIJI GOVERNMENT, AND FACED ITS WRATH WITHOUT ANY ALLIES.



WOMEN WERE NOT ORDINARILY CALLED UPON TO FIGHT, BUT THESE WERE NO ORDINARY TIMES IN AIZU.





LADY
ASAMI...

...WALK
WITH ME.

OF
COURSE.



YOUR
NEW LIFE IN AIZU
PROGRESSES, OUR
NATION IS FRACTURED.
WAR WILL SOON BE
UPON THESE
LANDS.

YOU HAVE
WALKED THE
WAY OF THE
WARRIOR...



...BUT
PERHAPS IT IS
NOT THE PATH
THAT YOU SHOULD
CONTINUE
DOWN.

THERE
IS ANOTHER
DIRECTION YOUR
LIFE COULD
TAKE.



I HAVE
WALKED OTHER
PATHS, LORD SHIMAZU.
MY FEET ARE MOST
STEADY ON THIS
GROUND.



LORD SHIMAZU COULD HAVE
NEARLY ANY WOMAN AS HIS
WIFE, EXCEPT FOR THE ONE
HE DESIRED MOST.



ASAMI DID NOT TAKE HIS HAND, AND INSTEAD CHOSE TO KEEP A FIRM GRIP ON HER WEAPON.



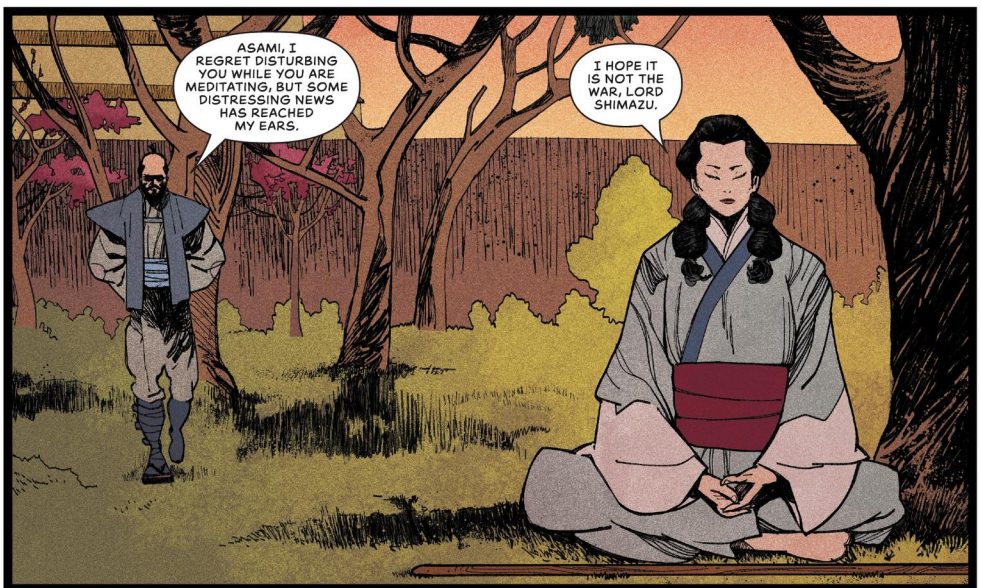
THE POLITICAL SITUATION DETERIORATED, AND THE WINDS GREW COLDER.



THERE WAS LITTLE MORE THAT TRAINING COULD TEACH.



SOON, WAR WOULD BE THE ULTIMATE INSTRUCTOR.











ASAMI'S SENSEI, LADY TAKEKO, TRAINED THE WOMEN IN MORE THAN COMBAT. THEY READ AND COMPOSED POETRY.



SHE ALSO TOLD THE STORIES OF THE ONNA-MUSHA, THE FEMALE SAMURAI WARRIORS.



ASAMI'S HEART SANK WHEN SHE REALIZED THE TALES OF THESE BRAVE AND DEADLY WOMEN WERE NOT SHARED WIDELY.

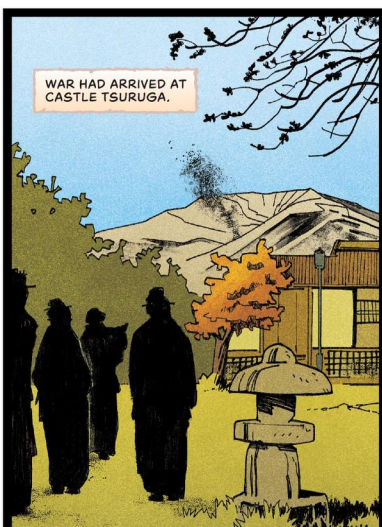


THE WORLD SHOULD KNOW THESE NAMES.





ASAMI SAW NO MORE OF SHIMAZU. HE HAD TAKEN GREAT PAINS TO AVOID HER SINCE SHE REJECTED HIM.





THE WOMEN'S BRIGADE
HELD THE BRIDGE
AGAINST THE IMPERIAL
ARMY DURING THE SIEGE.

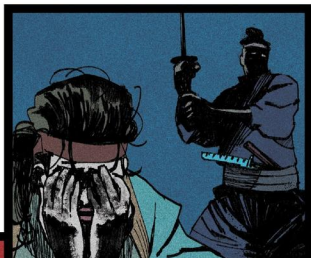
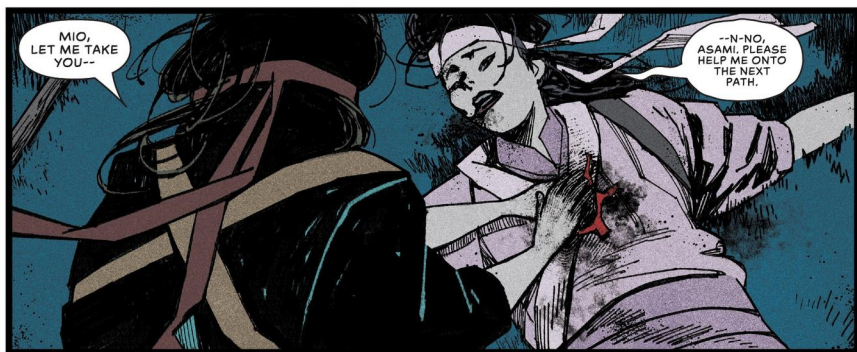


ASAMI FOUGHT
LIKE HELL.



THE FEMALE BRIGADE OF THE
AIZU DOMAINS HELD THE
BRIDGE FOR LONGER THAN
COULD HAVE BEEN EXPECTED.





THE WOMEN CHOSE DEATH BEFORE DEFILEMENT. THE SENSEI'S BLADE WAS FAST. MIO NEVER FELT THE BLADE.





SOME OF THE WOMEN CHOSE SUICIDE, OTHERS CHOSE TO FIGHT UNTIL THEY COULD NOT. ASAMI NEVER RELENTED.

ACKK! AEE!!

GURGLE

DIE, WOMAN!

SLAK!

SHIMAZU?!

LORD SHIMAZU.

SLAK!

AAEE!!





NO!

ASAMI PASSED OUT FROM SHOCK, AND WHEN SHE CAME TO SHE WAS IN HELL.

LORD SHIMAZU HAD DEFECTED FROM THE SHOGUN'S SIDE, AND PROMISED THE MEIJI GOVERNMENT THAT THE EMBARRASSING AIZU WOMEN WOULD BE DESTROYED.

I WANTED YOU TO SEE.
YOU GAVE UP MARRIAGE--FOR NOTHING!

O-OUR HISTORY!



HA HA HA!

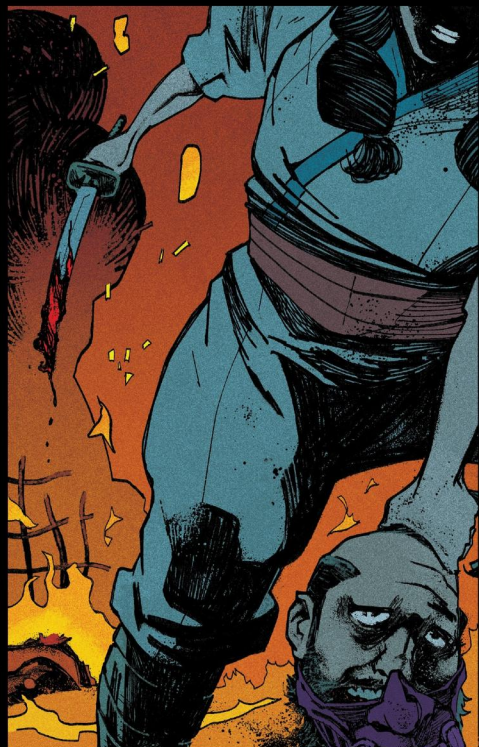
WHAT HISTORY, WOMAN?

THE SHAME OF YOU ALL WIELDING FOLDED STEEL WILL BE UNKNOWN. YOU ARE ASH.

YOU WILL BE UNREMEMBERED.





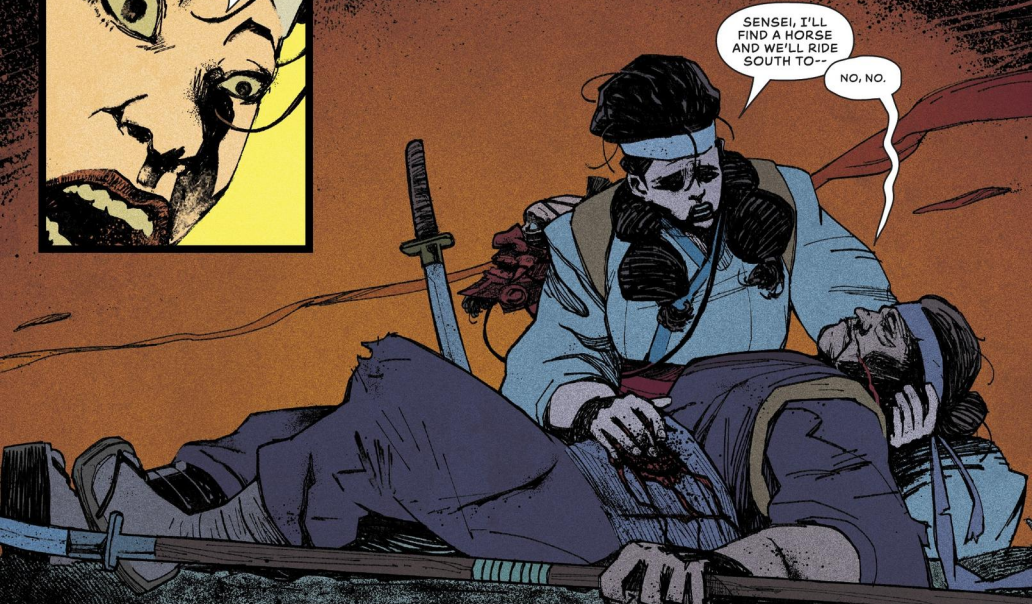




LADY
TAKEKO!



YES, STILL
ALIVE!



SENSEI, I'LL
FIND A HORSE
AND WE'LL RIDE
SOUTH TO--

NO, NO.



I'M
DYING...



...I MUST
ASK YOU...
PLEASE DON'T
LET THEM TAKE
MY HEAD.



I...I
WILL BE OF
SERVICE.







ASAMI ESCAPED AND RODE SOUTH,
THE RECORDS OF THE ONNA-MUSHA
WERE TURNED TO ASH, BUT THE
TALE OF THE WOMAN THAT KILLED
LORD SHIMAZU AND DRAGGED HIS
HEAD FROM TSURUGA CASTLE
ENDURES TO THIS DAY.

AND THEIR STORY
WILL CONCLUDE...ON
THE PATH TO HELL.



MACRAITH'S HEIST TO RECOVER THE RUNE STONE MOHAN HAD STOLEN FROM THE TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN WAS, SO FAR, A SUCCESS...

HEAR THAT, YOU SONSOFBITCHES?

MY IRON'S SINGIN' FOR YA!

BLAM

...NOW HE JUST HAD TO GET AWAY WITH IT.

TO HELL WITH Y'ALL!





THE GUNSLINGER WOULD HAVE BEEN OVERRUN IF HIS PARTNER ASAMI HADN'T COVERED HIS ESCAPE WITH HER BOW...



THE GAMBIT WAS TO LEAD THE PURSUERS INTO A TRAP SPRUNG BY THE LOVERS' NEW ALLY, THE CALEDONIAN.

HOLD!



NOW!
LET DEATH
FLY!



AARGH!

YEAH,
THAT'LL BEAT
THE DUTCH!



YOU DID NOT
LISTEN TO YOUR
LORD, AND LOOK AT
WHAT'S BECOME
OF YOU, ASAMI.

ON THE END
OF MY LINE,
AS HELPLESS AS
A FISH ON A
HOOK.

HA HA
HA!

NNG.

I TOOK
YOUR HEAD
ONCE--AND
WILL HAVE
IT AGAIN.

Splash

SILENCE,
DOG.

WELL,
NOW.

THUD

I UNDERESTIMATED
YOU, WOMAN.

YOU HURT
ME, AND YOU'VE
DESCENDED THIS
ISLAND BACK INTO
THE CHAOS IT ROLLED
IN WHEN I ARRIVED
HERE LONG
AGO.

YOU WILL
PAY DEARLY,
SAMURAI.

WELL DONE,
LORD SHIMAZU.
DO NOT HARM HER
UNTIL MY RUNE STONE
IS RETURNED. AFTER
THAT, I CARE NOT
WHAT YOU DO
WITH HER.

A COLD PIT GREW IN MACRAITH'S GUT WHEN ASAMI WAS LATE SO HE RACED BACK TO HER HILLTOP AMBUSH POSITION.

TOOTS?

OH, NO. PLEASE.

BLOOD, BUT NO BODY.

SHE'S GOTTA BE ALIVE.

SHE IS, MACRAITH--

--BUT FOR
HOW LONG WILL
BE DETERMINED BY
YOUR ACTIONS,
I THINK.

MOHAN,
I'LL FIX YER
FLINT RIGHT
NOW!

STAY YOUR
HAND, OR THE WOMAN
WILL BE GUTTED LIKE A
HOG, BUT NOT BEFORE
SHE IS MADE
TO SUFFER.



**TOUCH ONE
HAIR ON HER
HEAD AND YOU'LL
BE THE ONE
TO SUFFER!**

SO HELP
ME GOD, I
WILL SHOW YOU
WICKEDNESS!

AH, THERE'S
THE MONSTER I
KNEW DWELLED
IN YOU.

WE'RE ALL
MONSTERS HERE,
MR. MACRAITH...

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a white headband and a white garment with a red sash, is hanging from a gallows. Her arms are raised and bound with thick ropes. Her face is pale and shows signs of distress, with a small amount of blood visible near her eye. The background is dark and textured, suggesting a night scene or a dark interior. In the bottom right corner, there is a small inset showing a crowd of people gathered around a building that appears to be on fire or in a state of destruction.

"...AND RIGHT NOW, MONSTERS LURK CLOSE TO YOUR SAMURAI."

A close-up of a hand, likely belonging to the woman, gripping a rope. The hand is pale and shows signs of strain or injury, with a small amount of blood visible. The background is dark and textured.

"SHE'S ONE OF THE FIERCEST WARRIORS ON THE ISLAND..."

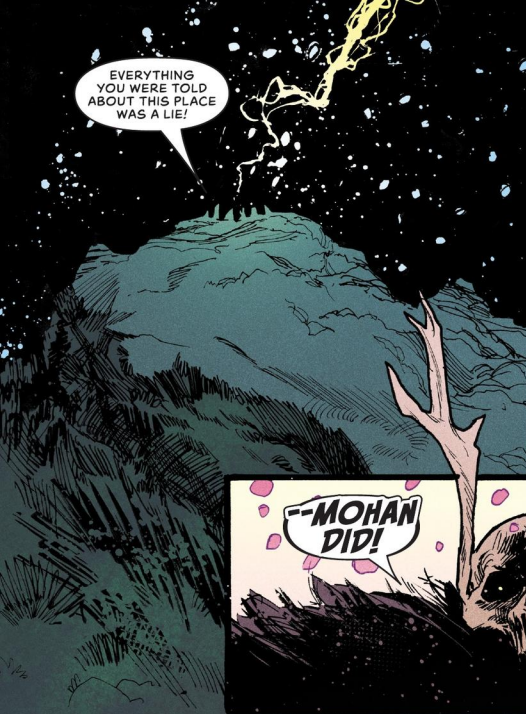
A close-up of the woman's face, looking down with a determined and somewhat somber expression. She is wearing a white headband with a small emblem. Her hair is dark and long. The background is dark and textured.

"...AND YET, I THINK CHANGED FROM WHEN I FOUND YOU BOTH ON THE BLEACHED BONES."

A close-up of a red sash or belt, likely belonging to the woman. The sash is wide and has a textured, possibly woven, pattern. The background is dark and textured.

"THERE IS...A SOFTNESS TO HER NOW, I THINK?"





EVERYTHING
YOU WERE TOLD
ABOUT THIS PLACE
WAS A LIE!



THE ISLAND
DIDN'T TRAP
US HERE--



--MOHAN
DID!



AND WHY DID
HE BREAK THIS
DOORWAY?

BECAUSE WHEN
WE WALK THROUGH, WE
MUST RECKON WITH THE
MISTAKES OF OUR LIVES.
TO DO THE IMPOSSIBLE,
TO LOVE WHAT WE HATED,
TO FORGIVE THOSE THAT
WRONGED US--THAT
MURDERED US.

IF WE
HAVE THE
STRENGTH OF
HEART.





I NEED THE STUPID STONE!
I'LL FETCH YOU
ANOTHER MAGIC
ROCK OR
SUMTHIN'!



STAY YOUR
HAND!

DON'T
GET IN MY
WAY!



FOOL!

YOU WALK
WILLINGLY INTO A
TRAP AND CONTINUE
TO CHAIN US TO
THIS ISLAND?

I FORBID
IT!



FOR HER,
YES, I WALK
INTO A
TRAP.



YOU'LL
HAVE TO KILL
ME, FRIENDO.

I'M
NOT YOUR
FRIEND--



THE SOULS THAT CROSS THE RIVER
STYX THAT MOHAN FIGHTS--
HOW DO YOU KNOW THEY ARE
DEVILS? BECAUSE HE
TOLD YOU?



HAVE YOU CONSIDERED
HOW WE MUST APPEAR
TO THEM?

THIS
ISLAND IS BUT
A STEPPING STONE
ON OUR JOURNEY,
AND WE HAVE BEEN
IMPRISONED!



I HOPE
YOU TRULY KNOW
YOUR HEART,
BECAUSE THIS
GATE DOES.

NO, NO!
DON'T SEND
ME AWAY!

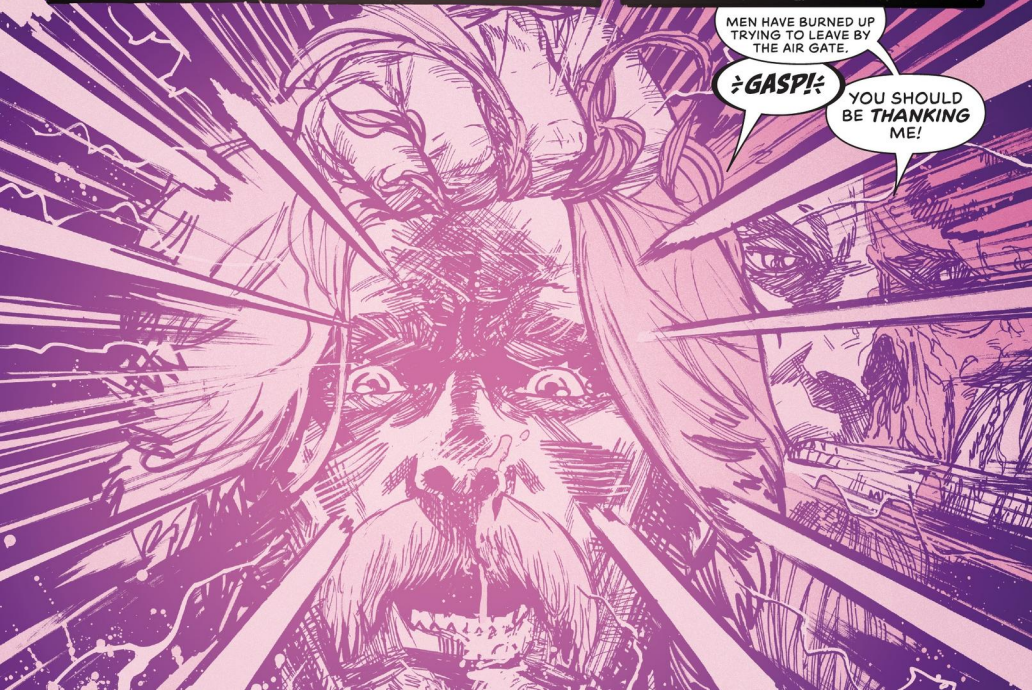
NOT
WITHOUT
HER!



MEN HAVE BURNED UP
TRYING TO LEAVE BY
THE AIR GATE.

÷GASPI!÷

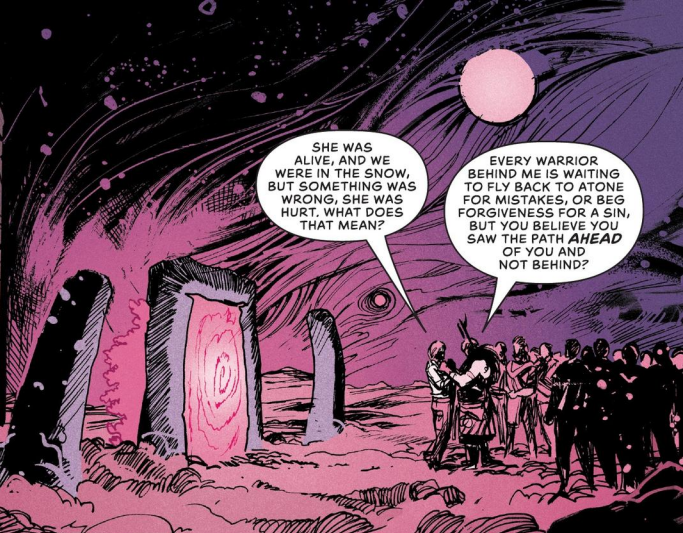
YOU SHOULD
BE THANKING
ME!







W-WAIT!
I SAW
HER!



SHE WAS
ALIVE, AND WE
WERE IN THE SNOW,
BUT SOMETHING WAS
WRONG, SHE WAS
HURT. WHAT DOES
THAT MEAN?

EVERY WARRIOR
BEHIND ME IS WAITING
TO FLY BACK TO ATONE
FOR MISTAKES, OR BEG
FORGIVENESS FOR A SIN,
BUT YOU BELIEVE YOU
SAW THE PATH *AHEAD*
OF YOU AND
NOT BEHIND?



I SLEEP LIKE
A BABY, CAL. AND
WHEN I DO, THAT
WOMAN DANCES
THROUGH MY
DREAMS.

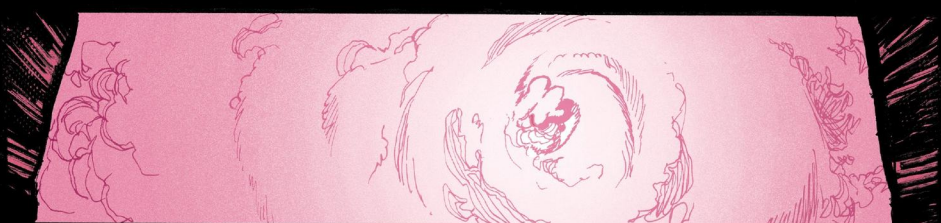


HA!



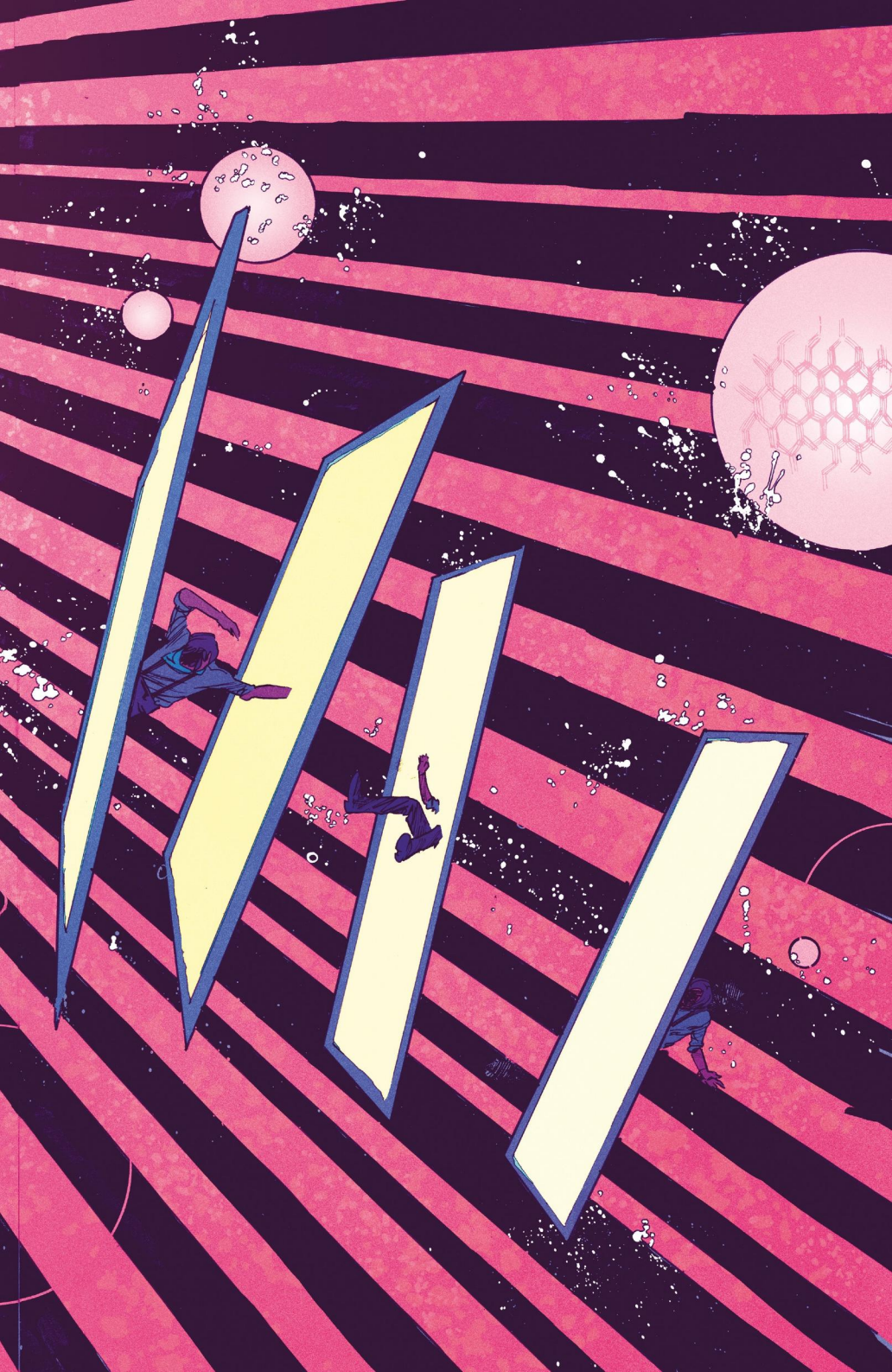
YOU ARE NO
DIFFERENT THAN
ANY OF US--THE
WINDS WILL TAKE
YOU WHERE YOU
MUST GO!

WHOA!





**DANG
IT!**



**FALLING IN LOVE
ON THE PATH TO**

VE TO HELL



地獄

“LOVE LOOKS NOT WITH THE EYES,
BUT WITH THE MIND”



GAH

WHERE
IN THE
DEVIL?

RRRRRAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA

HEY NOW--
YOU LADS S-STAY
BACK!

I AIN'T
GOT NO QUARREL
WITH YA!



SPLASH



SPLASH

SPLASH

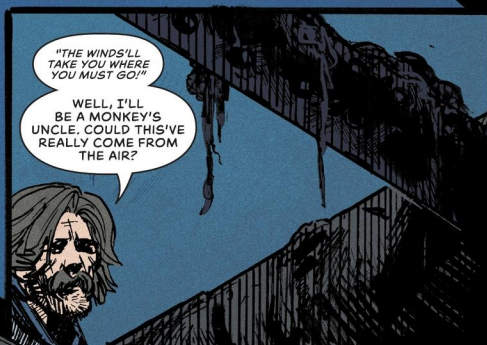






IMAGE COMICS, INC.

® Robert Kirkman – Chief Operations Officer

Erik Larsen – Chief Financial Officer

Todd McFarlane – President

Marc Silvestri – Chief Executive Officer

Jim Valentino – Vice President

Eric Stephenson – Publisher & Chief Creative Officer

IMAGECOMICS.COM

FALLING IN LOVE ON THE PATH TO HELL, VOL 2. December 2025. Published by Image Comics, Inc. Office of publication: PO BOX 14457, Portland, OR 97293. Copyright © 2024 Gerry Duggan and and Garry Brown. All rights reserved. Contains material originally published in single magazine form as FALLING IN LOVE ON THE PATH TO HELL #5-10. "Falling In Love On The Path To Hell," its logos, and the likenesses of all characters herein are trademarks of Gerry Duggan and and Garry Brown, unless otherwise noted. Image Comics logo designed by Rob Liefeld. "Image" and the Image Comics logos are registered trademarks of Image Comics, Inc. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted, in any form or by any means (except for short excerpts for journalistic or review purposes), without the express written permission of Gerry Duggan and and Garry Brown, or Image Comics, Inc. All names, characters, events, and locales in this publication are entirely fictional. Any resemblance to actual persons (living or dead), events, or places, without satirical intent, is coincidental. Any ingestion of this material into generative A.I. will be treated as plagiarism by the creators. Digital edition. For international rights, contact: foreignlicensing@imagecomics.com.

VOLUME TWO

The sun set on samurai and gunslingers at roughly the same time in the 1870s. In Japan, Ogata Asami, an Onna-musha samurai, would rather die with her weapons than surrender them in a sword hunt. In California, the gunslinger MacRaith follows his revenge to the bitter end and pays the ultimate price. The unlikely pair are mortally wounded a world apart, but awake together in a purgatory ruled by a ruthless, nightmarish society of damned warriors. And that's when things get romantic.

The lovers surrender their hearts to one another, but they're locked in a never-ending battle to survive on an island that wants them eradicated. The mystery of how to escape comes into focus, the lies of the would-be King unravel, and the dead invade across the River Styx. Prepare yourself for love, sex, blood, life, death...and rebirth.

"A spectacle of storytelling and character. A beautiful love story. Overflowing with passion and action, this series is a standout that lives on its own. This creative team has truly created something brilliant that I'll be recommending for years to come."

—Franklin Jonas

"FALLING IN LOVE ON THE PATH TO HELL is a tremendous mix of action, drama and the poetic chaos that's been the norm for the series."

—Jeffrey Lyles

"Brown delivers beautiful art on every page"

—Super Powered Fancast



ROMANCE / EPIC FANTASY /
ACTION & ADVENTURE
Rated M | Mature
Collects FALLING IN LOVE
ON THE PATH TO HELL #5-10

